

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
Directorate for Education,  
Education and Training Policy Division

**IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

**GUIDELINES FOR COUNTRY PARTICIPATION**

**Design and Implementation Plan for the Activity**

**FEBRUARY 2006**

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## **1. BACKGROUND: THE OECD ACTIVITY ON IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1. A recent OECD report on teacher policy [“Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers” (OECD, 2005)] highlights that strategies to improve the quality of school leadership must be a central element in any national plan to address the teacher quality challenge; principals and other school leaders are responsible for creating the conditions under which teachers can perform well, achieve job satisfaction and continue to develop professionally.

2. Moreover, the report raises concerns about recruiting, developing and supporting effective leaders in schools. A number of countries are struggling to attract well-qualified applicants to take on leadership roles. Also, despite the changing roles and higher expectations of school leaders, it seems that most receive little formal or structured preparation for the job. Finally, the report recommends that the relationship between school leadership, school climate, teacher job satisfaction, and student learning should be higher on the policy agenda.

3. The OECD Education Committee, following up this recommendation, decided to launch this Activity on “Improving School Leadership”. Full description of the Activity and of the key issues to be tackled in it can be found in the document “Improving School Leadership: Rationale and Plans for the Activity.”

4. This document comprises the following sections:

- Main objectives of the Activity;
- Scope and definitions;
- The process and methodology of the Activity in general and more specifically concerning the Country Background Reports;
- The timeline;
- The steps in implementing the Activity;
- Specific issues and key questions that are to be addressed in the Country Background Reports;  
and
- Some practical guidelines for preparing the Background Reports.

### **1.2 Main Objectives**

5. 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.

6. The Activity has the following objectives:
  - i. to synthesise research and country practices on issues related to improving leadership in schools;
  - ii. to identify innovative and successful policy initiatives and practices;
  - iii. to facilitate exchanges of lessons and policy options among countries; and
  - iv. to identify policy options for governments to consider.
7. In broad terms, the Activity will aim to analyse the following key questions:
  - What are the roles and responsibilities of school leaders under different governance structures?
  - What seem to be promising policies and conditions for making school leaders most effective in improving school outcomes?
  - How can effective school leadership be best developed and supported?
  - What policies and practices would be most conducive to the development of effective school leaders?

### **1.3 Scope and definitions**

#### ***Definition of “school leaders”***

8. The scope of the OECD Activity on school leadership needs to take adequate account of the breadth of both the roles undertaken by leaders in today’s schools and the institutions that are involved in developing these leaders. Consequently, the definition of “school leadership” needs to encompass a variety of leader responsibilities. These include: curriculum development; financial management; staff selection; management of professional development; student assessment and reporting; community relations; school accountability; and the management of innovation and reform. Therefore, the term “School Level Management”, which appears in the OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics (OECD, 2004), and “covers professional personnel whose primary or major responsibility is for school management/administration”, is not adequate for the purposes of the Activity.

9. Moreover, the Activity adopts the view that leadership functions are not equated with a particular office (such as a school principal’s office), but can be distributed within (and even among) schools and among different people. Thus, school leaders are defined to be those persons, who, from formal positions of authority in a school, work with others to provide direction and exert influence in order to achieve the school’s goals, and most particularly those related to improving learning and strengthening teaching. The focus of this Activity is not solely on school principals and their role and development, but also incorporates other school leaders (e.g. the head of science or the head of curriculum support), if appropriate. On the other hand, it does not include those persons who may carry out educational leadership functions, but do not hold formal positions of authority in a school (e.g. a regular teacher, or an educational leader at the regional level).

#### ***Concerning the preparation and development of school leaders***

10. Similarly, countries should take a broad view, and include within their analysis and discussion the full range of courses or programmes and of institutions involved in the preparation and development of school leaders. However, the major focus should be upon those courses, programmes and institutions that

aim primarily at the development of leadership skills in school leaders, rather than on courses and programmes that focus solely on pedagogy or subject content.

11. In a framework of increased decentralisation, the Activity encourages engagement from the levels of government which are appropriate for the analysis. The focus of the Activity is primarily upon *national*<sup>1</sup> policies and practices for developing and supporting effective school leaders. However, it also allows for the treatment of exemplary programmes and practices at the institutional level, through a set of case studies, as described in Section 2.

### ***School levels to target***

12. Finally the Activity will concentrate upon school leaders in primary through upper secondary schools (i.e. ISCED 1, 2 and 3) in the public and private sector and including general and vocational secondary education, and special education. It thus acknowledges that the roles and skill requirements of leaders may differ by level of schooling (primary and secondary), type of programme (e.g. general and vocational secondary education) and sector (public and private), as well as by the social and demographic context of the communities from which students are drawn.

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1. However in many countries with federal systems of government, policies at the state, provincial or regional level may be as important as, or more important than, national policies. This should be reflected in background reports.

