Studies in Educational Leadership 16

Louis Volante *Editor*

# School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform

## International Perspectives

Springer

# School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform

STUDIES IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

VOLUME 16



**SCOPE OF THE SERIES**

Leadership we know makes all the difference in success or failures of organizations. This series will bring together in a highly readable way the most recent insights in successful leadership. Emphasis will be placed on research focused on pre-collegiate educational organizations. Volumes should address issues related to leadership at all levels of the educational system and be written in a style accessible to scholars, educational practitioners and policy makers throughout the world.

The volumes – monographs and edited volumes – should represent work from different parts in the world.

For further volumes:
http://www.springer.com/series/6543

Louis Volante
Editor

# School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform

## International Perspectives

Part of the research for this book was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Springer

*Editor*
Louis Volante
Faculty of Education
Brock University
Hamilton, ON
Canada

ISBN 978-94-007-4094-5 ISBN 978-94-007-4095-2 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012937292

*To Filomena, Alexander, and Alyssa for making me smile . . .*

# Foreword

In the 1980s and 1990s, education moved from the shadows to the spotlight for policy makers, largely driven by concern about competitiveness in a complex global economy and a realization that education of the young is a necessity for creating educated citizens and ensuring a successful future. Words like standards, accountability, and effectiveness became part of the educational lexicon. As Fullan (1997) pointed out, the pressure for reform emerged in the 1980s without the reality. By the mid 1990s, however, large-scale reform was emerging, particularly in England and the United States, with a national curriculum in England in 1988 and a relentless focus on "education, education, education" by Tony Blair, and George Bush being called "the Education President", as he introduced "No Child Left Behind" in the United States.

Much of this reform was wrapped up in a package called "standards-based reform". Even at that time, however, the meaning of the term was different in different places. In the United States, the focus was on creating detailed and specific content and process standards at the state level and developing or choosing a quantitative instrument to assess whether the students knew the required content or could perform the required tasks. In England, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy focused on ambitious standards for learning but did not define specific content or processes. Instead, they established targets for success at a school level and inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) inspected and reported on the performance of every school in the country. In both cases, there was reliance on large-scale assessment, as a mechanism for deciding about success.

Although standards-based reform emerged in the United States and the United Kingdom, the idea has spread across the world as an approach to systemic reform. It might appear that there is a worldwide "tsunami" of standards-based reform that will standardize and homogenize the educational system across the globe. This book makes it very clear, however, that there is no one approach to standards-based reform and countries change—there is a danger in paying attention to its evolution and impact in only one context. This makes the book so valuable. Louis Volante has drawn together descriptions from a wide range of countries, all involved in large-scale reform and using standards and assessments as part of their process. What becomes very obvious is that the language may be the same but the words reflect different contexts and can represent very different ideals, values, and processes.

The collection of papers in this book makes it very clear that large-scale reform is indeed a local issue. Countries, states, and provinces address the issues of improving schools and holding educators accountable in dramatically different ways. Also, the approach to large-scale reform changes over time, sometimes gradually and sometimes dramatically with new governments or changing economic circumstances.

Leaders cannot assume that there is only one way for reform to proceed. Instead, they need to understand their own context well and make decisions within that context to serve the students and their communities by improving learning conditions for students. At the same time, if leaders are going to be visionary and lead for a time that is different from the current conditions, they have the responsibility of understanding the broader global approaches to large-scale reform and learn from other places. This book provides readers (e.g., leaders at all levels, students of educational reform, policy makers) with a powerful tool for standing outside their own particular context and understanding the fundamental issues related to educational reform, not only to move the collective knowledge base forward but to learn from one another and use this knowledge to shape current leadership decisions and actions.

Reading this book has stimulated my thinking and raised a number of questions that I leave with you as you read it—questions that I found myself asking as I considered the leadership issues associated with standards-based reform. As you read each chapter you might want to consider:

- What is the prevailing orientation toward accountability in this country?
- What does the word "standards" mean in this country?
- How is assessment used for educational reform in this country?
- What influence have these assumptions and policy decisions had on the role of leaders at different levels (i.e., schools, districts, states/provinces, and national governments)?
- What are the implications from this comparative analysis for leaders at different levels in your country to consider?

I am sure you will find this book as interesting and challenging as I have—a gem that pushes your thinking and does not allow readers to remain neutral.

Lorna M. Earl, Ph.D.
Director, Aporia Consulting Ltd.
and President of the International Congress
of School Effectiveness and School Improvement (ICSEI)

# Acknowledgments

First, and foremost, I would like to thank each of the international contributors for the research and insights they provided. My hope is that their work will inform research, policy, and practice outside their particular educational contexts and ultimately improve school leadership.

I would also like to acknowledge the series editor, Dr. Ken Leithwood, who provided support and advice during the various stages of the writing process. I was fortunate to have guidance from such an esteemed scholar and noted expert in educational leadership.

Lastly, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, and now colleague, Dr. Lorna Earl for her willingness to engage in this work. Dr. Earl understands the critical issues affecting the international community and is an exceptional communicator—for both academic and school-based audiences. The latter is a rare quality and one that is essential if research is to inform practice.

# Contents

# About the Editor

**Dr. Louis Volante** is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. His research focuses on assessment policy and practice, evaluation of large-scale reform, comparative and international education, and educational program evaluation. He recently completed a longitudinal project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), which examined the influence of policy contexts on school leadership and teacher assessment. His research has appeared in *Policy Futures in Education, Journal of Educational Administration, Assessment in Education, Assessment Matters, Journal of Educational Thought, Action in Teacher Education, Canadian Journal of Education*, and the *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy* among other scholarly journals. Professor Volante is a past recipient (with Dr. Lorna Earl) of the R.W.B. Jackson Award for the most outstanding English language journal article from the Canadian Educational Researchers' Association. He recently served on the Ontario Education Research Panel to help develop research priorities for the provincial education system.

# About the Contributors

**Dr. Jeffrey S. Brooks** is Associate Professor at Iowa State University. His research focuses on high school leadership and reform, teacher leadership, ethics, and sociocultural dynamics of leadership practice and preparation. His work has been published in *Educational Administration Quarterly*, the *Journal of Educational Administration, Educational Policy,* the *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership,* the *International Electronic Journal of Leadership for Learning, Journal of Research on Leadership Education, Science Education, Journal of LGBT Youth,* and *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration* among other scholarly journals. He is author of the book, *The Dark Side of School Reform: Teaching in the Space between Reality and Utopia* and the forthcoming *Black School, White School: Racism and Educational Misleadership.* Dr. Brooks is Editor of the *Journal of School Leadership* and Series Editor of the Information Age Publishing's *Educational Leadership for Social Justice* book series.

**Dr. Esther Care** entered the academy after a successful path working in secondary education, mental health, and human resources over a 15 year period. Her lecturing career has been focused on differential psychology, multivariate statistics, and assessment in education. Her research interests fall broadly within the area of educational psychology and assessment and have been sustained through the common theme of factors influencing educational development and achievement. Esther's applied approach to the use of quantitative methods both for research and in practice has enabled many postgraduate and doctoral students to see the relevance and effectiveness of using this approach to evaluate practice as well as academic literature. Together with Professor Patrick Griffin she has extended this approach in working with teachers to interpret assessment data for enhancing student learning and was a coinvestigator in the development of the leadership framework for school Principals in Victoria, Australia. The current work in helping teachers use data to make instructional decisions brings together skills developed from teaching in the secondary education sector, research in schools, large-scale testing in educational psychology practice, and specific expertise in testing and scale development. Esther publishes both in Australia and internationally, and has focused on the development and measurement of interests, on cross-cultural factors influencing educational outcomes such as literacy, and on assessment of those educational outcomes. Of specific

relevance to working with the teaching and academic communities, Esther's interest in the identification of the contribution of nonverbal abilities to higher order thinking and problem solving has interesting implications for the development of skills essential for successful navigation through the twenty-first century.

**Dr. Lorna Earl** is a Director of Aporia Consulting Ltd. and a retired Associate Professor from the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. She is currently the president of the International Congress of School Effectiveness and School Improvement and an adjunct Professor at the University of Auckland. She was the first Director of Assessment for the Ontario Education Quality and Accountability Office, and she has been a researcher and research director in school districts for over 20 years. Dr. Earl holds a doctorate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics as well as degrees in education and psychology. Throughout her career, Dr. Earl has concentrated her efforts on policy and program evaluations as a vehicle to enhance learning for pupils and for organizations. She has concentrated her efforts on issues related to evaluation of large-scale reform and assessment (large scale and classroom) in many venues around the world.

**Dr. Lester Flockton** is a graduate of Dunedin Teachers College and the University of Otago, New Zealand. He has extensive experience in New Zealand's school system as a teacher, principal, inspector of schools, Ministry of Education official, researcher, university teacher, educational thinker, and leader. He was one of the founding directors of the Educational Assessment Research Unit at the University of Otago, where he is a Senior Research Fellow. He was also one of the prime developers and codirectors of New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Project, which is widely recognized nationally and internationally. For a number of years he has led postgraduate programs on leadership for learning. Lester's field of expertise combines teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment, and the leadership, governance and management of schools.

**Dr. Patrick Griffin** holds the Chair of Education (Assessment) at the University of Melbourne and is Director of the Assessment Research Centre. He is the Associate Dean of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Professor Griffin was awarded the John Smythe medal for excellence of research in profiling literacy development. His approach to profile reporting was identified in the annual 1996 yearbook of the American Society for Curriculum Development in Washington as world's best practice. He is a project team leader for UNESCO in southern Africa and was awarded in 2005 a UNESCO Research Medal by the Assembly of Ministers of Education from Southern African nations. Professor Griffin is a World Bank consultant in Vietnam and China, leading national and international teams in studies of literacy and numeracy assessment. He developed a system of teacher assessment recently signed into law by the Vietnam Government and applied to more than 380,000 teachers. He has led the development of leadership frameworks for school principal and instructional development models for classroom teachers in Victoria. His work focuses on item response modeling applications in interpretive frameworks for criterion-referenced

assessment and its application of item response modeling to performance assessment. He is one of only five Australians admitted as a Fellow of the International Academy of Education.

**Dr. Jun Hirata** is an Associate Professor at the Department of Educational Science, the Faculty of Education of Hirosaki University in Aomori, Japan. He obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto in 2004. His research focuses on the involvement of students, parents, and community residents in school management, student involvement in educational administration, accountability in education, and neoliberal thought and education reform, through comparison between Canada and Japan. He is currently working on a 5-year project funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, which investigates about the student involvement in school management and educational administration in Canada and Japan. His works have been published in *Journal of the Japan Society for Educational System and Organization, Canadian and International Education,* the *Japanese Society, Studies on Education in Canada*, the *Annual Review of Canadian Studies*, and other books concerning education in Japan and Canada published in Japan. His doctoral dissertation titled "Do School Councils Empower Students? Two Japanese Case Studies" has been published in Japan after translated into Japanese since 2007, which gained the Award of the Japan Educational Administration Society in 2009. He also obtained the Research Promotion Award from the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies in 2002 and the Publication Award of the Prime Minister of Canada in 2003.

**Dr. Sonia Ben Jaafar** is an international education and evaluation consultant who is based in the Arabian Gulf. Her work in North America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East supports policy and programs for education system using applied research and evaluation. Dr. Ben Jaafar specializes in the conceptual and practical development of assessment, accountability, and educational reform through comparative work. Some of her recent work includes the Advanced Training Curriculum Standards Project for the Supreme Education Council in Qatar, a pan-African evaluation of the Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Model for the Forum of African Women Educationalists, and advising on monitoring and evaluation for the Aga Khan Development Network. Dr. Ben Jaafar holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and an M.A. in Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). She also has a B.Ed. specialized in science education and a B.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of British Columbia.

**Dr. Don Klinger** is an Associate Professor in Assessment and Evaluation at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Dr. Klinger's research interests include quantitative research methods, the examination of psychometric and policy issues of large-scale assessments, program evaluation, and measures of school effectiveness. Dr Klinger is particularly interested in the methods we use to evaluate students and the subsequent decisions, practices, and policies that arise from these evaluations. His research largely focuses on the uses and misuses of large-scale assessments and data sets to monitor and measure student achievement and program effectiveness.

These interests have allowed him to publish research in both national and international journals considering the uses of data for supporting educational decisions, specifically teacher practices and school policies. Dr. Klinger continues to explore the changing assessment culture surrounding large-scale testing and the impact of such testing programs. Much of the work published by Dr. Klinger uses Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) to explore those student and school-level factors associated with differing educational outcomes for students.

**Dr. Daniel Muijs** is Professor at the University of Southampton, England. Previously he was the Chair of Pedagogy and Teacher Development at the University of Manchester. He also worked as Chair of School Leadership and Management at the University of Newcastle and as a senior lecturer at Warwick Institute of Education. He is an acknowledged expert in the field of Educational Effectiveness and Leadership and is coeditor of the journal *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*. He has published widely in the areas of educational effectiveness, leadership, and research methods, and has conducted research for government agencies (DCSF, NCSL, QCA), Charitable Trusts (Gatsby) and Research Councils (ESRC). He is (coauthor) of the successful books *Effective Teaching: Evidence and Practice* (with David Reynolds) and *Doing Quantitative Research in Education.*

**Dr. Anthony H. Normore** holds a Ph.D from OISE/University of Toronto. He is currently professor and Department Chair of Educational Leadership in the Graduate School of Education at California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, Southern California. Dr. Normore's research focuses on leadership development, preparation and socialization of urban school leaders in the context of ethics and social justice. His most recent books include *Discretionary behavior and performance in educational organizations: The missing link in educational leadership and management* (2012, Emerald Publishing Group, and co-edited with Ibrahim Duyar); *Education-based incarceration and recidivism: The ultimate social justice crime fighting tool* (2012, Information Age Publishers, co-edited with Brian D. Fitch); *Leadership in education, corrections, and law enforcement: A commitment to ethics, equity, and excellence* (2011, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, co-edited with Brian D. Fitch); *Educational leadership preparation: Innovation and interdisciplinary approaches to the Ed.D and graduate education* (2010, Palgrave MacMillan, and co-edited with Gaetane Jean-Marie). Dr. Normore is Series Editor of Advances in Educational Administration with Emerald Publishing. His research has appeared in Journal of School Leadership, Journal of Educational Administration, Values and Ethics in Educational Administration, Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, Canadian Journal of Education Administration and Policy, International Journal of Urban Educational Leadership, Educational Policy, and Journal of Research on Leadership Education.

**Dr. Hana Saab** holds a doctorate in Education from Queen's University, Canada. She is currently a senior statistics and research analyst for the Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education, Canada and has also worked as a research and evaluation analyst for the Education, Research and Evaluation Strategy Branch

for the same Ministry. She has extensive research and evaluation experiences in Canada and internationally and was a research associate at Queen's University, Faculty of Education, for 10 years with the Social Program Evaluation Group and the Assessment and Evaluation Unit.

**Dr. Christina Wikström Ph.D.** in Educational Measurement, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Educational Sciences at Umea University, Sweden. Christina has a background as secondary school teacher and has also worked with educational assessment as a test developer, project manager, and director of assessment. Her research focuses on validity theory, criterion-referenced assessment, accountability systems, and selection in education. Christina is currently the General Secretary of the Association for Educational Assessment—Europe, member of the international advisory board of AQA, UK, and of the editorial advisory board of the Journal *Assessment in Education—Principles, Policy and Practice.*

**Dr. Huen Yu** is an Associate Professor of the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership at The Hong Kong Institute of Education. He was a principal for 16 years. He obtained his Ph.D. at the Ontario Institute for the Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. His research focuses on principal leadership, educational change, school management, middle leaders, and learning schools. His work was published in local and international journals. He edited two books: one on "shared vision", and the other on "middle managers' leadership" in Hong Kong. He has been actively involved in the principal and middle leader professional development projects in Hong Kong and overseas. He was an adviser of the Working Group on the Professional Development of Principals, a member of the Steering Committee on Principals' Professional Development, and a member of the Advisory Group on School Development and Accountability of Education Bureau in Hong Kong.

**Dr. Wai Ming Yu** is an Assistant Professor and Associate Head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. She received her Ed.D. from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto in 2005, following the completion of B.Ed. from the University of Liverpool, and MA from the University of London. Her teaching and research interests lie in curriculum, assessment, narrative inquiry, and teacher education. She publishes in the areas of curriculum, assessment, narrative inquiry, and teachers' professional development. She has been involved in a range of research projects funded by, e.g., Quality Education Fund and Internal Research Grant, on assessment, curriculum reforms, and teacher education.

# Part I
# Introduction

# Chapter 1
# Educational Reform, Standards, and School Leadership

**Louis Volante**

Education reform is not a new phenomenon. Every society, from the early classical period to the current modern era, has debated the importance of different types of contents and experiences that lead to an educated and well-adjusted child. It is impossible to do justice to this wide range of human history within this book. This introductory chapter merely attempts to capture some of the most salient changes that have influenced educational reform since the introduction of compulsory schooling, particularly as they relate to the genesis of educational standards and its corresponding influence on school leadership.

Although scholars may disagree, the general consensus is that the Aztecs (1400–1600 AD) had one of the first compulsory education systems for all children regardless of gender or class. Girls were primarily taught how to cook and care for a family, but they were also taught crafts and how to economically manage a family. Boys learned trades, fighting and leadership skills, and were generally the recipients of a wider education up to the age of 16 years. Not surprisingly, there was differentiation within the Aztec system where the children of nobles were educated as priests, doctors, teachers, and leaders of society. Other children were taught about Aztec culture/religion and learned trades and skills. Interestingly, there was some freedom to choose one's education based on a child's promise in a particular field; however, much debate still surrounds the degree of "choice" in this system.

Across the Atlantic, the reformation in Scotland led to the first national system of education for all children—not just the children of noblemen—by the early sixteenth century. Prior to this period, Scotland, like other parts of medieval Europe, followed the Roman Catholic Church and its organization of schooling. In addition to a focus on church teachings, core curriculum also included grammar, astronomy, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, philosophy, and Latin—but only for boys that had the aptitude to follow a demanding course of study. Some of these students would continue their education in a university. The University of Bologna is widely recognized as the first European university founded in 1088 AD.

L. Volante (✉)
Faculty of Education, Brock University, King Street East 1842, Hamilton, ON L8K 1V7, Canada
e-mail: louis.volante@brocku.ca

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_1, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

Similar reforms followed across much of Western Europe over the next two centuries. The Prussian model was particularly influential after the French Revolution. This system required all children between the ages of 5 and 13 years to attend schools. Children were taught a national curriculum consisting of reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as ethics, discipline, and obedience. Interestingly, the Prussian system also included specific training and certification for teachers and testing for all students that was used primarily to determine suitability for job training. Thus, the first widely recognized testing framework tied to standards can be traced to the early modern era in Western Europe. Although an analysis of this model is multifaceted, one measure of success for this system is that it boasted an average literacy level of approximately 85% by the later part of the eighteenth century (Becker et al. 2010).

The Prussian model was quickly adopted across much of Europe and was emulated in other countries such as the United States and Japan. Eventually, the adoption of standards tied to policy expectations and the monitoring of student assessment results would become known as standards-based reform. This loose coupling of standards, policy, and assessment monitoring often emerged in response to dynamic cultural, economic, and political forces, an issue that is discussed in greater detail in Part 2 of this book.

## Modern Assessment Systems

The development and implementation of accountability systems has, arguably, been the most powerful trend in educational policy in the last 20 years (Barber 2004). The setting of academic standards for what student should know and be able to do can be traced to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's British government during the 1980s. A national curriculum was adopted in 1988 that outlined core competencies that students should master in areas such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Through Standard Achievement Tests (SATs), students' and schools' achievement results could be compared. Naturally, teachers and school administrators would also be judged for the performance of their students. The underlying message conveyed to parents was that they should be relatively satisfied with schools that improve their test performance from year to year and begin to question the quality of instruction to those that have poor performance. Collectively, the institution of curriculum requirements and standardized tests are policies often associated with *both* neoconservative and neoliberal ideologies that adopt market logic to the realm of social institutions such as schools (Hursh 2005). This type of educational reform model and corresponding zeitgeist spread very quickly to other parts of the world including the rest of the United Kingdom, Europe, North America, Australasia, as well as parts of Asia.

I offer a brief survey of some of the more salient developments in assessment systems across various industrialized nations. In Part 2 of this book, descriptions of national education and accountability frameworks are discussed in greater detail by various international scholars, particularly with the aim of highlighting the impact of particular policy contexts on the development of standards and school

leadership practices. The following summaries are meant to provide the reader with a general understanding of how standards are assessed in parts of Europe, North America, Australasia, and Asia. In some cases, standards are assessed in relation to national/regional external tests while in others schools rely on internal assessment methods to reach judgments of educational quality. The reader should take note of the diversity in assessment systems since different models place unique demands and expectations on school leaders, an issue that is discussed in greater detail by the various international contributors to this book.

## *United Kingdom*

In England, the trend has historically been toward total accountability in the education system since the late 1980s (Harlen 2007; Whetton et al. 2000). England measured progress against national standards when students reach the ages of 11, 14, and 16 years. League tables that summarize the performance of schools are published by local and national newspapers, attracting a considerable amount of political and public attention.

This testing and accountability framework has undergone significant revisions in recent years. For example, England's national tests for 14-year-old students were dissolved and replaced by a system of assessment by teachers. This decision was announced by the Children's Secretary Edward Balls in the English parliament in October, 2008. The Children's Secretary was quick to point out that this decision is not a "U-turn" and will not affect the tests taken by 11-year-olds which will continue to be used for the accountability system.

Other parts of the United Kingdom have also seen significant changes to their assessment and accountability frameworks. For example, Scotland in 2003, later followed by Wales in 2007, abolished national testing for 5–14-year-olds and replaced them with teacher assessments. At that time, the Scottish Education Minister, Peter Peacock said, the change was precipitated by the desire to create a "seamless" curriculum with an emphasis on teaching rather than testing. Collectively, these changes suggest a fundamental shift in the assessment of policy and practice that are taking root in the United Kingdom. The implications of these changes for school leaders is profound and an ongoing area for research and focused study.

## *Europe*

This brief section describes some of the diversity in assessment systems across continental Europe. This is no small task given the large number of countries that occupy this continent. Fortunately, an important European organization named Eurydice provides information on and analyses European education systems and policies. Currently there are 31 countries that fall within the Eurydice Network. It is worth

noting that the previously discussed United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland) is also a member of this network. Overall, testing has become a common practice across Europe since the early 1990s. Assessment methods may be internal or external, formative or summative, and assigned various levels of importance (Eurydice 2009). Of course, this book is primarily concerned with assessment methods that are typically used to assess progress against preset standards. Countries such as Sweden, France, Ireland, Hungary, and the previously discussed United Kingdom have a long history of national testing to monitor and evaluate the quality of public education, particularly in relation to standards. In the present context, Eurydice reports that most European countries have introduced and implemented national testing in relation to education standards. In some cases, the legal basis for the inclusion of standards and standardized tests has been established through legislative acts. While the previous discussion suggests that national testing continues unabated in Europe, it is also important to note that some countries have taken steps to limit and/or abolish external summative assessments. For example, in four countries—Belgium (Dutch-speaking community), Czech Republic, Greece, and Liechtenstein—schools carry out assessments internally and rely on formative and summative measures on a continuous basis. Nevertheless, the Eurydice Network is quick to point out that despite the variations in approaches to pupil assessment the process of assessing learning outcomes is an instrumental factor in improving the quality of education in *all* European nations.

## *North America*

Testing in North America has also undergone significant changes. In the United States, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires every state to develop standards, standardized tests, and accountability systems. In addition, by mandating the option for students to transfer from schools with low test performance to those with higher performance NCLB promotes competition between schools. Not surprising, the expansion of the testing industry has continued unabated in the United States. The latter is unlikely to change, particularly since the current federal government has signaled its desire to reauthorize and strengthen NCLB. Perhaps more than any other policy direction in the Western world, NCLB has continued to provoke controversy and has resulted in countless legislative debates and criticisms from parents, teachers, and academics. Overall, proponents and critics of NCLB have debated the appropriateness of high-stakes testing in the American education system, tests that are used for important decisions such as promotion to the next grade, graduation, merit pay for teachers, and/or school rankings reported in the popular media.

External testing has also spurred considerable debate in Canada. In Ontario, Canada's largest province, testing is conducted under the direction of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Results are disseminated in a manner that invites comparisons across schools and districts. Parents are able to check their

school's performance relative to other schools, districts and the provincial average. Similar standardized testing programs operate throughout Canada's ten provinces each garnering media attention. At the national level, external agencies such as the Fraser Institute publish report cards that rank individual schools according to their performance on provincially administered tests. Despite the publication of test results, it is important to note that the Canadian landscape is markedly different than their southern American neighbors, for the most part, external test results are used to facilitate school improvement and do not carry high-stakes consequences for teachers or students in Canada.

## *Australasia*

Australasia comprises Australia, New Zealand, the island of New Guinea, as well as neighboring islands in the Pacific Ocean. This section summarizes standards-based reform in the two largest nations—Australia and New Zealand. Australia has six states and two major mainland territories, each developing and administering their own achievement tests to monitor educational progress. Although there was a fair degree of diversity in assessment approaches, national tests were recently introduced so that each state and territory could be judged against common criteria. As with assessment results in North America and parts of Europe, these national test results are published in a way that invites comparisons between schools.

New Zealand is divided into two main islands (North and South). As in Australia, New Zealand also has a national curriculum that sets a direction for what students should know and be able to do in reading, writing, and arithmetic at different points of compulsory schooling. Interestingly, New Zealand relies on Overall Teacher Judgments to determine the degree of progress toward national standards. Observations and examples of students' classroom work are very important in forming Overall Teacher Judgments. Popular assessment tools in reading, writing, and mathematics are also recommended to teachers to improve the reliability of their Overall Teacher Judgments. The Ministry of Education also makes it abundantly clear that no one assessment tool is sufficient to make a definitive judgment against a standard. Thus, the New Zealand model advances the use of a range of student assessment methods for accountability purposes.

## *Asia*

Asia comprises a diverse range of assessment and accountability frameworks. In Japan, standards-based reforms and a national curriculum have a well-established tradition. Assessments have particularly important consequences as a student progresses through the system. For example, high-stakes examinations determine student suitability for particular high schools and later for higher education institutions.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the only national examinations in the Japanese public system are those used for college entrance admissions.

In Hong Kong, educational standards are implemented through both self-evaluations and external reviews. Self-evaluations are based on key performance measures in the following areas: management and organization, learning and teaching, student support and school ethos, and student performance. The latter element, student performance, includes external measures such as the Hong Kong Attainment Test and the Tertiary-wide System Assessment (TSA). Collectively, external assessments, such as the TSA, provide the government and school management with information on school standards. TSA results are meant to inform teaching and learning and ultimately facilitate school improvement planning.

## Standards-Based Reform: Key Rationales

There are a variety of interrelated rationales underpinning the adoption of standards-based reforms around the world. Rather than discuss the merits and limitations of each of these arguments, I focus on three of the most commonly noted rationales that are often used to support the increased use of standards to drive school improvement. Liberal forms of education have resulted in poor competency in the following key areas: schools need to focus on getting back-to-basics by elevating the importance of core curriculum areas; holding schools accountable for poor student achievement results through the use of standards is one of the few policy levers available to governments to improve the quality of teaching and learning in contemporary schools; and performance data, particularly external standardized tests, provide the most reliable and valid forms of data for guiding school improvement efforts (Volante 2007).

### *Back to Basics Rationale*

One of the oldest rationales used to support standards-based reform is that a focus on key curriculum areas such as language arts and mathematics is the cornerstone of a quality education. Many proponents of standards-based reform argue that liberal arts approaches to education have undermined core curriculum competencies and resulted in too many children that lack basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Although noncore subject areas such as music, physical education, visual arts, are all important, they are not as critical for future success in the world of work. In addition, these noncore curriculum areas are too costly and difficult to assess since they often require approaches that do not rely on paper-and-pencil measures. The end result is that the mission of schools and education in general is to produce specific outcomes in core areas of the curriculum. Indeed, the popular term Outcomes-Based Education, in the 1980s and early 1990s, was often used to describe policies consistent with standards-based reform.

### *Policy Lever Rationale*

Perhaps the most central rationale currently driving standards-based reform is that holding schools accountable for external test results is one of the few policy levers available to governments to improve teaching and learning within schools. Regional and/or national achievement targets provide benchmarks to gauge educational progress and provide the necessary stimulus to spur school improvement and gauge the overall quality. Not surprisingly, school leaders are often expected to use performance data to guide (or drive) their school improvement planning.

### *Reliability and Validity Rationale*

The advent and widespread use of external testing measures for accountability purposes is partly a response to the perception that classroom assessment data are not sufficiently reliable and valid for guiding school improvement efforts. Part of this assertion is currently unassailable—classroom-based evaluative judgments can vary significantly between teachers—and therefore the reliability of these assessment measures will be lower than standardized tests. Nevertheless, the second part of this assumption related to validity—defined as the accuracy of assessment-based interpretations—is still widely debated. Opinions on whether external testing is the most valid mechanism for gauging student learning vary significantly. This debate is understandable when one considers the limitations of standardized paper-and-pencil measures and the richness of many classroom performance tasks (i.e., presentations, projects, experiments).

Collectively, many governments and senior policy makers in both the Western and Eastern world have adopted standards and external testing programs as the primary lever to spur improvements in the overall quality of their education systems. The widespread endorsement of this philosophical orientation is akin to an educational zeitgeist—the characteristic thought, preoccupation or spirit of a particular period of time (Volante 1). Nevertheless, this zeitgeist is changing as the ensuing discussion will show. Different governments around the world are revising the nature of their assessment and accountability systems and thereby refining the defining characteristics of their standards-based approach. The main objective of this book is to examine the responses of and implications for school leaders working within these various policy contexts.

## A Preliminary Critique

Evaluating the impact of standards-based reform is no small task given the countless studies conducted over the last 20 years. For the most part, the available research is predominately focused on the American and British contexts, since both these

educational jurisdictions have a long history of standard setting within their borders. Collectively, the introduction of Key Stage assessments in the United Kingdom and NCLB in the United States has spurred endless debates on the utility of standards-based reforms. While researchers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have examined the influence of these policy contexts on teaching, learning, and school systems, the limited research from jurisdictions outside of England and the United States is one of the chief rationales for this edited book. Namely, this book attempts to close this gap by highlighting the recent policy reforms and empirical research in other countries.

The summary of available research is divided into two sections: intended consequences for students, teachers, and administrators versus unintended consequences for these primary stakeholders. It will become self-evident that the literature reporting positive consequences of standards-based reform is markedly less extensive than the literature that notes negative consequences. The reasons for this skewed view may be tied to the heightened political situation surrounding the consequences for poor student performance and the preponderance of research originating from select educational jurisdictions.

## *Intended Consequences*

The available research suggests that particular jurisdictions have experienced some success with standards-based reform. For example, in select American states, the achievement of students in particular grade levels and subject areas increased substantially following the introduction of standards and external testing (Roderick et al. 2002). In many European and Asian countries, motivation to study and attain higher goals increases for students (Phelps 2006). It is important to acknowledge that these pockets of success were primarily jurisdictions that accompanied their aggressive standards and external testing policy with significant investments in after-school programming and/or included assessment measures that contained more open-ended items designed to test a broader array of reading and writing skills. The latter suggests that the nature of the assessment measures used in high accountability contexts has an important impact on the teaching and learning environment.

There are also limited positive findings when exploring the impact of standards on teaching practices. For example, teachers have made positive changes in their instructional and assessment practices as a direct result of receiving external test scores, particularly those who received assistance from lead teachers and principals (Herman 1997). Teachers also tend to increase their participation in staff development in tested subject areas and are more likely to take advantage of staff development programs linked to important test measures in standards-based reform contexts (Earl and Torrance 2000; Heck et al. 2008). Lastly, research using anecdotal and secondary information suggests teachers place higher expectations on students with disabilities and these students receive improved instruction in policy contexts that emphasize standards (Ysseldyke et al. 2004). Despite these findings, the scope of the positive effects for students and teachers is significantly limited.

## *Unintended Consequences*

In contrast to the previous section, extensive research has documented a number of important negative consequences associated with standards-based reform, particularly those jurisdictions that rely on high-stakes external testing measures to evaluate student performance. The following are some of the more commonly cited negative consequences for students when the literature was explored:

- There is little evidence to support the proposition that high-stakes tests tied to curriculum standards, including high school graduation examinations, increase student achievement (Amrein and Berliner 2003; Nichols 2007).
- There is little evidence to suggest that the achievement gap has closed since the inception of standards-based reform. In fact, some research indicates that the gap is widening and that standards testing may be an impediment to graduation for ethnic minorities (Scoppio 2002; Valencia and Villarreal 2003).
- There is a trend toward grade retention for low achieving students before key testing years to ensure that these students are properly prepared and will pass these important tests (Kornhaber 2004); there is also evidence that retention is associated with lower achievement growth in these types of testing contexts (Roderick and Nagaoka 2005).
- Lastly, students report increased stress and anxiety in response to standards testing, particularly those children who have previously struggled with achievement tests (Kruger et al. 2007; Scott 2007).

Collectively, these findings challenge one of the chief arguments used to support standards—namely, that external testing will raise the achievement of all students and improve the overall quality of the education system.

There is also a body of research that has begun to document the negative impact of standards on teaching and school leaders. Some of the key findings include:

- Teachers tend to focus less on subjects that are not tested and markedly differentiate their curriculum and instruction related to students' academic ability (Darling-Hammond 2004; Sandholtz et al. 2004).
- There is a tendency to utilize "teaching to the test" techniques in preparation for important external tests, sometimes with the direct endorsement of school administrators (Collins et al. 2010; Volante et al. 2008).
- External tests, particularly those that rely heavily on multiple-choice questions formats, constrict curriculum, and discourage teachers from pursuing more engaging instruction (Certo et al. 2008; Wagner 2008).
- Numerous instances of cheating by teachers and administrators have been reported in response to the pressures of standards testing (Gipps 2003; Simner 2000).
- Standards have been shown to increase stress among teachers and administrators, particularly those working in low-achieving schools (Croft and Waltman 2005; Leithwood et al. 2000).
- Lastly, the ranking that typically accompanies standards testing tends to decrease teacher and administrator moral and drive highly qualified educators out

of schools, particularly those serving the most vulnerable student populations (Center on Education Policy 2006; Hamilton et al. 2007).

Collectively, the available literature suggests that standards-based reform presents both opportunities and significant challenges for teachers and school administrators, particularly in policy contexts that assess standards through external testing programs. Students, teachers, and school administrators experience increased stress and anxiety which raises psychosocial concerns around student engagement and job satisfaction. The next section discusses the unique expectations and demands placed on school leaders—an area that has received relatively little attention till date, even in those educational jurisdictions that have a long history of standards-based reform.

## Theories of School Leadership

The theoretical underpinnings of contemporary views of school leadership have been influenced by earlier twentieth century management theorists. Many of these early leadership theories and models attempted to isolate characteristics of successful leaders with the belief that once these qualities were identified they could be adopted by a broader group of public school administrators. Nevertheless, most twentieth century theorists concede that there is no ideal list of skills or traits that can completely define the role of school administrators, particularly given the complex range of situations that confront leaders. Rather, they identified certain approaches as more or less appropriate at addressing the challenges of the school leadership position.

Transformational leadership, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, and transactional leadership are four approaches that are particularly relevant to the current discussion. The appropriateness of each of these theoretical frameworks within a standards-based policy context is open to debate. Nevertheless, this book attempts to address this issue by examining the impact of standards-based reform on school leaders across a range of international jurisdictions. This broad analysis may shed light on some of the unique knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are required of school leaders in highly accountable jurisdictions. It will also be interesting to compare and contrast the various recommendations made by international scholars against the distinguishing characteristics of these frameworks. Nevertheless, a brief overview of each of these frameworks is warranted before discussing the more specific relationship between school leadership and student achievement.

### *Transactional Leadership*

Transactional leadership is one of the oldest managerial approaches applied to school systems. This type of leader focuses on a series of "transactions" that are grounded in the belief that rewards and punishments serve as the primary motivation for people. A transactional school leader controls subordinates (i.e., teachers, resource personnel,

teaching assistants, etc.), in part, through the exchange of rewards (i.e., salary, recognition, or intrinsic benefits) for effective service. Thus, teachers and other personnel are likely to be rewarded by transactional leaders in schools that achieve at a high level in standards-based reform contexts. Conversely, teachers in poor performing schools are likely to be punished by school leaders that adhere to this philosophy.

### *Instructional Leadership*

Instructional leadership has often been defined in a variety of ways in the contemporary literature. However, one of the main threads that tie these different perspectives together is the belief that it entails both direct and indirect leadership behaviors that affect teacher instruction and student learning (Gupton 2003). In the majority of cases, instructional leadership relates to those actions that a principal takes to promote growth in student learning; however, this model does not preclude those instances when a principal delegates this responsibility to other members of the school staff. Given the extensive body of research that has linked instructional leadership and student outcomes, it is not surprisingly that policy makers in standards-based reform contexts such as the United States, England, and New Zealand have taken note of this framework for the development of leadership standards (Robinson 2010).

### *Transformational Leadership*

Perhaps no theory has attracted more attention in contemporary discussions of leadership, reform, and school effectiveness/improvement than those ideas tied to the transformational leadership model. Leithwood (1992, p. 17) succinctly described the nature of transformational leadership 20 years ago as "an approach that empowers those who participate in it." Transformational leaders facilitate a redefinition of theirs staff's mission and vision, renew their teachers' commitment, and take steps to restructure their school to accomplish these goals. Leithwood's comprehensive research in this area suggested that transformational leaders are primarily concerned with pursuing three goals: helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; fostering teacher development; and helping teachers solve problems together more effectively. The effects of these practices on teacher practice and student learning is particularly important for leaders working in standards-based reform contexts, an area addressed later on in this chapter.

### *Distributed Leadership*

Distributed leadership is one of the more recent theories of school leadership that is often associated with many types of shared or collaborative leadership practices.

Not surprisingly, such a broad notion of this construct has often hampered the attempts to systematically study this framework. Despite this limitation, Spillane and Orlina (2005) have been particularly instrumental in clarifying what it means to take a distributed perspective on leadership for schools. In their analysis, they suggest that interactions are the key to understand distributed leadership practices. Leadership takes shape in the interactions of leaders, followers, and their unique situation. Of chief importance is that leadership practice cannot be understood by focusing exclusively on the actions of individual leaders such as the school principal, rather all members of a school staff have the potential to significantly influence their colleagues' practice.

### *Other Leadership Theories*

In addition to mainstream theories, other perspectives on educational leadership have emerged in recent years related to critical theory, feminism, and postmodernism. Critical theory, which is often marginalized as an approach to educational leadership, provides practitioners an opportunity to reflect on what they do, are told to do, and would like to do in relation to the bigger picture outside of their immediacy of action (Gunter 2001). Critical theory often intersects with feminist perspectives in that they both are concerned with power and the culture of institutions. Of course, feminist perspectives use gender as the starting point to discuss emancipatory praxis (Young and Skrla 2003). Postmodernism is difficult to define by the nature of the movement itself. However, one key aspect of the theory in relation to educational leadership is that it allows reflection on a variety of epistemologies. At the forefront of this perspective is the idea that there is no one right method to solve a problem in schools (Grogan 2004). Rather each school staff and student body is unique, requiring diverse approaches to address the challenges of a rapidly changing education system. Collectively, the various theories discussed in this chapter represent some of the most widely utilized perspectives for understanding the relationship between leadership, school improvement, and student learning.

## Leadership, School Improvement, and Student Learning

School leaders have a noticeable influence on school effectiveness and improvement. The size of the effects of school leaders generally vary by the type of study that is conducted: modest in the case of large-scale research but fairly large when reported in qualitative studies of struggling schools that need to be turned around (see Leithwood et al. 2010). Indeed, the largest study till date on the influence of school leadership practices suggested that it is second only to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning (Leithwood et al. 2004). The previous researchers also point out that the influence of school leadership is greatest in schools where

the learning needs of students are most acute. Thus, the potential of school leaders to fulfill one of the chief objectives behind standards-based reform—namely, closing the achievement gap—seems promising when compared against the available literature. The work of Leithwood and his colleagues also provided insight into how "high-quality" leaders achieve the desirable effect of improving student performance. They succinctly summarized three key "essentials" from their large-scale Wallace Foundation study that characterize high-quality leaders/leadership:

- By setting directions: charting a clear course that everyone understands, establishing high expectations and using data to track progress and performance.
- By developing people: providing teachers and others in the system with the necessary support and training to succeed.
- By making the organization work: ensuring that the entire range of conditions and incentives in districts and schools fully supports rather than inhibits teaching and learning (Leithwood et al. 2004, p. 1).

Although these "essentials" were not proposed as a comprehensive framework for judging school leadership practices, they nevertheless provide a useful lens to reexamine school leadership across a range of international contexts.

## Substance and Organization of this Book

The remaining chapters in this book examine how standards-based reforms in various countries have placed new expectations and demands on school leaders. Faced with accountability requirements that are tied to student assessment results, school administrators, and other teacher leaders are being asked to demonstrate the effectiveness of their schools' pedagogical approaches. As previously noted, much of the debate surrounding standards-based reform has focused on the English and American contexts, this book broadens the scope of this analysis by examining other prominent standards-based reform models in parts of the Western and Eastern hemisphere.

Part 2 of this book discusses the challenges school leaders face within this heightened culture of student performance in England, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Japan, Hong Kong, and Qatar. Authors from these countries discuss their national education, assessment, and accountability systems; the impact of standards-based reforms on school leadership; and provide critical insights for the development of school leaders. These countries were selected to highlight some of the notable reforms that are taking place within parts of Europe, North America, Australasia, and Asia. Collectively, they provide a broad spectrum of challenges school leaders are likely to face across a range of policy contexts.

Part 3, Conclusion, focuses on trends in research, policy, and practice that are gleaned from the international perspectives represented. Suggestions for moving forward with sustainable reform are offered, particularly in relation to confronting the opportunities and challenges presented by various models of standards-based reform. The final chapter also discusses gaps in the research literature and the implications of focused inquiry for leadership development.

## References


Amrein, A. L., & Berliner, D. C. (2003). The effects of high-stakes testing on student motivation and learning. *Educational Leadership, 60*(5), 32–38.

Barber, M. (2004). The virtue of accountability: System redesign, inspection, and incentives in the era of informed professionalism. *Journal of Education, 185*(1), 7–38.

Becker, S. O., Hornung, E., & Woessmann, L. (2010). *Being the educational world leader helped Prussia catch up in the Industrial Revolution*. Retrieved from http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/5006. Accessed 28 Feb 2012.

Center on Education Policy. (2006, March). *From the capital to the classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act*. Retrieved from http://www.cep-dc.org/. Accessed 28 Feb 2012.

Certo, J. L., Cauley, K. M., Moxley, K. D., & Chafin, C. (2008). An argument for authenticity: Adolescents' perspectives on standards-based reform. *High School Journal, 91*(4), 26–39.

Collins, S., Reiss, M., & Stobart, G. (2010). What happens when high-stakes testing stops? Teachers' perceptions of the impact of compulsory national testing in science of 11-year-olds in England and its abolition in Wales. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy, & Practice, 17*(3), 273–286.

Croft, M., & Waltman, K. (2005, April). *The impact of school-level accountability on local test preparation practices*. Paper presented at the National Council on Measurement in Education, Montreal, Quebec.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Standards, accountability, and school reform. *Teachers College Record, 106*(6), 1047–1085.

Earl, L., & Torrance, N. (2000). Embedding accountability and improvement into large-scale assessment: What difference does it make? *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(4), 114–141.

Eurydice. (2009). *National testing of pupils in Europe: Objectives, organisation and use of results*. Brussels: Education, Audiovisual & Cultural Executive Agency. Retrieved from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/109EN.pdf. Accessed 28 Feb 2012.

Gipps, C. V. (2003, April). *Educational accountability in England: The role of assessment*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Grogan, M. (2004). Keeping an critical, postmodern eye on educational leadership in the United States: In appreciation of Bill Foster. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(2), 222–239.

Gunter, H. (2001). Critical approaches to leadership in education. *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 2*(2), 94–108.

Gupton, S. L. (2003). *The instructional leadership toolbox: A handbook for improving practice.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

Hamilton, L. S., Stetcher, B. M., Marsh, J. A., McCombs, J. S., Robyn, A., Russell, J., Nafftel, S., & Barney, H. (2007). *Standards-based accountability under no child left behind: Experiences of teachers and administrators in three states.* Santa Monica: Rand Corporation.

Harlen, W. (2007). *Assessment of learning*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Heck, D., Banilower, E. R., Weiss, I. R., & Rosenberg, S. L. (2008). Studying the effects of professional development: The case of the NSF's local systematic change through teacher enhancement initiative. *Journal of Research in Mathematics Education, 39*(2), 113–152.

Herman, J. L. (1997). *Large-scale assessment in support of school reform: Lessons in the search for alternative measures.* Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Evaluation.

Hursh, D. (2005). Neo-liberalism, markets, and accountability: Transforming education and undermining education in the United States and England. *Policy Futures in Education, 3*(1), 3–15.

Kornhaber, M. L. (2004). Appropriate and inappropriate forms of testing, assessment, and accountability. *Educational Policy, 18*(1), 45–70.

Kruger, L., Wandle, C., & Stuzziero, J. (2007). Coping with the stress of high stakes testing. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 23*(2), 109–128.

Leithwood, K. (1992). Transformational leadership: Where does it stand? *Education Digest, 58*(3), 17–20.

Leithwood, K., Steinback, R., & Jantzi, D. (2000, April). *Identifying and explaining the consequences for schools of external accountability initiatives or "What in the world did you think I was doing before you came along?"* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation.

Leithwood, K., Patten, S., & Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences student learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(5), 671–706.

Nichols, S. L. (2007). High-stakes testing: Does it increase achievement? *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 23*(2), 47–64.

Phelps, R. P. (2006). Characteristics of an effective student testing system. *Educational Horizons, 85*(1), 19–29.

Robinson, V. M. J. (2010). From instructional leadership to leadership capabilities: Empirical findings and methodological challenges. *Leadership & Policy in Schools, 9*(1), 1–26.

Roderick, M., & Nagaoka, J. (2005). Retention under Chicago's high-stakes testing program: Helpful, harmful, or harmless? *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis, 27*(4), 309–340.

Roderick, M., Jacob, B. A., & Bryk, A. S. (2002). The impact of high-stakes testing in Chicago on student achievement in promotional gate grades. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24*(4), 333–357.

Sandholtz, J. H., Ogawa, R. T., & Scribner, S. P. (2004). Standards gap: Unintended consequences of local standards-based reform. *Teachers College Record, 106*(6), 1177–1202.

Scoppio, G. (2002). Common trends of standardization, accountability, devolution and choice in the educational policies on England, U.K., California, U.S.A., and Ontario, Canada. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 2*(2), 130–141.

Scott, C. (2007). Stakeholder perceptions of test impact. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy, & Practice, 14*(1), 27–49.

Simner, M. L. (2000). *A joint position statement by the Canadian Psychological Association and the Canadian Association of School Psychologist on the Canadian press coverage of the province-wide achievement test results.* Retrieved from http://www.cpa.ca/documents/joint_position.html. Accessed 28 Feb 2012.

Spillane, J. P., & Orlina, E. C. (2005). Investigating leadership practice: Exploring the entailments of taking a distributed perspective. *Leadership & Policy in Schools, 4*(3), 157–176.

Valencia, R. R., & Villarreal, B. J. (2003). Improving students' reading performance via standards-based reform: A critique. *The Reading Teacher, 56*(7), 612–621.

Volante, L. (2007). Standards-based reform: Can we do better? *Education Canada, 47*(1), 54–56.

Volante, L. (2008, August). Testing achievement. *Education Today, 8,* 22–23.

Volante, L., Cherubini, L., & Drake, S. (2008). Examining factors that influence school administrators' responses to large-scale assessment. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 84.* Retrieved from http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/volante_etal.html. Accessed 28 Feb 2012.

Wagner, T. (2008). *The global achievement gap*. New York: Basic Books.

Whetton, C., Twist, E., & Sainsbury, M. (2000, April). *National tests and target setting: Maintaining consistent standards.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Young, M. D., & Skrla, L. (2003). *Reconsidering feminist research in educational leadership.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Ysseldyke, J., Dennison, A., & Nelson, R. (2004). *Large-scale assessment and accountability systems: Positive consequences for students with disabilities.* Minneapolis: National Center on Educational Outcomes.

# Part II
# International Perspectives

# Chapter 2
# Responsibility in a High-Accountability System: Leading Schools in England

**Daniel Muijs**

## Introduction

In this chapter, we will look at the challenges of leadership in a context characterised by high levels of school autonomy coupled with high levels of accountability and a great frequency of change. This context characterises schools in England, leading to a high-pressure environment, but also a high level of innovation in leadership practices. Some of these will be discussed here. First, we will outline the policy context for English school leaders before going on to implications for their role and some recent responses to the challenges of leading in this context.

## The English Education System: A Hotbed of Reform

Often known as an educational laboratory, the English education system has long been subject to the reforming zeal of respective governments, with education policy being a more prominent political issue than in many other European countries. Standards have been at the forefront of successive reforms, with school improvement a key aim of reforms by both Conservative and Labour governments. The amount of change and the number of initiatives that have affected the role of headteachers in this rapidly moving system over the past 20 years is too extensive to catalogue here, so in this section, I will review the main developments in terms of consequences for schools and teachers.

A key development and the starting point of the current era of standards-based accountability in England was the Education Reform Act of 1988. This act, introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, instigated the move towards simultaneously encouraging school autonomy and instigating stronger central control over standards. Thus, the act both introduced school-based management and

D. Muijs (✉)
University of Southampton, Southampton, UK
e-mail: D.Muijs@soton.ac.uk

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_2, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

significantly reduced the power of local authorities over schools, and, for the first time, a national curriculum intended to ensure an equal entitlement of all pupils to a broad academic schooling. This policy direction, weakening local authority control and encouraging school autonomy on the one hand and putting in place increasingly strong central accountability measures on the other, has broadly characterised English education policy for the past two decades.

School-based management was introduced essentially to encourage competition and management techniques from the private sector. This part of the Act allowed all schools to be taken out of the direct financial control of Local Authorities. Financial control would be handed to the headteacher and governors of a school. The devolution of responsibility to school was seen as a way of allowing management to occur at a level closest to its immediate effects and move away from a more socialised model of central control by local governments. This move, therefore, fit firmly in the Conservative Party's policy of moving from a Social-Democratic towards a Liberal economy based on market principles. Local Authorities, particularly those run by the Labour Party in the big cities, were seen as inimical to this shift.

A variety of reasons underpinned the introduction of a national curriculum model. Some felt that the removal of an examination at 11-plus, combined with the relative freedom of the comprehensive school to develop its own curriculum pattern, had resulted in too much unstructured or 'child-centred' teaching (West and Muijs 2009). There was growing frustration with the imbalance in curricular models, both within schools, where between the ages of 14 and 16 years, some pupils spent as much as a third of their time studying science subjects, while others avoided science altogether, and between schools, where models sometimes seemed to reflect the teaching interests and strengths of the staff as much as they did the interests and needs of the pupils (West and Muijs 2009). Also, there was a growing determination within government to increase accountability at school level for student performance. This is difficult to do unless performance can be 'measured' and compared in some way. An attraction of the national curriculum is that it brings with it the possibility of national testing and hence provides a basis for the comparison of individual school performance levels.

National assessments are held at the end of year 2 (second year of primary school), at the end of year 6 (final year of primary school), at the end of year 9 (third year of secondary school) and at the end of year 11 (fifth year of secondary school), which is when compulsory schooling ends. The English schooling system divides the school career into four so-called 'Key Stages' and the assessments mark the end of each Key Stage. During Key Stages 1–3, progress in most National Curriculum subjects is assessed against eight levels. It is therefore a criterion-referenced assessment system.

At Key Stage 1, the level is determined by teacher assessment, taking into account the child's performance in several tasks and tests. At Key Stage 2, the level will reflect the teacher's assessment and a national test taken by all year 6 pupils. At Key Stage 3, the level is based on the teacher's assessment. Each child therefore takes a national test at the end of Key Stage 2. The tests are intended to show if your child is working at, above or below the target level for their age. Subjects covered for the Key Stage 1 assessments are: reading, writing, speaking and listening, math

and science. The teacher assessment is moderated by the local authority to make sure that teachers make consistent assessments of children's work. Most children are expected to reach level 2 by the age of 7 years. Key Stage 2 tests for 11-year-olds cover English—reading, writing (including handwriting) and spelling, maths—including mental arithmetic and science. These tests are taken on-set days in mid-May and last less than 5.5 hours altogether. By the age of 11 years, most children are expected to achieve level 4. The Key Stage 3 teacher assessment for 14-year-olds covers English, maths, science, history, geography, modern foreign languages, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, music, physical education, citizenship, religious education. By the age of 14 years, most children are expected to achieve level 5.

A key element of the national assessment system is the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). GCSEs are the main qualifications taken by 14–16-year-olds, but are available to anyone who would like to study a subject that interests them. Pupils can take GCSEs in a wide range of academic and 'applied' (work-related) subjects. GCSEs are available in more than 40 academic and 9 'applied' subjects. The applied subjects are related to a broad area of work, such as engineering or tourism, and many are double the size of traditional GCSEs.

GCSEs are assessed mainly on written exams, although in some subjects there are also elements of coursework. Some subjects, like art and design, have more coursework and fewer exams. Some GCSE courses are made up of units; for these, one can take exams at the end of each unit. Other GCSEs involve exams at the end of course. GCSE's are a formal qualification which depending on subjects taken and results achieved can lead to further study, work or apprenticeships.

GCSEs are graded A* to G and U (unclassified): higher tier exams leads to grades A* to D and foundation tier exams leads to grades C to G. A 'good' qualification, leading to further education with the possibility of university study, consists of getting at least five GCSE's graded at least C. This five A* to C level is also the main accountability measure for secondary schools.

The percentages achieving the different levels on the Key Stage 2 (end of primary) tests and five A* to C grades at GCSE are published at the school level and open to inspection by the public. Media organizations publish so-called 'league tables' of school performance based on these test results. This publically available assessment data is intended to aid parents in making school choices and forms an important part of the national accountability system, as there is clearly pressure on schools to perform well in the 'league tables'. This pressure led, towards the late-1990s, to schools, especially those serving disadvantaged areas, enrolling ever more students in vocational subjects, seen as easier, to enhance their league table position. As a result of this, the Labour government under Gordon Brown mandated that for school accountability purposes the five A* to C grades had to include English and math and the current government has instigated the so-called English Baccalaureate which includes English, math, a science, a humanities subject and a foreign language.

The 1992 Education Act, under John Major's Conservative government, strengthened accountability through changes to the inspection system in schools. The 1992 Education (Schools) Act which provided the legal framework for the launch of the

Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED). This policy set out to inspect and report on the performance of every school in the country and to drive up standards; the underpinning rationale was that if schools had to attract students standards would automatically rise in the face of local competition.

OfSTED's early years were not without controversy. Some commentators claimed the Conservative government had legitimately pitted public interests against the self-interest of the educational establishment in an attempt to demystify the closed world of schools and classrooms. Others from within the educational establishment claimed the process was demoralising and de-professionalising (Muijs and Chapman 2009). A number of studies challenged the value of the OfSTED system of inspection, Fitz-Gibbon and Stephenson-Foster (1996) for example, challenged the sampling, reliability and validity of the process. Other researchers have focused on OfSTED's contribution to school improvement (Earley et al. 1996) and OfSTED has developed its own research and publications arm to support the claim of '*improvement through inspection*' (Chapman and Muijs 2010). The original framework was modified several times before being relaunched by the Conservative government in the summer of 1996. The new framework moved OfSTED further in to the terrain of school improvement by promoting "school improvement by identifying priorities for action" (OfSTED 1995, p. 2) as well as assessing the schools capacity to manage the change process and review its systems for institutional development (Early et al. 1996, p. 3). However, in many cases the key elements of trust and mutual respect between the inspecting and the inspected remained limited and limited OfSTEDs contribution to school improvement and therefore the improvements made because of inspection continued to be challenged (Cullingford 1999). There was an expectation within the profession that much would change, and quickly, and much did, schools reaping the benefit of increased funding and being asked to work in different ways by collaborating with each other on new initiatives such as Education Action Zones. However, less change occurred to the inspection system.

When the Labour Party under Tony Blair took office in 1997, they built on the policies of the Conservative governments that had preceded them, claiming that their inheritance included some positive aspects such as the introduction of regular independent inspection of all schools and the publication of school performance tables (Chapman and Muijs 2010). The government therefore intended to build on rather than replace some of the previous administration's attempts to improve the system. Barber (2001) one of the New Labour architects of change argued that to move from the relatively underperforming system of the mid-1990s to a world-class system for the twenty-first century the context for change required attention because the previous administration had attempted to change the system by identifying problems and increasing the level of challenge, neglecting to increase levels of support needed to counter conflict and demoralisation within the system. New Labour's belief was that excellent education systems are underpinned by high levels of challenge and support which would lead to, in their terms 'a framework for continuous improvement' (Barber 2001). This framework remained sharp with a focus on raising standards, accountability, data and targets but added supporting elements including devolved responsibility and an intention to provide high-quality professional development.

A major development in the later years of the New Labour government was the renewed focus on diversity and choice, through the introduction of Academies. An academy is a school that is directly funded by central government (the Department for Education) and is independent of local government control. An academy may receive additional support from personal or corporate sponsors, either financially or in kind. They must meet the National Curriculum core subject requirements and are subject to inspection by OfSTED. Academies are self-governing and most are constituted as registered charities or operated by other educational charities. Most are secondary schools but some cater for children from nursery age upwards. They were first announced in a speech by David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in 2000. A number of private organizations run groups of academies.

The most recent White Paper, the first from the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government elected in 2010, is again moving towards increased school autonomy, with the Academies programme being significantly expanded, and parents being allowed to start their own so-called 'Free Schools', which have greater freedom to deviate from the National Curriculum as well as greater freedom to select and appoint staff. Free schools still need to be approved by the Department of Education before being set up and will be state-funded. It is also proposed that teacher training become (even more) school-based with training schools to be set up and that all government funding will go directly to schools, further weakening the (already limited) role of local authorities in the system.

At the same time, the accountability system is being tightened up through the creation of a 'British Baccalaureat'. This means that school performance will be judged using a new measure, the percentage of pupils receiving five grade A+ to C at GCSE (national exams at the age of 16 years) in English, maths, a science subject, a humanities subject and a modern foreign language. The curriculum is also currently being revised and is likely to move back towards a more subject-based system.

## The Role of School Leaders in England

The role of the headteacher has always been important in English education. Reforming headmasters of public schools (this, confusingly, means private non-state-funded in England), like Rugby School head Matthew Arnold, were well known and influential in the nineteenth century education system and ran their schools as hierarchically structured organisations. This hierarchical structure was taken over in state schools and has persisted across the waves of reform of the state education system. In many ways, the centrality of the headteacher to the system has increased over recent decades, in part because of the decentralising tendencies mentioned above, but in part also due to the perceived importance of the head in instigating and leading school improvement. Successive British government leaders (and attendant initiatives such as Leadership Incentive Grants) have stressed the importance of school leadership, Britain's former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, for example, stating that 'As new headteachers you are the critical agents for change and higher standards school

by school. There is literally no more important job in Britain today than yours' (Blair 1999). Similarly, the English inspection agency OfSTED has claimed that 'changing the headteacher has been found to be the most successful means of taking a failing school out of special measures'. This perception of the importance of leadership has led to a significant investment in the recruitment, training and development of educational leaders. The most ambitious of these developments is probably the setting up of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) by the government in 2001 to provide and coordinate leadership development, pointing both to the importance attached to school leadership by the government and to a belief that leadership can be learned to at least to some extent. The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was set up as pre-service training programme for headteachers and is now mandatory for all new heads. The National College (recently renamed National College for the Leadership of Schools and Children's Services) offers a suite of programmes that provide leadership development from pre-service onwards, with programmes for newly appointed heads and those with experience.

The current system therefore is once again in a state of change, with the move towards academy status being considered or undertaken by many schools and the new accountability measure already impacting on planning for future years. The dual nature of the system, with its emphasis on both strong accountability and school autonomy puts the principal in a particularly central position within the system. While the formal responsibility for the school rests with the governing body, composed of representatives of parents, the community, school staff and the local authority or academy sponsor, day-to-day responsibility both for the financial management of the school and school outcomes rests with the headteacher, who can be held to account and dismissed by the governing body. School-based management itself, while generally seen as beneficial in terms of school improvement and effectiveness (Caldwell and Spinks 1992), challenges school staff in terms of leadership and management.

It is clear that the role of the headteacher within the English education system is both varied and broad. This is leading to a systemic problem in terms of the capacities of the headteacher to take on these tasks in an effective way and to a crisis of recruitment where even those leaders who have completed the NPQH often fail to move into headteacher jobs. One of the issues related to school-based management is that studies suggest that headteachers may spend an increasing amount of their time on the non-educational aspects of their role, such as fund raising, buildings management and financial management (Armstrong et al. 2010). This is problematic, as research in school effectiveness and school improvement has put a lot of stress on the concept of instructional leadership as a key component of effective schools (Teddlie and Reynolds 2002).

Instructional leadership is seen as being concerned with hands-on involvement with teaching and learning processes, and with the headteacher acting as the leader in terms of pedagogy and instruction rather than taking a more hands-off role concerned more strongly with administration. Instructional leadership has been defined as those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning, make instructional quality the top priority of the school and bring

that vision to realization (Hallinger and Heck 1998). Instructional leaders have a pedagogical vision, have pedagogical expertise and focus on teaching and learning. An instructional leader promotes homogeneous approaches to teaching and behaviour management in the school, monitors teaching and makes sure professional development focusses on teaching and learning. In many cases, instructional leaders start the process of school improvement by implementing a particular initiative such as promoting a teaching strategy (Muijs et al. 2004). The relationship between instructional leadership and educational outcomes is quite long established. In one early study, for example, Heck et al. (1990) found an indirect relationship wherein three latent variables related to principal instructional leadership (school governance, instructional organization, and school climate) affected student achievement. The relationship was still found to be there in an overview of research on instructional leadership conducted 15 years later by Hallinger (2005) and had received consistent confirmation in research. There is significant empirical support for instructional leadership (e.g. Teddlie and Stringfield 1993), though questions can be asked as to how the strong focus on the headteacher in this body of research fits with conceptions of distributed leadership. Likewise, we can question the extent to which this hands-on approach is still feasible as headteachers taking on new roles with regards to leading federations or groups of schools, such as is happening increasingly in the UK. However, that headteachers need to be instructional leaders if school improvement is to occur is a well-supported finding and it is therefore worrying if school-based management results in headteachers focussing primarily on administrative tasks.

## Developing School Leaders

There are several possible responses to this problem, one of which, as mentioned above, has been the upskilling of headteachers through professional development. This has meant reorienting practice around leadership development rather than selection of leaders, the underlying view being that everyone has the potential to lead if only they receive the necessary professional development. This view is reflected in investment in leadership development at the national policy level (such as through the formation of the NCSL in the UK) and in the success of leadership programmes at university level in many countries. This view reflects a more general move away from a belief in fixed innate characteristics as determining behaviour, as is also evidenced by the discrediting of the fixed view of IQ as a measure of innate intelligence, and the decrease in gender stereotypical role orientation as again the innateness of many traditional gender roles has been found to be a result of nurture rather than nature.

Therefore, while the view that leadership can be learnt appears to have support (though we must not lose sight of the fact that psychological research does appear to show that genetically determined personality characteristics do exist, e.g. Frederick's five factor model), the key question is whether all this activity in leadership development has, in effect, improved leadership in the schools. In other words, what

is the impact of leadership development, what forms of leadership development have an impact and is investment in leadership development a cost effective way of improving the education system? The English inspection body, OfSTED, appears to believe that the investment in leadership development through the National College is paying off: The OfSTED report, 'Leadership and Management: What Inspection Tells Us', suggests that some of the improvements in the quality of leadership and management were attributable to headteacher training programmes that began in 1995 and the establishment of National College in 2000 (OfSTED 2005).

The question that needs to be asked first, however, is to what extent leadership development has an impact on organisational performance. While the potential of continuing professional development to influence organisational performance is assumed in much of the generic literature, it is far from proven. A recent review of the literature concluded that there was insufficient evidence to link leadership development directly to improvements in organisational performance. A number of evaluations of specific leadership development programmes appear to point to positive effects, but these typically rely on self-report or satisfaction questionnaires and have not systematically explored impact (Huber and Muijs 2009). However, the literature on organisational change and improvement would assert that there is an indirect relationship simply because both leadership and continuing professional development feature prominently in many studies of effective organisational change (Berends et al. 2000; OECD 2002). The evidence supporting the great investment in leadership development under the New Labour government is therefore mixed.

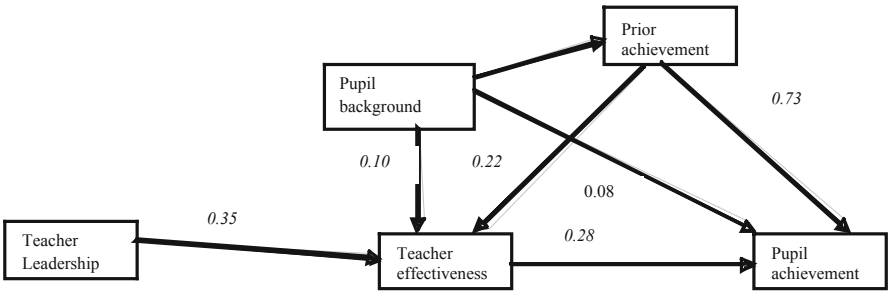
## Distributed and Delegated Leadership

A second response, that has stronger evidential support, is to involve a greater proportion of school staff in leadership. The increased responsibilities of headteachers have recently led to many researchers and practitioners espousing so-called distributed forms of leadership, involving all staff in leading their organisation. This view contradicts the traditional view of transformational leadership by stating that transformational practices can reside in all members of an organization rather than just the head. The heroic view of leadership has only on occasion been found to be the factor that has led to organisational improvement, while distributed forms of leadership have been found to benefit improvement efforts in a range of studies (Harris and Muijs 2004). Distributed leadership implies that the practice of leadership is *stretched* within or across an organisation and that there are high degrees of involvement in the practice of leadership (Spillane et al. 2001). This 'deep leadership' is co-constructed through joint practice drawing in part on yet untapped leadership potential and underdeveloped resources for collaboration and co-ordination. In this sense, distributed leadership is '*an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise*' (Gronn 2000, p. 23).

Distributed leadership is "*enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top*" (Fletcher and

Käufer 2003, p. 22). However, this does not mean that everyone leads simultaneously or that leadership activity has no agreed or common direction. Instead, it is a form of leadership that brings together both lateral and formal leadership processes in order to generate organizational change and development. It is '*educational rather than institutional in its focus and is exercised through the liberation of talents within a participatory framework* '(Fullan 2005, p. 6). In summary, it is a form of leadership practice where individuals collaborate in order to extend and enhance the leadership capacity within or across organisations.

Distributed leadership clearly holds theoretical promise in terms of organisational improvement and achievement. However, while there is some evidence linking distributed leadership to organisational growth and change, it remains the case that empirical studies of distributed leadership are relatively limited. As Bennett et al. (2003, p. 4) note in their review of the distributed leadership literature that '*there were almost no empirical studies of distributed leadership in action*'. The studies that do exist suggest a favourable relationship between distributed forms of leadership and organisational outcomes. Silns and Mulford's (2003) comprehensive study of leadership effects on student learning provides some cumulative confirmation of the key processes through which more distributed kinds of leadership influence student learning outcomes. Their work concluded that '*student outcomes are more likely to improve when leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and when teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them*'. The largest contemporary study of distributed leadership practice in schools concluded that intervening to improve school leadership may not be most optimally achieved by focusing on the individual formal leader and may not offer the best use of resources (Spillane et al. 2004). In England, Harris and Muijs (2004) found positive relationships between the extent of teachers' involvement in decision making and student motivation and self-efficacy. Looking at a number of factors, they found quantitative evidence that teacher involvement in leadership had an indirect impact on pupil performance through improving teacher effectiveness (see the following diagram)




Hallinger and Heck (2010) similarly reported that collaborative school leadership (a somewhat more limited concept than distributed leadership) can lead to improvements in reading and math, with the relationship being mediated by leaders building the school's capacity for academic improvement. School capacity itself, however, also shapes schools' collective leadership capacity in a reciprocal relationship.

In England, distributed leadership has been encouraged through organisations such as the National College, which has promoted this through its training programmes, and academics and consultants, who have quickly taken on board this message and have also been instrumental in encouraging schools to move in this direction.

In practise, of course, English schools by no means have all subscribed to distributed leadership. The model of strong directive leadership from the head with little involvement of other staff is still present in many schools and a lot of school improvement research still points to strong leadership from the head as a key element in improving schools, especially for those in the most troubled situation (Muijs et al. 2004).

A hybrid model, which is seen in quite a few schools, is that of an expanded leadership team. In this model, which is mainly present in secondary schools, a larger number of staff members than is traditionally the case are included on the senior management team, allowing greater delegation of responsibilities. In one example of this, a school expanded its senior management team to include subject leaders in English, math, science, cultural studies, creative arts and applied learning as well as four heads of house responsible for pastoral care.

Another example of an extended leadership team from a secondary school is given in Table 2.1.

As members of the core school leadership team (SLT), the headteacher, the Head of pastoral care and the Head of curriculum and achievement share responsibility with the Head for policy making, procedures, monitoring, reviewing and forward planning; responsibility for the school in the Head's absence; and additional responsibilities and initiatives as required. The Assistant Heads are members of the extended SLT, augmenting the core SLT as appropriate and undertaking additional responsibilities and initiatives as required. As members of the extended SLT, the assistant Heads support the core SLT in policy making, procedures, monitoring, reviewing and forward planning; accept lead responsibility for specific aspects of the school development plan; and undertake additional responsibilities and initiatives as required.

Clearly, this type of leadership arrangement can help the Head deal with the expanded responsibilities by delegating leadership tasks. It is also clear from the example in Table 2.1 how the accountability mechanisms shape leadership, by enforcing a strong emphasis on pupil outcomes, in particular achievement, a factor that is present in the description of the responsibilities of several members of the extended leadership team. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of this type of arrangement is still limited, though some qualitative studies show some positive views from school leaders themselves (Chapman et al. 2010).

