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Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training

## IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

### Country Background Report for Norway

OECD

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## **Improving School Leadership Report - Contributors**

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has organised and cooperated broadly to develop this Country Background Report about School Leadership in Norway.

Contributors to the report are participants in the **external advisory group**, participants in the **internal advisory group**, and contributors from the **competence network for school leadership** as well as professionals and school leaders at all levels. Contributors are listed in the appendix or as references.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This report is the Norwegian Country Background Report (CBR) produced for the OECD programme Improving School Leadership (ISL). Twenty-two countries are contributing with similar Country Background Reports.
2. The overall purpose of the Activity is to provide policy makers with information and analysis to assist them in formulating and implementing policies to support the development of school leaders who can systematically guide the improvement of teaching and learning.
3. The Activity has several objectives:
  - to synthesise research and national practices on issues related to improving leadership in schools
  - to identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices
  - to facilitate the exchange of lessons and policy options among countries
  - to identify policy options for governments to consider
4. The data on which this report is based consist of existing evaluations, reports and research as well as documents, reports and plans from authorities at central and local levels. The task of elaborating the CBR did not include producing new and independent research, but consisted of collecting and synthesising the data and evidence already available and identifying areas where evidence is not found. A national advisory group with actors from various parts of the school system was established to support this work. This means that stakeholders in this field – researchers, school owners’ representatives, school leaders, union organisations’ representatives and representatives from the authorities – have contributed to this report, which has been coordinated by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.
5. When reading the report, it is important to be aware of how the Norwegian school system is organised and directed. Although Norway has a national common framework, common law and common national strategies in fields given priority for primary and lower secondary education and for upper secondary education and training, the school owners at municipality and county level – in addition to private school owners – are responsible for how this is managed and carried out within each school.
6. Norwegian education is therefore characterised by great diversity and large variations in how local authorities choose to make priorities and run their schools. Through a report such as this it will therefore be very difficult to be precise on many of the issues the OECD would like elucidated at national level. We have gathered little data in a national context on factors related to school leadership, appointments and monitoring leaders. In such cases we have chosen to give examples in the report by describing the practice of a county authority or municipality.
7. New guidelines and signals in education policy have been presented in the Knowledge Promotion Reform and comprise new curricula, a strategy for competence building for those employed within all subjects at various levels, and strategies for political priority areas. Guidelines for school leadership are also given in the basic documentation of this reform. The White Paper *Culture for learning* submitted to the Norwegian Parliament emphasises that schools need competent and visible school leaders who have positive attitudes to change to enable schools to develop into learning organisations. This White Paper and the Knowledge Promotion Reform constitute the points of reference for most of the questions from the OECD concerning current education policy initiatives in Norway.
8. Little research has been conducted in Norway into school leadership. The work performed on this report has contributed to highlighting several areas that may well be worth assessing more closely in order to provide documentation and a knowledge base for new decisions. The advisory group also draws attention to the fact that reticence must be shown in initiating surveys, reports and documentation of data

and information at national level that impose additional work on the sector. The focus must be on what it is desirable to learn more about and what this is to be used for.

## SUMMARY

### Introduction and background for the programme

9. The OECD's intention with the programme *Improving School Leadership (2006-2008)* is to draw attention to the subject of school leadership in the member states. The programme represents a follow-up of the OECD study *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2003) which presented recommendations for the type of leadership from which schools and teachers will gain the maximum benefit. The study aims to contribute information and analyses on the basis of research and practice that have been conducted with a view to improving leadership in schools and to facilitating the exchange of experience, knowledge and policies between the countries. The 22 member states that are taking part in the study have each prepared a background report like the Norwegian one to describe the status of school leadership in their countries, written in keeping with guidelines and specific questions from the OECD.

### Chapter 1

10. This chapter gives a description of the political, historical, demographic, economic, social and cultural conditions in Norway in order to show the type of situation into which school leadership is incorporated. Norway is a monarchy and has a population of 4.6 million. The current government consists of three parties: the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party. Norway is among the countries (Education at a Glance 2006) that are ranked highest in the statistics with regard to the budget for education. The Norwegian economy is stable and positive. Immigration during the past 30 years has meant that Norway is developing as an increasingly multicultural nation.

### Chapter 2

11. Chapter 2 provides a description of the school system and the school as an organisation. It includes structural features of the school system and information about governance, objectives and framework. In Norway primary and lower secondary education extends from grade 1 to grade 13, as laid down in the Knowledge Promotion Reform (2006). There are approximately 834 000 pupils attending 3 700 schools in 429 municipalities and 19 county authorities. At the national level the sector is governed by the Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the Directorate of Education and Training, with regional governmental bodies in each county and with school owners assigned responsibility for their schools in the county authorities and municipalities. As part of the Knowledge Promotion Reform, a new joint national curriculum has been compiled for primary and lower secondary education in its entirety. School leaders and teachers are unionised in ten trade unions consisting of a total of 150 000 members, 140 000 of whom belong to one union.

### Chapter 3

12. This chapter describes aspects related to school leaders' working conditions, mandate and tasks, line of governance, authority and responsibility. In Norway the responsibility for education is delegated to school owners in parallel with national guidelines in the form of laws, curricula and regulations. The emphasis given to schools can vary depending on local priorities and organisation. Changes in the form of reorganisation and new local management structures that are of importance for school governance are described. The chapter deals with competence at the local level and the expertise of the teachers, as well as with the degree of freedom and control given to school leaders in relation to goals and reporting. Scattered settlements and a high number of small schools mean that teachers who can teach all subjects – general subject teachers – are in a stronger position than single-subject teachers, at the same time as the requirement for more specialised education for teachers is increasing. Information is given about the new school policy that focuses on basic skills for pupils, and the competence needs/competence-enhancement for school leaders are described.

### Chapter 4

13. This chapter focuses particularly on the role school leadership has and can have to promote and improve learning. Different perceptions of what produces optimal learning outcomes and how these can best be assessed have been the subject of continuous debate during the past decade inspired by OECD reports such as PISA and TIMSS. In 2006 a joint national inspection programme showed that more than 70% of the schools in the sample did not have systematic school assessment and reporting routines in place and thus

lacked a system to safeguard pupils' rights. In parallel with a greater commitment to develop "learning organisations", school leaders' accountability and opportunities are also being paid greater attention. In an era that focuses on accountability and results, new competence needs for school owners and school leaders are being highlighted. This chapter also provides a description of the intentions specified for this work in the Knowledge Promotion Reform.

### **Chapter 5**

14. Chapter 5 reports increasing concern from the authorities with regard to applicant figures and school leaders' qualifications, even though this has not been presented as a national problem but is resolved locally by school owners. Most school leaders at primary and lower secondary schools as well as in upper secondary education undergo continuing education and training, but little is known about the scope and content of such programmes. Existing laws and agreements ensure that school leaders have equal pay and working conditions, and from 2005 a legislative amendment allows them to be appointed on fixed-term contracts. However, this has so far been exploited to only a very small extent. The report explains how agreements are made and negotiations conducted in the cooperation between the parties in question. The work on the OECD's questions revealed that Norway lacks data on recruitment measures for the appointment of school leaders as well as an overview of vacant positions. Nor is it known how many of those recruited to school leader posts have undergone teacher training or have experience as teachers, and there are no figures that show the working time and the duration of school leaders' careers. There is no national overview of how the relationship between requirements and support is exercised by school owners vis-à-vis school principals, or of the type of formal education school leaders actually possess. All in all little research and data on school leadership is available. In addition there are no research results into the impact of study programmes in educational leadership on the school leaders who have taken them.

### **Chapter 6**

15. This chapter reports on the governmental training programmes for building school leaders' competence that have been conducted from the 1970s up to today and for which the Knowledge Promotion Reform has provided the direction and financial framework. However, no specific requirements have been set regarding education for appointment as school leader. A study conducted last year (2006) showed that 40% of school leaders had no formal education in management or organisational development. The Network for School Leadership – a collaboration between the university and university colleges that aims to improve and develop such options – has worked on these challenges for the past decade. Educational leadership as a subject has been developed and is offered as a Master programme at several universities. The content of such educational provisions and ongoing research is described.

### **Chapter 7**

16. In conclusion an assessment is given of the strengths and weaknesses of the efforts to improve school leadership on a national basis, along with tentative guidelines for further work. The reporting for the OECD has shown that Norway requires better knowledge and data about the working conditions of school leaders from their recruitment to policy measures aimed at later career stages as well as insight into how education policy provisions laid down by the central government are put into operation and their effect at local level. In the report a description is also given of the experience gathered from training and courses of studies for school leaders and of the intentions and ongoing measures that are included in the Knowledge Promotion Reform. One consequence may be an increased awareness of the shared responsibility for training established between the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities as the school owners' representative in cooperation with the employees' unions on the one hand and the central authorities on the other. A clear division of responsibility provides a strong platform for collaboration between school owners and the state authorities on school leadership training. Instruction for school leaders, as the employers' representative, in the fields of law, human resources administration and economy can be combined with government programmes with clear expectations of the school leader regarding education policy priorities. In combination these can elucidate the concept of "clear and powerful" leadership in schools as advocated in the Knowledge Promotion Reform.



## CHAPTER 1: THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT OF SCHOOLING

*The purpose of this chapter is to outline briefly and clearly the broad political, demographic, economic, social and cultural developments that shape the issues that education policies must address. It is intended to provide the context for the more detailed discussion in later sections.*

### 1.1 Political context

17. Norway's present government was appointed by King Harald V on 17 October 2005. It is a majority government representing the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party.

18. The Education Act stipulates that all activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values, and that each and every person working in schools should encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each individual as well as of the shared environment. It is underscored that education shall be based on fundamental Christian and humanistic values, and it should uphold and renew our cultural heritage to provide perspective and guidance for the future.

19. There is wide political support in the Norwegian Parliament for the education policy. The present government is continuing the initiatives in the Knowledge Promotion Reform, started under the previous government (representing the Christian Democratic Party, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party). However, it places greater focus on solutions that are to the general good – for example fewer approvals for private schools. The new curricula are intended to encourage better focus and greater efforts for individual pupils in their endeavours to achieve competence aims and to strengthen their basic skills through work on the various subjects. The process of achieving competence aims will be adapted to the individual pupil.

### 1.2 Historical context

20. Our historical development as a nation has established a way of understanding democracy in the workplace. It has been, and continues to be, important for everyone to have a sense of control over their working conditions, and to some degree there has been a similarity of lifestyle between managers and workers. Resilient unions are an important element in our way of framing legitimate leadership and management. The unions have contributed to robust elements of negotiations in the workplace and a form of institutionalised trust relations. A strong welfare state has simultaneously played a powerful role in shaping job security. Such conditions have set up barriers against implementing “Taylorism” within a Norwegian context (Sejersted, 1997).

### 1.3 Demographic context

21. Norway is comparable in size to Britain, but its population density is one of the lowest in Europe, with 4.6 million inhabitants. The population used to be fairly homogenous, but this situation has changed during the last 30 – 40 years with a high influx of people from non western countries and cultures. To provide educational opportunities where people live, a large number of schools – 40% of primary and lower secondary schools – are quite small (less than a hundred pupils), and in these schools children of different ages are often taught in the same classroom. But since they are small, only 8.7% of the total number of pupils attend such schools. The Norwegian educational system is predominantly public. The private sector in Norwegian education is small (2.3% of students in compulsory schooling, and about 5.2% in upper secondary).

22. As much as 73.2% of the labour force is employed in the service sector, with two-thirds of these people working in the fairly large public sector. Services in the health and education sectors are largely a government responsibility.

#### **1.4 Economic context**

23. Norway is the OECD country that has the highest national product per inhabitant. Value added in Norway, measured as GDP, increased by almost 80% through the 1980s and 1990s. This growth must partly be viewed in connection with the development of the oil industry, production having grown fourfold from 1980 to 2000.

24. The Norwegian state has no national debt, while Norwegian municipalities have increased their debts by some 30% (2002) to meet public commitments – such as education. These economic allocations are under continuous political debate, and the Government has increased transfers to the municipalities.

25. Statistics from the OECD (Education at a Glance 2005) show that Norway is among the countries worldwide that spend the most on schools. Adjusted for purchasing power, Norway spent 42% more per pupil in primary and lower secondary schools than the OECD average. Norwegian expenses per pupil in these schools compared to GNP per inhabitant amounts to 20%, which corresponds to the average for the OECD countries.

26. Capacity utilisation in the Norwegian economy is high. The economy is regarded as fairly open, with a *per capita* foreign trade that ranks among the highest in the world and that shows a positive balance.

#### **1.5 Social and cultural context**

27. Culturally the population of Norway is fairly homogeneous, with a small indigenous Saami minority mostly in the North (0.2% of the pupils use the Saami language at school). In addition there are between 10 000 and 15 000 Norwegians of Finnish descent in the counties of Troms and Finnmark. Many of them use their own language. While Norway has two official written languages taught in school, the two are fairly similar. The use of the languages roughly follows a geographical profile: the minority language ("New Norwegian") chosen by 15% of the schools is mostly used in the western and south-western counties.

28. There has been steady immigration to the country in the last 30 years. According to the 2001 national census, about 7% of the population (307 714) were immigrants. The same percentage of pupils in primary schools have a mother tongue other than Norwegian. The largest immigrant groups come from Pakistan (7.9%), Sweden, (7.3%) and Denmark (6.2%). In some districts in Oslo, schools have a clear immigrant majority among the pupils, who represent 20-30 different nationalities. The immigrant population in Oslo has increased by 40% in the past five years, and in seven of the city districts over 20% of the population have a non-western background. In primary and lower secondary education the term "student from language minorities" is used to refer to students who for a short or a long period need individually-adapted tuition in the Norwegian language to enable them to follow regular classes (Vedøy, 2006).

29. A total of 24% of the Norwegian population over the age of 16 has undergone education at university or university college level (2004). This is almost twice as many as 20 years ago (Statistics Norway). In the group in Norway that has taken short higher education there are now more women than men.

30. Gender equality is seen as an important goal for society at the same time as it is an overall goal within education and research. It features as an integral part of the Education Act, within the general component of the national curriculum, as well as within the different aspects of the education curricula. The goal has been highlighted in education policy for many years, and school principals live in this rhetorical universe, which probably frames their construction of gender identities. Compulsory schooling has a gender balance

among school principals, but this is not the case in upper secondary schools. During the 1980s and 1990s the number of woman in leadership positions at school level has increased considerably, while fewer and fewer men decide to become teachers. This is particularly the case for primary schools.

31. While the understanding of leadership in schools is being internationalised (see Karlsen, 2002), research shows that there are considerable national differences (Møller, 2005). These differences can be explained on the basis of national culture as illustrated by Hofstede when he links national culture and dimensions of leadership (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Such analyses may promote understanding of the conditions for the exercise of leadership and the kind of leadership that is regarded as legitimate.

32. Hofstede's analysis of leadership in 74 countries shows that Norway differs from the norm in other countries in two particular fields. Firstly there is little power distance, i.e. little distance between the leader and the employee. Secondly Norwegian leadership culture is characterised by femininity: modesty and caring (cf. Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). These results agree with the usual description of the "Scandinavian leadership model": little hierarchy, a flat structure, powerful labour unions, decentralised governance, few industrial disputes and good social welfare schemes.

## CHAPTER 2: THE NORWEGIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

*The purpose of this chapter is to outline the main features of the school system, its goals, trends and key policy issues. This chapter will provide much of the detail that is to be cross-referenced in the following chapters.*

### 2.1 Structural features of the school system

33. The school authorities and school leadership in Norway are part of a governance structure – national, regional and local – that is the same for the whole country across the various sectors. The entire school sector operates in line with common legislation. The Education Act and the national curriculum have been defined on a national basis, and agreements between employers and employees are negotiated for the country as a whole. These common framework conditions mean that authority is delegated to county authorities and municipalities, i.e. the level elected by the people in the Norwegian governance structure. However, local systems may vary considerably.

34. In Norway each school has a principal who is the authority responsible for the pupils in school hours, acting on behalf of the parents. The principal's authority is delegated from the school owner, which in political terms means the mayor, on behalf of the politically elected assembly in counties or municipalities or the chairman of the board in a private school. Administratively the exercising of authority is assigned to the chief municipal executive in each county authority and municipality, who in turn either delegates the power to a person with school-based competence, the chief municipal education officer, sector manager or person with a similar title, or directly to a principal for a school.

35. Those who exercise formal authority are leaders at different levels in the education sector. When the term school leadership is used, it includes the person with the highest authority but is extended to cover all those employed in leadership positions at various levels. In a school there are many who are able to assume the role of leader, but it must always be made clear how formally the responsibility has been assigned.

#### *Types of schools*

36. With the new school reform that started in autumn 2006 – the Knowledge Promotion Reform – the entire basic school programme is considered **one** coherent system, from grade 1 to grade 13.

#### *Primary and lower secondary school*

37. Compulsory schooling in Norway is of ten years' duration, and children start school at the age of six. The responsible unit is the local municipality.

- There are 3 238 primary and lower secondary schools in Norway, and they are situated in 429 municipalities. (Source: Norwegian Internet information system for primary and lower secondary education)
- There are about 620 000 pupils in the 10-year compulsory education. (Source: Statistics Norway)
- Daycare facilities for school children is a right for pupils from first to fourth grade, but parents are obliged to pay a fee.
- Just over 2% of the pupils at compulsory schooling level attend private schools.
- There are 12.5 pupils per teacher. (Directorate of Education and Training's analysis of primary and lower secondary education)

### ***Upper secondary school***

38. Upper secondary school covers the 16- to 19-year-olds from grade 11 to grade 13, and includes general academic studies as well as vocational training. The responsible administrative unit is at regional (county) level.

- There are 462 upper secondary schools in Norway, and they are situated in 19 counties.
- Approximately 6% of the total number of pupils at this level attend private schools.
- The total number of students was 214 000 in 2005.
- There are about eight students per teacher at upper secondary school. (Source: Statistics Norway)

39. With the Competence Reform of 1998, adults born after 1978 who have not completed upper secondary education have the same legal right to such education as the 16 to 19-year-olds. The government has now proposed that this right be extended to all youth below the age of 25.

40. Furthermore, the law obliges county authorities to provide a follow-up service for young people between 16 and 19 years of age who are currently neither attending a course of education nor employed.

### ***Types of personnel***

- 41. The total number of teaching staff in compulsory education (grades 1-10) was 62 200 and 23 100 in upper secondary schools in 2005.
- Approximately 73% of the teachers in compulsory education are women (grades 1-10), and women account for 47% of the teaching staff in upper secondary schools.
- In 2005, 48% of the teachers in compulsory education and 65% of the teachers in upper secondary education were older than 45.
- About 65% of the teachers in compulsory education have three or four years of general teacher training from a university college (e.g. the four-year general teacher training programme). (Source: Statistics Norway)
- Women account for 51% of the leaders in compulsory schools and 44% in upper secondary education

42. School leadership was examined by researchers at the University of Oslo in a survey conducted last year. It was found that 40% of school leaders had no formal education in management or organisational skills. As schools today have more open processes with regard to learning and learning outcomes, leadership is being assigned greater importance and the role of school leaders is changing in Norway. The Education Act states that school leaders are required to have pedagogical competence as well as the necessary leadership skills. It is the responsibility of the school owner to ensure that this is the case.

### ***Overall size and composition of the school system***

43. In Norway basic education lasts for thirteen years. Pupils start at school in the year they turn six. The first ten years of primary and lower secondary education are compulsory.

44. At upper secondary level (grades 11-13) students are offered a number of study options. As a result of the recent reform the structure of the upper secondary school system has been simplified with the intention of allowing more flexibility in organising education and training for the individual pupil, for the school, for the apprentice and for teachers and trainers. This entails fewer and broader study programmes, amounting to a total of eleven. The subjects will be organised to make it easier to identify common elements and to make it possible to use resources more efficiently.