## **2. THE PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE ACTIVITY**

### **2.1 International co-operation**

13. A co-operative approach among countries, and between countries and the Secretariat, provides countries with an opportunity to learn more about themselves by comparing their experiences with those of other countries. It also accumulates international evidence on the impact of policy reforms, and on the circumstances under which these work.

14. Nevertheless comparative work is not simple. The contexts within which schools and school leaders operate can vary markedly across countries depending upon their historical traditions, social structures and economic conditions. Policy initiatives that work well in one country cannot necessarily be transferred across national borders. The Activity will need to be sensitive to the role played by national context in influencing the implementation and impact of policies.

15. Depending upon how the school system is organised and responsibilities are distributed, policy responses to leadership issues will involve different sets of stakeholders in participating countries. It is important that the Activity involve the full range of relevant stakeholders and not just those based at the central administrative level.

### **2.2 Two complementary strands**

16. The Activity will comprise two complementary strands: an analytical strand; and a case study strand on innovative approaches to school leadership.

17. Using a variety of inputs, the analytical strand will analyse the context of school leadership in OECD countries, the factors that shape the role and development of school leaders, and the range of policy responses to these factors. All countries taking part in the Activity will be involved in the analytical strand. These inputs will include the following:

- Individual country background reports on the policies and structures that impact on the role and development of effective school leadership.
- A series of international workshops and expert commissioned papers to explore key issues.
- Work already undertaken at the OECD in this area, including the predecessor teacher policy activity (“Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers”) and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) activities ‘Schooling for Tomorrow’ and ‘What Works in Innovation in Education’.
- Detailed analysis of the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) database and other Indicators of Education Systems (INES) data, whenever possible, for information on the organisation of schooling and decision making on the role and impact of school leadership.
- The creation of a network of experts and relevant stakeholders to engage in discussion about the issues involved in the Activity.

18. To complement the information gathered from the analytical strand, a small number of case studies will be undertaken as part of the Activity to highlight innovative approaches to school leadership. These will focus on new models of school organization and management that distribute leadership roles and responsibilities in innovative ways, as well as on promising programmes and practices to prepare and develop school leaders.

19. Experience gained in other recent OECD activities has shown that where countries participate only in the analytical strand it is sometimes difficult for the Secretariat to gain a full appreciation of the national context, of key policy concerns, and of recent policy initiatives. This can result in countries not being reflected as fully as they might be in the final comparative report of the Activity. To help minimise these potential problems, we will take a number of cost-effective steps to set the material provided in background reports more fully into national context, and to widen the Secretariat's understanding of significant national policy issues. These will include telephone and video conferences with key individuals and groups, and a short (2-3 day) visit by one or two Secretariat members to meet with key individuals and stakeholder groups. (The cost of such visits will be included within the already announced costs to countries of participating in the Activity.)

20. The Activity will also seek to collaborate with relevant OECD activities currently underway or about to take place, such as the activity on 'School Autonomy, Parental Choice and Accountability' and phase 3 of the CERI activity 'Schooling for Tomorrow', which is on 'Future Thinking in Action' and will include a focus on developing future thinking in school leaders. Furthermore, it will work closely with the development and implementation of the INES international survey of teachers, teaching and learning, which has school leadership as one of its areas of focus.

21. Finally, the Activity will seek collaboration with external partners or organisations currently conducting national or international work in the area of school leadership. These may include the European Commission, the school leadership centres, International Principals Association, and other relevant stakeholders.

## **2.3 Background reports**

### **2.3.1 Some general comments**

22. All countries participating in the Activity will be required to prepare a background report. This is intended to:

- Provide a description of the national context of school leadership;
- Describe the school organisation and management structures within which school leadership roles and responsibilities are assigned; and the systems and programmes for the preparation and development of school leaders; and
- Provide an analysis of the major issues and challenges in redesigning the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and in attracting, developing and supporting capable people to fill those roles.

23. To facilitate comparative analysis and to maximise the opportunities for countries to learn from each other, all background reports are to be prepared within a common framework. Nevertheless the Secretariat may ask for supplementary material specific to the particular country.

24. In a number of places the guidelines that follow ask countries to provide statistical data. However full use will be made of existing OECD statistical collections during the Activity and countries will not be asked to duplicate statistics that are already available.

25. Background reports are intended for four main audiences:

- The OECD Secretariat, which will use them in preparing the final comparative report from the Activity;
- Those interested in school leadership issues within each country. The background report can be an important way to focus national attention on key issues, and to draw attention to policy initiatives;
- Other countries participating in the Activity - background reports can be an aid to sharing experiences; and
- Those interested in school leadership issues at an international level and in countries not participating in the Activity. After clearance by countries, all background reports will be placed on the OECD website and their availability will be widely disseminated.

