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# Professional Development of Educational Leaders

*Hülya Şenol*

## Abstract

The role of educational leaders has been undergoing many changes in the era of globalization due to diverse needs and expectations of the stakeholders of education. This increases the need for professional development of educational leaders to fulfill their roles. Educational leaders have high impact on shaping school culture, school improvement, student learning, and achievement, so that their professional development is critical to their continued success as leaders. Educational leaders who participate in professional development programs update and extend their knowledge and improve their performance on the job by applying new knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices in schools. This book chapter intends to provide reader with a comprehensive overview of expected responsibilities and features of school leaders in the context of the different models of educational leadership and also presents a review of the articles about the need for professional development of educational leaders and finally gives professional development ideas which will help school leaders continue to strengthen their practices throughout their career.

**Keywords:** co-principals, department chairs, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, principals, teacher leaders, transformational leadership, professional development

## 1. Educational leadership

There has been a great interest in leadership not only in education but also in many sectors such as business, health, and technology. "Leadership as a process of social influence can maximize the efforts of others for the achievement of a goal" [1]. In educational settings, leaders are appointed to positions formally or informally, influencing their colleagues by providing direction to them [2]. Main core of educational leadership, used as school leadership exchangeably, is achieving better student success in schools. That is why all scholars and school staff work hard to find ways to obtain better school outcomes. In this sense, scholars put forward different classifications of school leadership and tried to explain the roles and responsibilities of school leaders.

Policymakers, scholars paid attention to principal leadership because of the body of research on effective schools during the 1980s. According to McEwan [3], instructional leadership emphasizes on implementation of the curriculum involving instruction and learning. According to Hallinger and Murphy [4], instructional roles of the principals are as follows:

1. "Defining mission of school (frame school goals very clearly and communicate goals of school clearly)

2. Managing the instructional program (supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordination of curriculum and to monitor progress of students)

3. Creating a positive school climate (protection of instructional time, promotion of professional development, maintenance of high visibility, provide incentives for learning and teachers)" [4]

During 1990s, scholars started to interest in school improvement and argued transformational leadership and teacher leadership as alternatives so that instructional leadership lost its potency by the turn of twenty-first century but rising interest in accountability movement and student outcomes led scholars to focus on school principals as instructional leaders [5]. Concept of transformational leadership was introduced in 1978 by James MacGregor Burns. Leithwood and Jantzi [6] defined the meaning and dimensions of transformational leadership as follows: "transformational leadership for making reformative changes needed in schools, focuses on motivation, inspiration and influencing teachers and parents to work together cooperatively based on core beliefs and values" [6]. "Six dimensions of transformational leadership are building vision and goals of school; provision of intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; symbolizing professional values and practices; demonstration of high performance expectations; and development of structures to encourage participation in school decisions" [7, 8]. Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire their followers to commit to shared vision and goals of an organization, to achieve extraordinary outcomes and to be innovative problem solvers. They empower and support followers to develop and grow into leaders, align objectives and goals of each individual follower, pay attention to their needs and personal development as coaches and mentors [9]. Components of transformational leadership are

- Idealized influence (serving as a role model, admired, respected, and trusted leaders, emphasizing collective sense of mission, willing to take risks, being consistent, showing high standards of ethical and moral conduct)

- Inspirational motivation (motivating and inspiring followers, creating clear communicated expectations)

- Intellectual stimulation (encouraging creativity, ideas and approaches of followers to address problems and find solutions)

- Individualized consideration (paying attention to needs of each follower as a coach or mentor, recognizing individual differences, encouraging two-way exchange in communication, personalized interactions with them) [9]

Concept of distributed leadership, also known as shared leadership emerged in early 2000s in part from the "Distributed Cognition and Activity Theory" because of the idea that "the principal cannot do the job alone due to having many dramatically evolving managerial and leader roles. For organizational reform, principals distribute leadership and decision making to a group of leaders" [10]. From the distributed leadership perspective,

- Distributed leadership allows democratic or autocratic leadership

- Leadership may be stretched over all leaders in a school

- Multiple leaders take the responsibility for the leadership in the schools

- Number of leaders depends on the routine and the subject area

- Leadership practice is a product of the interactions between school leaders, followers, and their situation