- 45. The Norwegian education budget (including universities and university colleges) is equal to approximately 7.6% of the gross domestic product. The average for the OECD countries is about 5.5%. (Source: OECD, Education at a Glance [EAG])  
In 2005, primary, lower and upper secondary schooling accounted for about 9% of all public expenditure in Norway. (Source: Statistics Norway)
- Norwegian schools vary in size from one or two pupils in certain cases to more than 800 pupils at some schools. (Source: Norwegian Internet information system for primary and lower secondary education)
- The number of upper secondary schools has not changed noticeably over the past few years, but the number of private schools at this level increased from 13% in 2003-2004 to 16% in 2005-2006. (Source: Statistics Norway – Facts about education in Norway)
- On average, one out of ten pupils in upper secondary schools has a minority background. The educational level has risen considerably in recent years. In 2004, 24% of Norwegians above the age of 16 had undertaken higher education – twice as many as 20 years ago. (Source: Statistics Norway)
- The number of pupils with an immigrant background<sup>1</sup> in compulsory education (grades 1-10) is between 7% and 8%. Half these pupils are given education in their mother tongue, and around 70% are given additional instruction in the Norwegian language.
- A reorganisation of special education has taken place in Norway since the beginning of the 1990s, one of the main objectives being to effect a change from a system with special schools to a system of full integration. Whenever possible pupils with special needs are integrated into ordinary schools. The number of pupils in special schools is relatively stable: in 2005 was between 3% and 4% per thousand of the total number of pupils undergoing compulsory education, approximately 6% of whom receive special tuition at school.
- A total of 59% of all primary and lower secondary schools are solely primary schools (grades 1-7), 25% are combined primary and lower secondary (grades 1-10), and 16% are only lower secondary schools (grades 8-10). (Source: Norwegian Internet information system for primary and lower secondary education)
- Participation in upper secondary education has increased from 20 – 30% to well over 90%, and in higher education from under 10% to almost 50% in the course of the last 30 years

## 2.2 Availability of public and private resources for schooling

46. The resources available for primary and lower secondary education in Norway are relatively stable with regard to both the total resources and resources per pupil. The changes that have taken place in recent years are mainly due to the increase in the number of pupils, particularly in lower and upper secondary schools. Compared with other countries, considerable resources are allocated to the compulsory 10-year schooling and to upper secondary education and training in Norway, but there is significant variation in how the municipalities and county authorities utilise the resources. This is largely due to the fact that the municipalities and county authorities have different school structures. For example municipalities with scattered settlements often have higher expenses per pupil than those with more centralised populations. Differences in the structure of the facilities offered in upper secondary education and training can also explain the variation in the county authorities' use of resources. The majority of the municipalities spend an average of approximately NOK 65 000 per pupil per year. (Source: KOSTRA, the municipality/state reporting system)

47. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training provides data from primary and secondary schools in Norway at [www.skoleporten.no](http://www.skoleporten.no). These data are meant as resources for local work on issues concerning evaluation and development. The website also offers resources to contribute to interpretation,

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<sup>1</sup> Immigrant background can be understood as born in Norway (first generation), or born abroad (second generation) of parents who were also born abroad.

assessment and development within the schools. The website's main target groups are school principals, head teachers and school administrators and politicians. However, parents, pupils and the general public will also find the website useful.

48. Access to and the use of resources in schools are affected by factors such as pupil base, geographical location, buildings, and the school's internal organisation. Data documentation is divided into economy, teaching and materials. The various data make it possible to compare the resource situation for a school or municipality over time, or to compare the resource situation between different schools, municipalities and county authorities. At school level only data for teaching and materials are given, while data for economy are presented at school-owner level.

49. For instance it is reported that primary and lower secondary education accounted for 9% of total public expenditure in 2005. (Source: Statistics Norway)

50. In 2003/04, 98% of all pupils in primary and lower secondary schools attended public-sector institutions, while at upper secondary level some 95% attended such an institution. All expenses are covered by the Government, administered at national, regional and local levels. The remaining pupils attended private institutions, with most of them having 85% of their expenses covered by the Government. The remainder is covered by students' fees.

### **2.3 Governance of the school system and the regulatory framework for schools**

51. The Ministry of Education and Research – assisted by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, including the county governors in each county – has the overall responsibility for all areas of education including pre-school provisions. Municipal authorities manage all aspects of compulsory education, county authorities are responsible for upper secondary education and training, and the Ministry of Education and Research manages the tertiary education institutions directly.

52. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (established 2004) is the executive agency for the Ministry of Education and Research.

53. In this capacity the Directorate has the overall responsibility for monitoring education and the governance of the education sector, as well as for implementing Acts of Parliament and regulations. The Directorate is also responsible for managing the Norwegian Support System for Special Education (Statped), state-owned schools and the educational direction of the National Education Centres.

54. The Directorate is also responsible for all national statistics concerning primary and secondary education, on the basis of which the Directorate initiates and monitors research and development.

55. The objective of the Directorate is to ensure that all pupils and apprentices receive the high-quality education they are entitled to. The Directorate cooperates and discusses these challenges with the county governors in each county, who also have responsibility regionally for co-ordinating local guidance, development work and supervision.

56. The Norwegian 10-year compulsory education is regulated through a specific Act which currently covers education in these schools and in upper secondary schools and also includes that part of trade and vocational training that is carried out in companies. The Act was adopted in 1998 by the merger of several laws that previously regulated minor parts of primary and lower secondary education. The legislation is gradually being characterised by a clearer framework which gives the municipalities and county authorities – as the bodies responsible for primary and lower secondary schools and upper secondary education and training respectively – greater freedom to make their own decisions on the organisation and running of primary and lower secondary schooling. In the most recent reform of these schools – initiated in 2006 – the curricula have also become less detailed.

57. This means that in general each municipality and county authority decides the powers that are to be delegated to the individual school. Such delegation will therefore affect both the content and the empowerment of the school leader role and the teacher role, which can consequently vary to some extent among the 431 municipalities and 19 county authorities. This presents challenges when general replies are required to some of the questions that have been asked by this report.

58. A key feature of the Norwegian education system is the central role of teacher organisations. The basic agreement regulates cooperation between the social partners at local, municipal and school levels.

## 2.4 Changes in goals and objectives of the school system over the last decade

59. The ongoing reform of primary, secondary and upper secondary schools – the Knowledge Promotion Reform – was implemented in all schools in Norway in 2006.

60. A **new curriculum** is being created for schooling from the age of six to the age of 19, i.e. grades 1-13. The Core Curriculum is based on a set of values on which there is broad consensus, and has not been changed. Compared to the former syllabuses, the different subject syllabuses have been simplified and clarified so that they express clear learning targets concerning the type of competence pupils and apprentices should be able to acquire.

61. The new coherent set of curricula for the entire basic school programme identifies certain **basic skills** as being especially important for pupils' and apprentices' professional and personal development. These basic skills are: (1) oral expression, (2) reading, (3) writing, (4) arithmetic and (5) the use of digital tools. Other competencies or skills are also expressed in the curricula as principles for schooling in Norway and include social and cultural competencies, motivation and learning strategies.

62. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has the responsibility for the national curriculum, assessment/examinations and supervision/control, and for the development of primary and secondary education. The Directorate is developing the new national curricula for primary and secondary education based on the principles proposed in the White Paper *Culture for learning* submitted to the Parliament in 2004. The increased emphasis on basic skills and knowledge mentioned above, greater diversity with regard to working methods and organisation, and education that is better adapted to each pupil are essential elements in the new curricula and in the Knowledge Promotion Reform.

63. The Directorate for Education and Training appoints curriculum groups for each subject, and new competence aims are developed for pupils' learning in all these subjects. All the curricula are circulated for review to all environments and levels in the education sector, and the general public is given a genuine opportunity to present viewpoints during the process.

64. With the Knowledge Promotion Reform a common national curriculum was created for the first time for the compulsory 10-year schooling and upper secondary education and training in Norway. The aim of the reform is to sustain and develop the best in basic education (understood as all schooling from the start of primary to the end of upper secondary education), with a view to ensure that pupils are better able to meet the challenges of the knowledge society. The vision is to create a better *culture for learning and motivation for lifelong learning*. In parallel with the strengthening of the pupils' basic skills, schools' key role is defined as the communicator of values, all-round education and culture.

65. Curricula for private schools deviate from the national curricula in accordance with the grounds for establishing such schools, but they are to a large extent based on the same principles, guidelines and objectives as those that apply for public schools.

66. The new curriculum was implemented in grades 1-9 and 11 in August 2006, and will be implemented in grades 10 and 12 from 2007 and in grade 13 from 2008.



67. In addition to the curricula, the Ministry and the Directorate develop national strategies for education within special areas of priority. The strategies are intended to contribute to the work of implementing the curricula in the various subjects.

68. National centres have also been set up to assist in initiating objectives and programmes in the national strategies geared towards multi-cultural teaching, foreign languages, art and culture, teaching and researching reading, mathematics, natural sciences, New Norwegian, entrepreneurship, sustainable development and information technology.

69. The implementation of new curricula is a key component of the competence strategy that forms part of the Knowledge Promotion Reform. Competence building for school leaders is given priority in this programme.

70. Funds earmarked for competence building are channelled directly from the Directorate to the school owner, who is responsible for competence enhancement for school leaders and teachers. Universities, university colleges and other professional environments are hired to assist school owners in these efforts. A comprehensive national programme for school development has been compiled for use in schools entitled *The Knowledge Promotion Reform – from words to action*. The leaders' role and tasks are key components of the programme and form the basis for the work they are to lead in their own schools (cf. 4.9).

71. A national quality assessment system was introduced in 2004 which included national tests for assessing students' basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and English as well as surveys for mapping the learning environment in schools. Results at school and municipal level are published together with development resources at [www.skoleporten.no](http://www.skoleporten.no) (operated by the Directorate).

## **2.5 Unions for teachers and school leaders**

72. There are approximately ten educational unions that have the formal right to negotiate on behalf of their members nationally and/or locally. The number of union members working within the education system varies from the largest union – the Union of Education Norway with some 140 000 members – to the smallest that comprises a few hundred members. These unions have a total of roughly 150 000 members, including retired persons, who are attached to the education sector at institutions that range from daycare centres through to higher education.

73. One union with just over 2 000 members consists solely of leaders within the educational sector. However, there are altogether more school leaders who are members of the other unions. There are no official statistics on the number of school leaders in Norway, and none that reveal the proportion of school leaders who are unionised. However, it is presumed that this applies to a total of more than three-quarters in all types of school.

74. Key themes that were particularly relevant for school leaders at the most recent negotiations were the questions of whether leaders in general should have higher salaries than those they lead, and whether they should be guaranteed a minimum wage and minimum administration resources depending on the size of the school. The unions won approval for their most significant demands in these areas, even though some exceptions were made to the rule stipulating that the leader should have the highest salary in each school.

75. The matter of increased resources for school leadership is discussed locally, and school leaders' salaries are also fixed at this level in keeping with those of other municipal leaders.

76. The most recent negotiations highlighted competence building for leaders and discussed the organisation of their working year – particularly for those who also teach. Senior policy programmes were addressed to encourage leaders to remain longer in working life.

## **2.6 Public perceptions about the role of schools, the quality of schooling, and the status of teachers and school leaders**

77. Schools must be able to give pupils a good education. In a diverse society that demands more and more knowledge, schooling must provide access to both current working and community life and to the competence required to cope with changing circumstances and an unknown future. It must give its pupils attitudes and knowledge that can last the rest of their lives, and must lay the foundation for the new skills that are needed in a rapidly-changing society. As expressed in the Knowledge Promotion Reform, the goal of schooling is to expand the abilities of children, young people and adults to gain insight and new experience and to feel involvement, fulfilment and participation.

78. The Union of Education Norway claims that the status of teachers and school leaders has declined during the past 20 to 30 years. They are also of the view that there is a general opinion that the outcomes of the teaching have deteriorated. However, the comparison is difficult to make since participation in schooling has increased substantially in the same period of time (see 2.1). In addition, emphasis has been placed on a number of new competencies in the tuition, and these are difficult to measure through a test system. Moreover, surveys clearly show that parents are reasonably satisfied with the quality of their child or children's schools, while they are more critical of the education system in general. (Source: Directorate for Education and Training)

## CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP IN NORWAY

*This chapter aims to identify the roles and responsibilities of school leaders under different governance structures and environmental contexts. It asks for evidence on the relationship between these governance structures and contexts and effective leadership, as well as on the existence of a set of core competencies for effective school leaders whatever the organisational or environmental context.*

### 3.1 Conceptualising school leadership

79. Although educational leadership is situated in the field of education, much of the leadership discourse in education has been influenced by management discourse in other fields. As such, there are tensions and contradictions connected to the way school leadership is being conceptualised in our country (Møller, 2007). Norwegian policy documents indicate that strong and visible leadership is needed in order to transform schools into learning organisations. The assumption could be that leadership resides in individual role holders or a few actors who are strategically positioned within organisations.

80. In the White Paper entitled *Culture for learning* (cf. Introduction), an explicit connection is made between learning and leadership, and the difference in roles and responsibilities between teachers and leaders is highlighted. In this document the term school leadership is applied to those in a **formal** leadership position at local schools.

81. In order to make good use of the knowledge produced by the national quality assessment system, each school needs ambitious school leaders with positive attitudes to change and development. The arguments underpinning this conception of leadership are legitimised in international studies.

82. According to this policy document, strong leadership is fundamental for the development of schools into learning organisations. In contrast, the document introduces the concept of *compliant leaders* for those leaders that transfer their responsibility for student learning to the teachers. Compliant leadership creates an obstacle to school improvement and the development of learning organisations, while strong and visible leadership can make important contributions to the improvement of student learning (cf. Valle, 2005).

83. On the other hand, several research studies emphasise leadership as a relational concept, assuming that leadership practice is constituted in the *interactions* of people and their situations (Møller, 2006). Leadership is distributed within the organisation, and the term “school leadership” is conceptualised as a collective made up of deliberative teachers, the school principal and deputies, and students, as opposed to a single, visionary, creative leader who directs the school.

84. In this way school leadership can be understood as a network of relationships among people, structures and cultures rather than merely a role-based function assigned to one person. But leadership is also about power, and school principals are vested with formal powers that cover a range of means of compulsion and reward, including economic and structural sanctions. The power of the principal has its source outside the school because it is delegated by the State (cf. Møller, 2006).

### 3.2 Regulatory framework that governs the roles and responsibilities of school leaders

85. The fundamental framework that describes the responsibility and role of school leadership consists of the Education Act (1998) and its accompanying regulations that are laid down by the Norwegian Parliament and the Ministry, and the agreements for the municipal sector that are formed between the parties. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities negotiates with the employee unions on behalf of municipalities and county authorities (school owners and employers).

86. The first paragraph of Section 9 of the Education Act states that each school shall have sound professional, educational and administrative management and that the instruction given in the school shall be led by the school leader. School leaders are to keep informed about the daily activities in the schools and are to ensure the further development of these activities. The person appointed as school leader must have pedagogical competence and the necessary leadership skills, and can be appointed for a certain period of years. The *agreements* stipulate a minimum level for the period of leadership as well as the leader's salary, rights and obligations.

87. The Local Government Act of 1992 paved the way for a high degree of self-governance on the part of the municipalities and county authorities. The development has shifted from several detailed laws for various levels and types of school to more general and less specific provisions in an integrated body of legislation, cf. 2.3. This also applies to provisions that regulate the role and responsibility of school leaders. The different school leader positions were previously regulated through common instructions laid down by the Government for the various positions, whereas currently there is only the provision that states that there must be an administrative and professional leader for each school. The Act has also been amended to make it possible to appoint a principal who is responsible for several schools. The scope and content of the tasks for all school leader positions are decided on a local basis.

88. Most proposed amendments to Norwegian legislation are processed by a committee set up by the Government and are circulated for review to the organisations affected before the Government submits the draft legislation to the Parliament. The teachers' and school leaders' unions appoint members and representatives to committees that address such matters and are given the opportunity to express their opinions on relevant legislative amendments.

89. Local rules concerning empowerments that are delegated to the principals of individual schools are developed in different ways and are adopted in various bodies. In general there has been a tendency to transfer increasingly greater powers from political bodies to the administration in municipalities and county authorities. Union representatives for the employees are to varying degrees included in the work of shaping authorisations for schools and school leaders.

### **3.3 Challenges school leadership face in Norway**

#### ***Major policy concerns***

90. In the report entitled *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers* (OECD, 2003), a main concern was that generally poor finances at municipal level will result in a deficient and possibly deteriorating level of teacher policy initiatives. The present government has increased – and plans to continue to increase – the unrestricted funds in the block grants for the municipalities, but it is not yet clear how large a proportion of these resources are allocated to the education sector. Another worry expressed in the report is that the decentralisation of decision making and of the allocation of funding to schools will lead to inequalities among regions and individual schools. These issues are frequently the subject of public and political debate, and there may be reasons for examining such processes and outcomes more closely. One possible strategy could be to identify factors, reasons and results in cases where municipalities give priority to professional development initiatives and to improving levels of salary and working conditions etc.

91. In times of delegation of responsibility, teacher and school leader unions and school administrators at different levels express concern about what might be called a “draining of school-based competence” at local school management and local authority level. This can be described as a twofold challenge, one being the requirements to qualify for school leader positions. It has been suggested that school leadership posts should be open for the employment of school leaders without pedagogical insight or experience (cf. 6.2, 6.3). This would accentuate the need to ensure that school management teams include at least one person with the education and experience necessary to function as staff consultant in educational and teaching matters. Furthermore, concern was expressed about the fact that without an educational

background, leaders would not fully understand the distinctive character of schools and their kind of “production” and activities, and that they might give priority to aims and measures other than the quality of pupil learning and staff development.

92. Secondly, following the widespread reorganisations at municipal level, there is no requirement for municipal officials who are responsible for school-related matters to have school-related experience or education. Concern has therefore been expressed that school leaders will not be given the necessary support from school-competent consultants at municipal/school owner level, and that schools will no longer have dedicated “spokesmen” in the municipal decision making processes where financial resources are distributed and where schools compete with other worthy causes in municipal budgets. The school leader union points out that this problem is becoming more and more noticeable in many municipalities – not least on the introduction of large national reforms that are also to be implemented and monitored at local level.

93. These issues can be seen as related to the broader discussion on the professional background and competence of those responsible for school matters. Some call for an open discussion on this issue with a view to establishing the kind of professional competence that is required for school leadership at municipal and school level. There is a reciprocal aspect to this: if subordinates do not have sufficient confidence in and respect for the pedagogical and professional competence of their leaders, the ability of the leaders to influence their staff’s practice may be correspondingly reduced.

#### ***Concerns related to teacher competence***

94. One concern relates to the “generalist” versus the “specialist” teacher. Norwegian primary and lower secondary education has been and still is adapted to the scattered demographic pattern of the country, and there are therefore a large number of small schools. There are many schools with only a few pupils at each age level – or even with pupils at only a few age levels – and this has influenced the requirements to be met in determining the combination and profile of teacher competence. The general teacher had to possess a solid basic and broad competence, but not necessarily a high degree of specialised in-depth subject expertise (Lagerstrøm, 2000).

95. As a consequence, the profile and requirements of Norwegian teacher competence are more general than those in other OECD countries where teachers may be subject specialists even at the low levels of primary schools. Several stakeholders in various parts of the education system consider that the generalist teacher is currently under pressure, both through changes and through demands for a higher degree of in-depth and specialised subject competence also among teachers at lower levels. This poses a major challenge to school leaders. Firstly it constitutes a deviation from a long tradition of the “generalist” teacher who teaches a range of subjects to the same class or group of pupils at the lower levels of primary school and is thus able to get to know the pupils and to work with social aspects of the class environment. Secondly, there is the challenge of recruiting new teachers or giving teachers opportunities to strengthen their academic knowledge.

#### ***New school policies***

96. *Knowledge Promotion* is the latest reform in the 10-year compulsory schooling and upper secondary education and training. It introduces changes in substance, structure and organisation.

97. School leaders are faced with the challenge of implementing the Knowledge Promotion Reform in schools. The reform ascribes them the prime responsibility for ensuring that the individual teacher becomes familiar with the entire national curriculum and with the reasons and intentions that form the basis of the separate subject curricula. They must also assess the competence-building measures required to meet the challenges of the Knowledge Promotion Reform. It is expected that arrangements will be made to allow systematic work to be performed by the entire staff, and that changes to practice will be monitored.

98. The schools are responsible for developing pupils' and apprentices' basic competence: social and cultural skills, motivation for learning, and learning strategies.

99. The following are the most important changes resulting from the new curriculum of the Knowledge Promotion Reform:

- 100. [Basic skills are to be strengthened](#), and ICT (the use of digital tools) is to be introduced as a fundamental skill equal to reading, writing, arithmetic and oral expression. [Reading and writing are emphasised from the first grade. New subject syllabuses in all subjects, clearly indicating what pupils and apprentices are expected to learn.](#) New distributions of teaching hours per subject. [New structure of available choices within education programmes.](#) Freedom at the local level with respect to work methods, teaching materials and the organisation of classroom instruction. New curriculum structure involving a different way of working with curricula and a large measure of autonomy in work on the curriculum at local level.

101. In addition to the national curriculum, directions are provided for national school policy through strategic plans consisting of primary objectives and measures that can contribute to enable the individual school leader at all levels to exercise clear leadership within prioritised key areas (see 2.4). For example, the most recent strategy – which has not yet been adopted politically – concerns art and culture in education. The strategy provides an overview of provisions within art and teacher training and explains how it is planned to extend these efforts nationally and locally as a cooperation across the school and culture sector. It also provides guidelines for attitudes and measures that can be monitored directly by the individual school leader.

#### ***Changing composition of the student population***

102. Sudden large changes do not take place in the composition of school classes in Norway, but they are becoming increasingly multi-cultural and multi-lingual. The birth rate is approximately 60 000 per year. In addition to the number of births, both immigration and emigration affect the classes in schools. In 2005 Norway had a net immigration of 4 597 persons under the age of 15. Defining immigrants as those persons whose parents were both born abroad, at the turn of year 2005/2006 the immigrant population was approximately 390 000 or 8.3% of the entire population. If another definition is used, i.e. that only one parent was born abroad, the number of immigrants reaches 760 000 or 16% of the population. Immigrants to Norway have come from 208 different nationalities, and the immigrant population is therefore not a heterogeneous group. Even though some nationalities predominate, no individual group amounts to more than 7% of the total immigrant population (Statistics Norway 2006). The trend for people to move internally in Norway is most predominant in the counties around the Oslo fjord, but does not entail large unanticipated changes in the composition of the pupil base.