26. The questions to be addressed in background reports are grouped around a number of common problems and issues in school leadership that all countries must address. This provides a common structure for each background report. The questions are not prescriptive, and they should not take precedence over common sense. If some topics or issues are not relevant to a participating country, this should be indicated in the report. And if something that is important for school leadership in a country is not mentioned in the guidelines it should nevertheless be addressed in the background report. Although the use of the structure of questions that is set out in Section 3 of this document is strongly preferred, the authors of the reports may wish to combine, rephrase or expand certain questions in the light of national circumstances. The key requirement is that the issues underlying the questions are addressed in each background report.

27. The more complete the information that a country provides, the better the final comparative report of the Activity will be. If there is no information available on a question that is specifically mentioned in the guidelines, it is more helpful to the Secretariat if this is indicated explicitly, than if the issue is simply ignored. As supporting material, copies of relevant up-to-date research papers and data are welcomed.

28. Several questions raise issues where views may differ among key stakeholders. In these cases the answers provided should indicate the range of views held by stakeholders.

29. To maximise opportunities for countries to learn from each other, and to be useful to country authorities and to the Secretariat, the background report will need to be written in clear, simple language. It should be a coherent, self-contained analytical document rather than a descriptive list of responses to the individual topics or issues in the guidelines.

30. The guidelines in Section 3 suggest the number of pages that each Chapter of the report should contain. These are only indicative, and you should feel free to vary them if particular issues are of greater or lesser importance for your country.

31. Some technical guidelines on matters such as formatting are provided in Section 4.



### **2.3.2 Processes to follow when preparing background reports**

#### *National Co-ordinator*

32. National authorities are responsible for the preparation of the background report. Each country taking part in the Activity must appoint a National Co-ordinator. The responsibilities of the National Co-ordinator include:

- Communications with the OECD Secretariat about the Activity;
- Communications within the country about the Activity;
- Managing the preparation of the background report;
- Ensuring that the background report is completed on schedule;
- Liaising with the OECD Secretariat about the organisation of the case study visit (for those countries hosting a case study visit);
- Attending international meetings and workshops associated with the Activity;
- Co-ordinating country feedback on draft materials produced through the Activity; and
- Assisting with dissemination activities associated with the Activity.

33. The national authority responsible for a country's participation in the Activity may decide to write the background report itself, or it may decide to commission a research organization, a consultant or a group of consultants to write it on its behalf. Whichever decision is taken, the National Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the background report is completed on time and that it follows these guidelines.

34. The National Co-ordinator will normally be appointed from within the national Ministry of Education, and will preferably be an official with close involvement in the school leadership policy. It is estimated that the National Co-ordinator's role will involve a minimum of 20 working days per year, with perhaps an additional 5-10 days involved with organising the case study in those countries hosting a case study visit.

#### *National Advisory Committee*

35. Countries should consider establishing a National Advisory Committee to support the work of the National Co-ordinator, oversee the preparation of the Country Background Report, and assist in the Activity more generally.

36. No single organisation, Ministry or group will have all of the information required to complete the background report. National Co-ordinators therefore need to ensure co-operation between all relevant Ministries and agencies, as well as the involvement of key stakeholder groups<sup>2</sup>. The National Advisory

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2. These will vary from country to country, but will, in addition to the Ministry of Education, normally include: local authorities responsible for education policy; principals' and vice-principals' associations; teacher trade unions; other teacher professional organisations; school leadership centres; educators of school leaders; providers of professional development; employers' associations; former school leaders; parents' organisations; and students' associations.

Committee could include key stakeholder groups concerned with school leadership, as well as officials experienced in collaborating with the OECD. This committee can play an important role in ensuring that a variety of perspectives are reflected in the report. Where a country decides not to establish a National Advisory Committee there will need to be other processes for ensuring that the report adequately reflects the views and perspectives of the different stakeholder groups concerned with school governance and development of school leaders. A key task of National Co-ordinators will be to consolidate these different perspectives in order to provide the OECD Secretariat with a single, integrated response. The methodology used to ensure the involvement of different bodies in the preparation of the report should be noted in the report itself.

### **2.3.3 Data provision**

37. At a number of points the guidelines ask countries to provide comparisons or information on trends over a period of time. Generally a period of ten years is referred to. However countries should be flexible in interpreting this. In some cases a more useful picture will be provided using a longer time period in order to capture significant reforms or changes in school leadership.

38. Countries are **not** expected to collect new data, to conduct new research or to carry out new surveys in order to obtain the data needed to complete national background reports. Reports should be written using the best **available** data and evidence. Where evidence is missing on particular points this can be an important indicator of areas for future policy analysis.

## **2.4 Case study**

39. The Secretariat will identify potential candidate sites for case study by consulting with countries and using a variety of sources: information provided by countries; input from experts and stakeholders in the field; and knowledge developed in the international workshops organised on relevant issues. Although the exact number of case studies to be carried out will depend on the availability of funding as well as the quality of the candidates, we estimate that there will be six to eight such studies. We expect that the final set will reflect the diversity of school governance systems, financing arrangements, and political cultures of the countries participating in the Activity. Criteria for selection will include, in addition to the diversity issues just cited, evidence that the leadership innovation, however new, is on track to produce measurable improvements in school performance.

