

Suggested Standards of Professional Accreditation for Educational Schools' Principals within Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the light of Universal Standards

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Abstract

The past half-century has witnessed a significant evolution in the daily duties and responsibilities of school principals around the world. The key principle for school principals is to offer professional leadership and management to any educational institution. This in turn promotes protected foundations which lead to elevated professional standards in various domains of the school's work. To achieve this goal, a school principal should take high value educational initiatives by effectively, efficiently, and responsibly managing pedagogical practices. In addition, a principal may employ top-notch learning strategies in a bid to realize not only the students' potential but also those of the teachers. Therefore, school heads need to establish professional customs that uphold excellence, equality and high prospects for every student. This research paper aims to identify the suggested standards for school principals' accreditation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The paper applies Delphi technique to collect data from professionals in the field of education and thereafter outline the suggested standards. Findings reveal that there is a dearth of appropriate standards for school principals in the process of accreditation in KSA. For that reason, it is essential that KSA set up School Principals Professional Development Institutions (SPPDI) through partnership with other schools and professional development organisations. SPPDI may be given a mandate to design and structure standards that support the accreditation process of school principals.

Keywords: Standards, School Principals, Accreditation, Delphi Techniques

Introduction

The principals are the leading professional within the school environment. They are held accountable by the stake holders since they provide vision, direction and leadership for schools and guarantee appropriate management and organization of the academic affairs to meet the organisational objectives. To accomplish the objectives by school principals, there should be generic and applicable standards to be adhered by principals to follow, irrespective of their level of education, qualification, experience, or the type of school (Weller & Weller, 2002). The achievement outcomes in school performance can be predicted based on teacher's and principals' perceptions of instructional leadership. In order to be effective leader, the principal must be well aware of the present instructional approaches used in the school, understand what effective approaches are, and engage the school staff in continuously reviewing the instructional approaches (Shen, 2005). This often requires the principals to upgrade their professional knowledge of the current practices around the world and ensure a smooth dispensation of academic responsibilities in order to meet the standards.

In educational contexts, suggested standards intend to present a framework for professional development, actions, information, challenges, and stir up performance of serving and aspiring school principals (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). Renihan and Philips (2003) assert that standards have wide range of applications. For example, they assist in recruitment and performance management processes of school heads and provide directions to the stakeholders to determine the expected duties of the principals.

In the wake of exponential demands for professional excellence, it is significant to set guidelines for the school principals to follow in order to maximize the institutional and individuals' outcomes. Therefore, this research paper aims to identify standards of professional accreditation for school principals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with respect to universal standards.

With growing demands in educational institutions, prospective principals in Saudi Arabia will have to demonstrate certain skills that could help them attain benchmarks of a highly professional head teacher. The school principals' professional standards will illustrate skills, knowledge and values essential for effective teaching (Salowe & Lessinger, 2002). The standards will be applied in designing assessment tools for selection purpose, among teaching candidates, and determining training needs for accreditation among teachers and school principals.

The roles and responsibilities of school principals are identical in most contexts. They perform a wide range of duties in complex, challenging, and continuous changing environment leading and managing today's school that is ever conscious of tomorrow's requirements (Chapman, 2005). All schools sit around their distinctive community respecting local values, cultures, visions, ethos, history, and offer students a chance to excel academically. All students, in all communities, have equal right to access education. This ensures that they become active, creative, and confident informed learners and citizens. In 21st century, education plays a vital role in developing skills, knowledge and understanding of individuals as the world is increasingly changing and people becoming interconnected and interdependent (Caldwell, 1994).

A decade ago, American international schools in Saudi Arabia have reported significant improvement in school performances. These schools have achieved this through introduction of simple activities by school principals to develop understanding of the culture. These activities encompass the schools discussing improvement plans as an important item in their faculty meetings, giving their staff the responsibility to ensure progress on the school's targets, report the growth and display the documents within the school environment the words. For example, 'Our Mantra: Are we Improving? What is the evidence?' (Blandford & Shaw, 2004). In 1999, the Higher Public Education Arm of Kuwait and St. Lawrence College of Ontario implemented the interpretation of the ISO 9000 standards and its application in their respective educational contexts. ISO 9000 standards inspire, establish, and support the highest standards set for public education (Salowe & Lessinger, 2002).

The Standard is an incorporated framework that recognizes all outstanding leaders carve familiar capabilities and qualities, which express the leadership requirements. Standards confer expression to leadership, management practices, and requirements of principals to meet educational targets. Professionalism implies the need to adhere to a set of standards, ask decisive questions of educational practices and policies, and examine attitudes and beliefs of the individuals (Townsend & Bates, 2006). Accreditation links professionalism and standards. It provides a link between values and practices. School principals need to be regularly re-appraised over the course of their careers since there is a constant change in societies and thus learners need to understand and develop (Robson, 2007).

