
School leadership and management

BRIEF 1

School management

Schools need leaders who have a vision for improving quality and learning outcomes, and who are also effective at ongoing management tasks.

Schools need leaders with a vision for improving the school's learning environment within a well-functioning school-based management (SBM) system. SBM involves setting school directions concerning students, teacher development, and allocation of material and financial resources. Effective SBM impacts motivation, commitment, and student and teacher success by: facilitating school leadership that is both appropriate to the unique context and needs of the school community, developing and implementing school improvement plans, establishing fair and effective teacher appraisal systems, structuring classrooms and schools according to school needs, building partnerships with the community, and ensuring that frameworks exist to support the functions of other school departments and personnel.

Issues and Discussion

School managers' preparation and leadership: School managers can positively contribute to school effectiveness when they are prepared and able to use extensive leadership knowledge to solve complex school-based problems, and to build trust through working relationships with school staff, parents, students, and the community.(3)(8) Managers can have different and overlapping management styles including instructional, transformational, and distributed leadership, with each style having an influence on student outcomes and how teachers respond to leadership.(3)(8) However, it is important that school managers lead in a way that is appropriate to the school culture and context, that they be given opportunities for management support training, and that their performance be appraised by school inspectors, municipalities, or other boards that provide oversight on school management quality.(3)(8) School managers who model strong instructional leadership focus on planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching in order to achieve positive student learning outcomes.(8) School managers need to assess student and teacher performance and lead in a way that is culturally and pedagogically responsive to student' and teacher' strengths and needs.(8)

School improvement plans: Effective school managers design a school improvement process to guide their work.(2)(8) School improvement plans (also called school development plans) can provide such a process because they are strategic and based on a scanning of the school environment and the conditions that are faced.(1)(2) School improvement plans should prioritise goals and objectives, identify strategic actions to achieve school goals, and include a set of methods for monitoring,

implementing, and evaluating the strategies.(1)(2)(8) In particular, they may outline strategies for improving student performance in targeted subject areas, recommend particular types of assessments for teachers to measure student performance over time, and indicate when and for how long strategies should be implemented.(1)(8) The development of school plans is a collaborative process between school professionals and councils, parents, and other community stakeholders, and the results should be made accessible (in hard copy or online) to the public as a form of accountability.(1)(2)(3)

Teacher appraisal: Another function accomplished by school managers is regular teacher appraisal.(8) A [teacher appraisal framework](#) makes evaluation fair by clearly defining roles, responsibilities and procedures, and includes multiple forms of measurement such as teacher portfolios, [classroom observations, and surveys and/or administrator and peer assessments](#).(8) School professionals should have a clear rationale for choosing assessment measures, and should be cautious about using forms of teacher appraisal that can place [too much value on student's standardized test scores](#).(3)

Other management functions: Other aspects of schools require a clear management framework including maintaining [school libraries](#) and storerooms, addressing school health and safety issues, and managing [school-based funding and accounting](#).(5)(6) The management of school funding has a particular relationship to learning outcomes, since high performing schools tend to focus resources on the areas of greatest learning needs, including individual attention for students to learn core subjects and extra support to improve teachers' effectiveness.(5)(6)

School-community partnerships: SBM is effective when a school-based committee or department has been formed for the purpose of assessing [school and community needs](#), engaging the community, building partnerships, managing resources, and providing incentives and training to build partnership capacity.(3)(4)(8)(9)

School clusters: Rural or low-resourced schools may be grouped into school clusters in order to pull resources together for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching and learning. The [management of a school cluster](#) includes similar roles and responsibilities as in individual schools, however, additional leadership through a committee or a more experienced lead administrator will be needed at the cluster level to manage and oversee curriculum delivery and evaluation across school sites.(2)(4)(8)(9) The decision to form a cluster should be based on an assessment of school needs and shared goals across school sites for developing the cluster.(2)(4)(9) Forming a cluster can include mapping activities to identify schools that are self-sufficient and may not require inclusion, determining accessibility issues and the spatial distribution of schools in the network to identify a centralized location for a teacher resource centre.(2)(4) Trained staff for managing teacher resource centre activities including providing support, training, and resources to teachers is also important for effective management of a school cluster.(2)(4)(9)

Inclusiveness and Equity

Disadvantaged Students: School managers play a key role in promoting educational equity for disadvantaged students.(7) Some SBM policies that benefit disadvantaged students include prioritising school-community partnerships, improving teacher retention by identifying and eliminating barriers for teacher attrition, and school capacity building through leadership preparation programmes and quality mentoring, professional networks, and infrastructure.(7)

Policy Examples

- Fiji [[PDF](#)]
- Grenada [[PDF](#)]
- India [[PDF](#)]
- Madagascar [[PDF](#)]
- Wales [[PDF](#)]

References and sources

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