- Primary characteristic of interactions among the leaders is interdependency

- Principal shares daily works in schools with assistant principals, teachers, and also with other staff members [11]

- Multiple individuals lead and manage schools including principal, formally designated leaders and teachers who have no formal leadership position, students, and parents [12]

Assistant principals (APs) are critical leaders [13] and candidates for being principals in schools around the world [14] by serving underneath the school principal. There are categories of assistants in schools such as deputy heads called quasi-deputy heads; assistants who work below the principal called subordinate deputy head and assistants who fill specific needs called niche assistant heads [15]. According to Kwan [16], "roles of assistant principals are teaching, curriculum and learning, resource management, external connection and communication, accountability and quality assurance of the school, staff management, development and growth of the teachers, policy environment and also strategic direction". In 2011, roles of assistant principals were assigned as having duties in administration; formulation of goals, development of curriculum; training, development, evaluation, and selection of teachers; student discipline and counseling students [17].

In the concept of teacher leadership, teachers are accepted as holders of a central position in school operations, learning, and teaching [18]. Teachers are the most important stakeholders of education and must be at the center of school transformation and change in education. Teachers can influence practice and policy significantly by working purposefully, collectively, and collaboratively. If teachers are supported for their creativeness, innovation, and collaboration, they may form lasting difference to learners and learning [19]. Teachers having leadership roles become more confident, satisfied with their work in schools and this leads higher teacher retention rates [20]. Cooper et al. [21] emphasize that teacher leadership rooted from teacher professionalism movement in 1980s is very important for successful school reform. They have specific duties which may vary depending on the school context such as

- Working as department chair

- Working as grade level leader

- Working with principal to support teachers, to build community, to determine, and implement or manifest school-wide vision of instruction [21]

Success of teacher leaders depend on

- School culture (foster communication, collaboration, and learning)

- Relationships open, supportive and positive relationship between principal, teacher leaders, and colleagues; continuous communication and feedback, being role models, having leadership capacities school structures (time for collaboration, embedded professional development, and shared leadership) [21]

## 2. Need for professional development

Very fast changes in science and technology bring in new dimensions in social, political, economic, and cultural fields. Companies are seeking qualified, highly educated workforce having contemporary information and success in their fields. Outputs of education policy of governments effect societal development and also economic prosperity of nations seriously [22]. Earnings, employment, health of the individuals are promoted by education and also education strengthens institutions and encourages social cohesion [23]. In this sense, training of the students successfully to meet the expectations of the business world is very important. This reveals the importance of education. The basic building blocks of education like the rungs of a ladder (primary, lower, upper secondary education and higher education) help students learning not only the subject matter but also develop cognitive, language, emotional, and social skills of the students. As a result, students identify their talents, skills and select their future jobs. There is an increasing demand for schools to demonstrate the progress of their students as twenty-first century learners. To meet these expectations, schools need new generation of instructional leaders who can transform schools. Educational leadership influences not only the school effectiveness [24] but also the performance of students in four pathways as organizational, rational, emotional, and familial [25]. This effect is greater if they focus on teaching and learning [26]. Principals directly affect the academic capacity of schools and influence the growth of students indirectly [27]. Professional development of school principals should continue and be sustainable after they have been appointed to their schools [28]. This will help school principals

- To acquire current knowledge, skills, values, and attitude beyond schooling

- To understand the latest technological developments and to be comfortable with technology changes [28]

- To implement and manage new changes in education [29].