## School Business Managers

As identified in a recent PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC 2007) report, school heads are still having problems balancing their dual roles as operational and strategic leaders. The report suggests the more widespread and effective use of devolved leadership

**Table 2.1** An expanded leadership team

| Role | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| Headteacher | Leadership and management of the school<br>Staff<br>Co-ordination of specific programs<br>Representation and communication<br>Oversees SLT and is responsible to Governors and the local authority for all aspects of the school |
| Head of pastoral care and staff development | Oversight of pastoral care<br>Chair of Pastoral Leadership Group<br>Staff<br>Ethos and values<br>Specific initiatives and responsibilities (including learning support, oversight of lunchtimes, monitoring and supporting effective teaching and approval of trips and visits) |
| Head of administration and resources | Administration<br>Resources<br>Specific initiatives and responsibilities (including oversight and development of community links, oversight of Science College primary school links, oversight of trips abroad and chair of the School Association) |
| Head of curriculum and achievement | Curriculum<br>Achievement<br>Specific initiatives and responsibilities (including science and applied learning statuses, teaching and learning in secondary schools strategy, 14–19 developments, locality curriculum co-ordination and timetabling and the skills agenda including TEEP, AfL, L4L, AG&T and OOHL) |
| Assistant Head 1 | Overall leadership and co-ordination of all aspects of the pastoral care and pastoral management of Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and post-16 vulnerable learners<br>Leadership and co-ordination of learning support as head of faculty<br>Specific initiatives and developments (including work related learning; post-16 provision at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2; oversight of Cover Supervisors; and deputising for Assistant Heads and Deputy Heads as required) |
| Assistant Head 2 | Overall leadership and co-ordination of improving learning and progress in years 7 and 11, with a particular focus on Key Stage 4<br>Leadership and co-ordination of physical education as head of faculty<br>Specific initiatives and developments (including staff development leading to the raising of achievement, the skills agenda, assessment and reporting and deputising for Assistant Heads and Deputy Heads as required) |
| Assistant Head 3 | Overall leadership and co-ordination of Level 3 post-16<br>Co-ordination of 14–19 applied learning<br>Leadership and co-ordination of technology as head of faculty<br>Specific initiatives and developments (including diploma development in school and city-wide, development of business links and deputising for Assistant Heads and Deputy Heads as required) |

*SLT* school leadership team

to enable senior staff to develop their practice in ways that have potential to impact favourably on pupil attainment. The report also suggests many teaching and support staff perceive that their involvement in leadership falls short of what is possible and desirable. In a scoping study recently carried out for NCSL, it was found that school staff felt that over the last few years School Business Management (SBM) tasks had become both greater in number and more difficult (Woods et al. 2007), not surprising in view of the expansion of school-based management and autonomy mentioned earlier in this chapter. Substantial deficits in SBM expertise in schools were predicted over the next 2–3 years.

One increasingly important area of leadership development in schools is therefore the training of individuals within the school to manage the business aspects thereof, thus lightening the burden for headteachers who would be better able to concentrate on academic leadership and setting business management in schools on a more professional level. This need led to the development of the Bursar Development Programme, aimed at providing suitable training for School Business Managers. Key components thereof are the Certificate in SBM, the pilot for which was launched in 2002 (national roll-out followed in 2003) and the Diploma in SBM, the pilot of which ran in 2003, with national roll-out the following year. More recently, an Advanced Diploma was piloted (2009) with national roll-out following now. The idea is to upskill business managers in schools, who often start off as school secretaries, with a view towards them taking on leadership roles in the schools they are working in, in this way alleviating the demands on educational leaders and allowing them to exercise instructional leadership.

The programme has been the subject of a number of external evaluations (Woods and Brown 2003), which showed evidence of early impact on participants' professional skills, some evidence of impact in the workplace for about half of the participants, and satisfaction with content, though there was also evidence of too much variation in quality between venues and tutors. Further longitudinal evaluation supported the impact of the programme on participants' professional knowledge and skills and suggested that trainees could contribute to enhanced effectiveness in the workplace. In particular, the programme was seen as very helpful to the heads engaged in workforce remodelling, allowing them to change the job description of school administrators engaged in business management.

The involvement of non-educational actors in SBM was evaluated by Armstrong et al. (2010) using mixed methods research design. Findings were largely positive. In terms of SBM's roles, it is clear that as candidates move through the SBM training programmes they become more involved in leadership and management in the school. This is evidenced by their changing job titles, greater amount of time spent on leadership, and increased salary. In the most advanced cases, SBM's become central to the leadership team, as one candidate stated 'working alongside, not under the head'.

Findings also suggest that SBM has led to significant reductions in the amount of time Senior Leaders spend on administration and Finance, and has been particularly beneficial for small primary schools in rural areas, where previously no business

management function existed. The fact that a joint Business Manager could be appointed for collaboratives and networks of schools has helped to solve this problem in many cases.

There is also evidence that School Business Managers have been able to make considerable cost savings for schools through more thoughtful procurement processes and the pooling of school resources. This, however, has in some cases led to conflict with the Local Education Authority which has seen its services taken over by external providers. School Business Managers themselves felt very positive about the increased responsibility they were given, although there were some complaints that while work-life balance issues of teaching staff were being addressed, this was often done by loading tasks onto administrative staff, thus relocating rather than solving the problem. Most heads felt that School Business Managers had helped them to concentrate on the core educational tasks, although some had found it hard to delegate financial tasks to the School Business Manager. Contextual factors appeared important here, with heads of smaller schools sometimes finding it harder to delegate these responsibilities. Performance levels of schools also appeared to play a role, with heads of lower performing schools finding it harder to delegate significant responsibilities to their School Business Managers. Interestingly, School Business Managers have not just become more strongly involved in financial management and leadership, but have become increasingly involved directly with teaching and learning, in part through the greater confidence and understanding of the school that their training has given them. They are, for example, working in developing programmes to involve pupils in budgeting, or in greening the school.

Overall, there was evidence of greater effectiveness in terms of management and leadership in the school. However, till date, evidence that this had led to improvements in student progress remains elusive. It is likely that the impact of changed leadership and management arrangements, which by definition are unlikely to have a direct effect on student performance, will take longer to impact on students (if any impact is to be found). Creemers' (1983) model of educational effectiveness posits that the leadership function in schools exerts its impact mainly through creating the conditions in which the effectiveness of teaching can be maximised. SBM may aid this through allowing leaders to concentrate more fully on issues of learning and teaching in the school. Effective teaching and learning in turn will improve student outcomes. Of course, a problem that schools may face is whether they have the financial capacity to recruit a School Business Manager, one reason why they may form networks, thus increasing their financial capacity, to hire a joint Business Manager.

## Leading Networks of Schools

These attempts to alleviate the pressures on headteachers through greater involvement of school staff in leadership is obviously one solution. However, increasingly, it is becoming clear that the challenges faced by schools and school leaders require greater collaboration between schools. Not least of these problems is the issue that

improvements in one school in an area may be at a cost to others in the area, as the school choice existing in England will tend to lead to pupil transfers from one school to another, i.e. from the less to the more successful school. Also, weaker schools may benefit from support provided by stronger schools, as was found in Chapman and Muijs (2010) study on the impact of Federations of schools for the National College. Arrangements whereby schools collaborate have become increasingly common in the UK, with Federations of schools being the most frequently found. The term "federation" encompasses a broad spectrum of collaborative arrangements and is often used to loosely describe a range of partnerships, clusters and collaborations. In general, groups of schools agree to work together to raise standards, promote inclusion, find new ways of approaching teaching and learning or build capacity between schools in a coherent manner. This will be brought about in part through structural changes in leadership and management, in many instances making use of the joint governance arrangements invoked in the 2002 Education Act. The establishment of a federation, often referred to as 'hard federation', as specified in the 2002 Education Act, allows for the creation of a single governing body or joint governing body committee to operate across two or more (often cross phase) schools. A collaboration, often termed as 'soft federation', is where one or more governing bodies delegate some but not all of their powers to a sub-committee (with somewhat limited purpose). Whichever arrangements are adopted, each partner school remains as a separate entity, headed, inspected, ranked in league tables and funded in its own right.

The role of the headteacher or principal is a key one in networks. We have seen in many of our own case studies that successful networks either originate from the initiative of one or more charismatic headteachers, or else are steered through the always difficult set-up phase by individual leaders. While, therefore, we have evidence that distributed leadership is fostered through collaboration and networking, it remains the case that strong headteacher leadership at the network level appears to be a facet of many successful networks. There is evidence both from education and from other field that leaders play a key role in the establishment of networks, McGuire and Agranoff (2007), for example, pointing to the fact that a leader or leaders usually lie at the basis of new public service networks. Within schools themselves, headteachers and other senior staff in schools who are willing and able to drive collaboration forward are key to making it work. As with other educational interventions, networking will only work if headteachers are committed and behind the idea. Headteacher support is necessary to encourage other school staff to see network activities as key, to put in place the cultural and structural changes needed for collaborative work with other schools or organisations, and, not least, to ensure that time is freed up for staff to take part in network activities (for example joint Continuing Professional Development (CPD) with another school) and that staff are encouraged to disseminate the outcomes of any network activity in the school Obviously, where a network proposes thoroughgoing forms of integration such as teachers teaching at multiple schools or joint appointments the role of the head in making this happen is crucial.

Headteacher leadership is therefore clearly important to effective networking (Muijs et al. 2011). At the individual school level, this means that the Senior Management Teams of all network schools need to support the network in order for it to

be sustainable. Networks that are driven solely by staff, lower down the school hierarchy, while potentially successful in the short term, are unlikely to show long-term sustainability. Networks of teachers, where there is little senior management involvement, are unlikely to result in systemic change across the school and are likely to peter out (Ainscow and West 2006). In practice, according to Hadfield (2007), most successful networks are driven by a small group of activist leaders, given 'permission to lead' by colleagues. According to one report, firm directive leadership is required at the start, at least for schools facing challenging circumstances, which can later be relaxed. A more distributed approach can then be adopted once changes have been bedded in (Chapman and Harris 2004). Changing leadership styles can be fraught with difficulty, however, as staff expectations may have become embedded to the extent that such changes may be met by mistrust and a reluctance to take on new leadership roles (Muijs and Harris 2003).

The development of networks and collaboratives obviously challenges school leaders in a number of ways. Leaders' interpersonal skills are a key aspect of successful networking. Inevitably, networking entails the bringing together of different organizational cultures, so some measure of misalignment and misunderstanding is inevitable. In order to be able to overcome this problem, a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and the emotional impact of collaboration are necessary (Muijs 2006). Heads also need to be open and honest, in order to help develop the trust that is so important to effective networking arrangements.

However, as well as these softer elements of management, networks appear most successful where a clear management structure exists (Lindsay et al. 2007). Again, this is similar to the findings from other studies on school effectiveness and school improvement, which have, for example, shown that even school improvement based on notions of distributed leadership benefits from strong and clear management structures (Muijs and Harris 2007). In some of the Federations, the creation of new management posts at the network level (such as Associate Heads and Assistant Heads for the whole federation) has been found to aid that process, though this would only be appropriate where the network is intended to show permanence rather than a more short-term focus on particular programmes or aspects of improvement. New roles, described by Fullan (2004) as 'system leadership' are emerging in networks, largely structured around key-brokering roles. These include the building of group identity, trust and the fostering of mutual knowledge.

More generally, there is evidence that networks not only require additional leadership roles and skills, but that they, by creating these, help to involve more school staff in leadership, thus promoting both distributed leadership and an increased leadership capacity in the system. Likewise, the creation of leadership roles specifically related to network leadership creates a cadre of peoples with experience of system leadership and thus makes future networking easier (Hadfield 2007; Fullan 2004).

One of the key differences between managing networks and single organisations is the fact that networks are generally voluntary collaborations between equals, as opposed to hierarchical organisations. This is a very different situation than the norm for educational managers, used to being at the top of a hierarchical system, where, essentially, what they say goes. When managing a network, the role becomes very

different, focussed on getting a community of equals (who are likely to jealously guard that sense of equality and strongly resist signs of hierarchy) to work together and coordinate activities for the common good. This is what is known by economists as the Joint Production Problem. This form of management is characterised by the lack of possible sanctions and by often limited economic incentives (Milward and Provan 2003). As Handy (1991) pointed out, the good thing for network managers is that they manage a programme with far greater resources in terms of staff, but the bad thing is that none of them think they work for you.

According to some theories, networks are in fact unmanageable, due to the fact that they emerge from multiple micro-interactions, and therefore are not controlled by any one actor (Ritter et al. 2003). This view of networking fits well with a 'new social movements' perspective, but does not fit well with those networks that have been more deliberately created, and where often a network leadership position has been formally created, in which cases some element of network management is present. What is clear is that in many cases some form of central administration and management is necessary for a network to be sustainable and effective over time (Milward and Provan 2003).

Consensus building has been identified as another key role within networks, and one that is part of the role of all headteachers in a network. In his study, Hadfield (2007) found that in the early stages of network development, the aspect of consensus building that was central was the selection of an initial theme that could give cohesion to the work of the network as a whole. Later on, consensus building emerged around the choice of specific network activities.

Continuous change and fluidity of networks is another issue managers have to be able to deal with and this necessitates a flexible outlook, and again, strong communication skills. Communication in particular is important, as the more diffuse nature of a network can mean that not all teachers and other staff will be clear on network goals and purposes. Continuous and extensive communication to staff is therefore imperative. Likewise, parents may not be clear on the benefits of networking. In particular, where a highly effective school starts to collaborate with a school perceived as less effective there are often tensions with parents who fear that their head may lose focus on their school and pupils. Communication with parents is therefore important (Jones 2009). Overall, then, while school-to-school collaboration appears to have a lot of potential as a school improvement mechanism (Chapman and Muijs 2010), it also throws up a range of challenges to school leaders.

## Conclusion

Overall, the English system is characterised by strong accountability systems coupled with a great deal of school autonomy, and speedy changes to policies and initiatives, a combination that seems almost purpose-built to maximise the pressure on school leaders. This has led to a number of problems, such as difficulties in recruiting school leaders, but also to a number of creative solutions within the system.

These include expansion of the leadership teams and greater distribution of leadership in schools, the use of non-educators in leadership through roles such as School Business Managers, and working with networks of schools that can utilise shared resources and lead to innovative approaches to school improvement.

It is clear that as the system evolves towards even greater school autonomy through the expansion of the academies programme and the setting up off so-called 'Free Schools', that the role of the school leaders will remain central to the English system. A key challenge for policymakers will therefore remain the issue of providing appropriate support and training mechanisms for school leaders in dealing with the challenges of leading autonomous schools often grouped in networks or chains of schools. Creative solutions which make greater use of the capacities present in local authorities, schools themselves, private providers and higher education will be needed alongside the role of national institutions such as the National College, if this effort is to be successful. Collaborative arrangements at local level or within chains of schools are likely to be best able to tailor local solutions in a cost-effective manner. The national organisations could then usefully act as accreditors and inspection bodies, developing national competency frameworks and accrediting deliverers rather than delivering and developing programmes themselves, which has proven to be a rather costly mechanism.

## References

Ainscow, M., & West, M. (2006). *Improving urban schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Armstrong, P., Collins, A., Muijs, D., Pearson, A., & Woods, C. (2010). *School business management programmes: Evaluation: CSBM/DSBM and ADSBM activity. A report for the National College*. Manchester: University of Manchester.

Barber, M. (2001). *Large-scale education reform in England: A work in progress*. Paper prepared for the School Development Conference, Tartu University, Estonia.

Bennett, N., Harvey, J. A., Wise, C., & Woods, P. A. (2003). *Distributed leadership: A desk study*. Nottingham: NCSL.

Berends, M., Bodilly, S., & Kirby, S. (2000). *Facing the challenges of whole-school reform: New American schools after a decade.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Blair, T. (1999). *Speech to the labour party conference.* Bournemouth, UK, 28/9/1999.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. M. (1992). *Leading the self-managing school*. London: Falmer.

Chapman, C., & Harris, A. (2004). Improving schools in difficult and challenging contexts: Strategies for improvement. *Journal of Education Research, 46*(3), 219–228.

Chapman, C., & Muijs, D. (2010, April). *The impact of federations on pupil achievement.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO.

Chapman, C., Ainscow, M., Bragg, J., Gunter, H., Mongon, D., Muijs, D., & West, M. (2010). *New models of leadership. A report for the National College*. Manchester: University of Manchester.

Creemers, B. P. M. (1983). *The effective classroom*. London: Cassell.

Cullingford, C. (1999). *An inspector calls. Ofsted and its effects on school standards*. London: Kogan Page.

Earley, P., Fidler, B., & Ouston, J. (1996). *Improvement through inspection? Complementary approaches to school development*. London: Fulton Publishers.

Fitz-Gibbon, C. T., & Stephenson-Forster, N. J. (1996). *Inspecting her majesty's inspectors: Should social science and social policy cohere?* Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, Spain.

Fletcher, J., & Käufer, K. (2003). Shared leadership: Paradox and possibility. In C. L. Pearce & J. A. Conger (Eds.), *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership* (pp. 21–48). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fullan, M. (2004). *Systems thinking in action*. London: DfES/NCSL.

Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press; and Toronto: Ontario Principals Council.

Gronn, P. (2000). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership. *Educational Management and Administration, 28*(3), 317–338.

Hadfield, M. (2007). Co-leaders and middle leaders: the dynamic between leaders and followers in networks of schools. *School Leadership and Management, 27*(3), 259–283.

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(1), 9–34.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980–1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9*(3), 157–191.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership and Management, 30*(2), 95–110.

Handy, C. (1991). *The age of unreason*. London: London Business Books.

Harris, A., & Muijs, D. (2004). *School improvement through teacher leadership*. Ballmoor, Bucks: Open University Press.

Heck, R. H., Larsen, T. J., & Marcoulides, G. A. (1990). Instructional leadership and school achievement: Validation of a causal model. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 26*(2), 94–125.

Huber, S., & Muijs, D. (2009). School leadership effectiveness: The growing insight in the importance of school leadership for the quality and development of schools and their pupils. In S. Huber (Ed.), *International perspectives on school leadership*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Jones, J. (2009). The development of leadership capacity through collaboration in small schools. *School Leadership and Management, 29*(2), 129–156.

Lindsay, G., Muijs, D., Harris, A., Arweck, E., & Goodall, J. (2007). *School federations pilot study 2003–2007.* London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.

McGuire, M., & Agranoff, R. (2007). *Answering the big questions, asking the bigger questions: Expanding the public network management empirical research agenda.* Prepared for presentation at the 9th Public Management Research Conference, Tucson, Arizona, 25–27 Oct 2007.

Milward, H. B., & Provan, K. G. (2003, October). *Managing networks effectively.* Paper presented at the National Public Management Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Muijs, D. (2006). New directions for school effectiveness research: Towards school effectiveness without schools? *Journal of Educational Change, 7*(3), 141–160.

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2003). Teacher leadership: Improvement through empowerment? An overview of research. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership, 31*(4), 437–448.

Muijs, D., & Harris, A. (2007). Teacher leadership in (In) action: Three case studies of contrasting schools. *Educational, Management, Administration and Leadership, 35*(1), 111–134.

Muijs, D., & Chapman, C. (2009). Accountability for improvement: Rhetoric or reality? In C. Chapman & H. Gunter (Eds.), *Radical reforms. Perspectives on an era of educational change.* London: Taylor & Francis.

Muijs, D., Harris, A., Chapman, C., Stoll, L., & Russ, J. (2004). Improving schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas: An overview of research. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 15*(2), 149–176.

Muijs, D., Chapman, C., Ainscow, M., & West, M. (2011). *Networking and collaboration in education*. Dordrecht: Springer.

OECD. (2002). *Public sector leadership for the twenty-first century*. Washington: OECD.
OfSTED. (1995). *Planning improvement; schools' post-inspection action plans.* London: HMSO.
OfSTED. (2005). *Leadership and management: What inspection tells us*. London: HMSO.
PwC (PriceWaterhouseCoopers). (2007). *Independent study into school leadership: Main report*. London: DfES.
Ritter, T., Wilkinson, I., & Johnston, W. (2003). Managing in complex business networks. *Industrial Marketing Management, 33*(3), 175–183.
Silns, H., & Mulford, B. (2003). Leadership and school results. In K. Leithwood, P. Chapman, J. Corson, P. Hallinger, & A. Hart (Eds.), *International handbook of educational administration.* Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher, 30*(3), 23–28.
Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2004). Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective [Electronic version]. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 36*(1), 3–34.
Teddlie, C., & Reynolds, D. (2002). *International handbook of research on school effectiveness and school improvement*. London: Sage.
Teddlie, C., & Stringfield, S. (1993). *Schools make a difference*. New York: Teachers College Press.
West, M., & Muijs, D. (2009). Personalized learning. In C. Chapman & H. Gunter (Eds.), *Radical reforms. Perspectives on an era of educational change*. London: Taylor & Francis.
Woods, C., & Brown, M. (2003, January). *Distributed leadership at school site level: The role of the School Business Manager in school improvement.* Paper presented at the International congress for school effectiveness and improvement, Sydney, Australia.
Woods, C. E., Gunter, H., & West, M. (2007). *Scoping study for the school business director programme: Final report.* eScholarID:18112.

# Chapter 3
# Instructional Leadership in the Era of No Child Left Behind: Perspectives from the United States

**Anthony H. Normore and Jeffrey S. Brooks**

Most large-scale urban school reform efforts of the last three decades *in the United States* have centered on providing incentives and sanctions for aligning educational practice to standards set at the district, state, or national level. Among the key elements of education reform identified in the literature for improving schools and student achievement are state standards, accountability systems, state regulations of teacher preparation and compensation, whole-school reform, professional development, and instruction (Brooks 2006a; Cuban 1998; Supovitz and Poglino 2001; U.S. Department of Education 2008, 2009, 2010a, b). School systems have typically provided incentives for schools to meet standards, and accountability has been enacted in the form of various punitive measures when schools have not. In this chapter, we provide an overview of the American education and assessment/accountability system with a focus on the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Next, we build on Supovitz and Poglino's (2001) work by discussing the impact of assessment/standards-based reform on instructional leadership (Supovitz 2001; Supovitz and Poglino 2001). In particular, we examine evidence in support of the argument that instructional leadership is not just a principal's endeavor, but is instead educational work conducted by a wider cast of individuals in both formal and informal leadership roles. Research suggests that these formal and informal forms of leadership play a critical role in reinforcing instructional improvement and instructional quality that lead to accountability and enhanced student learning, though little of this work considers how NCLB has shaped this work (Brooks et al. 2007; McLaughlin and Talbert 2006; Spillane et al. 2001). Finally, we offer some insights around the implications for policy and practice for leadership development and preparation.

A. H. Normore (✉)
California Lutheran University, 60 West Olsen Road #4100, Thousand Oaks, Southern CA 91360-2700, USA
e-mail: anormore@callutheran.edu

J. S. Brooks
Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA
e-mail: jsbrooks@iastate.edu

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_3, © US Government 2012

## NCLB: An American Education and Assessment/ Accountability System

As one of the nation's most ambitious educational initiatives, NCLB of 2001, the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), is rooted in a long-standing ideological commitment to equal opportunity for all its citizens, and has changed the educational discourse in the United States. Terms such as "accountability," "adequate yearly progress," and "highly qualified" have become more prevalent in the national vernacular (Carnoy and Loeb 2002; Chrismer et al. 2006; Hershberg et al. 2004). Advocates, adversaries, pundits, and proponents have engaged in discourse for the last decade around NCLB and its system of accountability, a system driven by high expectations, ambitious deadlines, public reporting, and the threat of serious consequences for schools that fail to comply with the policy mandates (Berliner 2005). Based on the discourse coupled with numerous research reports (e.g., Anderson 2005; Cizek 2001; Darling-Hammond 2003; Devito 2010; Gonzalez 2002), NCLB has moved accountability for student performance to the forefront of the nation's consciousness. The reforms introduced into the ESEA by the NCLB fundamentally changed the way that states and districts approach the challenge of educating all students to achieve high standards (Center on Educational Policy 2008; Chrismer et al. 2006; Gonzalez 2002).

As a framework of accountability, NCLB was enacted to hold schools accountable for students' academic progress and eliminate achievement gaps among student subgroups, while also introducing unprecedented federal controls over K-12 school curricula in all 50 states. Many states have legislated statewide competency tests for student promotion and graduation and have developed curriculum guides for local schools to ensure teaching of those competencies (Glickman et al. 2009). NCLB mandates annual testing in reading and mathematics for Grades 3–8 and at least once in Grades 10–12, with annual tests in science given once for Grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12. States are required to set annual adequate year progress (AYP) goals for districts, schools, and student subgroups, and use the state tests to determine whether schools are making AYP toward 100% proficiency for all students by 2013–2014. Districts and schools that meet or exceed AYP goals, or close achievement gaps, are eligible for "State Academic Achievement Awards" (Glickman et al. 2009, p. 344). Districts and schools that fail to reach their AYP goals are subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures. Schools not meeting AYP must allow students to transfer to another school within the district and the district must pay for the students' transportation to the new school. Districts with schools that fail to meet standards for 3 out of 4 years must use a portion of their Title 1 funds to purchase supplemental educational services for eligible students. Eventually, such schools may have their staff replaced or be taken over by the state, depending on state educational policy. This framework of accountability provides an important motivation and expectation for participation in developing curricula for the purpose of improved instruction.

Since NCLB was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2002, there has been an abundance of literature and commentary on the law. However, while opinions from proponents and pundits on NCLB abound, they "have tended to remain ill-informed and have rarely moved beyond criticism of or support for the act" (Chrismer et al. 2006, p. 463). Recognizing that the act's ambitious goals and demanding requirements touch the lives of millions of people every day (Kohn 2000; Lee 2004), "a variety of stakeholders with differing professional identities, political orientations, and viewpoints continue to bear their insights on NCLB" (Chrismer et al. 2006, p. 463). According to Chrismer et al. (2006), researchers, practitioners, and policymakers regularly address multiple aspects of NCLB including ". . . various historical and legal contexts that serve as a foundation for understanding and critiquing the act; the law's impact on education, administration, and intervention at the state level; the public's role in shaping, benefiting from, and responding to NCLB and its initiatives; and the impact of NCLB on learning and teaching" (p. 467). With regard to teaching, several studies have noted that NCLB demands that teachers maintain and model a critical stance toward curriculum and instruction lest increasing regulation and standardization obscure a focus on educating individual students and meeting their unique needs (Darling-Hammond 2003; Darling-Hammond et al. 2005; Gonzalez 2002; Haertel 1999; Hershberg et al. 2004; Kohn 2000; Kornhaber 2004). Educators are encouraged to explicitly seek to provide transformative experiences within the constraints of high-stakes accountability measures (Covaleskie 2002; Earl 2003), though such experiences may not explicitly appear in standards.

As resources for public education have diminished, government control has increased, specifically in the form of common standards and high-stakes assessments (Devito 2010; U.S. Department of Education 2009, 2010b). According to Hess (2010), this has been tolerated by the public, at least in part, because current educational reform initiatives have been presented using rhetoric that promotes the very opposite of their actual consequences. NCLB and Race to the Top (RTT; see Manna 2010), for example, claim to alleviate social and economic inequities by providing all children with educational opportunities that will foster success (U.S. Department of Education 2008, 2009, 2010). Supporters of standardized reform maintain that accountability measures based on high-stakes assessments will improve public schools, particularly for poor and minority students (Covaleskie 2002; Kohn 2000, Manna 2006a). However, decades of research reveal evidence that contradicts this assertion: students in schools serving poor and working-class communities are most likely to be harmed by high-stakes assessment-based reform (Amrein and Berliner 2003; Anderson 2005; Black et al. 2004; Carnoy and Loeb 2002; Cizek 2001).

Since its inception critics have argued that NCLB is a regressive approach to education that fails to consider the complexities of curricular content and student achievement (Darling-Hammond 2003; Darling-Hammond et al. 2005; Gonzalez 2002; Hershberg et al. 2004; Kohn 2000; Kornhaber 2004). The professional literature is replete with criticism of standardized testing, and the belief that most teachers oppose standardized testing because it forces them to abandon creative lesson plans

in exchange for test prep. Au (2007) conducted a qualitative metasynthesis to analyze 49 qualitative studies to interrogate how high-stakes testing affects curriculum and found that the primary effect of high-stakes testing is that curricular content is narrowed to tested subjects, subject area knowledge is fragmented into test-related pieces, and teachers increase the use of teacher-centered pedagogies. Cawelti (2006) asserted that NCLB has narrowed the curriculum because of its focus on high-stakes testing in reading and mathematics. Cawelti concluded that NCLB comes at the expense of instruction in social studies, the arts, science, and health and denies many students access to the quality curriculums that students in more affluent schools enjoy—that NCLB has resulted in an imbalanced curriculum, it demoralizes teachers, and it encourages manipulation of the numbers. Similar findings were concluded in a study conducted by Watanabe's (2007). Based on ethnographic case studies of two teachers' classrooms and interviews with 13 teachers at five middle schools, data illuminates how high-stakes testing narrows the curricula and displaces teachers' priorities for their students, priorities such as developing personal appreciation for literature and communication and collaboration skills. These findings are noteworthy given that many of the teachers' priorities intersect with state standards. Still, other studies have reported some positive impact of NCLB. For example, in a significant minority of cases, certain types of high-stakes tests have led to curricular content expansion, the integration of knowledge, and more student centered, cooperative pedagogies suggesting that the nature of high-stakes-test-induced curricular control is highly dependent on the structures of the tests themselves (see Sunderman et al. 2005). In another study of Arkansas teachers and their views of testing (see Buck et al. 2010), teachers reported that tests provide useful data, help create a map for the year's instruction, test-prep does not sap creativity, testing can lead to collaboration, and accountability is useful.

## Title 1 of NCLB Act: New Regulations

Research studies conducted over the past 30 years indicate conclusively that schools with high concentrations of low-income students generally demonstrate lower levels of achievement than do schools with lower concentrations of low-income students. As a result, Congress, in the reauthorization of Title 1 under NCLB of 2001, now requires districts to allocate Title 1 funds to those schools with the highest concentrations of such students. Title 1 of NCLB is the largest federally funded educational program in the United States. The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach at a minimum proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. Title 1 regulations require school districts to provide services to all economically disadvantaged K-12 schools (i.e., highest student concentrations of poverty) where at least 75% of students qualify for free or reduced price meals. Districts may extend Title 1 benefits to schools lower than 75%, yet not below the district average percentage of free/reduced price meals.

In 2008, The U.S. Department of Education announced new regulations for Title 1 of NCLB Act that respond to the lessons learned from 6 years of implementing state assessment and accountability systems (U.S. Department of Education 2008). The final regulations included: establishing a uniform and more accurate measure of calculating high school graduation rate that is comparable across states; strengthening public school choice and supplemental educational services requirements; and increasing accountability and transparency (U.S. Department of Education 2008). In an effort to further understand NCLB and accountability context in American education, we draw a large number of data from several reports issued in the public domain between 2008 and 2010 by the U.S. Department of Education in the next sections. We begin with the new regulations for Title 1 of the NCLB Act, as presented by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development.

### *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Data on State and District Report Cards*

The NAEP is a nationally representative benchmark that parents and the public can use to evaluate the performance of their district and state. Including state-level NAEP results on state and district report cards gives parents easy access to this important information. States and districts are required to include on their report cards the most recent NAEP reading and mathematics results for the state and to also include the participation rates for students with disabilities and for limited English proficient students. For state report cards, the data must be disaggregated for each subgroup (i.e., data must be broken down by student subgroups; U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### National Technical Advisory Council (National TAC)

The Secretary of Education is required to establish a National TAC to advise the Department on technical issues related to the design and implementation of state standards, assessments, and accountability systems as well as on broad issues that affect all states. Specifically, the intent of establishing the National TAC is to create a mechanism through which the Department benefits from expert advice in its efforts to ensure that state standards and assessments are of the highest technical quality and that state accountability systems hold schools and districts accountable for the achievement of all students. The National TAC is subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA); thus notice of meetings and summaries of proceedings are available, and meetings are open to the public (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### *Minimum Subgroup Size and Inclusion of Students in Accountability*

According to U.S. Department of Education all States are given flexibility to use various statistical measures and techniques as part of their AYP definitions, yet they are required to ensure that those measures maximize the inclusion of students and student subgroups in accountability determinations. Each state is required to explain in its Title 1 Accountability Workbook how its minimum group size and other components of its AYP definition (e.g., confidence intervals, performance indexes, definition of "full academic year") interact to provide statistically reliable information while ensuring the maximum inclusion of all students and student subgroups in AYP determinations. Each state's Accountability Workbook must also include the number and percentage of students and subgroups excluded from school-level accountability determinations. States must submit their revised Accountability Workbook to the Department and peer review for technical assistance in time to implement the new regulatory requirements for AYP determinations based on school year assessment results (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### *Including Individual Student Growth in AYP*

The criteria in the final regulations ensure that schools continue to be held accountable for the achievement of all students, while providing flexibility for states to include a measure of individual student growth in calculating AYP. The final regulations set the criteria that a state's proposal must meet in order for the state to receive approval to incorporate individual student academic progress into its calculation of AYP (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### *Restructuring*

Based on regulations from the U.S. Department of Education (2008), it is important that states and districts take significant reform actions to improve chronically underperforming schools. Restructuring must include a significant change in the governance of a school that has not made AYP for 5 years. The new regulations clarify the following: interventions implemented as part of a school's restructuring plan must be significantly more rigorous and comprehensive than the corrective actions that the school implemented after it was identified as in need of improvement, unless the school has begun to implement one of the restructuring options as a corrective action; districts must implement interventions that address the reasons why a school is in the restructuring phase; the restructuring option of replacing all or most of the school staff may include replacing the principal; however, replacing the principal

alone is not sufficient to constitute restructuring; and, the "other" option to restructure a school's governance may include replacing the principal so long as this change is part of a broader reform effort (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### *Assessments and Multiple Measures*

There is a misunderstanding that accountability under Title 1 must be based on a single measure or form of assessment (Center on Education Policy 2008). Final regulations clarify that states may involve current measures of student academic achievement by including, in their assessments, single- or multiple-question formats (e.g., multiple choice, extended response) that range in difficulty within a single assessment, as well as multiple assessments within a subject area (e.g., reading and writing assessments to measure reading/language arts; U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### *Same Subject Identification for Improvement*

Current Department policy must establish clear parameters for districts and states to use when identifying schools and districts for improvement. Limiting the identification of schools and districts that are "in need of improvement" to those that do not meet the annual measurable objective (AMO) in the same subject for the same subgroup over consecutive years would be inconsistent with NCLB's accountability provisions. The law requires that every subgroup meet the state's AMO in each subject, each year, and permit a district to identify a school as "in need of improvement" if the school does not meet the AMO in the same subject (or meet the same academic indicator) for two consecutive years. A district may not, however, limit identification for improvement to schools that miss AYP only because they did not meet the AMO in the same subject (or meet the same academic indicator) for the same subgroup for two consecutive years. A similar provision applies to district identification for improvement (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

## President Barack Obama's Blueprint for Reform

During President Barack Obama's first 2 years in office, the administration's signature education initiative has been the RTT fund, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) that was passed to stimulate the nation's ailing economy (U.S. Department of Education 2010a). While celebrations and criticisms of RTT abound, serious attempts to understand the program in a larger context or grapple with its underlying assumptions and mechanisms have played smaller roles in the

conversation. Manna (2010) indicates that the collective knowledge of RTT's impact and future prospects is quite small compared with what it will be after the 2010 mid-term elections and the 4 years that the winners have to spend their grants. However, Manna also suggests that given that federal dollars support some actions but not others, policymakers and researchers may be able to glean additional insights about the conditions under which federal grants contribute most to valuable reforms and where less federal involvement might be desirable (U.S. Department of Education 2010a, b).

RTT is an attempt to raise the bar and foster excellence among schools by encouraging state and local leaders to work together on ambitious reforms, make tough choices, and develop comprehensive plans that change policies and practices to improve outcomes for students. Further, the initiative is intended to support the expansion of high-performing public charter schools and other autonomous public schools, and support local communities as they expand public school choice options for students within and across school districts (U.S. Department of Education 2010a, b, c).

President Obama's blueprint builds on the significant reforms already made in response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 around four areas (see Appendix A): (1) implementing college- and career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards, (2) improving teacher and principal effectiveness to ensure that every classroom has a great teacher and every school has a great leader; (3) improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest performing schools by providing intensive support and effective interventions; and (4) providing information to families to help them evaluate and improve their children's schools, and to educators to help them improve their students' learning. In an effort to incorporate and extend this framework, Obama's blueprint for a reenvisioned federal role builds on the above-mentioned priorities. Next, we turn to these priorities as they are presented in the U.S. Department of Education 2008 and 2010 reports:

## *Promoting a Culture of College- and Career-Ready Students*

In a 5 year study of NCLB implementation conducted by Sunderman et al. (2005) through the Civil Rights Project at Harvard, the authors documented how implementation of the law has exacerbated some of the very problems it hoped to address. The authors analyzed data from ten districts in six states including Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, New York, and Virginia. Many of the conclusions indicated that NCLB marks a major policy shift in state and federal relations, the school choice provisions are largely going unused, both choice and supplemental services face serious administrative burdens and capacity issues, and current graduation rate information is woefully inadequate. Access to a challenging high school curriculum has a greater impact on whether a student will earn a 4-year college degree than his or her high school test scores, class rank, or grades. Every student should graduate from high school ready for college and a career, regardless of their income, race,

ethnic or language background, or disability status. A new generation of assessments need to be developed that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards and will better capture higher order skills, provide more accurate measures of student growth, and better inform classroom instruction to respond to academic needs (U.S. Department of Education 2010a).

## *Effective Teachers and Leaders in Every School*

Schoen and Fusarelli (2008) conducted research on the impact of NCLB on the behavior of teachers and school leaders, specifically the centralizing, standardizing tendencies of the legislation concerning the type of teaching and leadership required to lead twenty-first-century schools. Their findings revealed that participant's responses to NCLB conflict with the pedagogical and leadership behaviors of the twenty-first-century schools movement. The authors conclude that unless modifications are made to the legislation, teachers and school leaders are unlikely to exhibit or promote the types of pedagogical skills, knowledge, or leadership envisioned by advocates of twenty-first-century schools. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the teaching profession must focus on recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding excellence. This is accomplished when states and districts develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation and support that can inform professional development and help teachers and principals improve student learning. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), the best teachers and leaders need to be placed in schools where they are most needed with a focus on improving the effectiveness of teachers and leaders in high-need schools. It is further stipulated that states and districts need to track equitable access to effective teachers and principals, and where needed, take steps to improve access to effective educators for students in high-poverty, high-minority schools (U.S. Department of Education 2010a, b).

## *Equity and Opportunity for All Students*

In an earlier study by Fusarelli (2004), strengths and weaknesses of NCLB were examined around potential positive and negative effects of NCLB on diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion and equity issues in schooling. Drawing on evidence from state-level systemic-based accountability initiatives coupled with a detailed analysis of the legislation, Fusarelli concluded that the promise of NCLB to enhance equity and opportunity by reducing the achievement gap will likely remain unfulfilled due to insufficient funding and an overly simplistic definition of the achievement gap. While it is important to ensure statistical reliability in state AYP determinations, such efforts must not undermine the strong subgroup accountability that is a core NCLB principle. Fusarelli (2007) later conducted a research study on the implementation

of the school choice and supplementary educational services provisions contained in NCLB. Findings revealed that school district progress, resistance, and obstacles to implementation were common trends in the NCLB services provisions which lead to the conclusion that much more research is needed in these areas to determine whether choices and supplementary educational services improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged children trapped in failing schools.

Data drawn from 186 teacher interviews as the part of a large ethnographic study that covered three decades of educational reform strategies pertaining to ethnocultural diversity in the United States and Canada, Skerrett and Hargreaves (2008) described the current effects of increasing standardization on racially diverse schools and concluded a need for reformed policies that embrace poststandardization in order to respond effectively to increasing student diversity. Sherman (2008) investigated how superintendents made sense of NCLB and sought out strategies employed by district leaders that target minority groups and the elimination of the achievement gap. Sherman concluded that district leaders, as moral agents, are tone setters for change in schools and negotiators and enactors of state and federal policies. Gayles (2007) study on The Florida School Recognition Program (FSRP) and the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) indicated that through the analysis of FSRP awards, it is established that poverty and race influence these awards with the assertion that such policies may act to legitimate and further entrench social stratification.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, all students must be included in an accountability system that builds on college- and career-ready standards, rewards progress and success, and requires rigorous interventions in the lowest performing schools. States, districts, and schools that do the most to improve outcomes for their students and to close achievement gaps are rewarded, as well as those who are on the path to have all students graduating or on track to graduate ready for college and a career by 2020. Most schools and leaders at the state, district, and school level enjoy broad flexibility to determine how to meet this ambitious goal (U.S. Department of Education 2010a, b). However, in the lowest performing schools that have not made progress over time, there is a mandate for dramatic change. To ensure that responsibility for improving student outcomes no longer falls solely at the door of schools, accountability is also promoted for states and districts that are not providing their schools, principals, and teachers with the support they need to succeed. Supporting and meeting the needs of diverse learners, including appropriate instruction and access to a challenging curriculum along with additional supports and attention where needed is critical. From English language learners and students with disabilities to Native American students, homeless students, migrant students, rural students, and neglected or delinquent students must be supported and programs strengthened that ensure schools are helping diverse learners meet college- and career-ready standards. Greater equity will ensure every student is given a fair chance to succeed, and every principal and teacher is given the resources to support student success. This means that school districts and states must take the necessary steps to ensure equity, by such means as moving toward comparability in resources between high- and low-poverty schools (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

### *Promote Local Innovation and Continuous Improvement*

Supporting, recognizing, and rewarding local innovations should encourage and support local innovation by creating fewer, larger, more flexible funding streams around areas integral to student success, giving states and districts flexibility to focus on local needs. (U.S. Department of Education 2010a, b). Tackling persistent achievement gaps requires public agencies, community organizations, and families to share responsibility for improving outcomes for students. Programs that include a comprehensive redesign of the school day, week, or year, that promote schools as the center of their communities, or that partner with community organizations are given priority. Critical to this discussion are new models that keep students safe, supported, and healthy both in and out of school, and that support strategies to better engage families and community members in their children's education (U.S. Department of Education 2008).

## Assessment/Standards-Based Reform and Instructional Leadership

With the publication in 1983 of *A Nation at Risk*, a stream of reports and pronouncements fueled the popular perception that the US education system was in crisis (Brooks 2006b). A quarter century later, American educational problems continue unabated (Tyack and Cuban 1995). According to Haertel (1999), regardless of the value of performance assessments in the classroom, a measurement-driven reform strategy that relies on performance assessments to drive curriculum and instruction seems bound to fail. Haertel asserted that "the use of test scores to index educational success or failure is almost never questioned. Low scores are bad news; high scores are good news" and that "in the rhetoric of education reform, it often sounds as if improving the education system is synonymous with improving test scores" (p. 80). Haertel further claimed that "in such a climate, the logic of high-stakes testing seems compelling . . . . Hold students or their schools accountable if they fail to make the grade" and "rather than micro-manage schools, policy makers can dictate that content standards and performance standards be created to codify expected learning outcomes and then let teachers and school administrators determine how best to attain those outcomes" (p. 80). High-stakes testing has been pronounced as signifying a rational management plan:

> if there are clear expectations, teachers will know what they are supposed to teach, students will see how hard they must work to make the grade, and taxpayers will know whether their schools are measuring up. If the standards are appropriate, if students and teachers are prepared to accept the challenge of meeting them, if the phase-in period for accountability is realistic, if reliable and valid tests are available to ascertain the extent of students' mastery, if teachers have the requisite knowledge and training to help students meet the challenge of new standards, if schools are not hobbled by extraneous demands and requirements, if necessary instructional materials and resources are available, if out-of-school factors are

> given appropriate consideration. . . then a measurement-driven accountability system ought to show just which students are working and which ones are slacking off, which teachers and schools should be rewarded and which ones should be punished. (Haertel 1999, p. 80)

Mintrop and Sunderman (2009) examined the federal accountability system driven by quotas and sanctions, stipulating the progression of underperforming schools through sanctions based on meeting performance quotas for specific demographic groups. The authors argued that even though sanctions-driven accountability may fail on practical outcomes, it may be retained for its secondary benefits and because there is a sense that credible policy alternatives are lacking.

Haertel (1999) reiterated that it is not hard to understand why accountability testing is popular with policy makers. Like many subsequent research reports have attested, testing enjoys broad popular support and calling for more or higher stakes testing is a visible, dramatic response to public concerns about education (Black et al. 2004; Blase and Blase 2004; Cohen 2002; Darling-Hammond and Barnett 2006; Hall and Kennedy 2006). Moreover, and to return to Haertel's (1999) assertion, "the idea that demanding higher test scores will improve schooling carries with it the not-too-subtle implication that students, teachers, and administrators just aren't trying hard enough" and "if efforts are redoubled, scores will rise" (p. 80). Haertel (1999) emphasized that:

> Proposing a new testing plan diverts attention from the problems alluded to by all those "ifs," including conflicting curricular expectations, inadequate teacher preparation, inadequate teaching materials and facilities, and the changing demography of the student population. Attacking those other problems is likely to take a lot of time and money, but calling for another new test costs next to nothing. Moreover, a new test can be implemented quickly, before the terms of current officeholders expire. Scores on an unfamiliar test are likely to be poor at the beginning and then to rise in years two and three. (p. 80)

Brown (2010) conducted a study on candidates in teacher education programs who were affected by high-stakes standards-based accountability reforms. Findings revealed that candidates entered their teacher education program with a complex understanding of the impact of these reforms on teaching and learning. Research asserts that the high-stakes testing approach to education reform has been tried repeatedly, with generally sorry results (Kornhaber 2004). With each new wave of reform, hope springs anew that this time past mistakes will be avoided, there will be dramatic improvements in student learning outcomes, and score gains will generalize beyond the specific tests used to hold teachers and students accountable (Neil 2003; Platt 2004; Popham 2001, 2004). Over the past two decades, one identified "past mistake" has been an overreliance on multiple-choice tests (Haertel 1999) and one identified solution has been an emphasis on using performance assessments. Performance assessment and education reform have been a centerpiece of state and national education reform initiatives since the 1990s (Popham 2004; Smith and Fey 2000; Stiggins 2004; Wilson 2004).

Of specific interest for the authors of this chapter is how assessment reform and educational leadership are connected (see Volante and Cherbini 2007) and how leaders of instruction play a pivotal role in the accountability and assessment equation. President Barack Obama promised to reward excellence and to promote innovation

(U.S. Department of Education 2010a) among states for improving the quality of their assessment systems, and to develop and implement the upgraded standards and assessments required by the College- and Career-Ready Students program. We broadly support Obama's general notions that improved assessments have the potential to help us: better understand student growth; better measure how states, districts, schools, principals, and teachers educate students; help teachers adjust, improve, and focus their teaching, and to; provide better information to students and their families (U.S. Department of Education 2010a). Further, we contend that improved assessments begin with school leaders who can assess achievement effectiveness and have the knowledge and skill that support effective instruction.

## *Instructional Leadership and Accountability*

In relation to accountability, the spotlight of educational leadership is on instruction and how school leaders carry out their daily routines as instructional leaders. As pressure for improving student performance in the current standards-based accountability environment swells and test results are increasingly scrutinized, school leaders are being urged to focus their efforts on the core business of schooling—teaching and learning (Huffman et al. 2007; Supovitz and Poglino 2001). Examples of myriad questions in the research literature include: What does it mean to be an instructional leader? What do instructional principal leaders do differently than other principals? How do instructional leaders spend their time? How do they shape the cultures of their schools? How knowledgeable are instructional leaders of subject-matter content? How do they work with, and develop, other leaders in their schools? How do they assess the effectiveness of student achievement? How are schools and those who work in them held accountable for quality education? What does this look like?

Assessment of student achievement is changing, largely because today's students face a world that will demand new knowledge and abilities. In the global economy of the twenty-first century, students will need to understand the basics, but also to think critically, to analyze, and to make inferences. Helping students develop these skills will require changes in assessment at the school and classroom level as well as new approaches to instruction and large-scale, high-stakes assessment. In most cases, such a task requires instructional leadership—leadership not just leadership by the principal but leadership that involves a wider cast of individuals in both formal and informal leadership roles, each of whom play a unique role in shifting the emphasis of school activity more directly onto instructional improvements that lead to enhanced student learning and performance (Brooks et al. 2007; Spillane et al. 2001). By contrast, the status quo in most schools is diffuse attention to instruction scattered amidst a variety of environmental, social, and organizational distracters that lead to fragmented and uneven instructional focus (Supovitz and Poglino 2001).

As early as 1973 (Wolcott 1973) and as recent as 2001 (Supovitz and Poglino 2001), researchers found that school leaders were typically engrossed in organizational care taking and the responsibility for instructional decisions falls to individual teachers. Instructional leadership, supported by the proper tools and resources, can counteract these tendencies toward fragmentation and incoherence. In support of similar research conducted on principal instructional leadership, teacher development, distributed leadership, leadership and learning, (e.g., Blase and Blase 1999, 2001, 2004; Brooks et al. 2007; Cobb and Alwell 2009; Gronn 2002; Knapp et al. 2003; Spillane et al. 2001), Supovitz and Poglino (2001) determined that when individual teachers independently determine the kind and type of instruction in their classrooms, three things tend to occur (p. 1): instructional culture of the school tends to splinter, as there is no overriding instructional guidance and no coherent glue to tie instruction to a larger whole; quality of instruction varies widely, as teachers bring different experiences and have different notions of what is good teaching; and, content that students receive, even in the same grade, differs from classroom to classroom, as each teacher prioritizes what students ought to know (Brooks 2006b).

Supovitz and Poglino (2001) conducted a study on a group of principals identified as instructional leaders who implemented the America's Choice Comprehensive School Reform Design. The design was developed by the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE). America's Choice is a standards-based school reform model that focuses heavily on aligning standards, curriculum materials, assessments, and other student work products. This core is supported by a leadership and management structure that emphasizes organizational support for instructional improvement and by the building of instructional capacity through ongoing school-based professional development. Findings revealed three emerging themes as crucial elements of instructional leadership: instructional leaders organized their schools around an emphasis on instructional improvement supported by a distinct vision of instructional quality; instructional leaders cultivated a community of instructional practice in their schools, creating safe and collaborative environments for teachers to engage in their work and drawing upon a wide network of individuals to deepen the work; and instructional leaders reorganized their own professional lives, time, and priorities to support instructional improvement (p. 1). It was through these three strategies that instructional leaders shifted the priorities of their schools toward a more disciplined emphasis on assessment for improving student performance.

## *Instructional Improvement Supported by Instructional Quality*

Research reports indicate that traditionally, school leaders engage in so many managerial duties that they hardly find any time to lead their schools (Blase and Blase 1999; Cuban 1998; Fullan 2005; Normore 2004, 2006, 2007; Supovitz and Poglino 2001; Wolcott 1973). In the book entitled, *Managerial Imperative and the Practice of Leadership in Schools*, educational historian Cuban (1998, cited in Supovitz and Poglino 2001) identified three dominant roles that have historically composed the

jobs of educational leaders (p. 1): educational leaders hold a managerial role as an administrative chief; educational leaders' jobs had a political role as a negotiator and facilitator with parents, administrators, and other constituencies; and educational leaders hold an instructional role as a teacher of teachers. As other researchers have reiterated (e.g., Heifetz and Laurie 1997; Olebe 2005), Cuban further argued that in most cases the managerial and political roles, not the instructional role, dominate the lives of most education leaders. These assertions further indicate that:

> The life of a school principal thus can be seen largely as a tug of war among managerial, political, and instructional responsibilities. Typically, managerial duties overwhelm the other two roles and principals construct their roles largely as managers of their schools. Given these forces, the job of the instructional leader becomes an ongoing struggle to preserve a substantial proportion of time and energy for instructional supervision and to make their managerial and political responsibilities subservient to their instructional ones. (Cited in Supovitz and Poglino 2001, pp. 1–2)

It stands to reason that if the goal of instructional improvement becomes the focus of school efforts and serves as the foundation for all activities then integrating these efforts in to the school's vision is critical. Research offers a variety of strategies to reinforce and distinguish the efforts of instructional leaders (Hargreaves and Fink 2006; Fullan 2005; Normore 2007). To return to findings from Supovitz and Poglino (2001), among these strategies are the articulation of a coherent vision of instruction, one which teachers and other faculty could envision and emulate; the development of a set of nonnegotiable expectations for effort and practice; and consistent implementation of the vision across classrooms (p. 4). Powerful instructional leadership involves more than just a generic focus on instruction (Blase and Blase 1999, 2001; Glickman et al. 2009; Hargreaves and Fink 2006). Supovitz and Poglino (2001) suggested that principals who "increase their schools' focus on instruction can certainly improve their students' performance, for more instruction is surely better than less. But exponential value of instructional leadership comes from the marriage of an intense organizational focus on instructional improvement with a clear vision of instructional quality" (p. 4).

A concrete vision of instructional quality provides "a tangible representation of what effective instructional planning and delivery looks like, provides teachers with an instructional portrait they can work toward, and provides a picture that administrators can measure implementation against" (Supovitz and Poglino 2001, p. 4). These authors assert that such a concrete conception of instruction serves two purposes for the savvy instructional leader:

> On the surface it provides them with a concrete vision of instruction against which to benchmark the instruction. But on a deeper level, this type of vision can bring the serious and challenging work of instructional improvement to the forefront of the discussions and work. It can change the tenor of the work and help principals to articulate a set of expectations. It also serves as the baseline for both academic and non-academic performance in the school. Teachers are not given a choice as to participation, but are expected to strive toward with the vision in their daily work. Additionally, the instructional leaders set an expectation for a vision of instruction to be consistently applied across classrooms and over time. As a result these expectations can create a standard for instruction that, over time, change the way that instruction occurs. (pp. 5–6)

## *Professional Learning Communities of Practice that Foster Effective Instructional Practice*

Until presently, there has never been greater consensus among educational researchers concerning the importance of professional learning communities (PLCs) as a strategy to ensure that all students learn. In 2005, many of North Americas' most respected educational leadership researchers, including Roland Barth, Michael Fullan, Lawrence Lezotte, Douglas Reeves, Dennis Sparks, Mike Schmoker, to name a few, demonstrated how their research validated and complemented essential PLCs of practice (DuFour et al. 2005; Tucker 2008). Further, almost all the leading educational organizations in North America endorse PLCs as a best practice including the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, National Education Association, National Staff Development Council, and National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (NAESP and NASSP). Considered a powerful approach to learning a PLC cultivates a community committed to fostering instructional focus and improvement across the school. The essential need for leadership—at all levels of school organization—to help PLCs realize their promise of improved student achievement (Hord and Sommers 2008). These learning communities of practice create conditions that honor all learners, build community, and design engaging and meaningful lessons that meet standards and benchmarks while keeping the learning in classrooms rigorous and relevant.

The concept of PLCs of practice has been garnering support within education over the past decade. Based upon the social learning theories (Wenger 1998), the basic idea behind communities of practice holds that groups that form around some specific purpose are a more effective means to achieve that purpose than would be individuals working on the same task in isolation (Hughes and Kritsonis 2007; Supovitz and Christman 2003; Williams et al. 2008; Vescio et al. 2008). This is because there are synergies of learning in social contexts that are believed to be stronger than traditional transmission methods. In order to develop effective group practices, individuals have to comfortably and regularly interact in order to form relationships in substantive and particular ways around specific activities (Supovitz and Poglino 2001). Thus, in education, school faculties or teacher teams that collaboratively engage in instructional focus are more likely to enhance student performance. According to Supovitz and Poglino, "developing meaningful communities around instructional practice is not an easy task. Groups may have a relatively easy time developing comfortable social interactions, but it is more difficult for them to develop sustained communities of practice around instruction" (p. 5). Hord (1997) explains how communities of educators inquiring into the intricate connection between teaching practice and student learning can lead to improved achievement for all students. Marshall (2005) advocates a model that is "owned by teacher teams" (p. 732)—a model where teachers are evaluated on the work they do with colleagues—creating, assessing, and adjusting their instruction in cycles using "interim assessments" that reflect attention to essential state standards (p. 733). Recent research has shown that organizational restructuring alone does not increase the likelihood that groups will

develop communities of instructional practice (McLaughlin and Talbert 2006; Newman and Wehlage 1995; Stoll et al. 2006; Supovitz and Christman 2003). Supovitz and Poglino (2001) identify several barriers that may impede the development of communities of instructional practice (pp. 7–8): conflicts may arise around traditional roles and responsibilities, between authority and autonomy; philosophical disagreements about educational content and methods may arise; language of instructional refinement may not be held in common, leading to miscommunication; and incompatible incentive systems may send conflicting signals.

In their America's Choice study, Supovitz and Poglino (2001) identified several strategies that principal instructional leaders used to foster community in their school that was focused on instructional improvement (pp. 8–9): carefully developed a safe environment within which their teachers could take the risks associated with change; emphasized open channels of communication and strong collaboration among their faculty for the purpose of expanding the networks of engagement around issues of instructional improvement; cultivated informal and formal leaders in their schools to both allow themselves time for instructional attention and to broaden the base for change in the school; employed powerful and symbolic actions and events to dramatize and reinforce their message; and, developed strong systems for accountability even as they expanded teachers' flexibility to further develop their instructional practices. Recognizing that there are disincentives to changing instructional practices associated with formal observations, instructional leaders can carefully separated their visits to classrooms for the purpose of nurturing teachers from the high-stakes routines embedded in their organizations (Supovitz and Poglino 2001, p. 7).

## High-Stakes Tests: The Primary Tool for Measuring Student Progress

Most teachers do not believe that high-stakes testing is an accurate measure of student learning or school effectiveness (Reese et al. 2004), yet they are under intense pressure to meet state testing goals. One study concluded that standards and high-stakes testing is the number one reason experienced teachers leave the professions due to the pressure to improve test scores and the powerlessness felt by many teachers (Popham 2001; Tye and O'Brien 2002). Further, well-respected school leaders have been dismissed without warning solely due to low scores on a single set of tests (McGhee and Nelson 2005).

A growing body of evidence indicates that improved scores on state tests do not mean increased student learning (Amrein and Berliner 2003; Klein et al. 2000; Reese et al. 2004; Supovitz 2009, 2010). These studies contend that students' motivation to learn is decreased due to stress, fear and anxiety; test preparation cause student burnout on testing; and graduation rates of African American and Hispanic students have decreased considerably during the era of high-stakes testing. Open adult

learning in schools violates long-held stereotypes of teachers' professional expertise. According to Supovitz and Poglino (2001), "the expectations of our educational culture are that teachers—as if somehow by virtue of their titles as 'teachers'—are experts of their craft. Even new teachers are illogically expected to be masters of their profession, springing forth from their pre-service experiences, fully equipped to lead our youth to high levels of knowledge and skill . . . that scarce opportunities and time available for professional development in most school environments is a testament to the low priority that we place on teacher learning" (p. 7). Teachers are supposedly "the learned". . . . "but truly effective teaching (as opposed to caretaking) is a lifelong challenge in itself, a multifaceted endeavor, filled with complex student-teacher and student-student interactions and instant opportunities grasped and missed" (Supovitz and Poglino2001, p. 8).

## *Developing Layers of Leaders*

The day is long gone when the fate of schools' neediest learners is relegated to the school psychologist and to student study teams. Leadership matters and schools need effective leaders more than ever (Leithwood et al. 2004). While the principal is the leader of the learning process and acts as the "head learner" (Barth 1990, p. 162), Spillane et al. (2001) argue that it is more legitimate to examine school leadership as the cumulative activities of a broader set of leaders, both formal and informal, within a school rather than as the work of one actor. Principals may be "leaders amongst leaders," (p. 25) but it serves both their own and their schools' interests to develop a broad set of leadership in their schools (see also Brooks et al. 2007; Buffum et al. 2009; Zependa et al. 2003). The development of other school leaders serves many purposes. First, "it expands expertise across the faculty, thereby deepening efforts for instructional improvement and increasing the likelihood that these efforts will be sustained over time . . . . it becomes a necessity for principals to lighten their management burden in order to spend more time in the classroom and on instructional issues". . . and . . . "when high-quality instruction becomes the central effort of a school, then those that are quality instructors become increasingly valued" (Supovitz and Poglino 2001, pp. 7–8).

Many of the leaders who rise in schools where communities of instructional practice are developed do not hold formal leadership positions in the school (Supovitz and Poglino 2001). Yet, "since the prime focus of schools is instructional improvement, and the currency in these realms is instructional expertise, it is not surprising that the principals often turn to effective teachers to become leaders in the schools. . . once school leaders give value to instructional quality, effective instructors become more valuable (Supovitz and Poglino 2001, p. 4). Distributing leadership responsibilities across the staff of a school is a necessity for principals who want to protect a portion of their time for instructional leadership (Zependa et al. 2003). Many principal instructional leaders make conscious effort to spread their management responsibilities across formal school leader positions. In Supovitz and Poglino's study

(2001), principals publicly acknowledged teachers who were successfully adopting the America's Choice design as leaders for their grade levels. These authors further noted that "Teachers that refused to adopt standards-based practices were asked to teach at other schools. Several of the principals viewed their accountability systems as a tacit agreement with teachers: 'you will have all the support you need to do this work and you will be expected to do it'. It is, no doubt, challenging to develop a coherent set of expectations and incentives within a school" (p. 8). In support of other research (e.g., Zependa et al. 2003), once the contours of a community become well established the principals become less important enforcers as the community itself holds its members accountable despite a variety of external forces impinged upon these systems. Programs imposed by districts, state testing programs, and even federal requirements often send contradictory and confusing signals of priorities into schools, providing competing incentives for teachers (Supovitz and Poglino 2001).

## Concluding Reflections: Implications for Policy and Practice

At the surface level, NCLB seems to be a positive and rational approach to problems facing public education in the United States. In principle, everybody would certainly agree that every child deserves a quality education, achievement gaps among students should be eliminated, and districts and schools should be held accountable for student learning (Glickman et al. 2009). Upon closer examination however several aspects of NCLB are problematic. As described earlier, these problems have placed school leaders, supervisors, and teachers across the nation in one of the great moral dilemmas of our time. On one hand, it would be unacceptable for these stakeholders to declare NCLB immoral and refuse to help students prepare for their state's high-stakes test. Glickman et al. (2009) argue that such action "would place their students at a disadvantage, help bring down sanctions on their school, and eventually result in their dismissal, after which they would no longer be of any value to their students" (p. 346). On the other hand, an abundance of school leaders and teachers believe that NCLB, as implemented, is at best not improving and at worst is harmful to many of our children. The question of morality then becomes whether it is wrong to comply with a system that has such negative effects. Brighton (2002) noted that many of these leaders and teachers respond to this dilemma by attempting to "straddle the fence" between what they believe to be sound instructional practices and test preparation strategies. While there may well be some merit to an approach where a balance is struck between "best practice" and "test practice" (Brighton 2002), we contend that educators have a moral obligation—though difficult—to directly confront the harmful processes and outcomes of NCLB and work for change in its provisions. The outlook and concerns of our communities, high school students, school and district leaders, policymakers, teachers, and researchers who bring different perspective to the discourse may or may not agree that NCLB's fundamental goal of leaving no child behind is honorable and merits universal support. It is from this point of consensus that we hope more stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers will continue to assess the potential and limitations of this landmark legislation.

Instructionally effective school leaders regularly organize their schools and personal priorities to pursue improved student performance (Supovitz and Poglino 2001). By developing an organizational emphasis on instructional improvement, promoting instructional quality, and creating communities of practice instructional leaders can demonstrate how schools can attain the instructional emphasis that leads to notable improvement in student performance particularly in high-stakes testing contexts (Herman 2004; Supovitz 2010). In this light, instructional leaders can lead student achievement in part by using test scores to help identify trends and segments of the student population that are not achieving to standard. These leaders can determine strategic programming and interventions that include an awareness of students' fundamental knowledge and learning needs. According to Volante and Cherubini (2007), "such a process is instrumental in complementing the developmental phases of students' academic and social growth. Instructional leaders are well positioned to focus the attention of their teachers on current assessment and evaluation practices . . . It is through communities of instructional practice that they can then review these practices and their bearings in juxtaposition to any negative and adverse implications of standardize testing protocol" (Para. 17). These authors further assert that "by discussing large-scale assessment measures and teacher assessment objectives" within their communities of practice, leaders at all levels—both formal and informal—"can seek input from parents and school councils on strategies to support learning and achievement on the entire curriculum in the context of situated learning" (p. 18). To quote an old saw and in the words of Volante and Cherubini (2007), parents can be reassured that the school's effort toward improving student learning in tested areas is "not merely fattening the proverbial prize pig at the cost of starving the other farm animals" (Para. 18). Research clearly indicates that in this era of accountability and standards-based reform, it behooves teachers to step up to the plate and assume leadership and/or team leadership roles by engaging in data collection and analysis of their students' test scores, making specific interpretations based on their classroom observations and evaluations while simultaneously aligning pedagogical practices to both classroom and large-scale assessments.

Among the short-term strategies cited in the literature for schools to consider for meeting the requirements of NCLB while balancing the "best practice" and "test practice" are: maintain a rich curriculum and avoid narrowing the curriculum to tested content; use authentic instruction including higher order thinking, deep knowledge and connection to the world beyond the classroom; extensive use of formative assessment where teachers observe students' classroom performance, engage in diagnostic discussion with students and revise instruction accordingly; differentiate and scaffold the instruction to meet diverse student needs; place limits on test-taking practice and skills; focus on thorough data-based analysis of why test scores are low and plan and implement a thorough data-driven school improvement plan; and, provide professional development that helps teachers and school leaders address conflicts between NCLB and best practice. While efforts in the short term to reduce harmful policies that prevent improved student learning is certainly helpful, in the long term is it is not enough. We believe that the stakes are so high for our public school students and public education that all K-12 educators, parents, university educators,

and enlightened business people and policymakers who recognize the critical need to change public policy must collaborate to educate the general public, and push directly for new legislation at the state and federal level with the ultimate goal to protect students from external factors that are interfering with student learning and to promote those that foster higher levels of academic achievement.

## Appendix A


### President Barack Obama: Every Child in America Deserves a World-Class Education

Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

We must do better. Together, we must achieve a new goal, that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college completion. We must raise the expectations for our students, for our schools, and for ourselves—this must be a national priority. We must ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for college and a career.

A world-class education is also a moral imperative—the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society. We will not remain true to our highest ideals unless we do a far better job of educating each one of our sons and daughters. We will not be able to keep the American promise of equal opportunity if we fail to provide a world-class education to every child.

This effort will require the skills and talents of many, but especially our nation's teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Our goal must be to have a great teacher in every classroom and a great principal in every school. We know that from the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents—it is the teacher standing at

the front of the classroom. To ensure the success of our children, we must do better to recruit, develop, support, retain, and reward outstanding teachers in America's classrooms.

Reforming our schools to deliver a world-class education is a shared responsibility—the task cannot be shouldered by our nation's teachers and principals alone. We must foster school environments where teachers have the time to collaborate, the opportunities to lead, and the respect that all professionals deserve. We must recognize the importance of communities and families in supporting their children's education, because a parent is a child's first teacher. We must support families, communities, and schools working in partnership to deliver services and supports that address the full range of student needs.

This effort will also require our best thinking and resources—to support innovative approaches to teaching and learning; to bring lasting change to our lowest performing schools; and to investigate and evaluate what works and what can work better in America's schools. Instead of labeling failures, we will reward success. Instead of a single snapshot, we will recognize progress and growth. And instead of investing in the status quo, we must reform our schools to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps, inspire our children to excel, and turn around those schools that for too many young Americans aren't providing them with the education they need to succeed in college and a career.

My Administration's blueprint for reauthorization of the ESEA is not only a plan to renovate a flawed law, but also an outline for a reenvisioned federal role in education. This is a framework to guide our deliberations and shared work—with parents, students, educators, business and community leaders, elected officials, and other partners—to strengthen America's public education system.

I look forward to working with the Congress to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act so that it will help to provide America's students with the world-class education they need and deserve.

*Source*

U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *Reward excellence and promote innovation. Reauthorizing the elementary and secondary education act* (p. 3). Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/faq/reward-excellence.pdf.

## References

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Public Law 111–5, 111th Cong., 1st sess. (2009). The RTT fund is described in Title XIV, Section 14006 of the law. See Recovery.gov, "The Recovery Act". Retrieved from http://www.recovery.gov/About/Pages/The_Act.aspx. Accessed 17 Feb 2009.

Amrein, A. L., & Berliner, D. (2003). The effects of high stakes testing on student motivation and learning. *Educational Leadership, 60*(5), 32–37.

Anderson, J. A. (2005). Accountability in education. *Education Policy Series, 1,* 1–26.

Au, W. (2007). High-stakes testing and curricular control: A qualitative metasynthesis. *Educational Researcher, 36*(5), 258–267.

Barth, R. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents and principals can make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Berliner, D. (2005). The near impossibility of testing for teacher quality. *Journal of Teacher Education, 56*(3), 205–213.

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C, Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2004). Working inside the black box: Assessment for learning in the classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(1), 9–21.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999). Principals' instructional leadership and teacher development: Teachers' perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(3), 349–378

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2001). The teacher's principal. *Journal of Staff Development, 22*(1), 22–25.

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2004). *Handbook of instructional leadership*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

Brighton, C. M. (2002). Straddling the fence: Implementing best practices in the age of accountability. *Gifted Child Today, 25*(3), 30–33.

Brooks, J. S. (2006a). Tinkering toward utopia or stuck in a rut? School reform implementation at Wintervalley High. *Journal of School Leadership, 16*(3), 240–265.

Brooks, J. S. (2006b). *The dark side of school reform: Teaching in the space between reality and utopia*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Brooks, J. S., Jean-Marie, G., Normore, A. H., & Hodgins, D. (2007). Distributed leadership for social justice: Equity and influence in an urban high school. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*(4), 378–408.

Brown, C. P. (2010). Children of reform: The impact of high-stakes education reform on preservice teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(5), 477–491.

Buck, S., Ritter, G. W., Jensen, N. C., & Rose, C. P. (2010). Teachers say the most interesting things—An alternative view of testing. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(6), 50–54.

Buffum, A., Mattos, M., & Weber, C (2009). *Pyramid response to intervention: RTI, professional learning communities, and how to respond when kids don't learn*. Bloomington: Solution Tree Press.

Carnoy, M., & Loeb, S. (2002). Does external accountability affect student outcomes? A cross state analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24*(4), 205–231.

Cawelti, G. (2006). The side effects of NCLB. *Educational Leadership, 64*(3), 64–68.

Center on Education Policy. (2008). *A call to restructure restructuring: Lessons from the no child left behind act in five states*. Washington: Center on Education Policy.