40. A team of up to three experts will undertake case study visits of three days in length. The study team will be chosen by the Secretariat, and the visit will be carried out in consultation with the host country. The case studies will provide perspectives on new models of school organization and management that distribute leadership roles and responsibilities in innovative ways as well as on promising programmes and practices to prepare and develop school leaders.

41. After the case study visit the study team will prepare a short case study report. The case study reports will document promising approaches to school organization and leadership development under different governance and financing systems and in different political cultures and will aim to involve the full range of relevant stakeholders. Sharing the findings of these case studies at an international level can become a catalyst for educational reform agendas across all the OECD countries.

## **2.5 Expert Commissioned Papers**

42. The Activity will be enriched through specially commissioned papers that will provide new perspectives and new analyses on selected issues. Some papers may be commissioned jointly with other work on school leaders within OECD or by other international organisations. Possible topics for commissioned papers include the following:

- The reciprocal responsibilities of school and system leaders;
- School leadership and school autonomy;
- Supply and demand for school leaders;
- Lessons from leadership reform initiatives in other sectors.

## **2.6 Workshops and Dissemination**

43. In order to explore key issues, two to three international workshops will be organised during the Activity. These could be held in association with (before or after) meetings of national co-ordinators. Participating countries will be invited to host these meetings, and they will be an opportunity for all countries to share progress in the Activity and information on school leadership policies and practices in host countries.

44. At each workshop, a set of issues from the Country Background Reports (for example school governance and leadership, instructional improvement and school leadership, school leadership development) could be selected for thorough cross-country examination. Participants would be invited to present an analysis of the issues in their own country and the impact on policy initiatives. It would be desirable to have a small delegation of stakeholders represent each country. These workshops would also provide an opportunity for participating countries to share perspectives and insights gained during the completion of the corresponding sections of the background reports. In addition to the country presentations, international experts and key stakeholders would be invited to contribute to the debate, and representatives of the innovative programs and initiatives being profiled in the case studies will be invited to present and discuss their work.

45. In addition, countries participating in the Activity will be encouraged to host national workshops, conferences and seminars to discuss and disseminate their background reports and innovative practices. Normally the OECD Secretariat would participate in such events.

46. During the Activity, the Secretariat will work with participating countries to develop a plan for dissemination events and activities for the final comparative report of the Activity.

## **2.7 Outputs**

47. The Activity will produce a range of outputs (some of which have been described in detail above):

- country background reports;
- a series of international workshops;
- expert commissioned papers;
- selected case studies of innovative approaches to school leadership;
- a final international conference to present key issues;
- a final comparative report with main policy conclusions focusing on good international practice.

48. To maximise impact, dissemination of findings will be an integral part of the Activity. This will involve:

- an Activity newsletter for participating countries and other relevant stakeholders;
- an Activity website;
- active OECD Secretariat participation in relevant meetings and conferences, organisation of meetings and collaboration with key stakeholders.

## 2.8 Timeline

49. The following timeline is proposed to guide the Activity. At this stage it is indicative, as it cannot be finalised until the number of countries participating in the Activity has been confirmed.

- **National Representatives' Meeting** (9 December 2005)
- **Country Background Reports** (Duration: January to December 2006)  
The draft report should be sent to the Secretariat for comments by the end of September 2006

*January – February 2006*

Countries confirm their interest in participating in the analytical strand, appoint a national co-ordinator and commence work on the background reports.

- **Innovative approaches to school leadership**<sup>3</sup> (Duration: January to December 2006)
- **Activity workshops and International workshops on selected topics**

*July 2006*

Meeting of national co-ordinators to assess progress in the writing of the background reports and discuss issues arising from these, followed by First International Workshop. The latter will discuss the first commissioned paper and the first three case studies of innovative approaches to school leadership.

*December 2006*

Meeting of national co-ordinators to focus discussion on a set of key substantive issues, policy implications and lessons learned from country experiences; Second International Workshop.

*October 2007*

Final international conference

- **Delivery of comparative report and Dissemination activities launched** (December 2007)

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3. Please note that this duration will depend on the final number of case studies to be carried out.

## **2.9 Next steps**

50. The following steps will be taken over the next few months to implement the Activity:
- Countries confirm their intention to participate in the Activity;
  - Participating countries appoint a National Co-ordinator;
  - Participating countries establish a National Advisory Committee (if desired);
  - Participating countries commence preparation of the background reports;
  - The Secretariat confirms timelines and costs;
  - The Secretariat commissions relevant expert papers;
  - The Secretariat identifies potential external experts for case study in consultation with countries;
  - The first country-hosted Activity workshop and first International workshop are convened.