- To have necessary knowledge, competencies, and dispositions to function and perform in the context of educational reform [29]

- Principals' continuous improvement and learning is important for student and teacher learning, policy implementation, and cultivating healthy and supportive school communities [30]

While designing professional development programs, patterns of provision, the delivery modes, career stage of school leaders, school improvement practices, human resources, strategic planning, and financial management are considered. Professional development programs can be provided to the school principals by a variety of sources such as school districts, universities, governmental agencies,

professional associations, and other organizations [31, 32]. Tingle et al. [33] emphasize that training activities about human capital, school culture, executive leadership, strategic operations, building relationships with peers, and also supervisor support have high influence for continued success of the leaders. There are outstanding examples of professional development programs for school leaders in different countries. Rowland [30] stated that The RAND and George W. Bush Institute offering principal professional development programs; the National Institute for School Leadership's Executive Development Program providing educators in-person and virtual training, and McREL's Balanced Leadership program offering learning modules and workshops have shown a positive impact on student outcomes and staff turnover. School Leaders Network recruits and places principals, engages them in peer networks, and provides one-to-one coaching support to principals in USA. In England, National College for School Leadership now called the College for Teaching and Leadership, established in the late 1990s strengthens the professional development of principals over the course of 4 years before principals can assume a school leadership position [34]. The Wallace Foundation in New York City provides high quality school leadership training for head teachers, successful teachers, and assistant principals. Canadian government is using the Energizing Ontario Education Model and developed a coherent leadership strategy to support school leaders. Each year, only 35 successful school leaders are selected based on leadership-situation exercises and interviews to attend "Leaders in Education" program' at Singapore's National Institute for Education.

Frost [35] emphasized that teacher leadership has been increasingly seen as crucial to educational reform and promoted in the USA and UK. Teachers can develop their leadership potentials and lead innovation in their schools with effective supports such as giving opportunities for open discussion about values, strategies, and leadership; enabling them to identify their professional development priorities; to access relevant literature; and guiding on leadership strategies. Many assistant principals acquire experience during internships or on-the-job training. Responsibilities and job description of assistant principals change from school to school. Their roles should be restructured [24].

There is a need for personalized professional development programs [36]. Sustainable programs can be supported by the professional development community [37]. Training may include workshops focusing on "action plans, collaborative inquiry, field practice, case study analysis, group dialogue, self-study, individual, feedback on performance and apprenticeships" [13]. Also mentoring by the school principals slightly better prepare assistant principals for the principalship [38, 39].

## 3. Conclusion

School leaders have clearly stated responsibilities set by Ministry of Education, government in different countries. Responsibilities of the school leaders may show similarities but also may show differences according to size, type, region of the school, school year and country. In all successful schools, the principals have high expectations for all students and have multiple responsibilities such as supporting curriculum and instruction, fostering a positive and caring culture, recruiting and retaining school staff, engaging parents and community resources, keeping up with the paperwork, e-mails, parent calls, evaluating teachers, attending school meetings, and community events in the USA [30]. New and experienced school leaders have different needs to fulfill their responsibilities because they have different levels of management, communication, technological skills, and understanding of curriculum. Also schools have different specific needs due to their demographical structure, academic

achievement level of students, experience of teachers, and parental involvement. In the light of the literature, all we need as educational leaders is:

- Clear recruitment criteria not only based on the teaching experience

- Clear stated roles and responsibilities

- Determination of training needs of new and experienced school leaders every year regularly. Because the needs change according to rapid changes in technology, communication, and culture during globalization

- Effective and fast determination of training needs of educational leaders

    ○ by interviews with school leaders

    ○ by conducting surveys

    ○ by using observations

    ○ by administration of school leader evaluation surveys to school community including students, teachers, and parents as part of the school-self evaluation

    ○ by reports of external inspectors of the schools

- Sustainable training programs in collaboration with universities, professional associations or governmental agencies

- Personalized training programs with careful consideration of content, duration, mode and place of instruction, experience and career stage of participant school leaders

- Updating training programs according to requirements of the era to meet the expectations of all stakeholders of education

- Encouragement of educational leaders to participate in professional development programs (i.e., giving certificates of attendance, certificates of successful completion, increment in salary, and advancement in career)

- Monitoring and evaluation of quality and efficiency of professional development programs

- Affordable professional development programs for all educational leaders (especially leaders in poor countries)

- Free, intensive networking between educational leaders for communication at national and international level (i.e., supported by pioneers of social media and social networking service companies)

- Free access of educational leaders to literature in education (i.e., supported by universities)

- Financial investments and funds by the governments, national and international associations, unions, foundations, agents to develop and implement up to date, and high-quality professional development programs

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