#### ***Accountability for results and social equity (see also 4.3)***

103. *Accountability* is a multi-layered concept with a connection to trust. It defines a relationship of control between different parties. As such, accountability can be understood as a social practice pursuing particular purposes, defined by distinctive relationships and evaluative procedures (Ranson, 2003). School leaders must be prepared to answer questions about what has happened within their area of responsibility and to provide an account of their practice. Within the school system, answers are evaluated by a superior against certain standards or expectations, which means that accountability is located within the hierarchical practices of the bureaucracy. But accountability is also an important dimension of professionalism. In terms of being responsible for the school's practice, school leaders are morally responsive to the student's and the parents' needs, as well as responsive to the public. In moral terms accountability can be seen as keeping to ethical and professional standards (Møller, 2007).

104. When school leaders make claims on behalf of their clients, some politicians and chief executives in the educational system recurrently claim that they are actually doing so in their own interests. Examples of this are wage negotiations and negotiations of working time agreements. The arguments are that

educational policy cannot be based on widespread trust in the professional competence of educators, and that teachers' performance should be controlled and judged according to criteria established outside the profession. Managerial accountability is becoming more dominant in many municipalities.

105. The Government has recently launched accountability as a system of quality control for schools where the schools' average results on national tests in reading, mathematics and English are published on a website. The improvement of schools was the Government's rationale for such publication, but the newspapers immediately started ranking the schools through informal league tables. Also as a part of evaluation's growing importance, international comparisons such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have been seized upon. The differences between the Norwegian and the Finnish students were striking and a great surprise to the Norwegian government. Finland was at the very top, while the Norwegian scores often were located at or below the OECD average. Teachers and school leaders are now subject to pressure from the Government to improve national rankings in mathematics and reading. Managerial models of administrative reform are making a strong claim on the definition of accountability, and language is becoming an agent of ideology in shaping understanding. These changes influence the way administrators at municipal level comprehend and establish issues of accountability. However, a national survey amongst school leaders in Norway, conducted in 2005, demonstrated that although external demands for results-driven curricula and other forms of bureaucratic accountability are increasing in the Norwegian context, they are not yet at the same level of intensity as they are in the US and UK (Møller et al., 2006).

### *Issues of equity*

106. In the Norwegian context equity in education can have two meanings. The first is equal access to the education system. Fairness is understood as the education system's ability to distribute financial and economic resources in order to meet the needs of all the users in a way that provides equal opportunities. The second aspect concerns equity at the individual level. This addresses the diversities among students and therefore the necessity for unequal treatment in order to meet individual learning abilities (e.g. greater resources for greater needs).

107. At present there is a lack of knowledge about factors in the education system that are of importance for social equality. The knowledge base must be extended to enable the authorities to work proactively to strengthen the role of education as a tool for social equality (White Paper [2006-2007], Ministry of Education and Research).

108. There are moderately large differences in performance, measured by grades, between Norwegian and non-western pupils, and there is a smaller proportion of pupils with a non-western background than with a Norwegian background that complete their education when relevant background factors are not taken into account (Støren, 2005). Some of the differences must be ascribed to socioeconomic variables such as the educational level, income and labour market affiliation of the parents but nevertheless the levelling-out of these differences poses a major challenge to school leaders.

109. The proportion of pupils with a minority language who complete the 10-year compulsory schooling is the same as the proportion of Norwegian pupils who complete the education when these groups of pupils are considered separately. In analyses that compare Norwegian and non-western pupils who have the same grades, there is a weak tendency for non-western pupils to have a higher completion rate than the Norwegian. It is also the case that when grades are taken into account, the effect of the educational level of the parents disappears.

110. One of the big challenges facing school leadership is to create the conditions for and to contribute to ensuring that the drop-out rate from upper secondary education and training is as low as possible. Students from linguistic minorities have a formal right to education in Norwegian as a second language, bilingual content instruction and instruction in their first language until they acquire sufficient skills in Norwegian.

However, there is no formal criterion to determine sufficiency. Moreover, it is stressed in policy documents that schools ought to reflect the students' cultural background (Vedøy, 2006).

111. Upper secondary education and training is a right for young persons who have completed the 10-year compulsory schooling and who apply for admission to this education and training (cf. Section 3-1 of the Education Act). Some 61 000 pupils completed the compulsory education in spring 2005, and statistics show that approximately 59 300 of them, i.e. 97%, applied to a county authority upper secondary school in the same year. A total of 77 257 students applied for admission to foundation courses for 2005–2006.

112. In 2006 a development and efficiency-enhancing network for upper secondary education and training was set up under the management of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities with the aim of strengthening the exchange of experience and the cooperation between the county authorities in order to improve the implementation of upper secondary education.

113. A study which aimed at identifying the qualities and characteristics of successful leadership practice within the Norwegian elementary and secondary school systems demonstrated how the principals and teachers in the selected schools expressed a strong commitment to working for equity and social justice. Respect for the individual student and colleague in the building of professional communities seemed to be a guiding norm of conduct, and both principals and teachers had strong emotional commitment to their work. Even though the municipal governance of schools had recently been framed within the discourse of New Public Management (NPM) and with a focus on managerial accountability, the discourse and the practice in local schools appeared to be of a different kind. The practice was not dominated by an instrumental rationality, which so often is closely linked to NPM. Both the leadership teams and teachers were making great efforts to fulfil a mission based on democratic values (Møller et al., 2006; Møller & Fuglestad, 2006).

#### ***Changing societal and community expectations (see also 3.5)***

114. Expectations that schools should play the role of key cultural institutions in the local community are still prevalent, at the same time as new tasks are constantly been imposed upon schools – such as daycare facilities for schoolchildren, running sports grounds, coping with combined schools/kindergartens etc. Such tasks are frequently assigned without school leader resources being increased correspondingly, and they result in a wider scope of administrative assignments according to the Union of Education Norway.

115. Up to the end of the 1980s the school sector was to a large extent controlled from central government level with regard to both content and financing. Before the new income system was introduced in 1986, the sector's economy was secured through earmarked grants from the State, making it unnecessary to enter into negotiations for funds with other sectors in the municipality and placing schools in a special position. The new Local Government Act that was adopted in 1992 required all existing special laws to be revised and to be subordinated to the Local Government Act. A major principle was that municipalities and county authorities should in general be permitted to organise their activities as they wished. During the 1990s a shift toward extensive deregulation took place: the Education Act was changed, and requirements were set regarding school governing boards and chief education officers in the municipalities and regarding school-based competence in municipal administration (Møller et al., 2006).

116. On 1 May 2004 the responsibility for negotiating terms for teaching personnel was transferred from the State to the municipalities, after which documents from the Parliament and the Government referred to the municipalities as *school owners*. The municipality has been assigned responsibility for schools within frameworks stipulated by the Government, which entails local politicians being jointly responsible for the development of schools in the municipalities. The new management system is partly based on a desire for a clearer assignment of responsibility and greater local freedom of action (White Paper no. 30 [2003-2004]).



117. After the Local Government Act of 1992 came into force, many of the municipalities changed their form of organisation. While it had previously been the norm to have three levels, many municipalities have gradually transferred to a two-level model. Administratively it was common to have a sector manager, but many municipalities have now removed this intermediate position, which in practice means that the administration is organised according to functions and has operational, administrative and development units at central level and service units as independent units directly subordinate to the chief municipal executive. One of the main features is that municipal administration has become more streamlined in the middle, and efforts have been made to introduce more direct lines of communication and decision making between municipal top management and the unit heads. It is this change that is often referred to as the transition from the three-level to the two-level municipality.

### ***Responsibility***

118. A change of this type results in altered responsibilities and tasks for school leaders. School principals are assigned the total responsibility for the school's operation and they report to the chief municipal executive. In many cases this has led to the disappearance of support functions – for example the pedagogical guidance service. It is also anticipated that principals will become involved in and promote municipal fellowship in areas that cross traditional sectors and political sectoral concepts, and that focus on professional skills will give way to coherence and strategic thought. To a large extent communication takes place through goal documents and result reporting. In general the municipalities have sought inspiration and ideas from the principles of NPM and have to varying degrees placed emphasis on the different elements found in this philosophy. There may thus be large variations between the municipalities with regard to adopting NPM (Røvik, 1998), at the same time as there are still some municipalities that cling to the traditional model consisting of a main committee with a teaching committee and an education department. Others are organised in line with an extended main committee model and have a department for both culture and education (Møller et al., 2006:21). This is the normal organisational model for the running of upper secondary education which is the responsibility of the counties.

119. The survey on school leaders (Møller et al., 2006) shows that school owners appear to have increased their support for principals more than the results from the 2001 survey indicated, but only 33% partly or completely agree that allocations to schools have high priority in their municipality/county. More than half of all the principals who filled in the form work in so-called two-level municipalities. Of those working in such municipalities, 20% state that their leaders do not have school-related competence, approximately half reply that school-related competence can be found in staff functions, while 20% have leaders with line responsibility who also have school-related competence.

120. School principals have been given greater responsibility and there is a noticeable increase in the number who have signed leadership agreements with the municipalities. Among those who have such an agreement as a basis for follow-up, the majority confirm that the agreement contains monitoring of economy and budget responsibility. There is also a high percentage who verify that the leadership agreement includes educational goals for the school. In relative terms it is less common to include personal goals for the individual principal in the leadership agreement. This result must also be viewed in connection with the content of the employee appraisal interviews that show that municipalities/counties that are organised as two-level models particularly monitor the economy, while follow-up of pedagogical development efforts is more predominant in municipalities/counties with a sectoral form of organisation. The difference concerning monitoring the economy is significantly in the two-level model's favour, while the difference in follow-up of pupil performance is significantly in the sector model's favour (Møller et al., 2006).

121. It has now been registered that some municipalities are strengthening school-related competence at municipal level after experiencing that the transition from the three-level to the two-level model was disadvantageous for schools with regard to attention, development and reporting.

### ***Technological and pedagogical innovations***

122. The Knowledge Promotion Reform assigned to the schools the responsibility for ensuring that pupils develop skills in the use of digital tools. Since knowledge of ICT also has great significance for learning yield, it is important that schools are able to offer their pupils equal provisions with regard to digital resources and digital competence, which in turn makes it critical for teachers to have expertise in the educational use of ICT. There is therefore a need for measures to strengthen the digital competence of both teachers and school leaders (White Paper no. 16 [2006-2007], Ministry of Education and Research).

123. Digital competence in schools ranges from using ICT as a tool in pedagogical practice and learning how ICT and the growth of new media affect and set new requirements for criticism of sources, personal protection and copyright to the so-called safe use of ICT and access to good ICT-based resources such as equipment, PCs, and infrastructure/broadband. These are elements to which school leaders should be able to relate in order to ensure that the prerequisites for meeting this challenge are available in the organisation.

124. In addition to the Ministry's programme for digital competence (2004-2008), the Directorate is working on a plan for knowledge formation, learning and sharing experience. School leadership and the development of schools will constitute a major area of the plan, and the starting point is the need to inspire schools and school owners to develop a uniform culture for leadership, with digital competence particularly in mind. A cooperation will be initiated between the Directorate and relevant professional environments in order to summarise and compile relevant documentation and information material for school leaders on this subject. Appropriate measures include preparing guidelines for school leaders, conducting studies and surveys to acquire a better knowledge base, and collecting and systemising experience from the national school leader conferences on digital development in schools.

125. A number of studies (Leithwood and Riehl, 2005; Ekholm et al., 2000) have documented that schools that develop a common culture and have clear and pedagogical leadership and a high level of ambition are more successful in performing their core tasks than other schools. Good organisation and interaction among the staff also makes the school better equipped to establish new practices to meet changed requirements for the schools of today and the future.

126. Findings from the former Norwegian PILOT project (Project – Innovation in Learning, Organization and Technology) points to the fact that the implementation of ICT in schools is complex and requires a uniform focus where technology, educational theory, organisation and leadership are seen in the same context. It is important to make a connection between pedagogical creativity and individual learning and the development of the school's organisation. Research shows that future school leaders will undoubtedly need the knowledge, skills and understanding that show how ICT can support, develop and improve education and learning and can motivate and develop school employees as well as how management information systems can improve schools' efficiency (Network for IT-Research and Competence in Education, 2006).

127. This uniform perspective is also accentuated in *The Knowledge Promotion Reform – from words to action*, which emphasises the need for a coherent focus on ICT involving the fusion of organisation, technology and educational theory.

128. *Monitor 2005* conducted by the Network for IT-Research and Competence in Education shows that the majority of Norwegian schools have now developed strategy documents for their implementation and use of ICT. Nonetheless, many schools still have extremely high ambitions and somewhat vague intentions related to these strategies. Experience from both this Monitor and the national school development programme *ICT-ABC* (led by the Network for IT-Research and Competence in Education) shows that pupils' and teachers' use of ICT is dependent on the schools drawing up clear visions and goals for their ICT projects.

### **3.4 Distribution of responsibilities for decision making in the public school sector**

#### ***Financing and resource allocation among and within schools***

129. The municipalities and the county authorities are responsible for running the 10-year compulsory schooling and upper secondary education and training respectively, both of which are mainly financed through the unrestricted funds allocated to the municipalities and county authorities. Education is a large and important sector in both the municipalities and the county authorities. Since 2001, the proportion of the municipalities' operating expenses that have been allotted to the education sector has been roughly 31%, while during the past few years the figure for the county authorities has been approximately 64%. The use of resources for primary and lower secondary education in Norway has been relatively stable in recent years with regard to both total resources and resources per pupil. Nonetheless, the Ministry has noted a slight decline in some of the resource indicators from 2004 to 2005. To contribute to giving the municipalities good framework conditions to enable them to provide well-adapted teaching for everyone, the municipal economy was strengthened in 2006. The Government also proposes further growth in this economy in 2007 (White Paper no. 1, 2006-2007).

130. Even though the municipal economy appears to be improving, many school principals are worried about what they experience as a growing focus on saving and cuts in the public sector. Both municipal politicians and principals in "self-governed" units can experience losing their managerial powers. In the survey conducted by Møller et al. (2006), only 33% of the respondents partly or completely agreed that allocations to schools have high priority in their municipality/county, but it must be stressed that this survey was carried out before the strengthening of municipal economy (see above), and it represented a positive change compared with the corresponding survey of 2001.

131. It is common for schools to be allocated funds on the basis of the number of pupils and special circumstances in the individual school (see 3.6 below), and it is the actual school (i.e. the school's coordinating committee or governing board) that shapes the budget. Each school also has great freedom, but the largest part of the budget is usually tied up as salary resources. Some school leaders thus experience a limited freedom of action in economic matters.

#### ***Curriculum development and implementation***

132. In Norway the national curricula are determined by the central authorities. School owners are responsible for work at the local level and for implementing the national curriculum. The former is to some extent carried out by municipalities – for example a municipality may draw up and suggest municipal curricula that specify goals for each year of education. However, this work is often delegated to the individual school, which in practice makes it the school leader's responsibility. Curricula are political documents that can be interpreted in different ways. Leading such work requires knowledge about pupils' learning processes and outcomes, as well as knowledge of teaching, evaluating and the curriculum. In addition knowledge about local circumstances linked to both the student group and to the local community is needed. School leaders must therefore have knowledge of and proximity to teaching to be able to lead the curriculum work at their schools (see also 3.6).

#### ***Employment of school leaders***

133. School owners – whether they are the county authority, the municipality or in the private sphere – are responsible for advertising for and appointing school leaders and for their competence building, follow-up and, if appropriate, their dismissal.

#### ***Employment of teachers***

134. School owners are responsible for appointing teachers, but in practice this takes place in cooperation between school owners and leaders at the individual school. In some municipalities the schools are obliged to employ redundant teachers. The right to self-governance can at times be experienced as somewhat illusory. There are no formal requirements for evaluating teachers, but to the extent this takes place it is as part of the general school assessment practice of the individual school or municipality/county

authority. There are few career opportunities in schools, and in general teachers advance by applying for school leader positions on their own initiative.

### *Student intake, retention and promotion*

135. At public primary and lower secondary schools most of the pupils attend the school that is nearest their home. The schools are intended to cover a catchment area around the school. Pupils attend compulsory schooling for ten years and are entitled to specially-adapted teaching. This means that in Norway pupils are not normally allowed to remain in one grade for several years or to skip a year unless the circumstances are very unusual.

136. In the case of the upper secondary school the school owner decides whether students can choose their school freely, and the practice among county authorities varies widely. In some counties there is freedom of choice whereas in other counties the choice is governed by place of residence and by the line of studies students select. At some places this has led to competition for students in recent years, and the schools are making great efforts to market their provisions.

## **3.5 Governance structure in the school system, and roles and responsibilities of school leaders**

137. All public compulsory education is managed at municipal level. The municipality has the responsibility for fulfilling the right to compulsory education and to special help for all local inhabitants. The county is responsible for fulfilling the statutory right to upper secondary education, and also to compulsory education and special education for clients in social and medical institutions run by the county. The Ministry of Education and Research has the overall responsibility for all areas of education including pre-school provisions and higher education. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is its executive agency, and cooperates with the county governors in each county who are responsible for supervision within their respective regions. (See also 2.3.)

### *State primary and lower secondary schools*

138. As the school owners of most primary and lower secondary schools (grades 1-10) in Norway, the municipalities have selected various management models of which the two main ones are:

- Three-level municipalities:  
The municipality has its own school office with a chief municipal education officer who manages the schools and meets their needs in the municipal system. The chief municipal education officer forms part of the management line and is subordinate to the chief municipal executive or the municipal director. The chief municipal executive is the municipality's highest administrative leader and is subordinate to a politically elected city/municipal council. Each school has a principal who reports to the chief municipal education officer. The staffing at such offices will vary according to the size of the municipality.
- Two-level municipalities:  
The school principals are directly subordinate to the chief municipal executive who has a supporting staff among whom the requirement for competence in school-related matters must be met. Each school has its principal who reports directly to the chief municipal executive (in practice to a person on his/her staff).

139. Some municipalities have set up governing boards as the highest body at each school with the principal as employer representative, representatives from all affected parties, and external representatives/local politicians.

### ***Upper secondary schools***

140. Most upper secondary schools (grade 11-13) in Norway are owned and run by the county authorities. The Education Department in the county authority is led by a head of department who reports to the highest administrative leader of the county authority – the chief municipal executive. This executive answers/reports to a politically elected county council. Schools are led by principals.

### ***Private schools – primary, lower secondary and upper secondary***

141. In Norway 5% of primary and lower secondary schools and 13% of upper secondary schools are owned and run by religious organisations, foundations based on educational movements, and non-profit organisations. Private primary and lower secondary schools are governed by a board, which appoints a manager for the school (principal) who in turn reports to the board. The education offices in the counties are responsible for ensuring that the schools are run in line with the Act concerning primary and lower secondary education and with the appropriate curricula.

### ***Roles and responsibilities of school leaders in accordance with the governance structure***

142. The school leader role/school principal role varies depending on whether the principal reports directly to the most senior leader in the municipality/county authority or to the chief municipal education officer. Both governance structures entail responsibility concerning financial management and the budget. The difference can particularly be seen in the support functions related to salary payments, staff appointments, personnel work, the continuing education of the staff etc. There has been little focus in any of the governance structures on results connected to pupils' performance (for example in the form of grades and/or test results).

143. In the period 1990-2005 there has been a trend for municipalities to move from the three-level to the two-level model. Another trend that can currently be seen is that some municipalities and county authorities decide to merge several schools to form an administrative unit governed by a school principal.

## **3.6 Division of responsibility between school leaders and the school governing board or local/regional education authority**

### ***Financing***

144. The schools' allocations are based on the number of pupils and on special circumstances at individual schools. In the three-level municipalities the responsibility for having the budget in balance will be the object of a dialogue between the school principal and the chief municipal education officer/director of education (in counties). The extent to which the responsibility for the economy is delegated to the school principal varies. Principals in two-level municipalities are assigned a clearer responsibility, and in these municipalities principals must themselves find out how many employees the budget can accommodate.

145. Systems where resources "follow the pupil" can pose a challenge for school leaders. Particularly in upper secondary education and training the drop-out rate can be high, and problems can arise when resources are withdrawn during the school year – even after staff appointments have been made. Teachers cannot be dismissed even though needs change and finances are reduced.

### ***Curriculum development and implementation***

146. Schools are themselves responsible for the progress of their work in line with the Act concerning primary and lower secondary education, curricula and other key priorities. In three-level municipalities the school office is assigned the responsibility for developing support structures, for example through building

the competence of resource persons and creating and maintaining networks between schools. Schools in two-level municipalities are often left more to their own devices in this field. In both systems the municipalities' political level can provide guidelines that the schools are obliged to follow. Some municipalities assume the overall responsibility for work on the curriculum at the local level.

