

WHO IS LEADING PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PUERTO RICO?

A Profile of
School
Principals

MAY 2010

Executive Summary

A report from the
Behavioral Sciences Research
Institute—University of Puerto Rico
for Flamboyant Foundation



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PRDE may be reached at P.O. Box 190759 San Juan P.R. 00919-0759, by phone (787) 759-2000 or at <http://de.gobierno.pr/dePortal/Inicio/Inicio.aspx>.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to all informants who dedicated their time and cooperated with their honest voices and opinions, especially to the school principals who participated in the study. We also acknowledge the help and unconditional cooperation of the Puerto Rico Department of Education in providing data and support for this study.

Contents

Introduction	7
Findings	8
Demographics, Career Paths and Retirement Trends	8
Academic Preparation, Certification and Professional Development	9
Recruitment, Selection and Retention	11
Evaluation and Incentives	12
Responsibilities, Expectations and Regulations that Define the Position	13
Barriers, Challenges and Issues Affecting Principal Performance	14
Effects of the No Child Left Behind Law — The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	16
Lack of Centralized and Reliable Data	17
Conclusions	18
Recommendations	20
References	22



Introduction

Evidence shows that school principals play a central role in any effort that aims to reform or improve public schools.¹ Although traditionally their role has been seen as one that is focused on the administrative aspects of supervising a school, it is now clear that principals are, and need the preparation and support, to be much more than administrators. They are increasingly held responsible for how much their students are learning; and they are also the primary supervisors of the teachers and other staff that directly impact their students' education. As heads of their schools, principals are in a unique and crucial position to lead change and to implement transformative initiatives. Schools and districts that have shown dramatic improvements in the academic achievement of their students, inevitably have a leader that has been key in making this happen.

Wishing to learn more about school principals in Puerto Rico, Flamboyant Foundation commissioned the Behavioral Sciences Research Institute (BSRI) to prepare a report on the current state of school principals throughout Puerto Rico. The study was conducted during academic year 2007–2008 and the research methodology included an extensive School Principal Survey; Secondary Data Analyses using data from the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE); focus groups with active principals; and in-depth interviews with PRDE top-level executives. Each one of these methods served to corroborate and enrich the information gathered for the report throughout the year-long study. Together, they offer a comprehensive picture of school principals, their work and their needs, and the challenges that the PRDE is facing as the foremost entity responsible for primary and secondary education in Puerto Rico. We trust that this report will offer the PRDE and others a greater understanding of how best to support, retain and encourage school leaders.

This research study focused on the following areas:

- Demographics, Career Paths and Retirement Trends
- Academic Preparation, Certification and Professional Development
- Recruitment, Selection and Retention
- Evaluation and Incentives
- Responsibilities, Expectations and Regulations that define the position
- Barriers, Challenges and Issues affecting principals' performance
- Effects of the No Child Left Behind Law—The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) amended and reauthorized in 2002

¹For references please refer to the final section of this report titled "References".

Findings

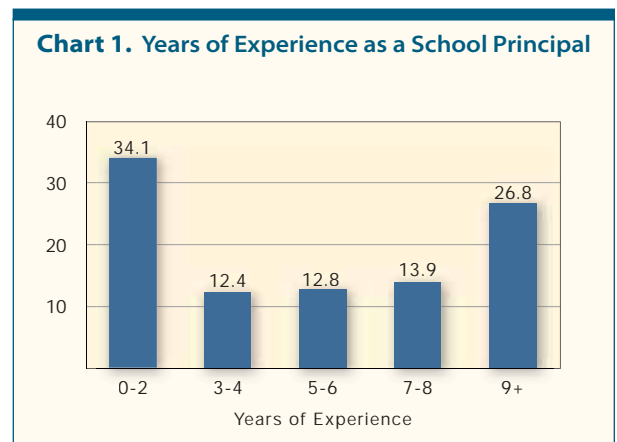
Demographics, Career Paths and Retirement Trends

During the academic year 2007–08, a total of 1,508 school principals were active at some point of the year in 1,319 schools in the island. Most school principals are women (70%) and their average age is 50, ranging from 29 to 58 years old. A little more than half (55%) work in elementary schools.