Chrismer, S. S., Hodge, S. T., & Saintil, D. (2006, winter). Introduction to assessing NCLB. *Harvard Education Review, 76*(4), 461–473

Cizek, G. J. (2001). More unintended consequences of high-stakes testing. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 20*(4), 19–27.

Cobb, R. B., & Alwell, M. (2009). Transition planning/coordinating interventions for youth with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 32*(2), 70–81.

Cohen, M. (2002). Unruly crew. *Education Next, 2*(3), 43–47.

Covaleskie, J. F. (2002). Two cheers for standardized testing. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 6*(2). Retrieved on March 5, 2012 from http://www.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/volume6/covaleskie.html.

Cuban, L. (1998). *Managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). *Standards and assessments: Where we are and what we need*. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www.tcrecord.org.
Darling-Hammond, L., & Barnett, B. (2006). Highly qualified teachers for all. *Educational Leadership, 64*(3), 14–20.
Darling-Hammond, L., Rustique-Forrester, E., & Pecheone, R. L. (2005). *Multiple measures approaches to high school graduation: A review of state student assessment policies*. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www.schoolredesign.net/srn/mm/pdf/multiple_measures.pdf.
DeVito, P. J. (2010). *The oversight of state standards and assessment programs: Perspectives from a former state assessment director*. Washington: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.
DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R. (Eds.). (2005). *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington: Solution Tree.
Earl, L. (2003). *Assessment as learning*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.
Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.
Fusarelli, L. (2004). The potential impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on equity and diversity in American education. *Educational Policy, 18*(1), 71–94.
Fusarelli, L. (2007). Restricted choices, limited options: Implementing choice and supplemental educational services in No Child Left Behind. *Educational Policy, 21*(1), 132–154.
Gayles, J. (2007). Race, reward, and reform: An implicative examination of the Florida School Recognition Program. *Educational Policy, 21*(3), 439–456.
Glickman, C., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2009). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership*. Boston: Pearson Education.
Gonzalez, R. (2002). *The No Child Left Behind Act: Implications for local educators and advocates for Latino students, families, and communities*. Washington: National Council of La Raza.
Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration* (pp. 653–696). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Haertel, E. H. (1999). Performance assessment and education reform. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80,* 662–666.
Hall, D., & Kennedy, S. (2006). *Primary progress, secondary challenge: A state-by-state look at student achievement patterns*. Washington: Education Trust.
Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). *Sustainable leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Heifetz, R. A., & Laurie, D. L. (1997). The work of leadership. *Harvard Business Review, 75*(1), 124–134.
Herman, J. L. (2004). The effects of testing on instruction. In S. H. Fuhrman & R. F. Elmore (Eds.), *Redesigning accountability systems for education* (pp. 141–166). New York: Teachers College Press.
Hershberg, T., Simon, V. A., & Lea-Kruger, B. (2004). The revelations of value-added: An assessment model that measures student growth in ways that NCLB fails to do. *School Administrator, 61*(11), 10–12.
Hess, F. M. (2010). *Why I'm feeling sorry for Sec. Duncan*. Rick Hess Straight Up. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick_hess_straight_up/2010/08/why_im_feeling_sorry_ for_ sec_duncan.html.
Hord, S. (1997) *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement*. Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/pubs/change34/.
Hord, S., & Sommers, W. (Eds.). (2008). *Leading professional learning communities, voices from research and practice*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.
Huffman, J. B., Pankake, A., & Munoz, A. (2007). The tri-level model in action: Site, district, and state plans for school accountability in increasing school success. *Journal of School Leadership, 16*(5), 569–582.

Hughes, T. A., & Kritsonis, W. A. (2007). *Professional learning communities and the positive effects on achievement: A national agenda for school improvement*. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www.allthingsplc.info/pdf/articles/plcandthepositiveeffects.pdf.

Klein, S., Hamilton, L., McCaffrey, D., & Stretcher, B (2000). *What do test scores in Texas tell us?* Santa Monica: RAND Corp.

Knapp, M. S., Copland, M. A., & Talbert, J. E. (2003). *Leading for learning: Reflective tools for school and district leaders*. Seattle: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Kohn, A. (2000). *The case against standardized testing: Raising scores, ruining the schools*. Portsmouth: Heineman.

Kornhaber, M. L. (2004). Appropriate and inappropriate forms of testing, assessment, and accountability. *Educational Policy, 18*(1), 45–70.

Lee, J. (2004). Multiple facets of inequity in racial and ethnic achievement gaps. *Peabody Journal of Education, 79*(2), 51–73.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *Learning from leadership project: Review of research: How leadership influences student learning*. Toronto: The Wallace Foundation.

Manna, P. (2006). Control, persuasion, and educational accountability: Implementing the No Child Left Behind Act. *Educational Policy, 20*(3), 471–94.

Manna, P. (2010). *Competitive grant making and education reform Assessing Race to the Top's current impact and future prospects*. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www.aei.org/paper/100156.

Marshall, K. (2005). It's time to rethink teacher supervision and evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(10), 727–744.

McGhee, M. M., & Nelson, S. (2005). Sacrificing leaders, villainizing leadership: How educational accountability policies impair school leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan, 81,* 728–734.

McLaughlin, M., & J. Talbert. (2006). *Building school-based teacher learning communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Mintrop, H., & Sunderman, G. L. (2009). Predictable failure of federal sanctions-driven accountability for school improvement—and why we may retain it anyway. *Educational Researcher, 38*(5), 353–364.

Neil, M. (2003). The dangers of testing. *Educational Leadership, 60*(5), 43–46.

Newman, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). *Successful school restructuring: A report to the public and educators*. Madison: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

Normore, A. H. (2004). Leadership success in schools: Planning, recruitment and socialization. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 8*(10), Special Issue. Retrieved on March 5, 2012 from http://www.ucalgary.ca/∼iejll.

Normore, A. H. (2006). Leadership recruitment and selection in school districts: Trends and issues. *Journal of Educational Thought, 40*(1), 41–73.

Normore, A. H. (2007). A continuum approach for developing school leaders in a large urban school district. *UCEA Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 2*(3). Retrieved on March 5, 2012 from http://www.ucea.org/JRLE/issue.php.

Olebe, M. (2005). Helping new teachers. *The Clearing House, 78*(4), 158–163.

Platt, R. (2004). Standardized tests: Whose standard are we talking about? *Phi Delta Kappan, 85*(5), 381–382.

Popham, W. J. (2001). Teaching to the test. *Educational Leadership, 58*(6), 16–20.

Popham, W. J. (2004). All about accountability/Why assessment illiteracy is professional suicide. *Educational Leadership, 62*(1), 82–83.

Reese, M., Gordon, S. P., & Price, L. R. (2004). Teachers' perceptions of high-stakes testing. *Journal of School Leadership, 14,* 464–496.

Schoen, L., & Fusarelli, L. (2008). Innovation, NCLB, and the fear factor: The challenge of leading 21st-century schools in an era of accountability. Educational Policy, *22*(1), 181–203.

Sherman, W. (2008). No Child Left Behind: A legislative catalyst for superintendent action to eliminate test-score gaps? *Educational Policy, 22*(5), 675–704.

Skerrett, A., & Hargreaves, A. (2008). Student diversity and secondary school change in a context of increasingly standardized reform. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(4), 913–945.

Smith, M. L., & Fey, P. (2000). Validity and accountability of high-stakes testing. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(5), 334–344.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher, 30*(3), 23–28.

Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change, 7*(4), 221–258.

Stiggins, R. (2004). New assessment beliefs for a new school mission. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(1), 22–27.

Sunderman, G., Kim, J., & Orfield, G. (2005). *NCLB meets school realities: Lessons from the field*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Supovitz, J. A. (2001). *Developing communities of instructional practice*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Supovitz, J.A. (2009). Can high stakes testing leverage educational improvement? Prospects from the last decade of testing and accountability reform. Journal of Educational Change, *10*(2), 211–227.

Supovitz, J. (2010). Is high-stakes testing working? *@PENNGSE: A review of research, 7*(2). Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www.gse.upenn.edu/review.

Supovitz, J. A., & Christman, J. B. (2003). *Developing communities of instructional practice: Lessons from Cincinnati and Philadelphia*. (CPRE Policy Briefs RB-39). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Supovitz, J. A., & Poglino, S. (2001). Instructional leadership in a standards-based reform. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Tucker, C. (2008). *Implementing and sustaining professional learning communities in support of student learning*. Alexandria: Educational Research Service.

Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tye, B. B., & O'Brien, L. (2002). Why are experienced teachers leaving the profession? *Phi Delta Kappan, 84,* 24–32.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (2008). *Accountability, assessments, and transparency: How the final Title 1 regulations support and strengthen the fundamental tenets of NCLB*. Washington: US Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2009). Race to the top fund; final rule. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-27426.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2010a). *Reward excellence and promote innovation. Reauthorizing the elementary and secondary education act*. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/faq/reward-excellence.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2010b). *A blueprint for reform: The reauthorization of the elementary and secondary education act*. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2010c). *Race to the top fund: Legislation, regulations, and guidance*. Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/legislation.html.

Williams, R., Brien, K., Sprague, C., & Sullivan, G. (2008). Professional learning communities: Developing a school-level readiness instrument. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 74*(6). Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/illiamsspraguesullivan.html.

Vescio V., Ross, D., & Adams A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24,* 80–91.

Volante, L., & Cherbini, L. (2007). Connecting educational leadership with multi-level assessment reform. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 11*(12). Retrieved on March 6, 2012 from http://www.ucalgary.ca/iejll/vol11/volante.

Watanabe, M. (2007). Displaced teacher and state priorities in a high-stakes accountability context. *Educational Policy, 21*(2), 311–368.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, M. (Ed.). (2004). *Towards coherence between classroom assessment and accountability: 103rd yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (1973). *The man in the principal's office: An ethnography*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Zependa, S. J., Mayers, R. S., & Benson, B. N. (2003). *The call to teacher leadership*. New York: Eye on Education.

# Chapter 4
# Educational Leadership in the Context of Low-Stakes Accountability: The Canadian Perspective

**Don A. Klinger and Hana Saab**

## An Overview of the Canadian Context

Canada, geographically the second largest country in the world, has a relatively small population of close to 35 million people. The country is made up of ten provinces and three northern territories. Overall, Canadians have a high standard of living with easily accessible public education. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for public education, with each province/territory managing its own educational policies, curriculum development, and system monitoring. Within each province, regional school boards or districts are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the education system, organizing schools, hiring teachers, and delivering instruction. Catholic schools are publicly funded in Ontario and Alberta, and are partially funded in some of the other provinces (e.g., British Columbia). Typically, these public education systems reflect the shifting educational, political, and the predominant social perspectives of each province/territory. Nevertheless, there is a set of similar structures and shared values and goals for the education of Canadian children (McEwen 1995; Klinger et al. 2008; Volante and Ben Jaafar 2008). For example, children generally begin schooling in Kindergarten and continue until Grade 12. Ontario does offer 2 years of kindergarten and Quebec's schools only go to Grade 11, with students then completing 2 years at CEGEP (Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, and in English, College of General and Vocational Education). Public schooling is further divided into elementary and secondary education, with secondary beginning between Grade 6 and 9, depending on the province. Operationally, this distinction may also vary within provinces with alternative school structures including middle schools, K-12 schools, and junior and senior secondary high schools.

D. A. Klinger (✉)
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Canada
e-mail: don.klinger@queensu.ca

H. Saab
Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto, Canada

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_4, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

While there are no national educational curricula, curriculum materials developed in the provinces tend to reflect similar expectations and outcomes for students. These expectations and goals highlight the need to provide students the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to contribute to a prosperous society. Students moving between provinces can usually continue their education with few if any gaps on key expectations, especially in the elementary system. There tend to be greater curricular differences at the Grade 11 and 12 levels. Courses in the early secondary years tend to be more general, for example, science or social studies. Senior secondary courses (Grade 11 and 12) are more specialized and paired. Students who wish to complete Chemistry 12 will have first completed the prerequisite Chemistry 11 course, often with a required minimum grade. In some provinces (e.g., Alberta and Ontario), some senior secondary courses are also classified as "academic" university stream or applied "college" stream courses. Such separation for senior secondary English, mathematics, and sciences is more common across the provinces.

## The Evolving Large-Scale Assessment Programs in Canada

Of particular interest for our work has been the increasing use of provincial and territorial assessment (examination) programs over the past 25 years, and the growing accountability purposes for which these assessments are now being used (Klinger et al. 2008; Volante and Ben Jaafar 2008). Although large-scale provincial assessment programs are not new in Canadian education, they have not been a constant component of provincial educational systems. Historically, these large-scale tests were used to ensure students demonstrated expected levels of performance, and used to determine school entrance and exit (Nagy 2000; Taylor and Tubianosa 2001; Klinger and DeLuca 2009). Nonetheless, education reforms throughout the mid 1900s resulted in the disappearance of the majority of the large-scale assessment programs throughout the country (Ontario Department of Education 1968; Raphael 1993). Those that remained tended to use sampling approaches with the intention of measuring overall system performance within a specific province. As an example, the Provincial Learning Assessment Program in British Columbia was intended to monitor student performance, with the results being used to revise curriculum and direct learning resources. Alberta reintroduced large-scale testing for students enrolled in academic Grade 12 courses in the early 1980s. British Columbia followed shortly thereafter. These initial large-scale testing programs were solely intended to be used as part of students' grades in these courses, and in the case of British Columbia, determine scholarship winners. In the years since this time, new assessment programs have been introduced across the provinces.

Currently, every province and territory has some form of large-scale assessment of public school children (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). These assessments serve several functions (Nagy 2000; Klinger et al. 2008). A brief overview of the testing programs in each of the provinces is provided. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 also provide a summary of

**Table 4.1** Provincial/territorial assessments in Canada by grade. (Adapted from Klinger et al. 2008)

| Province/territory | Grade | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | K-2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| British Columbia | | | X | | | X | | | X | X | X |
| Alberta | | X | | | X | | | X | | | X |
| Saskatchewan | | | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Manitoba | | X | | | | X | X | | | | X |
| Ontario | | X | | | X | | | X | X | | |
| Quebec | | | | | X | | | | | X | X |
| New Brunswick-Anglophone | X | | X | | | X | X | X | | | |
| New Brunswick-Francophone | X | X | | X | | | X | X | X | X | |
| Nova Scotia | | X | | | X | | | X | | | X |
| Prince Edward Island | | X | | | X | | | X | | | |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | | X | | | X | | | X | | X | X |
| Yukon | | X | | | X | | | X | X | | X |
| Northwest Territories | | X | | | X | | | X | | | X |
| Nunavut | | | | | | | | | | | X |

*X* designates testing at that grade level.

the testing programs that exist, the grade levels and subjects tested, and the primary purposes of the different testing programs (see also 2008).

**British Columbia** Two provincial assessment programs are administered in British Columbia: the Foundations Skills Assessment (FSA) and the Graduation Program Provincial Examinations. The British Columbia's FSA is an annual province-wide assessment for Grade 4 and 7 students. Reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy are assessed in each grade. The FSA tests are administered in early to mid February and have no impact on students' grades. The purposes of the FSAs are to monitor student achievement in these core curricular areas, and guide schools' efforts to improve student achievement. Secondary students are required to take five course-based provincial examinations (PE; language arts 10 and 12, science 10, mathematics 10, and social studies 11). These tests, intended to ensure graduating students have consistent levels of minimum competency, contribute 20% of the students' course grades for Grade 10 and 11 courses and 40% toward students' Grade 12 language arts course. The provincial testing program in British Columbia has undergone several changes over the past decade. The Grade 10 and 11 tests have replaced the previously administered Grade 10 FSA, and the Grade 12 PEs became optional in 2004 and were removed entirely in 2011 in every subject except language arts.

**Alberta** Currently, two assessment programs are administered in Alberta on a yearly basis: the Achievement Testing Program (ATP) and the Alberta Diploma Examinations Program (ADEP). All students in Grade 3, 6, and 9 complete the ATP in mathematics and language arts (reading and writing). In addition, Grade 6 and 9 students complete tests in science and social studies near the end of the semester or

**Table 4.2** Provincial/territorial examination programs and their stated purposes. (Adapted from Klinger et al. 2008)

| Province/territory | Purposes/uses | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Accountability | Gate keeping | Instructional diagnosis |
| British Columbia | FSA, PE | PE | |
| Alberta | ATP, ADEP | ADEP | ATP |
| Saskatchewan | AFL, DE | DE | AFL |
| Manitoba | PE | PE | Grade 3, 4, MYA |
| Ontario | Grades 3, 6, 9, OSSLT | Grade 9 Numeracy, OSSLT | |
| Québec | Cycle 2, 3 Exams | UEs | |
| New Brunswick (Anglophone) | Grades 2–8 | ELPA/ELPR, Grade 10 French Immersion, Grade 12 French | |
| New Brunswick (Francophone) | Grades 2–5, 8, 10 | Grade 10 English, Grade 11 French/ Mathematics | Grade 4 |
| Nova Scotia | PAs, NSE | NSE | PAs |
| Prince Edward Island | Grades 3, 6, 9 | Grade 9 | Grades 3, 6, 9 |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | CRT, PEs | PEs | |
| Northwest territories | ATP, ADEP | ADEP | ATP |
| Yukon | YAT | YAT (Grade 9), LPI, PE | |
| Nunavut | | ADEP | |

*FSA* foundation skills assessment; *PE* provincial examination in British Columbia, Manitoba and Yukon, public examination in Newfoundland & Labrador; *ATP* achievement testing program; *ADEP* Alberta diploma examination program; *AFL* assessment for learning; *DE* departmental examination; *OSSLT* Ontario secondary school literacy test; *Cycle 2* corresponds to Grade 4; *Cycle 3* corresponds to Grade 6; *UEs* uniform examinations; *ELPA* English language proficiency assessment; *ELPR* English language proficiency reassessment; *PA* provincial assessments; *NSE* Nova Scotia examinations; *CRT c*riterion-referenced test; *YAT* Yukon achievement test; and *LPI* language proficiency index

school year. The purposes of the ATP are to (a) determine if students are meeting learning expectations; (b) report to the public how well students are meeting provincial standards; and (c) assist schools, boards, and the province in monitoring and improving student learning. The ADEP for Grade 12 students includes 14 examinations for selected core academic subjects. These examinations are mandatory for students enrolled in these academic courses and the examination scores contribute 50% toward students' course grades. The ADEP help to certify the level of individual achievement in selected Grade 12 courses while also ensuring that province-wide standards of achievement are maintained. Individual and group results are provided to help teachers and administrators plan and deliver effective instruction.

**Saskatchewan** Two provincial assessment programs are given annually in Saskatchewan, the Assessment for Learning Program (AFL) and the Grade 12 Departmental Examinations (DE). The AFL program includes assessments in reading,

mathematics, and writing. Students in Grade 4, 7, and 10 complete the reading assessment in April and students in Grade 5, 8, and 11 complete the mathematics assessments in June and the writing assessments in April. All of the Grade 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10 students complete the assessments, whereas only those students enrolled in the appropriate mathematics or language arts Grade 11 courses are required to complete the assessment. The AFL program's purpose is to provide data to teachers and education leaders to guide discussion and inform decision making to improve student learning. The Grade 12 DEs are administered in core academic subject areas to students instructed by teachers who have not been accredited by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The DEs ensure a level of consistency across nonaccredited teachers with the test results contributing 40% to students' course grades.

**Manitoba** Manitoba's Provincial Assessment Program (PAP) includes 3 testing programs conducted on an annual basis: the Grade 3/4 Assessment, the Middle Years Assessment (MYA), and the Grade 12 Standards tests. Grade 3 students complete tests in reading and numeracy. Students in French Immersion complete the numeracy test in Grade 3 and the reading test in Grade 4. The tests are administered at the beginning of the school year with the purpose to inform parents and support subsequent instruction. The MYA is a unique assessment program in Canada. These assessments are classroom-based formative assessments, focusing on Grade 7 students' level of engagement with school and certain competencies in mathematics and Grade 8 students' skills in reading (comprehension) and writing (expository). These testing programs are also used to provide system-wide information to identify trends, guide decision making about resources and support, and provide the public with general information about student achievement. The Grade 12 Standards Tests (ST) occur in language arts and mathematics. These tests contribute 30% of the students' final course marks.

**Ontario** Unlike the other provinces, the provincial assessment program in Ontario is the responsibility of the Educational Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an arms-length agency from the MOE. EQAO annually administers three province-wide testing programs, the Grade 3 and Grade 6 reading, writing and mathematics provincial assessment (PA), the Grade 9 mathematics assessment, and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). The Grade 3 and 6 tests are administered late in the school year, and the Grade 9 numeracy assessment is administered at the end of each semester. The Grade 3 and 6 assessments are intended to report the level at which students are meeting curriculum expectations, provide data to guide schools' improvement planning and target setting, and support curriculum implementation. These scores do not contribute to students' final grades. The Grade 9 mathematics assessments serve similar purposes. Teachers commonly include a portion of the provincial test in calculating students' final grades, typically 10%. The OSSLT is administered to Grade 10 students in March, and students must successfully complete the OSSLT or its comparable course in order to graduate. The OSSLT is intended primarily as an external measure to ensure that students have the literacy (reading and writing) skills required across subjects up to the end of Grade 9.

**Quebec** Two large-scale annual assessment programs are administered in Quebec: the compulsory Cycle 2 (Grade 4) and 3 (Grade 6) Examinations and the Uniform Examinations (UEs). All assessments are developed by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. Students write the Cycle 2 and 3 language and mathematics assessments in May and June. The purposes of these examinations are to describe the students' competency levels at the end of elementary school, and to help teachers monitor the effectiveness of their teaching practices. These examinations also endeavor to measure more complex thinking and problem solving. The Cycle 2 examinations do not contribute to students' marks but the Cycle 3 examinations are expected to contribute 20% towards final course grades. UEs are administered to students in Secondary 4 (Grade 10) and Secondary 5 (Grade 11) in core subject areas. The results from the CEs contribute 50% towards students' course marks on the competencies measured by the examinations.

**New Brunswick** New Brunswick has the most comprehensive examination program in Canada with annual provincial assessments at several grade levels. Further, as Canada's only officially bilingual province, there are separate Anglophone and Francophone sectors. Each sector administers its own provincial assessment program. Anglophone students in Grade 2, 4, 7, and 9 complete a literacy assessment focusing on reading comprehension and writing. Students in Grade 5 and 8 write assessments in mathematics. Lastly, French certification for French Immersion students is awarded to those who successfully complete the French Immersion Literacy Assessment (FILA). The assessments in the early grades are administered early in the school year. The early administration dates enable teachers to obtain a current report of students' reading abilities. The testing programs provide a mechanism to monitor student achievement in order to improve student achievement and keep parents informed about their children's progress. The Grade 9 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) is also a graduation requirement for students. The structure and purposes of the assessment program in the Francophone system are similar at the elementary level although the actual examinations do vary. School readiness assessments for Francophone students begin in Prekindergarten and Kindergarten. Grade 2, 4, 5, and 8 students complete provincial assessments (PA) in literacy, and Grade 3, 5, and 8 students complete assessments in mathematics. Grade 5, 8, and 10 Francophone students also complete provincial assessments in science and technology. The Grade 4 assessment is completed early in the school year, while the other assessments occur at the end of the year or semester. There is an English Oral Proficiency Examination (EOPA) administered to all Francophone students in December and January to all students in Grade 10. Lastly, Grade 11 students write Provincial Examinations (PE) in Français 11 and Mathématiques 11. The Grade 11 examinations contribute 40% toward each student's final course grade.

**Nova Scotia** The Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) oversees two assessment programs in the province, the provincial assessments (PAs) in Grade 3, 6, and 9 and the Grade 12 Nova Scotia Examinations (NSEs). Grade 3 and 6 students write the literacy assessment early in the school year and the mathematics assessments near the end of the year. Grade 9 students write the Junior High Literacy

Assessment in May. The PAs provide information to support educational decision making and identify students' learning needs. The NSEs are administered to Grade 12 students in core subject areas. The NSE results contribute 30% toward students' final course marks.

**Prince Edward Island** Prince Edward Island was the last province to implement province wide, large-scale testing. Grade 3 and 6 students complete a language arts assessment and Grade 3 and 9 students complete a mathematics assessment. The tests are administered in May and June. The assessments provide achievement information to help improve teaching and learning and guide professional development. The assessments are also intended to monitor student learning across the province and help districts/boards plan resources and supports in order to improve overall student achievement. The primary purpose of the Grade 9 mathematics assessment is to monitor the mathematics skills and knowledge of students. Further, the assessment contributes 10% to students' mathematics grade.

**Newfoundland and Labrador** Two assessment programs are administered annually in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Criterion Referenced Testing (CRT) program and the Public Examination (PE) program. The CRTs in English language arts and mathematics are administered to all students in Grade 3, 6, and 9 late in the school year. The major purposes of the CRT are to assess student achievement over time and provide the Department of Education with information regarding students' educational strengths and weaknesses. PEs are administered at the end of the course in the Grade 12 academic courses. The PEs contribute 50% toward students' final course marks.

**Yukon** The Yukon territory administers three assessment programs: the Yukon Achievement Test (YAT), the British Columbia Provincial Examinations (PEs), and the Language Proficiency Index (LPI). The YAT program is administered to students in Grade 3, 6, and 9 in mathematics and language arts. All assessments occur near the end of the school year or at the end of the semester for the PEs. The YAT program is used to monitor the extent to which students are meeting learning expectations, report to the public how well students have achieved territorial standards, and guide schools' improvement efforts. The PEs' are used in the same way as British Columbia. The territory plans to implement extensive formative assessment programs in the near future.

**Northwest Territories** The Northwest Territories has partnered with Alberta to use the ATP and ADEP with the tests used for similar purposes.

**Nunavut** Currently, Nunavut has partnered with Alberta to use ADEP with the tests contributing 50% to students' course grades. The territory is also examining alternative assessment programs that will better monitor student achievement over time and support school improvement.

As highlighted above, the historical roles associated with measuring individual student achievement remain in several provinces, although provincial results are rarely the sole determinants of achievement. Rather, large-scale examination results

are included as part of students' final grades. The literacy assessments in Ontario and New Brunswick, which are graduation requirement, are scored in terms of pass/fail. The assessments of elementary school students are almost universally low stakes since they have no direct impact on students' marks. Students usually receive a report summarizing their results on the assessment. School, board, and provincial results are also common with previous results being available to provide an indication of change. With few exceptions, a fundamental purpose of provincial/territorial large-scale assessment programs is to monitor overall student achievement across the system and inform stakeholders about students' level of success on fundamental educational outcomes (e.g., McEwen 1995).

These monitoring programs are commonly attached to some form of school accountability. The FSA in British Columbia is designed to "help the province, school districts, schools and school planning councils evaluate how well students are achieving basic skills, and make plans to improve student achievement" (British Columbia Ministry of Education 2010). The ATP in Alberta is used to (a) determine if students are learning what is expected; (b) report to Albertans how well students are achieving provincial standards in their schooling; and (c) assist schools, jurisdictions, and the province to monitor and improve student learning (Alberta Education 2011). New Brunswick, a province with an extensive provincial assessment program, uses large-scale assessments for "systems check and longitudinal monitoring of programs" (New Brunswick Department of Education 2009, p. 6). Similar purposes can be found in ministry materials in other provinces across the country (e.g., Education Quality and Accountability Office 2010; Manitoba Education 2010; Nova Scotia Department of Education 2010). These assessments typically begin in Grade 3 or 4 and tend to focus on language arts (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy). A common pattern is to have an assessment program that repeats every 3 years, for example, Grade 3, 6, and 9.

The assessment programs administered across the country continue to change in both structure and function. The changes to the examination program in British Columbia provide one example of such changes. Prince Edward Island, the last province to reintroduce examinations in 2006/2007 continues to develop its assessment program (Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2010). One growing trend is a description of assessment practices and policies that highlight "Assessment for Learning" and "Assessment as Learning." Explicit examples are listed in Table 4.2 under the heading of Instructional Diagnosis. Largely introduced by Black and Wiliam (1998), educators and provincial ministries throughout the country are now referring to these terms in their own assessment policies (e.g., Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2007; New Brunswick Department of Education 2009). More importantly, even those assessment programs with primarily a monitoring or accountability function will include an intention to support teachers' instructional practice. Provincial assessment programs in some provinces are administered earlier in the year to further encourage their use to support teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, accountability and data-based decision making have become predominate in the use of large-scale testing in Canadian education. With the possible

exception of Nunavut, every province and territory in Canada describes an assessment purpose related to accountability and/or data-based decision making. Provincial ministries and departments of education are increasingly focused on supporting school boards and schools as they develop and implement improvement plans.

## Educational Accountability in Canada

There is little doubt that large-scale assessment programs throughout Canada now serve purposes related to accountability. As Linn (2000) notes, such assessments provide a relatively efficient, common, and public measure to monitor student achievement over time, enabling both internal and external comparisons to track ongoing progress. Accountability extends beyond the system monitoring for which many of the Canadian assessment programs were initially designed (Klinger et al. 2008). Whereas system monitoring does not include formal procedures for the use of large-scale assessment results, the provincial and territorial governments now include expectations for school districts and schools to develop improvement plans and monitor the results of their improvement efforts. Commonly, these accountability policies include formal procedures requiring schools to incorporate data informed decision making as the primary mechanism to support school improvement efforts. Provincial assessments are the most common source of student achievement data to provide this information (e.g., Earl and Katz 2006; Creighton 2007). As with the student level results, the accountability frameworks in which Canadian educators operate are also relatively low stakes (Klinger and Rogers 2011). Schools are not sanctioned for poor performance and there are no legislated negative consequences to schools or teachers who are unable to meet educational targets. Instead, accountability frameworks throughout the provinces and territories are typically framed to be a responsibility of educators. School boards, administrators, and teachers are expected to use the results from large-scale assessments to inform and guide board and school improvement efforts. The examples below highlight some of the different accountability programs found across Canada.

British Columbia introduced the Accountability Framework in 2002, replacing the more formal School Accreditation model previously in place (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011a). The Accountability Framework was intended to support educators' ongoing efforts to improve students' educational outcomes. Essential to the framework is the expectation that schools will work with their community to develop Annual School Plans. Schools and districts may develop plans that focus on their unique needs but must also set targets for literacy, completion rates, and Aboriginal student improvement. According to Fallon and Paquette (2008), the policy leading to the Accountability Framework was intended to provide not only greater autonomy to local school districts but also increased accountability toward improving the quality of education.

Alberta has developed different models to support its accountability efforts. The Accountability Framework was introduced in the early 1990s (Alberta

Learning 1999). The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) was an extension of this framework with the goal of directing funds to school boards that developed collaborative projects intended to improve student achievement. Funds were distributed based on a competitive review of proposals. Amongst the criteria for the projects was the need for measures of improvement that were based on "an appropriate balance of local and provincial measures of performance that includes approved quantitative and/or qualitative measures" (Alberta Learning 1999, p. 4), with a balance of 60% locally determined and 40% provincially determined. The AISI is currently in its fourth cycle.

Alberta introduced its Accountability Pillar in 2004, largely replacing the Accountability Framework. The Accountability Pillar is intended to support continuous improvement for students and ensure boards and schools measure student success the same way. Accordingly, the Accountability Pillar provides a mechanism for boards, schools, and the province to assess important educational outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement (Alberta Education, 2011). It is based on a set of common measures in specific categories, related to students' achievement of educational goals. Accountability reports are provided annually to schools and districts. The report summarizes students' academic and social outcomes, both in comparison to previous years and the province as a whole. The results are then used to support school improvement efforts (see also Klinger et al. 2011). While schools and districts can focus on their own specific needs, these needs are based on common academic and social outcomes.

Ontario has been exploring educational accountability models since the *Report of the Royal Commission on Learning* (1994) was completed. The resulting document, *For the Love of Learning*, resulted in a renewed focus on school improvement. It also led to the creation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an arms-length organization responsible for implementing and managing large-scale assessment programs in the province. Subsequently, Leithwood et al. (2003) argued Ontario needed "a coherent, high impact set of policies, based on a diagnosis of the school system's actual strengths and weaknesses, and guided by the best evidence available about how to accomplish the goal of a higher quality education system" (p. 4). The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) was created shortly after this, with the mandate to work with schools and school boards to build capacity and implement strategies to improve student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at the elementary level.

Since its inception, the LNS has implemented several initiatives to help meet its mandate. The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) was introduced in the 2007–2008 school year (LNS 2007). Prior to the development of the SEF, Ontario schools and school boards were expected to develop annual School and Board Improvement Plans, with each plan having specific learning targets for growth in student achievement. The SEF provided a mechanism to develop greater consistency across these plans while also increasing the level of professional accountability in Ontario schools. The SEF appears to has evolved from a similar model in Wales (Welsh Assembly Government 2006); however, it is also similar to other models in place in Canada. The SEF is also consistent with the position of Leithwood et al. (2003) that

districts and schools need to have the ability to focus their improvement efforts, under a broader, provincially directed mandate. The SEF is also guided by the tri-level solution proposed by Fullan (2005b), whereby professional learning communities (PLC) are considered a fundamental requirement to build collaborative school cultures, improve teachers' practices, and increase student achievement. From its foundations, the SEF has continued to evolve, with the most recent draft being released in 2010 with an expanded K-12 focus (Ontario Ministry of Education 2010). With rare exceptions, publicly funded schools in Ontario are expected to use the framework to better focus and streamline their district and school improvement efforts and plans across the elementary and secondary levels.

Nova Scotia implemented its voluntary Nova Scotia School Accreditation Program (NSSAP) in 2005–2006. The NSSAP was developed in conjunction with provincial educators and the province claims it is supported by current literature and international research. The intention of the program is to help schools develop an ongoing process for continuous growth. The program began with 49 schools, expanded to 312 of the 432 publicly funded schools by 2009, and obtained full school participation in 2010 (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2009, 2011). Schools begin the NSSAP with an internal review of "school performance and student achievement based on comprehensive data collection and analysis" (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2009, p. 9). This review is used to set priorities for the school. Next, "an external review team of educators from outside the school's board visit the school for 3 days and provide a verbal and written report on the work of the school" (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2009, p. 9). Based on the report, the school will implement its plan for the next 3 years and report annually on its progress allowing plans to be revised each year. At the completion of the implementation cycle, an external accreditation team visits the school. A school is accredited if it has demonstrated progress toward each of the school's set goals. At this point, the accreditation cycle begins again.

Together, these accountability and accreditation models highlight an educator-based improvement model that is increasingly common in Canada (Klinger et al. 2011). School boards and schools are given the autonomy to develop improvement plans that best meet their own specific needs to improve students' educational outcomes. The Ministry (or Department) of Education in the province maintains some form of overall leadership or direction, often requiring some specific educational outcomes or measures to be included. As an example, Fallon and Paquette (2008) examined the British Columbia model and concluded:

> the role of government in the provision of public education has changed as its main business has become setting educational standards based on the outcomes students need to achieve, monitoring student performance and reporting the results to the public, working with schools and communities to improve student and school performance, funding schools, and overseeing the governance of the system as a whole. (Para. 49)

Most commonly, there is a provincially mandated expectation that improvement plans will include provincially administered assessments as one of the outcome measures and boards and schools will use data from these assessments to monitor

their improvement efforts. Given that literacy (reading comprehension and writing) and mathematics are the two subjects most commonly measured on these provincial assessments, the result has been a preponderance of improvement plans that focus on these two subject areas. Certainly, those responsible for the provincial assessments acknowledge that these assessment results are only one source of data that provide some information about school effectiveness and guidance for improvement efforts (e.g., Jackson 2007). Hence, accountability models and improvement frameworks throughout the country typically allow school boards and schools a high degree of autonomy to also include other educational outcomes relevant to their specific regional or neighborhood needs.

Educational accountability in Canada is guided by school improvement reforms founded on the notions of "data-driven" decision making (e.g., Schmoker 1999; Marzano 2005). However, the low-stakes models that exist in Canada do not place any consequences on schools that do not provide evidence of the effective use of data to improve teaching and learning (Klinger and Rogers 2011). Neither school boards nor schools are penalized for not meeting their improvement targets. Admittedly, schools in Nova Scotia that do not show progress toward their goals may not receive accreditation at the completion of 5 year accreditation cycle, but these schools will not receive less funding or provincial support. The public ranking of schools based on provincial assessment results obtained by the media or the Fraser Institute (e.g., Cowley et al. 2010) may create added accountability and challenges for low-performing schools. These rankings may have a minor impact on parents' decisions regarding the schools their children will attend, especially in Alberta where school choice has reduced the traditional neighborhood school boundaries. In contrast, Ontario uses the provincial assessment results to direct resources to poor-performing or nonimproving schools, thereby providing extra support toward the achievement of improvement targets.

There is a high level of support for public education and satisfaction with educators throughout Canada (Dunleavy 2007). The low-stakes accountability models present throughout Canada reflect this overall level of trust and satisfaction, relying on the notions of professional accountability and responsibility (see also Romuald 2008). These professional accountability models assume that school administrators and teachers can effectively use the available data and information to identify priorities and implement practices and policies to address these priorities that aim to improve students' outcomes (e.g., Jackson 2007). Professional learning communities or school improvement teams then provide the leadership to guide the short- and long-term improvement efforts. Subsequent data are then used to monitor the effectiveness of these efforts. Along with school improvement, there is also an underlying belief that these professional accountability models provide effective professional learning for teachers and increased collaboration (e.g., McEwen 2008; Ontario Ministry of Education 2010). Capacity building is now a common phrase, which as Fullan (2005b) concludes, leads to practices that increase the collective skills of a group to improve student achievement.

## Educational Leadership and School Accountability in Canada

Certainly, provincial large-scale assessments have become central to school, board, and provincial educational improvement plans throughout most of Canada. More commonly, there are low-stakes accountability models that make the use of provincial assessments to monitor system, board, and school progress toward targets developed by each level in the system (Klinger and Rogers 2011). Given the increasing importance of these provincial large-scale assessments for schools and school boards, it is not surprising that there has also been an increased focus on the roles of school and board leaders to lead, direct, and support ongoing improvement efforts. Simultaneously, there has been increased emphasis on developing the leadership qualities that likely lead to improved educational outcomes for students. There is also a growing recognition that such leadership must extend beyond school board and school administrators. Foster et al. (2010) found that "empowered participation and capacity building through a sustained and shared vision around school improvement" were common characteristics among formal and informal leaders that were essential for the successful school improvement outcomes identified across 25 schools in Alberta. For example, establishing a layer of middle leadership throughout the jurisdiction with a certain degree of autonomy, authority, and responsibility resulted in teachers becoming very self-supporting and interdependent. In British Columbia, school planning councils, whose responsibility is to develop, monitor, and review school plans for student achievement, acknowledge the importance of parental involvement, guidance, and leadership on these councils (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b).

As with the education system in Canada as a whole, the provincial jurisdiction of education has not prevented common educational accountability practices and goals across the country. School and board improvement plans, district review processes, school leadership teams, and school accreditation have strong similarities, with the differences being mainly in the extent to which the current accountability and improvement initiatives have been implemented. There is certainly evidence that the Canadian policies around educational accountability and the methods to meet improvement targets have been based on the work of policy researchers in the country. Relevant provincial policy documents will refer to the work of Fullan, Leithwood, Earl, and Levin, as a foundation for guiding principles. Also, all of these researchers acknowledge the important role of educational leadership to direct and support school improvement efforts. The province of Ontario provides an example of the different leadership initiatives and challenges associated with educational accountability and the use of large-scale assessment programs to support accountability efforts.

### *The Ontario Example*

Ontario is Canada's most populated province with an approximate population of 13 million people. Toronto, the capital of the province, is the largest city in the

country with a population of 2.5 million in the city and a total population of almost 6 million in the region. The province also has a large immigrant population and the largest number of Aboriginal people in the country (approximately 300,000). At the same time, Ontario has vast rural and remote areas with very small populations. This diverse, spread out population provides a unique set of challenges for the MOE as it tries to support a common educational framework for the students in the province. There are approximately 1.4 million students attending Ontario's 4,000 publicly funded elementary schools. A further 700,000 students attend the 850 publicly funded secondary schools. It is within this large and diverse province that the provincial government has developed educational polices intended to assure the public that education is a priority in the province. As an example, the educational mandate currently focuses on the goal that 75% of students will meet the provincial standard, as measured by the Grade 3 and 6 provincial tests in reading comprehension, writing, and mathematics. At the same time, and in recognition of the diverse needs of the different regions in the province, school boards and schools are expected to develop their own board or school improvement plans.

With the establishment of the Education Quality and Accountability Office, Ontario entered the large-scale assessment accountability and monitoring frameworks in the mid 1990s. The assessments administered through EQAO were intended to support the provincial goals to ensure greater public accountability and higher student achievement in Ontario's publicly funded school system. There has certainly been recognition that the efforts to meet these provincial goals to increase student achievement must be supported by initiatives and practices that build leadership capacity within all levels of the public education sector. Leithwood et al. (2004, p. 3) suggest three dimensions of leadership that influence student learning:

- *Setting direction:* charting a clear course that everyone understands, establishing high expectations and using data to track progress and performance.
- *Developing people:* providing teachers and others in the system with the necessary support and training to succeed.
- *Redesigning the organization:* ensuring that the entire range of conditions and incentives in districts and schools fully supports rather than inhibits teaching and learning.

Leithwood et al. (2004) highlight the need to establish and maintain relationships across an educational system while implementing the associated policies, programs, and interventions. Fullan's tri-level solution (2005b), as described above, further describes the need to create an accountability framework that operates at three levels: the school/community, the district, and the province. Fullan argues that when all three levels are aligned in their purposes substantial progress toward educational improvement is possible. Lastly, there is also a large acceptance across the province with respect to the value of professional learning communities to build educational leadership at all levels of the education sector (e.g., Dufour 2004; Fullan 2005a; Stoll et al. 2006). The current educational policies and initiatives in Ontario are carefully aligned with the conclusions of these policy researchers. Provincial efforts have endeavored to create a shared focus on improving student achievement and developing

leadership at the provincial, school board, and school levels, and improving the flow of communication throughout the different levels in the system.

### At the Provincial Level

As described previously, the LNS was established in 2004 as a ministerial organization responsible for supporting the improvement of elementary student achievement across Ontario, especially in literacy and numeracy. "At its inception, the primary purpose of the LNS was to establish a visible and transparent presence in the education system—one that conveyed a sense of urgency, optimism, and commitment to system improvement" (Glaze and Campbell 2007). To reach its intended goals, a key strategy of the LNS was to build instructional and leadership capacity at all levels of Ontario's education system. In its evaluation of the LNS, the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network (2008a, b) identified several ongoing and largely successful initiatives that focused on such capacity-building efforts. The evaluation also noted the need for the LNS to support internal capacity building to enhance the professional learning community for staff within the LNS.

As part of its implementation framework, the LNS staff works directly and indirectly with schools and teachers "to build capacity and implement strategies to improve our students' reading, writing and math skills" (Ontario Ministry of Education 2009, Para. 3). As described by the LNS strategy, the LNS:

- Works with school boards to set ambitious student achievement targets tailored to the needs of individual schools and boards—and to develop detailed plans to meet those targets.
- Works with school boards to identify ways to improve student achievement and to provide the resources necessary to doing so.
- Provides professional learning opportunities for all educators in the system.
- Shares research on effective teaching and assessment practices.
- Builds partnerships with principals' councils, teachers' federations, faculties of education, and other organizations.
- Shares successful practices within and across school boards.

At the time of the implementation of the LNS, the MOE was also engaged in several other initiatives designed to further student achievement, including increased resources for professional development, reduced primary class sizes (Kindergarten to Grade 3), increased curricular focus on literacy and numeracy, and board-directed funds for local achievement-related initiatives. Of particular relevance to the use of large-scale assessment data to lead school improvement efforts was the Turnaround Schools Program (TSP). Underperforming schools with the lowest proportions of primary students achieving the provincial standard (Level 3) based on Grade 3 EQAO results—less than 34% of students meeting the provincial standard—were identified. These schools could then choose to participate in the TSP. Fourteen schools volunteered and these schools received additional funding and resources and access to external expertise to support their efforts to improve their students' levels of success.

Several of the MOE projects were slowly put under the control of the LNS when it was formed. The LNS took control of the TSP and revised it into a new program, the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP). OFIP focused on improving student achievement at the school level using a whole school approach with a focus on Kindergarten to Grade 6 (Turnaround focused primarily on Kindergarten to Grade 3). The OFIP strategy substantially increased the number of schools targeted for support, albeit at different levels. OFIP 1 schools were those schools having less than 34% of students achieving the provincial standard in reading for 2 out of the past 3 years based on Grade 3 and 6 results. OFIP 2 schools were those in which between 34 and 50% of students were reaching the provincial standard, with either declining or static results over the past 3 years. A third category of schools was subsequently created; OFIP 3 schools were those schools having between 50 and 74% of students achieving the provincial standard but with results that had been static or declining over the previous 3 years. More recently, the OFIP model was further revised replacing the OFIP 3 model with a new initiative: The Schools in the Middle (SIM): Effective Leadership, Effective Schools strategy. This strategy focused on schools that have between 50 and 74% of their students meeting the provincial standard. School boards received funding and resources that they controlled and directed to support identified schools. Ministry leadership for the OFIP initiative was provided by Student Achievement Officers (SAOs) at the LNS. The SAOs worked with the schools and their boards to devise and build school and district-based strategies to address student improvement efforts. The funding was not as large as provided during the original TSP, with OFIP 1 schools receiving the greatest amount of support, and OFIP 2 schools receiving less direct support. The OFIP has since been revised to focus on supporting school board initiatives to provide tutoring programs for students not meeting the provincial standards in read, writing and mathematics (Ontario Ministry of Education 2011).

The second and continuing ministry initiative that links accountability, leadership, and assessment results, albeit less directly, is the SEF. The SEF at the elementary level is overseen by the LNS and is increasingly being considered the foundation for educational improvement efforts across all schools in the province. The most recent draft of the document has expanded its focus from K-6 to cover all the grades from K-12 (Ontario Ministry of Education 2010). A parallel unit at the MOE has been created to lead the support at the Grade 7–12 levels. The secondary initiative is called the *Student Success* (SS) initiative. Ministry staff within the SS unit provide similar SEF-related leadership, and work closely with Student Success Leads and teams at respective boards. Student Success Leaders are hired by boards, although these positions are funded directly by the MOE. While the primary goal for this ministry unit is to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates, it also oversees the effective implementation of student success strategies such as credit recovery and dual credits, among others. Staff from both the LNS and the SS are expected to provide leadership across the SEF. Supporting components include field staff that work with schools and boards, ministry-led workshops focused in implementation of initiatives, ministry-sponsored conferences that highlight successful improvement efforts, and publications reporting research findings linked to improving student achievement. More importantly, the ministry has directed funds to school boards to develop board leadership for both the SEF and SS.

### At the School Board Level

The 72 school boards in Ontario (31 public, 29 catholic, and 12 francophone) and 21 smaller school authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operations of schools in the province. Not surprisingly, the school boards reflect the communities in which they reside and there are vast differences in the boards. For example, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the biggest in Canada, encompasses the city of Toronto and includes over 550 schools. In contrast, Rainy River District School Board (RRDSB), serving the communities surrounding Fort Frances, has only 14 schools. School boards are led by a Director of education, who is supported by an administrative team, generally made up of superintendents, assistant superintendents, district administrators, and instructional consultants. School boards also have a board of municipally elected trustees who oversee and guide the directions for educational policy in their region. Not surprisingly, the size of the school board staff and the number of trustees will vary depending on the population and geographic region that a school board serves. There will also be variability in the leadership structure that exists in each board.

Directed funding from the provincial MOE has provided funding resources for school boards to create leadership positions at the board level. These positions are typically tied to ongoing provincial initiatives. As an example, all of the school boards in the province now have a SEF Lead and a Student Success lead. The expectations for these individuals are to work collaboratively to provide leadership and support the implementation of provincial initiatives intended to increase student achievement across K-12. These expectations include efforts to develop board capacity, monitor progress, guide data-informed improvement planning, and support the analysis of student achievement results. These individuals are also a conduit to the provincial MOE. They attend ministry-led workshops and conferences and connect with each other to guide their own board activities. Currently, the SEF leads in the Francophone boards work closely together, staying in regular contact with each other. Research with SEF leads in the Anglophone sector suggests that there is less interaction amongst the leads in these boards, although such interactions are desired (Kasian et al. 2010). The SEF leads also oversee the district review process.

The district review process is a part of the SEF, although it is largely controlled by the boards. District review teams, commonly composed of school administrators and board staff, review a sample of school improvement plans, the evidence that the plans are being enacted, and the level to which plans are being met. Board capacity is developed through the training of the district review team, the completion of the reviews, and the focus on data-based decision making and how that operates within schools. During each district review, the review team meets with the school team, collects and analyzes data, prepares a summary report with recommendations, and provides feedback to the school. The intent is to help schools further refine and direct their school improvement efforts. The work of the district review teams also identifies board level needs with respect to board improvement planning and capacity building (see also McTighe and Thomas 2003). These expectations highlight the desire for the district review process to support capacity-building efforts and identify practices

and policies that have the potential to improve educational outcomes for students. Not surprisingly, the capacity-building efforts are intended to develop leadership capacity in the schools.

### At the School Level

Schools in Ontario are most commonly divided into an elementary (Kindergarten to Grade 6) or secondary panel (Grade 9 to 12). The province does offer 2 years of Kindergarten and until 2003, students also completed Grade 13. Grade 7 and 8 are considered to be intermediate, transition years, and although they are most common in the elementary schools, middle schools do exist that may be centered on these two grades. Other school models also can be found throughout the province, based on educational philosophy or on operational constraints.

The provincial, large-scale testing programs and the adoption of accountability frameworks changed the role of school administrators and required a shift in the way schools are now managed and administered (Dimmock 1999; Volante and Cherubini 2007). Principals are expected to build professional networks with other schools, engage parents in school initiatives, help provide targeted interventions within their schools, develop meaningful school improvement plans, and make effective use of data to inform improvement planning and monitor the effectiveness of the subsequent improvement efforts. At the same time, these school administrators are also expected to lead the efforts to build instructional leadership across the teachers in the school. As described above, resources and ministry staff are available to help these school administrators to meet their improvement targets. The SEF extends the improvement mandate to all schools. The SEF document is intended to provide a resource to guide these leadership efforts. As an example, the SEF document provides indicators that schools are expected to use to collect evidence that will guide improvement planning and implementation. A requirement of the SEF is for each school to conduct an annual self-assessment of its school improvement plan, using the SEF document to guide the process. The self-assessment is similar in purpose and structure to the district review process described earlier, although it is conducted on an annual basis by a school-based team. The school-self-assessment process was designed to foster local autonomy and ownership within the context of large-scale, school-based reform. It is a process whereby evidence of student achievement and educational outcomes is used to inform school-based improvement plans and in turn feed into board and district and priorities.

Within the current educational context in Ontario, two of the key leadership responsibilities for Ontario's school administrators are not only to lead the efforts to effectively use data to inform improvement planning, but also develop the instructional leadership of school staff. Provincial assessment data in literacy and mathematics remain the primary information source; however, other data are increasingly being used, including attendance rates, behavior, and report card grades. In this respect, school administrators are expected to provide assessment related leadership (e.g., Noonan and Renihan 2006). Given the increasing demands on school

administrators in Ontario, alternative leadership models are being incorporated into the schools. Most elementary schools now have a Literacy and Numeracy Lead. These leads are expected to support job-embedded professional development for the staff, identify and help implement research-based instructional strategies, and support the school's use of data to inform instruction. Similar personnel are also in the secondary schools, albeit with a broader focus on student success. Professional learning communities also exist in the majority of schools across the province, often in conjunction with school leadership teams. School administrators have become responsible for this leadership development in the school, accepting a school-based model in which educational leadership is collaborative and distributed across the school (e.g., Bush 2008; Dinham et al. 2008; Hallinger and Heck 2010).

## *Are Accountability Models and Large-Scale Assessments Improving Education in Canada?*

While educational accountability has become more prevalent across Canada, and provincial ministries (departments) of education identify educational improvement as a priority, it is unclear the extent to which these accountability efforts have improved student achievement in Canada. Canada continues to rank high internationally according to the international Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Knighton et al. 2010). However, the 2009 results indicate a small drop in Canada's relative standing. There are also provincial differences, although the measurement errors associated with the PISA results make it difficult to ascertain the extent of these differences. Provinces with more defined accountability models (Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia) appear to have relatively higher scores; however, these provinces, along with Quebec, had similar results on previous PISA administrations. As a second example, the Ontario provincial premier established a goal that 75% of students will obtain Level 3 (the provincial standard) on the Grade 6 provincial assessments and 85% of Ontario's students will graduate from secondary school. While these goals have yet to be realized, there is evidence from ongoing provincial assessment results and reported graduation rates that forward progress toward these goals continues.

Our research of the SEF in Ontario also provided only tentative support for the effectiveness of the SEF to support improvement in students' educational outcomes (Klinger et al. 2011). The teachers and administrators we interviewed generally supported the SEF in principle but were unable to provide definitive evidence of an impact on students' learning. Teachers commented that they observed students demonstrating deeper and more complex thinking and interpretation. The most notable changes appeared to revolve around teachers' practices. These teachers identified new strategies that had become common in their classroom and across the school, and believed these practices were having a positive impact. Yet, even these practices were not fully attributable to the SEF itself.

The foundations for the Ontario school improvement efforts (e.g., OFIP, SEF, SS) are based on a broad body of educational research, largely in the realm of educational policy, and from researchers familiar with the Ontario context. Each of the components that constitute these initiatives is associated with higher levels of student achievement, especially those related to school and system leadership. Still there is a lack of empirical, causal evidence linking the underlying strategies to subsequent improvement. Associations based on correlational studies are important but are insufficient evidence. Similarly, the policy concepts underlying these provincial initiatives (professional learning communities, data-informed decision making, capacity building) are extremely complex. Their foundations have yet to be fully explored, let alone understood. Further, the research evidence supporting the value of these concepts remains elusive. This does not mean they are ineffective, but it does mean there is still much to learn. For example, there might be a need to broaden the definition of success indicators beyond achievement on large-scale provincial tests to include other important educational outcomes.

The educational research on the impact of school leadership and improvement initiatives are still in its infancy in Canada. The need for a better understanding of the role and impact of educational leadership and school accountability is not unique to Ontario. Rather, Ontario simply represents the challenges faced by the current educational improvement efforts occurring across the country. As an example, the AISI in Alberta identifies very minor impacts of initiatives in provincial achievement results, although locally developed district measures seem to demonstrate higher achievement outcomes resulting from their ongoing efforts (McEwen 2008). A review of the AISI website, containing materials produced and presented by boards and schools funded by the initiative, highlights a set of results regarding changing practices, improved leadership, or capacity building with little direct evidence of student improvement.

## The Leadership Challenge in the Context of Educational Accountability and Large-Scale Assessment

Overall, the extent to which accountability-related initiatives are improving student achievement in Canada is still unclear. Further, the roles and skill levels of school leaders required to support meaningful improvement have yet to be fully identified. Nevertheless, the current educational context in Canada requires educational leaders to be able to work effectively with diverse forms of achievement-related information, while also creating a professional community that embraces shared leadership. Such skills are seen as central to school leadership and are distinguished from other routine roles such as managing daily school operations and other administrative duties (e.g., Dimmock 1999; Volante and Cherubini 2007). The traditional role of a leader is replaced by a more decentralized, collaborative model, and this collaboration extends across schools and levels of leadership. These leaders also need to recognize the unique challenges that may exist in their local context. In provinces such as British Columbia and Alberta, decentralized decision-making models also place increased

financial responsibility on school administrators and school leadership teams. All of these expectations reside within the increased demand for school improvement plans and focused efforts to improve student achievement. Further, the school-level autonomy to create and lead school improvement efforts requires school leaders who are equally able to work with educational data, be familiar with current research and literature, and create a collaborative educational team in the school.

Overall, the accountability frameworks that exist in Canada provide a low-stakes environment in which large-scale assessment information is used to support internal accountability efforts in schools, districts, and the provinces themselves. School improvement plans, accreditation models, and provincial supports (e.g., AISI, SEF) employ distributed models of leadership, providing autonomy that enable schools and boards to determine school goals and not simply respond to and implement "externally driven objectives" (Bush 2008, p. 274). However, these plans and efforts require school board leaders, school administrators and teachers to effectively examine student performance data to make critical decisions regarding school initiatives and practices. Although the expectations to use such data are clear, it is apparent that not all educational leaders and educators currently have the skills to understand these scores, properly analyze the results, or link the results with educational practices (Earl and Katz 2006; Noonan and Renihan 2006; Nova Scotia Department of Education 2010; Kasian et al. 2010). There is a requirement to know and understand the principles of sound assessment and then translate assessment data into quality information about students and effective instruction. Perhaps even more problematic, the majority of the data from large-scale assessment programs used in Canada may not be sensitive enough to direct focused improvement efforts. It is likely, these assessments only provide broad results that provide only a general direction of the educational reform to follow. The current evidence throughout the country suggests that these achievement data are more often misused than not.

There are also challenges associated with the notions of using provincial assessments for the purposes of system and school accountability. (Klinger and Rogers 2011) found that the greatest resistance to provincial testing was in the elementary system in both Alberta and Ontario. The elementary-level assessments in both of these provinces have little or no impact on students' grades. Yet, elementary teachers were less positive about these low-stakes assessments than secondary teachers who were responsible for the high-stakes examinations administered to high-school students. The fundamental difference between the elementary and secondary programs was the explicit monitoring functions of the elementary-level assessments in comparison to the student level focus of the examinations. Teachers in British Columbia have been waging a vocal campaign against the FSA program. This is in spite of the local control of marking of the assessments and the lack of any high-stakes consequences for either students or the teachers. A common concern expressed by teachers has been the inappropriate public use of these assessments to compare schools with the underlying fear that the assessments provide a mechanism for teacher evaluation.

The focus on literacy and numeracy has also raised concerns about the impact that accountability and improvement efforts are having on education in general (Kasian

et al. 2010; Klinger and Rogers 2011; Klinger et al. 2011). Teachers believe the focus on these two admittedly important curricular areas has resulted in significantly less classroom time being available for other subjects, content, and learning not related to literacy and numeracy. As an example, teachers interviewed in a study of the SEF commented that implementation of the SEF had resulted in decreases in time devoted to curriculum areas related to science, social studies, religion, music, visual arts, and physical education, thus creating a less-balanced learning environment (Klinger et al. 2011). As with much of the beliefs and practices associated with school improvement efforts in Canada, the evidence regarding both the positive and negative impacts of these practices needs to be found.

It is in this milieu of expectations, challenges and concerns that educational leaders operate in Canadian education. These leaders are no longer clearly identified by their roles as school board staff, school administrators, or classroom teachers. The roles of educational leaders have become less defined in terms of duties and responsibilities but more specific in terms of ensuring a focus on increased student achievement. Throughout the country, provincial assessments are the dominant method by which these improvement efforts are evaluated. Yet, even this is changing as educators and MOE staff acknowledge that such assessment data provide only one relatively narrow measure of school effectiveness and learning. The result may be an even greater responsibility placed on school leaders and leadership teams to identify or develop broader and more responsive methods to meet their improvement targets.

## References

Alberta Education. (2011). *About the accountability pillar.* www.education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/accountability/about.aspx. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Alberta Education. (2011). *General information bulletin: Achievement testing programs grades 3, 6, and 9*. www.education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement/achievementbulletin.aspx. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Alberta Learning. (1999). *Framework for the Alberta initiative for school improvement*. Edmonton: School Improvement Branch, Alberta Learning. www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/egovdocs/alle/1999/75881.pdf. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80,* 139–148.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2011). *Policy document: Accountability framework*. www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/accountability_framework.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2011). *School planning councils.* www.bced.gov.bc.ca/spc/. Accessed 12 March 2012.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2010). *Foundation skills assessment (FSA)*. www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa/. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Bush, T. (2008). From management to leadership: Semantic or meaningful change? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 36,* 271–288.

Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network. (2008a). *The impact of the literacy and numeracy secretariat: Phase 1 evaluation*. London: University of Western Ontario.

Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network. (2008b). *The impact of the literacy and numeracy secretariat: Phase 2 evaluation*. London: University of Western Ontario.

Cowley, P., Easton, S., & Thomas, M. (2010). *Report card on Alberta's elementary schools 2010*. Vancouver: Fraser Institute.

Creighton, T. (2007). *Schools and data: The educator's guide for using data to improve decision making* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

Dimmock, C. (1999). Principals and school restructuring: Conceptualising challenges as dilemmas. *Journal of Educational Administration, 37,* 441–462.

Dinham, S., Aubusson, P., & Brady, L. (2008). Distributed leadership as a factor in and outcome of teacher action learning. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 12*(4), 1–19.

Dufour, R. (2004). What is a "professional learning community" ? *Educational Leadership, 61*(8), 6–11.

Dunleavy, J. (2007). *Public education in Canada: Facts, trends and attitudes 2007*. Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Earl, L., & Katz, S. (2006). *Leading in a data rich world: Harnessing data for school improvement*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.

Education Quality and Accountability Office. (2010). *What parents need to know about province-wide testing*. Toronto: EQAO. www.eqao.com/pdf_E/10/WhatParentsNeedtoKnow.pdf. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Fallon, G., & Paquette, J. (2008). Devolution, choice, and accountability in the provision of public education in British Columbia: A critical analysis of the school amendment act of 2002 (Bill 34). *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy,* 75. http://umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/fallonpaquette.html. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Foster, R., Wright, L., & McRae, P. (2010, February 10). *Reflecting on innovative practices and partnerships*. International Symposium on School and System Improvement, Edmonton, AB.

Fullan, M. (2005a). Professional learning communities writ large. In R. DuFour, R. Eaker, & R. DuFour (Eds.), *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities* (pp. 135–153). Bloomington: Solution Tree. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Fullan, M. (2005b, Winter). The tri-level solution: School/district/state synergy. *Education Analyst*. www.michaelfullan.ca/Articles_04/2004-Tri-Level_soln/2004_Tri-Level.html. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Glaze, A., & Campbell, C. (2007, April). *Putting literacy and numeracy first: Using research and evidence to support improved student achievement.* Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 9–13 April, Chicago, IL.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative leadership make a difference in school improvement? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 38,* 654–678.

Jackson, M. (2007). *Large-scale assessment: Supporting the everyday work of schools.* www.eqao.com/Publications/ArticleReader.aspx?Lang=E&article=b07A001&section. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Kasian, M., Klinger, D. A., Maggi, S. & D'Angiulli, A. (2010). *Building roads for students' success: MISA research capacity building pilot project*. Kingston: Ontario Eastern Staff Development Network.

Klinger, D. A, & DeLuca, C. (2009). *The history of large-scale achievement testing in Ontario's education system*. Toronto: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Klinger, D. A., DeLuca, C., & Miller, T. (2008). The evolving culture of large-scale assessments in Canadian education. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 76. www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/klinger.html. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Klinger, D. A., & Rogers, W. T. (2011). Teachers' perceptions of large-scale assessment programs within low-stakes accountability frameworks. *International Journal of Testing, 11*, 122–143..

Klinger, D. A., Maggi, S., & D'Angiulli, A. (2011). School accountability and assessment: Should we put the roof up first. *The Educational Forum, 75(2)*, 114-128.

Knighton, T., Brochu, P., & Gluszynski, T. (2010). *Measuring up: Canadian results of the OECD PISA study: The performance of Canada's youth in reading, mathematics and science—2009: First results for Canadians aged 15*. www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-590-x/81-590-x2010001-eng.pdf. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Leithwood, K., Fullan, M., & Watson, N. (2003). *The schools we need: Recent education policy in Ontario and recommendations for moving forward*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York: Wallace Foundation. www.wallacefoundation.org/WF/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/EducationLeadership/HowLeadershipInfluencesStudentLearning.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Linn, R. L. (2000). Assessments and accountability. *Educational Researcher, 23*(9), 4–14.

Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS). (2007). *The school effectiveness framework: A collegial process for continued growth in the effectiveness of Ontario elementary schools. Implementation pilot: September 2007–June 2008.* Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education.

Manitoba Education. (2010). *Assessment and evaluation: Provincial assessment program.* www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/assess_program.html. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Marzano, R. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McEwen, N. (1995). Accountability in education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Education, 20,* 1–17.

McEwen, N. (2008, March). *AISI-seven years of enthusiasm: Improving learning and schools-innovation, renewal, sustainability*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, March 24–28, New York, NY.

McTighe, J., & Thomas, R. S. (2003). Backward design for forward action. *Educational Leadership, 60*(5), 52–55.

Nagy, P. (2000). The three roles of assessment: Gatekeeping, accountability, and instructional diagnosis. *Canadian Journal of Education, 25,* 262–279.

New Brunswick Department of Education. (2009). *Framework for provincial assessment*. Fredericton: New Brunswick Department of Education.

Noonan, B., & Renihan, P. (2006). Demystifying assessment leadership. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 56,* 1–21.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. (2009). *Nova Scotia department of education annual accountability report: Fiscal year 2008–2009* www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/businessplan/accountability-report-2008-2009.pdf. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. (2010). *Elementary literacy assessment (ELA)*. www.plans.ednet.ns.ca/ela. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. (2011). *Nova Scotia department of education annual accountability report: Fiscal year 2009–2010*. www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/businessplan/accountability-report-2009-2010.pdf. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Ontario Department of Education. (1968). *Living and learning: The report of the provincial committee on aims and objectives of education in the schools of Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Department of Education.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2009). *Literacy and numeracy strategy*.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2010). *School effectiveness framework: A support for school improvement and student success*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2011). *Technical paper, 2011–12: Education funding.* http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/policyfunding/funding.html. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2010). *Provincial assessment program*. www.gov.pe.ca/eecd/provincialassessment. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Raphael, D. (1993). Accountability and educational philosophy: Paradigms and conflict in Ontario education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 18,* 29–45.

Report of the Royal Commission on Learning. (1994). *For the love of learning*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Romuald, N. (2008). School effectiveness or the horizon of the world as a laboratory. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 29,* 665–676.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2007). *Assessment for learning conceptual framework*. www.education.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=5467d649-fc3b-42f9-a165-acb56da2ef16. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Schmoker, M. J. 1999. *Results: The key to continuous school improvement* (2nd ed.). Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change, 7*(4), 221–258.

Taylor, A. R., & Tubianosa, T. (2001). *Student assessment in Canada: Improving the learning environment through effective evaluation*. Kelowna: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education.

Volante, L., & Cherubini, L. (2007). Connecting educational leadership with multi-level assessment reform. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning, 11*(12).

Volante, L., & Ben Jaafar, S. (2008). Profiles of educational assessment systems worldwide: Educational assessment in Canada. *Assessment in Education, 15,* 201–210.

Welsh Assembly Government. (2006). *School effectiveness framework: Building effective learning communities together*. Cardiff: Cathay Park.

# Chapter 5
# Pathways of Educational Leadership: Monitoring and Developing Skill Levels Among Educational Leaders in Australia

**Patrick Griffin and Esther Care**

## Introduction

The Australian public education system has a federated structure. Each of the states and territories has their own education system whose authority and autonomy are protected by the Australian Constitution. The only authority, that the federal government has, comes through the provision of supplementary funds to the states, which is subject to the approval of a federal committee consisting of the state government heads. There are approximately 10,000 schools in Australia, of which approximately three quarters are primary schools providing education from years K to 6. Secondary schools provide education from years 7 to 12, which encompasses the last 2 years as a post-compulsory certificate level.

In addition to the state public system, education in Australia is provided by Catholic schools which provide education in the compulsory years to approximately one quarter of the school age population. There is also a strong independent system of schools which, when taken together with the Catholic systems, provide education to approximately one third of the school age population. Control over the schools is exercised through funding arrangements, but curriculum and other content matters are decided upon in each jurisdiction according to their own priorities.

The initiative described in this chapter was implemented in the State of Victoria, Australia. Victoria is the second most populous state in the country with approximately 5.4 million people, and is culturally and linguistically diverse. Its state education system is led by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), which enrolls roughly two-thirds of the state's primary and secondary school students. The remaining students are catered for by the independent and Catholic sectors. Around 39,000 teachers work in the state sector. Victoria has a noted history in educational leadership development as a state-wide endeavor (Matthews et al. 2007). In Victoria, leadership is seen as a major driver of school effectiveness and raising student achievement. Although educational policy is highly

P. Griffin (✉) · E. Care
University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia
e-mail: p.griffin@unimelb.edu.au

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_5, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

centralized in Australia, in Victoria there is a high degree of operational autonomy devolved to principals and school councils. The Victorian State government has established the Bastow Institute of Education Leadership, which delivers high quality leadership programs for emerging leaders, new and experienced principals, and leadership teams.

In the mid-1980s the Victorian Education Department began to develop frameworks of learning pathways in literacy and numeracy for the compulsory years. The government of the day requested that the Department monitor literacy and numeracy levels and advise on intervention strategies. In 1989, the Australian Education Council (a meeting of education ministers) adopted the Victorian model of developmental learning progressions, or profiles, in order to promote and develop a national system of profiling developmental levels across the curriculum. This was called the 'National Profiles and Curriculum Statements'. These were similar to the 'key stages' in the UK, but used developmental learning progressions and standards referenced frameworks (Griffin 1990) to steer learning in eight key learning areas. Despite the appetite for developmental learning progressions, there was little emphasis on accountability.

A decade later in the early 1990s, there was still almost no achievement monitoring in Australian schools. Autonomy over matters such as curriculum had been widespread throughout the Australian states and territories and the idea of a national curriculum based on developmental learning progressions was not uniformly supported. In Victoria and in New South Wales, the local variants of the National Profiles and Curriculum Statements were developed and implemented. From the mid-1990s, these two states began to monitor school achievement through statewide testing programs as a means of driving the implementation of the curriculum. The achievement monitoring programs were entered into amid much negativity about comparisons and league tables of schools. In 2000, all the states were still using their own curriculum and standards frameworks.

In 2008, a new organization, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was formed. The ACARA Board has 13 members, representing the Australian federal government and all education streams (independent, government, and Catholic) across all states and territories. ACARA is an independent authority responsible for the development of a national curriculum, a national assessment program, and a national data collection and reporting program that supports twenty-first century learning for all Australian students. It has conducted a National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in years 3, 5, 7, and 9 since 2008 and publishes its results on the 'Myschool' website (http://www.myschool.edu.au). This public accountability system for achievement results has had a profound effect on the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy, and has increased the power and influence of the federal government, which has tied tens of millions of dollars to the state funding grants, where target gains in test scores can be demonstrated.