147. "Towards a common goal" is a significant phrase in the educational philosophy of today. White Paper no. 30 (2004-2004) *Culture for learning* states that everyone in the organisation must assume responsibility and feel obliged to work towards common goals: "Of fundamental importance is the ability for continuous reflection over whether the objectives set and the decisions taken are the right ones for the organisation. These are essential characteristics of learning organisations as well as necessary skills for schools as organisations" (White paper no. 30, 2003-2004).

148. The competence aims in the new curricula must therefore form the starting point for dialogue between the actors in the field of education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005). This requires goals to be specified and cooperation to be formed within and across professional boundaries. In other words, Knowledge Promotion represents a reform in which the curricula set the goals for the development work in schools. Schools have been given a major responsibility with regard to specifying the goals in the new curricula. In addition, the follow-up of the curriculum will depend on how schools choose to use teaching aids, methods and forms of assessment in the teaching situation. School leadership must therefore be exercised in close connection with the teaching and with pupil results.

149. How schools meet the new challenges in the reform is a question of what their efforts are directed towards, but it is also dependent on the capacity the schools have built up over years to make it possible for them to develop pedagogical work satisfactorily. Many have pointed out that this requires a collective stance in schools (Dahl, 2004; Ministry of Education and Research, 2005), which entails school leadership ensuring that there is a good relationship between levels and between different organisations that play a major role in education. School leadership is thus of importance for the teaching and learning in the classroom (Spillane, 2003).

150. The content of the teaching is coordinated at most schools. The 2005 survey of school leaders showed that there is greater professional cooperation at lower secondary and upper secondary level than at primary level or in schools comprising grades 1-10. The most probable reason for this difference is the position of the subjects in the various types of school (Møller et al., 2006). At primary level cooperation largely involves the total educational provision for the pupils in line with curricula that emphasise working across subjects. In upper secondary education and training – perhaps particularly in the general courses – informal cooperation on the teaching is far more common than formalised cooperation on the development of the school as a learning organisation (Norwegian Association of School Leaders). Other factors such as the size of both the municipality and the school are also instrumental in promoting professional coordination.

### ***Employment of teachers***

151. Teacher appointments are decided in cooperation between school leaders and representatives from the employee unions. There are large variations between the municipalities regarding the extent to which this is done at the individual school or at municipal level.

## **3.7 The balance between autonomy, and transparency and accountability at the school level**

152. The National System for Quality Assessment constitutes a key element in the Knowledge Promotion Reform. Together with new curricula containing clearer performance goals, national assessment is intended to contribute to creating a better balance between political and professional governance. Politicians define goals, and school leaders and teachers are given considerable freedom to shape their practice (Aasen, 2006).

153. A balance of this nature is both fragile and problematic. Aasen points out that pedagogical issues cannot be separated from politics since they also involve value choices. School leaders may find themselves caught between a management-oriented ideal based on goal rationality and a profession-oriented ideal founded on value rationality.

154. This is reflected in the balance between autonomy and accountability at municipal level. The municipalities are increasingly regarded as political players. To maintain this role, school owners need an overview of activities and the ability to conduct systematic monitoring and continuous self-development. Pressure is thus exerted on schools to present results as management data for school owners. Coordination between school owners and the school nonetheless often appears to be based on trust, bridge-building and dialogue. In municipalities that succeed in establishing such dialogues, the schools experience that the municipalities emerge as political players in the school sphere and that they are appreciated by their superiors (cf. Møller and Presthus, 2006).

155. There is a growing tendency in many municipalities for individual school leaders to be responsible for – or more involved in – teacher appointments. This is emphasised as positive by school leaders. Many feel that the new system of governance results in considerable administrative work. Responsibility for economy, operations, personnel issues, reporting etc. have in recent years all been largely delegated to schools. In addition, central government authorities have imposed more reporting on schools (see 3.9). Even though many school leaders have a positive attitude to an increased focus on results, they experience problems in utilising statistical material in quality work at their own schools. This relates not only to the time required to analyse reported results, but also to inadequate analytical skills at the individual school, and the simultaneous reduction in municipal support functions also exacerbates the problem. Another tendency is for some schools or municipalities to seek consultancy help from outside the school system to analyse results and to indicate development areas and courses of action.

156. It appears that Norwegian school leaders experience considerable freedom in their role. But at the same time the possibilities are limited since tasks exceed capacity. Adequate resources of time and competence constitute a prerequisite for a good balance between autonomy and accountability. Some of them also feel that there is a discrepancy between expectations and the financial resources they have at their disposal (Møller et al., 2006)

157. In 2006 a *joint* national inspection programme was implemented for the first time in the education area based on the system audit method. This method entails inspection being carried out to discover whether the municipality has systems in place that secure compliance with the obligations stated in the Education Act and accompanying regulations. The inspection was carried out because the reforms of recent years had placed emphasis on elucidating the responsibility of school owners. One of the goals of the Knowledge Promotion Reform is local responsibility and the freedom to develop schools as learning organisations. White Paper no. 1 (2005-2006) states that efforts to achieve greater local freedom of action in the 10-year compulsory education make it necessary to have a good system for quality assessment that also inspires development, as well as a well-functioning supervisory network.

158. Common guidelines were drawn up for this inspection in which the requirements of the legislation were specified as obligations for the municipalities to take action. The purpose of the guidelines was to ensure that the county governors' understanding of the legislation and the conducting of the inspection are as similar as possible. The outcome showed that most of the municipalities that were subject to the inspection do not meet the requirements for having such a system as stipulated in Section 13-10. The results also reveal that the municipalities' responsibility for school-based assessment is fulfilled to only a small extent. As a measure to remedy the non-conformance situation and to clarify the school owners' obligation, the Directorate has suggested that work should be initiated on regulations for internal control in the education field (Report from the Directorate for Education and Training, 2006).

### **3.8 Organisation and leadership structures within the school**

159. School owners recognise the importance of school leadership and often wish to strengthen this function. Many municipalities allocate resources to schools and the school principals prepare their budgets within this frame in cooperation with employee representatives. This makes it possible to assign higher priority to funds for school leadership and other administrative support networks, but it is a matter of balancing such funds with those for other significant areas. The Norwegian Association of School Leaders describes this as a “dilemma of conscience” for school leaders, and experience shows that a suggested increase in resources for leadership often “loses” to tasks that are directly geared towards pupils.

160. An important aspect of leadership is securing the flow of information in the organisation. A study of leadership in recognised schools showed that these schools had developed clear procedures and areas for sharing information and holding discussions and for mutual reflection (Møller and Presthus, 2006). In addition to the formal structure, informal forums play a significant role. Leadership initiatives often come from individuals other than formal leaders – for example from teachers, pupils, parents or other employees. In other words, leadership functions are distributed throughout the organisation, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the formal leader.

#### ***Primary and lower secondary schools***

161. The manner in which the resources for leadership are distributed varies from one school to another. At small schools it is often the principal who is given the entire leadership allocation, and at these schools he/she often has teaching duties. At larger schools it is common for resources to be divided between the principal and one or more deputy principals. Some municipalities have introduced the term assistant principal for one of these deputies.

162. Most schools are gradually organising their teachers in teams. It is not uncommon for some of the school’s leadership resources to be divided among the team leaders, who are often also members of an extended leader/planning group. Such leader groups often also include employees who have particular responsibilities – for example the leader of the daycare facilities, employees responsible for special instruction or for teaching language minorities etc.

#### ***Upper secondary education and training***

163. In upper secondary schools there are large local differences in organisational and leadership structure. The most common model is the same as that in primary and lower secondary schools where the school is led by a principal and one or more deputy principals. In upper secondary schools, however, it is far more usual for these persons to be assigned defined areas of responsibility in which they are given full responsibility – for example within economy or staff management. This often reflects the competence profile of these leaders.

164. Most upper secondary schools have several study programmes, and the leaders for each programme are part of the school’s leadership team.

#### ***Recent changes***

165. As a result of the amendment to Section 8-2 of the Education Act, Organising pupils in groups (2003 no. 69), which came into force on 1 August 2003, a change has been made to pupils’ right to have one teacher who has a special responsibility for the practical, administrative and socio-pedagogical tasks related to the pupil. Whereas this right was formerly related to the pupils’ affiliation to a class, it is now connected directly to a teacher who in the text of the law is given the title of contact teacher. It is decided locally how many individual pupils a teacher is to have contact responsibility for.

166. The main objective of the amendment was to expand local freedom of action. The local level was to be made capable of adapting its supply of resources – including the use of teacher resources and other aids



– with the aim of improving the learning environment and achieving educational goals to an even greater degree than before. This has led to many schools now operating with flexible student groups based on pedagogical assessments.

167. Another change that has consequences for organisation is the introduction of ICT. Many schools have started to use learning platforms as tools for learning. This contributes to flexibility with regard to pupil groupings, teachers' opportunities for follow-up, and transparency (the organisation and arrangement of the teaching becomes "official" since leaders, teachers, students, and in many cases parents, gain an insight through the learning platform). This can have great significance for the exercising of leadership, but so far school leaders do not appear to be exploiting this opportunity for insight to any great extent.

168. There have also been genuine attempts to distribute formal authority and power among several individuals within the leadership. The Education Act provides for other ways to organise leadership, but these must be submitted as an application to the Ministry for approval. Pilot schemes were introduced in the 1980s – so-called "alternative forms of governance" – with various types of organisation and the division of responsibility. A school in Bergen has practised shared principal responsibility in three equal functions – a pedagogical leader, a financial leader and a personnel leader – from the 1980s until the present time, and submitted an application to continue the scheme with support from its own municipality. However the application has now been rejected at regional government level on the grounds that such leadership fellowships of three persons must have rules concerning who is responsible externally and who takes decisions. Dispensation has thus not been given from Section 9-1 that stipulates that schools must be led by the principal. Roald Valle (2007) uses this decision as an example of inconsistency in Norwegian school policy. He refers to how the previous and present ministers are emphasising stronger local right of governance for schools and school owners and to the challenges of developing schools to be "learning organisations". He views the decision to wind up the scheme as placing obstacles in the way of school development that produces results. The conclusion he draws finds support in the report *New School Management Approaches. Education and Skills* (2001) from the OECD where team leadership or relational, distributed or shared leadership is described along with the good results attained.

### **3.9 Tensions regarding priorities in leadership responsibilities**

169. Aasen (2006) describes school leadership as a diverse and demanding practice in which the school leader has to fill different roles. Principals must be head teachers and lead development processes and personnel as well as serving as administrators and politicians. In addition they must cope with a multiplicity of external expectations and balance the need for change against that for stability.

170. Although most school leaders express a wish to give priority to pedagogical leadership, it can appear as if this work loses out in competition with administrative tasks. At some schools the problem is solved by the leadership group sharing areas of responsibility. In some upper secondary schools, for example, a large part of the role of pedagogical leader has been delegated to middle management (Møller et al., 2006).

171. From the project *Successful School Leadership*, Fuglestad (2006) maintains that a basic feature of the schools they surveyed was that learning and pedagogical leadership were given top priority. Leaders acquire their *raison d'être* and job satisfaction from the pupils' learning. Learning represents the core at all levels – at individual level for each pupil and teacher, at group level within a learning collective and within groups of pupils, and at school level for the whole organisation (Fuglestad og Lillejord 2002).

172. The extent to which principals choose to prioritise administrative tasks can also be conditional on structural conditions such as the size of the school and municipality. But even those who prioritise pedagogical leadership are of the opinion that they have too many routine administrative tasks to cope with (Møller et al., 2006).

173. It appears that a large number of meetings with internal actors at the school are necessary to coordinate and harmonise activities across established structures. Most of the principals in the survey say that they spend three to five hours a week on meetings with the leadership group, and the same amount of time on meetings with department heads and with the staff/teachers respectively.

174. The fact that so much of the principals' time is spent on meetings indicates a strong belief in meeting arenas for coordinating and harmonising school activities. This is in fact not surprising. A number of studies conducted in the school leadership field show that structures and administrative tasks are given precedence over educational work, even though the school leaders themselves are of the view that pedagogical tasks should be given priority (Lotsberg, 1997; Møller, 1995).

175. The governance of the education system has also produced a belief in structure as a tool for change and development. White Paper no. 37 (1990-91) can be read as an answer to how the education system should meet challenges related to the wave of reform represented by *New Public Management* and the "modernisation" of the public sector (Busch and Jackson, 2001). Faster and more flexible budget systems were introduced along with new leadership principles. However, several researchers point out that the scope of administrative work has been further intensified as a result of management by objectives and the new form organisation in the municipal sector involving schools becoming separate management units (Engeland, 2000; Karlsen, 2002). There are those who claim that this is diametrically opposed to the intention of placing greater emphasis on pedagogical leadership – a key element of the LUIS programme for school administration and development (The Ministry of Education, 1992) which is also expressed in the White Paper *Culture for learning* (2003-2004). Others claim that it first and foremost illustrates a lack of leadership since the scope of leaders' freedom is now relatively wide. Nonetheless, daring to take initiatives requires both strong leadership and the ability to prioritise. School leaders' inadequate competence and their deficient experience in organisational development and change management may represent reasons for the lack of substantial change in school work structure.

### 3.10 Collaboration between schools

176. There has been an increase in the interest in and perceived relevance of collaboration between schools in Norway during the last few years. This has been defined more clearly at policy level, but has also emerged as initiatives from schools themselves. A major catalyst for this has been the increasing use of information and communication technology in schools.

177. One outcome of national initiatives to implement new technologies in schools is that the term "network" has become more prevalent. One example is the PILOT project (Project – Innovation in Learning, Organization and Technology), involving 120 schools in nine regions of Norway over four years (2000-2004). The project schools collaborated in meetings and online forums. One outcome of the project is increased attention to the needs and outcomes of collaboration between schools and to the significance of school leaders' involvement.

178. National programmes and initiatives have represented an important incentive for inter-school collaboration. An example of such a programme is *Networks of Learning* initiated in 2004. It consists of 21 networks in all regions of Norway. Each network consists of 10-11 schools and one teacher training college. This programme has been developed to create sustainable collaborative networks utilising funds given to schools and teacher training colleges specifically for this purpose (Erstad, 2005).

179. Another example of nationally initiated networking is provided by two recent initiatives – *Practice-oriented research and development* and *The Knowledge Promotion Reform – from words to action*. Both emphasise networks between schools, municipalities, regions and external partners such as district university colleges or universities. Collaboration between schools is also considered to be vital in the national *Competence Development Strategy in Basic Education* (2005-2009). Such extensive investment

in programmes of this type can be interpreted as an acknowledgement that network building has so far been weak. Network building is now regarded as an important method of fostering a culture for learning and development, and as a way of developing competence locally. The Directorate has initiated and finances networks for competence building in several different disciplines – including school leadership. These networks constitute a professional forum for discourse for those bidding to provide services to the university and university college sector at the same time as such efforts are intended to encourage the establishment of networks between school owners and competence environments to strengthen the quality of competence-building projects.

180. There are several examples of local school authorities that have initiated network programmes for schools in their region because they see a potential for school development in such collaborative efforts. Usually such programmes are funded locally.

181. One issue of importance in Norway is the large number of small schools in remote areas and small local communities. Collaboration between such schools has been the focus of initiatives at local and regional level, especially in the northern part of Norway. This has also been the theme of some research projects – for instance the PILOT project mentioned above.

182. A large number of schools, particularly at lower levels, have taken part in collaborations with schools in other European countries through programmes such as Comenius. Several schools have reported that this has provided essential experience of collaboration at both school level and among teachers and students.

183. The objectives for collaborative networks vary according to the overall aims of the programmes. In the national initiatives and programmes the intention is to provide a better platform for school development: through collaborative efforts schools will be in a better position to handle change and challenges. In upper secondary schools the objectives are often more related to the content of schooling, for example in collaborative networks within certain subject domains or between students at different schools. In rural districts the aims may be linked to the broader issue of survival as school communities. ICT has proved to be an important tool in collaborative networks between small schools.

184. Evaluations of some of the initiatives mentioned above show that there are challenges and problems in making collaboration efforts work and in reaching aims. Research has shown that it is often the more informal networks that work best for more content-oriented collaboration whereas in state-initiated programmes the networks seem to struggle to make the collaboration work. According to the school leaders, this is due partly to time constraints for establishing networks and partly to the fact that the technological infrastructure for working in networks often fails to support such collaborative efforts. In networks established by national agencies there also seems to be a difference in how schools and school leaders experience working with them: some feel they give a lot of their own experience to other schools without receiving much in return to help them in their own efforts towards school development. One important outcome of several of these initiatives at national level has been the development of mini-networks within larger networks. This means that the framework for collaboration that the larger networks have created has made it possible for school leaders and teachers to find partners within smaller networks for more focused collaboration.

185. School leaders play a crucial role in the development and operation of all such initiatives. They are the key agents between collaborative initiatives at regional or national level as well as for their own school community, and they play an important part in establishing such networks for their own schools as part of larger programmes for collaboration. In addition, they form part of collaborative networks for school leaders, and network building has become a more frequent theme at the regular school leader conferences. Far more focus is now placed on the key role played by school leaders in both developing and operating collaborative networks as part of school development.

186. Collaboration with other school leaders in formal and/or informal networks is regarded as critical for school leaders. The team of principals in a municipality can collectively constitute a major network, and those responsible for school matters seem to hold the key to how well the network functions as a learning community. Both the *Successful School Leadership* project (Møller and Fuglestad, 2006) and Møller's (2004) in-depth study of 12 principals confirm that it is the informal networks that seem to have the greatest power to create professional learning environments.

### **3.11 The school's role in broader community service and development**

187. Schools in Norway occupy a key position in the local community, both historically and culturally. The curriculum requires schools to cooperate with the community's business and working life, its art and culture, and the local clubs and associations with the aims of providing the pupils with concrete and realistic knowledge and contributing to updating the school's educational provisions. Other requirements include ensuring that such cooperation facilitates the transitions between the various grades in the educational process, and that the school cooperates with other public bodies that are responsible for the learning, development and growing-up environment of children and young people. A specific example is the school brass bands and the role they play on Norway's national day. Sports grounds are often attached to schools and vice versa, and school premises are used as arenas and meeting places for the activities of various clubs and associations.

188. Schools are expected to serve in this capacity, and both the State, counties and municipalities expect them to continue to play a major role. Local community development and cultural activity have been and still are key elements and will continue to be vital for schools. Several municipalities want to develop schools as local centres for children and young people. Examples of how schools' social assignments have been extended in recent years include the daycare facilities scheme and the culture schools that often collaborate with the school on the options they offer.

189. In upper secondary schools it is common to cooperate with local companies, particularly in connection with vocational training. Entrepreneurship has represented an area of priority for many years.

### **3.12 Competencies and school characteristics**

190. No Norwegian studies have been elaborated in this field. However, the *Successful School Leadership* project (Møller, 2006) shows that the **practice** of leadership varies from one school to another depending on history, the composition of the staff, the geographical location and the catchment area. The project does not demonstrate how this variation is specifically linked to the characteristics of the individual school, and emphasis is placed on common features rather than differences. Some such features, which are also of significance for the type of competence required, are extensive teamwork, focus on the pupils' learning processes, a clear value base, dialogue with parents, the continuous revision of action plans based on school assessment, and the systematic follow-up of school projects.

### **3.13 Core competencies for effective school leadership**

191. The White Paper *Culture for learning* (2003-2004) points to the necessity of developing schools into learning organisations, which sets greater demands on principals as leaders of the schools' learning programmes. In this perspective, knowledge of learning processes, learning outcomes, teaching, evaluation and the curriculum represent core competencies for effective school leadership. Analysis skills that make it possible to be proactive and critical about presentations that describe activities in schools are a prerequisite for organisational studies. School leaders (who are almost always recruited from the teaching profession) also need knowledge of organisational theory to enable them to understand and pave the way for the development of their workplace. They must of necessity be familiar with and understand

the legal basis for the school activities (cf. Møller, 1996). They control large financial resources that are to be utilised as tools to create good learning conditions, and insight into financial management is therefore a major area of competence (cf. Robertsen, 2006) (see also Chapter 6).

192. No research has been conducted in Norway that can prove correlations between certain areas of competence and schools' effectiveness. However, part of the Knowledge Promotion Reform consisted of initiating a nationwide development programme focusing on pupils and entitled *From words to action*. The programme extends over three years and has a financial budget of NOK 140 million. It is organised nationally but involves all sector levels. School owners apply for participation on behalf of schools.

193. The programme aims to ensure that far more schools and school owners will be competent to assess their own results and to adapt their activities in line with the objectives of the Knowledge Promotion Reform – for example by giving support to local development projects where the participants try to resolve a concrete challenge in working with pupils and apprentices. The projects are also intended to contribute new knowledge and practical aids that the entire sector can benefit from as well as those who participate in the programme. One characteristic of the programme is that the impact the project has on practice in schools, the learning environment and the pupils' learning will be documented.