On average, school principals have worked in public service for 22 years and served as principals for an average of 8 years or less. Chart 1 presents the number of years of experience in the position for school principals. Interestingly, nearly 75% of principals have been in the position for less than eight years, indicating that the majority of principals spend a considerable number of years as teachers or in another position at the PRDE before becoming a school principal.

It should also be noted that 34% of principals have only been in their position for 2 years or less; this is a significantly large group of new leaders who could benefit from targeted support and development. It is not clear how many principals leave their job during their first years as school leaders, nor does there appear to be a systemic method to identify and retain the most talented among the newly arrived.

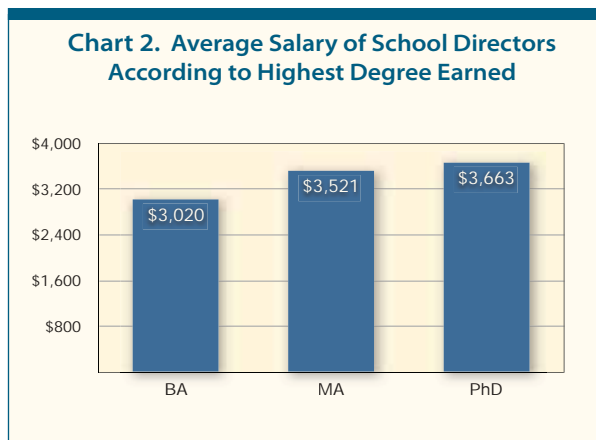
The age of retirement for school principals has been decreasing. The average age of retirement in 2007–2008 was 57, six years younger than the average age of retirement in 2003–2004. Using the number of years in public service to estimate



possible retirements for the near future, more than a third of public school principals could retire in the next five years. This would result in the loss of a significant number of school leaders (approximately 576 principals).

During academic year 2007–08, school principals in Puerto Rico earned an average of \$3,510.79 per month (\$42,129 a year). The minimum salary was \$1,520 per month and the maximum \$4,475. Chart 2 illustrates the distribution of principals’ salaries according to years of service or public experience. Although a linear relationship to a principal’s experience could have been expected, (i.e., having principals with more experience earning a higher salary), this was not the case. The only factor that seems to be related to a principal’s salary is the highest degree earned. The average monthly salary of a school principal with a PhD was \$642.42 higher than a principal with a Bachelor degree and \$142 higher than with a Master’s degree. At present, almost all school principals earn less than some of

the teachers they supervise. Since it is considered a managerial position, principals point out that they are not paid for overtime even when most of them work at least 60 hours per week, eleven months per year. Low compensation and a lack of time to get their job done are often discussed by school principals as disincentives.



Academic Preparation, Certification and Professional Development

Most school principals hold master’s degrees from private universities. 8.7% of school principals earned their highest degree at the University of Puerto Rico, which is the most affordable university in the island (See Table1). The remaining 91.3% earned their degree at private universities mostly located in Puerto Rico.

Current requirements of the PRDE to certify school principals establish that the minimum academic preparation should be a master’s degree. Requirements for certifying school principals are described in Article IX of the booklet entitled “Certification Policy for Teaching Personnel” (*Reglamento de Certificación*

Table 1. Career path of the PRDE principals for the academic year 2007–2008

Highest degree earned	n	%	University of highest degree earned	n	%
BA	20	1.3	University of Phoenix	353	24.0
MA	1449	96.1	Interamerican University	282	19.2
PhD	39	2.6	University of Puerto Rico	128	8.7
			Ana G. Mendez System	198	13.5
			Catholic University	132	9.0
			Other Universities in Puerto Rico	246	16.7
			Other Universities in US	100	6.8

del Personal Docente, 2004). Article IX establishes the requirement for certification of principals, which includes professional and academic preparation, prior experience and academic specialties (See Table 2).