### 3. SPECIFIC ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN BACKGROUND REPORTS

#### Chapter 1: The national context of schooling (about 3 pages)

*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<sup>4</sup> must address. It is intended to provide the context for the more detailed discussion in later sections.*

**Countries which have participated in OECD activity ‘Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers’ should feel free to use and update the information already provided in the equivalent chapters of that country background report.**

- Q1.1 Present the **economic, social and cultural background** of your country that has implications for schools and school leaders<sup>5</sup>.
- Q1.2 What are the **broad population trends** in terms of numbers, age structure and cultural diversity that have implications for schools and school leaders?
- Q1.3 Present the main **economic and labour market trends** that have implications for schools and school leaders.

#### Chapter 2: Overall description of the school system (about 7 pages)

*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.*

- Q2.1 Outline the main **structural features** of the school system:
- the **types of schools** (e.g. public and private, vocationally oriented schools, etc.);
  - the **types of personnel** working in schools (e.g. teachers, support staff);
  - the **overall size and composition of the school system** - distribution of schools by type and size; composition of student and teacher populations as a function of age, sex, socioeconomic background and ethnicity and their distribution by level of school (primary and secondary), location (urban, suburban, rural), type of programme (e.g. general and vocational secondary education), and sector (public and private). How has the overall size and composition of the school population changed over the last ten years and what are the projected changes over the next ten years? What are the reasons for those changes? (Include detailed tables in an Annex.)

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4. Here and in the remaining of this section the term ‘education policy(ies)’ refers to those policies that are concerned with the work of primary through upper secondary schools (i.e. ISCED 1, 2 and 3), in the public and private sector, and including general and vocational secondary education, and special education.

5. For the Activity’s definition of “school leaders” please see section 1.3 of this document.

- Q2.2 Summarise the main trends in terms of **availability of public and private resources** for schooling.
- Q2.3 Outline the basic **governance** of, and **regulatory framework** for, the school system, including the major legislation that applies to it. Describe the major public agencies responsible for developing education policy, for financing the system, and for assuring its quality. Describe how national education policies are developed and implemented. Are there effective frameworks to promote dialogue and common action among the main stakeholders?
- Q2.4 What are the **goals and objectives** of the school system, and how have they changed over the last decade? How are they set, and who is involved in setting them? Do they vary between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education), or between different sectors (public and private)?
- Q2.5 How many **teacher unions** exist and how are they structured? Is there a separate professional **association for school leaders**? What is the level of unionisation of school leaders by school type and sector? What were the key issues at stake during the latest round of school leader employer – school leader association negotiations? What were the outcomes of those negotiations?
- Q2.6 What are the broad **public perceptions** about the role of schools, the quality of schooling, and the status of teachers and school leaders.

### **Chapter 3: School governance and leadership (about 12 pages)**

*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.*

- Q3.1 How is the **term “school leadership”** being **conceptualised** (normatively and descriptively) in your country? Who are considered to be “school leaders”? What formal positions of authority, from which they provide direction and exert influence to achieve the school’s goals, do these hold?
- Q3.2 Outline the **basic regulatory framework** that governs the **roles and responsibilities of school leaders**, including the major legislation that applies to it. What agencies and/or organisations are involved in the development of this framework?
- Q3.3 What **challenges** does **school leadership** face in your country, in terms of:
- major policy concerns (e.g. number and qualifications of teachers and other types of school personnel);
  - new school policies (e.g. charter schooling);
  - changing composition of student population;
  - rising accountability for results and social equity;
  - changing societal and community expectations;
  - innovations (technological, pedagogical)?

Q3.4 In the public school sector what is the **distribution of responsibilities for decision making** among the **various levels of government** and **individual schools** on such issues as:

- financing and resource allocation (including allocation of teacher time) among and within schools;
- curriculum development and implementation (including timetable, allocation of instruction time, content of instruction, instructional programme coherence, examinations, and extracurricular activities);
- employment of school leaders (including selection, professional development, evaluation, promotion, and dismissal or redundancy);
- employment of teachers (including selection, professional development, evaluation, promotion, and dismissal or redundancy);
- student intake ('choice' and number), retention and promotion?

How does the **private school sector** differ in any of these regards?

Q3.5 Describe the **governance structure<sup>6</sup> of schools**. How does this vary between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education), or depending on school characteristics (sector, type, size, location, student intake, etc.)? What roles and responsibilities for school leaders result from this governance structure? Have there been any recent major changes in these respects, or are major changes planned, and what are the reasons concerned?

Q3.6 On those issues (see Q3.4) where substantial authority resides at the school level, what is the **division of responsibility** between **school leaders** and the **school governing board or local/regional education authority**? Where tensions and ambiguities exist, how are they typically resolved?

Q3.7 Describe the relative **balance between autonomy**, and **transparency and accountability** at the school level? Is the amount of control that school leaders have over such factors as curriculum, personnel selection and evaluation, and budget commensurate with the degree to which school leaders are held accountable for student performance?

Q3.8 Describe the **organisation and leadership structures<sup>7</sup> within a school**. If leadership roles are distributed across many persons in a school, describe how these roles are distributed and coordinated, who takes responsibility for what, and how decisions are taken. Do these roles vary between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education) or depending on school characteristics (sector, type, size, location, student intake, etc.)? Have there been any recent major changes in these respects, or are major changes planned, and what are the reasons concerned?