While ACARA in its development of a national curriculum has the goal of developing twenty-first century skills among the students in the Australian school systems, the national testing system remains paper-based, with electronic test reports being returned to schools from each state's central education administration. The process

is slow and cumbersome and some 4–5 months elapse between the time of the test and the reporting of results to schools on an individual student basis. With the introduction of individual student identification numbers, recording of individual growth and development of students has became possible in 2010 for the first time. Individual student scores were compared to their own performance between 2010 and 2008. For example, Grade 3 students in 2008 became Grade 5 students in 2010, and individual growth patterns were reported to schools and parents. At present, there are no benchmark data that indicate whether or not growth is attributable to maturation or to discrete intervention patterns that schools would have to identify themselves. The time lapse between the test and the report going to schools about school, class, or individual student performance generates a widespread level of cynicism amongst teachers that manifests itself in a rejection of the data as being of little use for instructional purposes.

The tests in English consist of items addressing reading comprehension, grammar, spelling, and language. The writing tests are scored using teams of teachers reading scanned electronic copies of the test papers and marking according to a predefined rubric. The rubric is not provided to the schools. Schools are known to practice writing using the genre announced as part of the test. In the mathematics tests, the domains assessed include number, measurement, data, relations, and problem-solving. Most items are multiple-choice with some machine-markable supply type items. In addition to the full cohort testing in English and mathematics, the sample studies are conducted in social education, civics, information technology, and science.

At another level, Australia has embarked on a research program to investigate more immediate provision of results and diagnoses of student performance. Along with the USA, Finland, and Singapore, the Australian government is participating in an initiative sponsored by Cisco, Intel, and Microsoft. The initiative is based at the University of Melbourne and seeks to develop large scale, interactive assessments and reporting methods that enable teachers to receive immediate feedback on student performance and provide the facility to aggregate data on cohort performance. This project, the Assessment and Teaching of Twenty-First Century Skills (ATC21S), is focused in the first instance on collaborative problem solving and learning through use of digital interactive tools. The Federal government is supporting this program through the provision of access to government schools with the cooperation of the state systems and financial support for the project.

In addition to the shift toward internet-based assessment of complex and difficult to measure skills as described in the ATC21S project, the Australian systems of education are moving toward evidence-based, data driven, interventionist approaches to teaching based upon the use of assessment data. It is not a variant on assessment for learning; it is in fact a deliberately driven initiative that teachers make teaching decisions based upon a developmental framework in which students' 'readiness to learn' is used as a focus for identifying the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). In pursuing this agenda, the state systems have insisted that senior educators (principals, leaders in regions, central administrators, and decision-makers) attend courses in data interpretation and use as provided by leading institutions such as Harvard, Melbourne, and Cambridge Universities. These courses and professional

development programs target educational leadership and the way in which data is used in decision making and policy formation.

These initiatives stand in contrast to the way in which student performance data based on the national testing program is being reported to schools. Reports are produced based on a developmental model with overlapping descriptive scales for grades 3, 5, 7, and 9. The student scores are transformed to a 1,000 point scale over 10 levels. Each year level is described as consisting of 6 levels and a 600 score point range. The four 6-level ranges are interpreted in terms of skills underpinning the test items. In a way, these overlapping 600 point 6-level descriptive scales for reading comprehension, grammar, spelling writing, and mathematics have become a quasi-national curriculum, because schools feel great pressure to improve the scores and to increase the distribution of students in the upper levels of the descriptive scales for each grade. Not only do the scales become a quasi national curriculum, they have also become a powerful indicator of school performance and school improvement. This increases the pressure on school leadership to improve test scores thereby losing sight of the skills and the development of competencies in reading, writing, grammar, spelling and mathematics. The 'Myschool' reporting framework has become an important determinant of the community's perception of school improvement and the school leadership's level of success.

As a means of contextualising the reporting of test scores an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is used to compare similar schools for judgments about school effectiveness based on achievement test results. The scale represents levels of educational advantage. A value on the scale assigned to a school is the averaged level for all students in the particular school. The ICSEA provides a means of making a comparison of the levels of educational advantage or disadvantage that students bring to their academic studies. In doing so the site provides a framework to interpret school level achievement scores compared to other schools with a similar level of educational advantage. This facility has had the effect of increasing pressure on schools as parents and the public have open access to the Myschool site, on which all data are in the public domain.

In the post-compulsory education section, each of the states conducts their own certification examinations. These are used predominantly to rank students for selection into university. Each of the state governments has an independent examinations authority that supervises and constructs certificate end of schooling examinations across the curriculum and moderates performance measures into a composite rank order of students. This rank order is then used to select students into university programs. It is not used for any other purpose. For employers, the possession of the certificate is adequate evidence of academic ability. Little attention is paid by Australian industry to the subjects studied or the overall rank of the student. It is sufficient to possess the year 12 certificate as issued by the state government authority. This narrow use of academic curriculum and assessment potentially distorts the use of education in the final school years.

The individual state authorities guard the quality and the nature of their examination systems. Some have separate examination systems for vocational subjects that are competency-based. Others incorporate the competency-based assessment into the

academic stream and link examinations directly to the industrial training packages at year 12. These are linked to a certificate of the national vocational training framework, where the lowest level certificates (Certificates I and II) can be obtained in years 10–12 in secondary schools. Certificate III can only be obtained during employment for most occupations. Consequently, some criticize the year 12 examinations in vocational competency areas or training packages by saying that the intellectual demands of these subjects are of a lower standard than those required of students taking more academic subjects. Schools have to make decisions about vocational versus academic streams and the placement of students in subjects depending upon ability, interest, curriculum provision, and staff and material resources available to the school.

In 2008, the Federal government, in line with the establishment of ACARA, proposed the establishment of an Australian Certificate of Education. Such is the intensity of the spirit of ownership by state systems of education that immediate moves were made to block the introduction of a national certificate and to retain state credentials. For example, the label "Australian Certificate of Education" was trademarked by one of the state jurisdictions, thus preventing the federal government from proceeding with the development of such a certification examination system. More importantly it signaled to the federal government that the state systems were unwilling to surrender their authority or their control of post-compulsory education.

The federal government has therefore only limited control over the compulsory years of education. This is mainly through the prospect of financial rewards to state systems for improvements in scores on national literacy and numeracy assessments. These financial rewards are so great that education systems put pressure on regions or organizational structures, which in turn place pressure on schools to improve test scores.

This pressure has an immediate effect on school leadership. The pressure to lift achievement scores has resulted in rampant test skills practice in schools and celebrations of NAPLAN score gains. The school leadership is under increasing pressure to rationalize the funding associated with the score gains. School improvement is in part being redefined in terms of score gains and the school leaders have to be constantly reminded of their wider responsibility. In this context, the symbolic and educational leadership of principals will increasingly be taken more seriously. The Myschool reporting website moves accountability of schools squarely into the lap of the school principal. The principal cannot escape the scrutiny of parents, teachers, and community and education systems on a national basis. Extreme pressure is brought on those schools where the results, comparable to similar schools, are below average. It is unfortunate that the pressure is responded by focusing on improvement of scores rather than skills.

Notwithstanding this pressure on principals to improve literacy and numeracy results in the national assessment program, some systems have responded to this in combination with other imperatives. For example, the state system in Victoria has established a process for principal evaluation that helps to ensure consistency across schools. The performance and development plan that the state government system has implemented has two broad dimensions: a school improvement focus and a professional development focus.

The school improvement focus is linked to a review of effective skills literature and consists of 8 strategies. They include professional leadership, a focus on teaching and learning, shared vision and goals, purposeful teaching, high expectations, establishment of learning communities, accountability, and a stimulating and secure learning environment for students. The principal's goals for improving school performance are expected to be set out in the school annual improvement plan and the school strategic plan. These are attached to the principal's performance review and their personal development plan in which they are expected to highlight actions that the principal will take.

The professional leadership role involves the school's plan for developing leadership skills necessary to implement school improvement goals across the school. This also involves assessment using student, parent, and staff opinion data, as well as self reflection and supervisor perspectives. The peer support and professional development programs available to school leadership teams in general are tailored to specific tenures and needs of the participants. The organizations that deliver professional development programs are instructed that the modules must be aligned with the Leadership Development Framework adopted by Victoria and include key learning components that encompass:

- A school-based component that encourages the application of leadership knowledge
- Research based and data based projects that participants must carry out
- An emphasis on networking both within and across schools and creating a cadre of school leaders for mutual support
- An intellectual engagement through analysis of education leadership research.

There is a core policy delivery chain embedded in the structure of the Victorian state education system. The system is divided into 9 regions under the leadership of a regional director. Within each region, there is a series of regional networks under the leadership of a Regional Network Leader. Each network consists of approximately 25 schools. The system encourages the development of an accountability framework by enabling schools to evaluate their progress toward improvement goals and targets. It provides support for improvement plans through a 4-year school strategic plan and an annual implementation plan. The school principals and regional network leaders are expected to report on progress in scores of school performance indicators and other achievements through an annual report to the school community. The principals are also expected to manage risk and to undertake compliance exercises to ensure that legislation and departmental policies are in line with school activities.

The network accountability and improvement framework builds on this and provides advice to networks about network accountability and improvement principles and processes. The regions are accountable to the Office of Government School Education which leads the implementation of general attainment outcome policies and approves funding and resources to government schools. The regional director is responsible for implementation of the policy at the regional level and to serve as a key link between the DEECD and the schools. The regional network leaders support discussion and collaboration among school principals and the sharing of

best practices between schools. The principals are responsible for the culture and implementation of policy at the school level. In all activity regional network leaders, school principals and leadership teams within schools are expected to situate their activities within the Leadership Development Framework. The importance of the Leadership Development Framework cannot be overstated within the Victorian system and for this reason the remainder of this chapter addresses the development and use of that framework.

## The Developmental Learning Framework

The Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders (Victorian Department of Education 2007) is embedded in a developmental learning paradigm, demonstrating a consistency of approach to education of students and to their service providers. The framework provides an explicit account of what is expected of school leaders.

The primary purpose of developing a leadership framework was to help build the leadership capacity of teachers and school leaders. The framework identifies and describes the capabilities that leaders need to create the organizational conditions under which good quality learning and teaching can take place. Defining the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an effective school leader is expected to support the development of a shared understanding of effective school leadership across the system and emphasize the importance of continuing professional learning.

*The conceptualization of leadership development provides direction concerning what it means to develop as a leader.* It implies that leadership is learnable because there is a body of knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with leadership. The assumption of a developmental nature of leadership provides the opportunity for teachers and school leaders to set directions for their professional learning over the long term and links in appropriate ways to their individual development and career stages. The framework was expected to provide clarity about the nature of professional learning needed in order to increase proficiency in domains of leadership. Under the framework, the teachers and school leaders would be able to reflect on and self-assess their current leadership capacity.

The stance taken in Victoria presumes that the leadership framework is not confined to those in the school principal positions. What is labeled as "Principal Class" in Victoria refers to principals and assistant principals. Leadership is expected to be distributed and shared widely, in the context of a system in which the aging profile of school leaders makes a necessity of developing future leaders. Effective leaders are expected to recognize that knowledge about the challenges facing their organization, and the expertise required to address these, can be developed by or reside with many members of the school community. Consequently, staff expertise needs to be maximized by distributing authority and responsibility throughout the school (Elmore 2000).

A decision was made to develop the framework within the leadership domains proposed by Sergiovanni (1996), in part due to its holistic approach to definition of the construct. Sergiovanni's 5 domains of leadership are described in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1** Sergiovanni domains of leadership

| Domain | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 Technical | Optimize the school's financial, human, and physical resources through sound management practices and organizational systems that contribute to the achievement of the school's vision and goals |
| 2 Human | Foster a safe, purposeful, and inclusive learning environment, and a capacity to develop constructive and respectful relationships with staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders |
| 3 Educational | Lead, manage, and monitor the school improvement process through a current and critical understanding of the learning process and its implications for enhancing high quality teaching and learning in every classroom in the school |
| 4 Symbolic | Model important values and behaviors to the school and community, including a commitment to creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities within the school, and across all levels of the system |
| 5 Cultural | Understand the characteristics of effective schools and have a capacity to lead the school community in promoting a vision of the future, underpinned by common purposes and values that will secure the commitment and alignment of stakeholders to realize the potential of all students |

Sergiovanni's idea of transformational leadership follows a shift toward reduction in differences in status between workers and managers, an emphasis on participative decision-making, and the promotion of a form of "consensual" or "facilitative" power that is manifested through other people instead of over other people (Leithwood 1992). While the number of leadership studies in schools is growing, the definition of transformational leadership remains vague. However, there are similarities in this form of leadership whether it is in a school setting or a business environment (Hoover et al. 1991; Leithwood and Jantzi 1990). The distribution of responsibility and leadership over layers within an organization changes the structure and function of leadership itself.

Pounder et al. (1995) reported that the leadership exerted by principals, teachers, and others was linked to student outcomes. Leadership was positively related to organizational commitment, which was positively associated with the perceived effectiveness of schools and negatively associated with teacher turnover.

Relatively few published studies have investigated the impact of shared leadership on school improvement, and even fewer have studied effects on student learning. Hallinger and Heck (2010) examined the effects of collaborative leadership on school improvement and student reading achievement in 192 elementary schools in one state in the USA over a 4-year period. Using latent change analysis, they found direct effects of collaborative leadership on change in the schools' academic capacity and indirect effects on rates of growth in student reading achievement. In addition, the study identified three different growth trajectories among schools, each characterized by variations in school improvement processes. The study supports a perspective on leadership for learning that aims at building the academic capacity of schools as a means of improving student learning outcomes.

Attempts to develop measures of leadership in the educational context have been uncommon. Systematic quantitative research on measuring distributed leadership is

scarce. Hulpia et al. (2009) developed a Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) to investigate leadership team characteristics and distribution of leadership functions across formally designed leadership positions in large secondary schools. A one-factor structure for the leadership team characteristics (coherent leadership team) and a two-factor structure for the leadership functions (support and supervision) were confirmed.

Evidence of the effects of transformational leadership is uniformly positive, according to Leithwood (1992). He cites two findings from his own studies: the transformational leadership practices have a sizable influence on teacher collaboration, and significant relationships exist between aspects of transformational leadership and teachers' reports of change in attitudes toward school improvement and altered instructional behavior. Sergiovanni suggested that student achievement could be improved by such leadership and Sagor (1992a, b) found that schools where teachers and students reported a culture conducive to school success had a transformational leader as its principal. Mitchell and Tucker (1992) argued that transformational leadership might be only a part of a balanced approach to creating high performance in schools. In support of this view, Leithwood pointed out that finding the right balance was a problem for schools.

## *Developmental Leadership*

Since the early 1980s, the view has been adopted that leadership skills are acquired progressively, become increasingly sophisticated, and demand increasing amounts of ability. The notion of developmental stages has been proposed in many areas of learning and professions. For example, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) proposed stages from novice to competent and expert. It has been argued however, that a focus on stages can hide some of the important aspects of development. This perspective ignores the reality that stages are not discrete steps but have intra level variation. For example, the levels in a standards-referenced framework are based on the identification of thresholds along a continuum of increasing competence, and the transition from one level to another is defined by at times minute increments in competence. The development of individuals is not monotonic. Progression and regression are typical and are dependent on contextual influences. It is not a staged development in which individuals progress inexorably from one level to the next.

> The notion of 'development' is perhaps the single most important concept in education. We use other terms to describe development—including growth, progress, learning, and improvement—but regardless of the term we use to describe it, the concept of individual development is the central idea underlying all teaching and learning. (Masters 1998a, b, p. 3)

Consequently the identification of a developmental leadership pathway was expected to provide a context within which the leadership capacity of teachers and school leaders could be enhanced. The pathway was to identify and describe the capabilities that leaders need in order to create the organizational conditions under which quality

learning and teaching can take place. Defining the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an effective school leader will support the development of a shared understanding of effective school leadership across the system and emphasize the importance of ongoing professional learning.

> The major purposes of professional learning are to deepen understanding, transform beliefs and assumptions, and create a stream of continuous actions that change habits and affect practice. Such learning most often occurs through sustained attention, study, and action. (Sparks 2003, p. 17)

In the Victorian state education system, the Leadership Pathway, the creation of which is outlined in this chapter, *describes development* in each of the 5 Sergiovanni (1996) domains of leadership, *and describes levels of performance so that individuals can determine their current stage of development and monitor their progress over time. Thus,* the potential of the Leadership Pathway resides in its capacity to show where a teacher or school leader is located on a continuum of developing leadership and what they need to know and be able to do in order to improve their leadership performance.

*Conceptualising leadership development using this approach* implies that leadership is learnable. While leadership is a complex and multi-faceted construct, there is a body of knowledge, skills, and dispositions associated with leadership that can be learned. It also assumes that the construct of leadership is a developmental trait.

Assuming a developmental basis for the Leadership Pathway provides the opportunity for teachers and school leaders to set directions for their professional learning over the long term, appropriate to their individual development and career stages. Clarity is provided about the nature of professional learning they should undertake in order to increase their level of proficiency in particular domains of leadership.

An important consideration in the development of the Leadership Pathway was to design a resource that was usable by teachers and school leaders. This is based on the view that leadership is an important part of teachers' practice and a critical means of supporting and sustaining school improvement. Given the complex challenges associated with leadership, it should not be confined to those in Principal Class positions. Rather, leadership should be distributed and shared more widely. Effective leaders recognize that knowledge about the challenges facing their organization and the expertise required to address them can be developed or may reside with other members of the school community. Consequently, staff expertise needs to be maximized by distributing authority and responsibility throughout the school.

> Distributed leadership means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. (Elmore 2000, p. 15; Griffin and Gillis 2001)

The developmental approach therefore can be applied to the distributive and transformational leadership using Sergiovanni's framework. It is in effect the development of a standards-referenced framework. Structures incorporating levels of development have had a range of names over the past 25 years. They have been called profiles (Griffin 1987, 1990), standards-referenced frameworks (Sadler 1987), and developmental pathways or progress maps (Masters and Forster 1996). The title that appears

to have been retained is Sadler's standards-referenced framework, in which levels can be regarded as standards and one particular level might be regarded as the minimum acceptable standard of competence. Other levels can be regarded as benchmark or aspirational levels for an individual or a system. In the leadership context, it may be possible to identify one level that is regarded as essential for a principal, another for an assistant principal, and so on. In a more complex analysis, it may be possible to define a school leadership team profile (Hulpia et al. 2009) and to link the collective or collaborative competence of the leadership team to the idea of an effective school.

Use of the framework by leaders and systems requires that individuals can both be assessed and self-assessed using its parameters. There are some important assumptions underpinning a developmental assessment framework. These are centered on the use of cohesive sets of indicative behaviors representing levels of proficiency in the area of learning or the underlying continua. These sets are ordered along the continua, enabling individuals to be placed at particular points which identify their current performance levels and therefore also identify the behaviors which they are ready to learn. As with most approaches to measurement, it is not necessary to observe all possible behaviors in order to define the continuum or to identify the probable location of an individual upon it. A full outline of these assumptions can be found in Griffin (1997).

## *Development of the Leadership Pathway*

The pathway was developed using iterations of a 4-step process of drafting, paneling, piloting, and trialing items to include in a questionnaire to be used within the system for identification of leadership capacities and professional learning opportunities. A series of workshops was conducted with approximately 40 leaders from the state education system. At each step, the comments of teachers and leaders participating in workshops were incorporated into the questionnaire as it developed. An international group of leadership specialists and researchers, comprising of academic researchers in the field of educational leadership from the USA, Canada, the UK, and Australia, was invited to review and critique the results of the workshop deliberations. This led to recommendations for change and a strengthening of the theoretical bases of the work as leadership researchers tended to offer supporting documentation for their suggestions.

First, the process required the identification of capabilities (broad skills or competencies) that were defined as critical activities to be performed by educational leaders. A capability is a 'big idea' that is not directly observable but which can be defined by behaviors linked to its demonstration. In the first workshop, the participants were asked to draft ideas about the critical capabilities of educational leaders. The capabilities were defined within Sergiovanni's framework. To assist with this, several readings by Leithwood, Sergiovanni, and others were provided as background reading.

**Table 5.2** Domains and capabilities

| Domain | Capabilities |
|---|---|
| 1 Technical | Thinks and plans strategically |
| | Aligns resources with desired outcomes |
| | Holds self and others to account |
| 2 Human | Advocates for all students |
| | Develops relationships |
| | Develops individual and collective capacity |
| 3 Educational | Shapes pedagogy |
| | Focuses on achievement |
| | Promotes inquiry and reflection |
| 4 Symbolic | Develops and manages self |
| | Aligns actions with shared values |
| | Creates and shares knowledge |
| 5 Cultural | Shapes the future |
| | Develops a unique school culture |
| | Sustains partnerships and networks |

The draft statements of the capabilities were circulated to ensure that the target groups of leaders were in agreement with the selection of activities of the leadership groups. In addition, a series of experts on leadership studies were approached to comment on and to critique the series of capability statements. This was the process of paneling. The finalized capabilities are presented in Table 5.2.

Second, the process required the drafting of indicators. An indicator is a discrete behavior that is indicative of a person's capability. A combination of indicators can be regarded as sufficient evidence of a person's capability. For each capability, a series of indicative or typical behaviors should collectively provide adequate and appropriate evidence that would satisfy an observer that the capability had been acquired and could be demonstrated. In the second workshop, each capability in turn was described in terms of a series of indicative behaviors which addressed the question "How would you know if a leader was able to demonstrate the capability?"

This led to an activity in which a checklist of indicative behaviors was defined. At this point, several issues were addressed: how much evidence is *adequate* to draw a conclusion about the demonstration of a competence or a capability? What kind of evidence is *appropriate* to use? What rules can be used to determine the *authenticity* of the evidence? How *accurate* will the information be?

The draft statements of the indicators were also circulated to the local target group leader representatives and to the international expert reference group. They were asked to critique, remove, challenge, edit, or supplement the descriptions of indicative evidence. The series of indicative or typical behaviors were expected collectively to provide adequate and appropriate evidence that would satisfy an observer that the capability had been acquired and could be demonstrated.

Third, the process required the drafting of criteria. Criteria are rephrased indicators. They answer the question of how well the indicators can differentiate between performances. The point of departure of the assessment approach taken in this project from other competence or capability assessment models is the assumption that competence is defined by a continuum rather than by a "can/cannot" dichotomy. The

approach retains that dichotomy but seeks further information about each indicative behavior. For each indicative behavior the question is asked "how well was it done?" This process incorporates notions of quality in definitions of competence and performance assessment—*quality criteria*. The understanding of competence also assumes that a truly competent person can adjust the quality of performance to the demands of the context. No one operates at their maximum capacity all the time, so a pertinent question arises in this approach to assessment. Is it necessary to identify the maximum, or the typical, level of performance? The answer to this is probably "both". The maximum is needed to identify potential and the typical is needed to identify the expected level of performance. Both assessments need to be interpreted in the context in which the performance was demonstrated. This is a generalized requirement of criterion referenced measurement. Defining the criteria is an integral step in this process. The combination of capability, indicator, and quality criteria represent the basis of the measurement. The combination of 'indicator' and 'quality criteria' form what have become known as 'rubrics'. This project embodies how the term rubric has been refined and illustrates how rubrics can be used in assessment. Additional detail including guidelines for writing quality criteria can be found in Griffin (2007).

The drafting of the quality criteria included the need for these to be rank ordered in terms of their relative difficulty. To do this, a judgment procedure called pairwise comparisons was used. A pairwise comparison is a process of comparing entities in pairs to judge which is preferred, or has a greater amount of some property. This makes it possible to identify a developmental leadership pathway that has implications for professional development strategies, resource allocations and policy development. It is an important driver of leadership development.

The draft quality criteria were linked to each of the indicators and the relevant capabilities. In appearance, the combination of indicator and criteria form a rubric and resemble a multiple choice item. When used in data collection, it was expected that the respondent would choose the criterion that best matched the quality of the performance rather than identifying a correct or best answer. Each successive criterion described an increment in the quality of the performance. Performance at any one of the levels also implies ability to demonstrate performances at lower levels and to recognize the context-dependent appropriate level to operate at.

A smaller panel of specialists reviewed the quality criteria and used a pairwise judgment analysis to determine where there were gaps, redundancies, or lack of stretch targets for higher level leaders. The pairwise analysis (Thurstone 1927) is described by Griffin (2007).

Once the input of the expert panel and the pairwise comparisons were obtained and revisions undertaken, the questionnaire was reviewed through a pilot procedure with teachers and leaders representing the target group of either existing or aspiring leaders. This helped to determine whether the indicators and criteria were understandable, clear, concise, observable, and grammatically correct, and whether the levels within an indicator defined a progression of increasing quality. The questionnaire was then assembled.

**Table 5.3** Criteria for the capability 3.1: shapes pedagogy; its three performance indicators and quality criteria

| Capability 3.1: Shapes Pedagogy | |
|---|---|
| *3.1.1* | *Applies knowledge of how people learn to inform teaching and learning* |
| 3.1.1.1 | I engage staff in conversations about effective learning |
| 3.1.1.2 | I support staff to apply learning theory to classroom practice |
| 3.1.1.3 | I evaluate classroom practice to determine professional learning needs |
| 3.1.1.4 | I ensure the common models of learning underpin all classroom practice within the school |
| *3.1.2* | *Aligns curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting with goals for individual learning* |
| 3.1.2.1 | I implement procedures and structures that align curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and reporting |
| 3.1.2.2 | I monitor schoolwide practices to ensure they reflect the interrelationship between the components |
| 3.1.2.3 | I embed a developmental framework for individual learning across the school community |
| *3.1.3* | *Designs contextually relevant curriculum within system requirements* |
| 3.1.3.1 | I ensure the curriculum reflects system goals and requirements |
| 3.1.3.2 | I ensure that the nature of the individual cohort is taken into account in designing the school curriculum |
| 3.1.3.3 | I create a flexible curriculum format to cater for changes in the individual cohort |
| 3.1.3.4 | I influence the design of innovative curriculum that informs practice in other schools |

Once the final questionnaire was ready, a field trial was undertaken. Table 5.3 presents a part of the overall instrument which contained 45 items distributed across the 5 Sergiovanni leadership domains. There were 9 items per domain and each item contained up to 5 levels of performance quality. The numbering system shown in Table 5.3 was used for later interpretation of the analysis output.

## Developmental Learning Models

The quality criteria were written by taking into account a number of relevant learning and developmental models or theories. Each of the developmental models was provided as guides to the writers as they developed the hierarchy of quality criteria within each rubric. Using developmental frameworks such as these helped to ensure that a learning theory underpins the assessment and that the theory in turn can drive any intervention, targeted teaching or mentoring, and leadership development. It enabled the link between learning theory and leadership development to be established. The link is embedded in the assessment. In this project, the criteria writers were guided by frameworks including the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) and Bloom (1956) taxonomies, a higher order thinking model, and Krathwohl et al. (1956) affective model. These are described in brief.

### *Bloom's Taxonomy*

Andersen and Krathwohl (2001) redeveloped Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives and the new approach is helpful in identifying higher levels of cognitive skill. It can be used to define quality criteria for the underpinning knowledge for competencies. This cross references the type of knowledge (from factual to metacognitive process) with the kind of cognitive skill (from remembering to creating) that is to be demonstrated.

### *Dreyfus' Model*

The Dreyfus model is particularly useful for writing performance-oriented criteria. It has 5 levels ranging from novice, through advanced beginner, competent, and proficient, to expert. Guiding questions such as "What would a novice do?" "What would an expert do?" make this a relatively simple model to work with.

### *Higher Order Thinking*

A third aspect of quality criteria might involve problem-solving skills. The following levels were developed by Griffin and Callingham (2001/2004). The model applies to complex situations in which the person needs to analyze and solve a situation in which there is no single correct solution. In order of increasing competence, people might: list or recognize patterns, create rules, combine rules to form generalizations, formulate hypotheses (by challenging generalizations), or create novel and insightful solutions.

### *Affective Development*

A fourth framework that can assist in writing quality criteria involves the attitudinal underpinnings of competence, important in many situations. Krathwohl and Bloom developed the taxonomy of affective levels which can be used for writing attitudinal quality criteria. Usually attitudes are measured using a series of statements to which the respondent either agrees or disagrees, typically using a Likert scale. Psychometric research is gradually building evidence that the Likert scale may measure acquiescence rather than attitudes to a target phenomenon (Christie 1991). For observation in a competence context, it is strongly recommended that quality criteria which reflect levels of attitude development such as those represented in the Krathwohl taxonomy or in other suitable developmental models of attitudes be used. The levels of the taxonomy are: rejecting, receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing.

## Data Sources and Analyses

There were several sources of data. The first was the workshops in which the participants defined their ideas of leadership development. The second was the international review panels and their input to the qualitative assessments of leadership. The third was the target group of teachers and existing leadership group. More than 1,000 teachers and school leaders participated in the field trial and provided data which was analyzed using both classical and item response modeling procedures. These analyses yielded directly interpretable descriptions of leadership development.

The Rasch model was the cornerstone of the item response modeling approach. The analysis is based on the probability of a performance being a function of the difference between the leadership ability of a person and how difficult the behavior is to exhibit. Rasch (1960, 1980) showed that when the amount of latent trait (in this case, leadership) possessed by the individual is equal to the level of difficulty (of the leadership criterion behavior), the probability that the person can demonstrate the behavior is 0.50. Although an important concept for the identification of a person's ability, the assessment itself also provides information about the need for professional development and the identification of appropriate intervention resources needed to advance the candidate's leadership skills. In this case, the Rasch model enabled statements to be made about relative difficulties without reference to specific persons. Similarly, statements could be made about people's relative leadership competence levels without reference to specific items.

The chart shown as Fig. 5.1 is referred to as a variable map and depicts the Educational Leadership domain. One of these maps was developed for each of the 5 domains.

In Fig. 5.1, the individuals are represented by an 'x' on the left of the figure and criteria codes are found on the right side of the figure. The height on the scale of the 'x' indicates the relative leadership ability of the individual 'x' and the difficulty of a criterion is represented by the height of the criterion code. The higher the criterion code, the more difficult it is to demonstrate the leadership behavior described by the criterion. Where individuals are shown at the same level as the criterion code, the ability of the individual is said to be equal to the difficulty of the criterion and the odds of an individual being able to demonstrate the behavior described by the criterion are 0.50. For example, item 3.1.2.3, which through reference to Table 5.3, is described by the statement "I embed a developmental framework for individual learning across the school community", is identified empirically as a relatively difficult item to endorse positively. Those individuals identified on the left of the figure at the same horizontal level as the item have a 0.50 probability of rating themselves as implementing this activity. Those at lower horizontal levels have increasingly lower probabilities of endorsement and those at higher levels have increasingly higher probabilities. Note that this method of displaying the data also enables a comparison of the relative difficulty of different criteria.

The codes for the criteria on the right side of the Figure are presented in columns—one column for each of the 9 indicators for this Educational Leadership domain. These

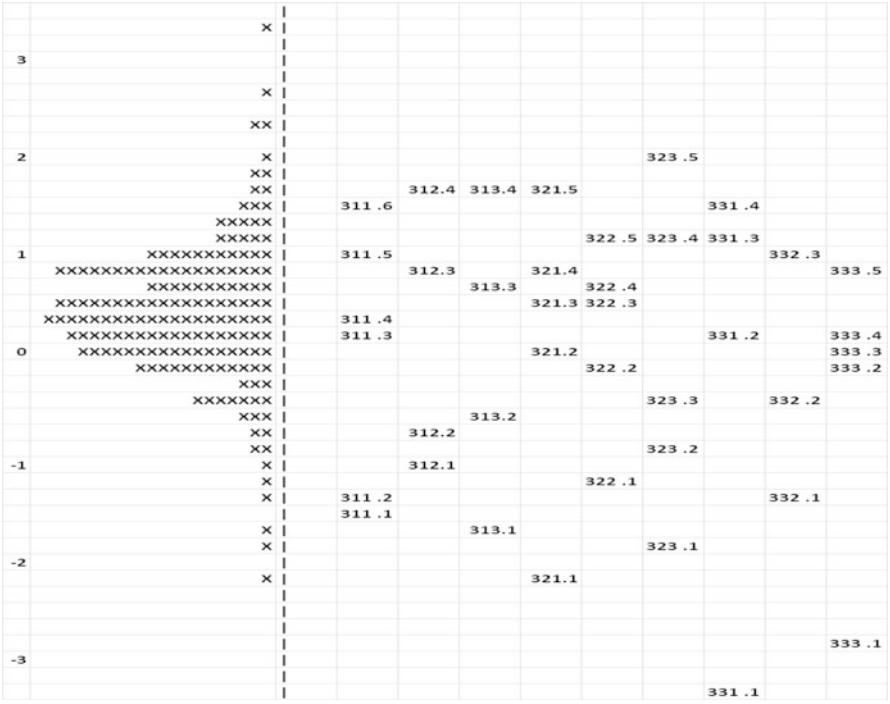



**Fig. 5.1** A variable map for the educational leadership domain

codes are of the same nature as those presented as an example in Table 5.3. The stages of increasing competence are identified by interpreting layers of criteria that appeared to cluster at similar heights on the latent dimension. Interpretations of the layers of codes then defined the progression of developing leadership competence. The same procedure was followed for each of the 5 domains.

## *Interpreting the Criteria*

Through use of the questionnaire, a respondent would receive a score on each indicator that contributes to an overall total score which, as outlined previously, can be decoded as a description of an absolute level of competence. Note that if the assessment design process stopped at the total score, it would be no different from typical forms of leadership assessment.

The work of Andrich (1978) and Masters (1982) established the basis upon which judgment could be used to interpret performance on complex tasks. Their elaborations of the Rasch model meant that quality criteria could be ordered according to the amount of competence required to demonstrate each criterion. This meant that the overall performance could then be interpreted in terms of not only the tasks completed

but also the quality of the performance. When defined in this way, interpretation of competence can be based on a description of performance in terms of the order, sequence, and difficulty of tasks performed and quality of the behaviors displayed. These profile statements of levels of quality can then provide the descriptions of the stages along progressions of increasing competence as illustrated in Table 5.4.

## Results and Conclusions

At the end of this procedure, several levels of development in leadership competence were defined for each domain. Principals, supervisors, regional staff, and central department managers could have access to a broad range of rich information with which to plan leadership training interventions via teaching or mentoring. The questionnaire was field tested with more than 1,000 teachers and showed evidence of high reliability and discriminating power based on leadership experience and training. It did not discriminate on the basis of gender, school size, sector, or location.

As can be seen from Figs. 5.2 and 5.3, the data supported the observation that both formal leadership training and experience as a leader contributed to higher levels of quality leadership performance across all the 5 Sergiovanni domains. From Fig. 5.2, assuming that formal training characteristically improves leadership skills, it can be inferred that these data support the construct validity of the scales. Those leaders who received formal training report higher level of competencies across all the 5 domains than do leaders with no formal training.

Figure 5.3 illustrates the higher level of reported leadership competencies by those educators who are already in leadership roles within the state educational system. Although there are slight differences between principals and assistant principals, these are not strong. Leading teachers typically take on leadership roles either for year/grade level coordination or for subject/discipline areas. This experience is reflected in their higher levels of reported leadership competencies when compared with expert teachers.

At a group level, these results are of interest although it cannot be inferred that either experience or formal training increases leadership performance. The data merely provide some basis from which it may be inferred that specific leadership behaviors are appropriately identified via the tool developed within the leadership framework.

## Discussion

Sergiovanni's framework has been widely discussed in terms of its applicability to leadership development, but this was the first time it had been operationalized in this way. The study offered a transparent system of reporting and providing feedback based on demonstrated skills and knowledge of educational leaders (Leithwood 1992). While the Sergiovanni framework has not been empirically or exhaustively tested, this project has provided a data and evidence-based approach to its implementation.

**Table 5.4** Levels of educational leadership

| | |
|---|---|
| *Technical* | |
| Level 1 Leaders | Leaders foster a common understanding of the school's context among the school community. They help others to understand the impact of change on people and the school. To implement the school's learning and teaching policies, they audit and monitor the adequacy of the resources. Leaders hold themselves and others accountable for making decisions in accordance with departmental and legislative requirements. They share their own performance plan to demonstrate alignment with school priorities and provide opportunities for others to develop their skills at giving, receiving, and interpreting feedback |
| Level 2 Leaders | Leaders develop decision-making processes that recognize the school's context and use a consultative approach to strategic planning. Change management principles are used to inform the implementation of new initiatives. They involve staff in identifying resource needs and making decisions about priorities and design processes to monitor the use of resources. A range of strategies are used to attract additional resources to the school. To improve practice throughout the school, they establish a staff performance and development process and draw on a range of feedback sources. Leaders set performance and behavioral expectations for all members of the school community |
| Level 3 Leaders | Leaders use an understanding of the school's context, including the school's readiness for change, to decide how and when to implement improvement initiatives. They develop processes to monitor progress toward achieving school goals and priorities. They analyze the use of resources in relation to student learning and establish performance measures to assess the impact of these resources on priorities. When setting expectations for performance and behavior, they engage the school community in the development of protocols |
| Level 4 Leaders | Leaders ensure that policies related to resource allocation are responsive to changing needs and establish processes to continuously evaluate the impact of resources on priorities. The school community is encouraged to share responsibility for managing the school's resources. Leaders establish processes that enable staff to take individual and collective responsibility for achieving goals. They ensure that feedback is used to inform the school's professional learning strategy |
| Level 5 Leaders | Leaders use an understanding of broader educational and political influences to inform strategic thinking and planning and initiate processes that enhance educational outcomes across the system. They use improvement strategies appropriate to the nature of change. Leaders are recognized for their innovative use of resources to improve student learning. They evaluate policies to ensure needs and priorities are met. Performance data is synthesized to continuously improve school practices and others are encouraged to reinforce expectations set by the school community |
| *Human* | |
| Level 1 Leaders | Leaders adhere to legal requirements that support a just and secure environment. They discuss with staff the impact of student diversity on the school and establish processes to identify students' needs. They schedule time and create opportunities for informal interaction and formal communication. Procedures and structures are established that enable committees and groups to function effectively |
| Level 2 Leaders | Leaders implement programs in order to respond to student diversity. To build mutual trust and respect, they make themselves available and give their full attention to others. They encourage the use of established communication procedures and protocols. Roles and responsibilities within the school are clearly defined and relevant information is regularly disseminated to individuals and groups |

**Table 5.4** (*Continued*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Level 3 Leaders | Leaders develop protocols that support a just and secure environment. They purposefully engage in activities to build relationships and demonstrate empathy when dealing with others. Opportunities to participate in decision-making are provided. Leaders differentially allocate resources and match the expertise of members of the school, local and wider community to the needs of students. They act as a coach or mentor to others |
| Level 4 Leaders | Leaders establish collective responsibility for monitoring all aspects of the school that contribute to a just and secure environment. They monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to cater for individual needs and develop shared responsibility for improving student outcomes. The school community is engaged in the development of protocols for decision-making and collective responsibility for decisions made is promoted. Leaders delegate authority to others to undertake specific activities and design strategies and processes that support leadership development. They maintain an environment where all members of the school community feel accepted and valued |
| Level 5 Leaders | Leaders create an environment that intuitively responds to changes that impact on the school community. A range of strategies are initiated to improve relationships between teams and individuals and behaviors that impact negatively on a cooperative environment are addressed. They create innovative ways of communicating and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of communication strategies. They delegate authority to others in the school community. They publicly support other schools to build trust and cooperation across the system |
| *Educational* | |
| Level 1 Leaders | Leaders engage staff in professional discussions about effective learning and teaching. They implement processes that support the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and reporting and ensure the curriculum reflects the system goals and requirements. The role feedback plays in supporting learning and teaching is articulated. They promote the use of multiple forms of data to determine starting points and goals for learning. They create opportunities for people to use their expertize and assist them to enhance their practice by identifying strengths and areas for improvement. To promote intellectual exploration, they refer the research material and source relevant data to determine priorities for school improvement |
| Level 2 Leaders | Leaders consider the nature of the student cohort when designing the school's curriculum. They establish processes in order to support the use of a range of feedback sources to inform teaching and learning. They assist others to develop their capacity by creating opportunities for staff to learn from each other. Leaders develop a shared understanding of the implications of data for planning improvements. They support staff to experiment with a range of strategies to improve their practice |
| Level 3 Leaders | Leaders design learning, teaching, and management interactions based on how people learn and support the application of learning theories in classroom practice. School practices are monitored to ensure alignment of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and reporting with goals for student learning. They design a curriculum that is responsive to system changes and to changes in the student cohort. Leaders manage staff performance and development to improve student outcomes and monitor the extent to which feedback informs professional learning. Opportunities for reflection are incorporated in a range of forums |
| Level 4 Leaders | Leaders challenge others to continually improve their performance. Classroom practice is evaluated to determine professional learning needs. They ensure that teacher performance and development processes are linked to teacher practice, program effectiveness, and professional learning. Resources are allocated in order to support the school community to engage in an ongoing process of inquiry and reflection. Leaders design improvement strategies based on empirical evidence |

**Table 5.4** (*Continued*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Level 5 Leaders | Leaders ensure common models of learning and teaching underpin all classroom practice. They ensure that the principles of developmental learning inform the alignment of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting. To improve learning outcomes, they verify that the students and staff self-evaluate against goals and targets. Leaders promote further improvement by systematically collecting evidence of how reflective practices contribute to improvement in teacher practice. They influence curriculum practices in other schools and design initiatives that build the capacity of people across the system |
| *Symbolic* | |
| Level 1 Leaders | Leaders use evidence to identify their learning needs and undertake professional learning to improve their performance. They openly communicate the importance of maintaining wellbeing and monitor and control their emotional reactions to different situations. They support the development of a common language around the school's values and vision and encourage others to act in accordance with them. Processes that support the achievement of school goals are documented and implemented. Leaders read current research papers, share effective practice and allocate time for people to work and learn together |
| Level 2 Leaders | Leaders demonstrate a commitment to learning and growth by acknowledging the importance of their own learning and that of others. They structure opportunities for feedback to improve their emotional awareness. They demonstrate the importance of taking responsibility for one's own wellbeing, including accessing information and services to support their wellbeing and that of others. The links between processes and school goals are made clear to all members of the school community and they explain the basis on which decisions are made. They encourage staff to read research material. Collaborative processes are established to support professional learning and enable individuals to learn from each other |
| Level 3 Leaders | Leaders ensure that the school's values are reflected in school practices and that goals are achieved through well-defined and defensible processes. They evaluate processes to ensure their continuing alignment with school goals. Collaborative practices are established across the school community and structures and processes that support wellbeing are created. They design a whole school professional learning strategy that aligns individual learning plans with school goals and support staff to link their own evidence-based research to practice. They actively promote the value of public education |
| Level 4 and 5 Leaders | Leaders demonstrate a commitment to learning and growth by creating opportunities to share their learning across the system. They coach and mentor others to enhance their emotional intelligence. They ensure that all members of the school community take responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing. The impact of professional learning on student outcomes is evaluated. They promote the school's values in the local community. They work with other schools and across the system to generate and share knowledge and maximise the access of all students |
| *Cultural* | |
| Level 1 Leaders | Leaders articulate a vision for the school and celebrate important events that reflect the school's vision. They communicate with stakeholders to build alliances to support the school's vision. They talk about the value of diversity and support the development of a unique school culture. They make sure that families and caretakers are informed of school policies, programs and activities and utilize local experiences to enrich learning and teaching. They influence others by using logical arguments |

**Table 5.4** (*Continued*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Level 2 Leaders | Leaders use a collaborative approach to develop a shared vision for the school. They provide opportunities for all members of the school community to have a voice in the school and share their knowledge and experience with others. They promote a sense of pride in current and past achievements and encourage groups and individuals to share them with the school community. They invite families and caretakers to participate in school activities and draw on expertise in other organizations to extend and enrich learning and teaching |
| Level 3 Leaders | Leaders make public and reinforce the relationship between the school vision, goals and improvement strategies and use a range of approaches to secure the commitment of others. They use the school's customs and traditions to enhance student connectedness to the school. Processes are established for families and caretakers to participate in whole-school decision-making. They formally recognise and acknowledge the achievements of individuals and teams. They form partnerships with other organizations to expand learning and teaching opportunities and work with stakeholders for the benefit of the school community. They seek opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise within and beyond their school |
| Level 4 Leaders | Leaders consistently reference short-term and long-term school planning and resource decisions to the school vision. They support leaders in other schools to develop processes for shaping a school vision. They respond strategically to opportunities in the external environment for the benefit of the school community. They actively shape, and encourage others to build on, the school's customs and traditions. Families and caretakers are supported to participate directly in students' learning and personal development. Processes are established that enable individuals and teams to acknowledge their own and others' achievements. They facilitate the sharing of school resources to support the local community and take on a leadership role beyond their school |
| Level 5 Leaders | Leaders coach and mentor other leaders in the use of influencing strategies to secure commitment to their school vision and goals. Their leadership expertise is sought by others and is recognize publicly. To position the school at the centre of the local community, they maximize access to a range of their services. They assist other education systems and organizations to transfer and adapt innovative practices from their school |

If leadership is to be defined as part of a profession, it ought to be characterized by a body of systematic, scientifically derived knowledge. Each profession needs to have identified a basic core of skills and knowledge that supports development within leadership positions. Leaders need to have an understanding of, and in, the practice of their profession which informs their leadership practice. Leadership skills themselves can be guided through professional development courses but must be shaped by the needs of the specific profession. To this extent then, the leadership skills cannot be regarded as independent of the professional context. The leadership and professional practice skills are interdependent. Due to this interdependence, views of both the leadership and professional practice components influence each other.

The Leadership Pathway was based on the 5 Sergiovanni leadership domains: Technical, Human, Educational, Symbolic, and Cultural. The procedures for the identification of capabilities, performance indicators, and quality criteria are based on knowledge of the education profession, and to this extent are judgment-based. Capabilities were initially defined without criteria and without an interpretation

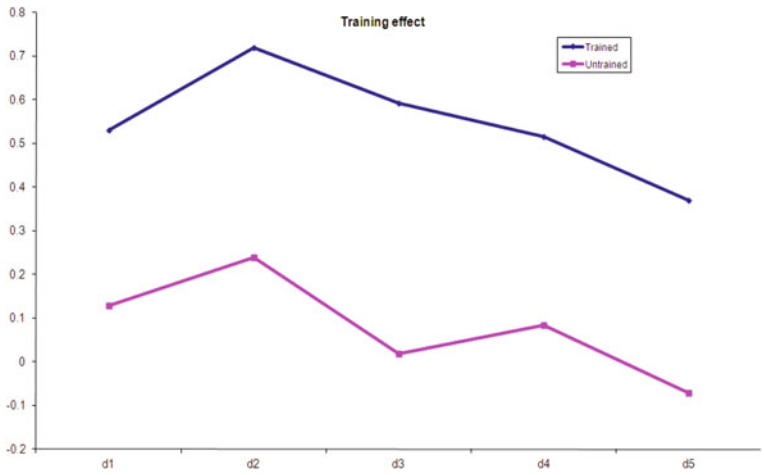



**Fig. 5.2** Effect of training on measures of leadership across domains

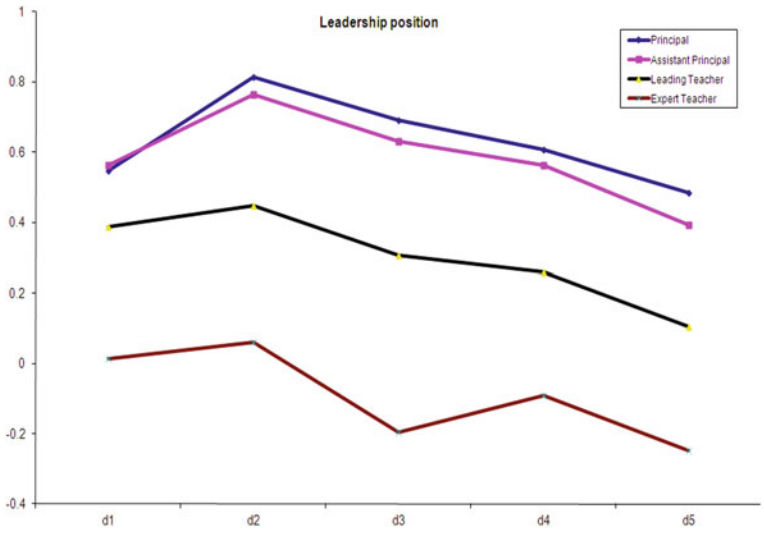



**Fig. 5.3** Leadership position in school and measures of leadership domains

framework. However, building upon knowledge of the profession and stipulating desirable practices through the quality criteria provided a framework within which individual respondents' scores can be interpreted.

Criterion-referenced interpretation is not qualified by group membership, but by the context of learning and observation. The performance is described in terms of its level of quality and is interpreted within a continuum of increasing competence as (Glaser 1981) originally defined. It provides a series of thresholds that enable development to be monitored.

Identification of the level at which an individual is developing means that the advisor or mentor can target interventions or professional development to facilitate the movement of each developing leader along the continuum of increasing competence. The scale is also analytical and diagnostic: it is analytical due to the way the quality criteria are derived—each element of the performance has to be defined and assessed in terms that are recognizable by a judge; it is diagnostic in that it can be used to infer appropriate professional development interventions. Specific interventions in the Victorian education system are based on this framework, including the leadership development modules offered by the Bastow Institute of Education Leadership. In 2010, the Victorian Government established the Institute and called for proposals to write up to 30 modules linked to leadership development. Those responding to the call for tenders were instructed to target the second level of each of the domains in their preparation of materials. This meant that all professional development for educational leadership in Victoria was required to conform to the Sergiovanni framework. The leadership programs offered by the Institute were required to be located within the framework, and accordingly the standards-based approach to developmental leadership assessment has had substantial impact on leadership training in the Victorian system.

Rubrics (the combination of a performance indicator and its associated set of quality criteria) must be developed by people with expert knowledge of the area of learning and development. The capacity to discern subtle difference in performance quality requires an expert or, as Eisner (2002) called them, a "connoisseur"—someone who not only knows quality when they see it but also who can articulate what it looks like. If quality criteria are well written, the interpretation of their relative difficulty is a simple task. This makes it possible to identify a developmental level for every individual. It also defines when individuals are ready to learn and where instruction can be targeted. If there is a development target for every leader, then even top educational leaders are catered for. This is a major advantage of a developmental approach to the assessment of competence, and it implies different intervention strategies for different subgroups with consequent different resource allocations.

In the Victorian DEECD system, the Leadership Framework has been implemented system wide. To ensure its take-up, stakeholders from the educational governance and implementation sectors were involved in the conceptual development, researchers and theorists from Australia and overseas were consulted, and principals and teachers generated the capabilities, indicators, and quality criteria that define educational leadership. Principals and teachers, in particular, ensured that the resulting survey tool was meaningful and useful. The profile descriptions of an individual across the five educational leadership domains provide the opportunity for their capabilities to be described differentially, given that there is no presumption that a leader will progress uniformly through all levels of all 5 domains. The tool, referred to as the iLead 360° Survey, can be used by individual leaders or teachers as a resource for reflection. It can also be used to provide a holistic and objective assessment of capabilities using the input of peers, reporting staff, and managers. This provides the individual with the means of identifying match between their self-perception and the perceptions of others concerning how the individual

functions in their leadership role. The feedback from this process leads to the setting of professional learning goals and plans, opportunities for coaching and mentoring, performance development and reviews, and as an aide in principal selection. The surveys can be accessed online by employees within the state education system.

The development of the framework, the notion of a developmental pathway underlying leadership, and its empirical definition in terms of actual leadership practices, has made available to the education sector a set of standards against which individuals, leadership teams, schools and regions can assess themselves. More importantly, the framework has established a commonly agreed set of standards to which these stakeholder groups are held accountable, and to which they can aspire. This provides a common language across the state system and enables a synthesized approach to leadership within the sector.

## References

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: Longman.

Andrich, D. (1978). A rating formulation for ordered response categories. *Psychometrika, 43,* 561–573.

Bloom, S. (Ed.). (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals*. New York: Susan Fauer Company.

Christie, R. (1991). Authoritarianism and related constructs. In J. P. Robins, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes.* San Diego: Academic Press.

Dreyfus, H. L., & Dreyfus, S. E. (1986). *Mind over machine: The power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Eisner, E. (2002). *What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education?* Retrieved from The Encyclopedia of informal education: www.infed.org/biblio/eisner_arts_and_the_practice_or_education.htm. Accessed 19 Sept 2009.

Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, D.C.: The Albert Shanker Institute.

Glaser, R. (1981). The future of testing: A research agenda for cognitive psychology and psychometrics. *American Psychologist, 36,* 923–936.

Griffin, P. (1987). *Assessing the development of reading behaviors: A report of profiles and reading band development*. Presented at the annual conference of the Australia Association for Research in Education, University of New England, Armidale, Australia.

Griffin, P. (1990). Profiling literacy development: Monitoring children's growth towards literacy. *Australian Journal of Education, 34,* 290–311.

Griffin, P. 1997. *The ARC learning profiles*. Melbourne: Assessment Research Centre, University of Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (2007). The comfort of competence and the uncertainty of assessment. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 33,* 87–99.

Griffin, P. (2009). Teachers' use of assessment data. In C. M. Wyatt-Smith & J. J. Cumming (Eds.), Educational assessment in the 21st century (pp. 187–212). New York: Springer.

Griffin, P., & Callingham, R. (2001/2004). *Shaping assessment for effective intervention*. Paper presented at the 18th biennial conference of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, Adelaide, Australia.

Griffin, P., & Gillis, S. (2001). *Competence and quality: Can we assess both?* Paper presented at the National conference on grading on competency based assessment in VET, Melbourne, Australia.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2010). Can leadership enhance school effectiveness? In T. Bush, L. Bell, J. Bolam, R. Glatter, & P. Ribbins (Eds.), *Educational management: Redefining theory, policy, and practice* (pp. 178–190). London: Paul Chapman.

Hoover, N. R. et al. (1991). *Transformational and transactional leadership: An empirical test of a theory*. Paper presented at annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April.

Hulpia, H., Devos, G., & Rosseel, Y. (2009). *The relationship between the perception of distributed leadership in secondary schools and teachers' and teacher leaders' job satisfaction and organizational commitment*. Ghent: Ghent University.

Krathwohl, D., Bloom, B., & Masia, B. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives. Handbook II: Affective domain*. New York: David McKay.

Leithwood, K. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Educational Leadership, 49*(5), 8–12.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1990). *Transformational leadership: How principals can help school cultures.* Paper presented at annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, Victoria, Canada, June.

Masters, G. (1982). A Rasch model for partial credit scoring. *Psychometrika, 47,* 149–174.

Masters, G. (1998a). Standards and assessment for students and teachers: A developmental paradigm. *Seminar Series Paper, 74,* IARTV.

Masters, G. (1998b). *Standards and assessment for students and teachers: A developmental paradigm*. Melbourne: Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria.

Masters, G., & Forster, M. (1996). *ARK progress maps* Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Matthews, P., Moorman, H., & Nusche, D. (2007). *School leadership development strategies: Building leadership capacity in Victoria, Australia*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/22/39883476.pdf. Accessed 19 Sept 2009.

Mitchell, D., & Tucker, S. (1992). Leadership as a way of thinking. *Educational Leadership, 49*(5), 30–35.

Pounder, D., Ogawa, R., & Adams, E. (1995). Leadership as an organization-wide phenomena: Its impact on school performance. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 31*(4), 564–588.

Rasch, G. (1960). *Probabilistic models for some intelligence and attainment tests*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for Educational Research. (Expanded Edition (1980) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).

Rasch, G. (1980). *Probabilistic models for some intelligence and attainment tests: Expanded edition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sadler, R. (1987). Specifying and promulgating achievement standards. *Oxford Review of Education, 13,* 191–209.

Sagor, R. (1992a). *How to conduct collaborative actions research*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Sagor, R (1992b). Three principals who make a difference. *Educational Leadership, 49*(5), 13–18.

Sergiovanni, T. (1996). *Leadership for the schoolhouse: How is it different? Why is it important?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Sparks, D. (2003). Interview with Michael Fullan: Change agent. *Journal of Staff Development, 24*(1).

Thurstone, L. (1927). A law of comparative judgment. *Psychological Review, 34,* 278–286.

Victorian Department of Education. (2007). *The developmental learning framework for school leaders*. Melbourne: Office of School Education, Department of Education.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

# Chapter 6
# The Shape and Shaping of School Leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand

**Lester Flockton**

## Introduction

New Zealand, like many nations, states, and districts, has for some time been introducing successive layers and rounds of reform (called 'initiatives') in its education system. More recently, the reforms have almost single-mindedly focused on improved and measurable student learning outcomes that are to be achieved through the interplay of curriculum, assessment, reporting, and leadership. The national curriculum has again been revised (2007), but this time it was closely followed by the introduction of national standards for literacy and numeracy (2009) with associated changes in assessment and reporting requirements. The School Leadership is widely understood as the centrifugal force necessary for the realization of policy ambitions and the success of ongoing reforms. For school principals in particular, this has amounted to a significant expansion of role and responsibility. It has also required an acceptance of the centrality of continuous learning about the processes, contexts, and dynamics of change. However, sustained and significant improvements in student achievement that may result from system initiatives and impactful school leadership do not happen overnight; they take time and they require strategy, pacing, resources, and commitment to a shared vision supported by a few key principles. Above all of these, school leaders need to be convinced that system-led changes will actually benefit teaching and learning if they are to give them full support.

L. Flockton (✉)
University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand
e-mail: lester.flockton@otago.ac.nz

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_6, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

## The New Zealand Education System

### *A Confluence of Self-Management and Accountability*

The current regulation and governance of schools in New Zealand is a direct result of the *Tomorrow' Schools* reforms legislated in the Education Act 1989. Long established government agencies were reconstituted, schools became self-managing, regulation less prescriptive, and accountability more defined. The reforms, which had major implications for school leadership, proceeded through two main stages of administrative reform followed by curriculum and assessment reform. The decision to address the administrative structure of the school system before tackling the core business of education itself (teaching and learning; curriculum, assessment, and reporting) was critical. It was argued that the right sort of administrative environment was prerequisite to not only enabling things to happen in different ways, but also in ways that would significantly improve educational outcomes. Radical change involved decentralization of school administration and a substantially different approach to regulation.

> Our investigations convinced us that the present administrative structure is overcentralized and made overly complex by having too many decision points. Effective management practices are lacking and the information needed by people in all parts of the system to make informed choices is seldom available. The result is that almost everyone feels powerless to change things they see need changing. To make progress, radical change is now required. An effective administrative system must be as simple as possible and decisions should be made as close as possible to where they are carried out. Because the state provides the funds and retains a strong interest in educational outcomes, there must be national objectives and clear responsibilities and goals. (DOE 1988, p. xi)

### *Government Agencies*

The reforms saw the New Zealand Department of Education replaced by a Ministry of Education which operates according to annual purchase agreements with the Minister of Education for designated outputs that the Minister either wants or supports. With Government now assuming more direct control over policy direction and resourcing than previously, a substantial increase in the politicization of education was inevitable.

> Ministers decide both the direction and the priorities for their departments. They should not be involved in their departments' day-to-day operations. In general terms, Ministers are responsible for determining and promoting policy, defending policy decisions, and answering in the House on both policy and operational matters. Officials, meanwhile, are required to support Ministers, serve their aims and objectives, and 'implement the decisions of the government of the day'.

The long-standing school inspectorate was also disbanded and replaced by the Education Review Office (ERO), a government agency independent of the Ministry of

Education. Its function is to regularly audit and publicly report on the performance of schools in terms of the board's charter, objectives and current Government priorities for education. ERO does this through a nationwide review cycle in which each school is reviewed once in 3–5 years, unless there is sufficient cause for concern for it to be reviewed more frequently. A school's reporting history, self-review processes, and use of assessment information are critical considerations:

> Schools . . . are reviewed on average once every three years. Reviews will be more frequent where the performance of a school or center is poor and there are risks to the education and safety of the students, or less frequent where a school has a stable reporting history and demonstrates good self-review processes and use of its assessment information. (Education Review Office (2011a))

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)was established to oversee and increase the coherence of qualification systems through a unifying framework (the New Zealand Qualifications Framework) and to take responsibility for national qualifications, including those for senior secondary school students. The authority led a major reform of senior secondary school examinations and awards, replacing traditional approaches with those intended to better meet the needs of a diverse society and economy in changing times.

## *School Boards and Principals*

The governance of each of New Zealand's 2,600 or so state-funded primary and secondary schools became the responsibility of a board of trustees elected by parents and staff. Each board is charged with 'setting the direction' of their school within the parameters of regulation and held accountable for the school's performance by the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education. The principal, who is appointed and employed by the board, is a full member of the board while also being its chief executive responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, implementing the board's policies and leading the school self-review. The division of responsibility between the board of trustees (governance body) and the principal is not altogether clear-cut, although the Education Act 1989 makes the following distinctions:

> Board to control management of schools—Except to the extent that any enactment or the general law of New Zealand provides otherwise, a school's board has complete discretion to control the management of a school as it thinks fit. (Section 75)
> Principals—(1) A school's principal is the board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management. (2) Except to the extent that any enactment or the general law of New Zealand provides otherwise, the principal—(a) Shall comply with the board's general policy directions, and (b) Subject to paragraph (a) of this subsection, has complete discretion to manage as the principal thinks fit the school's day-to-day operation. (Section 76)

It is significant that the duality of governance and management roles for the principal has been a point of contention. There are those who have difficulty accepting a constitutional arrangement intended to forge a collaborative working partnership

between community and profession, albeit underpinned by theories of choice and market mechanisms that presuppose strongly performing schools could thrive and prosper while weaker ones might whither and disappear (Codd 1999).

> Consumers need to be able to directly influence their learning institution by having a say in the running of it or by being able to turn to acceptable alternatives. Only if people are free to choose, can a true co-operative partnership develop between the community and the learning institutions. (DOE 1988, p. 4)

It is also significant that since school principals are the employees of the board of trustees and not a government agency, there are limitations on how far the State can directly assert control on their actions.

## *Charters*

The lynchpin that binds individual boards of trustees to the State and its mandates is the charter which each school is required to have by law. There is no set format for a school's charter, but in accordance with the Education Act 1989 (Section 61) it must include the following:

a. Aims for developing policies and practices that reflect cultural diversity and Māori culture and the aim of ensuring reasonable steps are taken for the provision of tikanga and te reo where it is asked for
b. A long term strategic planning section for the next 3–5 years (referred to as the 'strategic plan')
c. An annually updated section (the annual plan).

The charter must include the board's aims, objectives, directions, priorities, and targets in four categories:

d. Student achievement (including against national standards from 2011)
e. Activities to meet government policy objectives
f. Management of the school's and board's resources and ownership matters
g. Other matters that the Minister may determine.

Boards must submit their charter annual plans to the Ministry of Education each year, and report annually to both the Ministry and the school community on performance against targets and particularly those concerning student achievement. It is the school principal who is invariably delegated to lead this work.

## *Regulation*

Prior to the education reforms, the schools were required to operate within countless regulations that had grown like 'Topsy' over time in response to issues and ideas of the day. They controlled and shaped the workings of the system. This approach,

however, was antithetical to a devolved self-managing system that purported to give schools much greater scope and responsibility for exercising their own directions and initiatives, yet within a framework of accountability for outcomes. Consequently, the reforms led to the systematic dismantling of the regulatory system and its replacement with a new statutory approach titled *National Education Guidelines* (NEGs). Within these Guidelines, *National Administration Guidelines* (NAGs) "set out statements of desirable principles of conduct or administration for specified personnel or bodies". In effect, the NEGs and NAGs set the essential rules within which schools must operate. They give scope and flexibility to Boards of Trustees for setting their own direction, policies, and practices provided they are consistent with the broadly stated Guidelines. Knowing the detail of the Guidelines gives an important insight into scope of leadership responsibility and discretion. The first Guidelines (1993) illustrate the extent of their open, non-prescriptive nature with very little direction given; for example, on how assessment and reporting should be conducted in practice.

Boards of Trustees must foster student achievement by providing a balanced curriculum in accordance with the national curriculum statements (i.e. the New Zealand Curriculum Framework and other documents based upon it).

In order to provide a balanced program, each Board, through the Principal and staff, will be required to:

1. Implement learning programs based upon the underlying principles, essential learning areas and skills, and the national achievement objectives; and
2. Monitor student progress against the national achievement objectives; and
3. Analyze the barriers to learning and achievement; and
4. Develop and implement strategies which address identified learning needs in order to overcome barriers to students' learning; and
5. Assess student achievement, maintain individual records, and report on student progress.

Over time, the Guidelines have grown to incorporate the policies and requirements of successive Governments. Compare, for example, the 2009 sections on curriculum, assessment, and reporting (see Appendix) with the earlier 1993 Guidelines (above). In addition to developing and implementing teaching and learning programs to provide students with opportunities to achieve success in all areas of the National Curriculum, priority to student achievement in literacy and numeracy is separately mandated. There are requirements to develop a strategic plan that documents how the school is giving effect to the National Education Guidelines and meeting the needs of Māori students. Regular school self-review and reporting to parents, the community, and the Ministry of Education on student achievement and progress in relation to National Standards in literacy and numeracy have been mandated.

The revised Guidelines, which now stipulate that 'the principal and staff' must deliver on the requirements to the Board (with the Board being ultimately responsible) uphold *The New Zealand Curriculum* as the overarching context for teaching, learning, assessment and reporting while introducing quite prescriptive requirements for literacy, numeracy, and National Standards. In effect the Guidelines set the parameters and describe the nature and scope of New Zealand's assessment

and accountability at a national level. Responsibility for interpretation of regulatory expectations is devolved to individual schools. In turn, accountability requires demonstration through evidence that the requirements are being effectively interpreted and achieved in school practice. There is no national testing and no requirement to use any of the number of available standardized tests or assessment packages. The student achievement, except for the senior secondary school qualifications, is determined according to teachers' overall judgments based on multiple sources of evidence. Securing confidence in the strength of validity and reliability of those judgments and maximizing the improvement of student achievement are major challenges confronting each school leader, along with the other demands of managing the affairs of the school.

## *Accountability*

The *quid quo pro* between self-management and a State funded schooling system is accountability. Along with the accountabilities to local communities, New Zealand schools are accountable for their strategic actions and achievements to the Ministry of Education through the annual planning and reporting cycle, and to the Education Review Office through its three- to five-yearly review cycle. All accountabilities for student achievement are expected to be directly referenced to the National Administration Guidelines (see above), except that the secondary schools are also accountable to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority for national qualifications assessments that the Authority has authorized the school to conduct internally. For the purposes of this discussion, attention is focused on accountability requirements that are tied to student achievement as they are prescribed in the National Administration Guidelines.

Notably, it is the Board of Trustees that is ultimately accountable for the school's performance—not the Principal and the professional leadership team of a school. The government agencies only have powers of sanction over the boards of 'at risk' schools whose performance proves deficient, not the school's leader. These powers of statutory intervention, which are typically triggered by recommendations in Education Review Office reports, allow the Ministry to:

- Obtain information about specified matters of concern
- Require a board to engage specialist help
- Require a board to prepare and carry out an approved action-plan
- Appoint a limited statutory manager to exercise any specified functions or
- Powers of the board
- Dissolve the board and appoint a commissioner in its place where there is concern about the board's overall performance.

In reality, a small number (about 4%) of State-funded schools nationally are controlled each year through statutory measures, and in about 75% of those schools the interventions involve working with Boards to support their improvement rather than replacing them (Education Counts 2011). Along with the Ministry interventions,

the Education Review Office has authority to conduct additional followup reviews that allow it to monitor and publicly report on required improvements. For many of those schools that have not fallen under such provisions, the specter of a poor report, external intervention, unwanted media attention, and further visits from the Education Review Office give sufficient reason and motivation to perform to expectations.

The Education Review Office audits schools against the National Education Guidelines and areas requiring statutory compliance such as health and safety, good employer obligations, financial and assets management. However, consistent with a heightened culture of student achievement, the emphasis of school reviews has shifted significantly toward student progress and achievement. Statutory compliance aspects that were hitherto given much attention have been quite deliberately deemphasized. The Overall Review Framework, which is separate from, yet in accordance with Ministry of Education official guidelines, places student achievement and progress, assessment, and reporting firmly at the centre (Fig. 6.1).

In the introductory notes to its evaluation indicators, the Education Review Office gives strong reinforcement to similar messages being repeatedly delivered by the Ministry of Education.

> It is crucial that schools gather, collate, analyze, and use valid and reliable information on students, such as their achievement, progress, and attitudes to learning. This information is used in making decisions at a school-wide, cohort, classroom, group, and individual level. Effective use of data is linked to improved decision making in the governing, leading and managing, and effective teaching dimensions. (Education Review Office (2011b))

The "key evaluative questions" that external reviewers use to investigate a school's performance when seeking to make evidence-based judgments are those that the school leadership must be confident and capable of satisfying. The open-ended and qualitative nature of the questions recognizes that there is no one set approach or package of information that must be evident. Schools, as self-managing institutions, make their own decisions about the assessments they conduct and how the information from those assessments is recorded and used, except for the Government's recently introduced National Standards (2010) in reading, writing, and mathematics. These require that students in all primary grades (5 year-old through to 12–13 year-old) be judged as above, at, below, or well below the standards for their year level according to teachers' overall professional judgments based on a range of evidence rather than any prescribed test or tests. No other curriculum-based grading requirements apply.

While Boards of Trustees are held accountable to the Government and its agencies, their performance is inescapably dependent on the school's professional leadership. Therefore, it is both reasonable and necessary that there be formal mechanisms available to Boards, being the employers, to ensure that their Principal is accountable to them. The mechanism for this is the mandatory requirement to operate a 'performance management system' comprising performance agreements and annual appraisals as conditions of employment. Moreover, the Secretary of Education (head of the Ministry of Education) has exercised statutory authority to prescribe principles that must underpin a Board's appraisal policies and processes, the features of the appraisal


**Fig. 6.1** Framework for school reviews (DRAFT). Education Review Office. June 2010

process, and aspects which should be appraised. The appraisal is twofold (Ministry of Education (2011)):

**Accountability** Firstly, appraisal assures the accountability of the principal for leading the school and managing the quality of teaching. To achieve this, a board must document its expectations of the principal's performance.

**Development aspects** Secondly, appraisal has the effect of setting development objectives. These relate to school-wide organizational goals and professional development goals personal to the Principal.

Effective principal appraisal combines accountability and development aspects through:

- Role clarification;
- Ongoing feedback to the Principal about performance;
- Honest identification of concerns to bring about improvement;
- Affirmation of successes; and
- Support for development.