According to the principals themselves, the current certification process for school principals does not guarantee that they have the necessary skills for supervising a school. A majority of principals think that

the principal's certification only guarantees a minimum of needed skills (39%), or does not guarantee at all that the principal has what is needed to administer a school (36%). Only one fourth believes that the certification guarantees the skills needed to administer a school (See Table 3).

However, principals expressed great interest in strengthening their qualifications, particularly with training in areas such as special education, legal issues — including labor laws— and successful teaching practices. The principals also believe that future school directors should be better prepared in areas such as administration, criminal justice and psychology. Others think that curricula should include more practical, hands-on courses that require future directors to spend time in real scenarios. Principals indicated that both their previous work experience (53%) and the guidance received from co-workers (48%) were the most valuable factors in preparing them to administer a school.

Both principals and all of the PRDE top-level executives stressed the need for principals to receive technology training in order to acquire the necessary skills to manage the school's information systems. Educational leadership was also pointed out by the top-level executives at PRDE as an area that should be strengthened. In this respect, they discussed the need for principals to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about the teaching-learning process and that they can support their teachers in achieving excellence.

Table 2. Requirements for Certification
<p>Doctorate or MA in Supervision and School Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Permanent teacher certificate in their level, subject or program ◆ Two years of teaching experience ◆ 18 graduate level specialty credits for those who wish to work in specialized or special education schools <p>Doctorate or MA without Specialty in Supervision and School Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 18 graduate level credits in Administration and School Supervision ◆ Supervised practice as a school principal ◆ Permanent teacher certificate in their level, subject or program ◆ Two years of teaching experience ◆ 18 graduate level specialty credits for those who wish to work in specialized or special education schools

Table 3. Principals' Opinions About Certification and Preparation Issues	%
The current system to certify school principals...*	
Guarantees that the principal has a minimum set of skills to supervise a school.	38.7
Doesn't guarantee that the principal has what they need supervise a school.	35.9
Guarantees that the principal has what he/she needs to supervise a school.	25.4
Which of the following would you say was the most valuable to prepare you for your position as principal? *	
Previous experience	53.4
Guidance and advice from the people I have worked with	48.2
Sense of responsibility and commitment	42.5
Graduate studies	40.3

* Multiple answers were allowed

Recruitment, Selection and Retention

During the year of the study, PRDE reported that 14% of schools in the system did not have a principal. From the total of 1,524 schools in Puerto Rico, 205 schools were not assigned a principal and had a vacancy for the position during the entire academic year 2007–08. Although the data on eligible candidates is not available for that school year, in June 2009, the pool of eligible candidates for the position of school principal seemed to be reasonably large, relative to the demand (See Table 4).

A complex set of steps for recruiting and selecting school principals, as documented in *Carta Circular Número 13-2007–2008*, requires extensive coordination between school regions and the central administration, and appear to be at least partly responsible for recruitment problems. Also, according to interviews with PRDE top-level executives, the PRDE seems to be more focused on a strategy of re-activating retirees to serve as principals on a part-time basis (4hrs. per day), instead of hiring available applicants.

Although during the 2007–2008 School Year, a monetary incentive was proposed for school principals that accepted a position in schools

deemed “difficult to recruit,” during the 2007–2008 School Year, it was never fully implemented.

The general consensus among principals and top-level executives is that there is no specific strategy or policy in the PRDE to identify, recruit or retain the best school director candidates. Furthermore, the PRDE has no objective method to measure the quality of candidates who apply for these positions. Currently, anyone who can get a School Director Certificate can apply and be hired for the position.