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6. School governance may range from a local governing board to a regional or national administrative agency.

7. For example, in terms of subject departments, year groups and support units.



- Q3.9 Do tensions exist within schools, and between them and external actors, over the **relative weight** that should be given **to different leadership responsibilities** (for example learning-centred versus managerial)? How are these tensions resolved?
- Q3.10 What mechanisms exist for schools to collaborate with other schools, and what are the aims of such **collaborative networks**? If such networks exist, what role do school leaders play in their development and operation?
- Q3.11 Are schools expected to play a role in **broader community service and development**? For example, do they provide adult education or cultural activities? If so, how does this affect the role of school leaders?

*Relevant research studies*

- Q3.12 Is there any **evidence** based on published research conducted in your country that the **competencies** required of effective leaders **vary depending** on the **school characteristics** (sector, size, location, student intake, behaviour, etc.)? Provide examples. Has this evidence informed relevant policy development and to what extent?
- Q3.13 Is there any **evidence** on the existence of a set of **core competencies** that school leaders require in order to be effective whatever the organisational or school context? Provide synthesis of research. Has this evidence informed relevant policy development and to what extent?

*Innovative approaches*

- Q3.14 Please describe **recent innovations in your country in relation to the organization of leadership roles in schools**. Mention aims of the innovation, main actors, implementation process and review/evaluation procedures and results. Are these innovations part of wider reform processes, and if so, how are they expected to inform and influence that process?

**Chapter 4: Enhancing learning and school leadership (about 10 pages)**

*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*

- Q4.1 Are there major **concerns** about the **quality of teaching, learning and assessment** in schools in your country? If so, please describe them.
- Q4.2 What is the role of school leadership in the **development and evaluation of policies for teaching, learning and assessment**?

*School accountability and student learning*

- Q4.3 What forms does **school accountability** take in your country? Who are the **key audiences for evidence** on school quality and how is this evidence provided? What are the implications for school leaders?

- Q4.4 Are there any instituted processes for **monitoring (analysing and acting on) students' disciplinary behaviour, learning progress and outcomes**<sup>8</sup>? What is the role of school leadership in these? Do these processes vary between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education) or between different sectors (public and private)?

#### *Curriculum implementation*

- Q4.5 Are there any instituted processes for **monitoring curriculum development and implementation**? What is the role of school leadership in these processes? What is the division of responsibilities within a school in terms of decision-making about: allocation of instruction time; timetable; content of instruction; instructional programme coherence; examinations; and extracurricular activities? Are there any differences in these respects between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education) or between different sectors (public and private)?

#### *Teachers and teaching*

- Q4.6 Do school leaders have **teaching responsibilities** and what are these?
- Q4.7 Is there any instituted process for **teacher observation/peer coaching/mentoring**? What is the role of school leadership in this?
- Q4.8 What is the role of school leadership in **evaluating teacher performance**? Who sets the criteria by which teachers are evaluated? What is the role of school leaders in promoting or rewarding outstanding teachers, or in sanctioning ineffective teachers?
- Q4.9 Who decides what **professional development teachers** need? Do tensions exist within schools, and between them and external actors, over the relative weight that should be given to national, school and individual needs in deciding the focus of a teacher's professional development? What role does school leadership play in determining this focus?

#### *Relevant research studies*

- Q4.10 Is there any **evidence** based on published research conducted in your country that particular **leadership practices** are more **effective in promoting learning** in schools? Provide synthesis of research. Has this evidence informed policy development and to what extent?
- Q4.11 Is there any **evidence** based on published research conducted in your country that particular **contexts and conditions** are more **conducive to learning-centred leadership practices** in schools? Provide synthesis of research. Has this evidence informed policy development and to what extent?

#### *Policy initiatives*

- Q4.12 What **policy initiatives** have been undertaken or are planned to support **learning-centred leadership**? For those initiatives that have been implemented what is the evidence on **their impact**

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8. For example, assessment and test scores, evaluation data, school performance trends, parental opinion surveys, student attendance data, student participation in and engagement with school.

**and cost?** Where the impact has been either more or less marked than expected, what reasons are apparent?

Q4.13 What issues have the highest priority for **future policy development in strengthening learning-centred leadership**? What are some policy options that could be considered? What are the likely views of key stakeholder groups on these priority issues and possible policy options?

## **Chapter 5: The attractiveness of school leaders' role (about 12 pages)**

*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.*

### *Supply of school leaders*

Q5.1 Are there major **concerns** about the **supply and quality of school leaders** in your country? In what respects?

Q5.2 Is there any **monitoring** of the **supply versus demand** situation of school leaders? What indicators are used? Has this changed in recent years? If so, what are the reasons concerned?