194. Guidelines have been drawn up for how the mapping is to take place with regard to factual information beyond that available in existing statistics. Results from the compulsory pupil survey are to be inserted from grade 7 and grade 10 respectively and from grade 11 for upper secondary schools. Core areas of the pupil survey include well-being, bullying, working environment, pupil participation etc. Country averages are being compiled, and the schools use the documentation to interpret and improve their results.

195. Data on pupils' educational results are used as a foundation for the programme work based on results from survey samples in Norwegian, New Norwegian, Mathematics and English. The schools are requested to analyse the results over time to reduce random outcomes that may arise in a certain year.

### **3.14 Innovations related to the organisation of leadership roles in schools**

196. New and changed requirements for the school leader role must be related to the comprehensive work integrated into the Knowledge Promotion Reform on new structure, new curricula and broadly-based competence building. The goals of these efforts are described in the White Paper *Culture for Learning* (2003-2004): to develop schools as learning organisations with requirements regarding a clear and strong leadership that is aware of the school's knowledge goals. It is maintained that all experience shows that good school leadership is decisive for the work of quality development in schools, and the importance of greater competence and educational opportunities is emphasised (p. 27 and p. 100).

197. In *The strategy for competence building in compulsory schooling* (2005-2008), which forms part of the Knowledge Promotion Reform, competence building for school leadership is given priority. Particular emphasis is placed on competence connected to the school as a learning organisation and on better adapted tuition. Follow-up research from the Fafo Research Foundation places emphasis on showing the changes that can be documented with regard to the formal and informal qualifications of school leaders, teachers, training supervisors and instructors. The evaluation will also identify the extent to which and the way in which the programmes lead to changes in the educational provisions and the organisation of the individual school and training establishment.

198. In the first sub-report (Hagen, Nyen and Hertzberg, 2006), points out that this strategy can be distinguished from earlier programmes – for example by the fact that emphasis is placed on both the school owners' role and the organisational perspective. Researchers find little expressed disagreement and conflicts between school owners, principals and teachers in the assessment of competence needs at schools. However, the interviews indicate that these three groups have somewhat different understandings

of reality with regard to their view on competence needs and on suitable instruments for developing new competencies in schools. The impression given is that the planning processes have so far had little integrating effect and that they therefore produce little learning outcome at school level. This results in a low commitment to the process and a weak foundation at school level.

199. The interviews also indicate that it is largely the school owners who have taken control with regard to developing local competence-building plans. Decisions regarding prioritising needs and selecting programmes in general appear to be taken centrally in the municipalities and county authorities. The researchers point out that one of the advantages of school owners' control of the development of plans is that school development in the municipality as a whole is strengthened. The risk of managing a strategy from the highest level in this way can be that these types of process may lead to weak commitment and a lack of common understanding of challenges and choices at school and teacher levels. Another drawback may be that insufficient consideration is given to variations between schools.

200. The evaluation is keyed to the 2005 – 2008 strategy period and will result in annual sub-reports and a final report in 2009. Special emphasis is placed on communicating the results of the first sub-report so that this information can contribute to prioritisations and processes in the continuing work with competence building in municipalities and county authorities.

## **CHAPTER 4: ENHANCING LEARNING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

*This chapter focuses more particularly on the role of school leadership in enhancing learning, and aims to identify the conditions and policies under which school leaders can exercise this role most effectively. Policy concerns about teaching, learning and assessment are addressed.*

### **4.1 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

201. Discussions on quality in the education system have taken place for many years in Norway. To some extent there has been considerable disagreement about the best way to measure quality and about the correlation between the school's internal assessment of its activities, the external assessment and quality development. Since 1995 schools have been obliged to conduct school-based assessments, but there are still great differences among schools and municipalities to what extent such work is systematised. In 2003 it was decided to compile a national quality assessment system with national examinations and a website (*skoleporten.no*) that was to make it possible to put the available information to systematic use. Results from international surveys (for example PISA and TIMSS) have also attracted great public attention and have helped to put the spotlight on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and on assessment.

202. The average grade of learning outcomes at school level can be ascribed to three types of factors: (i) pupils' prerequisites, (ii) random variation, and (iii) the school's contribution to learning. Schools that score highest do not necessarily make the best contribution to learning. This can be due to advantageous pupil composition or chance. In the same way it is far from certain that school with weak results give pupils a poor learning yield. The school's contribution to learning yield can be influenced by many factors: the quality of the school buildings and equipment, the motivation and knowledge level of the teachers, working methods, organisation of the teaching/counselling, the cooperation between employees, the well-being of the pupils, school leadership and resources in the form of teaching hours are all examples of features at schools that can affect pupils' learning yield. It is desirable that the indicators at *skoleporten.no* reflect learning yield that is created by these factors to the highest degree possible. The extent to which this is the case is contingent on how significant pupils' prerequisites and random variation are in explaining the differences in results. The importance of pupil background and of chance can only be verified through systematic surveys based on assessing the actual results for the same schools over several years. (Hægeland, Raaum, Salvanes).

203. One area of concern is that it can seem that the differences in learning outcomes between pupils are increasing – in spite of the goals concerning adaptation and inclusion. This particularly applies to results compared to pupils' social background, but other reasons for concern are that boys in general perform more poorly than girls and that pupils from language minorities do not perform as well as those who have Norwegian as their mother tongue. These aspects have led to discussions on the content and working methods in schools, with special emphasis being placed on the fact that schools must clarify the educational requirements they set for their pupils (Directorate for Education and Training, 2005).

### **4.2 The role of school leadership in the development and evaluation of policies for teaching, learning and assessment**

204. In Norwegian schools, principals are responsible for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their schools (Ministry of Education and Research, 2004). Thus, at school level, principals need to obtain information about pupils' learning and learning outcomes, about teaching, assessment and the curriculum. Attention is increasingly being drawn to the school leaders' role in using such information for quality development in their schools. There are differences between schools, between municipalities and between counties, but the general tendency is to focus more on schools as learning organisations (Dahl, 2004; Møller, 2006; Ministry of Education and Research, 2004). The development of schools as learning

organisations is contingent on good communication between the school leaders, staff, pupils and parents about the schools' practice and results. Similarly, quality development presupposes that the communication between school leaders at school level and their political and administrative superiors maintains a focus on teaching, learning and assessment (Fevolden and Lillejord, 2006).

205. In addition to the recent implementation of a national system for evaluation, schools, municipalities and counties develop and carry out local tests and surveys to map different aspects of quality in schools. Private firms are also commonly employed to develop baseline reports for schools (Møller et al., 2006). Faced with an abundance of information, one challenge for school leaders is to understand how results can support governance and accountability. In the rhetoric of the day, school leaders are expected to use results as a basis for learning and school development. They need to approach results in an active and critical manner, and there is a need for analytical competence to be developed (cf. Møller, 2006). For example the school leader survey showed that about half the principals were of the opinion that educational statistics as they were presented on the *skoleporten* website were difficult to interpret.

206. The school leader survey also points to the lack of a systematic approach in schools' evaluation work. It appears to be the most development-oriented schools that to the greatest extent utilise evaluation results in their development efforts (Møller et al., 2006)

207. It can also appear as if there is a discrepancy between the political expectations of school leaders and what they actually contribute to learning, teaching and assessment. Nonetheless it should be emphasised that there are differences between schools, that many work systematically on quality development, and that the national systems are still in the implementation phase and have perhaps not completely attained their final shape.

208. The main conclusions of *The Office of the Auditor General's investigation on education in primary and lower secondary schools* (Document no. 3:10 [2005-2006]) document weakness in the organisation and monitoring of the educational provisions in compulsory schooling. The investigation shows that teachers' expertise regarding adapting and conducting tuition for those with special needs is a key factor in ensuring that pupils receive such tuition and can thus attain a satisfactory learning yield. Almost half the principals included in the investigation are not satisfied with teachers' competence in this area. The consequence is that many pupils are not offered appropriate educational provisions. Pupils who do not receive specially adapted teaching but are in need of extra help are particularly affected. The Office of the Auditor General is of the opinion that it is crucial for the Government and the municipalities to draw attention to this fact.

209. The first joint national inspection programme that was carried out in 2006 (see 3.7) shows that more than 70% of the selected municipalities do not have adequate systems for ensuring that pupils' rights are secured (Directorate for Education and Training report, 2006).

### **4.3 Issues of accountability**

210. Traditionally it has been taken for granted that, as professionals, teachers and leaders in Norwegian schools have conducted their work in the "best possible" manner in line with national curricula and pupils' needs. As schools are increasingly looked upon as separate units for monitoring of results, the issue of accountability is becoming more predominant: schools are made accountable for their results (Møller, 2006). By law, school owners are responsible for routines for the quality assessment of schools' results. Good reporting procedures must be drawn up to enable schools to meet the requirements concerning documenting their results according to the Education Act. Afsar et al. (2006) refer to the fact that the Knowledge Promotion Reform emphasises the management by results model and that this tool is gradually being put into operation in the form of a national assessment system. Management by results is not understood as merely control but also as a tool for development and learning. In other words schools are not only held accountable for results but also equally for what is done with the results. Møller and



Fuglestad (2006) draw attention to the fact that pupil outcomes are now understood to a greater extent than previously as an expression of how the school actually functions. It is thus the *schools* – and the school leaders in particular – that are held accountable.

211. Substantial resources have been used on building up a national assessment system. However, at school level it is viewed as a problem that nowhere near the same amount of resources has been used on developing schools' competence in interpreting the type of information that is produced by such systems and in converting these analyses to development goals and improvement efforts. It can appear as if those who are politically and administratively responsible for schools at the various levels perceive the situation as being that if schools and the general public are notified of the deficiencies, the competition between schools will in itself be sufficient to ensure that improvements are made – which in turn will produce better results according to the Union of Education Norway.

212. There has been considerable debate in Norway about the manner in which school results are to be publicised and for whom. The discussion has partly been concerned with the quality of the results (Lie, Caspersen & Björnsson, 2005), but it also has ideological undertones. On the one hand the access rights of pupils and their parents/guardians is emphasised and their entitlement to be able to choose the “best” school, while on the other the risk of creating A and B schools is underlined. The publication of results has attracted great attention. There is an ongoing process of assessment of how the results should be published in order to provide the best possible platform for further work. (Directorate for Education and Training, 2007).

#### **4.4 Monitoring students' disciplinary behaviour, learning progress and outcomes**

213. A number of comparative studies have concluded that the academic pressure in Norwegian schools is too low compared with that in other countries. On the basis of findings in the PISA surveys in 2000 and 2003, researchers conclude that academic requirements in Norwegian schools are not sufficiently high. Low academic pressure means that the requirements set for the students are too low and that the continuity and depth in the tuition are deficient. Bachmann and Haug (2006) point out that low expectations of pupils can lead to increasing the differences in a pupil group instead of the opposite. It is implied that a passive and compliant leader role combined with low demands for active student participation in the learning process can explain the relatively low academic pressure in Norwegian schools.

214. Students who show problematic behaviour represent a particular challenge to schools and research has dedicated considerable attention to this subject. The PISA surveys from 2000 and 2003 show that there is more disruption and noise in Norwegian schools than in other countries included in the surveys. Although much of this behaviour is not of a serious nature, such problems will disrupt the teaching and will steal time since the tuition is interrupted and pupils are given little peace and quiet in which to work. In this context, Klette (2003) raises the question whether teachers formulate too few and too inexplicit demands on the individual student and instead assume a more withdrawn role as academic supervisor in which their leader function becomes ambiguous and reactive.

215. Some studies indicate a connection between students' behaviour problems in schools and their academic learning yield (Nordahl, 2005). It is also the case that those with good social skills show a clear tendency towards better academic performance than pupils with poor social skills. This shows that preventive work concerning students' social and personal development is not only a goal in itself but is also extremely important for ensuring that students' academic learning yield is the best possible. This is illustrated in the Directorate's 2006 report on preventive efforts in schools in which a number of recommendations and measures are presented.

216. The Directorate has posted four net-based user surveys aimed at students, apprentices, parents and teachers. It is compulsory for schools to conduct the pupil-oriented survey at grades 7 and 10, and in the first year of upper secondary education. The objective of these surveys is to give user groups the

opportunity to express their views on learning and well-being. This will provide schools with significant information that will contribute to the work of further developing the learning environment. School leaders are requested to use the results from the surveys as a starting point for discussions with the pupils' council, parents, teachers and other employees.

#### **4.5 Monitoring curriculum development and implementation**

217. The distribution of responsibility between government and municipal levels indicates that such processes and routines are compiled locally. The Knowledge Promotion Reform gives great freedom at local level for organising the school day and for local adaptation of the distribution of lessons among subjects and disciplines. Emphasis is placed on developing good routines for the transition between the various grades. The introduction of programme subjects at lower secondary level is intended to provide a better link between compulsory schooling and upper secondary education and training, to promote better adapted tuition, and to give the opportunity for practical activity or in-depth subject study. On the basis of the report from the national supervisory body in 2006 (see 3.7), the Directorate for Training and Education and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities will draw up guidelines for the municipalities on control routines, cooperation and reporting between the levels (Directorate for Education and Training report, 2006).

#### **4.6 School leaders' teaching responsibilities**

218. There are wide variations in the amount of working time school leaders spend on teaching. Resources for school leadership are determined according to the size of the school and in most cases each school is given the freedom to distribute the resources according to its needs. The school leader survey (Møller et al., 2006:43) revealed that 34% of school principals state that they have up to 100% leadership resources at their school, 43% state that they have between 101% and 200% leadership resources, while 6% have more than 400%. Among principals at the smallest schools, i.e. those with up to 100 pupils, 25% of the principals say that they have less than 50% leadership resources.

#### **4.7 Teacher observation/peer coaching/mentoring**

219. According to the school leader survey (Møller et al., 2006) there are relatively many schools that create the conditions required for colleague-based counselling. The highest score is at primary school level where 68% of the principals say that the school organises such guidance, and the figures seem to reveal a positive attitude. To some extent principals themselves counsel some of their staff. Principals can play an important role in giving guidance to groups, but when providing individual counselling to members of staff, they must make a clear distinction between the employee appraisal interview and this guidance (Stålsett, 2006).

#### **4.8 Evaluation of teachers' performance**

220. There is no tradition in Norwegian schools for school leaders to directly monitor teachers' work in the classroom or pupils' learning processes, and such monitoring is not subject to any plan. It may be difficult for some principals to gain access to what has traditionally been the teacher's autonomous arena. Nonetheless, by far most school leaders are of the opinion that they have set up good procedures to ensure the quality of the work performed in the school. When school leaders offer guidance to teachers, it is often in connection with special cases involving pupils rather than with the teaching or learning situation (Møller et al., 2006).

221. Almost 90% of school principals in upper secondary schools and more than 50% of those in primary schools say that they have set up procedures to monitor newly appointed teachers – a noticeable increase

in primary and lower secondary schools compared with the survey from 2002. However, fewer have set up routines to monitor teachers who do not function satisfactorily: approximately half the school principals in compulsory education have done so, i.e. an increase of approximately 20% compared with 2001 (Møller et al., 2006). An evaluation of the project designed to evaluate recently trained teachers shows that a large majority of the project participants were of the view that the project helped them to improve their ability to reflect on their own teaching, gave them a greater belief in their own abilities, and improved their control of the work situation. They also say that they have benefited from the offer of counselling regardless of how proactive school leadership is with regard to cooperation, development and participation or how the offer is organised (Sintef Technology and Society, 2006).

222. There is little tradition in this country for the formal assessment of teachers. Formal appraisal interviews can represent an arena where quality requirements are discussed and developed and where the leader and the employee together agree on requirements and development tasks. Employee appraisal interviews are a statutory right but are often regarded as “private” in the sense that they are considered a matter solely between the leader and the employee. With regard to the use of assessment systems, almost half the principals in schools with grades 1-7 and grades 1-10 say that these are used in follow-up interviews with teachers, whereas this applies to only 34% of the principals in lower secondary schools and 29% of those in upper secondary schools (Møller et al., 2006). Formal reward systems are utilised to only a minor degree in Norwegian schools.

223. Since school leaders do not usually exercise planned supervision of teachers’ tuition, they can run the risk of either not reacting to teachers who do a poor job or of reacting too violently on the basis of random or isolated information. However, there are schools that have made systematic use of colleague counselling or a mentor scheme and where openness and knowledge of strengths and weaknesses among the staff is greater than that at other schools. It is not particularly difficult to have bad teachers dismissed or relocated in Norway, but there are few school leaders who possess sufficient knowledge or willingness to carry out the systematic efforts that form the basis of such processes according to the Directorate for Education and Training.

#### **4.9 Teachers’ professional development**

224. A competence report from 2003 focused on lifelong learning and learning in working life. One conclusion was that employees in the education sector had poorer learning conditions than could be expected, and the general impression was that schools score lower than other enterprises for criteria that are regarded as typical for learning organisations. The competence report 2005 pursued this matter through a survey on the school as a learning organisation. The report – which encompassed 39 upper secondary schools – concluded that learning schools are more successful with regard to the pupils’ academic progression in the first year of upper secondary education and training and that pupils at learning schools say that they experience higher quality in the learning process, have a good opinion of the school environment and experience little bullying and disruption. The report emphasises that learning schools ensure continuous learning for their employees by the staff feeling part of a well-functioning community where they have some influence but where general guidelines are set. They also feel that they are faced with high expectations and make use of each other’s competence to meet these expectations. Teachers give feedback to each other and improve and update the practices at the school together.

225. It appears that leaders at learning schools are particularly good at rewarding proficiency. They are able both to include their co-workers in the school’s development and to make priorities. At learning schools there is a considerable amount of daily learning in the everyday interaction between colleagues who test teaching programmes, evaluate and discuss. But daily learning is not conducted at the expense of other forms of competence building: employees’ participation in continuing education and training is facilitated and they are given the opportunity to share knowledge and experience after such programmes.

226. The strategy for competence building in compulsory schooling 2005-2008 has been developed in collaboration between the central education administration and the central parties. In accordance with the strategy the school owner is responsible for developing, deciding and implementing plans for competence building in conjunction with the involved parties. The school owner has responsibility for ensuring that the plans fulfil local competence needs within the national prioritised areas and that the individual school and learning enterprise assess the competence building measures that should be given priority. The first sub-report presenting the evaluation of the competence building strategy was published in May 2006 and shows that decisions on appropriate measure are apparently very often made at central level in municipalities and county authorities. One advantage of the school owner's management of planning is that the development of schools in the municipality as a whole is strengthened. The danger is that this may lead to weak involvement and a lack of a common understanding of challenges and choices among schools and teachers. Another disadvantage may be that insufficient consideration is given to the variations among schools (Hagen, Nyen and Hertzberg 2006). On the basis of the findings in the first sub-report the central authorities have pointed out that assessment of needs must be carried out at each place of instruction.

227. The follow-up evaluation of the strategy for competence building finds little expressed disagreement between school owners, principals and teachers in the assessment of competence needs at schools. However, it appears that they have a somewhat different understanding of reality with regard to their view on competence needs and on suitable instruments for developing new competencies in schools. The evaluation reveals that the aim of the strategy is understood differently by the various target groups. Whereas school owners perceive "the development of the school as a learning organisation" as an aim of the strategy, school leaders attach less importance to this goal while teachers place very little importance on it. School leaders attach most importance to the connection with the Knowledge Promotion Reform and see the strategy as an element in achieving the overall goals of the reform – for example the strengthening of the basic skills of pupils. Professional competence building and competence building keyed to adapted education play a central role in teachers' understanding of the aim of the strategy. The three groups appear to agree that competence keyed to better adapted education is a central goal but have differing views on the kind of competence and how it can best be acquired.

228. With regard to the evaluation, school owners and to some extent principals experience that needs for local competence building correspond to national prioritisations. Teachers have less to say about national prioritisations but have professional needs that these cover in part. At the same time the evaluation finds that the strategy is perceived as giving fairly wide latitude to prioritise local needs and measures.

229. In the case of assessments of needs and prioritisation of measures it appears that different perceptions of goals and needs can be ascribed to different understandings of the purpose of the strategy. Therefore the communication of this strategy is an important task both for the school owner and the school leader since this will reduce tensions connected to the emphasis on needs at national level, at the place of learning and at the individual level. A clearer understanding of the purpose of the strategy may also mean that individual needs can be more closely related to national priorities and the needs of the place of learning allowing the implementation of priorities within a common understanding of needs.

230. The strategy for competence building in primary and lower secondary schools (2005-2008) is different from previous strategies: it underlines the role of school owners, places clear emphasis on local needs and on the development of the school as an organisation and is strongly rooted at each place of learning.

231. A shift is taking place in Norwegian education policy from external courses towards learning in and through daily work. The Directorate for Education and Training's programme *The Knowledge Promotion Reform – from words to action* is an example of how competence development are being adapted to integrate learning processes into everyday life. Earmarked resources for competence development are channelled from the Directorate via the county governors to the school owner responsible for the

competence building of school leaders, teachers and others. Universities, university colleges and other professional environments provide assistance to school owners in this work. The competence building strategy is evaluated by the Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research which submitted its first sub-report in 2006. Reports are to be submitted every year with the final report in the spring of 2009. The researchers find that this strategy differs from previous strategies through:

- stronger emphasis on the role of the school owner
- greater stress on local needs
- more focus on the organisational perspective
- improved central organisational basis

The researchers find that a key prerequisite for success is the will and ability of the school owner to organise processes so that teachers and school leaders experience that the measures implemented meet their needs.