Table 4. Number of applicants for the position of principals (June 2009)

School Level	Number of Candidates
Elementary School	1,083
Intermediate or High School	855
Technological Institute	54
Vocational	122
Total	2,114



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Evaluation and Incentives

There is no evaluation system for a principal's performance or productivity. However, principals expressed that they would like to have regular evaluations in order to clearly know what is expected from them. While the law mandates that all principals be directly supervised and evaluated by the Secretary of Education, this is not the case. Principals were asked to indicate the most important criteria that should be part of the evaluation of a principal's performance (See Table 5). Six of every ten (60%) school principals indicated that the most

Table 5. Which of the following should be the most important criteria in evaluating a principal? *	%
How well he/she improves the academic performance of students	59.9
How well he/she manages the school and funds	41.1
How well he/she maintains teacher quality	11.7

* Multiple responses were allowed

important part of a performance evaluation should be how much they increase students' academic performance. 41% held that it depended on how well they manage the school and administer a budget. Only 12% of principals indicated that teacher quality should be the most important criteria in their evaluation. This could be due to the fact that principals are not allowed, by law, to evaluate and assess the performance of their school teachers.

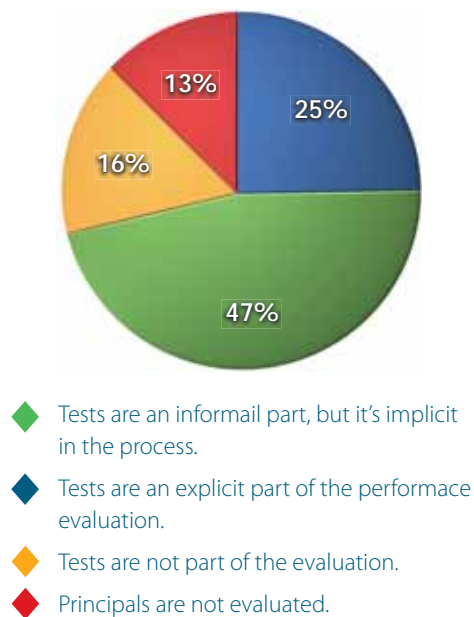
Although principals feel accountable for their student academic performance, a majority stated that they should not be held responsible for student scores in standardized tests (89%). When asked what their reaction would be if their students had low averages in standardized tests, a third (31%) blamed the school for not preparing students well. This apparent contradiction may be due to the fact that a school—and implicitly its leader—is judged according to the degree that it achieves Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is measured

according to the percentage of students in each school that achieve a certain level of proficiency on the standardized tests (in this case, the *Pruebas Puertorriqueñas*).

Almost half of the principals (47%) said that standardized tests are not an explicit part of a specific evaluation, but that the results are nevertheless used in evaluating their performance (Chart 3). One out of every four principals (25%) indicated that standardized tests are an explicit part of their evaluation, and 16% that the tests are not part of a principal's evaluation. Evidently principals are confused about whether the results of the standardized tests are part of their evaluation or not.

There was consensus among principals and top level executives that PRDE does not have a reward or incentive system for school principals, and that this is largely due to the fact that there is no formal evaluation process to determine performance and productivity. Top-level executives explained that a new performance evaluation form was designed by the PRDE in collaboration with a group of principals; however, at the time this study was conducted, the instrument had not been implemented.

Chart 3. To what point are standardized tests part of the directors' performance evaluation?



Responsibilities, Expectations and Regulations that Define the Position

School principals feel that they have many more responsibilities than what is stated in the job description under Law 149. Most of the added tasks are administrative, which keep them from performing as well as they would like in the teaching-learning process. In fact, 93% of principals agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced an increase in responsibilities and mandates without receiving the necessary resources to be able to comply with them.

Law 149 describes 24 functions that school principals are required to fulfill, yet it was last amended in 1999. Since then, PRDE has continued adding functions and responsibilities as school needs and political leadership have changed, without clearly defining what is expected of them.