Q5.3 How have the **total number and composition of school leaders** changed over the past 10 years in terms of (i) gender; (ii) age; (iii) ethnicity; (iv) years of teaching experience; (v) academic background; by level of school (primary and secondary), type of programme (e.g. general and vocational secondary education) and sector (public and private).

Q5.4 Is there any **evidence** on the **reasons why qualified candidates may choose not to apply** for leadership positions? Do these reasons vary depending on the leadership post and between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education) or between different sectors (public and private)? Has this evidence informed policy development and to what extent?

Q5.5 Is there any **evidence** on the **proportion of teachers who aspire to school leadership** positions as part of their career path?

### *Employment and working conditions*

Q5.6 How are **vacancies for leadership positions** determined, **applications** invited, and **successful candidates chosen**? Are school leaders assigned to schools or do they apply? Does this vary depending upon the type of leadership post? How does the system ensure an equitable distribution of school leaders among schools?

Q5.7 On what **basis** do school leaders occupy their **leadership positions** – fixed term contracts, at-will contracts, or lifetime tenure? Does this vary depending upon the type of leadership post? How does it compare with other school educators? Have there been any changes in these respects, or are any planned? What are the reasons involved?

Q5.8 How frequently are school leaders **evaluated** and decisions made about their **employment renewal**? What processes and criteria are involved? Do these vary depending upon the type of leadership post? To what extent do they relate to any **evidence-based competencies** identified

under Q3.12, Q3.13 and Q4.10? How are ineffective leaders identified? What happens to them? Have there been any changes in these respects, or are any planned? What are the reasons involved?

Q5.9 How are **leadership salary scales structured** and what determines movement from one salary increment or level to the next? Is there any form of **performance-related compensation**? Are there any other means for **recognising and rewarding** effective school leadership? Have there been any changes in these respects, or are any planned? What are the reasons involved?

Q5.10 How do **salaries, other financial and non-financial benefits** (including retirement benefits) and **working conditions** of school leaders compare with those of teachers or with equivalent positions in other governmental and non-governmental institutions. How do the salaries, benefits and working conditions compare for different types of school leaders, now and over the past 10 years? Is there any **evidence** on the **impact** of salaries, benefits and working conditions on the uptake of school leadership positions? To what extent are school leaders' working conditions aligned with the conditions identified as conducive to learning-centred leadership practices, under Q4.11?

Q5.11 Is there any **evidence** on whether those who become school leaders view this as a **long-term career commitment or a short-term assignment**?

#### *Retention of school leaders*

Q5.12 Summarise the data on the **numbers of school leaders who leave the profession** each year – if possible by age, gender, leadership post, extent of leadership experience, reasons given, and destination. Do they leave earlier from certain types of leadership posts, or certain types of school or regions? Are there any major **trends** in these regards, and any **evidence** on the **factors** involved?

Q5.13 What is the usual **retirement age** for school leaders? How does this compare with teachers? Have there been any changes in retirement provisions or are any planned? What are the reasons involved?

Q5.14 Are there any instituted processes for **leadership succession**? What are these? Do these vary depending on the leadership post and between different parts of the system (e.g. between primary and secondary, compulsory and post-compulsory, general and vocational secondary education) or between different sectors (public and private)? Have there been any changes in these respects, or are any planned? What are the reasons involved?

#### *Policy initiatives*

Q5.15 What **policy initiatives** have been undertaken or are planned **to improve the recruitment and retention of effective school leaders**? For those initiatives that have been implemented what is the evidence on **their impact and cost**? Where the impact has been either more or less marked than expected, what reasons are apparent?

Q5.16 What issues have the highest priority for **future policy development in attracting and retaining effective school leaders**? What are some policy options that could be considered? What are the likely views of key stakeholder groups on these priority issues and possible policy options?

### **Chapter 6: Training and professional development of school leaders (about 10 pages)**

*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.*

*Policy concerns*

Q6.1 Are there **major concerns about school leaders' preparation, development or certification**? In what respects?

*Preparation of school leaders*

Q6.2 What are the **main pathways** by which people **become school leaders**? Are there any **alternative pathways** by which people from sectors other than education can become school leaders? If so, please describe them, and indicate whether there is any evidence about the relative effectiveness of alternative versus conventional pathways into leadership positions.

Q6.3 What are the **major requirements to qualify** for school leadership positions and who sets them? Have any major changes been recently initiated in this regard or are any planned? What are the reasons involved and what has been their impact? How does the private system differ in this regard?

Q6.4 Outline the **basic regulatory framework and legislation** that applies to **school leadership preparation (pre-service) programmes**, in terms of: the types of institutions; financing; staffing; entry requirements; length, aims, content and design of programmes; extent of in-school experience and on-the-job mentoring; and graduation/certification requirements. Include any special or training provisions made for established professional from other occupations who would like to become school leaders. What is the scale of such programmes and what is the **evidence** on their **effectiveness**?