#### **4.10 – 4.11 Leadership practice and learning in schools - Relevant research studies**

232. It has been difficult for research conducted on schools to document whether formal leadership has a direct impact on pupils' learning outcomes. Nonetheless many are of the opinion that principals' leadership is critical for schools' development, and leaders can be very significant as a symbol. Replacing one leader with another can, for example, trigger strong feelings, new expectations and perceptions that influence future functional abilities in the organisation for better or for worse (Møller, pending publication, Strand 2000). International studies (for example Mulford & Johns, 2004, Leithwood et al., 1999) imply an indirect correlation between leadership and results. For instance, formal leadership is important as a support structure for classroom activities.

233. This result is reflected in Norwegian studies. Imsen's (2004) study of leadership in the evaluation of Reform 97, for example, could not refer to a clear pattern for the variables that were most important in explaining the variation in pupils' performances, but the teacher was regarded as being the most significant actor for the tuition offered. On the other hand, the study documented a high correspondence between the actions of the principal and the leader group and the direction of the school's development (Møller, 2006).

234. In the Norwegian part of the international research project entitled *Successful School Leadership* a common feature throughout was that there were many who exercised leadership at the selected schools (Møller and Fuglestad, 2006): formal leaders, teachers and pupils all took a number of leadership initiatives. But even though formal leadership was only one of many elements that constituted the practice of leadership, it was still the leadership actions that were performed by the principal that were important. Formal leaders have the power and authority to affect the agenda and to determine what is to be given attention in schools, and formal leader actions are therefore significant for the school's development even though it is difficult to measure a direct impact on pupils' learning outcomes (Møller, 2006).

235. In a survey from 2004 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2005) the following aspects of leadership are highlighted as essential for the development of the school as a learning organisation: leadership that is rewarded, leadership that has legitimacy, inclusive leadership, and leadership that assigns priorities and can use power.

236. The Fafo Research Foundation has evaluated the scheme involving demonstration schools and demonstration companies. The evaluation shows that the scheme involving such schools has had comprehensive extended effects on other schools. The scheme is characterised by imparting information that is closely linked to educational practice, and this seems to have contributed to greater understanding and learning in the schools that have visited the demonstration schools. The scheme involving demonstration companies has not produced equally good effects with regard to spreading results and experience.

237. Studies show that 40% of the primary and lower secondary schools and 50% of the upper secondary schools that have been in contact with the demonstration schools are of the view that the contact led to specific changes at their own schools. However, most of them consider that it is too early to express an opinion on whether it has had an impact on learning yield. Of the schools that think they have sufficient documentation to assess the effect, almost all are of the view that the experience is largely positive. Researchers claim that it will be possible to acquire a complete picture of the impact of the scheme on pupils' learning yield in two years or so.

238. The scheme is characterised by imparting information that is closely linked to educational practice, and this seems to have contributed to greater understanding and learning. The opportunity for a direct exchange of experience combined with access to seeing how demonstration schools' models function in practice provides a good understanding of the models. Interviews in the survey show that user schools are fully aware of what is required to adapt the demonstration schools' model to their own organisation. The models are not adopted randomly: user schools give priority to the fact that as a rule there will be a need for adjustment and further development in their own school. Demonstration schools function first and foremost as inspiration for other schools.

239. Internally, schools that have been demonstration schools report predominantly positive effects from the scheme, and the scheme leads to an increase in the internal learning at the schools. External recognition, pride and access to networks are other positive outcomes. Researchers point out that at many of the demonstration schools both teachers and school managers feel convinced about the correctness of what they are doing since it promotes both the pupils' desire to learn and their actual learning.

#### **4.12 Policy initiatives which have been undertaken or are planned to support learning-centred leadership**

240. Schools as learning organisations and competence building for leaders at individual schools and training establishments are assigned priority in the Knowledge Promotion Reform's strategy for competence building. This document regards the main challenge for schools as learning organisations to be developing the learning environment and organising it in a way that best promotes learning – for pupils and for the staff as a professional community. Amendments to the Education Act have given schools greater opportunities to organise the teaching so that it is better adapted to local prerequisites and needs. Both the evaluation of Reform 97 and the project on differentiation in education have revealed a considerable potential for better adaptations in compulsory schooling. The evaluation of the Government's programme on quality development (2000-2003) shows that schools with a cooperation-based working method and systematic evaluation of their own practice are more able to give their pupils adapted tuition than other schools.

241. This makes it necessary to prioritise competence-building programmes in order to develop schools' and training establishments' abilities to organise education and training appropriately and to adjust the content and working methods in order to give the individual student and apprentice specially-adapted tuition. There is also a need to improve the quality of special tuition, at the same time as the need for such teaching should be prevented and reduced by providing better adapted education. The work of preventing and reducing behaviour problems in school has also been given high priority. In all, this puts considerable demands on the competence of teachers and school leadership.

242. The national system for quality assessment is intended to promote quality development by paving the way for informed decisions at all levels in the school system. Developing schools as learning organisations particularly involves strengthening the ability of school leadership and staff to evaluate the results of their work. Appropriate application of the national system for quality assessment requires the ability to analyse and make use of information about resources, the learning environment and learning yield on the website *skoleporten.no*. In collaboration with the main partners in the business community,

*skoleporten.no* is to be expanded to include vocational training and training in companies. The skills required to use guidance resources to improve the quality of the training are also necessary.

243. School leaders must facilitate knowledge-based class leadership. A key task for the teacher as a leader is to make choices and take decisions based on the most secure knowledge possible, which in turn will ensure knowledge-based practice in the classroom and the school. Core sources of information for such a practice are research-based knowledge, empirical knowledge and user knowledge, in addition to that from sources such as legislation, professional guidelines, ethics and the school's key principles. A knowledge-based practice does not give priority to one source of knowledge over others, but integrates knowledge from different sources (cf. document on preventive measures, Directorate of Education and Training 2006).

244. Never before has there been more comprehensive investment in competence building in Norwegian schools. In 2006 the Government allocated NOK 375 million to such efforts, and an equal amount will be employed in 2007. The municipalities and county authorities have used corresponding amounts, bringing the amount to approximately NOK 750 million during the year for competence building. The strategy will last until 2008, and the Government and school owners will by then have spent a total of NOK 3.5 billion on the various programmes.

245. Work on follow-up research is being carried out at the Fafo Research Foundation along with processes for reporting qualitatively, quantitatively and financially.

#### **4.13 Issues with high priority for future policy development in strengthening learning-centred leadership**

246. Government policy documents for schools generally describe leadership as critical for a school's development. The White Paper *Culture for Learning* emphasises that schools need competent and visible school leaders who have a positive attitude to change to enable schools to develop into learning organisations. This is necessary to meet the challenges posed by a more knowledge-driven society. The point of reference in this context is international studies that highlight what characterises leaders at development-oriented schools. The White Paper maintains that principals at such schools keep themselves updated about and show interest in teachers' work with pupils. They proactively promote teachers' development and improvement to their work. They manage to retain a focus on the pupils, to share power and to create a climate where taking chances and being innovative is appreciated. They take the time to talk to the teachers, the pupils and the community outside the school. Leaders at such schools are able to build up the school as a learning organisation. Good school owners also represent a key prerequisite for school development, and their responsibilities include the practice of a good personnel policy.

247. The national curriculum for the Knowledge Promotion Reform further elaborates schools' responsibility in the education principles. These first clarify the responsibility of the *school owners* for ensuring that the education is in line with the relevant legislation and regulations and with human rights, and that it is adapted to local and individual conditions and needs. Secondly it specifies that the school's formal leaders, in cooperation with the teachers, have an unambiguous responsibility for promoting a good learning environment for all those involved.

248. The so-called Learning Poster on *skolenettet.no* accentuates the responsibility of schools and training establishments for helping teachers and instructors to be viewed as visible leaders and as examples for children and young people. This is related to the general section of the national curriculum that provides details about the role of teachers and counsellors and about what should characterise a good teacher, and highlights the importance of learning as teamwork. It also emphasises that coordinated efforts and interaction between colleagues are vital for the results that are attained, and that this sets requirements for school leaders who must both understand the distinctive character of the teaching profession and be able to promote inspiration and proficient coordination. The explanatory comments to the Learning Poster

clarify the type of competence that teachers must develop to meet the expectations associated with their role. These include professional competence, the ability to communicate, organisational skills, the ability to counsel and assess, and knowledge of multi-cultural matters. In addition it is assumed that teachers cooperate on planning, performance and assessment, and that they continuously ensure that they are professionally and pedagogically updated. Pupils' learning outcomes represent a goal for the school's quality – learning outcomes in this context being defined in a wide sense where knowledge and appreciation of democracy are also of key importance.



## **CHAPTER 5: THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL LEADERS' ROLE**

*This chapter addresses country concerns regarding the supply and quality of school leaders. It explores the characteristics of the school leadership workforce, as well as the types of employment conditions and support structures that make school leadership an attractive career for potential candidates and for those on the job.*

### **5.1 Major concerns about the supply and quality of school leaders in Norway**

249. There has been increasing concern in recent years about the recruitment of school leaders regarding both the number of applicants for such posts and the qualifications of the applicants. The concern is intensified since there will be a need for a considerable number of school leaders in the future.

250. Problems with recruitment can be viewed through isolated cases. Examples can be seen of municipalities having to advertise school leader posts several times in order to attract sufficient qualified applicants. Some municipalities are obliged to assign such posts compulsorily in order to fill them. Most municipalities involve school leaders in normal municipal management training, and several municipalities have also allocated funds to special school leadership training courses. This applies chiefly to those who already have leadership positions, but the training is also employed as a recruitment measure by issuing invitations to teachers. In recent years school leadership training has also been prioritised by school owners because of the focus on competence building for school leaders in the strategy for competence building in compulsory schooling (2005-2008). (Directorate of Education and Training's analysis of primary and lower secondary education)

251. School owners' reports on competence building resources for 2005 show that 74% of school leaders in primary and lower secondary schools participated in continuing education and training programmes in municipal/general leadership training as did 43% of school leaders in upper secondary schooling. In the same period 9% of school leaders in compulsory schooling participated in continuing education programmes that gave credits for higher education. 6% of the school leaders in the upper secondary schools took part in such continuing education.

252. The reports show that 98% of school leaders in compulsory schooling and 84% in upper secondary schooling participated in continuing education and training in pedagogical leadership. In the same period 21% of school leaders in compulsory schooling and 24% of school leaders in upper secondary schools participated in continuing education programmes in pedagogical leadership that gave credits for higher education.

253. Little documentation and few statistics are available nationally for school leader recruitment. The extent to which municipalities and county authorities have their own statistics in this area is unknown. Focus has been on recruitment to the teaching profession. As a follow-up to Norway's participation in *Teachers Matter – Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (OECD, 2005), a report has been written that discusses assessing the possibilities of setting up a framework for professional career paths in the occupation. This can encourage conscious career planning for new school leaders. The conditions for school leaders and the intention of having a constant focus on principals' opportunities to perform pedagogical leadership have been submitted as a proposal for policy development (2006).

254. The Norwegian Association of School Leaders refers to the following possible causes for the situation:

- Lack of systematic recruitment measures
- Large variations in employers' investment in competence building
- Increasing work pressure and strain from new tasks and greater responsibility

- More tasks and greater delegation is not followed by a corresponding increase in time resources for leaders
- Deputy principals do not apply for principal posts since the greater responsibility and strain is not adequately reflected in the increase in pay – the current form of organisation with team management allows them to take part in most of the tasks without assuming responsibility
- Less chance of following teachers' working hours

## **5.2 Monitoring of the supply versus demand situation of school leaders**

255. There are no national surveys of the number of persons who have been appointed to school leader positions or of how many vacant posts there are at any given time. The issue has been discussed at school owner level – county authorities, municipalities and in the private sphere – but no systematic records have been made. A government policy has been sought for recruitment to school leader posts in connection with a project in the county of Trøndelag on the selection of leader candidates in the municipal sector – which was a follow-up of the From teacher to principal programme. Both these programmes were run under the auspices of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

## **5.3 Composition of school leaders and changes over the past 10 years**

256. In Norway there are no figures that show the age and gender of school leaders over the past ten years, but the Norwegian Association of School Leaders has procured information that indicates that:

- i) there is an increasing number of women, particularly in primary schools. The number is also increasing in upper secondary education and training.
- ii) the average age is somewhat high, but there is a trend for young teachers to apply for leadership posts. This applies to school leader positions, but only to a small extent to posts as principals.
- iii) there are no school leaders that have a background other than ethnic Norwegian
- iv) most school leaders have teaching experience from the type of school they lead. It is reported that there are leaders with a different background in cases where it is difficult to recruit others for such posts, but these are exceptions.

There may be a trend for those who apply for leader positions in upper secondary education to have a lower professional background, but this has not been mapped.

257. The situation in 2005 in terms of age and gender is described in section 41.

## **5.4 Evidence of the reasons why qualified candidates may choose not to apply for leadership positions**

258. There are no national surveys in this country that describe the growth in the number of applicants for school leader posts. However, according to the Norwegian Association of School Leaders, it is commonly held that the number of applicants has declined in recent years. The causes are complex, but the perception of school leaders' working conditions appears to be an area that can be a contributory factor for whether or not individuals apply for a school leader post. One of the main conclusions of the school leader survey of 2001 among principals in compulsory schooling was that support systems such as clerical staff and caretaking services were regarded as particularly critical (Møller et al., 2006).

259. On the basis of feedback from their members, the Norwegian Association of School Leaders has presented possible explanations as to why qualified candidates decide not to apply for school leader positions. They point to the fact that school leadership does not have a particularly high status. Teachers assess the considerable responsibility leaders must assume and their administrative tasks as very stressful and somewhat unattractive. Furthermore they say that their own pay is good and that leaders often do not earn much more than they do. In addition, the divisions of the teaching year are regarded as more

attractive than the school leader's working year: teachers would have shorter holidays if they took up a leadership post. Moreover, many teachers say that they have chosen to be teachers because they like the teaching, the contact with the pupils and the chance to "use" their academic knowledge. Traditionally there has been little focus in teaching training on areas that are important for exercising leadership or on training for school leadership.

260. Teachers' salary system with graded minimum pay according to formal qualifications means that particularly teachers with high formal qualifications have little to gain salary-wise by moving to a school leader position. As far as is known, however, there are no statistics on the relationship between school leaders' formal competence level and that of teachers at the same school according to the Union of Education Norway.

261. The Norwegian working life tradition is very democratic. Many people have experienced that having ambitions to hold a leadership position has not been regarded as 'politically correct' (Sørhaug 1996) and this is also reflected in research. The subject of leadership has not been prioritised in Norwegian social science research (Sørhaug 2004).

### **5.5 Evidence on the proportion of teachers who aspire to school leadership positions as part of their career path**

262. The Norwegian school leader surveys do not map teachers' wishes to apply for school leader positions. However, school leaders are mainly recruited among teachers (Møller, 2004). They are often encouraged to apply for leadership posts. Older teachers often see their appointment as school leader as a result of chance rather than a conscious choice of career path while younger teachers plan their career more deliberately. Training for the position takes place primarily as part of the learning community; first they become deputy school principals and later principals.

263. In 2001 two counties worked on the selection and development of leaders in the municipal sector on the basis of the project *From teacher to principal*. Cooperation between the university college in Sør-Trøndelag and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities documented differences in strategies/ideologies between large and small municipalities. Small municipalities use instruments such as mentoring/counselling/coaching more or less systematically. This also applies to large municipalities but they use new management tools such as management by objectives and leadership agreements.

264. Methods for developing leaders vary from regular, informal oral feedback or use of modern management and leadership tools. Performance assessment interviews are used in many municipalities but different experiences have been registered. Surprisingly many municipalities have either phased out the use of this method or are in the process of doing so. An increasing number are considering the trainer, counsellor and mentor variants in order to develop municipal managers. Such models, however, do not seem to have been adopted systematically at present. Many approaches are being tried but there is a lack of documentation of how they work in practice. At present there is little interest in adopting the trainee concept in the public sector.

265. The municipalities carry out the recruitment process in a professional way. However mapping shows that there may be need for renewed training, updating and new competence. This is carried out by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the educational institutions and other actors.

266. A number of municipalities have a strong and well-considered commitment to setting up career paths for their school leaders. School leaders with special aptitudes are counselled and asked to focus on development in particular areas in order to turn into competent principals. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities is aware that in the appointments process, emphasis is put on finding principals with special characteristics that fit the profile and challenges of the school.

267. There are many applicants for the Master programme in educational leadership. These studies also function as a recruitment base for the profession of school leader (Møller, 2006).

### **5.6 Leadership positions, assignment and equitable distribution of school leaders among schools**

268. There are no formal requirements for leadership training in Norway. The school owner, i.e. municipalities, county authorities and private owners have responsibility for advertising vacancies, selection and appointment of school leaders. Posts are advertised publicly as they fall vacant and the advertisements include requirements as to qualifications and experience. Often there is a description of the special leadership qualities and skills that are sought, e.g. the ability to inspire and collaborate, communication and change competence, human resources leadership, performance orientation and quality development. Personal suitability for the job is also emphasised. Some municipalities/county authorities demand education in leadership.

269. School leaders are employed in a municipality/county authority but normally they apply for a leadership post at the particular school mentioned in the advertisement. At a later stage school leaders may be asked to take up leader positions at other schools in the municipality/county authority. The system is based on the employment policy of the individual municipality/county authority together with some basic elements from labour relations agreements.

270. In recent years many school leaders have had to accept considerable changes in their job content and job ranking because of organisational changes in the school structure. In many municipalities and county authorities schools have been closed or merged to form larger units, both because of changes in the recruitment base for schools, but also in order to save money. As a result many principals have been made responsible for schools consisting of several separate departments that were previously separate schools. In some cases these departments are situated at some distance from each other so that the leadership team must spend a considerable amount of time travelling between the different departments in according to the Union of Education Norway.

### **5.7 School leaders' position**

271. School leaders are normally appointed in the same way as teachers to permanent posts that may be terminated. In 1992 the Local Government Act allowed appointments to be made based on fixed-term contracts for leading administrative posts, i.e. for the leader of an administrative area. This was first applied in 2002. Changes in the Education Act of 17 June 2005 allow the appointment of principals in primary and lower secondary schools on fixed-term contracts but this has not as yet become widespread. In upper secondary education in some municipalities, newly-appointed principals are employed on fixed-term contracts. It appears that this trend is on the increase, especially in upper secondary education.

272. The justification for this change is a wish and need to professionalise the role of school leader to a greater degree.

### **5.8 Evaluation of school leaders and employment renewal**

273. The follow-up and evaluation of school leaders and the renewal of work contracts is the responsibility of the employer, and is carried out in different ways in municipalities and county authorities. There is no national system for assessing a school leader with a view to continued employment as a school leader. All municipalities have the aim of conducting performance assessment reviews or development interviews with their principals at least once a year. These interviews are focused on the principal's development and competence needs among other factors. In the municipalities that have

introduced leadership agreements the interview is linked to expectations and performance objectives in the contract.

274. In recent years an increasing number of municipalities have adopted leadership agreements, follow-up and development interviews as active tools. The 2005 school leader survey shows that this applies to 53 % of the municipalities/county authorities (Møller et al, 2006). A number of municipalities also assess their leaders in working environment surveys in which co-workers also assess their leaders.

## **5.9 Leadership salary**

275. The central agreement that regulates conditions for teachers and school leaders in the school system stipulates a *criteria-based minimum wage* for principals and a number of other school leader positions. In primary and secondary education the criteria are linked to the number of man-years performed at each school.

276. In addition to these provisions there are different kinds of locally decided criteria for determining the salary of school leaders. In several municipalities and county authorities employment contracts for principals have been introduced in which salary levels and salary increments are linked to specified goals. No statistics are available as to how many municipalities and county authorities have introduced this type of performance-based pay system for school leaders.

277. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities has worked for the development of local wage settlements for school leaders. An important basis for this has been a number of research and development projects aimed at shedding light on how the municipal sector should work to recruit and keep competent leaders and co-workers, including teachers and school leaders. One example is the survey conducted by Gallup Norway in 2001.

278. The determination of salaries in the municipal sector has traditionally been characterised by limited possibilities for local wage negotiations. This is now in the process of change. Today many leaders achieve the best results in local negotiations. The salary has been linked to the position and to a lesser extent to the employee's performance. The survey indicates that the traditional position and competence-based pay system continues to be used in the municipal sector. Seven out of ten employees claim that salary is not used to any great extent as an instrument to recruit and retain employees. Likewise traditional criteria linked to education and practical work experience are accorded the greatest importance in the determination of salary, even though initiative, service-mindedness and achievement are also regarded as important in many organisations.