Principals have to comply with local and federal mandates. They receive instructions from central, regional and superintendent levels of the PRDE. In addition to supervising all school personnel, preparing budgets and administering school purchasing, they oversee all academic issues, deal with four unions, submit hundreds of reports, participate in dozens of monthly meetings and personally administer four electronic platforms for anything from purchasing materials to paying employees. These platforms are: the Financial Information System of the Department of Education; Time, Absences and Leaves of Absence System; Automation Software for Special Education System; and the Student Information System.

Principals also represent the educational system in court, organize teacher professional development, handle relationships with the community and supervise student-teacher affairs. Overall, principals feel that what is expected of them is too much for one person to deal with, and that this heavy workload is a major obstacle to retaining talented individuals in leadership positions.

When asked why a talented principal would leave his/her position, 34% respondents indicated that politics and bureaucracy is the main reason that pushes principals to leave their job, (See Table 6), followed by the issues of not receiving adequate compensation (29%) and the extreme demands and responsibilities of the job (28%).

Table 6. Why would talented principals leave their job?*	%
Politics and Bureaucracy	34.4
Low salary and prestige	29.3
Irrational demands due to more responsibilities and higher standards	28
Lack of resources	13.9
Discipline/Violence	9.1
No effort from the students	2.3

** Multiple answers were allowed*



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Barriers, Challenges and Issues Affecting Principal Performance

When asked about the most urgent problem they face as school leaders on a daily basis, insufficient funding is by far considered to be the biggest hurdle (See Table 7).

Table 7. Principals' opinions about the most urgent problem their school encounters *	%
Insufficient funds	40.3
Lack of committed and helpful parents	24.5
Problems with infrastructure	24.1
Lack of committed and devoted teachers or poor quality teachers	21.9
Lack of committed and motivated students	16.6

* Multiple responses were allowed

Poor school maintenance and infrastructure are a serious problem for many. Principals often pay for school repairs, cleaning supplies and maintenance out of their own pockets. School buildings in Puerto Rico are mostly old and thus require significant maintenance and in many cases renovation. Keeping up with infrastructure challenges becomes an enormous burden for principals, especially if they do not receive a budget assignment for their school.

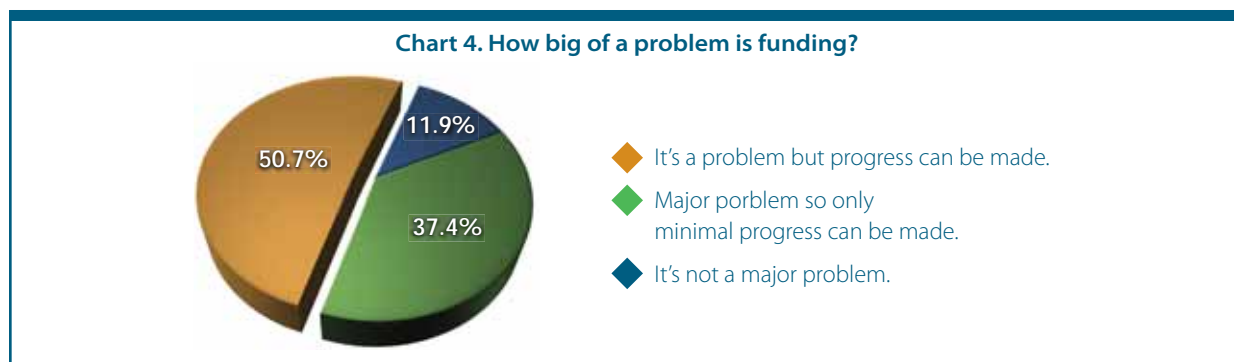
When principals were asked how much funding affected their school's progress, more than three quarters of them (88%) stated the lack of funds is a critical problem that affects their ability to manage their school (See Chart 4). This is obviously a major problem that needs further

investigation, as it is not clear from this study why it is that principals do not have access to the funds they need to run a school efficiently.