Research Objectives

There is a plethora of literature that has identified a wide range of rationales for the roles and responsibilities of school principals (AITSL, May 2011), (Lassonde, et al 2009), (Chapman, 2005), (Su, et al 2000). Factors such as level of salary, changing notions of professional identity, stretched and restructured work roles of principals, and work load and intensifications have extensively been studied by different scholars in various contexts. This research paper aims at structuring suggested framework professional standards that needed for accreditation for all school principals in KSA with respect to the universal standards in various countries. Saudi Arabia have aspirations to be an innovative and successful country in relation to education sector so as to bring together learning and employment through professional accreditation of leaders in schools.

This research aims to give a clear guideline that principals should follow when carrying out their professional duties. The standards will present the principals with potential power to support continuous improvement in their schools, provide a guideline to be applied in an assessment process and provide feedback about principal's work, and offer the policy makers at national and local levels with a platform to offer incentives and support the principals.

Literature Review

Principals play a key role in any school system. Effective school principals contribute to the development of teachers, entire school community and students' performances. Successful principal natures a custom of learning that: press on students learning and commitment, recruiting and retaining good-quality teachers and develops improved teachers and school performance. In western countries, educational researchers and reformers have discussed the duties and responsibilities of the school principal as the main decision maker, agent of change, facilitator, and problem-solver at the school site (Salowe & Lessinger, 2002). However, research studies on demographic features and professional growth and development of educators have largely concentrated on teachers rather than on school administrators. This has led to little information on the preparation and profiles of school leaders to encounter the new challenges of the 21st century schools (Su, et al, 2003).

The last decade has been characterized with an increase in collaboration and communication among different educational institutions around the world. In this respect, international education intellectuals in Britain, Australia, China and the United States have developed a cycle of research projects with an objective to examine and compare the experiences and professional education of school leaders. In 1976, Sharpe conducted a research study of the profiles of principals in high schools in the United States and Australia (Sharpe, 1976). As a branch of mutual research programs and training in the international Professional Development Academy (IPDA) situated in California State University, Su, et al (2000) conducted analysis study of selected Chinese and American schools. The IPDA was established to: create an awareness of the objectives, duties and responsibilities of educational administrators for schools in 21st century, enlarge perspectives on the present school reform issues in the universal context, extend friendship and understanding among worldwide intellectuals and educational practitioners in educational sector and lastly evaluate theories, their application in educational administration practices at various phases of schooling and across nationwide borders (Su, et al, 2000).

In highly competitive education systems, educational leaders have the responsibility for major regional standards and policies, such as official programs of the study and provincial achievements. However, decisions for selecting school leaders and principles are generally made by either a representative of the school's maintain organization, leading official, board of directors or a multi-member committee. Exceptions are South Korea, France, Germany, and China, where selection decisions are made further away from school's own administration (Renihan & Phillips, 2003). For instance in France, a career as a school principal begins when a person joins principal training, thereafter a government authority selects a principal aspirant to a post after evaluating the wishes of the candidate, representative of school's administration and organizations.

In his study on international survey of leadership education, Taipale asserts that the qualifications requirements for school principals should be laid down in three different categories: no general qualifications requirements determined: leadership training as an additional to the former requirements; and a teaching degree and educational experience (Taipale, 2012). In Sweden, Finland, Anglo-American countries, South Korea and, Denmark, school principals are required to have teachings qualifications.

The Standards

The dictionary of Merriam-Webster provides two definitions of the word 'standard': 1) a level of quality and achievement, 2) ideas about morally correct and acceptable behavior.

Both definitions are applicable to the development of standards for school principals. Standards are also measures as they require some degree of quality. We constantly use standards as tools for making judgments in various fields of life and work, even in evaluating the performance of school principals. Set standards provide the background of collective values and meanings that are essential for reasonable, steadfast, and positive judgment (Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn, & Jacks, 2006).