279. Today there is widespread support for the introduction of performance-related pay as a supplement to the existing scheme based on education and seniority among managers at the municipal level (TNS Gallup Norway). There are differing opinions among municipal employees as to whether there in fact exist differences in working performance efficiency among the employees on which a performance-based pay system can be based. At the same time there are differing views as to whether performance-based salaries are suitable for use in municipalities. Nevertheless there is a small majority who believe that a performance-based salary is the best guarantee that the municipality is able to recruit and retain motivated employees.

280. The employees widely support local negotiation rights even though they claim that central negotiations are the best guarantee for an equitable allocation of wage funds. The majority have the view that influence on the wage settlement should lie with similar position or functions. Opinions differ among employees as to whether labour organisations safeguard their needs in the local wage negotiations.

## **5.10 Salaries and working conditions of school leaders**

281. The wage system for teachers in Norway is based on a system whereby various levels of formal education are linked to different levels of minimum wage. This means that teachers who take extra qualifications so that they achieve a higher formal educational level have automatically a right to a higher *minimum* wage level. It is common that teachers with different teacher training qualifications and with different formal levels of competence work together in the various kinds of schools and consequently also at the same school.

282. Since school leader posts are mainly filled by those with pedagogical competence from teaching posts, this means that the increase in salary level on becoming a school leader depends on the competence level achieved as a teacher prior to this. Up to 2004 the provision that school leaders (with the exception of department heads) should be paid four pay grades over what they would have had as teachers. School leaders are ensured a minimum wage based on the number of man-years at the school. In addition a factor for pupil numbers is included in upper secondary schools (see 5.9).

283. There are two alternatives for wage regulation depending on the leadership structure in the municipality/county authority:

1. The salaries of school leaders (principals) who are unit heads and who report directly to the highest administrative leader (head of the municipal administration) in the municipality/county authority are determined through local negotiations once a year. The negotiations basis is prescribed in the central collective agreement. School leaders are treated in the same way as other municipal managers.
2. The salaries of school leaders (principals who are not included in the first category, vice-principals, deputy principals and heads of department) are determined through central and local negotiations once a year. The framework for local negotiations is stipulated at central level. (In 2006 the following was agreed: a general supplement of 2.6% with a supplementary frame of 1.4% in local negotiations. In addition all centrally determined minimum wage rates for principals and deputy principals were increased by NOK 16 500 (approximately EUR 2 000.) Negotiations are conducted in the same way as for other employees in the municipality/county authority. Salary negotiations can also take place if there are changes in working conditions etc.

284. School leaders are not ensured a minimum remuneration relation to their education but will in most cases receive a higher salary than they would receive in a teaching position. As leaders they are guaranteed a centrally negotiated minimum wage (see below). The municipality/county authority determines leadership resources (time resources) for the individual school. There are no non-financial benefits for school leaders that are centrally determined. Any such benefits must be agreed at local level.

285. The development over the last ten years has led to greater pay differences among school leaders and it is probable that there are also greater variations in other kinds of working conditions. However, when the role of the school leader is defined locally it is extremely difficult to draw up statistics and to assess to what extent these differences are justified.

286. Prior to 2004 when pay and working conditions for teachers and school leaders were agreed with the State, pay conditions for school leaders were mainly at the same level nationwide at schools of the same kind and size. Since wage levels in the municipal sector as a whole vary so that salaries are higher in central areas than in outlying areas, the changeover to municipal negotiations has led to a very weak salary increment for school leaders in outlying areas. Their salaries are now often compared to the salaries of other municipal managers who historically have been on a much lower wage level than school leaders according to the Union of Education Norway.

287. Policy measures targeted at employees at the later career stages that apply to municipal employees do not apply to principals in some municipalities. The basic agreement regulates conditions such as time

off in lieu of payment and overtime for municipal employees. Principals are excluded in part from this. Instead a scheme giving seven days off in lieu of payment for meetings and conferences is applicable.

288. Pension entitlements linked to school leader positions are the same for all school leaders since pension entitlements for public employees are regulated at central government level in Norway.

### **5.11 School leaders - long-term career commitment or a short-term assignment**

289. No data are available on this subject. The predominant trend in Norway seems to be that school leaders are appointed to permanent posts which they retain up to retirement. The situation is now changing both with the introduction of fixed-term posts and also because school leaders now move to different school leader positions or find new challenges in other types of posts. However, few school leaders transfer to the private sector and recruitment of school leaders from the private sector is also modest.

### **5.12 and 5.13 Data on the numbers of school leaders who leave the profession each year**

290. In Norway there are no data that document this. However, this is an issue that causes concern among school leaders. Many school leaders today are middle-aged and many find it a very stressful to remain in a leadership position until retirement. They are interested in life-phase policies including entitlements in connection with contractual pensions, professional self-development leave and pre-retirement positions according to the Norwegian Association of School Leaders.

### **5.14 Instituted processes for leadership succession**

291. The municipality's responsibility for facilitating policy measures targeted at employees at the later career stages is prescribed in the Basic Agreement. Nevertheless leaders in a number of municipalities are exempted from these schemes precisely because they are leaders. However, many employers have made good provisions for older employees.

### **5.15 Initiatives to improve the recruitment and retention of effective school leaders**

292. There are no systemised measures known to the Norwegian Association of School Leaders. However some municipalities/county authorities have initiated measures to retain their leaders

- paid study leave
- reduced working time on full salary
- competence building

### **5.16 Priority for future policy development in attracting and retaining effective school leaders**

293. Based on the current situation the following areas might be of importance for future policy:

- School leader training
- Competence building
- Good salary and working conditions
- Broad powers that give room for action
- Adequate access to resources in order to implement prioritised development provisions
- Leadership agreements that promote the development of learning schools
- Better opportunities to administer the working time of staff

## CHAPTER 6: TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERS

*This chapter aims to identify effective policies and practices to develop high quality school leaders, by exploring issues in relation to the structure, content, methods and effectiveness of existing preparation and development programmes.*

### 6.1 School leaders' preparation, development or certification: Issues and concerns

294. Until the early 1990s, no formal education for school leaders was offered by Norwegian university colleges and universities. However, national and regional authorities have instigated in-service training. In the period from 1980 to 2000, such efforts were guided by broad national programmes for school leadership: MOLIS, LIS, LEVIS, LUIS (cf. Tjeldvoll et al., 2005). These programmes have been evaluated and the course adjusted on a continuous basis. Especially in the initial phase, the options that were offered were founded on a theoretical basis from leadership theory developed within the private sector. As regards content, continuing education and training has been somewhat fragmented and characterised by a low degree of obligation for the participants (Møller, 1996).

295. In the past ten years, the Ministry has encouraged cooperation between universities and university colleges in order to promote the development of in-service training courses and master programmes in educational leadership. This has resulted in an extensive co-operation across institutions, and now several universities and colleges offer master programmes within school leadership/educational leadership (cf. 6.7 below).

296. Over the last 10 years, the Government has ceased to offer continuing education and training to school leaders. The Ministry now expects universities and university colleges to develop relevant and experience-based courses in cooperation with municipalities and counties. The school owners, i.e. municipalities and county authorities, are responsible for ensuring that school leaders have the necessary competence, and also for evaluating, developing and implementing leadership programmes and courses. Thus preparation and development for school leaders vary across municipalities/counties. This is because the requirements are evaluated differently, and because the higher education institutions with whom the school owners co-operate offer different professional profiles and standards.

297. Whether formal education in the form of a Master's degree is a requirement for employment is currently up to the municipalities as employers. While the Quality Committee's recommendation, Official Norwegian Report NOU 2003:16, proposed that school leaders should be offered education in leadership at the Master's degree level, and the Ministry in White Paper no. 30 (2003-2004) *Culture for learning* toned this down to separate education for school leaders, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities is somewhat more sceptical to such formalisation of competence requirements. Their position is that the school owner has, and should have, the responsibility for leadership training since they can best evaluate the need in co-operation with their school leaders. Municipalities and counties do not wish governance intervention by the State in the form of formal requirements, or that the Directorate and county governor shall have a co-ordinating role on behalf of the school owners (Kjøraas, 2005). Nor do they take it for granted that key competence is linked to colleges and universities in this context, and therefore encourage the formation of a local network where schools and school leaders can learn from each other. "Best practice" is considered to be a basic principle, and it is the school's/schools owner's own perspective, not a centrally developed model by experts and researchers. Such local development programmes can undoubtedly be both important and useful. At the same time, it may be questioned whether this is sufficient. The leadership field has developed into a large industry, and there are many players in a market offering consultancy services and quick solutions.

298. The workplace is emphasised again and again as the most important arena for education. But an analysis of what happens in everyday life assumes the existence of good concepts as tools: concepts that



help to frame problems in different ways to avoid an embracement of the latest trends and fashions in leadership without the necessary reflection and critical perspective. Therefore, formal education is important (Møller, 2006). However, colleges and universities need to be willing to listen to the criticism which may be directed towards their programmes. As pointed out on several occasions in this report, it is the school owners, the municipalities and the county authorities, who are responsible for identifying needs, for preparing measures for competence building and selecting candidates for the options offered. The universities and university colleges are expected to assist by developing these options in line with the needs of the school owners.

299. The establishment of partnerships between college/university and schools may be one option. Programmes such as *Practice-related research and development* and the Directorate for Education and Training's programme *The Knowledge Promotion Reform – from words to action* focus on school development as part of the Knowledge Promotion Reform exemplify such measures. Another way is to develop the quality of higher education through co-operation across institutions. A national network of professional institutions that offer school leadership certification may have an important function here, not least to ensure that the training is firmly embedded in the research field (cf. 6.5 and 6.10 below).

300. How knowledge is developed between these institutions and what is included in the creation of a professional basis for school leaders in today's society are the subject of continuous discussion. While there seems to be a shift in focus towards leadership for learning (Tjeldvoll et al., 2005) this term is highly ambiguous and open to several interpretations. While it is evident that key leaders would invest in the core business of schools, i.e. organising goal effective learning for all students (ibid, p. 43), there is less agreement about what school leaders need to know in order to be able to make such an investment. Also, there are no blue prints as to how training or education could best be organised. For instance, a recurrent problematic issue is the allocation of time for preparation and development. In addition it is expected that the certification meets requirements for high quality, flexibility and implementation of new learning technology (Sivesind et al., 2006).

301. Good school leadership is a key to the implementation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform and will become even more important in the future. The role of the leader is changing and has also become more difficult. It is important that school leaders get the help, support and training that they both desire and need.

## **6.2 and 6.3 Pathways to and requirements for school leadership positions**

302. As mentioned above (cf. 6.1), no formal requirements regarding education in leadership are demanded for leadership positions in schools. However such requirement may be set by the school owner. The school leadership survey shows that almost 40% of school leaders have no formal training in organisation and leadership and only 18.5 % have taken education in leadership equivalent to one year's study (Møller et al., 2006). However it can be assumed that many more have participated in the national programmes (cf. 6.1 above). The municipalities and county authorities conduct their own management development programmes for municipal managers in which many school leaders have participated. In addition educational organisations have contributed to continuing education and training for school leaders through courses and conferences.

303. School leaders are primarily recruited among teachers. Training for this position takes place first and foremost through participation in the learning community, first as teachers, then as deputy principals and later as principals. Møller (2007) points out that although learning in the work situation is naturally of importance, there is a need to develop concepts as tools for understanding everyday experiences. Formal pedagogical qualifications can constitute a key corrective and supplement to everyday learning. Moreover participation in pedagogical or leadership studies may lead to recruitment. Some municipalities focus consciously on training as a form of recruitment, for example by offering teachers places on their

leadership programmes, by part-financing education at university colleges or universities, or by arranging special leader recruitment programmes.

304. Up to the 1999/2000 school year, there was a statutory requirement that a principal should be a trained teacher and should have three years teaching experience in the type of school he/she was to head (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998/Education Act, Sections 10.1 and 10.2). A background in teacher training was regarded as a prerequisite for the ability to exercise pedagogical leadership and to understand the school as an organisation. Therefore considerable debate arose when the Government put forward draft legislation in 2002 to the effect that pedagogical competence in the leadership team of which the principal was a member was considered to be a sufficient requirement. Since the fundamental task of the school constituted learning, teaching, socialisation and knowledge building, many felt that it was a clear prerequisite that the school principal had formal competence in this area. The Government's justification for the proposal was linked to changes in the role of school leader that both strengthened the responsibility as an employer and equated the principal with other municipal managers. In the Government's view this entailed a much greater need for general leadership certification in schools. However, when the new Act was adopted the requirement for pedagogical qualifications was retained, but formal competence was replaced by the principle of total qualifications (formal and non-formal). Consequently there are no formal obstacles preventing those who have a background other than teaching from applying for and being appointed to school leadership positions as long as they satisfy the formal requirements, i.e. that they have educational qualifications and the necessary leadership skills (Education Act, Section 9-1). Nevertheless the majority of principals have teacher training certification but the Act allows for local evaluation when appointing school leaders. The municipality or county authority specifies requirements in the text of the advertisement of the position. It appears from the advertisements that school leaders in Norway are expected to play an all-round leadership role. New governance structures with delegation of responsibility and tasks to the individual school ensure that the employer dimension is made clear in advertisements. However there is emphasis also on the ability to direct development and on leadership (Møller et al., 2000).

305. In the case of independent schools there are no requirements for the appointment of a principal. In the Act relating to private schools (Section 4-1) requirements are set that each school must have proper professional, educational and administrative leadership, and that the school must have an administrative leader.

#### **6.4 Regulatory framework and legislation that applies to school leadership preparation programmes**

306. There are no statutes or regulations that govern school leadership preparation programmes, either as regards who can offer such programmes, how programmes are to be financed, who can participate or the professional content. Master's programmes at universities are put together by the individual institutions but there is extensive collaboration between universities and university colleges, see 6.1 above.

307. Although municipalities and county authorities partly finance school leadership preparation by means of state funding, there are no requirements as to the content and organisation of this, apart from expectations that it is formed in collaboration with competence environments. This leads to a variation in content, organisation and scope.

#### **6.5 Development and evaluation of school leadership preparation programmes**

308. Since municipalities and county authorities are responsible for competence building for school leaders, the responsibility for development and evaluation is decentralised. Assessments and analyses keyed to the major national efforts in the 1980s and 1990s (see Tjeldvoll et al., 2005) have been conducted but they are not based on jointly developed standards and quality criteria, and there is little documentation of the impacts of programmes at school level. It is asserted that national programmes for school leadership

preparation during this period were characterised by uncertainty, diversity and a tenuous link to school policy goals and that the further development of programmes was to a very limited extent shaped by the results of assessments (Wales and Welle-Strand, 2005), although there are differing opinions about this. Sector status reports describe systematic work over a period of years.

309. The *Quality Reform* in higher education directs focus to assessment and quality assurance. The various institutions have developed and are continuing to develop systems that safeguard quality, for example by means of student evaluation and programme assessment and the appointment of supervisory officials. Self-evaluation and surveys of participant satisfaction are undoubtedly important for the quality of studies but it is also vital to investigate the impact of learning. At present no such studies are available but the ongoing HEAD project at BI Norwegian School of Management may make a significant contribution.

310. In 2002 the Ministry of Research and Education announced new methods of encouraging university and college environments to further develop continuing education and training programmes and to offer a Master's degree for school leaders that was experience-based. This resulted in extensive cooperation across institutions, and now many universities and university colleges offer Master's degree studies within school leadership/education leadership. How knowledge is developed between these institutions, and what is included in creating a professional basis for school leaders in today's society, is the subject of continuous discussion – not least because it is expected that the educational programmes offered meet the requirements for high quality, flexibility and the implementation of new learning technology.

## **6.6 Support or induction programmes for new school leaders**

311. Induction schemes or programmes form a natural part of the staff policy of municipalities and county authorities. These are mainly general programmes aimed at municipal and county managers from different sectors. Large municipalities may have a recruitment programme (see 6.2 above).

312. School leaders often point to the importance of colleagues both at the initial phase and later in their careers but there is no overview of the extent or organisation of such support. It may appear that collegial networks most frequently come into existence as a result of an individual initiative. Some municipalities arrange for observation periods during which new school leaders 'shadow' an experienced principal for a period of time. Others provide organised mentoring schemes whereby an experienced principal counsels an inexperienced school leader. This is a new phenomenon in the Norwegian school and there is no overview of the scope, organisation or impact of such schemes.

313. In many cases a school leader is appointed at the start of a new school year, while his/her predecessor very often leaves at the start of the school holiday. Many new appointees experience this as a problem since there is very little opportunity to participate in the planning and preparation of the new school year.

## **6.7 and 6.8 Professional development options and programmes for school leaders**

314. Training programmes for school leaders can be divided into two main types. In some programmes the main focus is on **school** leadership. The target group will most often be those with working experience in schools, either as teachers or as leaders. The content focus is on key areas for school leadership such as learning processes and learning yield, the curriculum, assessment, the school's mandate and societal role. The second type has a clearer focus on organisation and leadership and is more generally directed at educational leaders in the public sector, for example in municipalities or county authorities (cf. Wales and Welle-Strand, 2005). An intermediate type is aimed at management in the public sector but offers special modules adapted for school leaders.

315. Wales and Welle-Strand (2005) have mapped educational options for school leaders that generate credits. Although the figures are somewhat uncertain it appears that altogether 22 higher education institutions offer formal education. Programmes are divided into three categories: firstly, those offering courses or programmes that give credits but that are not directly part of a Master's programme; secondly, module-based schemes that are part of a Master's programme or that can be included in this at a later stage; finally those that offer a full Master's programme. The various options differ in extent (from 30 to 120 credits) and content. Many options are experience-based part-time studies in which participants' practical experience constitutes an important element. Such education is free in public sector institutions. In addition public sector institutions, private actors and organisations offer continuing education and training in the form of courses and conferences.

316. According to the organisations leaders desire more education but it must be organised in such a way that participation is practically and financially viable. One option is paid study leave. The need to increase time resources allocated to leadership when a member of the leadership team is engaged in continuing education and training in addition to work is also pinpointed. In addition the view is expressed that education should be module-based, i.e. appropriate modules can be selected depending on previous experience and formal competence.

317. Study programmes at universities and university colleges are assessed regularly by means of the internal quality systems of different institutions. Most studies are part-time and even though the students are often very satisfied with the education offered, the pursuit of studies while working full-time is perceived as a burden. Only in exceptional cases does the employer provide compensation in the form of allowing time to participate in continuing education and training.

318. In Norway as a rule the need for competence building is established in collaboration between employer and employee and there are no formal requirements that school leaders should participate in continuing education and training. Nor does competence building automatically give higher pay or promotion. Participation in master programmes in educational leadership is an individual decision on the part of principals or potential school leaders. A few municipalities choose to involve all their school leaders in formal leadership education, usually delimited to 30 ECTS.

319. The school leadership survey (Møller et al., 2006) reveals that school leaders regard personal reflection on their own practice as the most important source of learning and development. Conversations and discussions with colleagues and observation of colleagues are also highly rated. In this survey formal leadership education has a relatively low score but the authors indicate that this may be attributed to a lack of experience of formal leadership education. Those who have participated in continuing education and training rate this highly and they also value participation in conferences, continuing education and training, school visits, specialist literature and reflection on working experience as key sources of learning and development.

320. Good leadership demands knowledge, skills and convictions. This is one of the premises included in the *Strategy for competence building 2005-2008*. Therefore leader training/leader education and leader development are required. Many programmes offered in Norway focus largely on training/education. Relatively few professional programmes offer leader training that is tailor-made for the education sector.

321. Tjeldvoll et al. (2005) argue in favour of clearer standards in leadership training closely linked to the mandate and tasks of school leaders while Møller (2007) warns against standards that can erase the dividing lines between the political and professional accountability.

## **6.9 Research on school leadership preparation and development programmes' effectiveness**

322. Apart from the evaluation of the national programmes (see 6.5 above), there is at present little research to show the effectiveness of school leadership preparation and development programmes. The

ongoing (2003-2008) HEAD project aims to investigate curriculum organisation and the achievements of school leader training programmes within what is labelled the "value chain of education". The project assesses the quality relations between national policies, school leadership training, school leadership practice, teaching and learning activities, student learning results, stakeholders' satisfaction and the Norwegian knowledge economy's competitive strength (Tjeldvoll, 2004)

323. Aas and Skedsmo (2006) have published the results of a survey of the Master studies in educational leadership at the Department of Teacher Education and School Development at the University of Oslo. The results indicate that there are varying perceptions among students of the experience-based profile and problem-based working methods of the Master studies. It may appear that as part-time students with demanding jobs they are interested in learning as much as possible in the shortest possible period of time. Effectiveness is equated with gaining knowledge in contrast to the emphasis on knowledge-building activities in the study. At the same time students stress that the Master studies should have practical relevance. There appears to be a duality in students' assessments: on the one hand it is essential that they work efficiently in order to cope with their studies in addition to their jobs, while on the other hand their motivation for participation in the Master studies is to further their own professional development and to tackle the leadership role in a better way. For this reason the exchange of experience and knowledge building together with others is highly rated. The results show that 75% of the students state that they derive great benefit from their studies in their daily work. The survey indicates that the degree of perceived usefulness is closely linked to the holding of a formal leadership position in school and the number of years' experience, so that the most positive evaluations are given by students who are school leaders with a number of years' experience.