Another major challenge for principals is their inability to hire and fire teachers. Most (51%) of them believe that the best way to improve teacher quality in their schools is to have greater autonomy to recruit and fire teachers (See Table 8). However, 61% of principals said it would be practically impossible to fire a permanent teacher with poor classroom performance, and only 3% of respondents thought it would be easy for them to discharge a teacher. According to law, principals can observe but not formally evaluate teachers. A majority (78%) of principals indicated that it is very difficult to evaluate a teacher's performance (See Table 8).

Some of the challenges that a principal faces regarding unprepared teachers might be addressed early on, before these candidates reach the school. A large majority of principals (89%) indicated that current teacher preparation programs are not aligned with the realities that teachers face in public schools. And 80% agree that the current teacher certification system does not ensure that teachers have the necessary skills to do their jobs well.

In addition to the challenge of being able to impact the teaching process, as described above, many school principals also discussed how the lack of support personnel added to the difficulties of their job. Many schools don't have an administrative assistant, as only schools with more than 150 children can hire one.



Finally, on a positive note, the majority of school principals (61.1%) characterized the help and support provided by regional superintendents as excellent or good. Only 21.9% described the help and support of their regional superintendent as average. This speaks well of superintendents in Puerto Rico. Superintendents are the closest level of support to principals and thus probably more

available to help them than the educational region or the central office. However, soon after the study was completed the PRDE decided to eliminate the superintendents and appoint them to the vacant school principal positions. This situation could add to principals' sense of isolation, depriving them of a support system that seemed to be working.

Table 8. Principals' opinions on teachers issues		%
Programs that prepare teachers are not in tune with the reality of public schools nowadays. . .		
Extremely Agree		59.15
Agree		29.8
Disagree		9.9
Extremely Disagree		1.2
The system to certify teachers. . .		
Guarantees that the teacher has a minimum of skills to teach.		43.4
Doesn't guarantee that the teacher has what they need to teach.		37.3
Guarantees that the teacher has what he/she needs to teach.		19.3
It is very difficult to obtain a real performance evaluation of teachers through formal evaluations.		
Extremely Agree		38.0
Agree		40.6
Disagree		17.5
Extremely Disagree		3.9
What is the most effective way to improve teachers in your school?*		
Have more autonomy to contract and fire teachers.		51.6
Improve the training and education of current teachers.		28.8
Having a pool of highly qualified teachers to choose from.		16.0
More rigorous evaluation system.		12.7
More supervision.		10.3
Professional development offerings.		6.1
Improve teachers salaries.		3.9

** Multiple responses were allowed*



Poor school maintenance and infrastructure are a serious problem for many. Principals often pay for school repairs, cleaning supplies and maintenance out of their own pockets.



Effects of the No Child Left Behind Law – The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Amended and Reauthorized in 2002

Principals consider that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has added responsibilities to their burden, without providing needed support to address the expectations inherent in the Law. They are ambivalent about the law's effectiveness in Puerto Rico and about the *Pruebas Puertorriqueñas*, the locally developed standardized test that measures a school's yearly progress, and a cornerstone of NCLB. 50% of principals believe that the Law will raise academic standards, but the other half indicated that it would lower standards (30%) or not affect them at all (20%). A lack of alignment between the resources that each school has to improve teaching and learning; what students are expected to know in each grade; and what is tested in the *Pruebas Puertorriqueñas* were discussed as issues that need to be addressed in order to prevent schools from failing.

Several other barriers were also highlighted by principals when they discussed trying to comply with NCLB. For example, they pointed out that many teachers, parents, and students are not motivated to do what is needed to fulfill the requirements of the NCLB law. NCLB calls for parents to be involved with the school but principals find that engaging parents is difficult, and that this is especially true for parents of children in high school. Principals also mentioned

that many teachers are equally disengaged, as they do not see the test as useful or adequate.

Regarding students' attitudes, some principals indicated that many students are not interested in doing well in achievement tests. They explained that students often answer the test randomly to get it out of the way and are not motivated to perform well because it is not worth a grade. Another barrier principals face with NCLB is that it uses the same standards and tests to measure children in special education, which is unfair to the students and the school.