Q6.5 What **agencies and/or organisations** are involved in the **development and evaluation of this framework** and in assuring quality provision? What mechanisms and criteria are used to assess and assure the quality of school leadership preparation programmes? For example, are there any standards of professional performance or other principles that guide programme content? To what extent are they implemented and what is the evidence on their effectiveness? To what extent do they relate to any evidence-based competencies identified under Q3.12, Q3.13 and Q4.10? What relationship exists between the methods used to finance school leadership preparation and quality measures?

Q6.6 Are there any special **support or induction programmes for new school leaders**? If so, how do they operate, and what is the evidence of their impact?

*Professional development of school leaders*

Q6.7 What **types of professional development options and programmes** exist for school leaders? Who decides what type of learning opportunities school leaders need? How are such programmes monitored for effectiveness?

Q6.8 Is participation in **professional development programmes a condition of continued employment** as a school leader, or for promotion or increased compensation? Are there any other incentives for participating in professional development opportunities, and of what kinds? What evidence is available on the **impact** of such links (or incentives) on school leadership effectiveness?

*Relevant research studies*

Q6.9 Is there any **evidence** based on published research conducted in your country regarding the **features** (e.g. content, methods, structure) **that school leadership preparation and development**

**programmes** should have to be effective? Has this evidence informed policy development and to what extent?

#### *Policy initiatives*

Q6.10 What **policy initiatives** have been undertaken or are planned **to improve the quality of school leadership preparation, certification and development**? For those initiatives that have been implemented what is the evidence on their impact and cost? Where the impact has been either more or less marked than expected, what reasons are apparent?

Q6.11 What issues have the highest priority for **future policy development in school leadership preparation, certification and development**? What are some policy options that could be considered? What are the likely views of key stakeholder groups on these priority issues and possible policy options?

#### *Innovative approaches*

Q6.12 Please describe **recent innovations in your country in relation to school leadership preparation and development programmes**. Mention aims of the innovation, main actors, implementation process and review/evaluation procedures and results. Are these innovations part of wider reform processes, and if so, how are they expected to inform and influence that process?

### **Chapter 7: Conclusions (about 3 pages)**

*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:*

Q7.1 What are the **major strengths and weaknesses** in current policy on school leadership?

Q7.2 What are the **trends and changes** that might be anticipated **in future policy development**, in both the short and the long term, and what are the highest priorities for future policy development in the field of school leadership?

## 4. SOME PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING BACKGROUND REPORTS

### Language

The background report should be provided to the OECD Secretariat in either English or French.

### Length

The text of Chapters 1-7 of the background report should be about 55-60 single-spaced pages in length. Additional material can be attached as Annexes or included as tables, charts, diagrams and extracts from other documents.

### Contents

In addition to Chapters 1-7, we suggest that your background report should include: a table of contents; a list of tables and figures; a list of acronyms; a glossary of terms; an executive summary; a list of references; and a set of Annexes.

### Format

To ensure that background reports have a consistent appearance and are easy to use we would appreciate it if you could follow these format guidelines:

- Font Times 11;
- Single spacing;
- Page size A4;
- Pages numbered (bottom centre of each page);
- Part /Section/chapter heading level 1: in **CAPITAL LETTERS IN BOLD** (centred);
- Sub-chapters heading level 2: **Normal letters in bold** (left justified);
- Heading level 3: *Normal letters in bold and italics* (left justified);
- Heading level 4: *Normal letters in italics* (left justified);
- Heading level 5: Normal letters (left justified);
- Normal text, single spacing within paragraphs, with a space between paragraphs;
- Paragraphs should be numbered sequentially throughout the document (1, 2, 3, etc.); indent after the paragraph number;

- Lists should be indented; points in a list should be indicated with bullets or numbers;
- Tables and figures should be prepared in Excel or Word, if possible. Each table and figure should have a title and a source, as well as notes as appropriate. Please insert the tables and figures as “pictures” in the document, not floating over the text. The numbering of the tables and figures should be in accordance with the number of the chapter. For example, the first figure in Chapter 3 will be Figure 3.1, the second Figure 3.2 etc;
- Photos, which are inserted in the text as gifs or bitmaps, should have a resolution 300 dpi in the size of print to ensure quality of images;
- References should appear as needed throughout the text in round brackets, specifying the author and the date, like (Smith, 2004);
- Please use the symbol “%” instead of “per cent” or “percent”.

The background report should be provided in electronic format, preferably as a Word document, suitable for placement on the OECD website.

In completing the background report please try wherever possible to refer to the source(s) of any data -- legislation, formal agreements, research articles, literature reviews, surveys, evaluations, publications, administrative data and so on. Where possible, please provide copies of key documents, particularly those available in English and French. Countries should also take the opportunity to include extracts from key documents within the background reports, or as appendices.

### **General notes on sources**

Where data are not available, this should be noted, as we would like to identify priorities for future data collection and research.

In addition to statistical data, databases and official documents, it would be helpful if the background report also drew on information from research studies in the country, whether of qualitative or quantitative nature. Countries should build some participation by using the input of their own researchers in the writing process.