There are four areas of practice (culture, pedagogy, systems, partnerships and networks) with associated 'professional standards' that must be appraised. However, consistent with self-management, the Board has considerable discretion over how it sets up its performance management and conducts annual appraisals. The current system emphasis on student achievement is explicitly reflected in only three of the principal professional standards (Ministry of Education (2011)):

- In conjunction with the Board, develop and implement a school vision and shared goals focused on enhanced engagement and achievement for all students
- Analyze and act upon school-wide evidence on student learning to maximize learning for all students with a particular focus on Mäori and Pasifika students
- Interact regularly with parents and the school community on student progress and other school-related matters.

The remaining 23 standards encompass conditions that are believed to directly or indirectly advance student progress and raise achievement.

It is accepted within State-funded systems that decentralization only goes so far, since Governments themselves are accountable to the electorate for the consequences of their policies. Despite some perceived intrusions, tensions, and inevitable imperfections, New Zealand's school system has remained substantially true to the interpretation of self-management and accountability that underpinned the reforms initiated in 1989, which went well beyond the definitional scope of "a self-managing school as one for which there has been significant and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources" (Caldwell and Spinks 1988, p. 5).

This commitment in no small measure reflects the vigilance of school trustees, school leaders, and professional organizations in guarding these principles and their influence on successive governments. The regulatory framework gives schools permission and latitude to set their own strategic direction and choose their approaches to implementation provided they are consistent with the intent of the Government's policies and priorities. The recently revised *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education 2007b) that was developed jointly by the education sector and the Ministry of Education exemplifies this by allowing considerable autonomy for localized interpretation within its broadly stated, nonprescriptive framework. The Boards of Trustees are held accountable to their community and the State for the school's

performance, yet the Board's performance is highly dependent on the school's professional leadership, so there are provisions that Boards are required to follow to ensure that the Principal is accountable to them. It is expected that any standards-based reforms should be introduced in ways that are sympathetic to the principles of self-management as they have been espoused and practiced in New Zealand.

## The Impact of Standards-Based Reforms on School Leaders in New Zealand

If the goals of standards-based reforms are understood as raising expectations, improving educational outcomes, and strengthening curriculum (McDonnell et al. 1997), then New Zealand most certainly falls within those intentions to the point that they have become the catch cry of the Ministry of Education as exemplified in its national education goals:

> The highest standards of achievement, through programs which enable all students to realize their full potential as individuals, and to develop the values needed to become full members of New Zealand's society.
> Excellence achieved through the establishment of clear learning objectives, monitoring student performance against those objectives, and programs to meet individual need.

If the key strategy of standards-based reform is seen as formalizing detailed, challenging, and measurable standards for student achievement then New Zealand has begun to follow that direction, but only partly. Recently introduced National Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for primary grade students at every year level are a key Government policy that has been mounted with all of the resources at its disposal.

*Message from the Prime Minister* National Standards in education are a critical part of the National-led Government's plan for securing a brighter future for New Zealand. New Zealand deserves a future with more highly skilled citizens, who have better job prospects, greater life choices and, in turn, who live in a society with less dysfunction, unemployment, welfare dependence, and crime. This policy is a critical step along the pathway to achieve that. I hope you and your family make the most of it.

**What You Can Expect** The National-led Government is determined to improve education standards.

From the start of this school term children in Years 1–8 will benefit from our new National Standards policy. National Standards will ensure primary and intermediate schools regularly assess their students' progress in reading, writing, and maths, and that this essential information is provided to parents. Schools will use National Standards to report to parents on the progress your child makes, and how their achievement compares with other children of their age (http://www.national.org.nz/education/).

In turn, the Ministry of Education's 'Output Plan' for 2010–2011 sets the seal on National Standards as the means to achieve one of the six education priority outcomes determined by the Government:

> Every child needs the opportunity to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, and to be supported to enable to make as much progress in developing these skills as they can. The Ministry aims to reduce the gap between high and low performing groups to lift overall achievement. (Ministry of Education 2010, p. 3)

Beyond these laudable yet contentious National Standards, formulated with unprecedented haste and condemned by academics and professionals alike as being seriously flawed, politically motivated, and unlikely to achieve their intentions, the 'standards' are not prescribed in such a manner for any other curricular responsibilities. This is despite the regulatory requirement "to provide all students in years 1–10 with opportunities to achieve success in all areas of the National Curriculum". Regardless, many would argue that schools do have standards—those that they themselves have the discretion to decide, prescribe, and assess within the broad scope offered by *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education 2007b). Thus, there are two quite distinct domains of demand on school leaders for raising student achievement and improving progress. One concerns the National Standards that are mandated in content and reporting procedures; the other concerns the system imperative of "raising expectations, improving educational outcomes, and strengthening curriculum" across a broadly stated national curriculum. Although the second of these two demands is inconsistent in strategy with approaches representative of standards-based accountability, it is nonetheless widely accepted within the school sector and given considerable emphasis by the Ministry. These two quite distinct approaches have significant implications for school leadership. On the one hand, there is regulatory enforcement with attendant accountabilities, whereas on the other hand there is professional obligation within a self-managing context. One imposes 'comply in' whereas the other seeks 'buy in'. Predictably, the school leaders have responded quite differently to the demands of each situation.

## *National Standards Reform*

In the case of the national standards reforms, large numbers of educational leaders simply do not *believe* that they will succeed in achieving the Government's main reasons for introducing them as given by the Minister of Education in a pamphlet to parents:

Why National Standards? (National Standards: lifting education standards. http://www.national.org.nz/education/)

- As many as one in five Kiwi children are leaving school without the basic literacy and numeracy skills they need to succeed.
- National standards will help identify struggling children early, ensuring they receive the support they need before it's too late.

- While many schools use tests, there's not been one standard which all children are measured against.

The New Zealand Principals Federation (NZPF), which represents the majority of the country's primary school principals, has been adamant in its opposition to the reforms.

NZPF vehemently opposes the implementation of National Standards as currently proposed because of the downstream threat they inevitably pose to student learning and the New Zealand Curriculum, and the unrealistic implementation timeframe (NZPF April 2009)

- This approach has never worked anywhere else
- It is politically and ideologically derived
- It is populist and it is shallow
- It will change the educational landscape by creating winner and loser students in NZ for years.

Moreover, the support for the Federation's stand has rallied from assessment experts who have cautioned the Government on the likely failure of the system intended to achieve its goals:

> Minister, in our view the flaws in the new system are so serious that full implementation of the intended National Standards system over the next three years is unlikely to be successful. It will not achieve intended goals and is likely to lead to dangerous side effects. . . .
> In our view the intended National Standards system has little chance of engaging the hearts and minds of New Zealand primary teachers. Our primary teachers have a strong ethic of care for children. We believe they are opposing National Standards not because they are reluctant to be accountable but because of genuine concerns about the effects of the national standards system on children and their learning. (Open Letter to the Minister of Education, Hon Anne Tolley, warning about the new National Standards system. 23 November 2009)

Despite deep concerns, regular media attention and compelling arguments against national standards as they have been formulated, the Government has remained steadfastly uncompromising in its refusal to make any changes. By and large, the general public has little understanding of the deeper issues and sees nothing wrong with standards, so politically the policy has not been counted 'high risk' for a government that is sitting high in public opinion polls. However, amidst all of the opposition from educationists, professional organizations, and school leaders alike, the majority of schools have nonetheless proceeded to implement the standards. Out of 350 schools sampled in a national snapshot of overall patterns and findings, "most schools had started work on the National standards by late July 2010; 91% of the principals and 86% of the teachers reported that their school had begun work to implement the National Standards" (Wylie and Hodgen 2010, p. 19).Perhaps this is not unexpected when considering that school Boards have been told by the Government that failure to implement would be tantamount to break the law. The threat to the elected board (please note, not the Principal) being replaced by a Government-appointed commissioner gives sufficient motivation for most to comply. In simple words, the school boards are loath to be publicly removed and shamed, and principals feel

strongly obligated to their boards. The consequences for school leaders, however, are fivefold:

1. Injury to strongly held and shared professional beliefs and values brought about by high-level public disregard for reasoned analysis of cumulative experience, evidence, and ethic;
2. Tokenism, a common response to compliance when there is little confidence that the reforms will significantly benefit teaching and learning;
3. Redistribution of time, thought, and energy at the expense of other worthwhile and satisfying curricular and professional learning activity;
4. Erosion of the trust necessary for productive partnerships between government agencies and schools; and
5. Redefinition of the purpose of the school and a good education.

School leaders are no exception to other professional groups when their values and the integrity of their knowledge-based judgments are undermined or dismissed. When values "define a standard of goodness, quality, or excellence that undergirds behavior and decision making, and what people care about" (Deal and Peterson 1999, p. 26) and when in consideration of expert advice and evidence school leaders have judged national standards to be in conflict with their values standards, then it can be expected that they will be unwilling to support their implementation in schools with the kind of commitment considered necessary. This is despite media statements asserting, for example, "Teachers must learn to obey Government's orders" (nzherald.co.nz, 15.12.2009)—a view undoubtedly shared by a sizeable section of the media audience which suggests that school leaders themselves need to "have the political skill to cope with the conflicting requirements of multiple constituencies" (Gardner 2007, p. 20). Many, if not most, would probably admit to lacking a sufficient measure of such skill while acknowledging its importance.

When a high profile assessment expert states, "I predict that National Standards will barely if at all change the mean achievement scores of the nation" (Hattie 2010, p. 5) despite this being the Government's major goal and reason for having them, then it is hardly surprising that the policy is regarded with disdain, and the extra work it involves an unnecessary burden and a distraction from investing in what is commonly valued by New Zealand school leaders as good: a broad, balanced, and engaging curriculum. Moreover school leaders become suspicious of how the system might be manipulated when achievement gains of the magnitude sought do not eventuate. Will unjustified blame be directed toward them?

> The politicians, advocates, and officials who promised improvement from their policies then start to become concerned that they do not see the gains promised by their national standards policies. Maybe, they say, the standards were too aspirational, and we cannot have a system that "fails" so many, so it is necessary to take stock, conduct a review, and so on. This can lead to complicity in finding ways to make the policies seem successful. This path includes presenting data in "interesting" ways such as using fancy graphs, changing of the standards (in a particular direction), and higher baying of criticism at the culprits who are causing this lack of success (i.e. schools). I am not saying that we would do this in NZ . . . (Hattie 2010 p. 5)

Lack of genuine commitment coupled with pressure to comply typically results in tokenism. Many school leaders become adept at devising economical systems within the latitude offered by the regulatory framework and the absence of detailed procedures (cf. Appendix: National Administration Guidelines). They know that the system does not have the capacity or resources to conduct deeper analyses of the quality and suitability of every single school's data generation and treatment, and they have little confidence that the achievement data they do send to central agencies will be used to benefit their school. In the circumstances, many school principals feel justified in 'simply' meeting the requirements.

The unwelcome redistribution of time, thought, and energy at the expense of other worthwhile and satisfying curricular and professional learning activity caused by the national standards reforms has been exacerbated by the requirement that schools officially begin to implement two major reforms in the same year (2010): National Standards, and the recently revised New Zealand Curriculum.

> 2010 also saw the requirement for schools to give effect to the revised New Zealand Curriculum. The process leading up to this was quite different from the development of National Standards. Schools have had several years to develop their understanding of the revised New Zealand Curriculum framework . . . after a lengthy period of collaborative consultation.
> By mid-2010, a quarter of the principals (in the research sample) thought that their school's teachers were now very confident in using the revised New Zealand Curriculum.
> Principals were asked what effect the introduction of National Standards was having on their school's development work with The New Zealand Curriculum. Most schools appear to be continuing with their work albeit with some tensions, including cutting back some of this work, and having less advisory support for that work. (Wylie and Hodgen 2010, p. 24)

Having to distribute time and resources simultaneously between developing a widely supported revised national curriculum and implementing a much-criticized national standards system has evoked predictable tensions among school leaders. One consequence is compromised quality, depth, and sustainability of school-level curriculum development and implementation, yet in the self-managing school the strong leaders accept the inevitability of compromise in such circumstances. They search out all possible ways to maintain the resolve to pursue the vision, directions, and priorities that the school, with the support of its community, is committed to.

Trust in those responsible for designing reform systems that schools are required to implement breaks down when school leaders are not convinced that the systems are fair, manageable, and likely to achieve intended outcomes. For trust to be placed in both the systems and those who design them, Onora O'Neill in her 2002 BBC Reith Lecture advised "we need to discover not only which claims or undertakings we are invited to trust, but what we might reasonably think about them". When hastily enacted[1] and implemented reforms are foisted on schools and their leaders without proper regard for the technical (measurement), pedagogical, curricular, and philosophic issues raised from within and beyond the education community—as has been the case in New Zealand's National Standards reforms—the trust necessary for productive partnerships between government agencies and schools is eroded.

[1] National Standards were enacted into law by Government within 6 weeks of taking office.

Moreover, when school leaders argue that they have been largely excluded from the development and improvement of systems they must adopt and be accountable for, they feel justified in challenging them with the emotional as well as the rational sides of leadership inevitably coming to the fore.

> Trust is a very strong emotion but is very difficult to assess and measure, and thus is often overlooked in discussions of leadership . . . . . Trust can move people within a group to behavior that is productive and beneficial for the group. (McDowell and Buckner 2002, p. 70)

Trust requires the demonstration of "benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence" (Tschannen-Moran 2007, p. 99) at all levels of educational leadership—government agencies and their officials through to individual schools and their personnel. Crooks (2003, pp. 2–5) offers useful guidelines for developing trust-based accountability reforms involving teaching, learning, assessment, and reporting:

- Preserve and enhance trust among the key participants in the accountability process;
- Involve participants in the process, offering them a strong sense of professional responsibility and initiative;
- Encourage deep, worthwhile responses rather than surface window dressing;
- Recognize the severe limitations of our ability to capture educational quality in performance indicators;
- Provide well-founded and effective feedback that promotes insight into performance and supports good decision-making; and
- Ensure that as a consequence of the accountability process, the majority of the participants are more enthusiastic and motivated in their work (p. 2).

School leaders in New Zealand are particularly watchful of the consequences of education reforms in other Western systems where evidence cautions.

> The evidence on the impact of the various initiatives on (literacy and numeracy) standards of pupil attainment is at best equivocal and at worst negative. While test scores have risen since the mid-1990s, this has been achieved at the expense of children's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum . . . (Wyse et al. 2008, p. 1)

At both philosophic and pragmatic levels, many are concerned that the weight given to the National Standards reforms will lead to redefinition of the purpose of the school and the narrowing of curriculum. Now that New Zealand schools are required to publicly report achievement data to both the Ministry of Education and their communities on student performance against the National Standards for reading, writing, and mathematics, there are also fears that in time the devices of accountability will extend to league tables, particularly since the Minister of Education has refused to rule out the possibility. In the public's mind, the league tables undeservedly assume the status of authoritative 'evidence' for comparing school against school despite well-documented shortcomings. A common effect is that schools reprioritize curriculum time and resources on the areas measured and publicly reported: those aspects of literacy and numeracy chosen for National Standards. Many school leaders see this in direct conflict with the vision and direction of the revised national curriculum and the localized goals they develop in line with the national curriculum.

When a school states and commits to a vision that its students will be "wide-eyed and enthusiastic learners" who can think creatively, critically, and logically (Mt. Eden Normal Primary School, Auckland), then it is difficult to see how this can be achieved within a foreshortened curriculum. In schools such as Mt. Eden, school leaders become adept at sandwiching National Standards performance reporting within captivatingly presented information about students' activities and achievements across a rich spectrum of learning experiences in areas such as science, the arts, and technology. Students' enjoyment and pride in their successes across wider domains can become contagious among their parents. The community values and supports an education for its children that goes well beyond National Standards, but they also want to be satisfied that their children are achieving and progressing in 'the basics'. School leaders can moderate the excesses of standards reforms in New Zealand when they are committed to a broad and balanced curriculum.

National standards reforms with their attendant curricular, assessment, and reporting accountabilities are impacting on New Zealand school leaders by creating considerable tensions between what they believe and value, and what they are being asked to do. Disenchantment is common, yet most are not prepared to have their school board under threat because of noncompliance with the law. A significant number of boards with their principals are nonetheless making their positions and their feelings clear.

> Our Board is disappointed at the hard line view the Education Minister Anne Tolley and yourself have taken. To threaten to sack Boards who do not comply with implementing the standards when there is clearly much controversy around them seems heavy handed and concerning. Your heavy-handed tone is not what New Zealand school culture is about. We feel in this respect you and the Minister have not represented yourselves in a positive light. Scare tactics and threats are not conducive to building relationships. (Letter to the Prime Minister signed by every board member and the principal of Cambridge Primary School, 4 March 2010)

## *Curriculum Reform*

In New Zealand, national standards reforms and curriculum reforms are distinct. National standards reforms are proving contentious and troublesome. National curriculum reform is now proving welcome with the replacement of separate subject area statements that were progressively introduced over a 10-year period as part of the evolving *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms. The design of these national curriculum statements was intended to sharpen school accountability through a structure of incrementally leveled 'achievement objectives' against which student achievement had to be measured and reported. Showing the amount of progress against the achievement levels was intended to raise accountability and sharpen the focus of teaching, assessment, and reporting. The Ministry of Education appointed contractors to write the statements according to the structure set by the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (2003) and the Ministry's criteria. An initial draft version of each statement was distributed to schools for comment before statements were finalized. In effect, the schools played a minor part in their development.

The model seemed logical and pragmatic. Yet almost from the outset it was under constant challenge from subject area experts, professional organizations, school leaders, and practitioners alike. Major concerns included

- Insufficient time, training, and resources for teachers to understand and assimilate the model into their practice;
- Curriculum overload and fragmentation;
- The rapid rise of expansive checklist assessment systems (ticking off numerous lists of often disconnected achievement objectives) that depicted surface coverage rather than depth or internalization of learning;
- The failure of 'leveled' achievement objectives to help teachers make sound discriminations of achievement and progress from one level to the next; and
- Unreasonable pressure and demands from the Government review agency (Education Review Office) to produce mechanistic data compilations.

Unreasonable expectations on school leaders for developing and managing credible assessment and reporting procedures in line with a curriculum that proved problematic contributed to the Government in 2000 approving a 'Curriculum Stocktake'. The result was Government approval to completely revise the New Zealand Curriculum following a 'co-constructed' development process (extensive involvement of the education community), which contrasts starkly with that used for National Standards and the response shown by school leaders.

The direction for the development of the revised national curriculum set out to enable four major goals: rationalization of learning outcomes (less but done well, not more), quality teaching, school ownership, and community engagement. Consistent with principles of self-management, it was designed to give schools the permission to make and shape their curriculum so that it is relevant to the needs and circumstances of their students, while being mindful of the necessity for interpretations being consistent with the general intent and scope the national curriculum. It is a curriculum that simultaneously emphasizes learning for knowledge and skills, and learning for learning and living. It shifts a preoccupation with lists of achievement objectives to a bigger view of learning.

The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in education. It takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved. It includes a clear set of principles on which the curriculum decision making is based. It sets out values that are to be encouraged, modeled, and explored. It defines five key competencies that are critical to sustained learning and effective participation in society and that underline the emphasis on lifelong learning. (Ministry of Education 2007b, p. 4)

## *Assessment*

It will be clear that for the most part, the National Standards reforms and the National Curriculum reforms do not go hand in hand. An important exception is the approach

to conducting assessment. Although National Standards mandate the reporting of student achievement in relation to defined learning progressions for the various stages of primary schooling, they do not prescribe or make available standardized approaches for making judgments of achievement in relation to the standards. Thus, assessment has not been 'tightened' as part of the reforms and tests are not driving the curriculum. Instead, grades are assigned on the four-point scale of 'above', 'at', 'below' or 'well below' the standard for a particular year level according to 'teacher overall judgment'. This is consistent with the approach to assessment that is strongly promoted in New Zealand and reinforced in the national curriculum.

> THE PRIMARY PURPOSE of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. With this in mind, the schools need to consider how they will gather, analyze, and use assessment information so that it is effective in meeting this purpose.
> Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is best understood as an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning. It involves the focused and timely gathering, analysis, interpretation, and use of information that can provide evidence of student progress. Much of this evidence is "of the moment". Analysis and interpretation often takes place in the mind of the teacher, who then uses the insights gained to shape their actions as they continue to work with their students.
> And:
> Effective assessment is valid and fair—Teachers obtain and interpret information from a range of sources and then base decisions on this evidence, using their professional judgment. Conclusions are most likely to be valid when the evidence for them comes from more than one assessment. (Ministry of Education 2007b, pp. 39–40)

New Zealand has invested heavily in assessment for learning, putting a premium on attaining validity while somewhat neglecting reliability. Strength of reliability may not be so important for day-to-day classroom teaching purposes, but it is of critical importance when assessments are to be used for reporting purposes when the stakes are potentially high. Assessing against problematic standards criteria along with the absence of suitably referenced assessment tools seriously threatens the consistency of teacher judgments from one student to the next, one teacher to the next, one year to the next, and one school to the next, despite much faith in moderation processes. It is generally accepted that school leaders need support to develop assessment capability but the daunting challenge they face is to work a National Standards system that makes little provision for the production of quality, reliable student achievement data so that the school can be confident of the dependability of its information. To expect individual school leaders to make right the system in their own schools and to be accountable for producing robust data is clearly unreasonable, and it follows that without dependable data confidence in interpretations and usefulness is likely to be undermined.

The dilemmas New Zealand school leaders face with National Standards reforms are twofold: first, national standards are at variance with a long-established culture of school-level autonomy in approaches to curriculum, assessment, and reporting and second, despite the serious problems with the system they are required to administer, the school leaders nonetheless feel obligated to support their boards in meeting regulatory requirements. In light of these dilemmas, it remains to be seen whether

the reforms will succeed or fail in achieving the Government's goals of reducing achievement disparities and raising the bar on educational success so that 'all New Zealanders have a greater opportunity to enjoy a better education". (John Key, Prime Minister).

> Reforms for schools, no matter how well conceptualized, powerfully sponsored, brilliantly structured, or closely audited are likely to fail in the face of cultural resistance from those schools. (Mulford et al. 2004, p. 3)

## Leaders Lead and Leaders are Led

Gardner (2007) advises "leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers" (Gardner 2007, p. 17). Within education systems, there are layers of leadership with those heading the system intent on exercising their persuasion and authority on leadership practice among those who lead within the system. While Government agencies and their officials have no direct control over school leaders in New Zealand (they are answerable to their Board of Trustees) they do have a vested interest in influencing how they might think and work, particularly since one of the system's prime goals is to ensure that schools concentrate on raising achievement and reducing disparity, with strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and improving Mäori achievement. The system is sensitive to the multiple executive and professional demands from the Principal of the self-managing school and the consequences for priority focus on raising student achievement. The fact that New Zealand principals spend significantly more time on administrative tasks than principals of other OECD countries is acknowledged by the Ministry of Education which claims to be working to reduce compliance activities and costs for schools to allow school leaders to be more focused upon their school's core activity of teaching and learning, and in particular the continuous improvement of student achievement through the collection, analysis, and sharing of good quality data to strengthen evidence-based decisions (Ministry of Education 2007a, pp. 70–71).

Initiatives have been taken in four major areas at a system level to strengthen school leadership in ways intended to maximize the achievement of the system's goals: research, a model of leadership, leadership training and development, and a revised approach to school reviews.

### *Research*

A program of 'Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration' (BES) research studies funded and directed by the Ministry of Education is consistent with education policy becoming increasingly evidence based. The 'School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why' BES conducted an analysis of evidence around

three key questions about the links between leadership and student outcomes (Robinson et al. 2009, p. 36):

1. What impacts do different types of leadership have on student outcomes?
2. What is the role of leadership in interventions and programs that improve student learning in New Zealand contexts?
3. What knowledge, skills, and dispositions do school leaders need to engage in the practices identified in questions 1 and 2.

The analyses were guided by a conceptualization of leadership as both positional and distributed, as highly fluid, and as embedded in specific tasks and situations. A main finding was that when school leaders promote and participate in effective teacher professional learning this has twice the impact on student outcomes across a school than any other leadership activity (effect size 0.84). Alongside this is the claim that New Zealand principals spend less time on those activities that make most difference than many of their international peers. The implications are twofold: supporting school leaders to develop the competencies and dispositions needed to promote and guide teacher learning and development, and reducing the administrative and compliance demands on school leaders while maintaining the benefits of significant professional autonomy within the self-managing school.

## *Kiwi Leadership Model*

In response to the recommendation in the OECD report Improving School Leadership (2007) that the key elements and responsibilities of school leaders' roles that have the greatest impact on student learning be clarified, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the education sector produced a position document titled *Kiwi Leadership for Principals. Principals as Educational Leaders.* The main purpose of the document "is to present a model of leadership that reflects the qualities, knowledge, and skills required to lead New Zealand schools from the present to the future" (Ministry of Education 2008, p. 5). The five 'elements' of the model include educational leadership (improving outcomes for all students with a focus on Mäori and Pasifika); school context (adapting or adjusting to the particular demands of the school context); Manaakitanga (leading with moral purpose), pono (having self-belief), ako (being a learner), and awhinatanga (guiding and supporting); leading change and problem solving, and culture, pedagogy, system, partnerships, and networks bounded by relationships.

The "Kiwi" model combines understandings drawn from research, theory, and practice. Its inclusiveness gives impressions of rounded aspirationalism and idealism. The hard-edged intentions of performance accountability communicated in the National Standards reforms are counterbalanced by a more wholesome and palatable set of worthy generalizations. This may be intentional. Leading the leaders toward commitment and identification with system goals through a collaboratively developed resource intended to help steer leadership induction and development encourages many to aspire to its intent.

## *Leadership Training and Development*

The considerable growth and expansion of training and development programs for school leaders in New Zealand in recent times has emerged out of a combination of the system's desire to 'grow' leaders who will advance its goals and the school leaders themselves wanting to expand their professional knowledge. The Ministry of Education is obligated to provide development programs to support the implementation of major policies such as National Standards, yet evidence shows that significant number of school leaders feel disgruntled with both the content of messages and the way in which they are delivered. When development programs are directed toward unwelcome policies, their intended effects are frequently lost. It is becoming increasingly evident, however, that when school leaders themselves play a part in organizing and conducting development programs with the support of acknowledged expertise, the influence on their thinking is real. In the New Zealand self-management environment, school leaders have both the resources and autonomy to decide which programs they will support. Many would agree, "... there is no one package for leadership in the education service, no one model to be learned and applied in unrefined forms for all schools ..." (Riley 1988, p. 6).

## *School External Reviews*

For many years, the Education Review Office (ERO) stood in judgment over schools according to its particular interpretations of the largely nonprescriptive regulatory framework provided by the National Education Guidelines, and its view on what those interpretations should look like in practice. This typically gave rise to counterproductive antagonisms and fraught relationships between the office and school leaders. The emphasis was disproportionately placed on compliance with Government requirements and the office's views on how that compliance should be demonstrated. It stamped its authority over schools and their leaders in its publicly reported judgments, with the implicit threat of naming and shaming schools that did not conform. In effect, review was 'done' to schools, and for school leaders it reinforced the split between management and leadership of teaching and learning.

Consistent with the system's current emphasis on raising student achievement and the necessity for allowing school leaders to make this their first priority, the review office leadership has recently revised its own review approaches so that the school itself is encouraged to sit in judgment over its performance. The role of external reviewers is to assist the school to evaluate the efficacy of its processes, with student achievement being the explicit point of reference within the scope of the school's curriculum—and more recently, the National Standards.

> The school's curriculum is tailored to its own particular context in order to promote the achievement of its students. When ERO reviews the schools, it has a key interest in information that each school has on student achievement and also looks at the way in which the school's curriculum contributes to student achievement.

> A key feature of ERO reviews is the integrated approach to external review and self review. Through helping to build schools' capability in self review, and incorporating self review information in its reviews, ERO's evaluation process helps the school to establish a cycle of ongoing improvement. (Education Review Office (2011b))

The review office has drawn on international research in justifying a process that links external and self-review, including claims that effective links are most likely when external review focuses on the quality of each school's own self review and approach to improvement, and when the process is seen by stakeholders as supporting educational improvement.

The implication for school leaders of this major change in approach is the necessity to bring student achievement and improvement to the forefront of their responsibilities, with attendant work of goal setting, strategic planning, assessment, data compilation and analysis, reviewing, and reporting. Many, perhaps most, school leaders would admit that this not only challenges their professional knowledge and skills, but requires time and learning. They are being led by external review to lead the system's priorities in their schools.

## Conclusion

Raising student achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy and for groups of underperforming students (largely Maori, Pasifika, and students in poor communities) has taken centre stage as a system priority in New Zealand. The National standards reforms coupled with processes of assessment, evidence-based data review, and public reporting are key mechanisms. These priorities and processes are set within the context of an established and settled self-managing school system that functions according to a relatively nonprescriptive regulatory framework titled 'National Education Guidelines'. A major national curriculum re-write resulting from co-constructive approaches which gave a high level of involvement to the education community further reinforced school-level responsibility for shaping curricular priorities. Consistent with policy-backed approaches to school-based assessment, it is expected that student achievement be determined according to 'overall teacher judgments' based on multiple evidence. No tests are mandated and no standardized tests are currently available that align to the untrialed national standards. Regardless of this, the schools are required to grade and report student achievement on the standards with the expectation that their judgments will be nationally consistent—an intention that is understandably proving elusive.

The *Tomorrow's Schools* reforms have required school principals to learn how to develop and manage budgets, oversee health and safety, become employers, counselors, property managers, and chief executives to governing bodies as well as leading all that is entailed in implementing the national curriculum and the more recently mandated National Standards. For some school leaders, the incremental system initiatives around raising student achievement are stressful, frustrating, and exhausting; for others the challenges are professionally stimulating. Regardless, for the system

to attempt success in achieving its goals, all leaders require opportunities for new learning, reprioritization of the work entailed in leading and managing schools, and confidence that changes will result in distinct benefits for teaching and learning. New Zealand is already taking initiatives in recognition of the challenges ahead but many school leaders remain skeptical. In the face of frequently unrealistic demands and doubts that they will ever become realistic, many school leaders are committed to the theoretical underpinnings of distributive leadership within a culture of a school-wide learning community with the unassailable goal of leading a school where teachers enjoy teaching and students enjoy learning.

## Appendix: National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) 2009 version

### *NAG. 1*

Each Board of Trustees is required to foster student achievement by providing teaching and learning programs which incorporate The National Curriculum as expressed in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education 2007b) or Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

Each board, through the principal and staff, is required to:

a. Develop and implement teaching and learning programs:
    1. To provide all students of age 1–10 years with opportunities to achieve for success in all areas of the National Curriculum;
    2. Giving priority to student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in years 1–8;
    3. Giving priority to regular quality physical activity that develops movement skills for all students, especially of age 1–6 years.

b. Through a range of assessment practices, gather information that is sufficiently comprehensive to enable the progress and achievement of students to be evaluated; giving priority first to:
    1. Student achievement in literacy and numeracy, especially in years 1–8; and then to
    2. Breadth and depth of learning related to the needs, abilities, and interests of students, the nature of the school's curriculum, and the scope of The National Curriculum as expressed in *The New Zealand Curriculum* or Te Marautanga o Aotearoa;

c. on the basis of good quality assessment information, identify students and groups of students:
    1. Who are not achieving;
    2. Who are at risk of not achieving;

3. Who have special needs; and
4. Aspects of the curriculum which require particular attention;

d. Develop and implement teaching and learning strategies to address the needs of students and aspects of the curriculum identified in (c) above;
e. In consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community policies, plans, and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students; and
f. Provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students of age 7 years and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training.

## *NAG 2 (Planning, Self-Review, and Reporting)*

Each board of trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to:

a. Develop a strategic plan which documents how they are giving effect to the National Education Guidelines through their policies, plans, and programs, including those for curriculum, National Standards, assessment, and staff professional development;
b. Maintain an ongoing program of self-review in relation to the above policies, plans, and programs, including evaluation of information on student achievement; and
c. Report to students and their parents on the achievement of individual students, and to the school's community on the achievement of students as a whole and of groups (identified through NAG 1(c) above) including the achievement of Māori students against the plans and targets referred to in 1(e) above.

## *NAG 2A (National Standards)*

Where a school has students enrolled in years 1–8, the board of trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to use National Standards to:

a. Report to students and their parents on the student's progress and achievement in relation to National Standards. Reporting to parents in plain language in writing must be at least twice a year;
b. Report school-level data in the board's annual report on National Standards under three headings:

1. School strengths and identified areas for improvement;
2. The basis for identifying areas for improvement; and
3. Planned actions for lifting achievement.

c. Report in the board's annual report on:

   1. The numbers and proportions of students at, above, below, or well below the standards, including by Māori, Pasifika, and by gender (where this does not breach an individual's privacy); and
   2. How students are progressing against the standards as well as how they are achieving.

## References


Caldwell, B. J. & Spinks, J. M. (1988). *The self-managing school*. London: The Falmer Press.

Codd, J. (1999). Educational reform, accountability, and the culture of distrust. In M. Thrupp (Ed.), *A decade of reform in New Zealand: Where to now?* (pp. 45–53). Waikato: School of Education.

Crooks, T. (2003). *Some criteria for intelligent accountability applied to accountability in New Zealand.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 2003.

Deal, T. E. & Peterson, K. D. (1999). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Department of Education. (1988). *Administering for excellence: Effective administration in education* (Picot Report). Wellington: Government Printer.

Education Counts. (2011). Retrieved from http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2523/57149/6. Accessed 26 Jan 2011.

Education Review Office. (2011a). *ERO's role in New Zealand*. Retrieved from http://www.ero.govt.nz/About-ERO/ERO-s-Role-in-New-Zealand. Accessed 26 Jan 2011.

Education Review Office. (2011b). *Evaluation indicators for school reviews (DRAFT) June 2010.* Wellington: New Zealand Government. Accessed 20 Jan 2011.

Gardner, J. W. (2007). *The nature of leadership. In the Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hattie, J. (2010). *Horizons and whirlpools: The well travelled pathway of national standards*. Unpublished paper.

McDonnell, L. M., McLaughlin, M. J., & Morison, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Educating one and all: Students with disabilities and standards-based reform*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

McDowell, J. O. & Buckner, K. G. (2002). *Leading with emotion*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Ministry of Education. (2007a). *New Zealand country report on improving school leadership: OECD background report.* Retrieved from http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leading-change/Future-schools-and-innovation/OECD-Report-Improving-School-Leadership. Accessed 20 Jan 2011.

Ministry of Education. (2007b). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media Ltd.

Ministry of Education. (2008). *Kiwi leadership for school principals. Principals as educational leaders.* Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *Ministry of education output plan between The Minister of Education, The Minister of Tertiary Education and The Secretary for Education* (30 June 2010). Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2011). *Performance management systems*. Retrieved from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOperations/EmploymentConditionsAndEvaluation/PerformanceManagementSystems/. Accessed 20 Jan 2011.

Mulford, W., Silinis, H., & Leithwood, K. (2004). *Educational leadership for organisational learning and improved student outcomes*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Riley, K. A. (1988). *Whose school is it anyway*? London: Falmer Press.
Robinson, V., Hohepa, M., & Lloyd, C. (2009). *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why best evidence synthesis Iteration*. Wellington: New Zealand Ministry of Education.
Tschannen-Moran, M. (2007). *Becoming a trustworthy leader. In the Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Wylie, C. & Hodgen, E. (2010). *NZCER 2010 primary and intermediate schools national survey*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
Wyse, D., McCreery, E., & Torrance, H. (2008). *The trajectory and impact of national reform: Curriculum and assessment in English primary schools*. Cambridge Primary Review Research Briefings 3/2. Retrieved from http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/. Accessed Feb 2001.

# Chapter 7
# Policy and Practice in Swedish Education, Assessment, and School Leadership

**Christina Wikstrom**

## Introduction

An educated population is essential for a country's welfare and, in an era of globalization, the human capital is also recognized as an important competitive tool. In Sweden, there is a widespread and growing concern that students' knowledge and skills are not in line with expectations of successful education, and that the country is falling behind in important areas. This has led to an intense discussion about the quality of the Swedish schools and the education they are providing, but also how successful education should be carried out in practice. These discussions involve all stakeholders—policy makers, researchers, practitioners, and the public. The discussions and opinions about school systems and educational performance are, of course, not uncommon; however, the Swedish example may be seen as especially interesting since the educational system that has been internationally renowned for its equality and quality was fundamentally changed a few decades ago to become one of the most deregulated and decentralized systems among the OECD countries. The main purpose was to raise educational quality and student performance. The reforms have, of course, affected professionals within the school system in many ways, and perhaps, especially, the school leader, who has a new role with new responsibilities. The former head administrator is now expected to be an entrepreneur and a pedagogical leader, the roles which are not always so easy to carry out in practice.

In the current goal-referenced school system, national standards and common goals are expected to ensure comparability and also that the schools are striving in the same direction while giving the schools the freedom and also the responsibility to choose their own methods as to how education should be carried out to meet the goals. Unfortunately, there was not enough prevalidation prior to the reforms—the big experiment proved unsuccessful and did not produce the desired boost in quality as has been shown by international surveys such as PISA (2009). Instead, it led to a number of unintended consequences, such as lower performance and increased

C. Wikstrom (✉)
Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden
e-mail: Christina.wikstrom@edusci.umu.se

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_7, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

segregation. Many schools are also struggling under the pressure of increased accountability and restrained resources, while many of the tax-funded free schools are making large profits. The public interest has never been greater. Public debates, and even televised reality shows have become common, giving a convincing picture of a deteriorating school system with stressed or underperforming teachers and students.

There are now a number of new reforms and proposed changes underway, with the intent to adjust for the problems that have occurred. These changes have to do with how education is regulated and carried out, with the main focus on measurement and control. This is interesting since the increased school competition, in combination with the current assessment model, has been identified as particularly problematic. In this chapter, I will explain why and discuss the problems with the current model with a special focus on the role of the school leaders.

I will start with describing the Swedish goal-referenced school system, and the move toward the current model. I will also discuss how the educational model relates to a typical standards-based accountability system and the roles of the professionals in this system. In the last part, I will discuss tests and grades as important instruments in the goal-referenced system with focus on their validity.

## The Swedish School System

The Swedish school system is goal-referenced. The national goals are formulated by the Swedish Parliament and the Government and are to lead the schools in their work, and also ensure that the education they are providing is equal across the country. Practical oriented documents such as recommendations, syllabi, grading criteria, etc., are the responsibilities of the National Agency for Education. The schools are responsible for delivering education and are fairly autonomous in this respect, which means that they usually can decide on methods and strategies for their work as long as this work is directed toward the national goals.

The National Agency for Education functions directly under the government, but is politically independent. The role of National Agency for Education is to guide and support the schools as well as to evaluate their work to ensure that all students have access to equal education. The latter is goal shared with the School Inspectorate that was introduced only a few years ago. The Inspectorates' main task is to make sure that the schools are following laws and regulations. They also supervise educational activities at primary and secondary levels. Their objective is to ensure that all students are given the prerequisites to meet the goals and be as high achieving as possible.

### *Governance and Structure*

The school system is also decentralized at a municipal level. All primary and secondary schools, except free schools, are governed by the municipalities. There are currently 290 municipalities in Sweden and they are all self-governing authorities,

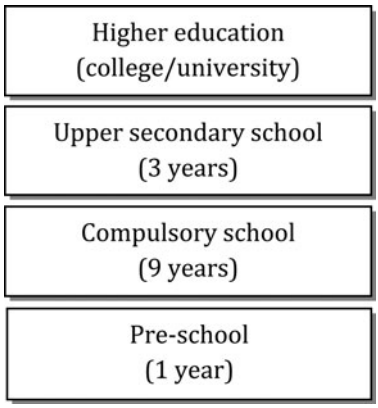



**Fig. 7.1** The basic structure of the Swedish school system

responsible for a considerable part of the public services, and the main part of primary and secondary education. Even though there are national regulations, and common steering documents, most practical matters are decentralized to the municipal or school level. The municipalities and the authorities that run the independent schools are responsible for their organization but also for distributing resources among their schools.

Even though there have, in recent years, been many changes to how education is regulated and carried out, the model for how education is structured has been basically the same for almost half a century. The children start school at the age of six or seven. The first school year is an optional preschool year (this is rather new), but the following nine years in comprehensive school are compulsory for all. There is also a parallel school structure for students with special needs. These 9 years are divided into 2 stages: years 1–6, and years 7–9. Attempts have been made to remove these divisions, but not successfully, which to a large degree is related to how teacher training has been organized. The content of compulsory school is regulated from a national level in terms of the subjects, courses, and hours of instruction the students are entitled to. There is, however, some freedom in terms of optional courses and subjects. In recent years, schools often have profiles in terms of music, sports, art, etc. (For a more detailed description of the Swedish school system, see www.skolverket.se. Fig. 7.1).

The municipalities are also obliged to provide education at the upper secondary level for all students in their municipality aged 16–20. All students are entitled to three years of upper secondary school. The upper secondary education is not compulsory but most students enrol, and do so directly after elementary school. In 2009, about 72% of the students graduated. Currently, a student can choose from about 17 different national programs with varying orientations. Some programs are academically oriented and some have a vocational orientation. These programs follow a similar syllabus wherever the education takes place in the country. In addition, there are a number of local programs which can differ considerably as to how they are structured. A relatively large proportion of students continue to higher education after the upper secondary school. The higher education includes colleges and

universities, both of which offer academic education (and are often quite similar), but universities are more research oriented and only universities have the right to examine on the doctorate level.

## *Assessment and Local Independence*

In the current model, there is a high degree of local independence in terms of how education and assessment should be carried out in practice.

The professionals in Swedish schools are given a lot of freedom but also a lot of responsibility. Even though all activities should be carried out with the goals and other directions and guidelines stated in the steering documents in mind, *how* to conduct education in practice is not regulated from a national or even regional level. The schools have the freedom to define concretely what students need to know and to be able to do to meet these goals. The school leader, who formerly was the state's representative in the schools and mainly responsible for management and administration, is now to be the educational leader who will guide the teachers in their work and give them the necessary prerequisites to ensure that all activities in the school strive for the same—that is the national—goals.

In descriptions of the Swedish goal-referenced system and how it is intended to work, it is often emphasized that the system relies on a high degree of interaction between school leaders, teachers, and students. The school leaders and the teachers, together with the students, are supposed to decide on the structure and content of education, and also to develop and improve instruction. However, in practice, this does not take place so often. The school leaders are usually primarily focused on administrative tasks, hence giving teachers the responsibility for pedagogical work and for progress in the school (School Inspectorate 2010). The teacher's role is therefore rather complex since he or she often has the sole responsibility to teach but also to guide the students in both their social and cognitive development (National Agency for Education 2006). The Swedish model is also rather unique when it comes to teacher autonomy because teachers are also given responsibility for assessment and examination. To have control over the whole process can be an advantage for the teacher who can use this opportunity well. Even so, it can also be problematic for the educational quality of the school, since there may be as many strategies and local goal interpretations as there are teachers. A problem with the model can also be that the teacher can find himself or herself in a "sitting on two chairs" dilemma, being the teacher and the examiner at the same time. However, it can also be an advantage to be both the teacher and examiner. The grading based on classroom assessment may lead to more reliable and valid decisions, compared to using one examination with one instrument. The teachers can observe the students and gather different types of information which are appropriate for what is being assessed, instead of having to rely on one type of examination. On the negative side, this can result in validity problems such as narrowing of the curriculum. When teachers are examiners, there may be other types of validity problems as it is common to include construct-irrelevant information or use instruments that are of insufficient quality, as will be discussed later.

The information to be used for decisions about grade assignment is expected to be collected from various modes of assessment in the classroom. To some extent this is true, but traditional teacher-constructed tests are very common. However, teachers are not without systematic guidance in their work with assessing and grading the students. Apart from the criteria and guidelines issued by NAE, there are so called National tests available in some subjects. These tests should not be mixed up with other tests with similar names, such as the English National Curriculum Tests, since they have quite different purposes. The Swedish tests are developed centrally, but scored and administered by the teachers. The main purpose of these tests is to give the teachers information on where students seem to be in relation to performance standards, and what type of knowledge and skills are required for different grade levels. However, the national tests are not available for all courses and years but mainly for core subjects and mainly toward the end of each stage.

Even though the tests are supposed to be regarded as low stakes, in practice this is not the case. It is often said that the national tests should not function as examination tests, but many teachers rely heavily on these tests in their decisions. However, the degree of expected alignment between tests and grades is not clear. Tests are clearly used in the grading process even though very few teachers seem to assign lower grades than test scores. Still, the systematic discrepancies between national test scores and grades are being increasingly questioned and criticized by the regulating bodies (the NAE and the school inspectorates). This is not necessarily incorrect however, since teachers are expected to collect different types of evidence for grading, and the national tests are one source of information. An additional complication is that sometimes national tests are administered during a course or term, while the grading is supposed to reflect goal attainment at the end of a course.

Even though teachers are expected to provide students and parents with information about goal attainment in all school years, the formal grades have not been given until the last part of compulsory school when the students are about 15 years old (8th grade). This is about to be changed toward the end of 6th grade. It is still rather late compared to most other countries. There are no external examinations and it is not possible to challenge a grade once it has been registered. The test scores are not only used in the schools; the aggregated scores are collected by the National Agency for Education and who also publish the information in public databases. Even though the test scores are important for the schools, so far no high-stake decisions at the teacher or school level have officially been made, where tests have been used as evidence. However, it should be noted that at the time of writing, new reforms and revisions are underway. It seems that different types of performance measures will play a more prominent role in the future and data will probably be collected by the authorities in a more systematic and detailed form.

The grading scale is also under revision. It has until now had three (or four) grade levels: Fail/not approved (only for upper secondary school), Pass, Pass with distinction, Pass with special distinction. The grade Fail is not used in compulsory school since it is required that all students should pass, that is, meet the achievement goals and should get the necessary support and time to do so. The new grading scale will have more grade levels, ranging from A–E, plus the grade F for Fail/nonapproved.

### *Equal Access*

The Swedish school system is built on the Scandinavian Welfare State model. All education, even higher education, is entirely tax funded. Fees of any kind are generally not allowed, and compulsory education should not be associated with any costs at all (for school trips, materials, etc). The compulsory schools are also not allowed to make their own selection of students but must adhere to a first come–first serve principle. The municipalities are obliged to provide equal education for all children in their catchment area. The municipalities are also obliged to provide the students with upper secondary education; some programs are more popular and here a selection is allowed. The schools' tasks and obligations are regulated by national steering documents, including the Education Act, the National Curricula, and program and course syllabi. These steering documents are available for each level in the system (Preschool, elementary/compulsory, upper secondary), with the exception of those program goals and syllabi that are only applicable for upper secondary school. These documents have changed several times since the beginning of the 1960s, but there are some common denominators: equality and democratic values are key concepts that are reflected in prescriptions of regulations and also in educational content. The most well known and often quoted statement can be found in the introductory part of the Education Act:

> All children and young persons shall irrespective of gender, geographic residence and social and financial circumstances have equal access to education in the national school system for children and young persons. The education shall be of equal standard within each type of school, wherever in the country it is provided. Education Act (1985:1100)

A similar statement is included in the revised Education Act implemented in 2011. As will be described in this chapter, the Swedish education model today is facing a number of challenges with regard to these aims. Most problematic are how to meet the aim of equal access to students of different socio-economic background and, at the same time, also ensure that all education is of equal standard. Unfortunately, the trend has been negative, especially in recent years. In the rest of this chapter I will discuss some of the mechanisms behind this trend.

## Educational Policy: A Historical Overview

The background to the current goal-referenced model needs to be explained, especially since the transition from the previous system to the current one is relevant to some of the effects and consequences that have been noticed as to how the system works.

### *Equality and Quality*

Equality in education has been the primary focus in Swedish school policy for a long time. This is grounded in the belief that equality is of central importance in

a democratic society, and also is a prerequisite for educational quality in a broader sense. However, the interpretations of the concept equality and ideas of how to meet the expectation of an egalitarian school system have changed over time. For many years, the assumption was that equality could only be achieved through regulation and centralization. Until the beginning of the 1990s, there was basically one form of schooling and very limited choice in Swedish education. A national curriculum described what should be taught, but there were few or no control mechanisms, such as external tests or inspectorates. The schools were run, regulated, and funded by the state. The school leader represented the state in terms of making sure that the school was run according to national regulations. The students went to the school closest to home. This was fairly uncontroversial, since the schools were expected to be relatively equal in terms of the education they were providing. Still, even though the system was strongly regulated in terms of organization, teachers were basically arbitrary regarding how to teach, assess, and grade students. There were few or no controls and the quality and equality of the system relied on a general trust in the professionalism of school leaders and teachers. The quality of teaching and assessment methods were seldom questioned unless there were conflicts or something else that received attention. Teachers taught and students were expected to learn. The school leaders were not expected to interfere with teaching, but led schools and were accountable to bureaucracy and regulations. Their role was to manage the administration of the school, making sure necessary funding was allocated, deciding on schedules, timetables, and so forth.

This educational model received quite a lot of criticism, especially during the 1970s. Swedish students, who had been relatively high performing in the international context, did not do so well. International surveys showed that the performance levels were much lower than expected. This caused a lot of commotion (what was the problem?) and demands that something be done to increase the quality of Swedish education. The discussions continued, but the debate and criticism changed direction somewhat, as a reflection of general trends in society. Individualism was promoted to a much larger degree than before. The educational model was now accused of being inefficient and it was argued that the schools were unable to give the students the education they needed because equality had been incorrectly interpreted as meaning "the same."

It was difficult to be certain where the problems were. International surveys were seen as one way of evaluating Swedish school performance but were also found to be insufficient for all the evaluative needs. The norm-referenced model for assessment and grading was also found unsatisfactory for this reason. Researchers and policy makers were especially concerned with the fact that the cohort-referenced model made comparisons over time impossible.

The norm-referenced grading system had been introduced during the 1960s as a fair, objective, and comparable way to grade the students on a scale that would be useful in the admission to further education. This was based on the assumption that students' abilities and performances are following a Gaussian normal distribution curve. The grading was cohort-referenced and grades were assigned on a scale from 1 to 5, where 3 represented average achievement. This grading model turned

out to be problematic in a number of ways. The relative grading was criticized for contributing to a negative climate in schools, since the system encouraged unproductive competition between students. Students (and teachers) were often found to be more focused on how they performed compared to other students than on what they actually learned. For instance, a low performance in the classroom was not regarded to be so bad if others performed low as well. The norm-referenced system was also problematic since it gave little or no information about what and how students learned or could learn, which made it difficult to use the information for educational evaluation and future planning. The system also had some technical problems; there were often misconceptions as to how the system was supposed to work. Some teachers believed that the distribution with 3.0 as average grade should be applied for each class, instead of each cohort which lead to many incorrect decisions and unfair grades. Students could be told that the the grading teacher was "out of" a certain grade, and they therefore had to receive a lower grade than they deserved in order to maintain the expected distribution of the grades (Andersson 1999; Wedman 1983).

The 1980s was a period of innovation and change, not only in education but also in society in general. How to reform the school system was intensely discussed. Even though the norm-referenced grade system was useful as an instrument in the selection of students to higher education, it was no longer of much interest since the number of study places had increased and there was a belief that there would be other, better ways to rank students, for instance, by admission tests.

A recurring question was how the schools really performed and how education could and should be evaluated. The need to get information about performance standards in schools and classrooms was identified as a matter of urgency among policy makers and also among researchers and practitioners. Most agreed that the current curriculum and norm-referenced grading system did not give useful information about standards or progress. At this time, there was a growing trend in society, internationally as well, toward goal-orientation and decentralization. Performance management models were popular and interested the Swedish policy makers, who looked outside the school system and the country borders to borrow ideas. In education, the benefits of criterion-referenced assessment systems were discussed and Swedish policy makers and scholars became interested. Would it be possible to introduce such a goal-referenced system with criterion-referenced assessment and grading in Sweden, without changing the Swedish model of classroom assessment and teacher grading? The views were divided. Scholars pointed out that the change of system could lead to many practical problems, especially since it was assumed to be difficult to define the objectives without making them too detailed and fact-based while also ensuring comparability. Another concern was whether criterion-referenced grades could be used for ranking the students in the selection to higher education as this still was a purpose of the grades. Ingemar Wedman, who was one of the most influential Swedish scholars in educational assessment during this time, also concluded that it could be difficult to combine ideas of fair and comparable grading in a goal-referenced system, and that this could only be achieved if schools were to be relieved from competition and pressure for high grading (Wedman 1983, 2000).

## *The Reforms*

The first part of the 1990s was a turbulent time for Swedish schools. One of the most fundamental changes was the decentralization of the school system. School leaders and teachers, who previously had been employed by the state, now became employed by municipalities or other school authorities. This meant that they came "closer" to their employers, but also that the conditions for employment no longer followed the same regulations or were as secure as before. With decentralization followed many new responsibilities and tasks, especially for municipalities, but also for school leaders.

The introduction of a voucher system and the "free-school reform" were two particularly important reforms since they opened up independent, tax-funded schools ("free schools") in a way that had not been possible before. The municipalities were also given the right to abolish the residence principle. Since the money followed students, and schools could compete for students, the number of free schools increased rapidly and the entire school system became an open market. For more information about the mechanisms behind these reforms, see, for instance, Lundahl (2002) and Nytell (2006).

The reform program did not only change how and by whom the schools were run. In 1994, a new national curriculum with a criterion-referenced assessment and grading system was introduced. The new curriculum was different from the previous national curricula in the sense that it no longer specified what should be taught. Instead, it described goals and objectives on a relatively abstract level (in spite of the concerns that had been discussed) with a lot of freedom for interpretation. The intent was to avoid detailed objectives that could fragment teaching and learning and work against knowledge and skills on higher cognitive levels (as had been discussed before); the intent was also to give the schools the responsibility as to how to carry this out in practice since schools and teachers were regarded best suited to decide on the best methods to reach the goals (Carlgren and Klette 2008). The new curriculum described two kinds of goals: *goals to attain* and *goals to strive for*. The idea was that all students should meet a basic standard in terms of knowledge and skills, i.e., goals to attain, but should also aim higher. *Goals to attain* were concretized in criteria for assessment and grading, but still not on a detailed level. *Goals to strive for* would describe a direction for education in general, which would guide all educational planning (National Agency for Education 2005). Such goals could also be noncognitive and contain statements about communication, cooperation, and responsibility. In the curriculum, the performance standards for each subject are defined as one general knowledge domain, where quality differences, i.e., each grade level, are specified in terms of cognitive levels. To ensure comparability, criteria for describing the knowledge and skills required were introduced as a complement to the curriculum. However, the criteria were only provided for some stages/courses, and left to the municipalities and the schools to complement and concretize further.

The role of the teacher did not change a lot after the reforms, even though the tasks became different with increased responsibility for methods and influence over

educational content. The teacher is still fairly autonomous. Still, the abolishment of the norm-referenced system and the introduction of the goal-referenced model changed the methods for assessment and grading. Since the criterion-referenced grades should represent the performance standards, the teachers had to let go the former traditions of relative ranking and grading. They are now expected to focus on degrees of goal attainment and grade the students accordingly.

## *How Did it Turn Out?*

A number of years have now passed since the goal-referenced grading system was introduced, and it is possible to see its advantages and disadvantages in a long-term perspective. The important question is, of course, whether the goal-referenced model has proved to meet its expectations?

The reforms changed the school system in many ways. The municipalities were given new and different tasks and responsibilities; this was also the case for school leaders and teachers. Many things that had been taken for granted before were no longer so certain. Especially in urban areas, the new school competition made schools and the education they provided quite variable in both content and quality. Some schools did well and flourished under the new regulations for funding and increased freedom. Such schools often entered a positive circle: attracting more students, earning more money, recruiting better teachers, and showing even better results. Other schools were less successful, with the number of students decreasing, followed by financial difficulties that inevitably reflected on the education provided. These schools are often left with high proportions of students from a lower socioeconomic background because, even though education is free of charge, the high achievers, or the students from high socioeconomic background, are better at making choices and finding the better options. Even though the intent of allowing the municipalities to omit the residence principle was to enable students from low-income areas to go to schools in other, "better" areas, few took advantage of this opportunity. The number of free schools increased rapidly due to the generous new funding and with this came new problems. The prospect of making money attracted less serious schools; some failed in their intention to provide good quality education, some have less honorable intentions and mainly focus on making financial profits that go into the pockets of the owners, who may even be international venture capital firms.

The differences in equality and quality can now be seen in the school statistics. The increasing school segregation is a serious concern. Even though the Education Act states that all students should be given the necessary support to reach the goals, it is not uncommon that many students still fail to do so, either at the school or when continuing to the next educational level. There are now examples of schools where less than 15% of the school leaving students have met the basic knowledge standard in compulsory subjects (School Inspectorate 2010).

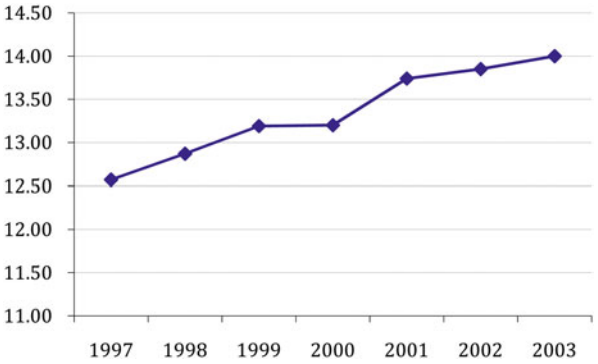



**Fig. 7.2** Upper secondary GPA 1997–2003 (Wikström 2005)

## *Effects from Pressure*

A low performing school is in a difficult position given the circumstances described above. If the school leader and the teachers are failing in their aim to raise standards, they still need to do something, while being aware of the fact that the bad results will lead to even more negative effects. In such a situation, it may be tempting to focus more on the assessment instruments: be lenient in the grading and/or start teaching to the test. The benefits of lenient grading are double: the statistics will be better and more students will have the opportunity to continue to the next level. Claims of leniency in grading are often rejected by the professionals within the schools, but research show that this is indeed what has happened, and in some schools more than others.

Research, as well as yearly evaluations and reports by National Agency for Education, show that the competition between schools and students did increase results but not always for good reasons. As had been predicted before the reforms, the external and internal pressure for high grading proved to be negative for the reliability and validity of the grades (Korp 2006; National Agency for Education 2009a; Wikström 2005, see also Fig. 7.2[1]). The decision to formulate goals and criteria on a highly abstract level and give schools the freedom to make their own decisions on how to reach those goals resulted in considerable variation in instruction, assessment practices, and grading. Furthermore, it seemed difficult for teachers to free themselves from relative grading; teachers use their class or school as reference and are more lenient in their grading when average performance is low, and more strict when average performance is high. This has been claimed to be due to vague criteria, combined with insufficient professional development for school leaders and teachers. This is probably true, since the theory and practice of assessment and grading have not been included in the teacher education but were expected to come naturally (which, of

[1] Note that the GPA includes a large number of courses and ranges from 0.0 to 20.0. The Grade *Fail* = 0 credits, *Pass* = 10 credits, *Pass with distinction* = 15 credits, *Pass with special distinction* = 20 credits.

course, is not the case). The level of understanding as to how this is to be carried out is, therefore, totally dependent on teachers' professional development after teacher education. This is not typical for Sweden (see for instance, Popham 2009) but perhaps is more serious than in other systems, since there are little or no control mechanisms available.

The idea of using grades for information about goal attainment and also in the selection to higher education, proved problematic. Inflated grades are particularly problematic when comparisons are to be made over time; for instance when grades are used in the selection to higher education, or when trying to evaluate educational standards or progress. The students who received their grades early in time or at a particular school are disadvantaged and, in the worst case, unable to compete with students who were graded later. From the perspective of information and educational feedback, the variation in grading generally has fewer immediate consequences for students than for teachers and schools. A student may be underrated or overrated, which of course may seem unfair and can affect self-esteem and motivation for some students, but as long as the student is not competing for the very selective study places, small variations may not be too problematic. However, on the school level, in a goal-referenced system, grade inflation is particularly problematic, as a high-grading school is easily mistaken for being more successful than a low-grading school.

It is difficult to say who is to blame for the negative consequences that followed the reforms. Most likely they are the result of conflicting purposes, new and unfamiliar tasks for the schools and the professionals within the system, and different rules for the "players" who benefit from decentralization and deregulation. A contributing factor was that all the changes happened in a very short time; many school leaders and teachers found themselves in a state of confusion regarding how to adapt to the new model. The reforms probably affected upper secondary schools more than elementary schools because suddenly, they were in competition with other schools, and students (and consequently their employment) could no longer be taken for granted. The school had to adjust to new demands, market themselves, and become more customer oriented. Some schools and school leaders have been more entrepreneurial than others, starting new schools or adjusting profiles and methods. Such changes have sometimes been for the better, sometimes for the worse. To attract students, many schools have started to offer "freebees" such as private laptops, gym memberships, or program profiles in sports, art, music, etc. The main intention of such offers is generally to attract students. The parents, who generally are more interested in educational quality, focus on other things. This is spurring the schools to display good results, which is good, but it has also led to the other, more negative consequences for educational quality and fairness, as was discussed above.

## Goals, Results, and Accountability

When reading the description of the Swedish goal-referenced school system and the consequences of reforms, one may come to two conclusions: First, the system does not seem to be working as good as expected and, second, the Swedish school

system resembles what is usually described as an accountability system. It has many similarities to other systems where accountability models have been adopted (see, for instance, Hamilton et al. 2002; Stobart 2008). It is clear that Swedish schools are being held accountable for a number of things, and for this reason it is important to identify the problems, and what can be done on a local level to reverse the negative trend in terms of lacking equality and equal standards.

## *What Characterizes an Accountability System?*

Many educational systems these days are described as standards-based (or results-based) accountability systems, and are consequently discussed and evaluated as such (see, for instance, Eklöf et al. 2009). Even though Swedish schools, or more specifically, school leaders and teachers are being held accountable for many things, it can still be questioned whether the Swedish system really can be categorized as a standards-based accountability system. It is rather important to determine this, since it is well known that instruments used for measuring goal attainment in accountability systems must meet certain quality standards. Eklöf et al. (2009) also asked this question, and concluded at that time that the Swedish system should not yet be regarded as a traditional, standards-based accountability system, since there are no formal sanctions or rewards attached to assessments and performance measures. However, since there are continuous revisions of the Swedish model, and educational accountability systems can have different interpretations and meanings, it may be wise to revisit this question.

Educational accountability is a concept that has been frequently discussed among researchers and educators in recent years. In Sweden, the term accountability is seldom used, but this is most likely a combination of several things, one of them being research traditions–assessment or assessment driven systems have not had a prominent role in Swedish educational research. Accountability is also a rather muddled concept, with many different meanings. A particular problem in the Swedish context is that the term does not translate well—there is no exact correspondence in the Swedish language, and it can therefore be difficult to fully comprehend its meaning or how it is perceived in English-speaking countries where the accountability debate has been particularly strong.

According to Anderson (2005, p. 1–2) there are three main types of accountability systems in the field of education. These are categorized as follows:

- *compliance with regulations*—educators are accountable for adherence to rules (and to bureaucracy)
- *adherence to professional norms*—educators are accountable for adherence to standards (and to their peers)
- *results driven*—educators are accountable for student learning (and to the public).

The Swedish system clearly meets the requirements for at least two of these types:

*Compliance with regulations:* Even though the school system has been decentralized in terms of governance and responsibilities, the schools are still rather strongly regulated, especially by the national steering documents. The schools' obligation to comply with these regulating documents has even increased in recent years. The steering documents have also been revised over time to include more detailed instructions on what schools should do and how they should do it. The Education Act regulates all education in Sweden, from preschool to adult education. The national curriculum and other related documents have the purpose of ensuring that all education and assessment is equal in quality and content throughout all school structures and across the country. The school leaders are accountable for making sure that their schools comply with the regulations. As an additional control mechanism, the School Inspectorates are to make sure this is done. Their procedure is usually random evaluation, but sometimes there are more systematic checkups, for instance regarding a number of schools under the same governance. Until very recently, the authority of the School Inspectorate has not been very pronounced, but it is now gaining strength with the right to sanction schools. Violations do not result in monetary sanctions but can, in extreme cases, result in revoking the school's rights.

*Adherence to professional norms:* Swedish schools are characterized by many different norms. Like schools everywhere, these norms can be found on all levels and in all activities, and have to do with behavior, attitudes, principles for instruction and assessment, teacher-student interaction, and more. However, this may not be the type of norms that Anderson (2005) had in mind. She describes a professional norm as something more established, "a widespread agreement on certain principles and practices" (p. 1), which can be a standard published by a committee or association. Such standards rarely influence Swedish education, at least, not with regard to assessment and examination. Still, it is impossible to ignore the fact that norms are incorporated in all activities in a school, and the norms and principles for assessment and examination generally follow tradition and the school's culture.

*Results driven:* As has been described in this chapter, the focus on results has been pronounced in Swedish school policy and practice for many years. However, in recent years, the school performance (as an expected consequence of student learning) has received increasing attention; policy makers have been concerned with how schools are doing and how to increase their performance in terms of test results and grades. A school performing at a lower level is assumed to be inefficient while a school performing at a higher level is assumed to be efficient and have proficient teachers. The performance is generally measured through national test results and grades. The figures are communicated through school statistics regarding the proportion of students who meet/fail to meet the achievement goals and the school's grade averages. So far, no formal incentives such as financial sanctions or rewards have been tied to results, but the school results are getting more and more attention and there are certainly consequences attached, especially for underperforming schools.

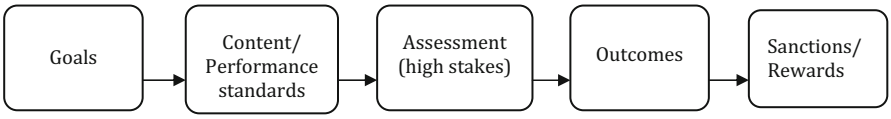



**Fig. 7.3** Key elements of a standards-based accountability system according to Eklöf et al. (2009)

## *Standards-Based Accountability*

In the results-driven accountability system, a key element is the measure of performance. This is often information gathered by tests or grades, and the outcomes of these are linked to rewards or sanctions of some kind. An example of such a system, and also a reason for the considerable attention to accountability issues in education, is the No Child Left Behind Act that was introduced into US schools by the Bush government in 2001 (Hamilton et al. 2007). The Act was based on the assumption that incentives attached to standards and measurable goals will improve performances. As in the Swedish model, schools are being held accountable for their performances, but in the US model, the performance levels result in explicit rewards or sanctions. This is an accountability model that often (explicitly or implicitly) is referred to as standards-based accountability (also called test-based or performance-based accountability) where goals and standards, assessment, and incentives based on assessment outcomes are the key features (Hamilton et al. 2002). In other words, it is results-driven. Eklöf et al. (2009) defined standards-based accountability according to the model illustrated in Fig. 7.3, and used this model to investigate to what degree it corresponds with the Swedish system.

According to Anderson (2005), the five main components included in an accountability system are: objectives, assessments, instructions, resources, and sanctions/rewards (incentives). This is in line with the Eklöf et al. (2009) model in Fig. 7.3. The exception is instruction, which is not included in the model but naturally included in the process and takes place before, during, and after the assessment phase. The standards-based accountability system is similar to, or rather incorporated into, the results-driven accountability system according to Anderson (2005).

If comparing the Swedish educational system with the standards-based model above, all the components (described earlier in this chapter) are included. The national goals and the detailed goals are fundamental in the Swedish goal-referenced system. The content or performance standards are also there, even though they are problematic in terms of being vaguely defined and interpreted differently within and between schools. The goal-referenced assessments are there, even though they are not designed for high stakes decisions or to measure results in an accountability model, where one would expect the performance measures would be more focused on educational quality and successful instruction/learning than student's goal attainment (see Popham 2007; Polikoff 2010). The outcome, and the interpretations and uses of the outcome, are interesting and yet contribute to the problem as to how to define the system, as there clearly is a gap between theory and practice. There are still no formal monetary rewards attached to how schools perform, but underperforming

schools sanctioned in various ways, formally by the School Inspectorate (in extreme cases) and informally in terms of image, which in turn will affect future recruitment and resources, decreasing the school's possibility to provide high quality education. The answer to the question whether the Swedish system should be categorized as an accountability system should probably be yes, according to the definitions above, even though it does not meet all the requirements included in the standards-based accountability model. However, as previously mentioned, the main part of the definitions given by Anderson (2005) is also met, which may serve as additional support for this interpretation.

## *Who's Accountable?*

In the analysis of the Swedish goal-referenced system above, the accountability for goal attainment is often described as something belonging to the schools. However, even though the overall responsibility for school activities lies with the municipalities (as with the free schools), the school leader and especially the teachers, in practice are those who are held accountable for the schools' performance. This is also very evident in the current public school debate, where most of the limelight is on the teachers and often on their shortcomings. The remaining part of the debate talks about "lacking resources" but with limited elaboration.

As previously mentioned, the teachers often have the sole responsibility for all steps from educational planning to examination and grading, which also means that teachers have the freedom to choose the methods and strategies used in the classroom. This may be wise, or very unwise, depending on the teacher but it can be a risky strategy. It should be noted that the theory and practice of assessment and grading have not been included in teacher education but has been expected to come naturally (which, of course, is quite naïve). The level of understanding as to how this is to be carried out is, therefore, completely dependent on teachers' professional development after teacher education.

Does this mean that teachers should be held accountable? At the level of student learning, this is probably necessary, since it is the teachers' job to make sure that students learn what is expected in order to reach the achievement goals. However, since the overall responsibility lies with the school leader, he or she is accountable for the school's performance. According to the steering documents, the school leader is obliged to guarantee quality, equity, and legal security for the students and their education. In the national curriculum it is also stated that it is the school leader's responsibility to lead the school in a long-term process toward continuous improvement of the school's work, which should be incorporated into the daily activities (see also Höög and Johansson 2010).

According to the Department of Education (Ministry of Education 2001), the four main areas of responsibility are:

1. To be familiar with daily work in the school.
2. To be the pedagogical leader and responsible for ensuring that the activities in the school are focusing on the national goals.

3. To be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the results in relation to the national goals.
4. To make decisions according to the regulations.

The second and third points represent the difference in the school leaders' tasks compared to how the rule used to be defined. To be able to meet all these expectations, the school leader needs to have a broad understanding of education and school management. It is also clear that a considerable part of the school leaders' work has to do with educational measurement. It is therefore necessary that the school leaders have a good understanding of how formative and summative assessment can and should be conducted, interpreted, and used.