Principals indicated that bureaucracy at the PRDE, as well as teacher and staff turnover, make it difficult for the principal to provide students with the help they need to do well in the tests (e.g. tutoring). Finally, they noted the lack of incentives for students to perform satisfactorily in the tests.

Some of the positive aspects principals recognized in the NCLB law were related to the economic resources it provides to schools. Teachers have been able to receive training and even master degrees with funds granted by NCLB. Also, the law has offered reinforcement to some students' academic achievement through tutoring services and it has helped increase student attendance. Finally, some participants explained that they see test results as a self-evaluating tool, and use the results to identify areas that must be improved in their school.



A lack of alignment between the resources that each school has to improve teaching and learning; what students are expected to know in each grade; and what is tested in the *Pruebas Puertorriqueñas* were discussed as issues that need to be addressed in order to prevent schools from failing.



Lack of Centralized and Reliable Data

There are significant information gaps in the electronic data available at the PRDE and there is no central source of information about school principals. The research team had to navigate several central administration offices of the Department in order to collect the information presented in this report. The following information was requested several times from different units of the PRDE and was never obtained:

- Number of vacancies for the past five years, when they occurred, and how long it takes to fill the positions.
- Number of schools that begin the year without a principal or with an acting principal in place for the past five years.
- School Principals' mobility during the past five academic years through schools and regions.

- Professional development opportunities for new and experienced principals.
- A written document from the PRDE explaining the compensation system for school principals.

Although it was possible to obtain some of the information requested from the PRDE, most information was incomplete, inaccurate, and/or inconsistent. Some of the challenges that became evident in collecting data for this study include the following: poor communication and coordination among the different units of the Department; poor knowledge of the kinds of data collected by each unit; duplication of data collection efforts of some variables that result in serious inconsistencies; some essential information is paper-based instead of electronic; and poor documentation of databases.

Conclusions

Paying Attention to Teaching and Learning

While they are increasingly held responsible for student achievement, principals do not have the legal authority, the knowledge and tools, or the time to focus on how well their teachers are teaching and how much their students are learning. In their day-to-day reality, most school principals are overwhelmed with responsibilities such as managing databases, preparing reports, finding basic resources to run their schools, attending central office meetings, dealing with legal issues and managing students, parents and community affairs. They are also in charge of supervising teachers and other personnel. However, as currently defined and carried out, this supervisory responsibility is not focused on whether students are receiving a high quality and equal learning opportunity.

Lack of Funds for their Schools

The most urgent problem that principals encounter in their schools is the lack of sufficient funds. Approximately half of surveyed principals stated that because it is such a major problem, only minimal progress can be made. Some principals indicate that they find ways to deal with this limitation, but still see it as a serious problem. Further investigation—beyond the scope of this study—is necessary to identify why principals do not have access to their school budget. It is clear that they feel that not having access to funds is much more detrimental to their ability to get their job done than other challenges they face, such as difficulty in involving parents, deteriorated school facilities and supervising teachers.

Qualified Candidates to Lead Schools

A majority of principals indicated that the certification process to become a principal requires only a minimum set of skills and no guarantee that the person knows how to supervise a school. The men and women who are certified to become principals in Puerto Rico spend an average of 22 years in the educational system, either as teachers or in other positions. Combined, these two facts point to a troublesome reality. Not only is the bar set low initially—as indicated by the principals themselves—but there is currently no process to identify, select and train potential candidates, early in their careers, who demonstrate the qualities of good school leaders. Furthermore, retirement trends indicate that more than a third of current school principals could retire within the next five years. Without a long-term plan to retain high-performing principals or to keep them in the system, e.g., as mentors, the PRDE will face the additional challenge of filling positions and retaining talent. Finally, it is important to note that most principals express a desire to become better at their job, but they feel they do not have the necessary support and learning experiences to improve and grow professionally.