Standards are developed to define the duties and responsibilities of the principals and fused the professional countrywide to explain the professional performance of school principals in general language and set straight the precise responsibility of quality school leadership in improving learning upshots. They often strive to support and develop prospective and practice principals (Hover-Kramer, 2011). The strength of standards is in its implementation through engagement and ownership by the profession. School principals are required to manage and lead learning institutions. Effective leadership develops shared vision, creates and motivates commitment and embraces risks, uncertainties, and innovation. Therefore, school principals should lead through vision and values, skills, knowledge and understanding and personal qualities, interpersonal and social skills (Townsend & Bates, 2006).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) with the cooperation of experts in the profession, educational sectors and systems developed the Australian Professional Standard for Principals to promote excellence in teaching profession and leadership in schools. AITSL, with funding from the Australian government, was created to present countrywide headship for the Commonwealth, state and regional governments in providing excellence in teaching profession and school leadership (AITSL, May 2011).

In other contexts too, such proactive steps were taken. Since 2009, 15 Pacific Island countries in conjunction with Pacific Professional Standards for School Principals (PPSSP) have developed a set of professional standards for school principals that should be applied by other Pacific countries on the basis of developing their own nationwide standards. PPSSP outlined realistic and achievable expectations for principals that could lead to excellent work in their domains. The expectations included raising the degree of student achievements, upholding fairness, and excellence, creating and sustaining the circumstances under which to thrive quality learning through effective teaching, influencing, developing and supporting government policies and community expectations and lastly supplementing the growth and development of 21st educational system at all levels (UNESCO, 2012).

Accreditation Commissions and Standards in Saudi Arabia

If the role of a teacher is to create the conditions within which students can raise their performance, then it could be argued that the role of a school management is to create circumstances where teachers learn, practice, reflect and develop their practices. Following this standard, the role of the Board is to create the conditions within which the senior management of the school operates (Blandford & Shaw, 2004). More recently there has been “absence of any systematic understanding in the literature of how individuals get to be leaders, an ignorance of culturally diverse patterns of defining leadership and of knowledge of the cultural different ways prospective leaders learn within leadership remains in its infancy (Lumby, et al, 2010).

KSA has established the Public Education Evaluation Commission (PEEC) which is responsible for Setting up the professional standards, competency tests and license requirements for professionals working in the public education sector (PEEC, 2015). Since it is an independent authority, PEEC reports directly to the Council of Economic and Development Affairs of Saudi Arabia. In KSA, the public education system to a great extent, is similar to the educational system of United States. However, in the case Saudi Arabia, the adopted guidelines and procedures of its educational system has been formulated and espoused in accordance with Islamic values, traditions and customs. Moreover, the Commission is dedicated to improve the quality and efficacy of public education and enable to contribute to the national economy and its development by improving public education outcomes at large.

The quality assurance programs in institutional matters have a major role to play in the overall achievements of an educational institution. For example, they offer facilities and equipment, educational programs, staffing, the establishment of relationships with other societies. This implies that school principal's accreditation process should involve academic practitioners, individuals, and organizational institutions, not only those closely involved in the delivery of educational programs. External organizations, in KSA, such as Commissions, should play a significant role in assisting the Ministry of Education in planning, evaluating, and improvement of strategic standards for accreditation of school principals in KSA.

Research Design and Methodology

The year 1997 signaled the first conceptualization and design of comparative research study of school principals by scholars at IPDA (Su, et al, 2003). First, survey data were gathered from a group of American and Chinese schools principals during 1998 and 1999. There were 111 survey records collected from school principals and assistant principals in America. 1999 witnessed another study in Australian schools in collaboration with the University of Newcastle (Su, et al, 2000). The Australian data were collected from 102 schools principals and their deputies in Maitland, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie districts. In this research paper, it is important to note that The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Australia have dissimilar social, political, and educational settings and take into consideration this difference in interpreting the collected data.

Setting standards for accreditation is certainly a complex process that requires planning and structured decision-making. For this purpose, this paper will employ Delphi technique as a tool of collecting data. The Delphi technique is broadly applied and accepted tool for collecting data from respondents contained in a similar domain of expertise (Underhill, 2004). The system is designed as a group communication process that targets at attaining opinion union on a particular real-world subject. Finally, the technique is appropriately suited as a tool for consensus building by applying a sequence of questionnaires delivered using various iterations to gather data from a group of selected subjects (Hsu & Sandford, 2007).

Delphi survey method uses questionnaires but in a different way than the typical survey. The Delphi techniques use a series of questionnaires in such a manner that the respondents eventually reach a consensus about the topic (Thomas, et al, 2011). Basically, Delphi method uses expert's perceptions to aid in making decisions about practices, needs and goals. The procedure involves the selection of experts, or informed educational practitioners, who are to respond to the series of questionnaires. Questions or statement set were prepared for consideration. The first round was entirely exploratory and the respondents were asked for their ideas, opinions and goals. Open-ended questions were included to permit the respondents to express their views freely (Keeney, et al, 2010).