Even though there are many expectations on the school leaders in terms of knowledge and skills, in the present goal-referenced, results-based system, there are no specific requirements for school leaders in terms of qualifications or previous education. Prior to the goal-referenced system, the school leader had to have a teacher's qualification, but this is no longer the case. The only formal requirement stated in the Education Act (1985:1100) is that the person should have received "a pedagogical insight" through education and experience. The typical school leader is still a former teacher with leadership qualities or an interest in administrative matters, but could also be someone with a very different background, for instance, someone who has worked in a management position in another organization and has an interest in education. However, even if the school leader does have a teacher's degree, the knowledge of measurement and assessment theory and practice will vary since there generally have been no elements of assessment, evaluation, or grading in the teacher education program, at least not until now SOU 2008:109 (2008). There are of course teachers with a good understanding of how to assess and grade the students, but such skills are gained by practical experience and personal interest. It is also likely that the person who has a good understanding of the assessment of student achievement, will be at a loss when it comes to measurement of school performance (statistics and interpretation), and vice versa. To conclude, the opportunities for professional development for teachers and school leaders are important in order to improve the quality and equity of Swedish schools. However, there have been some improvements in this aspect. School leadership courses have been available before, but there is now an educational program at the university level for newly appointed school leaders and others who have school management responsibilities. This training should give the necessary prerequisites for the position as school leader. The expected outcomes are that

> the head teacher should, on the basis of democratic principles and with regard to individuals' integrity and equal value, be able to lead and develop the school, as well as asserting the rights of children and pupils to the education guaranteed in the government's legislation and regulations. The head teacher should also have the ability to direct the organization's learning toward better goal achievement and thereby bring his/her own, as well as children's, pupils', and co-workers' learning, into focus. (Johansson 2001)

As the reader has probably noted, the description is general and a more detailed description will be given in additional information. Still, it provides an interesting

example as it fails to mention educational measurement, assessment, or evaluation of student and school performance, which would be important outcomes of any course for school leaders given the background described in this chapter. These objectives may of course be incorporated into the activities "lead and develop" and "direct the organization's learning toward better goal achievement," but may also not be included at all. If so, this would be very typical for most of the courses that are available to future professionals within the school system. Still, the educational measurement and assessment are necessary components when aiming for educational goal achievement and, hopefully, this is also how educators will interpret it. To be able to lead and guide the teachers, the school leader must know the characteristics of formative and summative assessment, at both the student and school levels. A recent report by the School Inspectorate (2010) presents a number of findings that support this argument. The aim of the study was to find out if school leaders really are leading processes which focus on pupils' learning and knowledge development. One of the findings was that there did not seem to be a fixed model for successful school leadership. School size (number of staff and students) is one of the parameters that makes the leadership very different between schools, as well as what phase the school is in, how the school leader is relating to necessary improvement needs, and the support he or she is receiving from the municipalities and school boards. Another finding is that the important aspects for successful leadership seem to be communication and effective structures to make room for major improvements and to be professional leaders.

The report also elucidates a number of areas school leaders need to improve to be successful in what they do. Not surprisingly, most of them include aspects of assessment and evaluation. It is also argued that the school leaders must be better at liaising the school's professional development with a long-term perspective. Goals, visions, and directions must be clear to all, and the school's work and goal attainment must be continuously evaluated. The school leader should also develop structures as to how to follow up, evaluate, and give feedback to teachers regarding their teaching, content and methods and, together with the teachers, analyze and discuss the relationships between the school's results, teaching patterns, and pupils' development and learning (School Inspectorate 2010).

## What to Do and What to Know: The Role of the School Leader

In the earlier part of this chapter, the Swedish goal-referenced school system and the roles of the professionals in this system were discussed. It was argued that educational measurement is a key component in education and especially in the Swedish goal-referenced model, but is still not given proper consideration in educational policy and practice.

Teachers constantly assess and interpret performance in the classroom and school leaders use this information to evaluate the progress and performance of schools. The decisions based on these assessments have consequences for all stakeholders—students, teachers, school leaders, and society in general. Hence, it is unfortunate

that educational measurement, assessment, and grading have been practically nonexistent in teacher training. The general lack of understanding as to how assessment can and should be interpreted and used has most likely contributed to many of the problems that have become apparent in Swedish education in recent years. Here, the school leaders have an especially important role to play since they have the formal responsibility to lead activities in schools and guide teachers in their pedagogical work. A good understanding of both the theory and practice of measurement and assessment is, therefore, essential for school leaders in a goal-referenced system. Improvements in this area would most likely make the Swedish educational model work better and would also be beneficial for the quality of education in general.

The rest of this chapter will focus on what professionals in the school system need to know to be able to use and interpret educational assessment in appropriate ways which avoid most of the pitfalls in the results-based accountability model. The main focus will be on validity. Validity is not only a key concept in measurement theory—understanding its meaning and implications for assessment in practice would give school leaders a very good basis for discussions and decisions in the school.

## *Validity as a Concept*

Most would agree that it is important that an assessment with stakes attached be relevant and trustworthy, especially if asking those who are being assessed. Still, it is not uncommon that students are being assessed without much consideration as to how this should be done and how the outcome should be interpreted and used. Although it is probably recognized that assessments in school include error given the frequent complaints about tests and grading practices, the outcome of assessment is often treated as unbiased evidence in many decisions.

When something is being measured or assessed, an instrument of some sort is always used. It can be a traditional instrument such as a ruler, a scale, a test of some sort, but could also be an observation. If the information from the instrument is going to be used to make important decisions, it is, of course, important that the instrument be of good quality and return the desired information. In other words, it should be possible to use it to measure what it is designed to measure and to do so in a reliable way. If this is the case, the instrument can be said to be reliable and valid, or at least have the potential to be reliable and valid; reliability having to do with stability and validity having to do with what is being measured. The professional test development employs an ongoing process to identify and correct an error that is negative for the reliability and the validity of the instrument and how it is to be used. It is important to remember that reliability and validity are not properties which inherently characterize an instrument since it must be used appropriately to have these attributes. A well developed test that is administered incorrectly (for instance, the test takers are unprepared or unfamiliar with the format) or interpreted and used in a way for which it was not intended, may be lacking in both reliability and validity.

However, it should be noted that the concept of validity is complex and there is not complete consensus on its definitions. In the traditional view of validity, it was simply described as "if the instrument measures what it purports to measure." However, in the modern view of validity, there is as much interest in how the outcome is interpreted and used as well as the consequences to which this may lead. The validity of an assessment process can be separated into components, which are interrelated (see, for instance, Messick 1989). One component is content validity, which has to do with whether the instrument (a test, for instance) asks for relevant aspects of the domain one is attempting to say something about. Criterion-referenced validity and construct validity have to do with whether the instrument is measuring what it intends to. If the assessment procedure and the decisions being made on the basis of the information obtained from the assessment are leading to different kinds of consequences for individuals or groups or for society in general, then consequential validity is affected. However, even though (social) consequences from assessment are always considered important, not everyone agrees that this should be part of the validity concept (see, for instance, Popham 1997). Still, when assessing and grading children and young persons, it is important to consider the possible consequences since decisions based on assessments often affect students in many ways and over a long period.

## *Evaluating Validity*

In order to improve assessment practices in the schools, it is important that all who develop, administer, interpret, and use an instrument should be familiarized with concept of validity. In fact, it is a good idea, before the assessment is carried out, to identify possible threats to validity. This is particularly important if high stakes are attached to the assessment outcome or to the decisions based on the outcome. Typical examples of such assessments are school grades (high stakes for the students) or measures used in a standards-based accountability system. There are two parts of the process that are especially important when evaluating validity: the purpose of the assessment and the appropriateness of the interpretation of the outcome. If there is more than one purpose to an assessment, each purpose must be evaluated separately. Within the school system, it is not uncommon that additional purposes are added to the original. A problem with the Swedish accountability model is, for instance, that the national tests and the grades are used for additional purposes (evaluating school quality), purposes they were not originally intended to meet. Even though an instrument can be appropriate (reliable and valid) for one purpose, it can nevertheless be inappropriate for another.

A problem with validity and the validation of assessment is that it is so complex, it tends to be neglected or even avoided. Still, there are ways to make at least a basic judgement on the appropriateness of an assessment. The basic rule in validity theory and practice is to always have the purpose of the assessment in mind. According to

Stobart (2008, p. 14) the three best questions to ask to estimate the validity of an assessment procedure are:

1. What is the principle purpose of this assessment?
2. Is the form of the assessment fit-for-purpose?
3. Does it achieve its purpose?

The first question has to do with whether there are multiple purposes of the assessment. The second question has to do with whether the form of assessment is appropriate or not, and the third question has to do with the impact of the assessment, and whether there are unintended consequences.

## *The Validity of the Swedish Model*

The question of interest is how valid the assessments in the Swedish school system are? Returning to the accountability model previously described (Fig. 7.3), and asking the questions suggested by Stobart above, the first question is quickly answered. It is not possible to make any statements about the assessment that goes on in classrooms, but it is evident that both national tests and school grades are used for multiple purposes, in light of the fact that they are used for giving information about both student and school performance. According to Eklöf (2010), grades have four purposes: information, motivation, selection, and control. The information aspect concerns information about students' knowledge development and goal attainment; the motivation function concerns the grades giving students the incentives to learn more. The selection function concerns how grades are used in the competition for higher education or employment positions and the control function concerns how grades are used to evaluate the schools and their work. It is important to be aware of the strengths and shortcomings of grades (and tests) when they are used for these purposes.

The second question has to do with fit-for-purpose. This issue is complex, and needs more time and space to explicate than available here. However, as discussed earlier, both the tests and grades have advantages and disadvantages for various purposes. This regards both format and content. The third question is very important to consider, and should be discussed among all who use the information from educational assessments for a particular purpose. A particularly interesting aspect in the context of the Swedish goal-referenced system is whether the available instruments achieve their purpose of measuring school performance.

The third question is perhaps the most difficult, but maybe also most important. Do tests and grades achieve their purposes? Most likely, some intentions work well or fairly well. The teachers receive guidance from tests in the grading process, and grades do motivate students and give information about goal attainment. However, from a broader perspective, since grades clearly have both reliability and validity problems, it is doubtful if the other purposes are achieved. As was discussed earlier, there are a number of problems associated with the Swedish grades when the

information is used to make comparisons between students and also when it comes to goal attainment in general. The grading practices vary considerably, partly due to vague criteria for grading but also due to the fact that the grading is carried out by teachers with varying skills in assessment and grading. In combination with the internal and external pressure for high grading, this has resulted in undesirable variations and grade inflation (Wikström 2005). Probably one of the most difficult tasks in the teaching profession is making reliable and valid judgments on what students know and can do. The system has also been criticized for including too few grade levels, allowing significant variation within one grade level and particularly within the boundaries of the grade "Pass," where the difference between the student who barely passes, and the student who almost reaches the grade "Pass with distinction" is substantial. The incentives for schools to give a weak student a "Pass" should also not be underestimated. Many teachers have experienced pressure from school leaders and parents to be lenient in such situations. Also, when the stakes are high for school leaders and teachers, the pressure for good results often results in various strategies to maximize the outcome, which, in turn, can lead to unintended consequences. Teachers who risk facing sanctions and fear that student achievement results will not be good enough may start teaching to the test, or be lenient in their grading. This will, of course, be counterproductive for students' learning, and the system, since the purpose to promote learning and raise performance levels will in reality be undermined.

A particularly interesting question to discuss, from the perspective of increased school accountability is whether national tests or grades really can be used to measure school quality? It is recognized that, to a large degree, the educational performance is related to students' background and previous education (see, for instance, the Swedish National Agency for Education 2009b). Two schools with different student compositions but with similar grade results may very well have performed very differently. The grades (or traditional tests) are not always appropriate measures, since it may be difficult to identify what the school has contributed versus what was brought by the pupils from their homes or from previous education. If the accountability purpose is to monitor school performance, the priority may instead be to assess effective teaching or to distinguish between school input and school output, rather than making crude comparisons of grades or test scores. This is not an easy task, but strategies as to how to measure effective teaching have been discussed by, for instance, Popham (2007) and Polikoff (2010).

## *What Can School Leaders Do?*

As described in this chapter, the Swedish educational system has changed significantly over the past decades. These changes have followed trends in society in general, and also internationally, with an increasing focus on goals and market orientation. The current system, which now is characterized by a combination of modern views on education and how it should be organized with traditions from former systems, has proved to have rather severe problems. As always, the students are affected,

but the reforms and the consequences of the reforms have also led to problems for school leaders and teachers. A common perception has been that these problems had to do with vague criteria in combination with teachers who were not sufficiently prepared for the new tasks. However, this same problem also applies to the school leader, who may have received even less training about how education and assessment in the goal-referenced model is be carried out. If school leaders had been given the necessary preparation and opportunities for professional development, and then given enough time to prepare their co-workers in the schools, this could have been avoided.

The discussion about consequences may seem discouraging, but there are some core issues relating to educational measurement that are key to many of the problems on which future reforms and actions should be focused. Anderson (2005) concluded that educators often have to balance the accountability to regulations, norms, and results. This is probably correct since accountability to regulations and professional norms are necessary control mechanisms in a results-based or standards-based accountability system. Still, in the Swedish model, the difficulty for teachers and school leaders is not to be accountable to regulations, but to agree on professional norms and to make sure that the results, i.e., the information from the assessment is reliable and valid.

Some things may change radically in the very near future, for good or bad. A number of changes are about to be made. The solution has been communicated as an improved teacher education program that includes courses in assessment, a more clearly defined National Curriculum, a more detailed grading scale, and national tests in more subjects. The goals of improving the curriculum, re-formulating educational goals, and revising grading criteria are intended to fix the weaknesses that have been found in the steering documents. However, there are also signs that tests, especially the national curriculum tests, are becoming more high stakes since there are more incentives, in the standards-based accountability model such as salaries and school funding. The increased focus on tests and grades has so far been limited to quantity and frequency, i.e., how early and how often the students are to be assessed. This will, of course, change the prerequisites for the tests and change how they should be developed, administrated, and evaluated. It also represents the last step to standards-based accountability, as defined by Eklöf et al. (2009). Often forgotten, however, are the key questions of validity: what is being measured, and how is the outcome interpreted and used?

So what can school leaders and teachers do? First of all, they can learn more about how assessment can be used for formative purposes, which will make learning more visible and improve the quality of the education in the classrooms (see, for instance, Hattie 2009). It is imperative that the assessment that goes on within the schools be used as a way to make improvements rather than judgments. Furthermore, it is essential to develop a better understanding as to how to grade students in a fair way, and how to evaluate and improve the instruments used for summative purposes, especially those that will lead to high stakes decisions impacting the students. The school leader has the leading role in this work, and must make sure that all teachers receive the necessary professional development, and also that teachers are discussing

goals and criteria, in order to come to some consensus on how they should be interpreted and how to assess them. Another recommendation is to return to Stobart's three questions on validity.

It is equally important to be aware of how the instruments and their outcome data is used and interpreted in a larger perspective, to be active in the public debate about its interpretation and the appropriateness of this interpretation, and to inform policy makers and the public about assessment practices in the schools. In accountability systems, the measures of goal attainment are of central importance; a relevant question is whether the Swedish instruments for assessment and grading are suitable for all purposes? The absence of the voice of professionals in schools has been especially noticeable in the recent school debate. It is crucial that school leaders become more proactive as educational leaders, especially regarding evaluating whether assessment processes in the school are functioning as intended, and also whether the school itself is being fairly assessed. From such a proactive position, they can argue for improvements.

## Concluding Remarks

To conclude, there have been positive aspects of the introduction of a goal-referenced school system in Sweden, for instance, increased awareness of the curriculum and its content, and increased autonomy for schools and teachers that many find motivating. We have also seen problems, some that could have been avoided if the validity of educational and assessment system had been (pre)validated. In a standards-based accountability system, the intention is often to measure school efficiency or progress. When there is a focus on results, there must be instruments that will return the required information accurately; such instruments must, therefore, be of high caliber. In an accountability system where school leaders and teachers are being held accountable for performance as measured by tests and grades, and where one of the main targets for improvement concerns assessment and evaluation, the reliability and validity of assessment instruments are of central importance.

The school leader is the key to a successful school. It is his or her responsibility to ensure that regulations are followed, education is delivered, and assessment is conducted with the national goals in focus. This is often forgotten, as revealed in the debate about the problem with implementing the new goal-referenced assessment and grading system.

For the Swedish reader, many of the negative aspects described here are probably well known, especially because of public and political debate. Recent publications and reports from researchers and the regulating bodies talk about unreliable assessment, decreasing student performance, and increased school segregation; these reports have been important sources of evidence in the debates. The debate has become more intense over time, and it is common that "experts" with varying educational insight are debating the failing school system in the media. There are many opinions on how the school system is working and how it should be working. There

are even TV-productions, such as reality shows where "super-teachers" are placed in low performing schools, to guide unsuccessful teachers and improve students' motivation and performance. The attention can be both positive and negative. The positive side is that the importance of skilled and committed teachers is illuminated (the importance of good teachers is also argued by Hattie 2009); the negative side is that it may add to beliefs in "quick fixes" rather than focusing on what is really the problem.

## References


Anderson, J.-A. (2005). *Accountability in Education*. France: The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). (The International Academy of Education (IAE)).

Andersson, H. (1999). *Varför betyg? Historiskt och aktuellt om betygen* (*Why grades?*). Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Carlgren I., & Klette, K. (2008). Reconstruction of the nordic teachers: Reform policies and teachers' work during the 1990s. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 52*(2), 117–133.

Education Act. (1985:1100). Stockholm: Department of Education.

Eklöf, H. (2010). Betygen i den svenska skolan (Grades in the Swedish school). In A. Hult & A. Olofsson (Eds.), *Utvärdering och bedömning i skolan* (*Evaluation and assessment in the school*). Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.

Eklöf, H., Andersson, E., & Wikström, C. (2009). The concept of accountability in education: Does the Swedish school system apply? *Cadmo, 2,* 55–66.

Hamilton, L. S., Stecher, B. M., & Klein, S. P. (Eds.). (2002). *Making sense of test-based accountability in education.* Santa Monica: RAND.

Hamilton, L. S., Stecher, B. M., Marsh, J., McCombs, J. S., Robyn, A., Russell, J., Naftel, S., & Barney, H. (2007). *Implementing standards-based accountability under No Child Left Behind: Responses of superintendents, principals, and teachers in three states.* Santa Monica: RAND.

Hattie. J. (2009). *Visible learning. A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. London: Routledge.

Höög, J., & Johansson, O. (Eds.). (2010). *Struktur, kultur, ledarskap—förutsättningar för framgångsrika skolor* (*Structure, culture, leadership—prerequisites for successful schools*). Stockholm: Studentlitteratur.

Johansson, O. (2001). Swedish school leadership in transition: In search of a democratic, learning, and communicative leadership? *Pedagogy, Culture, & Society, 9*(3), 387–406.

Korp, H. (2006). *Lika chanser på gymnasiet? En studie om betyg, nationella prov och social reproduktion* (*Equal chances in upper secondary school? A study on grades, national tests and social reproduction*). Lund: Lärarutbildningen, Lund University.

Lundahl, L. (2002). From centralization to decentralization: Governance of education in Sweden. *European Educational Research Journal, 1*(4), 625–636.

Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational measurement* (3rd ed., pp. 13–103). New York: Macmillan.

Ministry of Education (2001). *Lärandeledare* (*Learning leaders*). (Report no. 4). Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartmentet/Ministry of Education. Retrieved from http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c4/32/34/a64fc34f.pdf. Accessed 27 July 2011.

National Agency for Education (2005). *National assessment and grading in the Swedish school system.* Stockholm: National Agency for Education.

National Agency for Education (2006). *Competence and opportunity—the importance of teachers, their working situation and conditions* (Report 282). Stockholm: National Agency for Education.

National Agency for Education (2009a). *Vad påverkar resultaten i svensk grundskola. Kunskapsöversikt om betydelsen av olika faktorer* (*What is affecting the results in Swedish elementary*

*school. A review of the importance of different factors*). Retrieved from http://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=2260. Accessed 25 September 2011

National Agency for Education. (2009b). Likvärdig betygssättning i gymnasieskolan? En analys av sambandet mellan nationella prov och kursbetyg [Comparable grading in uppder secondary school? An analysis of the relation between national tests and course grades.] Skolverket 2009 (Report 338). Stockholm: National Agency for Education.

Nytell, H. (2006). *From a quality idea to a quality regime: On state governing of the school.* (Doctoral Thesis). University of Uppsala, Department of Education.

PISA (2009). *PISA 2009 Results: What students know and can do*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/edu/pisa/2009. Accessed 25 September 2011

Polikoff, M. S. (2010) Instructional sensitivity as a psychometric property of assessments. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 29*(4), 3–14.

Popham, J. W. (2007). Instructional insensitivity of tests: Accountability's dire drawback. *Phi Delta Kappan, 89*(2), 146–155.

Popham, W. J. (1997). Consequential validity: Right concern—wrong concept. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 16*(2), 9–13.

Popham, J. W. (2009). Assessment literacy for teachers: Faddish or Fundamental? *Theory into practice, 48,* 4–11.

School inspectorate (2010). *Rektors ledarskap. En granskning av hur rektor leder skolans arbete mot ökad måluppfyllelse.* (*The school leader's leadership. A review of how school leaders are leading the work toward increased goal achievement*). (Report 2010:2015). Stockholm: Skolinspektionen. Retrieved from http://www.skolinspektionen.se/Documents/Kvalitetsgranskning/rektor/kvalgr-rektor-slutrapport.pdf.

SOU 2008:109. (2008). *En hållbar lärarutbildning* (*A sustainable teacher education*). Retrieved from http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/10005/a/116737.

Stobart, G. (2008). *Testing times: The uses and abuses of assessment.* New York: Routledge.

Wedman, I. (1983). *Den eviga betygsfrågan. Historiskt och aktuellt om betygssättningen I skolan* (*The eternal grading question. Historical and current issues about grading in the schools*). Stockholm: Skolöverstyrelsen & Liber Läromedel/utbildningsförlaget.

Wedman, I. (2000). *Behörighet, rekrytering och urval: Om övergången från gymnasieskola till högskola* (*Eligibility, recruitment and selection*). (Högskoleverkets arbetsrapporter 6 AR). Stockholm: Högskoleverket.

Wikström, C. (2005). *Criterion-referenced measurement for educational evaluation and selection.* U (Doctoral thesis). Umeå University, Department of Educational Measurement.

# Chapter 8
# Standardization, Deregulation, and School Administration Reform in Japan

**Jun Hirata**

## Introduction

The prototype for the present Japanese education system was established after World War II when Japan was occupied by the United States. The main purpose of this education reform was to democratize and decentralize the existing education system. Following a series of reform efforts, people's right to education was guaranteed for the first time in the Constitution of Japan. The Fundamental Act of Education, which provides the principles of education in Japan, was legislated in 1947 to make the education provisions in the Constitution clear and concrete. As a means to decentralize the education system, the Boards of Education Act (legislated in 1948) established Boards of Education in prefectures and municipalities, with trustees to be elected by community residents (Horio 1988).

Japan achieved independence from USA in 1952. Japan then started to recentralize its educational administration system, culminating in 1956 with cancellation of the Boards of Education Act and legislation of the Local Educational Administration (LEA) Act. Trustees were no longer to be elected by community residents and were, instead, to be appointed by the Governors of prefectures and the Mayors of municipalities. The Ministry of Education (MOE)[1] began to insist that the Course of Study (the national curriculum) had a legal binding force and, on the premise that notification of its revision was published in the National Gazette in 1958, required teachers to strictly obey it; otherwise, they would be punished. Influenced by recentralization, other areas of education policy—such as the number of students per

[1] The national office responsible for education in Japan is the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, which is abbreviated as MEXT (Monbu-kagaku-sho). Before MEXT was created in 2001 to incorporate the Agency of Technology, it was called the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture abbreviated as MESSC (Monbu-sho). In this chapter, the expression "the Ministry of Education (MOE)" is used for both offices.

J. Hirata (✉)
Hirosaki University, Aomori, Japan
e-mail: jhirata@cc.hirosaki-u.ac.jp

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_8, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

classroom—were standardized at the national level during this period of time (Horio 1988). Standardization of educational content in Japan continued until the late 1970s.

Yasuhiro Nakasone became Prime Minister of Japan in 1982 and initiated several administration reforms under the banner "the total clearance of the postwar *political* accounts." He also embarked upon education reform, insisting on "the total clearance of the postwar *educational* accounts" and establishing the Ad-Hoc Council for Education (AHCE) in 1984 (Schoppa 1991). The AHCE was an advisory body to the Prime Minister, meaning that he intended to initiate education reform beyond the leadership of the Minister of Education. By the time of its dissolution in 1987, the AHCE had issued four recommendation reports in which it claimed to deregulate education by introducing market approaches in education based on Neoliberal thinking.

In 1998, the Central Council for Education (CCE), an advisory body to the Minister of Education, issued a report titled *On Prospects of Local Educational Administration* (CCE 1998). The report recommended a review of the educational administration system, in which the term *review* was meant to devolve authority and responsibility from the upper levels of educational administration to the lower levels. It also encouraged independent and autonomous school administration and the increase of principals' leadership. Furthermore, the CCE recommended increasing the accountability of schools and building more intimate and cooperative relationships among schools, homes, and communities. In other words, a centerpiece of the CCE's recommendations was to redecentralize the educational administration system (Hirata 2004). As a part of decentralizing education, the Course of Study—which was revised in 1998 and put into practice in compulsory schools in 2002 and in high schools in 2003—was both reduced and made more flexible. This deregulation of educational content meant that each school could now teach students advanced contents beyond the national curriculum. In 2005, the CCE issued another report titled *Redesigning Compulsory Education for a New Era* (CCE 2005). One of its main purposes was to restandardize many aspects of education. Around the time this report was issued, the National Achievement Tests, the Teacher Performance Appraisal, the Teacher Re-Certificate Program, the School Evaluation Program, and so on were put into practice. The newly revised Course of Study was made public in 2008, and its legal binding force was once again strengthened by the increased instructional content.

Japan has repeatedly experienced the centralization and decentralization of education. Like the swing of a pendulum, standards of education in Japan have been strengthened and loosened, depending on the time. On one hand, a theme running through this book is standards-based reform, which is not a new topic in Japan; on the other hand, standardizations implemented at different times have embraced different principles and meanings, influenced by the social, political, and economic background of the time.

This chapter aims to explore standards-based education reform in Japan, past and present. The study of the past focuses on the 1950s, when the standardization of many areas of education followed postwar education reform. The study of the present reform concentrates on the 1990s and onward when, after deregulation was

attempted, ongoing implementation of the restandardization of education began. The implications of standardization in the 1950s appear to be different from those after the 1990s; therefore, this chapter addresses similarities and differences between the two standardization reform periods.

Another focus of this chapter is principals' leadership. Since the late 1990s, strengthening principals' leadership has been regarded as one of the most crucial issues in education reform in Japan. In this context, some reform efforts have been attempted through the devolution of authority and responsibility to individual schools and the reconstruction of school organization. As present standards-based reform coincides with current policies for strengthening principals' leadership, this chapter also addresses the relationship between these reforms and policies during the 2000s.

## A Broad Overview of the Education System in Japan

### *The School System*

Figure 8.1 shows the school system in Japan. Compulsory education includes elementary and junior high schools. Though high school education is not compulsory, its enrolment rate was 97.6% in 2005 and the drop-out rate was 2.1% in 2004 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT] 2006). Secondary education consists of junior high schools and high schools, each of which has a 3-year curriculum. Junior high school students who wish to go on to high school usually must write an entrance examination. Since the late 1990s, many Boards of Education have established secondary schools, which are continuous for 6 years—from Grade 1 of junior high school to Grade 3 of high school (Grades 7 and 12 in North America). If a student is admitted to this type of school at the junior high level, they do not have to take the entrance examination to advance to the high school level.

### *The Educational Administration System*

There are three levels of educational administration in Japan: the national level, the prefectural level, and the municipal level. At the national level of educational administration, the Prime Minister, who is designated by the publicly elected National Diet[2] members, appoints the Minister of Education. In turn, the Minister appoints MOE personnel and educational agencies under the MOE's jurisdiction. The MOE establishes the fundamental framework of the education system, including school education systems regulated by the School Education Act. It sets national education standards—such as the Course of Study, teacher certification, teacher–pupil ratios,

[2] The National Diet is the Japanese counterpart of the Canadian Federal Parliament.

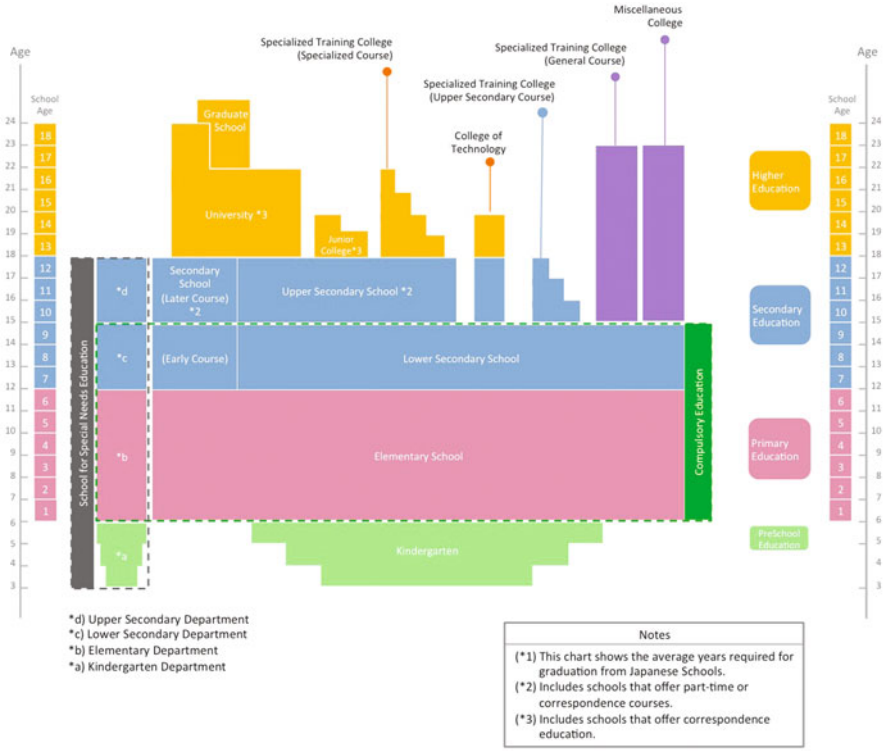



**Fig. 8.1** The School System in Japan. (Source: MEXT (n. d.). School System. Tokyo: MEXT. Retrieved February 24th, 2012, from the World Wide Web: http://www.mext.go.jp/english/introduction/1303952.htm. Necessary corrections are made for more accuracy and convenience by the author)

and class size—and supports local governments in obtaining better educational resources by subsidizing teacher and school personnel salaries. The MOE also provides support for municipal elementary and junior high school buildings; assistance for the proper implementation of educational administration in the areas of guidance, advice, educational content, and school management; and resources for other relevant issues, such as the implementation of in-service training (Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture [MESSC] 2000).

Prefectural Boards of Education play a number of roles: They establish prefectural standards in education, including principles of organization, curriculum of municipal schools, and educational materials within the framework set by the national government. They are in charge of broader-based implementation of educational administration and the establishment and management of educational institutions, including high schools. They also establish public high school districts, administer the payment of salaries to teachers, and support staff in municipal elementary and junior high schools. Support is further provided for the correct implementation of administration and the proper establishment and management of municipal institutions.

Guidance, advice, and assistance are provided with regard to educational content, school management, and so on (MESSC 2000).

The role of municipal Boards of Education is to establish and manage institutions such as schools, libraries, museums, public halls, and gymnasiums, and to implement educational programs in the community, including courses and lectures for adults as well as cultural and sporting events (MESSC 2000). Almost all public elementary and junior high schools are under the jurisdiction of municipal Boards of Education.

## Standardization or Deregulation?

This section describes education reforms in Japan and focuses on educational content in the context of standardization/deregulation from a historical perspective.

### *Deregulation in Postwar Reform and Standardization in the 1950s*

There is a significant difference in the political regime of Japan before and after World War II. Until the end of the war, the sovereignty of the nation fell under the Emperor, based on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan legislated in 1889. The purpose of education was to produce people who could sustain and develop the Emperor-centered society. Under postwar reform, the Constitution of Japan was legislated in 1946 and put into practice in 1947. Japan embarked upon the reconstruction of society based on democracy, in which each individual person has sovereignty, and the Emperor becomes the symbol of the nation and of the solidarity of the Japanese people. Under the Constitution, the people's right to education, academic freedom, and other rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression and religious belief, are guaranteed. Based on this transformation of society, educational content had to be substantively changed. The Fundamental Act of Education was legislated in 1947 to restructure education in Japan. Article 1 of the Act states the purpose of education as the completion of character of individuals who can then form a peaceful and democratic nation and society.

While postwar reforms began in every field of society, there was still a lot of turmoil in education and schools. What had to be taught in schools was different from the prewar period, and teachers were confused about what to teach and how to teach it. The MOE issued *A Tentative Suggested Course of Study General* in 1947 as a guideline for teachers on educational content. The term *Shi-an*, which means a "tentative" or "suggested" plan in English, was put on the coversheet of the Course of Study; thus, it was generally interpreted as not having a legal binding force over teachers, and it was believed that teachers' expertise and autonomy should be respected in their practices. In fact, the first published issue of the Course of Study (Monbu-sho 1947) describes its intent as follows:

> The purpose of this document is to describe the guidance of learning, yet it is not written to attempt to show the only single unmovable way like teachers' handbooks before. It is written as a guideline for teachers themselves to study for themselves how the newly born curriculum, on the basis of the needs of children and the society, should be utilized. (As the Course of Study is referred to on the Internet, the page cannot be specified)

The 1951 revision of the Course of Study described itself as a document to provide teachers with good suggestions, not to make education uniform at all (Monbu-sho 1951). In contrast to the prewar and wartime period, when teachers' practices were strictly controlled by government and military, now teachers' discretion was broadened and their practices were deregulated.

The Course of Study as *Shi-an* was revised several times until 1953 and the term *Shi-an* was deleted in the 1955 revision. With the 1958 revision, the MOE posted notice of the revision to the Course of Study in the National Gazette as a Ministerial Order amending part of the School Education Act Implementation Regulation (Kariya 2009). Since then, the MOE has insisted on the legal binding force of the Course of Study over teachers, which marks the beginning of postwar standardized educational content. Schoppa (1991) articulates one of the purposes of the postwar education reform in Japan, which was to prevent a recurrence of the prewar abuses by limiting central government control. According to him, responsibility for curriculum and textbooks was to be devolved to the level of individual schools and teachers, and local autonomy was to be encouraged through the establishment of elected school boards based on the American model. As a result, the MOE's authority was limited to that of issuing guidelines, suggestions, and teaching guides; thus, the Course of Study was expressed as *Shi-an* until the 1955 revision.

Okuda (1987), a former bureaucrat of the MOE, explains the reason for eliminating the term *Shi-an* from the Course of Study. As the first Course of Study was issued during a time of great turmoil right after the war, its contents were imperfect and, therefore, the term *Shi-an* was added to indicate that the document was tentative. This approach did not necessarily mean the Course of Study did not have legal binding force, as it embraced the standards from the beginning. The 1958 revision made it legally clear that, by amendments to the School Education Act and the School Education Act Implementation Regulation, the curriculum of schools and the contents of textbooks had to accord with the Course of Study. Consequently, the term *Shi-an* was deleted. As mentioned above, however, the first issue of the Course of Study and the 1951 revision clearly explain its nature as a guideline that does not have legal binding force over teachers. Therefore, it is evident that the government changed its interpretation of the nature of the Course of Study.

The change in governmental attitude toward the nature of the Course of Study has been traditionally explained from a political perspective in the context of the Cold War. Due to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, tensions between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc grew in Asia. After the disarmament of Japan in the postwar period, the National Police Reserve (NPR) was established in 1950 to complement the U.S. Military in Japan under Order by the General Headquarters (GHQ), the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. The NPR was transformed and expanded to the

National Safety Force in 1952 and then to the Japan Self-Defense Force in 1954, which has lasted to the present. Meanwhile, then Assistant Secretary of State, Walter Robertson, had meetings in 1953 with Hayato Ikeda, the then Chair of the Division of Political Affairs in the Liberal Party,[3] who would become Prime Minister under the administration of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). They reached agreement that the Japanese government would take responsibility for fostering an atmosphere to develop a spontaneous spirit of patriotism and the self-defense of Japan through education and public relations. The international conflict between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc was compared to the domestic conflict between the government and trade unions and the conflict between the MOE and teacher unions, especially the Japan Teachers' Union (*Nikkyoso*), concerning education. For the Japanese government to keep its promise to the USA, it was necessary to recentralize the education system, standardize the contents of education, and exclude the influence of *Nikkyoso* from schools.

Schoppa (1991) explains the political background of the 1950s as follows:

> First, the MOE realized that regaining central control of education policy was a prerequisite to any other action it might want to take. . . . Equally important, however, was the fact that both the MOE and the LDP saw centralization as a way of countering *Nikkyoso* influence. The MOE needed to defeat the union in order to effect its education policies; the LDP wanted to weaken the union because of its prominent role in building up the vote of the opposition, the Japan Socialist Party. (p. 40)
>
> The next step in the government's campaign was to use its new authority to reassert national control over the school curriculum and textbooks. The Occupation had left the MOE with only the authority to issue curriculum 'guidelines.' In 1958, the ministry made its curriculum mandatory. Concurrent changes required that textbooks conform with the curriculum—a provision enforced by a group of ministry 'reviewers.' Through these ordinances, the MOE succeeded in reestablishing national control over textbooks without a legislative change. (p. 41)

In this sociopolitical background, the democratic and decentralized education reform of the postwar period was relinquished, and the MOE commenced to strengthen the central control over teachers by diminishing their expertise and autonomy.

According to Ogawa (2010), during the prewar and wartime period, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had great influence on every field of domestic affairs, including education and police, yet it was abolished in 1947 after the war. MHA personnel lost their jobs, but those who worked in the MHA Division of Educational Affairs moved to the MOE and preserved their great influence even in the MOE. As MHA bureaucrats tended to see education from the viewpoint of domestic security, they emphasized the importance of strengthening national control over prefectures and municipalities, as well as teacher unions, in accord with the opinion of conservatives in the MOE. As a means to achieve such control, the Boards of Education Act—under which the trustees had been elected by the community residents—was replaced with the LEA Act in 1956, in which the trustees were to be appointed by the Governors and Mayors. Also, in the appointment of Superintendents under the LEA Act, municipal Boards of Education had to obtain approval from prefectural Boards of Education

[3] The Liberal and Democratic Parties were merged into the LDP in 1955.

which, in turn, had to get approval from the Minister of Education.[4] The MOE started to insist on implementing the legal binding force on teachers in the 1958 revision of the Course of Study; then the centralization and standardization of education was completed in terms of its content and framework. Today, these actions during the 1950s are called "reverse-course" reform.

The 1955 revision of the Course of Study, in which the term *Shi-an* was first deleted, addressed Social Studies, and the Course of Study on Moral Education was first issued 1 month prior to the publication of the 1958 revision. These facts reinforce the persuasiveness of the political perspective because fostering patriotism and a sense of national defense, on which the Japanese government and the American government agreed, was supposed to be dealt with in these areas of study. However, Kariya (2009) questions the dichotomous explanation of education reform in the 1950s and afterward regarding conflict between the right wing and the left wing. He proposes a new perspective, which is standardization as a means to reduce the interregional gaps in student performance. Kariya explains that around the mid 1950s, it became clear that student performance had declined and that there were gaps in student performance among regions. In 1956, large-scale national research was conducted by the MOE on Japanese and Arithmetic/Mathematics tests for elementary and junior high school students. One purpose of this research was to analyze differences in student performance on the basis of differences in educational conditions. Kariya analyzed the results of the tests and found significant interregional gaps that stemmed from three factors: differences in educational expenditure, differences in teacher quality, and differences in curriculum. Considering the focus of this chapter, differences in curriculum are addressed below.

Laws and regulations on the number of instruction days were repealed after 1950; most of the 395 schools in the research had 210–240 instruction days. Seven schools (1.8%) had 251–260 instruction days and three schools had 131–140 instruction days (0.8%). The number of the maximum instruction days was approximately double that of the minimum instruction days (Monbu-sho 1959; Kariya 2009). Kariya points out that the learning contents in the 1951 revision of the Course of Study were written with the assumption that schools all over Japan would choose curriculum content on the basis of their regional differences. "Education on the basis of regional circumstances", however, is related neither too closely to, nor too distant from, "education on the basis of interregional gaps." He asserts that the ideal of postwar education, which respected the autonomy of each region or school, was implemented in the context of the interregional gaps in educational conditions (Kariya 2009). Based on these circumstances, the MOE explained that it had decided the minimum instruction hours per year were to be provided for each subject and each school type by amending the School Education Act Implementation Regulation (Monbu-sho 1959; Kariya 2009).

[4] This appointment system was abolished in the amendment of the LEA Act put into practice in 2000, influenced by the recommendation report, *On Prospects of Local Educational Administration* (1998).

Kariya (2009) further asserts that, though teachers were given autonomy in postwar education reform, it led to unstructured curriculum and instruction rather than diverse education. According to him, the MOE explained the standardization of curriculum as necessary after the independence of Japan from the USA. During postwar occupation, the Japanese government had to follow the guidance and directions of the GHQ. Decisions by the GHQ on education reform were based on relatively new views on education in the USA, which emphasized the importance of student spontaneity and of education through daily experience. Meanwhile, the following criticisms of education reform were raised: Teachers taught students daily, familiar, and miscellaneous issues without structure, which entailed much waste, and it was necessary to teach more basic and fundamental issues in more systematic ways. Instructional methods at that time stuck to empiricism, and the educational values of students' lives and experiences were not sufficiently considered. This tendency influenced the structure of educational content and neglected the configuration of teaching materials. Though the experiences of students should be respected, the system of education had to be more respected in the structure of educational content from a viewpoint of the efficiency of education (Monbu-sho 1958; Kariya 2009). As a result, the term *Shi-an* was deleted from the Course of Study, and the MOE started to insist on the legal binding force of the Course of Study in the 1958 revision.

## *Deregulation and Restandardization from the Late 1980s to the 2000s*

In the 1960s and 1970s, Japan experienced rapid economic growth and became one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Many countries and international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), dispatched researchers and other staff to Japan to investigate the secrets of Japan's economic success. One answer they found was in school education, as Japan's public education system was envied for its excellent performance in many parts of the world (Hirata et al. 2005).

From the 1960s to the 1980s, the social situation in Japan changed drastically. Its industrial structure was transformed, and the main part of industry shifted from primary industry to secondary industry, and also to tertiary industry. This transformation accelerated population mobility and people seeking better jobs became concentrated in urban areas, which created many nuclear families. In this context, Japan's education system expanded in both quantity and quality. Educating the first "baby boom" generation, those born in the late 1940s, required more and more schools in an environment of remarkable economic growth. Also, as the number of students seeking higher levels of education increased, so the competition to enter high schools and universities also increased. The second baby boom generation appeared at the beginning of the 1970s and when they reached school age in the 1980s competition became even greater. This situation was called "the entrance examination war" and seemed to increase stress among students. It was criticized for causing many social

pathologies, such as violence and vandalism inside and outside of schools, as well as delinquency, bullying, suicide, and so on. School education was blamed for these phenomena.

Simultaneously, educational content and instructional methods were also criticized. Teachers crammed as much knowledge as possible into students so they would succeed in entrance examinations.[5] The knowledge students gained was evaluated, but their thinking abilities and creativity were not sufficiently respected in schools. Teacher-centered instructional methods were broadly adopted, and students were expected to sit quietly, listen carefully to their teachers, and remain passive in the classroom. Consequently, students were said not to gain abilities that could be applied in real life, such as problem-solving skills.

The content of the Course of Study had gradually decreased since the 1977 revision. Deregulation of educational content did not begin in earnest until the late 1980s, as a reaction to the social pathologies described above. New evaluation and reporting methods were adopted in the 1989 revision, in which more emphasis was put on students' motivation to study rather than academic achievement. In the late 1990s, the MOE announced that, beginning in 2002, schools would no longer have classes on Saturdays. The MOE also revised the Course of Study, reducing up to 30% of teaching materials, beginning in 2002 for compulsory schools and in 2003 for high schools. These reforms were implemented to create *yutori*—which means sufficient mental and physical room—among students who supposedly had not developed abilities applicable to real life and who suffered from many pathologies. "Integrated Studies" was newly incorporated into the Course of Study to nurture students' "zest for living," a slogan that has influenced education reform ever since. This trend toward education reform deregulated the standards of educational content (Hirata et al. 2005).

Deregulation of educational content immediately came under strong criticism from many fronts, including sectors of the mass media and business circles. Critics argued that the new curriculum would result in students' poor performance and would, therefore, impede Japan's edge in the global economy. The MOE refuted these criticisms by arguing that one of the major objectives of the new Course of Study was to foster a zest for living among students: to foster the qualities and abilities necessary to learn, think, and act for themselves, and to develop problem-solving skills. The MOE insisted that the very concept of scholastic ability should be drastically changed. The ensuing clashes triggered a controversy over the so-called "decline of academic ability" among students, and the MOE was finally forced to retract the new curriculum. Prior to implementing the new Course of Study in 2002, the MOE released a public statement encouraging students to study harder (Hirata et al. 2005). It also announced that, because the Course of Study set only minimum standards, teachers could now go beyond the Course of Study and teach "developed learning." The MOE had previously required teachers to teach neither more nor less than the precise contents of the Course of Study.

[5] Entrance examinations were usually held once a year from January to March, depending on prefectures and municipalities, in the form of paper-based testing.

Criticisms of the decline of student performance were not weakened, however, and the MOE started to strengthen its control on educational content around 2004. In 2005, the CCE issued a recommendation report titled *Redesigning Compulsory Education for a New Era*, which led to the introduction of National Achievement Tests. It also led to intensification of the Course of Study as the national standard, with increased content in the 2008 revision for compulsory schools and the 2009 revision for high schools. Parts of the 2008 revision were implemented in elementary schools in 2009 and in junior high schools in 2010. The full revision will commence in elementary schools in 2011 and in junior high schools in 2012. The preceding implementation of parts of the 2009 revision for high schools started in 2010, and the contents to be implemented will be increased annually until 2013 (Monbu-kagaku-sho 2010a). Furthermore, the implementation of the National Achievement Tests in Japanese and Arithmetic/Mathematics for Grade 6 students in elementary schools and for Grade 3 students in junior high schools (Grade 9 in North America) began in 2007. While it depended on municipal Boards of Education whether or not they would participate in the tests, all of the municipalities except one, and about 65% of private schools, joined the 2007 tests.[6]

## School Administration Reform and Principals' Leadership

The impetus, during the past 10 years, for implementing education reforms that strengthen principals' leadership was the CCE report *On Prospects of Local Educational Administration*, issued in 1998. This report emphasized the importance of devolving authority and responsibility from the MOE to Boards of Education, and from Boards of Education to individual schools. Several reforms have been attempted, and this section focuses on three such reform policies: the decline of the function of teacher councils, community schools and school management councils, and the transformation of school organization.

### *The Decline of the Function of Teacher Councils*

Traditional school organization consists of a principal, vice-principal(s), teachers, a school nurse teacher, and other staff regulated by the School Education Act (see Fig. 8.2). Principals have the authority and responsibility to oversee administrative and financial issues and to monitor teachers and support staff. To develop a unified approach in their educational activities and administrative affairs and duties, principals assign teachers to different areas of responsibility, such as educational affairs, course guidance, student behavioral guidance, and so on. Administrative mechanisms

[6] The nonparticipating municipality joined in 2009, influenced by the change of Mayor and the consequent change of trustees on the Board of Education.

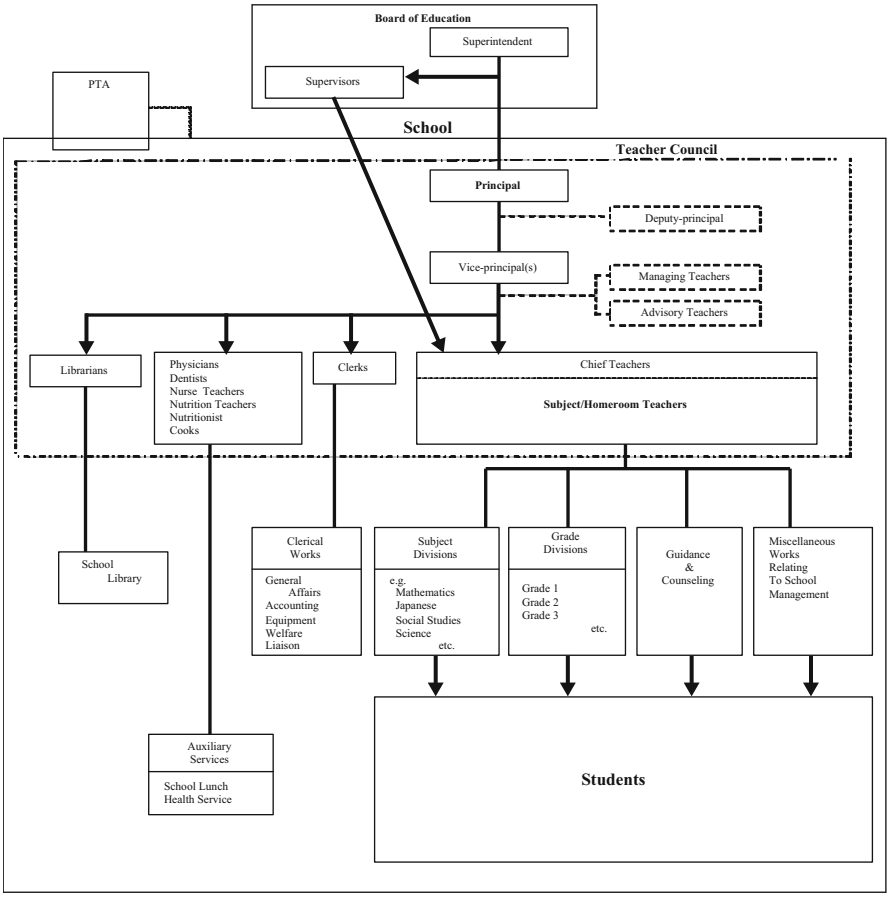



**Fig. 8.2** School Administration Structure in Japan (MESSC 2000. Necessary modifications have been made by the author to fit the present system)

in schools are organized in such a manner that each school performs its activities under the authority and responsibility of the principal, with ultimate responsibility being held by each Board of Education (MESSC 2000).

Each school usually has a teacher council, a specific component of school organization in Japan that includes all teachers in the school and facilitates their cooperation. Teacher councils had significant influence on decision-making, which was sometimes beyond the principal's authority, based on the principles of democracy in education and the self-governance of teachers. The School Education Act Implementation Regulation was amended in 2000, however, and the amendment transformed the status and function of teacher councils. Prior to this amendment, teacher councils had no legal provision for their status and function at the national level. Some local governments merely had school management regulations—provided by Boards of Education as the internal rules of their jurisdictions—that allowed principals to set

up teacher councils if needed. Though principals were not required to have teacher councils, in many schools these councils had significant influence on principals' decision-making and eventually even acquired a decision-making function.

The tendency toward establishing teacher councils as decision-making bodies was influenced by the democratic education movement that followed World War II. Some government documents required that administrators, teachers, students, and the community be encouraged to participate in school decision-making. Due to this democratic education movement, many schools established teacher councils. These councils were very active and, in some schools, administrators were elected by the teachers (Urano 1999; Hirata 2004).

Around 1950, the MOE began implementing policies to strengthen principals' administrative authority in school management and to put schools under the strict control of Boards of Education and the MOE (Hirai 2000; Hirata 2004). This change of policies on school management—part of the reverse-course reform in the 1950s—made the issue of teacher councils controversial. Lengthy debates on their status and function revolved around the councils' perceived roles as decision-making bodies, advisory bodies, or supporting bodies. The Amendment of the School Education Act Implementation Regulation in 2000 concluded the controversy, whereby a principal may establish a teacher council to support the principal's smooth school administration. This legislation was the first to provide teacher councils with legal status at the national level. It was at the principals' discretion whether or not to have teacher councils, however, which weakened the function of teacher councils in school management.

Many researchers and educators criticize this Amendment based on the concept of democratic education and teachers' rights (Urano 1999; Hirata 2004). The intention of the reform policy makers was to reduce the influence of teachers on school management and strengthen the leadership of principals. The Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, for example, in 2006, notified every school under its jurisdiction that the teacher council meetings were no longer opportunities for teachers to have discussions, exchange opinions, and vote in decision-making. Instead, principals would convey their decisions to teachers, and teachers were expected to obey them. Critics claim that this type of reform strengthens top-down school governance and reduces teachers' influence in school decision-making—disempowering teachers and impairing democracy in schools (Hirata 2004). In this regard, the retired principal of a high school in Tokyo filed a lawsuit against the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education in 2009, and the case is still under trial.

### *Community Schools and School Management Councils*

In March 2004, the CCE issued a report titled *On Prospects of the Management of Schools* (CCE 2004) and recommended that "community schools" be instituted. After this report, in June 2004, the LEA Act was partly amended and Boards of Education were given the authority to designate existing schools as community schools,

which must have "school management councils" as advisory bodies to principals. Referencing the CCE report, the provisions of the LEA Act, and the Ministerial Notification on implementation of the amendment, the following are some of the characteristics of community schools and school management councils:

- School management councils are established to discuss the management of those schools designated by Boards of Education to be community schools.
- Members of school management councils are appointed by Boards of Education from among parents, community residents, and persons deemed appropriate. Principals and school staff can also be members, as determined by Boards of Education.
- The number, composition, appointment, dismissal, and term of members, as well as agendas and other items necessary for school management councils, are provided in Boards of Education regulations.
- Principals of designated schools shall plan such basic issues as curriculum and budgets as provided in Boards of Education regulations and obtain approval from school management councils.
- School management councils can present opinions to those who appoint staff (usually Boards of Education) about staffing policies. Those who appoint staff shall take the opinions seriously and acknowledge them, unless there is a valid reason not to do so (Hirata 2006).

As of April 1, 2009, there were 5,107 public Kindergartens, 21,713 public elementary schools, 9,982 public junior high schools, 3,780 public high schools, and 1,039 public schools for special needs education. Out of the 41,621 public schools 629 schools were designated as community schools, including 36 Kindergartens, 428 elementary schools, 157 junior high schools, 3 high schools, and 5 schools for special needs education (Monbu-kagaku-sho 2010b). Community schools comprise about 1.5% of all public schools in Japan and do not play a dominant role in public schooling, though their number has increased gradually since their legislation in 2004 (Monbu-kagaku-sho 2010c).

## *The Transformation of School Organization*

The Fundamental Act of Education was amended in 2006. The amendment changed many articles and clauses from the original Act and has been severely criticized. The newly added Section 2, Article 6, states that "in order to achieve the goals of education, systematic education must be implemented organizationally." Influenced by the term "organizationally", the School Education Act was amended to add three new positions in school organization: deputy-principals, managing teachers, and advisory teachers (see Fig. 8.3).

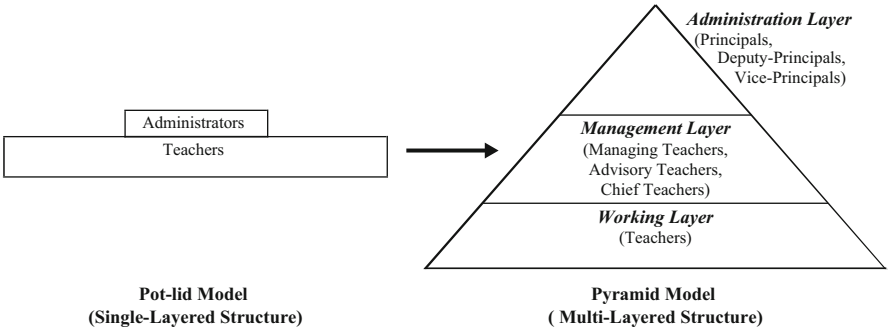



**Fig. 8.3** The transformation of school structure model

This change of school organization was based on New Public Management (NPM),[7] an aspect of Neoliberal ideology that introduced the management forms of private companies into public organizations, including schools. NPM proposed the organizational structure of schools as multilayered (pyramid model), in contrast to the traditional "pot-lid," single-layered model (see Fig. 8.3). By making the school structure multilayered, policy makers aimed at strengthening the top-down form of decision-making and management of schools that they believed would improve principals' leadership (Hirata 2008). Critics thought this reform spoiled the collaborative relationship among teachers by creating a divisive hierarchy (Fujita et al. 2007).

## Analysis

The following is an analysis of standardization reforms in both the 1950s and the 2000s—identifying their similarities and differences—and reforms on principals' leadership after the late 1990s. Table 8.1 shows the trends of decentralization/centralization and deregulation/standardization reforms after World War II.

### *Standardization of Processes and Outcome-Based Assessment*

Standardization reform in the 1950s has been explained from a political perspective, but attention to the interregional gaps in student performance provides valuable insight. The MOE apparently intended to strengthen national control of educational content; however, it did not regularly continue to confirm the effects of standardization. In 1961, the MOE implemented the National Achievement Tests in Japanese

[7] As part of the NPM reform, since 2000, the requirements to become principals have been buffered and principals no longer need teaching certificates. This reform has resulted in many principals without teacher certificates.

**Table 8.1** Trends of education reform policies in Japan

| | 1945 (the postwar period) | The mid 1950s | The 1990s | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Educational administration | Decentralization | Centralization | Decentralization | Decentralization/ centralization |
| Educational contents | Deregulation | Standardization | Deregulation | Deregulation/ standardization |

and mathematics for all Grade 2 and 3 students in junior high schools (Grades 8 and 9 in North America). The tests were to be administered annually, but opposition was strong, especially from teachers, because the tests would strengthen governmental control over teachers regarding educational content. Teachers were also concerned about the links between test results and teacher appraisals. As a result, the tests were cancelled in 1965. Furthermore, the MOE did not consistently measure test outcomes. Though the MOE implemented the National Achievement Tests in 1982, their plan was not public knowledge and an official results report was not issued (Kariya 2009).

In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled that the government could intervene in educational content within necessary and reasonable limits. It also acknowledged the legality of the National Achievement Tests. The MOE could have reinstated testing. Instead, while the 1977 revision started reduced educational content in the Course of Study, with the 1989 revision of the Course of Study on Special Activities, it became mandatory for teachers to guide students to sing the National Anthem (*Kimigayo*) and to hoist the National Flag (*Hinomaru*) in such school events as the graduation ceremony. As the National Flag was the symbol of invasion of Asian countries by the Japanese military during World War II, and the lyrics of the National Anthem celebrate the Emperor-centered society, these icons are controversial concerning the Constitution and people's perceptions of the history of war. Before the 1989 revision of the Course of Study on Special Activities, therefore, it was declared *desirable* for teachers to guide students in singing the National Anthem and hoisting the National Flag (Hirata 1998). The 1989 revision strengthened the MOE's control on the freedom of thought, conscience, and creeds of teachers and students, but it did not attempt to readminister the national tests until 2007.

To summarize, the gaps among regions in student performance were large, and not all local governments could afford to provide the educational conditions sufficient to meet the principle of equal opportunity of education. It is possible to interpret the MOE's intention as one of strengthening and preserving their control over prefectures, municipalities, and teachers, until they could develop sufficient educational conditions for themselves. However, it should be noted that authority over educational content had not been sufficiently devolved to Boards of Education and schools, even after Japan experienced rapid economic growth and after policies for reducing the interregional gaps—such as income redistribution—were instituted. From a political perspective, nationalism had a tremendous influence on educational policy making. Whichever perspectives are taken, the focus of standardization during this period was on process-control.

In the 1990s, the MOE announced a reduction in educational content and instruction days in the Course of Study, to be implemented in the early 2000s. At the same time, the MOE was severely criticized for instituting a series of deregulation policies that brought about the decline of student performance. In reaction to this argument, the MOE began to restandardize educational content.

A central tenet of *Redesigning Compulsory Education for a New Era* (CCE 2005), which accelerated restandardization, was expressed as "quality assurance." Its achievement was proposed as follows: First, the national government sets the goals, based on clear strategies, and prepares the ground for reform, such as ensuring certain sources of revenue (the management of inputs by the national government). Second, local governments and schools are responsible for the outcomes of educational practices after the sufficient devolution of authority and responsibility (the implementation of policies and practices by local governments and schools). Third, the national government is responsible for measuring the outcomes of education by local governments and schools (the management of outcomes by the national government).

The Fundamental Act of Education was then amended in 2006, with the following provision added in Article 6, Section 2: "Systematic education must be implemented organizationally." Influenced by the expression "systematic education," the School Education Act was amended in 2007 and, consequently, the Course of Study was revised and educational content increased. The total number of instructional hours per year in the most recent Course of Study, for example, is 5,645 in elementary schools from Grades 1–6, an increase of 278 hours over the previous revision; and 3,045 in junior high schools, an increase of 105 hours. The total instructional hours per year devoted to Integrated Studies—the symbol of deregulation reform in the 1990s and criticized by those who emphasize the importance of teaching basic knowledge—in elementary schools became 280, a decrease of 150 hours, and the total for junior high schools became 190, a decrease of 20–145 hours from the previous revision (Monbu-kagaku-sho 2010a).

In addition to instructional hours, the following issues in the latest revisions should also be noted: Foreign Language Studies is new to the curriculum for Grades 5 and 6 in elementary schools. *Budo*, which means the Japanese martial arts, including *Judo* and *Kendo*, is now mandatory in Grades 1 and 2 of junior high schools, to enrich education on the traditions and cultures of Japan. *Budo* is also purported to foster Moral Education (Monbu-kagaku-sho 2010a) in relation to the introduction of patriotism education in the amendment of the Fundamental Act of Education. Though the MOE insisted that teachers have more discretion in their instructions, national control of educational content is strengthened in the current education reform. Furthermore, the National Achievement Tests were implemented and the results were made public by announcing the ranking of prefectures in the mass media. The test results are to be included in the School Evaluation Report of each school, which is similar to the Annual Educational Results Report in North America. Each school is required to prepare a School Evaluation Report and to make it public. The MOE measures outcomes of prefectures, municipalities, and schools by using these methods. Thus, the current standardization reform stresses an outcome-based assessment.

## *Principals' Leadership in School Administration under Education Reform from the Late 1990s to the Present*

After the 1998 CCE report, decentralization reform appears to share some perspectives with the concept of School/Site-Based Management (SBM). Two major elements of SBM support this form of school governance: devolution of decision-making authority to individual schools and participatory decision-making or Shared Decision-Making (SDM).

The concept of the devolution of decision-making authority arose from critical problems in the centralized education system. Brown (1990) points out that in a centralized system, those persons responsible for the education of students have little authority to control educational resources, while those not responsible for students have the authority to control school resources. As a result, two problems arise: First, schools face a lack of flexibility. School staff members on site have little control over resources deployed to their schools because they cannot make key decisions about personnel, equipment, and maintenance, yet they are considered responsible for the education of students under their care. Second, central office personnel are perceived to be in control of district budgets, most of which affect schools directly, and to have the authority to allocate resources for students, but they are not responsible for students' education. Given this disparity between authority and responsibility, individual schools must lobby for resources and resort to inefficient spending practices, with the result that more resources are directed to some schools than to others (Brown 1990).

The decentralization of decision-making authority has been discussed and was adopted to overcome these problems and to increase the voices of those who are not heard, or at least not sufficiently listened to by authorities (Leithwood and Earl 2000). Advocates of SBM insist that "activities that directly impact students on a day-to-day basis must be determined as close to the student as possible" (Candoli 1991, p. 40; cited in Murphy and Beck 1995, p. 21). Those persons closest to the students should make decisions about educational programs, including curriculum, instruction, and the organization of time, people, facilities, and other student resources (Mojkowske and Fleming 1988; Murphy and Beck 1995). The people closest to a situation are uniquely positioned to address the needs of themselves and their students (Murphy and Beck 1995). In his qualitative research concerning decentralization in Alberta and British Columbia in Canada, and Cleveland in the USA, Brown (1990) found that SBM schools have more flexibility than schools under a centralized education system.

Mintzberg (1989) views decentralization, or SDM, as the extent to which power is dispersed among many individuals in an organization. Wood asserts that "participatory decision-making is a collaborative approach in which superordinates and subordinates (and community members) work together as equals in an attempt to identify, analyze, and solve problems that face the organization" (1984, p. 63). In an SBM form of school governance, therefore, decision-making authority is expected to be shared with many stakeholders, including principals, teachers, students, parents, and community members.

Applying the two elements of SBM to the current decentralization education reform in Japan illuminates several points. Regarding the devolution of authority, the MOE maintains strong control on educational content through the Course of Study, the Textbook Authorization, and the National Achievement Tests. Prefectural Boards of Education hold staffing authority even in municipal schools. The adoption of textbooks authorized by the MOE is in the hands of Boards of Education, with principals and teachers having no formal authority. Boards of Education set strict frameworks for school finance, leaving principals with little discretion. Policy makers assert that the current reform reinforces the decentralization of educational administration and the deregulation of educational content, as recommended in *Redesigning Compulsory Education for a New Era.* However, in actuality, it facilitates the standardization of educational content and maintains the centralized educational administration system. According to the research conducted by the Japanese Association for the Study of Educational Administration in 2000, 2001, and 2002, the majority of superintendents of municipal Boards of Education and principals of elementary and junior high schools felt that sufficient authority was not devolved to the lower levels of educational administration in terms of curriculum (Fujiwara and Ueta 2004), finance (Kono and Chijibu 2004), and staffing (Motokane and Yaosaka 2004), even during the decentralization reform period. Although one of the recommendations in *Redesigning Compulsory Education for a New Era* was that the national government takes responsibility for establishing necessary educational conditions, since the 2006 school year, the national share of expenditure on teachers' salaries in compulsory education has been reduced from one-half to one-third, raising the burden on prefectures from one-half to two-third. The current reform regarding teachers' salaries is directly converse to the 2005 CCE report. In short, although educational administration in the past was characterized as "support, but control," the current reform is seen as "less support, but more control" (Hirata 2009).

Community schools were instituted in 2004 and the number has increased year by year. They are expected to implement independent and autonomous school management even though they do not necessarily have more discretion or authority than regular schools. Community schools have to follow the Course of Study and are still under the supervision of Boards of Education, unlike charter schools in North America. Most activities conducted in community schools can also be implemented in regular public schools, and education reforms that affect public schools are also applied to community schools.

Regarding SDM, the other element of SBM, the current reform strengthens principals' leadership and autonomy in relation to teachers, but not in relation to Boards of Education and the MOE. Teacher councils had a profound influence on school decision-making; in order to strengthen principals' leadership, in 2000, the School Education Act Implementation Regulation was amended to designate teacher councils as supporting bodies only. This amendment has gradually reduced the function of teacher councils as bodies that give teachers a voice in decision-making. In the research by the Japanese Association for the Study of Educational Administration mentioned above, Tsuyuguchi and Sako (2004) found that more than 70% of principals of elementary and junior high schools made decisions in such key areas in school administration as organization of subcommittees, management of teacher

council meetings, selection of classroom teachers and chief teachers, establishment of the fundamental framework of curriculum, and so on. Furthermore, in 2007, following the amendment of the Fundamental Act of Education, the School Education Act was amended, transforming the structure of school organization from the single-layered model to the multilayered model by instituting such positions as deputy-principals, managing teachers, and advisory teachers. This organizational transformation strengthens principals' leadership—facilitating top-down decision-making and decreasing teachers' voices—but does not increase the principals' or schools' autonomy from the upper levels of educational administration. The current reform does not, therefore, promote an SDM form of school governance.

Community schools have school management councils, and principals are required to get their approval on fundamental items, such as curriculum and school budgets. School management councils can give staffing requests to Boards of Education, and the Boards are required to respect all reasonable requests. Decision-making authority is to be shared between principals and school management councils and between school management councils and Boards of Education on staffing. As principals and the members of school management councils are appointed by Boards of Education, it is doubtful whether school management councils can reject principals' plans or direct schools to go against the policies of principals or Boards of Education. When Boards of Education determine that particular community schools are not working or are not conforming to the Boards' policies, their school designation can be cancelled. Consequently, substantive authority over school management, even in community schools, is mainly in the hands of principals and Boards of Education and is not necessarily shared with school management councils.

## Conclusion

With the exception of 1 year (1994–1995), the LDP has held the national government since 1955. In the summer of 2009, the Japanese people experienced the almost first change of government since 1955, which is that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won the General Election. The DPJ administration was losing support; however, due to financial scandals and political failures, and the Prime Minister had changed from Yukio Hatoyama to Naoto Kan during the Party's first year in office. In this unstable situation, the DPJ government implemented several education reforms: National Achievement Tests were conducted in 2010 as a sampling survey. The tests in 2007, 2008, and 2009 were implemented under the LDP administration as a complete survey; tuition has been free in public high schools since the 2010 school year and the MOE announced that the number of teachers in elementary schools will be gradually increased to reduce class size from 40 to 35 students.

Focusing on educational content, the results of the 2009 PISA (Programme for International Student Achievement) were released in December 2010. Though Japan had experienced a decline in achievement from the 2000, 2003, and 2006 tests, student performance improved in the 2009 tests. Yoshiaki Takagi (2010), the Minister

of Education, stated that the improvement is a result of current reform. Standards-based education, therefore, will continue.

Concerning decentralization reform in Japan, the educational administration system has been centralized and educational content has been standardized for a long time. Even during the decentralization and deregulation reforms attempted since the 1990s, substantive authority was not devolved to the level of individual schools. In every field of public administration, including education, Japan has been a centralized nation. In contrast, the DPJ administration has raised a slogan "local sovereignty," which is intended to facilitate decentralization. Thus, devolution of authority from the upper levels of educational administration to the lower levels is expected to take place. Although the DPJ government has had many initial confrontations and some reform plans have already failed, its reform efforts should continue to be carefully monitored by the general public.

## References

Brown, D. J. (1990). *Decentralization and school-based management.* London: Falmer.

Candoli, I. C. (1991). *School system administration: A strategic plan for site-based management.* Pennsylvania: Technomic.

Central Council for Education (CCE). (1998). *Kongo no chihou kyouikugyousei no arikata nit suite [On prospects of local educational administration].* Tokyo: Monbu-sho. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/old_chukyo/old_chukyo_index/toushin/1309708.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Central Council for Education (CCE). (2004). *Kongo not gakkou no kannri un-ei no arikata ni tsuite [On prospects of the management of schools].* Tokyo: Monbu-kagaku-sho. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/gijiroku/04030401/002.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Central Council for Education (CCE). (2005). *Redesigning compulsory education: Summary of the report of the Central Council for Education.* Tokyo: MEXT. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/06051511.pdf. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Fujita, H., Sato, M., Kita, A., Nishihira, H., & Ogi, N. (2007). *Dare no tame no kyouiku saisei ka [For whom is "turn-around of education"?].* Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho.