#### **6.10 Policy initiatives to improve the quality of school leadership preparation, certification and development**

324. The most recent initiative focusing on the role of school leader and school leadership in Norway is the support of the Ministry and the Directorate for Norwegian participation in the OECD's Improving School Leadership programme. This may lead to leadership being given a more prominent position on the agenda in Norway. It also gives the Norwegian authorities an opportunity to compare research and practice in collaboration with benchmark environments in Norway and to discover whether this is reflected in other countries' reviews. In addition an understanding of the expectations and recommendations that will be put forward by the OECD will be attained. This will form a new platform for the debate on the challenges faced by school leaders that must be met in today's competitive society. Attention will be also be drawn to the opportunities school leaders are offered for obtaining qualifications and ongoing competence building. Fresh input in these areas will form a basis for new policies in the field.

325. Formal requirements as to pedagogical qualifications for appointment as a school leader were removed in 2002 and at the same time the Ministry encouraged professional environments that offer competence building and studies in education leadership to develop Master programmes (see 6.5). Competition for students in professional environments promotes and encourages professional collaboration. The national network for school leadership intends to contribute to the quality development of options for school leaders offered by the institutions. The network facilitates both coordination (for example through the "school for principals" – a collaboration project on the first 30 credits in the Master programme) and diversity through the discussion among those offering their services of various approaches to school leadership and the professional knowledge base.

#### **6.11 Future policy development in school leadership preparation, certification and development**

326. There are many unsolved questions and challenges regarding school leadership preparation, certification and development. One key issue is that it is not known whether Norway has in general "good" school leaders. In White Paper no.30 (2003-2004) it is stressed that compliant leaders pose a

challenge to the school's learning intensity and performance achievement. However the White Paper does not refer to Norwegian research that documents the extent to which Norwegian school leaders are compliant and what connection there is between such compliance and pupil outcomes. Nor are there studies that document a connection between the formal pedagogical background of school leaders and the school's results. This is very difficult to investigate since there is a complicated interaction of many factors affecting the pupils' learning outcomes. Nor is it known to what extent there is an explicit requirement for more formal education for those who are in school leader positions.

327. The school leadership survey 2005 documented for example that almost 40% of the country's principals have no formal education in organisation and leadership, and only 18.5% have 20 credits or more – equivalent to at least one year of full-time education (See 6.1 and 6.2 above). Should this be regarded as a satisfactory result? At the same time, the survey shows a significant correlation between formal education in organisation and leadership and a high score on the following sources of learning: *participation in conferences, continuing education and training, school visits, reading professional literature and personal reflection on own practice*. Correspondingly, it is mostly the principals who are qualified as teachers at upper secondary level or higher who have replied that reading professional literature / research reports / professional journals is an important source for self-learning. This may indicate that formal education predisposes for continued learning on the job (Møller, 2006).

328. The White Paper strongly emphasises leaders' responsibility for developing schools as learning organisations. Therefore it is necessary to further develop training programmes with a focus on learning leadership – attention must be directed to teaching and learning. The White Paper identifies the following main subjects that should form part of school leader training: the quality of the school's activities, the pupils' learning achievements, the strategy for quality development and the effective and efficient use of resources (Ministry of Education and Research 2003: 100). Møller (2006) points out that the basis for continuing education and training for school leaders must be knowledge of pupils' learning processes and learning outcomes, tuition, evaluation and the curriculum. It is of importance that theoretical knowledge is combined with the participants' practical experience. In addition school leaders need to develop analytical competence in order to play an active and critical role in presentations of school activities. This is essential in order to prepare the basis for organisational learning. School leaders (who are recruited from the teaching staff) also require knowledge of organisational theory in order to understand and facilitate development at their own workplace. It is also important that school leaders are aware of and have an understanding of the legal basis for the operation of the school. Legal subjects will therefore be relevant and essential in leader training. Economic subjects must also be included, since leaders at the individual school are in charge of considerable resources that are to be employed as instruments to create good learning conditions. Knowledge of human resources – how co-workers can be best motivated and inspired – is important. Counselling and follow-up of co-workers form a major part of the tasks of school leaders.

329. In the present situation there are many stakeholders who aspire to define quality in schools. School leaders function as a "door opener" to the school as a system, and as such they need to be able to participate in a dialogue about the quality of education in an informed manner. The requirement for formal school leader education constitutes an important corrective and supplement to the learning which takes place in the workplace. The school is a complex knowledge organisation with many competent employees. Leaders at all levels who know how to appreciate knowledge and knowledge development are a prerequisite for the development of schools as learning organisations.

## **6.12 Recent innovations in school leadership preparation and development programmes**

330. The school owner (municipality/county authority) plays a key role in the development of the school as a place of learning as well as in competence building for school leaders. This is made explicit in the Ministry's strategy for competence building (2005). In the implementation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform the Ministry wished to collaborate with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities on a special programme targeted at school owners and school leaders that would include both

information about the content and intention of the reform and also an offer of competence building (White Paper no.30). This measure was implemented through five regional conferences in the winter of 2005 at which mayors and chief municipal executives were informed of the content and intentions of the Knowledge Promotion Reform (approximately 1 500 participants). In addition the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities has focused in its training programme for local politicians on informing and instructing those on political and administrative levels about the challenges implicit in the implementation of the reform. They have also developed a training programme for school leaders that focuses on the Knowledge Promotion Reform, the Education Act and the employer's managerial prerogative and responsibility. During the autumn of 2006 approximately 150 municipalities and roughly 800 school leaders took part in these activities, which will continue in 2007.

331. Central government authorities are interested in paving the way for competence building that is closely linked to practice and that can also contribute to school development. The school development programme *The Knowledge Promotion Reform – from words to action* (see 2.4 above) is a programme that may prove to function as a competence-building measure for the school leaders who participate. At the same time the programme may stimulate the recruitment of teachers participating in projects at their own school.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

*The purpose of this chapter is to enable the authors of the report to give an overall assessment of policies regarding school leadership in their countries, to comment on trends and changes in policy development, and to include a discussion of their vision for the future of policy in the field. Please address following issues:*

### 7.1 Major strengths and weaknesses in current policy on school leadership

332. **It is a strength** and provides a strong platform that White Paper no.30 *Culture for learning* makes it clear that there is political will to strengthen clear and powerful leadership in schools. This was followed up in the Knowledge Promotion Reform and in the focus on best leadership practice from demonstration schools, as well as encouragement to participate in leadership studies and the continuation of collaboration in specialist environments through the competence network for school leadership. In the competence-building strategy, school leadership is prioritised in the first phase of the work. The Fafo Research Foundation shows that this is being followed up, continuing a long tradition. Competence building for school leaders on all levels has been prioritised and this is the area that has received greatest attention in the education sector in Norway throughout the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s with nationwide programmes for school leaders and leadership development. Although programmes have primarily been linked to and financed by the Ministry of Education and Research, all levels of the education sector, organisations and all relevant specialist environments have in various ways been involved in preparation, implementation and evaluation. This applies to the Voksenåsen courses (1963-1971), MOLIS (Environment and leadership development A,B,C and D 1976 – 1987), LIS (Leadership development in schools 1987/88-1992), LUIS (Leadership development in primary and lower secondary schools 1992-1998), LEVIS (Leadership development in upper secondary education 1989-1992), LUIS (Leadership development for all levels 1992-1998), and Expectations for school leadership towards 2000 (1998-2000). In addition to programmes for school leaders, school leadership was a central element of several nationwide programmes such as ICT-PILOT and SAMTAK (Adapted tuition for the individual, individual training programmes for special education and *leadership's* responsibility for this). Moreover there were decentralised options under the auspices of school owners in cooperation with various professional environments. Other strengths are the establishment of Master program in educational leadership (from 2002) and the collaboration between the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities and educational organisations on the training of school leaders through nationwide conference and course activities.

333. **It is a weakness** that in spite of long-term broad initiatives it is not *known* whether school leaders in Norway are good. At local level however, some municipalities and county authorities have quality systems that ensure that they have good information about their school leaders. But there is a wide variation in the education options offered to school leaders and there are differing opinions as to what provides the greatest impact both on the individual school leader, on the school as an organisation and workplace and not least on the learning outcomes for the individual pupil. There is no systematic documentation of these efforts (Wales and Welle-Strand, 2005). Nor are there statistical data from Statistics Norway, the Norwegian Internet information system for primary and lower secondary education, or the 2001 and 2002 school leader surveys that provide data for assessing school leaders and school leadership in Norway as good, or better or poorer than other countries. Norway will take part in the planned OECD study TALIS which is also aimed at shedding light on school leadership.

334. The work on this report has shown that there is a lack of data in Norway on recruitment to school leader positions. There are no data that show vacant positions. Nor is it known how many people are appointed to school leader positions without a teaching background. Figures on working time and the duration of school leaders' careers are also lacking. There is no national overview of how the relationship between requirements and support is exercised by the school owner towards the school principal or what type of formal education school leaders actually have. All in all little research and data on school



leadership are available. Nor are there research results on the impact of studies in educational leadership on those who are engaged in them.

335. When leadership is described in national reports on education it is very often the teacher as a leader who is presented. Effects concerning pupils learning and results are related to the teachers' competence and behaviour, and not to how the leadership is carried out. There is little focus on or reference to the role of the school leader when challenges and tasks in the educational sector are described in plans and strategies.

336. The OECD asks several questions about the school system and teaching conditions that indirectly provide data on the function of the school leader. Even although statutes, formal agreements and curricula are determined at national level, responsibility for tuition, follow-up and reporting remains with the school owner. The first joint national inspection that was carried out by education directors from the office of the county governor (county level) in 2006 shows that the majority of the municipalities inspected did not fulfil the requirements set out in systems for quality assessment (Education Act, Section 13-10). *Aftenposten*, a Norwegian national newspaper, printed an article on 10 January 2007 with the headline "Deficiencies in the system in the school sector". In the article reference is made to the following presentation of facts from the county governors' offices and the Directorate for Education and Training: "Lack of control of activities in the teaching sector. Confusion as regards delegation of responsibility and tasks. Absence of reporting obligations. Differences in understanding of school-based assessment. Deficient documentation on school-based development. Poor communication between municipal management and schools. Failure to follow-up national quality assessments."

337. This reveals that at national level it is difficult to give an overall precise description of, for example, how school leadership is exercised in Norway. This may be a weakness of the present system.

338. The State has prescribed that content, specification and the scope of competence building must be decided in collaboration between the school owner and school leadership in close cooperation with organisations and specialist environments in universities and university colleges. A pertinent question in this connection is whether the school owner and specialist environments in the university and university college sector have concurrent views when it comes to the competence needs of school leaders.

339. The work on the questions raised by the OECD reveals that the use of concepts and definitions assumes great importance. This applies not only in the case of structure and organisation but also in a specialist area such as leadership that must provide descriptions of areas of authority and power structures as well as accounting for how this is to be administered in the form of requirements, development, results, follow-up and new choices and decisions. It can be difficult on the basis of the formulation of the questions to grasp the relationship of power and authority to management, and whether these functions are referred to as synonymous with or separate from the concept of leadership.

## **7.2 Trends and changes that might be anticipated in future policy development**

### ***The concept of school leadership***

340. There appears to be general agreement, both nationally and internationally that there is a connection between the quality of leadership and school effectiveness (cf. Bush and Jackson, 2002). However there is less agreement on how leadership in schools is to be understood and what can be interpreted as "high quality leadership". In Norwegian education policies, research and practical school leadership there is tension between the focus on the employer role and pedagogical leadership, and between powerful visible leadership and an understanding of leadership as relational and dispersed.

341. The follow-up of the programme *Improving School Leadership* will help to clarify how visible leadership is to be understood, thus facilitating debate and policy making. In this manner a new basis for debate on school leader competence and required qualifications can be created.

342. A possible outcome is that a clearer distinction will be made between the principal as a representative of the employer and as a pedagogical leader responsible for the implementation of state education policies. This may result in the formulation of clearer expectations on the part of the State as to a “clear school leader” when it comes to the implementation of curricula and national programmes. For example strategic plans could present more lucidly the expectations of the Ministry or Directorate as to leaders in the municipalities and in schools. This is a clear trend in the Knowledge Promotion Reform. The school owner’s responsibility to follow up national education policies must be considered in connection with the State’s responsibility for paving the way for a dialogue as a basis of mutual understanding.

343. At the same time it will be difficult to distinguish sharply between employer functions and pedagogical leadership. As leaders of independent profit centres it is required that these functions are integrated in the principals’ area of work. While the State now puts more emphasis on the municipality’s responsibility for the school’s quality, responsibility and tasks are being transferred from municipal level to the individual school while the pedagogical support function in the municipalities is being downsized.

344. Following the establishment of the Directorate for Education and Training in 2004, national strategies have been developed in priority areas for the sector and national competence centres have been founded in the majority of these areas. This provides content to prioritised programmes and access to competence as support for school leadership which gives an improved basis for clear school leadership in the case of national priorities.

345. The follow-up of the programme Improving School Leadership may contribute to debate on whether a strategic plan for school leadership as a profession and area of expertise should be prepared and a national centre for school leadership should be established. Such centres have been set up in a number of countries. There are undoubtedly major differences from country to country in how the centres are organised but they all appear to play an important role for the development of high-quality school leadership. The creation of such a centre in Norway would play a role in integrating theory, research and experience and thus strengthen the understanding of school leadership as an area of expertise, encourage new research and assist in the spread of best practice. A centre with focus on administration and leadership will also help to put the curricula at the centre of school activities and at the same time contribute to the inclusion of different strategies and expert centres in a comprehensive support structure for leaders at all sector levels. This will strengthen the professional dialogue that forms part of the learning process at all levels.

### ***Research on school leadership***

346. Research results are an important source for the formation and legitimation of education policies. In the Norwegian and Nordic context school leadership constituted a limited field of research up to the 1990s. This report shows that there continue to be few areas that have been the subject of thorough research. This implies that the legitimation basis is often derived from international studies. Thus the special features of the Norwegian governance model are not identified, for example the division of responsibility at state and municipal level. Norwegian research on school leadership has been influenced by a philosophy based on theoretical framework factors, by a cultural perspective and by a micro-political perspective. Cognitive interest has been directed towards *understanding* leadership or the conditions for leadership in schools and only to a limited extent have there been attempts to develop the features of good leadership or the connection between school leadership and pupil outcomes (Møller, 2004).

347. In the Norwegian context there is a need for increased investment in research on school leadership. It is essential that a research-based governance development be based on knowledge that is derived from Norwegian studies because education and school leadership are influenced by history and culture.

### ***Education of school leaders***

348. As indicated in this report, there are at present no formal competence requirements for school leaders. There are some statistics that show the education levels of school leaders but there is no research to document the leadership competence school leaders possess or the impact of continuing education and training. At the same time international research as well as national policy documents stress the significance of school leadership preparation for school improvement (Bush and Jackson, 2002; Møller 2006).

349. Continuing education and training in school leadership has first and foremost been offered to those who hold leader positions in schools in Norway (see. Ch. 6). Key questions about school leader training are now being asked by the authorities, by school-leaders, and by universities and university colleges. Current issues are whether it is sufficient to provide training when school leaders are employed or whether there should be requirements as to leadership training before their appointment. Another question is whether the State should establish new guidelines for the training offered to school leaders as in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Other topics of discussion are how such training should be organised and conducted, and what the content should be.

350. In Norway the professional education of teachers is the subject of close scrutiny. Discussion focuses on whether teachers should be able to teach subjects in which they have no higher education. Similarly questions are being raised about whether it will be appropriate in the future to appoint school leaders who do not have higher education in school leadership. A possible solution is to include subjects connected to organisation and leadership in teacher training as is already the case in pre-school teacher training. Another scenario might be to set requirements for formal education in school leadership building on teacher training. In recent years Master studies in school leadership/education leadership have been developed at several Norwegian universities and university colleges. A key question is whether such education will be a requirement for appointment to leader positions in the future.

351. However other important questions must also be clarified. In many countries there are specific programmes for new school leaders. In Norway this type of follow-up is the responsibility of the school owner, and no documentation of the content and scope of this is available. This also applies to continuing training and education for experienced school leaders and middle leaders such as heads of department and team leaders. A key question that demands clarification is the division of responsibility between the central government authority and the municipalities in the case of such education. In the Norwegian governance model the school owner has responsibility for content and implementation and it is a prerequisite that the education offered is relevant in order to fulfil state requirements. For example the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, representing the school owners, has started a nationwide training programme in cooperation with the Union of Education Norway. But there are considerable differences among the municipalities and more focus should be directed at the problem of whether the education offered is adequate and has a focus that is relevant for the facilitation of national school policies.

352. The work on this OECD report has shown that Norway requires better knowledge and data about the working conditions of school leaders from recruitment to policy measures aimed at the later career stages as well as insight into how education policy provisions laid down by the central government are put into operation and their effect at local level. In the report a description is also given of the experience gathered from training and courses of study for school leaders and of the intentions and ongoing measures that are included in the Knowledge Promotion Reform. A consequence may be to increase awareness of the shared responsibility for training established between the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities as the school owners' representative in cooperation with the employees' unions on the one hand and the central authorities on the other. A clear division of responsibility provides a strong platform for collaboration between the school owners and the state authorities with regard to school leadership training.

353. Instruction for school leaders, as the employers' representative, in the field of law, human resources administration and economy can be combined with government programmes with clear expectations to the school leader in the case of education policy priorities. In combination these can elucidate the concept of "clear and powerful" leadership in schools.

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## Appendix:

### Follow-up of the strategy – Competence for development

- 1) The strategy *Competence building – Strategy for competence building in primary and lower secondary education 2005-2008* is an appropriate strategy that has in the main the correct priorities and provides suitable measures for sound competence building.
- 2) The partners in the strategy – the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, the Union of Education Norway, the Norwegian Association of Graduate Teachers, Skolenes Landsforbund, Norwegian Association of School Leaders and the Ministry of Education and Research assume joint responsibility for ensuring that the strategy is implemented as intended, including the dissemination of information and experience regarding the strategy. The partners require that the county governor and the school owner establish collaboration forums for the exchange of information and discussion of implementation where the organisations that are interested parties are represented. Regular updates must be provided about how resources that are earmarked for the implementation of the strategy are allocated to the various bodies and provisions.
- 3) A firm basis in the individual educational institution and processes that involve teachers, instructors, school leaders and the training supervisor are the decisive factors for achieving a good, long-lasting impact on practice. Educational institution in this context refers to primary and lower secondary schools as well as institutions for vocational education.
- 4) The local platform must be strengthened so that competence building has its starting point in the needs of the individual education institutions and of the employees, with reference to the Knowledge Promotion Reform. The school owner has the main responsibility for this. The implementation is to be reported in the various collaborative forums.
- 5) The school owner is required to ensure local participation and a firm basis at the individual educational institution. The county governor is requested to monitor that the school owner has followed up this when allocating funding.
- 6) In the coming strategy period there will be a need to prioritise competence building for activity assistants and training supervisors in training establishments. This will take place through changes in the allocation of state funding to municipalities and county authorities. The State and the county authority will assume responsibility for developing good competence-building provisions for this target group. If it is appropriate, joint training for vocational teachers, activity assistants and training supervisors in training establishments should be set up.
- 7) Competence building provisions are described in the strategy as a range of different activities. It is important to keep in mind that the competence-building strategy is both aimed at competence building for the individual and at the educational institution's development as an organisation – with a view to introducing the Knowledge Promotion Reform.
- 8) The strategy includes a number of key concepts such as specially-adapted tuition and learning organisations. The Directorate for Education and Training is currently working on material for the sector aimed at providing input for reflection and development work at the individual educational institution so that the concepts can be given specific content.
- 9) The implementation of competence-building measures requires adequate time to be set aside and that the framework conditions encourage active participation. Funding allocated to the school owner may therefore also be used for granting time off and for covering the expenses of a temporary stand-in at the educational institution.
- 10) The annual reports from the school owner, the progress evaluation of the Fafo Research Foundation and other evaluations provide important information about the implementation of the

strategy. Reporting routines must be adjusted on the basis of experience and needs. The reporting must provide more information about local involvement and the use of funding locally. Information on the reports and the evaluation results must be passed on.

11) For the Directorate the letter of information about the funding and reporting requirements will be key instruments for disseminating information and providing clear governance signals. The information must stress that the competence-building strategy is directed at both individual competence building and the educational institution's development as an organisation.

12) Successful implementation is dependent on whether those bidding to provide training can provide competence building that covers needs at the individual institution. There must be collaboration with universities/university colleges on the development of competence- building programmes for schools. The development and harmonisation of regional collaboration forums may be an appropriate instrument in this work. State education administration must be involved in strengthening the cooperation.

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The *Competence network for school leadership* has been informed and invited to contribute. In addition focused inputs have been requested from professionals at all levels, cf. References.

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