The questionnaires were peer-checked, revised and sent back to the correspondents, second round, asking them to reconsider their answers, resulting from their first respond. In subsequent rounds, the respondents were given summaries of their previous outcomes and asked to revise their responds appropriately. Consensus, about the suggested standards for school principal's accreditation, was finally achieved on the third round of analysis and subsequent considered judgments. Anonymity is an important feature in Delphi method, and the consensus of the recognized educational practitioners in the research presented a viable means of confronting the important issues of the study.

The research questionnaire is consisted of both open-ended and structured questions and was in relation to the American National Study of the Education of Educator's research model (Brace, 2008). The questionnaire was based on the school principals skills and knowledge and understanding as illustrated by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (Lassonde, et al, 2009).

The questionnaire covered four parts: Part (1) on Principal's background information; Part (2) principal's training in both pre-service and in-service experiences; part (3) on educational practitioners views on the principals role and responsibilities with respect to their fundamental beliefs; and lastly Part (4) Principal's and educational practitioner's perceptions of the standard and principles of school principals reform and the duty of the principal in accreditation reform.

In addition to the research questionnaires, the researcher interviewed various school principals in KSA. The interview questions covered related grounds as the research questionnaire, but allowed the selected respondents to give clear explanations and illustrate their views and perceptions. According to Fink and Kosecoff (1998), a survey is a method of collecting information directly from people about their ideas, feeling, health, plans, beliefs, and social, educational, and financial background (Fink & B.Kosecoff, 1998).

A questionnaire presents the advantages of acquiring the responses of the participants regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program that generally cannot be met via other methods. Moreover, the research is designed to obtain professional and academic practitioners' feedback on impacts suggested standards on school principal's affective and cognitive development so as to encourage principal's development and document results for accreditation and other external requirements. The instruments for this study were developed based on the information gathered from various sources. Some of the sources include the below elements: the information of designing research paper, an extensive review of related literature in standard and accreditation preparation, telephone conversation with several educational practitioners to obtain information about the standard process and related dissertations dealing with programs evaluation (Alhwiti, 2007).

Findings and Results

In any context, quality schools can be characterized by the quality of leadership they possess. A quality leadership will never be assumed or acquired devoid of consistent, systematic, integrated, and consequential approach to effective leadership recruitment, development, and retention (Chapman, 2005). Questions concerning the optimum educational leadership through effectual accreditation, recruitment, training and development of school principal's has become key subjects to which increasing concern has been dedicated in international systems (Sharpe, 1976).

In various educational contexts, nationwide inquiries have been conducted to analyze the basic dimensions of what is viewed as issues emerging in provision of educational leadership (Taipale, 2012). In a similar vein, National Leadership Institutes have been formed in Australian, China, France and United States to assist in identifying new initiatives and standards in educational leadership. In addition, it attempts to offer general consistency and directions in providing quality school leadership and effective prolonged professional learning environment for school principals (Townsend & Bates, 2006).

Implications for Policy and Practice

There is a dire need to create a harmonized, strategically accredited approach within educational systems which would attract, recruit and retain school principals and encourage individuals' progression for future educational leadership (Chapman, 2005). In addition, policies and strategic standards need deliberation and proper planning to bridge up the gap between the supply and demand for internationally recognized cadre of principals. Consequently, this will safeguard the negative impacts of dysfunctional features that affect the personal concerns and a number of aspiring applicants to leadership positions (Su, et al, 2000).

Suggested Standards for Principal Accreditation

Key Responsibilities of School Principals

Literature has highlighted various responsibilities that school principals undertake in various educational settings around the world. For instance, school principals in their domain of accountability lead and manage with teacher(s) in order to develop, improve and guarantee high quality learning experiences and outcomes for all students (Renihan & Phillips, 2003). While leadership requirements are generally familiar to all school leaders, there are five professional practices specific to the duty of a principal: Leading teaching and learning, engaging and working together with the community around the school, managing and leading the school's management, self-development, and leading innovation, improvement and change (Chapman, 2005). All these responsibilities aim to create a professional environment where students and teachers can meet the expectations.

The school principal is the epicenter in the school accreditation process. As a leader of the school, head-teacher has daunting and demanding tasks related to accreditation. Principal ensures that the learning community achieves high quality performance, executes a sustainable improvement process, and attains a quality assurance through internal and external analysis (UNESCO, 2012). The suggested standards for accreditation of the school principals are divided into four main focus areas namely: Leadership, Management, Teaching and Learning and Partnership with community.