Fujiwara, F. & Ueta, T. (2004). Kyouiku katei to jiritsuteki gakkou un-ei [Educational content and autonomous school administration]. In K. Kono (Ed.), *Chihou bunkenka ni okeru jiritsuteki gakkou un-ei no kouchiku ni kansuru sougouteki ken-kyu [Comprehensive studies on the construction of autonomous school administration under the decentrazation]* (pp. 159–174). Tokyo: Taga Shuppan.

Hirai, K. (2000). Shokuinkaigi no arikata wo meguru mondai no keii [The history of the problem on the nature of teacher councils]. In H. Ojima (Ed.), *Gakkou un-ei soshiki wo dou minaosuka [How to review the organization of school management]* (pp. 52–55). Tokyo: Kyouiku Kaihatsu Kenkyujo.

Hirata, J. (1998). Hinomaru Kimigayo mondai [The issue on Hinomaru and Kimigayo]. In M. Tsuchiya., H. Hirahara, S. Miwa, & O. Muroi (Eds.), *Gakko kyoiku keyword jiten [Encyclopedia of school education]* (pp. 36–38). Tokyo: Junpo-sha.

Hirata, J. (2004). *Do school councils empower students? Two Japanese case studies* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Toronto: University of Toronto.

Hirata, J. (2006). Does school/site-based management (SBM) in Japan achieve its policy purposes? A policy analysis of Japanese education reform regarding school advisors and school management councils. *Canadian and International Education Journal, 35*(2), 62–75.

Hirata, J. (2008). Gakkou no kanri to un-ei [The management and administration of schools]. In M. Katsuno & N. Fujimoto (Eds.), *Kyouiku Gyouseigaku (Kaitei-ban) [Educational administration (revised version)]* (pp. 47–62). Tokyo: Gakubun-sha.

Hirata, J. (2009). Kyouiku kaikaku seisaku no accountability kouzou ni kansuru ichi kousatu [A study on the accountability structure of education reform policies]. *Bulletin of the Faculty of Education, Hirosaki University, 101,* 89–100.

Hirata, J., Ogawa, Y., & Mizoue, C. (2005). Educational administration and some reform efforts in Japan. In J. F. Kess & H. Lansdowne (Eds.), *Why Japan matters!* (Vol. 2, pp. 612–635). Victoria: Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives, University of Victoria.

Horio, T. (1988). *Educational thought and ideology in modern Japan: State authority and intellectual freedom* (trans: S. Platzer). Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

Kariya, T. (2009). *Kyouiku to byodo [Education and equality].* Tokyo: Chuo Koron-Shinsha.

Kono, K. Chijibu, T. (2004). Gakkou yosan to jirituteki gakkou un-ei [School finance and autonomous school administration]. In K. Kono (Ed.), *Chihou bunkenka ni okeru jiritsuteki gakkou un-ei no kouchiku ni kansuru sougouteki ken-kyu [Comprehensive studies on the construction of autonomous school administration under the decentrazation]* (pp. 237–276). Tokyo: Taga Shuppan.

Leithwood, K., & Earl, L. (2000). Educational accountability effects: An international perspective. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(4), 1–18.

MESSC. (2000). *Education in Japan: A Graphic Presentation.* Tokyo: Gyosei Corporation.

MEXT. (2006). *Japan's education at a Glance 2006.* Tokyo: MEXT. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/statistics/1303013.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

MEXT. (n.d.). *Organization of the School System in Japan.* Tokyo: MEXT. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/english/org/struct/010.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Mintzberg, H. (1989). *The structuring of organizations: A synthesis of the research.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Monbu-kagaku-sho (2010a). *Gakkou katei chiiki ga chikara wo awase, shakai zentai de kodomotachi no "Ikiru chikara" wo hagukumu tame ni [For cultivating "zest for living" among children by the whole society, binding school, home and community].* Tokyo: Monbu-kagaku-sho. Retrieved March 12, 2012, from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/pamphlet/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/07/26/1234786_1.pdf.

Monbu-kagaku-sho. (2010b). Community schools no shitei joukyou ni tsuite [On the designation of community schools]. *Kyouiku Iinkai Geppou [Monthly Report of Boards of Education], 731,* 76–84.

Monbu-kagaku-sho. (2010c). *Gakkou kihon chosa [School basic survey].* Tokyo: Monbu-kagaku-sho. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/chousa01/kihon/kekka/k_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2010/12/21/1300352_1.pdf.

Mojkowske, D., & Fleming, D. (1988). *School-site management: Concepts and approaches.* Andover: Regional Laboratory for the Educational improvement of the Northeast and Islands.

Monbu-sho. (1947). *Gakushu shido youryou ippann-hen (Shi-an) [A tentative suggested Course of Study general].* Tokyo: Monbu-sho. Retrieved from http://www.nier.go.jp/guideline/s22ej/index.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Monbu-sho. (1951). *Gakushu shido youryou ippann-hen (Shi-an) [A tentative suggested Course of Study general].* Tokyo: Monbu-sho. Retrieved from http://www.nier.go.jp/guideline/s26ej/index.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Monbu-sho. (1958). Shogakkou kyouikukatei no kaizen ni tsuite [On the improvement of the curriculum for elementary schools]. *Shoto Kyouiku Shiryou Rinji Zokan [A Special Number of Materials on Primary Education], 102,* 225–261.

Monbu-sho. (1959). *Wagakuni no kyouiku suijun [Educational standards in Japan].* Tokyo: Teikoku Chihou Gyousei Gakkai.

Motokane, M., & Yaosaka, O. (2004). Jinji kanri to jiritsuteki gakkou un-ei [Staffing management and autonomous school administration]. In K. Kono (Ed.), *Chihou bunkenka ni okeru jiritsuteki*

*gakkou un-ei no kouchiku ni kansuru sougouteki kenkyu [Comprehensive studies on the construction of autonomous school administration under the decentrazation]* (pp. 353–374). Tokyo: Taga Shuppan.

Murphy, J., & Beck, L. G. (1995). *School-based management as school reform: Taking stock.* California: Corwin.

Ogawa, M. (2010). *Kyouiku kaikaku no yukue [Prospects of education reform].* Tokyo: Chikuma Shinsho.

Okuda, M. (1987). Gakushu shidou youryou [The Course of Study]). In H. Kida (Ed.), *Testimony of the post-war educational policies [Shogen sengo no bunkyou shisaku]* (pp. 393–413). Tokyo: Dai-ichi Houki.

Schoppa, L. J. (1991). *Education reform in Japan: A case of immobilist policies*. New York: Routledge.

Takagi, Y. (2010). *OECD seito no gakushuu toutatsudo chosa (PISA 2009) ni tsuite [On PISA 2009, OECD]*. MEXT. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/daijin/detail/1299985.htm. Accessed 12 March 2012.

Tsuyuguchi, K. & Sako, S. (2004). Kouchou no leadership to jiritsuteki gakkou un-ei (Principals' leadership and autonomous school administration. In K. Kono (Ed.), *Chihou bunkenka ni okeru jiritsuteki gakkou un-ei no kouchiku ni kansuru sougouteki ken-kyu [Comprehensive studies on the construction of autonomous school administration under the decentrazation* (pp. 175–204). Tokyo: Taga Shuppan.

Urano, T. (1999). *Gakkou kaikaku to kyoushi [School reforms and teachers]*. Tokyo: Doujidai-sha.

Wood, C. J. (1984). Participatory decision making: Why doesn't it seem to work? *Educational Forum, 49*(1), 55–64.

# Chapter 9
# School Leadership, Accountability, and Assessment Reform in Hong Kong

**Huen Yu and Wai Ming Yu**

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AP | Aspiring Principals |
| APASO | Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes |
| BCA | Basic Competency Assessment |
| CPD | Continuing Professional Development |
| EDB | Education Bureau |
| ED | Education Department |
| EC | Education Commission |
| ESR | External School Review |
| HKALE | Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination |
| HKCEE | Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination |
| HKSCE | Hong Kong School Certification Examination |
| SVAIS | Hong Kong Schools Value Added Information System |
| IMC | Incorporated Management Committee |
| KPM | Key Performance Measures |
| NAP | Newly Appointed Principals |
| PI | Performance Indicators |
| QAI | Quality Assurance Inspection |
| SBM | School-based Management |
| SDA | School Development and Accountability |
| SMI | School Management Initiative |
| SMC | School Management Committee |
| SSE | School Self-Evaluation |
| SP | Serving Principals |
| SSB | School Sponsoring Bodies |
| SHS | Stakeholder Survey |
| TSA | Territory-wide System Assessment |

H. Yu (✉) · W. M. Yu
The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Tai Po, New Territories, Hong Kong
e-mail: hyu@ied.edu.hk

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_9, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

## Introduction

Throughout the world, there is no consensus as to how structuring of schools should take place. "Some argue for increased autonomy for schools, others call for increased testing and standardization of curriculum, and still others contend that schools should be held more accountable for their results" (Sackney and Dibski 1994, p. 104). In the past three decades, the Hong Kong Government promoted the quality school education by increasing autonomy for schools and holding schools accountable for students' learning outcomes. This chapter aims to examine the accountability system and assessment reforms in Hong Kong and to discuss the challenges school leaders are facing. The history of local principals' leadership development is briefly presented as a backdrop for deeper understanding of the accountability system in Hong Kong. Recommendations for the development of school leaders are highlighted and the need to shift to transformative leadership and integrated leadership is suggested.

### *Education Reform*

In Hong Kong, the main policies for educational change and development in schools were developed in the 1980s. These policies were generally formulated by the Education Commission (EC; Cheng 2000a) which published eight reports (EC 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000). The EC Report 2000, entitled "Learning for life, learning through life: Reform proposal for the education system in Hong Kong" has been one of the most important documents proposing educational change, curriculum and assessment reform in Hong Kong since 2001.

### *Education System and Academic Structure*

There are, in general, four sectors in the Hong Kong education system: preschool education, primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. Preschool education, provided by Kindergartens or nurseries, begins at the age of 3 or 4. The majority of Kindergartens are privately run. Nurseries are run by charitable or church organizations and subsidized by the government. Formal schooling begins at the age of 6. Legislation, making education compulsory from Primary 1 (P1) to Secondary 3 (S3), was passed in 1978.

In Hong Kong, the academic structure for 9 years of basic education is 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. Most primary schools follow a uniform curriculum with an emphasis on major subjects, that is, Chinese language, English language and Mathematics. Chinese is the language of instruction in almost all government and subsidized primary schools. The curriculum for junior secondary schools offers a limited range of subjects, such as the three major subjects (Chinese, English, and Mathematics), integrated science and cultural subjects. The curriculum

for this stage focuses on developing students' basic knowledge and abilities and attitudes toward life-long learning (EC 2000):

> The curriculum at this stage should focus on developing students' basic knowledge and abilities, including positive attitude and values, judgment, the capability for independent thinking, critical analysis and problem-solving and team-work, as well as adaptability, creativity, organizational skills and communication skills. These will help them lay a good foundation for life-long learning and all-round development. The curriculum should be reformed to become more flexible, diversified and integrated. Through more flexible time-tabling, the use of more diverse teaching materials, the integration of all-round learning activities both inside and outside the classroom, inspiring teaching methods as well as diversified assessment mechanisms, students will become more proactive in their learning, and they will "learn how to learn". (p. 9)

In the past, secondary schools adopted a 5-year secondary and a 2-year matriculation curriculum. Students needed to take the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE). The combination of HKSCE and HKALE which constituted the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), suited the 3-year senior secondary curriculum that was more diversified and multichanneled. The EC recommended that for admission, universities consider students' overall performance instead of excessive reliance on the results of public examinations. For senior secondary education, the reform proposal stated that the curriculum should be able to provide multiple channels and diversity for learning (EC 2000):

> Students should be provided with multi-faceted experiences to explore their own aptitudes and strengths, so that they will be better prepared for further study and future employment. Premature streaming should be avoided, so that students can choose the best combination of subjects across various disciplines. Students should, according to their aptitudes and abilities, choose between curricula of different emphases, including curricula with a practical or vocational slant. (p. 9)

The implementation of the 3-year senior secondary education has taken place since 2011. Following the change of the academic structure of secondary education, mainstream undergraduate programs have been adjusted from 3 to 4 years. However, many professional degrees, for example, educational programs for teacher training, have gone beyond 4 years.

## Assessment Reform

In Hong Kong, the intention to carry out reform in assessment arose as early as the 1990s. The discussion on formative assessment was published in EC Report Number 4 (EC 1990):

> If we are to develop an education system which provides for the different needs of students, we must be able to assess their individual strengths and weaknesses. We therefore firmly believe that the time has come for the development of an assessment system that would serve a formative function and which would enable the performance of students to be measured against agreed targets. (p. 63)

According to EC Report Number 7 (EC 1997), more discussions on assessment change appeared:

> Output indicators should measure the value-added improvement of students in both academic and non-academic domains at different learning stages, as a result of changes in factors affecting the student performance such as improvement in the teaching and learning environment. (p. 12)

The concept of measuring the "added value" in different stages of education was elaborated: "[An] individual school's performance over a period of time and a student's progress over the years (e.g., as he/she enters and leaves a school) should be measured" (p. 13).

Academic achievement was the most common output indicator. The use of a Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) became the basis for evaluation of learning outcomes. It was recommended in the Report that while the TSA measures students' learning at junior levels, the public examination results would be a good measure of a student's academic achievement at the senior secondary level.

Moreover, the EC recommended that the Education Department (ED; later called the Education Bureau [EDB]) should play an important role providing support and assistance to "schools in the development of quality indicators in order to achieve a school-based quality reform, in collaboration with the tertiary institutions, education profession and various education-related and advisory boards and committees, with reference to overseas experience" (p. 15).

In 2000, the EC raised the issue again and invited members of the public to review the aims of education in Hong Kong for the twenty-first century and published the overall aims as below:

> To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large. (p. 4)

To achieve these aims, the document also proposed six strategies, among which the one proposing "to raise the overall quality of students: to improve the overall quality of our society through upgrading the knowledge, ability and attitude of all students" (p. 5) was considered the most relevant to assessment reform.

The EC (2000) highlighted the importance of assessment in supplementing learning and teaching in primary and secondary schools:

> The major function of assessment is to help teachers and parents understand the learning, progress and needs of their students, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers could take into account the results of assessment in planning the teaching syllabus, designing teaching methods and giving guidance to individual students to help them learn effectively and exploit their potentiality fully. This will also enable students to have a deeper understanding of themselves. (p. 46)

As shown in Appendix 1, both internal and external assessment mechanisms are equally important in primary and secondary education in Hong Kong (EDB 2003).

The main function of internal assessment is "to facilitate learning and teaching and help teachers understand the learning progress and needs of their students" (EC 2000, p. 10). Internal assessment includes flexible formative assessment and quantitative assessment. Quantitative assessment can be employed "to make way for more analytical assessment which can produce a more comprehensive picture of the performances and needs of students in different areas" (EC 2000, p. 10).

External assessment includes public examinations which serve the function of certification and selection, and play a crucial role in directing students' learning (EC 2000, p. 11). In the past, students had to take two public examinations, namely, the HKCEE and the HKALE, but now a more flexible examination approach was adopted. School-based assessment was introduced which linked the content of examinations with students' experiences in daily lives. This raises students' interest in learning and encourages them to put more time and effort into useful learning activities. In addition, the contribution of teachers' diverse (nontest) forms of evaluation helps to better examine those abilities that are not easily evaluated through written tests.

## *Measuring Student Performance I: Basic Competency Assessment (BCA)*

The Basic Competency Assessment (BCA) is carried out in major subjects such as Chinese language, English language and Mathematics "at various stages of basic education to make learning and teaching more effective, and to strengthen remedial and enhancement measures" (EC 2000, p. 10). The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority were commissioned to develop and implement BCA in the three major subjects at Key Stage One (P3), Key Stage Two (P6) and Key Stage Three (S3) in the Basic Education in local schools. As recommended by EC (2000), the BCA consists of two parts: Student Assessment and TSA.

**Student Assessment** For the part on Student Assessment, there is an online system developed to provide immediate feedback to students of P3, P6, and S3, and their teachers. The web-based design allows teachers to review and improve students' progress toward learning objectives and targets set for students.

**TSA** This systemic assessment aims at providing "the Government and school management with information on whether schools in Hong Kong attain the basic standards in key learning areas" (p. 16). Tests were administered centrally by the Government at the levels of P3, P6, and S3. The TSA is mainly conducted in paper-and-pencil format, except for the oral assessment component for Chinese and English languages. The TSA has been fully implemented, with Key Stage One (P3) started in 2004, Key Stage Two (P6) in 2005, and Key Stage Three (S3) in 2006.

**Significance of TSA** In 2008, the Hong Kong Government invited the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority to conduct a survey on how teachers in local primary and secondary schools received TSA and how the reports were used. The

questionnaires were sent to 1,081 schools (624 primary and 457 secondary schools), with returns from 727 schools (432 primary and 293 schools)—a return rate of 67.3%. Results regarding the perceived usefulness of TSA reports revealed that more than 90% of the primary and secondary respondents considered the "Subject Results and Student Performances" in TSA reports the most valuable. Results also indicated that a majority of teachers (97% primary and 94% secondary) changed their teaching strategies after they read TSA data. Most schools were satisfied with TSA reports. "These results suggested that TSA has had significant positive impact on the teaching and learning of Hong Kong schools" (Mok 2010, p. 88). The establishment of TSA is an important milestone in assessment reform in Hong Kong. Mok (2010) also stressed that BCA "is a timely initiative within the international context of assessment for learning movement as well as within the local context of structural reform in the education system" (p. 89).

### *Measuring Student Performance II: Schools Value Added Information System (SVAIS)*

The Hong Kong Schools Value Added Information System (SVAIS) is another instrument for understanding school academic results. SVAIS is a quality assurance information system employed in secondary schools to find out how well individual schools improve academically. It provides secondary schools with confidential information on the extent to which they have added value to students' academic progress. The system allows individual schools to access value-added information on their own school and for other schools, schools with a similar intake, and schools within the same district. Currently, the system provides information related to students' performance between S1–S5 and S6–S7. The information provided relates to the performance of students who have successfully completed S5 or S7. Estimates of value-added are calculated. Group comparisons specific to cohort, year, and subject are made so that schools can get comparison information on individual subjects and for specific subject groups of other schools, schools with similar intake and schools from the same district. As a result, different reports can be generated: a report for a given subject over a period of several years, a report for multiple subjects in a given year, and a report for all subjects within a given year. School teachers and school council members know exactly how their students perform in different subjects and in different years. If students' results are not favorable, improvement strategies can be planned for students. Further elaboration of this measuring tool can be found in the next section on the "School Development and Accountability."

## School Development and Accountability (SDA) System

The accountability system is considered to be a response to the two waves of education reform, as identified by Townsend and Cheng (2000) in the Asia Pacific Region. In

Hong Kong, the first wave occurred between the 1960s and 1970s based on the assumption that

> . . . policy makers could establish best practices to enhance effectiveness or optimal solutions to solve major problems for all schools at the school-site level. They were generally characterized by a top-down approach with an emphasis on external intervention or increasing resource inputs and with a moderate focus on certain aspects of education practice. (Cheng 2000a, p. 23)

The problem seemed to be the ignorance of policy makers about "school-based needs and the use of knowledge and research for supporting policy making and implementation" (Cheng 2000a, p. 49).

However, the second wave in the 1980s was different from the first wave. It promoted a school-based and bottom-up approach, and emphasized the use of knowledge and research (Townsend and Cheng 2000). Cheng (2000a) pointed out that the "pursuit of quality in education became a key goal for educational reform efforts in Hong Kong" (p. 18). The "quality" was related to the extent to which the education practices or services satisfy and meet the stakeholders' (e.g., parents, students, policy makers) expectations and needs (Cheng 2000a).

Altogether, there are three government documents relating to the setting up of an accountability system in Hong Kong. They are: "The School Management Initiative (SMI): Setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools" (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991); the "EC Report Number 7, Quality School Education" (EC 1997); and "Education blueprint for the twenty-first century: Learning for life, learning through life" (EC 2000).

During the decades between the 1970s and the 1980s, the Hong Kong Government stressed the importance of "providing enough places for every child of compulsory school age, and for all those able and willing to continue beyond compulsory education" (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991, p. 1). Under the policy of compulsory education, children of school age were given the opportunity to study in schools. In consequence, a large number of primary and secondary schools were built to cater to the great demand for children's education (EC 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990). However, students' academic standards were problematic. There was "a public outcry on failing standards in education in general and on students' English language ability in particular" (Wong 1999, p. 251). According to Black and Wiliam (1998), learning standards have a close relationship with the work of teachers. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Government started to shift its attention from the expansion of the number of schools toward the concern for educational quality in schools (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991).

## *A Framework for Quality*

The policy document "The School Management Initiative: Setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools" (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991) pointed out that the main reason for the lack of educational quality

was the low quality management in both schools and the ED. It also pointed out that principals lacked proper training for management and leadership in schools.

> There is a widespread perception that many Principals are insufficiently experienced and inadequately trained for their tasks. Because proper management structures and processes are lacking, some Principals are insufficiently accountable for their actions and see their post as an opportunity to become 'little emperors' with dictatorial powers in the school. (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991, p. 14)

The report suggested that those enthusiastic and able teachers frustrated by the lack of educational and managerial leadership in schools, should be trained if they were willing to remain in the profession and accept the challenge of promotion to principalship (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991).

The report adopted the concept of an effective school system with a list of ideals including: clearly stated educational goals, a well-organized school-based curriculum development scheme, a systematic process for determining educational needs, high expectation of student performance, high involvement of teachers in making decisions, a teaching force with team spirit, and the principal's assurance of regular evaluation of programs (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991, pp. 27–28). It also recommended "changes to clarify roles, reallocate responsibilities, and strengthen management through the system" (Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department 1991, p. 1).

## *Quality School Education*

In 1997, the transition of the sovereignty of Hong Kong from a British colony to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China caused the city to go through significant social, economic, and political changes. These changes prompted a move from meeting quantitative goals to striving for qualitative improvement (EC 1997). The EC started to look closely at the question of quality in October 1993 and Working Groups on Educational Standards and on School Funding were set up. The results of the findings were published in EC Report Number 7 (EC 1997), which focused on Quality School Education. The recommendations to enhance the quality of education included the following:

> Inculcating a quality culture in the school system; providing a practical framework for key players in the school system to achieve the aims of education in an efficient, cost-effective and accountable manner; presenting an integrated strategy for quality assurance and development; providing incentives for quality performance; assisting under-performing schools; and outlining a framework for raising the professional standards of principals and teachers and enhancing their professional education and development. (EC 1997, p. ii)

In addition, the report recommended a two-way approach to the quality of education: an internal assurance by schools and an external quality assurance mechanism. It was agreed that the internal quality assurance should be achieved through School-based Management (SBM), participation of parents and teachers, and self-evaluation

by schools. The external quality assurance could be met by performing Quality Assurance Inspection (QAI) and External School Review (ESR) in schools.

## *School-Based Management (SBM)*

EC Report Number 7, proposed the implementation of SBM aimed at increasing school effectiveness and improving the quality of education. It recommended that all schools have SBM in place by 2000, so as to develop the quality of school education with greater flexibility in using resources, in accordance with the needs and characteristics of their students (EC 1997, p. 17). As well, SBM should be implemented "in the spirit of the SMI to better meet the needs of their students" (EC 1997, p. xiii). Currently, all government and subsidized schools in Hong Kong have implemented SBM.

**Involvement of School Stakeholders** According to EC Report Number 7, SBM assures the quality of education through the involvement of school stakeholders. Quality assurance within schools "can best be achieved through practising school-based management, which allows key players of school education to participate in setting school goals and developing quality indicators which best meet the needs of schools and students" (EC 1997, p. 16). In addition, under SBM, Hong Kong schools aim to "build a quality culture which is student-centred, school-based, open and accountable" (EC 1997, p. 17). SBM also includes some key elements that are in line with the spirit of the SMI for the enhancement of quality school education. They are as follows:

- Development of formal procedures for setting school goals and evaluating progress toward these goals;
- Provision of documents to outline the schools' profiles, development plans and budgets, and means of evaluating progress;
- Preparation of written constitutions for the school management committees (SMCs);
- Participation of teachers, parents and alumni in school management, development, planning, evaluation and decision making; and
- Development of formal procedures and resources for staff appraisal and staff development according to teachers' needs (EC 1997, p. 17).

**Incorporated Management Committee (IMC)** In Hong Kong, the majority of the school population is in the subsidized sector under the operation of school sponsoring bodies (SSB). There are many types of SSB such as religious bodies (e.g., Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Taoist, etc.), welfare bodies, clan associations, rural schools, alumni associations, and trade associations. Many of these SSB run a number of primary and secondary schools. In each school sponsoring body, a SMC (or school council) consisting of a certain number of members, is set up for the purpose of proper school management. After the implementation of SBM, more decision-making authority was passed to the SMC of SSB.

The Government issued a consultation document (Advisory Committee on School-based Management 2000), aiming to solicit views and comments from the public on the new structure and the formation of school-based councils in schools. Schools have to "work in partnership with parents and the wider community in order to harness their support and tap their resources in providing every student with learning experiences suitable to individual aptitude and needs" (p 1). It was hoped that through a new spirit of professionalism from teachers, enhanced leadership from principals, and deeper commitments from parents and the community, the quality of education in schools could be improved. The Advisory Committee on SBM proposed a school management framework, recommendations on the composition and legal status of the SMC, and responsibilities of school managers. The following summarize the main ideas in the proposals (Advisory Committee on School-Based Management 2000):

- Each SMC is to be registered as an incorporated body under the Education Ordinance;
- Membership of an SMC:
  - Up to 60% of the total membership nominated by the SSB;
  - The principal;
  - 2 or more teacher managers, to be elected by the teaching staff;
  - 2 or more parent managers, to be elected by the parent–teacher association;
  - 1 or more alumni managers, to be elected by the alumni association; and
  - 1 or more independent mangers, to be elected by the SMC from among community members and relevant professionals.
- Each SMC drafts its own constitution stipulating the composition and responsibilities of the SMC and the ways in which the school is managed;
- The number of schools which managers may serve on to be limited to five—in order to ensure that managers have sufficient energy and time to perform their function properly;
- The names of school managers, their tenure, and the sector they represent to be public information;
- School managers to declare any personal interests which may be in conflict with the best interests of the school (including the interests of relatives, friends and business associates) and anything which may be construed to confer financial advantage or other benefits; and
- School managers to be eligible for office between the ages of 21 and 70 years.

After 3 months of consultation, the Government published a proposal with a few minor changes, in the form of a blueprint, entitled *The Education (Amendment) Bill 2002* (Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2002). It was decided that the Education Ordinance be amended "to make provision for the establishment of IMCs to manage certain types of schools" (Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2002, p. C1031). "The proposed new bill aroused an intensive debate among SSB [School Sponsoring Bodies], teacher associations, parent groups, the policy makers and the public" (Yu 2005, p. 260). The

debate in the Legislative Council was severe. Ultimately, 29 of the 50 legislators voted for it and 21 voted against it in the third reading (Hui and Chan 2004). The Legislative Council passed the Bill by 8 July 2004. It is known as the Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 (Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2004).

## *School Self-Evaluation (SSE)*

By the implementation of the SBM policy, a mechanism for SSE was proposed for school self-improvement. According to EC Report Number 7, "self-evaluation should be conducted annually by schools to review and evaluate their progress, identify areas for improvement and plan for necessary follow-up action" (EC 1997, p. 20). The Report recommended that all schools should produce documents which outline the long-term goals and priority development areas, set out specific targets for implementation, evaluate progress of work during the school year, and set improvement or development targets for the coming year. The document should be disclosed for parents' and students' information. Through an annual reporting process, schools can be more open and accountable to students, parents, and the community at large.

## *Quality Assurance Inspection (QAI)*

According to EC Report Number 7 (EC 1997), the EC accepted the Working Group's recommendation on education standards to set up a quality assurance unit, and the ED's proposal to adopt a whole-school approach to inspection, and to establish "Quality Assurance Inspectorate" to provide quality of education. The EC also agreed with the ED's call

> for an integrated inspection team to carry out quality assurance inspections using the whole-school approach which are open and transparent, with a view to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual schools, recommending improvement measures and taking appropriate action to assist those under-performing ones. (p. 21)

QAI involves

> . . . self-evaluation by schools, whole-school inspection and post-inspection support by the ED, with assistance from a panel of experts consisting of practicing teachers and other education specialists, and periodic external evaluation of the ED's inspection process and practices. Inspection reports are provided to schools for information and follow-up action. (Tang 2008, p. 21)

QAI "works within a framework based on the aims of Hong Kong school education and agreed performance indicators" (Tang 2008, p. 40). "In what ways is the school system in Hong Kong good?" was the main question which QAI sought to answer. Supported by refinements of performance indicators (PI) and inspection processes, a

new structure of framework, "School Development and Accountability" (SDA), was formulated by combining SSE and ESR. The emphasis was changed from a process focusing on inspection and an externally driven agenda to one that put the school's own self-evaluation as the starting point for the review of its performance. The main measuring tools provided for Hong Kong schools in SDA (Tang 2008, p. 40) are as follows:

- Performance Indicators (PI): The ED published a document, "Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools 2002: Evidence of Performance", to facilitate the assessment of school performance using PIs. There are 14 performance indicator areas with 29 PIs (Quality Assurance Division, Education Department 2002). These descriptions provide a common platform to evaluate school performance in four domains: management and organization, learning and teaching, student support and school ethos, and student performance.
- Stakeholder Survey (SHS): A SHS can assist schools to collect views of parents, teachers and students. The quantitative data are related to key performance measures (KPM), the effectiveness of teaching strategies, home–school partnership and school culture.
- Schools Value-Added Information System (SVAIS): In a SVAIS, territory-wide and school-level information data on added value in school academic performance can be seen.
- Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO): An APASO helps schools obtain quantitative and objective data on nonacademic aspects of student development such as emotional well-being, relationships, and self-image.
- Key Performance Measures (KPM): KPMs are built on the PIs framework providing quantitative and objective data at the school level. KPM can provide information for schools to assess their progress against their previous performance and all schools in the territory. There are 17 KPMs including students' reading habits, student destinations on leaving schools, and results in public examinations.

After 4 years' implementation of the framework of SDA, the EDB collected views of teachers, education practitioners, and inspection personnel, and reviewed and developed new PIs so as to bring them in line with the stage of school education and curriculum reform.

The implementation of SBM started earlier than the assessment reform. The policy of SBM was piloted in the 1990s and became mandatory practice in all public-sector schools in Hong Kong in the 2000s. In the following sections, the impact of the accountability system and the impact of the subsequent assessment reform are discussed.

## Impact of Accountability System

After the full implementation of SBM in schools in 2000, the EDB devolved much autonomy to schools in personnel management, financial matters, and curriculum arrangement. There were at least four challenges for school leaders: autonomy given

but responsibilities increased; the decision-making authority shared among IMC members; principals' leadership weakened; and schools being too defensive during ESR visits.

### *Autonomy Given and Responsibilities Increased*

After the implementation of SBM, autonomy was given to schools, but at the same time, many responsibilities were assigned to them. For instance, in personnel management, responsibility for approving teacher appointment and promotion of teachers, employment of substitute teachers, and teachers' leave applications was given to schools. In financial matters, the government approved a special grant to schools to contract out services and employ additional staff to relieve teachers' workload; however, the administration procedures, such as tendering and purchasing procedures, were strict and tedious. With regard to curriculum arrangement, the concept of school-based curriculum development was promoted. Teachers were encouraged to develop a whole-school plan based on their school mission, strengths, and targets of curriculum reform. Sackney and Dibski (1994) highlighted the extra work for principals under SBM:

> The principal has to attend to a larger set of managerial tasks tied to the delivery of educational services, including programme planning, development and evaluation, personnel selection and assignment, staff development and evaluation, and budget management. In addition, the principal is burdened by the increased time committed to collaborative decision-making. The principal is expected to involve staff, students, parents and the community in the decision-making process. Where political and philosophical differences exist, as is highly probable with such diverse participants, more time and energy may be expended on argument and debate than on accomplishing something worthwhile. (p. 106)

Workload had been increased for principals who could, in turn, distribute work to the middle management, teachers and supporting staff. How to balance the principal's work was a challenge to the principal. Also, if too much work was passed to middle managers and teachers, the problem of staff's negative emotions had to be handled with care.

### *Change in Decision-Making Authority*

The key change in the implementation of SBM was the way decisions were made. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) claimed that SBM was a widespread reform initiative, that schools were restructured by allocating to them more decision-making authority. Sackney and Dibski (1994) pointed out that for some advocates, the decision-making authority should be shared within schools. Originally, EC Report Number 7 (EC 1997) made a recommendation "to establish a School Executive Committee, under the SMC, to decide on school matters and be answerable to the SMC" (p. 19). The

School Executive Committee was to be chaired by the principal. However, the Government did not accept that proposal. Instead, it decided to establish an IMC to give legal status to parents, teachers, alumni, and independent managers. The new bill, Education (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 (Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2004), establishing IMC in schools aroused an intensive debate among SSBs and the government. Although the government was eager to involve other stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and alumni, "many SSB are worrying about their future control of schools in the newly restructured IMC" (Yu 2005, p. 268).

Cheng and Chan (2000) believed that competition for power and resources among key school actors could be created in Hong Kong SBM schools. Gamage and Pang (2003) pointed out that restructuring and participatory approaches of management might create numerous conflicts and serious disagreements. Similarly, according to Flinspach and Ryan (1994), if some of the parents, teachers, alumni, and independent managers do not share the same or similar vision, mission, and beliefs as their SSB colleagues, power struggles and political conflicts could happen. Not surprisingly, how to settle competition, conflicts and disagreements in IMCs seemed to be a difficult task for school leaders.

## *Principal Leadership is Weak*

"Principal leadership is the key to successfully implementing SBM and school council" (Parker and Leithwood 2000, p. 60). However, according to local findings, Hong Kong principals' leadership seemed rather weak in transforming teachers' commitment. A survey on the principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment to change was conducted by Yu in 2000. It covered a representative sample of 107 primary schools (14% of the total primary school population) and 2,092 primary school teachers (10% of total teacher population) in Hong Kong. As a composite variable, transformational leadership received a mean rating of 3.74 (on a six-point scale). One of the eight dimensions, "holding high performance expectations", received a higher mean rating of 4.19. Teachers more strongly perceived this set of leadership practices to be in evidence than any of the others. Other dimensions received very similar ratings ranging from 3.60 to 3.77 ("modeling behavior": 3.77; "developing a widely shared vision": 3.74; "building consensus about school goals and priorities": 3.68; "strengthening school culture": 3.67; "providing intellectual stimulation": 3.65; "providing individualized support": 3.64; and "building collaborative structures": 3.60).

According to Yu et al. (2002), the qualitative description showed that the majority of the dimensions of principals' transformational leadership were weak:

> A representative sample of Hong Kong elementary teachers moderately agreed that their principals were providing some elements of transformational leadership. These teachers most strongly agreed that principals had high expectations for teachers' professional growth and students' performance. But they disagreed that principals could provide appropriate models

> or set good examples for staff to follow. There was a low level of agreement that principals made much effort to clarify school vision or to build consensus about school goals. Teachers disagreed that principals had a high priority to change teachers' values, although they invited teachers' collaboration in the implementation of change. Although teachers agreed that principals intended to provide intellectual stimulation, they disagreed that principals were professional enough to help teachers further develop themselves professionally. There was a low level of agreement that their support for teachers was strong and extensive enough, the support mainly being confined to the area of teachers' professional development. Teachers only slightly agreed that their principals provided leadership in building collaborative structures in schools. (p. 382)

The effects of principals' transformational leadership practices on teachers' commitment to change were also examined in this study. Results suggested weak but significant effects of principals' transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change. In comparison to other evidence, it was suggested that the pattern of transformational leadership effects in Hong Kong was similar to North America, but the magnitude of these effects was far less in Hong Kong (Yu et al. 2002). In addition, according to Cheng (2000b), principals' leadership in implementing school-based curriculum reform was also weak. The challenge here is for school leaders to equip themselves for transformational leadership and curriculum leadership.

### *Schools Become Defensive During ESR Visits*

According to the Final Report of The Impact Study on the Effectiveness of ESR in Enhancing School Improvement through SSE in Hong Kong, "the implementation of SSE and ESR as complementary processes has served as a significant catalyst to change and school improvement" (Quality Assurance Division, Education Bureau 2008, p. ii). SSE and ESR facilitate continuous school improvement (Quality Assurance Division, Education Bureau 2008, p. iii) by giving impetus to nurturing the culture of SSE, promoting the use of data-based evidence for SSE, creating a greater sense of openness, transparency, and collaboration within schools, enhancing a sense of ownership and team spirit; and creating a positive impact on learning and teaching. The Report also identified some achievements and concerns:

> . . . a deepening understanding and heightened confidence of school staff in relation to SSE and ESR; classroom teaching becoming more engaging, student-centred, and open and receptive to student voice; a welcome for the insights of ESR teams and setting of a clear agenda for improvement after the review; the enhanced skills of ESR teams in conducting review; sharing of thinking and practice by teachers beyond the classroom in a whole-school dialogue; a growing concern for and willingness to engage with evidence to move from impressionistic evaluation of quality and performance to a more systematic, rigorous and informed approach to assessing practice; and concerns about teachers' workload and stress. (Quality Assurance Division, Education Bureau 2008, p. 4)

The ESR is informed by five basic principles: The process is data driven and evidence based; there is a need for mutual trust between the ESR team and the school; the

focus is on issues not on individuals; the exercise is improvement oriented; and the scope of the interview takes full account of the school's context.

Moreover, "[Performance indicators] PI are now serving as a common platform for evaluation of school development by schools and the EDB [Education Bureau]" (Quality Assurance Division, Education Bureau 2008, p. ii). In order to align with education trends and latest development of school education, the EDB revised and updated the PIs after consultation with frontline teachers, education practitioners, and inspection personnel. In 2008, a new document, "Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools 2008 with Evidence of Performance" was published. Fourteen performance indicator areas with 29 PIs were simplified and restructured into 8 performance indicator areas with 23 PIs. The document embraced the concept of "Planning-Implementation-Evaluation" in the SSE cycle. Other evaluation tools such as KPM and the SHS were also revised. A set of questions was provided against each PI to help school administrators start their approach and inquiry, and stimulate reflection and discussion, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the evaluation.

In the inspection process, many principals were defensive in response to the ESR teams' questions because they did not want their schools' weaknesses to be revealed. However, the purpose of the ESR teams is to help schools understand their real situation and build up a culture of SSE. The school leaders' big challenge, therefore, was to help himself/herself and teachers to gain a positive and correct perception of SSE.

## Impact of Assessment Reform

Walberg et al. (1994) explained the relationship between accountability and assessment reform:

> Since accountability places responsibility for the success of the students on their teachers, it has become a central feature of education reform. Some reformers believe that the education system will improve only if teachers are held accountable for their students' test performance, because assessment data are the best evidence that schools are reforming. (p. 9)

### *Teachers and Principals Work Under Stress*

According to Leithwood et al. (1999a), the "approach to accountability holds teachers, as a group, accountable to parents, students, and the district office, for the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the school" (p. 26). In Hong Kong, results of students' achievements, such as the TSA, and results of public examinations such as the HKCEE and the HKALE are reported in the School Council, SMC or IMC. Essentially, school quality is judged by how well students perform on these examinations. Principals and teachers are questioned if students' academic results are not satisfactory. This creates great pressure on both teachers and principals.

In Hong Kong, educational reforms mainly started in 1997. EC Report Number 7 (EC 1997) called for quality school education. The EC Report of 2000 urged reforms in various areas such as the admission and public examinations systems, curriculum and teaching methods, and assessment mechanisms (EC 2000) at a time when Hong Kong was in the midst of a thorough review of its curriculum and assessment development. These educational reforms caused teachers to work under great pressure. In Hong Kong, the educational reform resulted in teachers' protest and their grievances were reported in the survey.

**Teachers' Protest in 2006** Teachers became militant after implementing educational reforms mandated by the Government since 1997. In January 2006, thousands of teachers, organized by the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, protested against and demanded a review of educational reforms. They wore yellow ribbons as a symbol of their hopes and demands. "These demands included reducing class sizes, an end to the closure of schools and reduction in number of classes, more permanent teaching staff, and sabbatical leave with full pay for professional development" (Clem and Forestier 2006, EDT1). The rally was addressed by teachers, principals, and academics representing all levels of education including Kindergarten, primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. One teacher expressed her difficulty in implementing assessment reform in a big class. It took her 8–10 hours to mark compositions for a class of 43 students (Clem and Forestier 2006). Teachers complained that they were working long hours at school. They had complaints and negative feelings which needed to be handled properly. This was not an easy task for school leaders.

**Study on Teachers' Stress** A research study was conducted on Hong Kong Teachers' Stress in Schools by Hong Kong Primary Education Research Association and Hong Kong Education Convergence (Chan et al. 2006). The study began in February 2006 and was completed in August 2006. Altogether, two semistructured focus groups and four individual interviews were conducted in March 2006 to solicit teachers' opinions on stress. A questionnaire was designed based on the data collected. A survey was done between May and June 2006, using random sampling. Questionnaires were sent out to 40% of all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Two hundred and forty-two schools returned completed questionnaires from which 2,295 valid questionnaires were obtained. One of the questions asked respondents to indicate "which policies cause teachers' to work under great pressure?" In the primary school sector, 12 policies were listed for respondents to select among. TSA ranked highest (selected by 71.4% of the respondents); SSE ranked fourth (selected by 59.2% of the respondents); ESR ranked fifth (selected by 52.5% of the respondents); and developing teachers' teaching evaluation mechanisms (selected by 43.4% of the respondents) ranked twelfth. In the secondary school sector, eight policies were listed for respondents to select among. ESR ranked highest (selected by 74.4% of the respondents); Senior Secondary Curriculum Reform ranked second (selected by 65.5% of the respondents); New Senior Secondary Education system ranked third (selected by 58.9% of the respondents); SSE ranked fifth (selected by 59.2% of the respondents); TSA ranked seventh (selected by 42.8% of the respondents). The findings revealed that elements of assessment reform and accountability reform such as TSA, SSE, ESR,

etc., all ranked high as sources of stress. The impact of assessment reform was big. School leaders need to balance teachers' stress and students' academic assessment. Emotional leadership has to be employed.

## Professional Development for School Leaders

According to Leithwood et al. (1999b), "without effective educational leadership, little educational change will happen, and still less of it will be sustained over time" (p. viii). Cheng (2000a) also pointed out that "effective and persistent leadership for education reform is a necessary condition for achieving the success of second wave or further education reform in the coming decades" (p. 50).

Since 1991, the implementation of new initiatives such as SMI, SBM, IMC, SSE, QAI, and ESR, has brought about a paradigm shift in the role of leadership. Effectively, high-quality education must be assured for all. The starting point of most reform initiatives was the idea that educational aims of schools should be perceived differently by all stakeholders. The cooperation and collaboration of teachers, parents, and the community are necessary. The traditional view of principalship, namely, to maintain the status quo and follow a hierarchical allocation of tasks and responsibilities, does not work anymore (Huber and Yu 2004). In the following section, the history of the professional development of Hong Kong principals is outlined and examined.

### *Principal Induction Courses*

Much literature argues that principal leadership is an important factor for educational change and school reforms (Bennis and Nanus 1985; Cheng 1997; Fullan 1991; Hallinger and Murphy 1991; Hunt 1999; Senge 1990; Walker 2002; Yu 2002; Yu et al. 2002). In the 1970s, there was hardly any formal training for school leaders before or after they took over principalships in schools. Instead, some large SSBs assigned experienced principals to be the mentors of the newly appointed principals (NAPs). In the 1980s, the ED designed 9- and 10-day induction courses with basic knowledge about school management for newly appointed secondary and primary school principals, respectively (Huber and Yu 2004). These courses were able to provide NAPs with basic survival skills, but they were definitely not sufficient for preparing contemporary school leaders to cope with the host of educational innovations in schools in Hong Kong (Huber and Yu 2004).

In 1997, the overwhelming response from public consultation was that "proper and continuous education of principals and teachers was conducive to professional growth and improvement in the quality of school education" (EC 1997, p. 35). There was a strong demand from the teaching profession for a well planned, systematic, coordinated, and comprehensive training and development strategy to enhance a

quality culture (EC 1997). It was suggested that "principals and senior teachers should receive training in human resources, financial management, and curriculum development" (EC 1997, p. 37). "Due to the strategic importance of the role of principals, consideration should be given to requiring potential principals to pass certain qualification tests before they are promoted" (EC 1997, p. 40).

Three years' later, the EC identified the changing roles of school heads who are the key protagonists in education reform and pointed out that school heads are facing the change in their role "from someone who executes policies to someone who leads and contributes to the reform" (2000, p. 150). Therefore, "school heads and teachers need to: be more proactive and pursue lifelong learning, enhance their professional competence, have a stronger sense of commitment" (2000, p. 150).

## *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Principals*

In 1999, the ED set up a "Task Group on Training and Development of School Heads" which published a consultation paper on a Leadership Training Program for Principals. The Task Group proposed "a new leadership training program to equip and develop school principals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to become competent leaders to lead schools into the new millennium" (ED 2002, p. 1). There was great support for the government to upgrade principals' competence and to promote their spirit of continuous professional development. Having collected positive feedback from the consultation, the ED set up a Working Group on the Professional Development of Principals in June 2001. Tertiary experts and experienced frontline practitioners were invited to develop a continuous professional framework and different requirements for aspiring principals (APs), NAPs, and serving principals (SPs). The Group worked out a proposal for "Continuing Professional Development for School Excellence: Consultation Paper on Continuing Professional Development of Principals," which was published in February 2002 for public consultation. Subsequent to the consultation, the ED set a policy on professional development for principals and started its implementation in the following year.

## *Professional Development of APs, NAPs, and SPs*

There were different requirements to meet different developmental needs of APs, NAPs, and SPs. In the Consultation Paper (ED 2002), it was suggested that APs, NAPs, and SPs all needed to be trained and developed. APs have to attend courses and meet the requirements of a Certification for Principalship which acted as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure APs possess certain leadership requirements in preparing themselves for principalship. From the 2004/2005 school year onwards, APs had to attain a Certificate for Principalship before they could be considered for the appointment of principalship. The Certificate of Principalship consisted of three

parts: (1) needs analysis aimed at enabling APs to understand and reflect on their own strengths and areas for further development and improvement; (2) a designated course of about 50–60 hours covering six core areas of leadership (Appendix 3); and (3) professional development portfolio presentation which was a formative report containing the AP's career highlights with evidence of professional growth, a vision or personal belief statement on the meaning of principalship, etc. The portfolio required APs to have a clear personal vision in mind and to present evidence of their continuing development and learning progress consistent with their vision, as well as their growing preparedness for principalship.

NAPs were required to undergo a designated program throughout the first 2 years of principalship aimed at providing timely support for them to adapt to their new role. The courses contained three parts: (1) Designated program which included a needs assessment for principals, an induction program, a school leadership development program, and an extended program; (2) CPD activities relevant to the personal and school needs of the NAPs; and (3) for information and record, a professional portfolio presentation to the school, sponsoring body, or SMC on an annual basis within the period of their being NAPs.

SPs were required to undertake 50 hours of CPD activities per year, totaling a minimum of 150 hours over a 3-year period. The activities could be in the form of: (1) structured learning, such as attending degree programs, conferences, symposiums, and offshore training programs, etc; (2) action learning such as quality education fund projects, QAI action plans, school-based improvement projects, etc.; and (3) service to education and the community, such as serving as members to various advisory committees, voluntary agencies, community and religious organizations, etc.

If we match the four leadership domains (Appendix 2) with six core areas of leadership (Appendix 3), "strategic direction and policy environment" belongs to strategic domain. The second and third core areas, including "learning, teaching and curriculum" and "principal and teacher growth and development," belong to the domain of "instructional leadership." The fourth and fifth core areas, "staff and resources management" and "quality assurance and accountability," belong to the domain of "organizational leadership." The last core leadership area "external communication and connection to the outside world" matches with the "community leadership" domain. Principals' leadership was considered to be a decisive factor for the success of the implementation of the quality school education and assessment reform in Hong Kong. It was hoped that these leadership domains and core areas of leadership could be demonstrated by the Hong Kong principals (ED 2002).

## *A Framework for Guiding Principals' CPD*

The ED (2002) provided a framework which included three components, namely, belief statements, leadership domains, and core areas of leadership. The following statement of beliefs underpins continuous professional development for principals:

- Principals are responsible for their own professional growth;
- Principals have a mandate to be professionally up-to-date and to provide a role model for their own teaching staff in terms of CPD;
- CPD enhances principals' professionalism and leadership for the benefit of students and student learning;
- CPD builds on principals' individual strengths and is, by its nature, developmental;
- CPD opportunities need to be varied to reflect the needs of aspiring, newly appointed, and serving principals, and open to individual selection; and
- CPD embraces collegial input and output and support from the ED as well as other professional sectors. (p. 8)

## Insights for the Development of School Leaders

Since 1991, the Hong Kong Government has affirmed its strong commitment to assure quality school education and to improve students' outcomes. It has worked on assessment reform by introducing BCA, TSA, and SVAIS to monitor students' learning outcomes. The government has set up an accountability system to guarantee school management quality by implementing SBM and inviting parents, teachers, alumni, and independent managers to work with the SSBs. In addition, a SDA framework based on SSE, QAI, and ESR was established to help schools create a self-improvement culture. School leaders play a significant role in the accountability system by monitoring change and providing leadership in raising the quality of teaching and learning. The government knows that effective and professional principals are needed to implement all these new initiatives. Therefore, more professional development for principals has been provided. A system of developing APs, NAPs, and SPs has been set up and principals at different stages have been trained. Four types of leadership are required of the principals, namely, strategic leadership, instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and community leadership. It is reasonable to say that these four types of leadership are necessary and useful for principals to apply in their workplace. In addition to these four leadership domains, what other type of leadership should be learned to equip principals for the twenty-first century? At least three types of leadership are useful: transformational leadership, integrated form of leadership (with shared instructional leadership and transformational leadership qualities), and emotionally responsible leadership.

### *Transformational Leadership*

Ample literature has argued that transformational leadership is a more effective type of leadership in the implementation of SBM in comparison with other types (Chui et al. 1996; Cheng 2003; Leithwood 1994; Parker and Leithwood 2000; Tam 2010) because this kind of leadership is able to build the capacity of both leader and led, increase teachers' commitment to change, and initiate a shared vision with various

stakeholders. Therefore, school leaders should learn these kinds of transformative practices of leadership.

**Teachers' Commitment To Change** Most school reforms assume a significant capacity for development on the part of individuals and organizations (Ball and Rundquist 1993; Putnam and Borko 1997). Also, these reforms depend highly on the degree of teachers' commitment to solving the often complex problems associated with the reforms. That is to say, whether a reform improves the quality of education depends on the work of teachers. Teachers' commitment is "at the centre of school organizational reform" (Kushman 1992, p. 6). "So those providing leadership for reform in schools must be capable of influencing teachers' commitment to change" (Yu et al. 2002, p. 369). Leithwood and his colleagues have found significant effects of transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change (Leithwood et al. 1993, 1994a; Leithwood et al. 1994b; Yu et al. 2002).

**Building a Shared Vision** In transformational leadership, developing a widely shared vision is the most powerful leadership dimension because "when visions are value laden, they will lead to unconditional commitment" (Leithwood et al. 1994a, p. 54). Kotter and Cohen (2002) argued that most leaders did not handle change well and made predicable mistakes and errors. Kotter (1996) identified eight errors in leading change in organizations. He emphasized that making any of the eight errors can have serious consequences affecting transformation efforts. Among these errors, three are related to vision, i.e., underestimating the power of vision; undercommunicating the vision; and permitting obstacles to block the vision. Leaders should be aware of the importance of building a shared vision and communicating well with staff about the vision. Fullan (2001) pointed out that the leadership style that can mobilize people toward a vision "had a significant positive impact on climate and performance" (p. 35). Bennis and Nanus described a vision as "a mental image of possible and desirable future state of organization" which "may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement" (1985, p. 89). Vision building is essential to effective transformational leadership and distinguishes leaders from managers.

For enhancing the quality of education in school and assessment reform, a transformational leader seems to be a decisive role in increasing teachers' commitment to raising the quality of education and identifying professional standards for their work. Transformational forms of leadership aim at making events meaningful, enhancing capacity development, and higher levels of personal commitment to organizations' goals on the part of leaders (Yukl 1999). Increased capacities and commitment are supposed to create extra effort and greater productivity (Burns 1978; Bass 1995). The most recent model of transformational leadership has been developed from Leithwood's research in schools (Leithwood 1994; Leithwood et al. 1999b). This model describes three broad clusters of leadership practices, each of which includes several more specific dimensions (Yu et al. 2002, p. 373):

- *Setting directions* includes building a shared vision, developing consensus about goals and priorities, and creating high-performance expectation.

- *Developing people* includes providing individualized support, offering intellectual stimulation (i.e., professional development), and modeling important values and practices.
- *Redesigning the organization* includes building a collaborative culture, creating and maintaining shared decision-making structures and processes, and building relationships with parents and the wider community.

To assure quality school education and implement assessment reform in Hong Kong, school leaders need to first build a shared vision for their school to provide quality of education for students. Second, school leaders should set high expectations for teachers and students so that they are able to pursue a high level of standards in schools. In order to stimulate teachers' intellectual standards, resources should be provided to teachers for their professional development. To build a collaborative culture, especially in team learning and organizational learning, it is crucial for teaching staff to foster the collective capacity identified in research about professional learning communities (Louis and Kruse 1995) and organizational learning (Leithwood and Louis 1999) in schools. Many of these are transformational leadership practices. Such leadership practices create positive effects on teachers' commitment to change (Leithwood et al. 1993 1994a; Leithwood et al. 1994b; Yu 2000; Yu et al. 2002; Yu 2010).

## *Integrated Form of Leadership*

Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) examined the relative impact of different types of leadership on students' academic and nonacademic outcomes. They found that the effect of instructional leadership on student outcomes was three to four times greater that of transformational leadership. According to Leithwood et al. (1999b), instructional leadership "typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students" (p. 8). As mentioned above in the leadership domains, instructional leadership is also a significant form of leadership that principals need to exercise in schools. According to the ED, principals should "coordinate school programme to achieve coherence across curriculum, learning, and teaching" and "promote and enable continuous professional and career development for teachers and themselves" (2002, p. 9). However, Hallinger (2005) pointed out that principals' instructional leadership was not enough. In his review of the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes, he contended, "the size of the effects that principals indirectly contribute toward student learning, though statistically significant, is also quite small" (p. 229). Robinson et al. (2008) concluded that "an integrated form of leadership, incorporating a strong capacity for developing shared instructional leadership, combined with qualities associated with transformational leadership, was the best predictor of the intellectual quality of student work in both math and social studies" (p. 658). According to Leithwood, instructional leadership and transformational leadership supplement

one another. He argued, "whereas instructional leadership aims to narrow the focus of leaders to the core technology of their organizations, transformational leadership asks them to adopt a much broader, more systemic, view of their work" (Leithwood 2007, p. 191). Therefore, the integrated form of leadership is worth studying in future.

### *Emotionally Responsible Leadership*

In the recent two decades, Hong Kong teachers have been working under great pressure. The implementation of assessment reform and the accountability system has increased teachers' stress and anxiety. In the assessment reform, the instruments for TSA and SVAIS have been used to monitor students' outcomes and school effectiveness. All students are expected to achieve to a certain standard, regardless of their starting points, financial resources, or personal motivation. Also, if the results of external examinations such as the HKCEE and the HKALE, are not favorable, teachers are held responsible for students' achievements. In the accountability system, the replacement of the SMC with the IMC has brought in parent, alumni, and independent managers. Some of them have a very strong influence on teachers' work. In addition, in the SSE and ESR exercises, QAI team members make various demands on teachers.

Moreover, Hong Kong has undergone the tragedy of cutting primary schools because of the very low birth rate after the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in 2003. Since then, more than 100 primary schools have been forced to close, thousands of teachers have been laid off or forced to retire earlier. Those were some of the reasons why teachers became militant and, on 22 January 2006, protested against educational reforms and asked the then Permanent Secretary of Education to step down. The research study mentioned earlier on Hong Kong Teachers' Stress in Schools carried out by the Hong Kong Primary Education Research Association and Hong Kong Education Convergence (Chan et al. 2006) revealed that teachers' negativity and negative emotions in schools had been pushed to a very high level. The impact of the very low birth rate is now extending to and affecting Hong Kong secondary school teachers in the subsequent years.

Topchik (2001) pointed out that when negativity becomes a routine posture for staff and the entire organization, "it can begin to eat away at performance" (p. 3). Goleman et al. (2002) argued that the fundamental task of leaders is "to prime good feeling in those they lead" (p. ix). They emphasized that "the primary job of leadership is emotional" (p. ix). Leithwood and Beatty (2008) pointed out that school leaders should embrace the concept of emotionally responsible leadership. They contend that nowadays, principals should lead with teacher emotions in mind. They need to better understand teacher emotions as "a potent and largely untapped resource" (p. 2). Some of their arguments are summarized as follows:

- Teachers' practices and their students' learning are influenced by their professionally relevant thoughts and feelings.

- Teaching is an emotionally intense form of work and emotions have influence on what teachers do.
- The emotions such as morale, stress, and commitment are influenced by the conditions of such work, and conditions are influenced by leadership.
- Leaders have exercised their leadership in ways that often provoke negative rather than nurture positive emotions.

Goleman (2001a) suggested that most effective leaders have a high degree of emotional intelligence. The components of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill (p. 6). Goleman et al. (2002) highlighted the leadership competencies derived from emotional intelligence: *self-awareness* including emotional self-awareness, accurate self-awareness, and self-confidence; *self-management* including self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, and optimism; *social awareness* including empathy, organizational awareness, and service; *relationship management* including inspiration, influence, developing others, change catalyst, conflict management, and teamwork and collaboration. These leadership competencies help to settle competition, conflicts, and disagreements in the IMC. Furthermore, Leithwood and Beatty (2008) have conducted research on the emotions of leadership. They found that the power to nurture positive teacher emotions is an extended set of transformational leadership practices such as setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

## Development of School Managers, Middle Leaders, and Vice-Principals

The implementation of SBM has been a mandatory practice in all public-sector schools in Hong Kong since 2000. As a result, the ED has devolved many responsibilities and involved stakeholders such as teachers, parents, alumni, and independent members, in the SMC and the IMC.

### *Development of School Managers*

Since 2000, the ED has been providing training sessions for serving school managers of subsidized and government primary and secondary schools, such as SSBs, teachers, parents, alumni, and independent managers. It has conducted a series of briefing and experience-sharing sessions focusing on the roles and responsibilities of school managers, and the introduction of current educational school reforms in Hong Kong.

### *Professional Development for Middle Leaders and Vice-Principals*

Much of the recent literature revealed that middle leaders play an important role in school reforms (Blandford 1997; Bennett 1995; Fleming and Aamesbury 2001; Yu 2005). Recently, some large SSBs in Hong Kong have invited tertiary institutes to design and provide leadership development projects for their school middle leaders and vice-principals. A model for a school–institute collaborative program has been suggested. It includes five stages (Yu 2005):

- *Preparation stage* includes conducting two qualitative studies: a needs assessment for middle leaders and vice-principals and a study asking for principals' expectations of middle leaders and vice-principals.
- *Collaborative learning stage* includes the introduction of SSB' vision and mission statements, latest concepts and models of management and leadership, teacher collaboration and team building, and issues in relation to recent educational change and school reforms.
- *Small group shadowing stage* includes the provision of opportunities to observe exemplary schools' application via small group school visits.
- *Try-out stage* with a problem-based learning approach which includes undertaking an action-learning plan for improving a self-identified problem by individual participants.
- *Debriefing stage* includes the report of small group school visits and the results of action-learning try outs, and the evaluation of whole projects.

## Conclusion

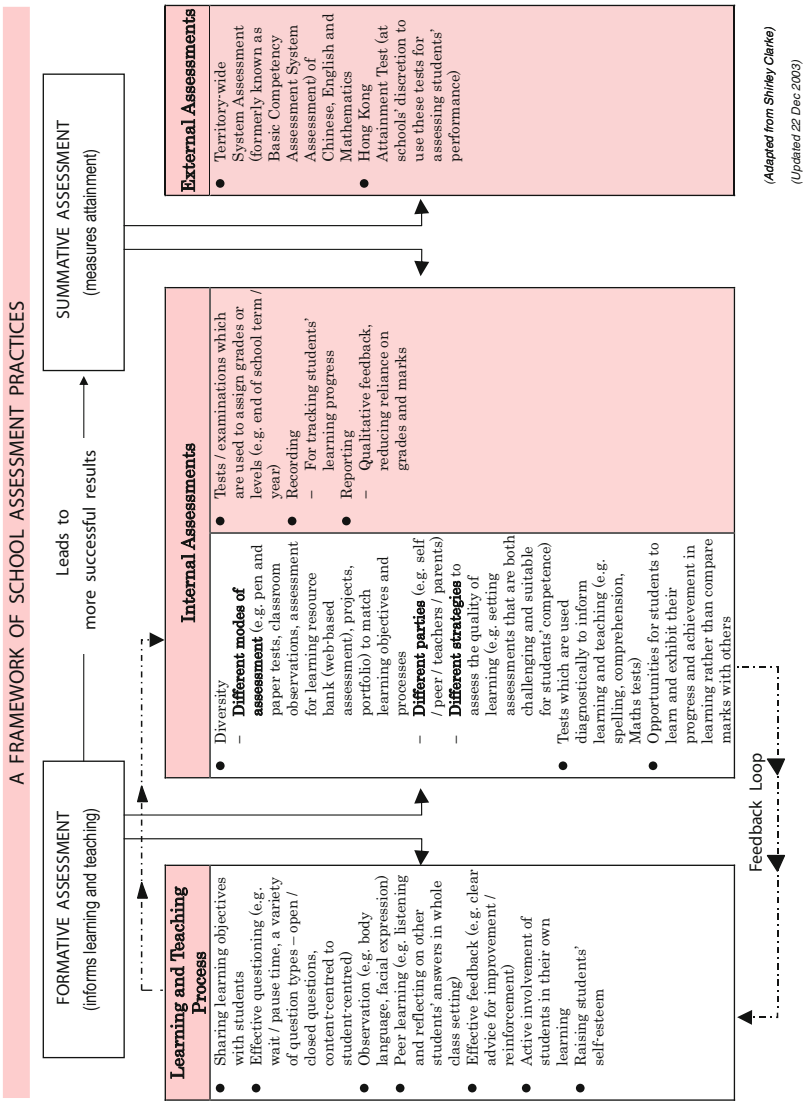
In the twenty-first century, the environment around schools is changing rapidly. Many educational reforms are being implemented in schools. In-school conditions become complicated. The future workplace is the one that "provides an intensely personalized, social experience to attract, develop, and engage employees across all generations and geographies" (Meister and Willyerd 2010, p. 3).

> Leaders who get the best results don't rely on just one leadership style, they use most of the styles in any given work. . . . practice leaders can switch among leadership styles to produce powerful results, thus turning the art of leadership into a science. (Goleman 2001b, p. 54).

In the case of assessment reform and the accountability system in Hong Kong, principals cannot use only one leadership style to lead the teaching team or to improve the quality of education in schools; a transformative and integrated leadership should be adopted. More attention should be given to instructional, transformational, and emotionally responsible leadership. Also, Hong Kong teachers are working under great pressure because of the implementation of different kinds of school reforms and educational change. It is hoped that change in classroom practices can take place and students' learning outcomes can be improved. Success will surely depend upon the extent to which school leaders such as principals, vice-principals, and middle leaders

are able to instruct, transform, and inspire their teaching team positively and constructively. Finally, school managers' encouragement and support are also conducive to building up a positive and professional spirit within the teaching profession.

## Appendix 1



## Appendix 2

### *Leadership Domains*

The following leadership domains describe broad and opportune forms of leadership that schools in the twenty-first century require principals to demonstrate:

- Strategic leadership that focuses on developing vision, commitment, inspiration, appropriate values and a firm belief that all students can learn, as well as leading and managing change;
- Instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening learning, teaching, and curriculum, ongoing professional development, accountability and data-driven decision making;
- Organizational leadership that focuses on personal relationship, culture building, dispersed leadership, teamwork, communication, planning and management of resources; and
- Community leadership that focuses on an awareness of the role of the school in the broader society, close relationships with parents and other community members, and an ability to build and utilize community resources in developing students into global citizens.

## Appendix 3

### *Core Areas of Leadership*

The values, knowledge, skills, and attributes needed for the school principals in Hong Kong are as follows (ED 2002, p. 9):

1. Strategic direction and policy environment, where principals plan for the future and ensure school community involvement in the process. They strategically integrate relevant aspects of policy from the social, educational, and political environments into their planning for school and student improvement;
2. Learning, teaching, and curriculum, where principals coordinate school programs to achieve coherence across the curriculum, learning, and teaching. Together with their school communities, they ensure that all students experience a broad, relevant, and balanced curriculum through formal, informal, and nonformal activities;
3. Teacher professional growth and development, where principals promote and enable continuing professional and career development for teachers and themselves. They foster the sharing of up-to-date professional knowledge and informed practice aimed at accommodating change as well as the diverse needs of students within a general commitment to student and school improvement;

4. Staff and resources management, where principals create a collaborative team-management ethos focused on empowering human resources as well as deploying physical and financial resources effectively and efficiently toward the goals of school improvement and student achievement;
5. Quality assurance and accountability, where principals in concert with their school communities build quality assurance and accountability systems that provide feedback to students, teachers, and others with a view to securing school improvement. These systems also meet the information requirements of external agencies regarding school performance; and
6. External communication and connection to the outside world, where principals build connections between the school and the local, national, and global communities. By doing so, they enable their school communities to contribute to the wider society and its development.

## References

Advisory Committee on School-based Management. (2000). *Transforming schools into dynamic and accountable professional learning communities: School-based management consultation document*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Ball, D. L., & Rundquist, S. S. (1993). Collaboration as a context for joining teacher learning with learning about teaching. In D. Cohen, M. W. Mclauglin, & J. Talbert (Eds.), *Teaching for understanding: Challenges for policy and practice* (pp. 13-42). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bass, B. M. (1995). *Leadership and performance beyond expectation*. New York: Free Press.

Bennett, N. (1995). *Managing professional teachers: Middle management in primary and secondary schools*. London: Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper & Row.

Black, P. & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(2), 139–47.

Blandford, S. (1997). *Middle management in school*. London: Pitman Publishing.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.

Chan, R. M. C., Lee, S. H., Yu, H., Wu, S. W., Tsui, K. T., Hung, W. S., Ho, H. K., Hui, W. T., Tso, K. L., Cheung, K. C., Choi, K. K., Wu, J. K. F., Yeung, S. W., Lau, P. S. Y., Chan, M. K. W. (2006). *A research study on Hong Kong teachers' stress*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Primary Education Research Association and Education Convergence.

Cheng, Y. C. (1997). School re-engineering in the new century: An organizational perspective. *Educational Research Journal, 12*(1), 73–95.

Cheng, Y. C. (2000a). Educational change and development in Hong Kong: Effectiveness, quality and relevance. In T. Townsend & Y. C. Cheng (Eds.), *Educational change and development in the Asia-Pacific region: Challenges for the future* (pp. 17–56). Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Cheng, Y. C. (2000b). The characteristics of Hong Kong school principals' leadership: The influence of societal culture. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 20*(2), 68–86.

Cheng, Y. C. (2003). The theory and practice of school-based management for school effectiveness: An international perspective. In A. Volansky & I. A. Friedman (Eds.), *School-based management: An international perspective* (pp. 233–278). Israel: Ministry of Education.

Cheng, Y. C., & Chan, M. T. (2000). Implementation of school-based management: A multi-perspective analysis of the case of Hong Kong. *International Review of Education, 46*(3/4), 205–232.

Chui, H. S., Sharpe, F. G., & McCormick, J. (1996). Vision and leadership of principals in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Administration, 34*(3), 30–48.

Clem, W., & Forestier, K. (2006). Thousands join call for rethink on education. *South China Morning Post,* p. EDT1.

Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department. (1991). *The school management initiative: Setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Bureau. (2003). Materials retrieved from Hong Kong EDB website: http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=2410&langno=1.

Education Commission (EC). (1984). *Report number 1*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (1986). *Report number 2*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (1988). *Report number 3*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (1990). *Report number 4*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (1992). *Report number 5*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (1995). *Report number 6*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (1997). *Report number 7: Quality school education*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.

Education Commission (EC). (2000). *Education blueprint for the 21st century: Learning for life, learning through life: Reform proposals for the education system in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: The Printing Department.

Education Department. (2002). *Continuing professional development for school excellence: Consultation paper on continuous professional development of principals*. Hong Kong: Government Logistics Department.

Fleming, P., & Amesbury, M. (2001). *The art of middle management in primary schools*. London: Fulton.

Flinspach, S. L., Ryan, S. P. (1994). Diversity of outcomes: Local schools under school reform. *Education and Urban Society, 26*(3), 292–305.

Fullan, M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change: Being effective in complex times*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gamage, D. T., & Pang, N. S. K. (2003). *Leadership and management in education: Development essential skills and competencies*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

Goleman, D. (2001a). *What makes a leader? Harvard Business Review on what makes a leader* (pp. 1–25). Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.

Goleman, D. (2001b). *Leadership that gets results. Harvard Business Review on what makes a leader* (pp. 53–85). Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(3), 221–239.

Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1991, March). Developing leaders for tomorrow's schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72,* 514–520.

Huber, S. G., & Yu, H. (2004). Hong Kong: A task-oriented short course. In S. G. Huber (Ed.), *Preparing school leaders for the 21st century: An international comparison of development programs in 15 countries* (pp. 227–235). London: Tayor & Francis.

Hui, P., & Chan, M. (2004, July 9). Education chief under attack as school bill is passed. *South China Morning Post,* p. C1.

Hunt, J. G. (1999). *Transformational/charismatic leadership's transformation of the field: An historical essay. Leadership Quarterly, 10*(2), 129–144.

Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Kotter, J. P., & Cohen, D. S. (2002). *The heart of change: Real-life stories of how people change their organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Kushman, J. W. (1992). The organizational dynamics of teacher workplace commitment: A study of urban elementary and middle school. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 28*(1), 5–42.
Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. (2002). *Education (amendment) bill 2002*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.
Legislative Council, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. (2004). *Education (amendment) ordinance 2004*. Hong Kong: The Government Printer.
Leithwood, K. (1994). Leadership for school restructuring. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 30,* 498–518.
Leithwood, K. (2007). Transformation school leadership in a transactional policy world. In Jossey-Bass Publishers (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 183–196). San Francisco: Wiley.
Leithwood, K., & Beatty, B. (2008). *Leading with teacher emotions in mind.* Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
Leithwood, K., & Louis, K. (Eds.). (1999). *Organizational learning in schools*. The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.
Leithwood, K., & Menzies, T. (1998). *A review of research concerning the implementation of site-based management*. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9*(3), 233–285.
Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Fernandez, A. (1993). *Secondary school teachers' commitment to change: The contributions of transformational leadership*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA.
Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Fernandez, A. (1994a). Transformational leadership and teachers' commitment to change. In J. Murphy & K. S. Louis (Eds.), *Reshaping the principalship: Insights from transformational reform efforts* (pp. 77–98). Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
Leithwood, K., Menzies, T., & Jantzi, D. (1994b). Earning teachers' commitment to curriculum reform. *Peabody Journal of Education, 69*(4), 38–61.
Leithwood, K., Edge, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999a). *Educational accountability: The state of the art.* Gütersloh: Bertesmann Foundation.
Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999b). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Louis, K., & Kruse, S. (1995). *Professional learning communities*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
Meister, J. C., & Willyerd, K. (2010). *The 2020 workplace: How innovative companies attract, develop, and keep tomorrow's employees today.* New York: Harper-Collins.
Mok, M. M. C. (2010). The basic competency assessment in Hong Kong. *Curriculum and Instruction Quarterly, 13*(1), 67–94.
Parker, K., & Leithwood, K. (2000). School councils' influence on school and classroom practice. *Peabody Journal of Education, 75*(4), 37–65.
Putnam, R. T., & Borko, H. (1997). Teacher learning: Implications of new views of cognition. In B. J. Biddle, T. L. Good, & L. F. Goodson (Eds.), *International handbook of teachers and teaching* (Vol. 2, pp. 1,223–1,296). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
Quality Assurance Division, Education Department. (2002). *Performance indicators for Hong Kong schools 2002 evidence of performance.* Hong Kong: Government Logistics Department.
Quality Assurance Division, Education Bureau. (2008). *The impact study on the effectiveness of external school review in enhancing school improvement through school self-evaluation in Hong Kong: Final Report.* Hong Kong: Government Logistics Department.
Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(5), 635–674.
Sackney, L. E., & Dibski, D. J. (1994). School-based management: A critical perspective. *Educational Management and Administration, 22*(2), 104–112.
Senge, P. (1990, Fall). The leader's new work: Building learning organization. *Sloan Management Review, 32,* 7–23.
Tam, W. M. (2010). School-based mechanism for school development: The entropy consideration. *The Journal of Quality School Education, 6,* 41–57.

Tang, T. F. Y. (2008). School development and accountability in Hong Kong: A quality assurance framework. *The Journal of Quality School Education, 5,* 39–55.

Topchik, G. S. (2001). *Managing workplace negativity.* New York: American Management Association.

Townsend, T., & Cheng, Y. C (Eds.) (2000). *Educational change and development in the Asia-Pacific region: Challenges for the future*. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Walberg, H., Haertel, G. D., & Gerlach-Downie, S. (1994). *Assessment reform: Challenges and opportunities.* Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Walker, A. (2002). School based management reform: Leadership challenges. *Journal of Basic Education, 11*(2), 119–136.

Wong, K. C. (1999). The development of effective secondary schools in Hong Kong: A case report. In T. Townsend, P. Clarke, & M. Ainscow (Eds.), *Third millennium schools: A world of difference in effectiveness and improvement.* Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Yu, H. (2000). *Transformational leadership and Hong Kong teachers' commitment to change*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Yu, H. (2002). A shift in Hong Kong principals' leadership conceptions. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 3*(1), 37–47.

Yu, H. (2005). Implementation of school-based management in Hong Kong: Recent development and future challenges. *Journal of Educational Change, 6,* 253–275.

Yu, H. (2010). *Transformational leadership, teacher commitment to change and in-school conditions in Hong Kong*. Paper presented at Hong Kong Principals' Conference 2010, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong, March 29.

Yu, H., Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2002). The effects of transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(4), 368–389.

Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluation of conceptual weakness in transformational and charismatic leadership theories. *Leadership Quarterly, 10*(2), 285–305.

# Chapter 10
# Leadership in Qatar's Educational Reform

**Sonia Ben Jaafar**

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has the highest population of youth around the world. Ironically, it is also a region that suffers from a marked insufficient growth of an educated and skilled population. Several international organizations have concluded that *indigenously driven reforms that engage the support of the global community* are the only solutions that can be sustainably successful (Lord 2008; The World Bank 2008; United Nations Development Program 2003). Qatar is a country in the MENA region which is engaged in developing and implementing such an educational reform. It is a unique case that holds a lot of promise and faces a number of challenges.

Since the late 1990s, the leadership of Qatar has had an unwavering political will to reform its own education system to sustainably improve human development in the country. The emphasis on human development answers the call from Qatari employers for national human capital (Stasz et al. 2007). The K-12 portion of this reform was packaged as *Education for a New Era*. The graduates from this new schooling system are expected to continue their education and train to better contribute to a national workforce (GSDP 2008).

The degree of transformation for *Education for a New Era* was best described in 2003 by Darwish Emadi who left his post as Dean of Qatar University to supervise the public school reforms in Qatar (Glasser 2003):

> The reform in this country is something you won't see anywhere else in the Middle East. It's a total earthquake.

Before I present a description of this extensive reform and its embedded assessment and accountability system, it is critical to understand the context of Qatar and the GCC. It is necessary to understand the context in which *Education for a New Era* was introduced, implemented, and in which it is evolving to fully appreciate the depth of the issues that, on the surface, may appear similar to those in the West. This chapter is presented in four parts. First, the education reform is introduced within the

S. B. Jaafar (✉)
EduEval Educational Services, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
e-mail: s.benjaafar@edueval.com

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_10, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

context of Qatar. Second, an overview of the assessment and accountability system are presented. Third, the impact of the reform on school leadership is discussed. Finally, insights for the development of leadership are offered.

## Qatar: Young and Wealthy in the Arabian Gulf

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is made up of six[1] states in the Arabian Gulf. Since the substantial increase in international oil prices during the 1970s, the region has been enjoying a fast growing economy. The boom in revenues from oil and natural gas was recently complimented with building investments creating one of the wealthiest developing regions in the world. In 2009, the GDP of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE were US$ 369,179, US$ 71,041, and US$ 261,348 million respectively (The World Bank 2009). According to the International Monetary Fund, the gross domestic product growth in Qatar and the UAE had overperformed in the GCC area (Al-Hassan 2009).

The state of Qatar is one of the smallest of the developing countries in the Arabian Gulf with area approximately 11,500 $km^2$ housing a total population of 1.5 million people. The foreign workers who hold a temporary residence status represent up to 85% of the total population and 90% of the total labor force (U.S. Department of State 2010). It is noteworthy that these foreign residents will never be granted citizenship as a rule. The wealth of the nation is reserved for the Qataris who are mostly descended from migratory tribes who landed in Qatar in the eighteenth century.

Qatar has the third largest gas reserves in the world and is the world's largest exporter of clean fuel[2] and production. It boasts the highest GDP per capita income at US$ 90,149 surpassing Luxembourg and leading the group of top 10 wealthiest countries in the world—a group in which none of the other GCC countries enjoy a position (Global Finance 2010; International Monetary Fund 2010). It is a monarchy that achieved independence from England in 1972, but had only started to develop the country's physical, social, and economic infrastructures after a bloodless coup in 1995. This means that there has been approximately 15 years of focused development of the nation.

The current government is committed to investing in the human development of its national population through education. Specifically, efforts were invested to address the quality issues in primary and secondary education systems that were graduating unprepared youth to enter the labor market or competitive university programs (General Secretariat for Development Planning 2008; Gonzalez et al. 2008). As Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned stated at the World Innovation Summit for Education (2010):

---

[1] Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

[2] Clean fuel is any natural fuel used as a substitute for fossil fuels. They produce less pollution than the alternatives.

> Through education, through the pursuit and attainment of knowledge, all things become possible.

In 2002, under the leadership of the ruler of Qatar—HH Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani—and the direction of HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, the Qatari government started to implement its K-12 education reform, *Education for a New Era*. This extensive public education reform included developing a new governance structure with new bodies and institutes to coordinate the K-12 policies, new school organizational change, new schools, new curriculum standards, a new national assessment system, and participation in international assessments. The independent school system is similar to a tightly monitored charter school system with independent operators.

In the fall of 2004, the Supreme Education Council (SEC) opened the doors to the first cohort of independent schools teaching the new curriculum (Brewer et al. 2007). Every fall from 2004 to 2010, the state of Qatar welcomed a new cohort of independent schools to replace the cohort of Government schools that were closed. In September 2010, Qatar achieved its target of converting all Government schools to independent schools and merging the governing institutions: the Ministry of Education and the SEC. There are now 165 independent schools in Qatar hosting approximately 79,000 students (SEC 2010n, o; The Peninsula 2010a).

## Fostering a Culture of Achievement: The Evaluation Institute

Embedded within *Education for a New Era* was the introduction of large-scale national and international assessments and school evaluations tied to accountability policies. The Evaluation Institute, an internal segment of the SEC, was charged with collecting valid and reliable data that would inform policymakers' decision. Over the last few years, the Evaluation Institute has grown to house 5 offices that coexist to meet two key objectives. The two key objectives are:

I. To inform schools, teachers and students about their performance for improvement purposes.
II. To provide stakeholders information on the success of schools to allow for informed parental school choice.

The remainder of this section describes the 5 offices and the role each play in contributing to these 2 key objectives.

1. **The Student Assessment Office** is responsible for national and international assessments. The national large-scale assessments consist of the Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment (QCEA). It is noteworthy that the QCEA is the first national standards-based assessment in the region (Gonzalez et al. 2009). The QCEA is composed of a series of assessments that measure student learning in English, Arabic, Mathematics, and Science based on the Curriculum Standards of Qatar. The baseline for achievement in the Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment (QCEA) was established in 2004 and the annual results provide a means

to monitor progress at the student, school, and national levels. Each April/May, the office administers standardized assessments to all students in all independent schools in Qatar in each of Grades 4–11 (both inclusive). The raw results are scale scores that are converted to performance levels attached to 3 categories that are reported: "Below Standards," "Meets Standards," or "Approaches Standards." The Student Individual Reports present the results using these categories of performance to provide students, parents, and teachers information to monitor annual progress (SEC 2007b).

Qatar participates in three international assessments with the explicit purpose for "Qatar's education system to be benchmarked and compared with education systems in countries around the world" (SEC 2010a). Qatar participated in The Program For International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2006 and 2011. Qatar participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2007 and 2011. Finally, Qatar participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006 and 2009 (SEC 2010k).

2. **The Qatar Senior Schooling Certificate Office** is responsible for the official national certificate issued upon completion of Grade 12 studies at independent schools in Qatar. The Qatar Senior School Certificate (QSSC) is made up of an internal and an external component.

   The internal component of the QSSC is established through teacher developed assessments at the school level. It is worth 30% of the total score for the QSSC. The external component of the QSSC is established through external tests prepared by the Evaluation Institute. It is worth 70% of the total score for the QSSC. Students must achieve a minimum pass level in Islamic Studies, Social Sciences, Arabic Language, English as a Second Language, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, and Physics to obtain their graduation certificate—or—high school diploma.[3]

   The QSSC was fully implemented by the SEC by the 2009/2010 scholastic year. The purpose was to increase objectivity and reliability in the high school graduation exit process.

   The approach is believed to encourage students in Qatar to take the education system seriously and exert greater effort when learning. Students can now fail. Students who fail fewer than five exams are eligible to take supplementary exams, students who fail over four exams may repeat the course, and students may be expelled due to repeated failures (SEC 2010c, m; The Peninsula 2010c, d). This increase in student-level consequences has resulted in strong reactions from some parents and students alike who did not fully appreciate the potential of the newly implemented consequence until they did not receive their Qatar Senior School Certificate.
3. **The School Evaluation Office** designs, implements, and oversees the evaluation of all schools in Qatar. The explicit purpose is to hold schools accountable for providing quality education and to support school improvement. This office collects

[3] Mathematics and Science tests are in English with Arabic translations. Students may respond in the language of choice.

data from all stakeholders in the system to report on the performance of schools individually and collectively. School Report Cards (SRCs) on all the Independent, private Arabic, and international schools in Qatar are published and released to parents. The information in the reports is comprehensive. They include information on school academic achievement, teaching methods, parental involvement, and facilities. Parents are expected to use these SRCs to make informed school choices given their individual child's needs and the results of the school.

In addition to the annual SRCs, independent schools also receive a Triennial School Report. The Triennial School Reports are part of an overall evaluation framework for *Education for a New Era*. These reviews are comprehensive and tailored to meet the informational needs of individual schools. Multiple data sources are examined (e.g., school records, parent interviews, classroom observations, and student assessment data from QCEA and school results) to report on predetermined specific areas of schools. The framework includes examining the school leadership, standards, achievement, learning environment, and educator relationships.

4. **The Data Collection and Management Office** plans, designs and conducts all the data collection related to the education reform effort. In addition to conducting the Qatar Comprehensive Educational Assessment and Qatar Senior School Certificate, this office administers questionnaire of students (grades 3–12), parents, teachers and school social workers. The first enumeration of all students, teachers, principals and time schedules in all Arabic schools in Qatar was conducted in 2003/2004. Survey data was collected from 300 schools housing 90,000 students and 7,000 teachers.[4] All the data is collected and centrally managed in the Qatar National Education Database System (QNEDS). The public interface is managed through an educational portal so as to provide easy access to relevant data for stakeholders as determined by the system owner. The differential access to information is or will be granted to SEC staff, principals, teachers, students, parents, and public depending on their role. For example, when the feature is completely implemented, principals will have access to school data, whereas teachers will have access to classroom data only (SEC 2010i).
5. **The Qatar Office for Registration, Licensing, and Accreditation** is managed in collaboration with the Qatar National Education Database System via the portal. The Qatar Office for Registration, Licensing, and Accreditation (QORLA) issues provisional and full licenses to independent school teachers and school leaders based on the National Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders in Qatar (QORLA 2010). In August 2006, the National Professional Standards were established creating a benchmark for both teaching and school leadership in Qatar. The portal provides an E-Portfolio service to support the QORLA process and the SEC has offered training to teachers and school leaders to support the appropriate use of the QORLA system (SEC 2010d).

   In 2008, QORLA initiated registration for school leaders and teachers in independent schools. The SEC has announced it will officially launch its electronic

[4] Approximate numbers are reported publically.

site for the professional licensing of teachers, principals and school operators in independent schools in November 2010 (SEC 2010j). QORLA anticipates that registered school leaders and teachers will be licensed within 3 years. The 3 year expectation is accompanied by flexibility for teachers who will need additional time to showcase their abilities given different circumstances (SEC 2008). In case of those who do receive a permanent license, they will have to upgrade their certification every 3 years (SEC 2010j).

## Nationalizing the System: Capacity and Population Challenges

The current system encompassing five offices in the Evaluation Institute was introduced over time during the implementation of *Education for a New Era*. It is a comprehensive system that utilizes classroom, national, and international assessment data accompanied by other school data to offer relevant and timely information to all the stakeholders in the system. There are implicit and explicit statements of expectations for the central office staff, principals, teachers, parents, and students to use the information to make better decisions. Within the system, the expectation has been directly linked to professionalism through formal certification processes. All of these components indicate that Qatar's performance-based accountability model relies heavily on professional accountability, which is founded on the premise of high educator capacity (Ben Jaafar 2011).

By 2007/2008, the issues regarding sustainable capacity in the system were surfacing. The predicament is a result of a combination of local realities regarding professional capacity, local human capital, national demographics, and sustainability goals. The situation has two tightly coupled embedded challenges rooting in professional capacity for reform sustainability. There is a minority of nationals who are working toward achieving the National Professional Standards, and there is a majority of foreign workers who, likewise, do not already possess the requisite linguistic and pedagogical knowledge and skills demanded by the high standards of *Education for a New Era*.

The situation is reflective of the national demographics where—as stated above—the foreign workforce represents up to 85% of the total population and 90% of the total labor force (U.S. Department of State 2010). Notwithstanding the situational challenge, the government is committed to ensure the national education system is staffed by nationals (Qatarization) for a truly sustainable system. The introduction of the Qatar Office for Registration, Licensing, and Accreditation is a step towards addressing the internal capacity issues of the country for all professional educators—nationals and non-nationals.

In 2006/2007, there were over 2,600 teachers responding to all the demands of *Education for a New Era* to educate children in Qatar. At that time, only 35–38% of teachers were Qatari (SEC 2007a; The Planning Council 2007). Over 60% of the teachers were foreigners from surrounding countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, and other Gulf Arab states (The Planning Council

2007). It is important to note that the diversity of teaching staff is accompanied with a diversity of teaching credentials and capacity. Although most of the teachers do hold a Bachelor's Degree, only a small percentage holds post-bachelor teaching certificate. Moreover, the English language skills of the teachers were not adequate to satisfy the English language requirements of teaching the new curriculum in Mathematics, Science, and English.

In 2003, a teacher training program was introduced by the SEC and then followed up by Qatar University in partnership with Texas A&M. The professional development program targeted teaching strategies, unit and lesson planning, assessment, and integration of technology in classroom teaching. All of the pedagogical topics were in addition to subject-matter knowledge and English language skills (Zellman et al. 2009). Noteworthy is the fundamental nature of these core areas for professional development of teachers in contrast to developed countries with established education systems where teachers arrive at schools with a minimum of a teaching certificate as a rule rather than an exception. The Qatar Office for Registration, Licensing, and Accreditation is a solution that systematized and formalized the process of professional development and offers leveled teacher licensing in Qatar.

The minority of Qatari educators in independent schools is not unique to the sector. A high number of expatriates working as skilled workers is a norm in Qatar where the national population has been and remains too small to provide the necessary human capital required for the development projects in the country (Jolo 2005). Notwithstanding, the goal of the SEC was to reach 70% Qatarization in independent schools (SEC 2006). In 2005, the SEC implemented a new policy that assured a minimum salary for Qataris and set minimum percentage targets for Qatari teachers in each independent school (Zellman et al. 2009). By 2008/2009, 95% of principals and 24% of teachers were Qatari nationals in independent schools (Evaluation Institute 2009). The drop in the Qatarization of teachers in independent schools might be attributable to the increase in demand for teachers with the introduction of new independent schools outweighing the efforts made by the government. In 2010, the SEC Shared Services Directorate reinforced their Qatarization drive and gave directives to school leaders regarding recruitment. These included the complete Qatarization of all administrative posts and the non-renewal of contracts for non-Qatari personnel whenever a Qatari personnel is available (SEC 2010f). The commitment to sustainable human capital in the national education sector is explicit.

## School Leadership: Balancing Expectations

When discussing the impact of the reform on school leadership, it is important to remember that this reform implementation process has been ongoing since 2004. It is only in 2009/2010, with the inclusion of the seventh cohort of schools that all the government schools had become part of the independent school system. Independent schools are publicly funded and are called independent because they are autonomously run by operators to permit variety and allow for parental school choice.

School leaders are subsequently managing the directives of the SEC, the capacity of the teaching staff, the mixed abilities of the students, and the demands of the parents. In other words, they are balancing demands, capacity, and service in a particular context.

The demands of the reform on school leaders to continue to drive the reform locally and embed new ways of educational practice into the school culture are considerable. The SEC has acted to support the transfer of government schools to independent schools through the provision of guidelines for school leaders and meeting with them to ensure school readiness to begin the new academic year as an independent school. Support focused on the maintenance of the schools, the structure, the furniture for preparations, training courses for teachers, and the distribution of books and special documents prepared by the Curriculum Standards Office (SEC 2010n). Notwithstanding the comprehensive induction training, as with any reform, implementation is challenged by local realities.

Continuing the development of the independent school system relies on local level growth in educator capacity and targeted school improvement. School capacity, critical for instructional quality and student achievement, relies on principal leadership that develops teachers' knowledge and skills, professional community, program coherence, and technical resources (Newmann et al. 2000). Fullan (2001a, b) offers that irrespective of the complexity of the change being implemented, it will only become embedded in the system when educators are using new materials, engaging in new practices, and incorporating new beliefs. The principals are therefore charged with moving the reform from the implementation phase to being institutionalized within the local context. This calls for strong instructional leadership in addition to the management of independent schools.

As with all contexts implementing this kind of educational reforms, the school principals need to manage teaching and learning approaches, curriculum standards, and evidence-informed decision making. However, the school leaders in Qatar have the additional responsibility to invest efforts in fostering English language skills, changing the work culture, addressing teacher values and beliefs, and engaging the community with the school. These root issues are appreciated by the government and are being addressed to promote local human capital development through Qatarization of the sector (Gonzalez et al. 2008; SEC 2010e, g, h, l).

As the demands of the reform meet the daily reality of schooling, it is the school leader who needs to find the equilibrium between Qatarization, professional capacity, and satisfying the demands of *Education for a New Era*. The balance is critical because of the high standards and the reliance on a professional accountability approach embedded in *Education for a New Era* (Ben Jaafar 2011; Blackmore 1988; Kuchapski 1998). Consequently, the focus on human resource development overshadows expected issues of implementing this level of reform in any context. The move to self-sustainability requires focused continuous efforts. Given the complexity of the situation, it is perhaps not surprising to find that in 2010, as school leaders were trying to move towards embedding reform practices into schools, there were unpleasant, confused, and sometimes acrimonious local outburst. For example:

- In August, female teachers who were laid off without explanation or warning from their schools responded by publically stating that they would approach the SEC to intervene in their situation (The Peninsula 2010b). The rights to retain, add, or dismiss resources in independent schools is presumably at the discretion of the school leadership.
- In October, the SEC sent notice to school leaders that certain disciplinary actions were unacceptable such as terminating students without official approval, sending students out of classes as a penalty and consequently exposing them to dangerous situations, and sending students back from schools without informing their parents (SEC 2010b).
- In October, dozens of female Qatari teachers applied to change their job because of a perceived lack of job security and a heavy workload in response to the government announcement that teachers were permitted to take up other public sector jobs (Toumi 2010).

These incidences reflect a situation where the practical role of the principal in managing expectations while simultaneously meeting the demands of the reform and directives of the SEC is a challenge. Given the implementation phase of *Education for a New Era*, the collective mindset of teachers and school leaders in independent schools will make all the difference in integrating the reform into daily routines.

## Moving Forward: School Leaders at the Helm

The independent nature of the schools in *Education for a New Era* places school leaders at the helm to make the reform work successfully where it counts—in schools. School leaders need to balance the demands of the different stakeholders to ensure quality competitive education is being offered in Qatar's national education system. The SEC's initiation support for new independent schools is now complete and *Education for a New Era* enters a new phase: sustainable implementation and institutionalization (Fullan 2001a, b). It is the phase where the reform slowly progresses to become a normal part of the system rather than being considered a reform. This is the part of the change process that requires continuous responsive directive systematic support at all levels.

For effective progress, the scope, type, focus, and recipient of support should depend on the needs of each particular school. Hence, each school leader is responsible for coordinating professional activities in their school, protecting their school from other initiatives, making provisions for staff to engage in professional activities, monitoring progress, taking and sharing responsibility for improvement, and engaging the opinions of staff when initiating actions in school. In other words, the new phase is about cultivating a school culture and climate to push forward the reform to become part of daily practice. This kind of school environment allows the educators to teach at optimal levels, enhances interpersonal relationships within schools, increases job satisfaction, and increases student academic achievement (See Johnson

and Johnson 1993; Kuperminc et al. 2001; Manning and Saddlemire 1996; Taylor and Tashakkori 1995).

Cultivating and maintaining this type of school environment requires continuous dedicated efforts of teachers who have the professional capacity to meet the National Professional Standards set by the SEC. School leaders find themselves in schools where they are working to engage teachers to build the requisite professional capacity to reach this desired reality. QORLA is designed to support school leaders by framing professional learning so that the school leaders can understand, appreciate, and respond to their own capacity needs as well as those of their teachers using a nationally supported structure. This official process that certifies the level of proficiency of teachers can leverage teacher efforts to engage in necessary professional development to enhance teaching and learning in classrooms. The inclusion of in-school attestation committees with the QORLA Principal–Operator attestation panel in assessing license applications engages the school in the process (SEC 2009, 2010d). The school leaders can rely on QORLA's supportive framework and leverage to foster individual and collective professional learning in schools.

Given that *all* teachers are obligated to engage in the QORLA certification process, school leaders are able to use the process to leverage collective teacher engagement. Constructing collective school capacity can contribute to minimize the traditional isolation of teachers that has proven to be a factor in schools where change is not fully implemented and institutionalized (Wagner 1994). In fact, when collegial support for teachers to adopt effective teaching methods is established, it has shown to yield student achievement (Bidwell and Yasumoto 1997; Borman et al.2005; Bryk and Schneider 2002). Hence, teachers in the school need to work together and believe that they are an effective instructional team in order to promote high student achievement.

The significant role of school efficacy should not be overlooked in the case of Qatar. This sense of collective teacher efficacy in schools is deeply connected to prior student achievement. In the case of Qatar, previous student achievement in independent schools was not as high as one would desire. The reform created new demands of high expectations on teachers and students. Those expectations were not fully and immediately met as made evident by international assessment results. The 2006 PISA scores indicated that in reading, mathematics, and science, all the schools in Qatar scored below the OECD average. Only one school scored almost average (426/500) in science. The Qatar PIRLS 2006 results for mean proficiency in Overall Reading achievement was in the same range as that of Kuwait, Morocco, and South Africa (Martin et al. 2007). Moreover, the timing of the implementation suggests that there will be implementation dips for the newer cohorts. Hence, the antecedent of success for collective efficacy, which is a factor that predicts student achievement results proved to be a challenge that principals need to help their staff overcome.

The empowered school principals who can initiate and systematize school processes that engage their staff in school direction can indeed overcome the challenge of the past—in terms of educational beliefs, practices, and achievement. Certain *school processes* (such as goal sharing and needs-based planning), which create a cohesive school climate, proved to have a greater influence on teacher efficacy than prior student achievement, however, only when the school had control over its

direction (Ross et al. 2004). The caveat of local ownership and control should be an assumption that is met in the case of Qatar where the structure of the school system is such that schools are independently owned and run with guidance and support from the SEC. In other words, the local management structure of the independent school system in *Education for a New Era* has set up the schools for success.

Notwithstanding all these organizational advantages, school leaders are faced with the usual challenges of education reform compounded by the demographics of a professional group whose majority is made up of a contingent workforce regardless of the Qatarization efforts to date (Jolo 2005; Pollock 2010; SEC g). In other words, the majority of teachers are foreigners with limited contracts and limited residency status. Hence, the investment made by the school principals for the majority of the teachers will be lost when these teachers leave the country. This is and will be the reality that challenges the normalization of *Education for a New Era* in practice until Qatari teachers have the requisite pedagogical and linguistic capacity, have the desire to remain in the profession, and make up the majority of teaching workforce.

## Budgeting Time for Success

As with any jurisdiction, new policies, governance, curricula, and accountability measures calls for an update in the capacity of school leaders and teachers. In the case of Qatar, the unique local context defined by demography and teacher capacity compounds the typical challenges of a major reform. It is therefore critical to appreciate that any investment in these reforms will not yield speedy results. Implementation and institutionalization of educational change takes time in the best of cases, and time cannot be rushed (Fullan 2001a, b).

The first phase of the reform, the introduction, was not rushed. The SEC had the wisdom to introduce the completely new system in a stepwise manner. It took 7 years to steadily introduce the reform into a cohort of schools each year before *Education for a New Era* overtook the Ministry schools' infrastructure and the old system completely. This process accomplished a laudable goal with respect to normalizing education as a part of Qatar's social fabric. In 2000, the gross enrolment rate of Qatar's school-age population was 75.4%; by 2007, it stabilized at 80.4% (United Nations Development Program 2010). As Fig. 10.1 illustrates, in comparison to neighboring GCC states, Qatar has shown a marked progress in terms of capturing all students in the country. However, it is important to note that Qatar's reform was not focused primarily on enrollment. Quality of sustainable services is at the heart of *Education for a New Era*.

Now that all the schools are under the umbrella of *Education for a New Era*, it will take time for the processes of implementation, consolidation, and eventual institutionalization of the reform in practice. The high professional standards of the reform and the commitment to Qatarization reflect the high expectations of the country's leadership from their educators and foresight for the sustainability of their education system. The high curriculum standards coupled with the participation in

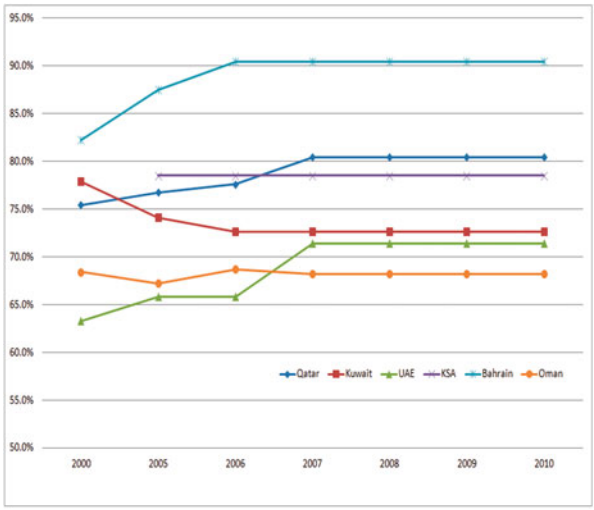



**Fig. 10.1** Annual gross enrollment of school age children in GCC from 2000 to 2010

international tests indicates a steadfast commitment to develop the human capital of Qatar. These are laudable goals that require patience and systematic support for school leaders because of their prominent position in ensuring the real success of the reform.

The Evaluation Institute is collecting a plethora of data on students, teachers, schools, principals, and the community. There is immense potential to analyze the data to examine trends in terms of achievement results, parent satisfaction, resources, quality of instruction, school environment, school culture, and school leadership. Purposeful and systematic analysis of these data over time will serve to support school leaders in identifying the strengths of their school and staff as well as specifying areas of growth. Moreover, the Evaluation Institute should be able to offer benchmarks to the school leaders and means to the school and country so that individual principals can appreciate school growth in specified areas in relation to national trends. This will facilitate a sense of urgency in developing specific areas for individual schools and family of schools. This kind of evidence can support school leaders in prioritizing improvement goals given local realities and parameters.

## Knowledge Networks: Leading for Sustainable Improvement

There is great promise in sustaining this reform. QNEDS and QORLA have facilitated access to timely relevant data and promises to continue promoting an evidence-informed culture. The use of data or evidence to support decision making for schools calls for a high level of professional work and learning for school leaders and teachers. For successful long-term results, it is critical for this support to utilize professional development approaches that recognize andragogy—the science of teaching adults.

Simple workshop-based delivery training models will be patently insufficient and ineffective in the long term.

Andragogy promotes the notion that adults tend to learn knowledge and skills that are related directly to their workplace. This means that their learning needs are immediate, part of a larger situation, and structured in terms of application rather than theoretical in nature (Knowles 1980; Koschmann 2002). The evidence provided by the Evaluation Institute can be a rich source for practical conversations around responsive practices for schools and classrooms. However, moving from simply receiving the information to collectively understanding the information and appropriately acting on the information is a big step that requires strong leadership and vision.

A viable and promising sustainable solution for local school leaders is to cultivate knowledge networks in their schools and eventually across schools. Knowledge networks are organizational structures that allow for knowledge flow, sharing, and creation. These cultivate the ways of working that help the school staff to collectively focus on their real needs and solutions. It is a way for individuals to think together about common professional issues, create new solutions together, and assiduously implement them for real effect. When this process is done well, the group forms a networked expertise so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In other words, if each individual in the group used their individual expertise to address a single problem without talking to their group members, then the result would not be as good as when they all work together. In Qatar, given the complexity and novelty of the reform in practice, the transient nature of many members of the teaching staff, and the high expectations of the educators, developing a collective expertise amongst a critical mass is necessary for long-term success.

The school leader is in a position to cultivate the school environment and possibilities for the social interactions necessary for network learning. This means that the principals need the leadership knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead in a culture of change. The principal needs to recognize that this approach to institutionalizing reform relies on a participation perspective and emphasizes group-level information processing as a key to success (Virkkunen and Ahonen 2004; Wenger et al. 2002). The principals need to construct the school level situations to engage the teachers in these professional communities to work on instrumental and incremental knowledge integration (Josephine Chinying 2004).

*Instrumental knowledge integration* is when teachers use explicit knowledge to complete their technical work. For example, when a group of teachers learn a specific instructional strategy to deliver the curriculum, they are fitting the new strategy into their old mental models in practice. This is the first level of change that can be promoted through constructive social interactions in networks. *Incremental knowledge integration* is when the teachers extend their existing knowledge to refine the specified teaching strategies to better suit the local needs of the students and the community. This is the next level of change that calls for teachers to start innovating through a collective sharing of their explicit and tacit knowledge (Edge 2005). I conclude that when teachers enter this phase of knowledge sharing, we will see the Qatarization of instructional practices to match local needs at a deep level. In future, this deep

level of change will be accomplished if the system and school leadership consistently commits to supporting teachers in this work-embedded knowledge sharing practice.

Educational researchers have identified key enablers for network learning structures to yield localized relevant knowledge development and change. Leadership has been found to be a critical and important enabler (Ben Jaafar 2005, 2006; Katz et al. 2008, 2009). The networked learning communities include many levels of leadership—both formal and informal. Formal leaders such as school principals provide encouragement and motivate others, set and monitor the agenda, allocate resources, share leadership, provide support, and build capacity (Aporia Consulting Ltd. 2005). Given these demands on leadership and the current position of *Education for a New Era*, school leader development is a priority in the reform.

The school leader support needs to be deeply rooted to the reality of the Qatar local context and the school local context. Different social contexts can place parameters around how principals interpret local situations and how they make their decisions (Moos et al. 2008). When cultivating network learning communities, school principals recognize and embed those contexts in the decision making process. The following suggestions focus on the needs of school leaders in order to create and promote school learning networks to institutionalize the reform.

1. Build a mechanism into the organizational infrastructure that focuses support on school leaders to understand the practices of knowledge management processes.
2. Create work-embedded learning opportunities for school leaders so that they can experience and model the knowledge work required from their teachers.
3. Develop guidelines for principals to create local professional communities of learning in their schools.
4. Encourage development and maintenance of professional learning communities.
5. Assist, scaffold, and reinforce practice on the use of systematic evidence-informed collaborative decision making skills within and across schools.
6. Assist, scaffold, and reinforce practice in change management skills for expectation setting and reality checks tied to evidence.
7. Assist, scaffold, and reinforce the role of priority setting for slow and deep progress ensuring principals appreciate the role of time in sustainable school success.
8. Collectively monitor and evaluate progress in areas specified as in urgent need of improvement.
9. Assist, scaffold, and reinforce practice of distributive leadership in schools.
10. Create family of schools so that independent schools are required to work collaboratively to create a collective intelligence given a specific shared focus.

## Conclusion

The Qatar commitment to a system-wide quality education in the Middle East and North Africa is commendable. The country sits in the Arab world where inadequate management of resources directed at improving education is a common cause for

poor education for a population demographic that is defined by a youth explosion (Akkari 2004). Moreover, Qatar has created a comprehensive new education system and finished its introduction to all public schools. Seven years of slow and steady extensive reform. Driven in a context where there is a strong push to nationalize the educator workforce, where there is a lack of professional capacity and where expectations are being held to the highest of international standards.

Now that the extensive reform is over and the implementation is settling into institutionalization. Now that all the public schools are independent schools. Now that teachers are being certified as professional educators officially professing their capacity. Now that all the changes are being measured against national and international test results for proof of improvement. *Now* is when the work of the school leader is vital if the reform has to grow strong roots in each school.

The charter-school like nature of *Education for a New Era* necessarily places a hefty weight on the role of the school leader. Making the most of the infrastructure invested in this education system and addressing the complexity of the situation is now in the hands of the school leaders. To successfully lead in this culture of change requires strategic and patient school leaders who make sense of intricate situations, respect local complexities, and do not have quick and easy answers (Fullan 2001a, b). Successful school leader who will act as change agents to support and satisfy the full implementation and institutionalization of this reform will need their own professional support. The nature and structure of that support will be tightly coupled with the promise of Qatar's reform as they now enter into the real test of sustainability.

## References

Akkari, A. (2004). Education in the Middle East and North Africa: The current situation and future challenges. *International Education Journal, 5*(2), 144–153.

Al-Hassan, A. (2009). *A coincident indicator of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) business cycle*. Washington: International Monetary Fund.

Aporia Consulting Ltd. (2005). *International perspectives on networked learning*. London: National College for School Leadership.

Ben Jaafar, S. (2005). *Responding to provincial assessments in Ontario: The practices of administrators*. Paper presented at the Canadian Society for Studies in Education Annual Conference.

Ben Jaafar, S. (2006). *Learning about professional learning communities: An evaluation of the network learning communities in England*. Paper presented at the Joint European Evaluation Society and UK Evaluation Society.

Ben Jaafar, S. (2011). Performance-based accountability in Qatar: in progress. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*.

Bidwell, C. E., & Yasumoto, J. Y. (1997). The collegial focus: Teaching fields, colleague relationships, and instructional practice in American high schools. *Sociology of Education, 72,* 234–256.

Blackmore, J. (1988). *Assessment and accountability*. Victoria: Deakin University.

Borman, K., et al. (2005). *Meaningful urban education reform: Confronting the learning crisis in mathematics and science*. New York: SUNY Press.

Brewer, D., Augustine, C., Zellman, G., Ryan, G., Goldman, C., Stasz, C., et al. (2007). *Education for a new era: Design and implementation of K-12 education reform in Qatar Executive Summary*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Edge, K. (2005). Powerful public sector knowledge management: A school district example. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 9*(6), 42.

Evaluation Institute. (2009). *Schools and schooling in Qatar: 2008–09 report*: Evaluation Institute, SEC.

Fullan, M. (2001a). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). New YorK: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. (2001b). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

General Secretariat for Development Planning. (2008). *Qatar national vision 2030*. Doha: Author.

Glasser, S. B. (2003, February 2). Qatar reshapes its schools, putting English over Islam. *Washington Post,* p. A20.

Global Finance. (2010). *The richest countries in the world.* Retrieved from http://www.gfmag.com/tools/global-database/economic-data/10501-the-richest-countries-in-the-world.html. Accessed 19 Nov 2010.

Gonzalez, G., Karoly, L. A., Constant, L., Salem, H., & Goldman, C. A. (2008). *Facing human capital challenges of the 21st century: Education and labor market initiatives in Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

Gonzalez, G., Le, V.-N., Broer, M., Mariano, L. T., Froemel, J. E., Goldman, C. A., et al. (2009). *Lessons from the field: Developing and implementing the Qatar student assessment system, 2002–2006*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned. (2010). *World innovation summit for education.* Retrieved from http://www.wise-qatar.org/. Accessed 19 Nov 2010.

International Monetary Fund. (2010). *IMF country report Qatar: Statistical appendix*. Washington: International Monetary Fund.

Johnson, W. L., & Johnson, M. (1993). Validity of the quality of school life scale: A primary and second-order factor analysis. *Educational & Psychological Measurement, 53*(1), 145–153.

Jolo, H. A. (2005). Human capital formation: The case of Qatar. *Journal of Business and Economics, 7,* 67–93.

Josephine Chinying, L. (2004). Social context and social capital as enablers of knowledge integration. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 8*(3), 89–105.

Katz, S., Earl, L., Jaafar, S. B., Elgie, S., Foster, L., Halbert, J., et al. (2008). Learning networks of schools: The key enablers of successful knowledge communities. [Journal Articles; Reports—Evaluative DER: 20080101]. *McGill Journal of Education, 43*(2), 111–137.

Katz, S., Earl, L., & Ben Jaafar, S. (2009). *Building and connecting learning communities: The power of networks for school improvement*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. New York: Cambridge Books.

Koschmann, T. (2002). *Dewey's contribution to the foundations of CSCL research.* Paper presented at the CSCL 2002 proceedings.

Kuchapski, R. (1998). Conceptualizing accountability: A liberal framework. In R. J. S. Macpherson (Ed.), *The politics of accountability: Educative and international perspectives*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Kuperminc, G. P., Leadbeater, B. J., & Blatt, S. J. (2001). School social climate and individual differences in vulnerability to psychopathology among middle school students. *Journal of School Psychology, 39*(2), 141–159.

Lord, K. M. (2008). *A new millennium of knowledge? The Arab human development report on building a knowledge society, five years on*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.

Manning, M. L., & Saddlemire, R. (1996). Developing a sense of community in secondary schools. *NASSP Bulletin, 80*(584), 41–48.

Martin, M. O., Mullis, I. V. S., & Kennedy, A. M. (2007). *PIRLS 2006 technical report*. Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Moos, L., Krejsler, J., & Kofod, K. K. (2008). Successful principals: Telling or selling? On the importance of context for school leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 11*(4), 341–352.

Newmann, F., King, B., & Youngs, P. (2000). *Professional development that addresses school capacity*. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Pollock, K. (2010). Marginalization and the cccasional teacher workforce: The case of internationally educated teachers (IETs). *Canadian Journal for Educational Administration and Policy.*

QORLA. (2010). *Welcome*. Retrieved from http://www.qneds.sec.gov.qa/wps/portal/QORLA_Home#. Accessed 12 Nov 2010.

Ross, J. A., Hogaboam-Gray, A., & Gray, P. (2004). Prior student achievement, collaborative school processes, and collective teacher efficacy. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 3*(3), 163–188.

Stasz, C., Eide, E., Martorell, F., Salem, H., Constant, L., Goldman, C., et al. (2007). *Identifying priorities for post-secondary education in Qatar*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation.

Supreme Education Council. (2006). Currents of reform overturn traditions on teacher training and careers. *The teaching profession*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/ content/resources/detail/3565. Accessed 7 June 2006.

Supreme Education Council. (2007a). *Annual report*. Doha: Supreme Education Council.

Supreme Education Council. (2007b). *Evaluation Director urges all stakeholders to carefully review, analyze, and act upon QCEA results*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/494. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2008). Registration and licensing of teachers and leaders is key to reform. *Education for a New Era Magazine*, 20–21.

Supreme Education Council. (2009). *Registration and accreditation of school leaders and teachers*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/blog/detail/7074. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010a). *Assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/section/sec/evaluation_institute/assessment/. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010b). *Education institute stresses the importance of maintaining safety procedures in schools*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/12090. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010c). *Evaluation institute clarifies on QSSC results*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11570. Accessed 4 July 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010d). *The evaluation institute trains teachers on electronic portfolios*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11205. Accessed 23 May 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010e). *Independent schools in need of Qatari workforce*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11223. Accessed 25 May 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010f). *Independent schools to Qatarize all administrative posts*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/10954. Accessed 17 Apr 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010g). *Independent schools to Qatarize all administrative posts*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/10954. Accessed 17 Apr 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010h). *Procedures to recruit more Qatari staff in schools*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11958. Accessed 19 Sept 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010i). *Qatar National Educaiton Data System FAQs*. Retrieved from http://www.qneds.sec.gov.qa/wps/portal/qneds/qneds_index/qneds_home/qneds_faq/!ut/p/c5/04_sb8k8xllm9msszpy8xbz9cp0os3hdf2pdye8tiwp_agnxa89ga2n3n0tly6maa_1wka6zeamcwneaio_lbedd_pkhxvp-hvm5qfof2dlbfo6kigb2nyif/dl3/d3/l2djqsevuut3qs9zqnz3lzzfqljmrujgsdiwt1jdmzbjneeyszruszawrzm!/?nid=6_1o31si420op3e0is03gf9932p0&cid=6_1o31si420op3e0is03gf9932p0#question2. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.

Supreme Education Council. (2010j). *QORLA to launch site for license registration*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/12193. Accessed 18 Oct 2010.
Supreme Education Council. (2010k). *The SEC announces national and international test dates*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/12185. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.
Supreme Education Council. (2010l). SEC announces plans to support Cohort 7 of the independent schools. *Press Release*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/12101. Accessed 7 Oct 2010.
Supreme Education Council. (2010m). *SEC publishes results of the second round of QSSC tests*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11748. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.
Supreme Education Council. (2010n). *Seventy nine thousand students march to school on first day of 2010/11 year*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11945. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.
Supreme Education Council. (2010o). *Seventy nine thousand students march to schools today on first day of new academic year 2010–2011*. Retrieved from http://www.english.education.gov.qa/content/resources/detail/11945. Accessed 15 Nov 2010.
Taylor, D. L., & Tashakkori, A. (1995). Decision participation and school climate as predictors of job satisfaction and teacher's sense of efficacy. *Journal of Experimental Education, 63*(3), 217–227.
The Peninsula. (2010a). Govt schools become independent schools. *The Peninsula*. Retrieved from http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/qatar/126639-govt-schools-become-independent-schools.html. Accessed 19 Sept 2010.
The Peninsula. (2010b). Laid off schoolteachers call on SEC to intervene. *The Peninsula*. Retrieved from http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/education/122217-laid-off-schoolteachers-call-on-sec-to-intervene.html. Accessed 3 Aug 2010.
The Peninsula. (2010c, July 16 Friday). SEC extends parallel school registration deadline. *The Peninsula,* p. 03.
The Peninsula. (2010d, July 27 Thursday). SEC launches parallel education program. *The Peninsula,* p. 05.
The Planning Council. (2007). *Annual statistical abstract*. Doha: The General Secretariat, State of Qatar.
The World Bank. (2008). *The road not traveled: Education reform in the Middle East and North Africa*. Washington: The World Bank.
The World Bank. (2009). *World Development Indicators database: Gross domestic product*. Retrieved from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf. Accessed 17 Jan 2010.
Toumi, H. (2010). Qatari teachers seek job change due to heavy workload. *Gulf News*. Retrieved from http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/qatari-teachers-seek-job-change-due-to-heavy-workload-1.691450. Accessed 1 Dec 2010.
U.S. Department of State. (2010). *Background note: Qatar*. Retrieved from http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5437.htm#people. Accessed 1 Dec 2010.
United Nations Development Program. (2003). *Arab human development report 2003: Building a knowledge society*. New York: United Nations Development Program, Regional Bureau for Arab States.
United Nations Development Program. (2010). *International human development indicators*. Retrieved November 15, from http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/406.html.
Virkkunen, J., & Ahonen, H. (2004). Transforming learning and knowledge creation on the shop floor. *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management, 4*(1), 57–72.
Wagner, T. (1994). *How schools change: Lessons from three communities revisited*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
Zellman, G. L., Ryan, G. W., Karam, R., Constant, L., Salemm, H., Gonzalez, G., et al. (2009). *Implementation of the K-12 education reform in Qatar's schools*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

# Part III
# Conclusion

# Chapter 11
# Thoughts on School Leadership Policy, Practice, and Future Inquiry

**Louis Volante and Lorna Earl**

It has been fascinating to consider standards, accountability, assessment, and leadership in education through the lenses of a broad and diverse selection of countries. It is not our intention to summarize each standards-based reform model that was previously discussed. Rather the ensuing discussion merely highlights some of the notable trends and provides the reader with a sense of the many faces of standards-based reform, accountability, and student assessment, and draws out some implications for learning for school leaders. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future inquiry.

It is important to note that our discussion and juxtaposition of specific models versus others in no way diminishes the importance of other international jurisdictions—even those that are not addressed in this book. Our intention is to direct the readers' attention to the salient issues, in order to help the international community understand the challenges contemporary school leaders are confronting in an era of standards-based reform.

## The Many Faces of Standards-Based Reform

Perhaps our most interesting observation, as we have read the collection of papers, is that the language of contemporary reform in these countries is very similar. On closer investigation, however, the intentions and the meaning of the words are very different in action. They differ in so many ways—e.g., the setting of standards, the kind of assessments that are used, the conception of accountability, the stakes that are attached to meeting the standards, the level of professional development that is provided, and the way that successful leadership is characterized. All of these

L. Volante (✉)
Brock University, Hamilton, ON, Canada
e-mail: lvolante@brocku.ca

L. Earl
Aporia Consulting Ltd., Toronto, Canada

L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2_11, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

differences arise from historical and political contexts and decisions that shape the way that ideas and concepts are received and incorporated into the different national contexts. So, although the various countries have adopted the same language to describe their reforms, the language represents a locally developed and context-specific approach to standards-based reform.

As the preceding discussion suggested, the oldest reform models, represented in the English and American systems, are highly accountable policy contexts that put a premium on student achievement. However, while the English system appears to be moving toward greater school autonomy in addressing standards, the American system seems to be intensifying central control via rewards and sanctions. Indeed, Chap. 3 (the American chapter) underscored how the pressure for improving student achievement continues unabated and that student achievement results are receiving unprecedented levels of public attention. It is not surprising that many critics have argued that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has essentially federalized education and further eroded state and local control.

Given that the American system has changed very little in its overall orientation over the last three decades, it does provide a useful benchmark to compare other standards-based reform models. Consider the Canadian and Australian systems where the authority and autonomy of provinces (in Canada) or states and territories (in Australia) is constitutionally protected. Nevertheless, while the Canadian system has relied on low-stakes assessments that have little effect on educational funding, Australia has created a public accountability system (ACARA) that has tied millions of dollars to state-funding grants, where target gains in test scores can be demonstrated. Thus, one could argue that ACARA has similarities to NCLB—particularly the adequate yearly progress (AYP) provisions—despite differences in governance.

The issue of governance is important since the broader academic community tends to conflate standards-based reform with the issue of centralization versus decentralization. That is, even highly decentralized systems like Sweden, which utilizes goal-referenced assessments, can put significant pressure on schools to succeed. Conversely, the Japanese system, which has been moving increasingly toward more central control, stresses outcomes on their national achievement tests. Thus, the issue of centralization versus decentralization does not necessarily dictate the level of accountability within an education system.

Overall, the standards-based reform landscape is in a state of considerable flux. Well-established systems such as England are adjusting their accountability model; other jurisdictions such as Australia and New Zealand have introduced national curriculum and assessment standards; while newer systems such as Qatar are grappling with the challenges associated with western style large-scale reform. Nevertheless, as Dr. Wikstrom suggested, the goals, content/performance standards, stakes associated with assessment results, outcomes, and type of sanctions/rewards vary from one standards-based reform context to the next. Standards-based reform is being manifested in different ways across countries, even when they appear to be very similar to the casual observer.

## The Many Faces of Accountability

Accountability is a charged word that is deeply embedded in the history and culture of the country. It carries with it expectations for action among various educational stakeholders. In 1994, Linda Darling Hammond described two different views of educational change and of accountability (Darling Hammond 1994):

> One view seeks to induce change through extrinsic rewards and sanctions for both schools and students, on the assumption that the fundamental problem is a lack of will to change on the part of educators. The other view seeks to induce change by building knowledge among school practitioners and parents about alternative methods and by stimulating organizational rethinking through opportunities to work together on the design of teaching and schooling and to experiment with new approaches. This view assumes that the fundamental problem is a lack of knowledge about the possibilities for teaching and learning, combined with lack of organizational capacity for change. (p. 23)

The countries described in the chapters in this book provide nuance and shading to these polarized views and show the range of perspectives that accountability can take. Certainly, the United States continues with sanctions and rewards while other countries have sought to build capacity through greater professional autonomy.

## The Many Faces of Standards-Based Assessment

Our review of the various international perspectives suggests that no particular model of assessment is dominating the standards-based landscape. Rather, diversity in international jurisdictions exists with respect to a variety of interrelated features such as whether student assessments are:

- Low versus high stakes for students.
- Low versus high stakes for schools (teachers and principals/school administrators).
- Internally versus externally developed.
- Nationally versus regionally oriented.
- Geared toward all ages versus key developmental points.
- Geared toward a variety of subject areas or a select few.
- Geared toward academic versus nonacademic domains.
- Traditional paper-based modes versus technology-enhanced delivery modes.
- Reported at the student, school, and/or district level.
- Focused on assessment *of* learning versus *for* learning.

Most systems have diversity in relation to each of these elements. For example, some systems use a combination of internally developed teacher assessments as well as more centralized external assessments. Other systems might reserve low-stakes consequences for students in elementary grades but have more pronounced high-stakes consequences for students in the senior grades—as evidenced through graduation

examinations. The most contentious issue related to high or low stakes is not associated directly with students, although student results are the measure. In some jurisdictions, schools are judged on the basis of student achievement on large-scale tests and receive sanctions or rewards on this basis. Thus, no particular system can or should be classified according to single features. To do so, would misrepresent the unique character of their standards-based assessment model. Instead, each jurisdiction has made choices on all of these dimensions and sometimes blended them to create their own unique assessment processes.

One particularly interesting dimension of the assessment landscape is the extent to which the various jurisdictions incorporate Assessment for Learning (AfL) into their policies and expectations for practice. AfL emerged on the policy scene in the early 1990s, at about the same time as standards-based reform was moving into the foreground. Just as governments world-wide were moving toward large-scale assessment systems as mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness and improvement of schools, another kind of assessment was capturing attention in the educational domain. A wide range of research studies have demonstrated that, if learning is the goal, AfL can be very powerful (Popham 2009). AfL was defined by the Assessment Reform Group as:

> [the] process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. (Assessment Reform Group 2002, p. 2).

Since this early work by the Assessment Reform Group, AfL has become ubiquitous in educational systems around the world, sometimes as an integral part of the educational reform agenda and sometimes as an additional reform element, often in competition with the standards movement. In the United States, AfL runs a parallel course to large-scale assessments that determine decisions about both policy and practice. The Assessment Reform Group, the group who initiated AfL in England continue to promote a focus on assessment as part of teaching and learning at the same time as the shift toward less reliance on national tests.

In New Zealand, there is heavy reliance on teachers "overall judgment" as well as considerable attention to AfL as a major improvement initiative. The arms-length agency in Ontario, Canada, describes its large-scale assessment program as AfL and the Ontario Ministry promotes AfL as a key dimension of improving teaching and learning. Similarly, British Columbia's *Accountability Framework* promotes evidence-based, data-driven decision making with a focus on AfL. None of the authors from the countries represented in this book provide a clear specific statement about the role of AfL in their standards-based model. This is worrying because it is increasingly clear that it is difficult to realize the promise of AfL. Although many teachers would say that they do "assessment for learning", there is considerable evidence that their assessment practice does not really reflect the intentions and principles that make AfL powerful. AfL is a way of thinking and a set of beliefs about the nature of learning and the rhythm of interactions in classrooms. Its primary aim is to contribute to learning by identifying aspects of learning as it develops, using both

informal and formal processes, so that learning itself can be enhanced. This focuses directly on the learner's capabilities as they are developing (Earl et al. 2011).

Becoming an expert in AfL is hard work, as teachers come to understand the theory behind it and examine how these ideas are both similar to and different from their current beliefs and practices. It requires teachers and school administrators to engage in high-quality professional learning that helps them explicate their preconceptions about assessment and internalize an approach to assessment—and even to learning—that may run counter to current expectations in their schools. This kind of change will not happen without policy expectations that honor the essential role of teachers' expertise and opportunities for serious job-embedded professional learning. When the policy context is focused on measurement and scores, and teachers are constrained in deepening their professional knowledge and their practices, there will undoubtedly be a mismatch between AfL and standards-based reform. If, on the other hand, the focus of standards-based reform moves toward supporting teachers in becoming adaptive experts, AfL can become one of the internal levers connecting teaching and learning that are specifically connected to standards.

## International Perspectives on School Leadership

Not surprisingly, the international perspectives portrayed in these chapters tend to reflect notable leadership approaches discussed in the introductory chapter. For example, Dr. Muijs made reference to instructional leadership and particularly distributed forms of leadership as an appropriate response to the seemingly endless pace of policy reforms and initiatives in England. Overall, Dr. Muijs argued that the pressure exerted on school leaders has facilitated solutions that include greater distribution of leadership in schools, expansion of leadership teams, the use of noneducators in leadership through roles such as School Business Managers, and working with networks of schools that can utilize shared resources and lead to innovative approaches to school improvement. Of course, one should not assume that other approaches to school leadership are not reflected within the English schools. Given the tradition of using rewards and sanctions in England, it would be naïve to assume numerous headteachers have not been socialized into such practices—particularly those aligned with transactional leadership. Rather, our sense is that leadership in the English schools seems to be undergoing a period of significant transition—primarily as a response to the dual nature of the system, with its emphasis on both strong accountability and school autonomy.

The other European nation discussed, Sweden, also seemed to be adjusting to the challenges of a decentralized system characterized by local independence. However, the Swedish challenges seemed to be more closely linked to the demands of their new goal-referenced assessment system. As Dr. Wikstrom noted, Swedish school leaders are expected to possess assessment expertise despite the notable absence of specific training requirements, qualifications, or previous education.

Across the Atlantic, Dr. Normore and Brooks tended to emphasize the importance of instructional leadership in the United States. They argued that instructional leadership is vital to balancing "best practice" and "test practice" in schools. The latter is no small task given the reams of research-documenting inappropriate test-preparation practices across their country. However, these scholars were also quick to point out that given the formidable challenges facing school leaders in the United States, leadership must include a broad cast of individuals in both formal and informal roles. Essentially, both the English and American scholars seemed to advocate for distributed leadership as an appropriate response to their policy context. The Canadian system also highlighted distributed leadership approaches in Ontario—the country's largest province. However, as noted by Drs. Klinger and Saab, educational leaders in the Canadian system tend to have greater autonomy to direct their improvement efforts with no direct threat of sanctions or negative consequences. Of course, the same cannot be said of the United States given the provisions of NCLB. One must naturally query if it is more difficult to enact distributed forms of leadership in highly accountable policy contexts.

The Australian scholars focused on the robustness of an educational leadership framework in the Victorian education system to provide measures of leadership beyond student achievement results. The framework is characterized by Sergiovanni's domains of leadership and intersects with distributed and transformational approaches. As Drs. Griffin and Care noted, Sergiovanni's idea of transformational leadership follows a shift toward the reduction in differences in status between workers and managers, an emphasis on participative decision making, and the promotion of a form of "consensual" or "facilitative" power that is manifested through other people instead of over other people. Overall, the Australian Leadership Pathway reminds us that school leaders need accurate information on what they need to know and be able to do in order to improve their leadership performance.

The other Australasian nation profiled also underscored the importance of a leadership framework—as reflected in New Zealand's Kiwi Leadership Model. The "Kiwi" model combines research, theory, and practice to help tackle the challenges school leaders are facing in response to national standards and curricular reforms. These challenges are not trivial—particularly when one considers New Zealand utilizes school-based assessment where student achievement is determined according to "overall teacher judgments". Thus, New Zealand's principals must facilitate teacher judgments that are nationally consistent in an environment where they spend significantly more time on administrative tasks than principals in other OECD countries.

The Asian nations, Japan and Hong Kong, each struggle with similar issues experienced in the Western world. For example, Dr. Hirata chronicles the waves of reform centralization and decentralization that have characterized the Japanese for more than half a century. The most recent and noteworthy reforms in Japan have increased principals' leadership and autonomy—but unfortunately this has come at the expense of reducing teachers' voices in school governance. The latter would seem to be in direct contrast to distributed forms of leadership previously discussed. Conversely, Drs. Huen Yu and Wai Ming Yu provide a fairly strong endorsement of

transformational leadership approaches to contend with the implementation of their School-Based Management policy. Reminiscent of other jurisdictions, this policy provides greater autonomy to schools as well as greater responsibility. For example, teachers are encouraged to develop a whole-school plan based on their school mission, strengths, and targets of curriculum reform under the guidance of school leaders.

The last nation profiled—Qatar—is perhaps the most interesting to the international community given that it is the first country to enact large-scale western style reforms in their region of the world. The hallmark of the Qatar system is represented by the charter school-like nature of their system where independent schools rely heavily on local-level growth in educator capacity and targeted school improvement. Qatar's school leaders must essentially balance demands, capacity, and service against the backdrop of a performance-based accountability system. Dr. Ben Jaafar suggested networked learning communities as a viable response to addressing some of these challenges. The success (or lack thereof) of this approach is contestable given the relative paucity of leadership research in this emerging nation. Overall, all the countries profiled were moving toward collaborations of some sort, either across schools in networks or federations, or within schools through distributed leadership and professional learning communities (PLCs).

## Standards-Based Reform: Implications for School Leadership

There is no question that standards-based reform has changed the roles of school leaders. It is important, however, to acknowledge that design features and different contexts place different expectations and demands on school leaders. Consider a school leader in the United States where high-stakes testing dominates. Leaders in such contexts must grapple with the nature and form of test preparation practices. If their teachers raise test scores through narrowing of the curriculum and teaching to the test, they risk undermining authentic student learning. Conversely, a school administrator in England or Sweden must ensure that teacher-developed assessments are sufficiently reliable and valid to stand up to public scrutiny. Failure to do so inevitably leads to criticism and perhaps a move toward externally developed assessments. School leaders in systems that value assessment *for* learning, as is the case in New Zealand, must effectively balance a long-established culture of school-level autonomy with the demands of a national curriculum. Similarly, assessment systems that emphasize academic and nonacademic domains, as is the case in Hong Kong, require a more holistic approach to education. School leaders in such jurisdictions must collect and analyze a complex array of data.

Although standards-based reform has been different in each country, the breadth and speed with which it has changed the educational landscape inevitably means dramatic changes in the work of school leaders. Our analysis of the international landscape suggests school leaders face a variety of challenges, given the unique make-up of their standards-based assessment approach. In our view, successful leaders in

this environment are not managers but lead learners. They do not passively accept policy initiatives; neither do they stubbornly resist. They lead by understanding their context, identifying the salient issues, and actively participate in new learning and sharing of ideas to stimulate and foster innovative solutions to real problems (Earl and Hannay 2011). If the intention of standards-based reform is to provide all students with high-quality instruction, opportunities for school leaders to learn is critical. Their role is one of negotiating this landscape and creating the conditions for new learning for teachers and for themselves to foster better learning for students.

More than ever before, leaders need to understand their context and their school(s). This means, searching for and being open to new understanding that will help them see their school and its context clearly, as a basis for making decisions. We refer to this as having a culture of inquiry—always needing to know more and creating or locating the knowledge that will be useful to make thoughtful decisions (Earl and Katz 2006). One of us has written elsewhere about developing an inquiry habit of mind—a habit of using inquiry and reflection to think about where you are, where you are going, and how you will get there, and then turning around to rethink the whole process to see how well it is working and make adjustments (Earl and Katz 2006). Leaders with an "inquiry habit of mind" genuinely want to know, even when the knowing is difficult or contrary to their beliefs. This "inquiry habit of mind" pushes them to consider a range of evidence and keep searching for increased understanding and clarity by engaging in a spiral of systematic analysis of the situation, professional reflection, action, and reanalysis. This inquiry cycle of wanting to know, appealing to evidence and making changes to practice is fundamentally a process of new learning, of knowledge creation through a process of questioning past assumptions, past tacit knowledge, and past mental models.

Given the differences in interpretation of standards-based reform (both dramatic and subtle), leaders need to be sure that they understand the policy expectations, not just the requirements, but the philosophy of change and the intentions that underpin the policy and consider both the intended outcomes and possible unintended ones. Just as important, leaders need to understand their school, including the beliefs and values that are held by the community, the students, and the staff. As the policy intentions in the United States lean heavily toward using high-stakes standardized tests of student achievement as the measure of progress, with rewards and sanctions for schools and leaders based on these tests, leaders have the responsibility of understanding their schools and motivating staff to genuinely influence student learning.

In Sweden, the national tests are low stakes for schools and teachers and the decisions that are high stakes apply to students. There is a growing interest, however, in looking more closely at the quality of schools. Leaders in this context will be more concerned with introducing a focus on schools and helping teachers move beyond anxiety to use the information in profitable ways. The provincial assessments in Canadian provinces are also low stakes in terms of sanctions but the results are used to provide additional support, resources, and professional learning to teachers. In Canadian schools, leaders can use the evidence to target support and professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of the students in their school. New

Zealand has no large-scale assessment and relies on "overall teacher judgment" as the measure of student achievement that will be used for decisions about schools. The consequences of this approach remain to be seen but the role for school leaders is likely to be one of ensuring that the "overall teacher judgment" is accurate enough to be accepted as evidence for decisions about schools and safeguarding the formative role of assessment to support student learning in classrooms.

When leaders have an inquiry habit of mind and work to build a culture of inquiry in the school, the focus is always on seeing what comes next, based on a deep knowledge of the current state of affairs and clarity about the intended goals, in a continuous process of standing back, identifying areas of concern and providing the support and resource to create the optimum conditions possible to students, and the adults who work with them, to learn.

As we noted earlier, all of the countries in this book referred to collaboration and distributed leadership as key elements in their reform efforts. There appears to be general agreement that utilizing more people in leadership roles will lead to better outcomes. However, collaboration and distributed leadership can take many forms from loose, voluntary networks focused on a single issue, to federations or clusters of schools with a particular mandate to work together for systemic change. The country chapters give us many insights into the complexities of working collaboratively within and across schools. Some collaborations merely pull resources for staff or professional learning, others provide opportunities for discussion and sharing of best practice. Although it is becoming clear that the challenges faced by schools and school leaders require greater collaboration between schools, just creating structures of networks or clusters or federations of schools, or establishing PLCs in schools will not necessarily result in the kind of learning communities that support focused professional learning for teachers to change classroom practice and influence student learning. As Daniel Muijs pointed out in Chap. 2 (the English chapter in this book): collective leadership in a school is very much tied to the capacity of individuals within the school. . . . Networking will only work if headteachers are committed and behind the idea. Headteacher support is necessary to encourage other school staff to see network activities as key to put in place the cultural and structural changes needed for collaborative work with other schools or organizations, and, not least, to ensure that time is freed up for staff to take part in network activities and that staff are encouraged to disseminate the outcomes of any network activity in the school. Obviously, where a network proposes thoroughgoing forms of integration such as teachers teaching at multiple schools or joint appointments, the role of the head in making this happen is crucial.

Learning about measurement and using data has emerged as a key area for new learning for leaders who are immersed in standards-based reform. Regardless of the measurement system that is in place, standards-based reform has made it imperative for leaders to understand and be able to use measurement concepts and statistics as a routine part of their work. Most school leaders have had very little training in using data, although expanded leadership development programmers are beginning to include it. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to establish accurate and honest images of the current state of affairs or to monitor progress toward goals without

becoming knowledgeable about the measurement that is being used and how to interpret it and explain it to others.

Leadership in an era of standards-based reform is "all about learning"—learning for leaders, learning for teachers, and learning for students. There is no singular process of standards-based reform; the theory of accountability is different; assessments vary; countries have local geographies, cultures and beliefs, and policy directions continue to change. Leaders must stay "ahead of the curve" by being knowledgeable and by building school cultures of inquiry and improvement.

## Concluding Thoughts on Future Inquiry

The international authors in this book have drawn on extensive research in their attempt to faithfully represent the intersection of standards-based reform and school leadership within their particular national context. Their descriptions often draw attention to the salient large-scale reform features—such as the nature of accountability or the form of assessment used to gauge student achievement—that are often debated in the international literature. However, the preceding discussion suggested that it is difficult and perhaps inappropriate to consider any reform feature in isolation of the particular historical and political features that have shaped school leadership. Thus, it would be interesting to examine how particular elements of large-scale reform interact differently across various contexts. Consider assessment literacy—an understanding of the principles and practices of sound assessment—that is considered fundamental for school administrators (Volante and Cherubini 2011). One might naturally query how different reform contexts provide opportunities and constraints for school administrators attempting to build this type of capacity within their own schools. Given the importance of data use for school planning and the role of AfL in raising student achievement (see Black and Wiliam 1998; Crooks 1988; Kluger and DeNisi 1996; Natriello 1987), the relationship between large-scale reform, leadership development, and AfL represents an important area for future study.

The evolving nature of standards-based reform draws attention to the impact of policy shifts on school leaders. More specifically, how do leaders initially acculturated within a particular reform model adapt and change to the demands of a new standards-based reform approach? Do these veteran leaders require a unique form of professional development to help facilitate this type of paradigm shift? An extensive body of research has suggested that the "one size fits all approach" for professional development is not effective in making sustained changes to practice (see Penuel et al. 2007; Speck and Knipe 2005). Understanding how school leaders adapt and change in relation to new policy directions is essential if we are to realize the sizable influence school leaders have on student learning.

Inevitably, any study in the social studies leads to more questions than answers. This edited book is no different and provides a historically situated snapshot of the standards-based reform landscape. No doubt, leadership challenges are likely to change as successive waves of reform take place within different countries. Nevertheless, an examination of schools in 5, 10, or 25 years from now will likely still

include an analysis of school leaders' propensity to facilitate effective teaching practices, utilize a range of data sources, and positively respond to shifts in policy. Our sense is that an understanding of how school leaders develop these types of capacities is likely to remain a fundamental concern for the international community.

## References

Assessment Reform Group. (2002). *Assessment is for learning: 10 principles*. Retrieved from http://www.assessment-reform-group.org. Accessed 1 March 2010.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(2), 139–148.

Crooks, T. J. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research, 58,* 438–481.

Darling-Hammond, D. (1994). Performance-based assessment and educational equity. *Harvard Educational Review, 64*(1), 5–31.

Earl, L., & Hannay, L. (2011). Educators as knowledge leaders. In J. Robertson & H. Timperley (Eds.), *Leadership and Learning*. London: Sage.

Earl, L., & Katz, S. (2006). *Rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind*. Western and Northern Collaboration. Retrieved from www.wncp.ca/assessment. Accessed 1 March 2010.

Earl, L., Volante, L., & Katz, S. (2011). Unleashing the promise of assessment for learning. *Education Canada, 51*(3), 17–20.

Kluger, A. N., & DeNisi, A. (1996). The effects of feedback intervention on performance: A historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin, 119*(2), 254–284.

Natriello, G. (1987). The impact of evaluation processes on students. *Educational Psychologist, 22*(2), 155–175.

Penuel, W. R., Fishman, B. J., Yamaguchi, R., & Gallagher, L. P. (2007). What makes professional development effective? Strategies that foster curriculum implementation. *American Educational Research Journal, 44,* 921–958.

Popham, J. (2009). A process – not a test. *Education Leadership, 66*(7), 85–86.

Speck, M., & Knipe, C. (2005). *Why can't we get it right? Designing high-quality professional development for standards-based schools* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Volante, L., & Cherubini, L. (2011). The challenges school administrators face in building assessment literacy. *Assessment Matters, 3,* 161–182.

# Index




L. Volante (ed.), *School Leadership in the Context of Standards-Based Reform,*
Studies in Educational Leadership 16,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-4095-2, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012