Hold Us Accountable—but Restructure the Playing Field

There was consensus among principals and top-level PRDE executives regarding the need to establish a system of performance evaluation, which currently does not exist. Six of every ten principals indicated that the most important criteria for their evaluation should be how well they improve the academic achievement of students. However, a majority also said that principals should not be responsible for student scores on standardized tests. The apparent contradiction is most likely due to a set of constraints that principals identified as limiting their capacity to impact learning, including the lack of alignment between the curriculum that is taught and what appears on standards-based tests; that they are not allowed by law to assess teachers performance; and resistance from students, teachers and parents who do not see the usefulness of the test, among others. The emphasis placed by NCLB on test results to determine how well a school is doing in reaching a set of standards presents a difficult conundrum for principals, who express a desire to be measured according to their capacity to impact student learning, but have very limited control over the teaching and learning process.

Overworked and Underpaid

The current job description for principals is defined by Law 149, which was last amended in 1999. Since then, PRDE has added numerous functions and responsibilities responding to local and federal mandates, without conducting a holistic review of the position. Principals are overwhelmed with the amount of responsibilities they are expected to complete. Low salaries and a salary scale that does not take into consideration years of experience, educational region, school level or job performance only exacerbate this situation. Presently, almost all principals earn less money than some of the teachers at their schools. Both principals and top-level executives agree that there is no incentive system that recognizes and rewards improvement and excellence for principals and their schools.

Information to Move Forward

Although this research study did not set out to investigate how information about principals is organized and used, one of the main issues the research team encountered was the lack of centralized and reliable information on school directors. Several types of information are unavailable or inconsistent, including number of vacancies at the beginning of each school year, number of schools without principals, how long it takes to fill these positions and principal mobility. It is also unclear why vacancies exist when there appears to be a large enough pool of certified candidates. Information on the professional development opportunities for both new and experienced principals was also unavailable. Finally, both principals and top-level executives discussed the need for university programs that prepare principals to review their programs, using information that reflects current reality, responsibilities and challenges that define the job of a school leader.

Recommendations

Developing, promoting and recognizing successful leadership has long been a central tenet of the private sector in our society. Recent academic research, evidence from the field and privately funded efforts point to a parallel reality in our public schools: without vibrant and effective leaders, it is very difficult for schools to improve student achievement and to offer a great educational experience to all students. The role and responsibilities of a school principal need to be clearly defined and aligned with the ultimate goal of our public school system, which is to prepare our youth for active and equal participation in a democratic system.

Based on the finding of this report, we propose the following recommendations as some of the first issues that we need to attend to in order to strengthen the ability of principals to transform and improve their schools:

- Build a robust recruitment and selection system that brings only the best candidates into schools.
- Work with universities that prepare school directors to ensure coursework is relevant to present and future demands, and work with the PRDE to review the requirements to become a principal.
- Centralize PRDE data and information in order to better select, train, recruit and develop current and future principals.
- Build a support structure to provide principals with the ongoing professional development they need to improve their work. Improve professional development activities so that they are aligned with their specific needs and realities.

- Clarify what principals are responsible for and provide them with the financial and structural means to achieve what is expected of them.
- Identify why principals do not have access to funds for their schools and improve the process by which their school budgets are available to them for effective use.
- Develop a systematic, empirical method to identify school principals that excel at their job, but that is not solely based on one evaluation tool.
- Establish who is responsible for managing principals and providing them with feedback on their work. It is not feasible for the Secretary of Education to evaluate all principals, as the current structure dictates. Review the role of the Superintendent, or a similar position, which principals point to as one of the few support systems that was working for them.
- Establish a compensation scale that does justice to principals, and that correlates with the amount of time and responsibility that is expected of them as school leaders.
- Increase support personnel to alleviate some of the administrative tasks that principals are responsible for, making time for them to work with teachers and influence the teaching and learning of their students.
- Create an accountability system where principals are the supervisors of teacher performance. Then, provide principals with greater autonomy to recruit and fire teachers and to reinforce academic excellence in their schools.

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