Leadership

Leadership involves developing ethical, conducive and empowering learning atmosphere within the school

Table 1: Leadership

The Standard	Professional Actions
A. Work within the employment structure, legislation, national and local agreements and policies governing principal's employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Take due account of legislation, countrywide and local agreements in all different facets of human resource management. ii. Take due account of the legislative structure associated to fairness and social enclosure to endorse an inclusive community which takes into account diversity and challenges discrimination.
B. Establish and certain the constant use of PRD processes to categorize strengths and development requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Use and develop in contemporaries, coaching and mentoring skills to sustain the process of PRD iv. Encourage the personal commitment of staff to, and personal responsibility for, PRD using applicable professional standards to support self-evaluation and reflection. v. Ensure that meaningful and precise PRD occur recurrently and that the results of the process lead to the improvement of professional practice.
C. Add to systems level education leadership in their perspective and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Contribute to the development of others, including peer school principals, all the way through coaching and counselling, and networking opportunities vii. Support cross-segment working at cluster, local authority and national levels viii. Contribute to cluster, neighbourhood and state-run developments and discussions to shore up and augment the process of policy making.
D. Demonstrates honesty, fairness, professionalism and moral behaviour, and work within set professional guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ix. Promote and form both personal and professional ethics through high opinion, understanding, forbearance and approval to other positive values and principles. x. Promote and adhere to local and national requirements and ensure the same from other staff members. xi. Display knowledge of and skills in the use of proper mechanisms in decisions making process in addition to resolving problems and conflict management.

Management

Principals promote the success of all students by supervising the organization of a school. The supervision includes its operation, and resources for a protected, well-organized, and effective learning environment.

Table 2: Management

The Standard	Professional Actions
A. Identifying priorities within their area and allocating resources to realize these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Working in teamwork with teachers to consent and deliver proper resourcing decisions. ii. Using data and evaluations of earlier planning precedence and learning programmes to update potential resourcing decisions.
B. Establishing and using systems to examine the application of resources within the principal's areas of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Ensuring efficient, effective and appropriate application of resources to maintain the learning requirements of all students iv. Giving timely regard to health and safety legislation to ensure safety and welfare of all.
C. Promoting, upholding the achievements of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining conducive studying environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Facilitating the participation of parents, teachers, students and the community thereby establishing a learning culture which would improve and institute a learning-friendly environment for all learners. vi. Supporting the entire staff and students in developing values that uphold a norm of honesty, respect, support and informational analysis inside the school environment vii. Encouraging and supporting a tradition of research for innovative knowledge and sharing such knowledge with others for school's general improvement.
D. Sustainably managing the school's limited resources in a strategic manner to ensure a safe, efficient and effective learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> viii. Ensuring that the school's financial resources are included and supported with identified priorities in the school's planned and yearly work plans. ix. Managing and accounting for the use of available resources to effectively support learning and teaching and to grant adequate teaching and learning resources for example textbooks and furniture. x. Certifying the maintenance and repair of school's environment to boost and advance student learning process.

Teaching and Learning

Principals have immense responsibility to guarantee quality learning and teaching as part of a school achievement. This involves targeting the extraordinary expectations, effective monitoring and precise evaluation of the learning outcomes. In order to achieve these goals, a conducive learning climate and culture within the school should make it possible for pupils to become efficient, passionate, independent learners, devoted to and capable of achieving ultimate learning objectives.

Table 3: Teaching and Learning

The Standard	Professional Actions
A. Supporting the improvement of teaching and learning and consistently high expectations for all within the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Closely work with the teachers to identify and articulate a joint vision, values, ethos and objectives in relation to teaching and learning. ii. Modeling and developing a culture of reciprocated respect and responsibility, within and beyond the jurisdiction area. iii. Outline clear practice standards, in relation to the principles of equality, social justice, inclusion and sustainability
B. Working with teachers to devise logical and progressive programmes which address learning requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Plan and develop circular, pastoral programmes and cross-curricular to guarantee appropriate personalization and choice vii. Make certain the principles of good curriculum design underpin all learning programmes viii. Ensure complete inclusion of students in decision associated with the planning and development of learning programmes
C. Supporting and taking responsibility for building capacity of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ix. Review and self-assess individual practices using information from teacher's assessment performance to develop and implement strategies to improve teacher's individual performance To foster trust and creativity by recognizing, acknowledging and celebrating teacher's individual achievements x. advocate, nurture and sustain staff development through professional development programs and activities
D. Applying collaborative processes to monitor and review pedagogic practice, working together with teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> xii. Implementing variety of peer learning approaches which facilitate collaborative teamwork. xiii. Regularly working with teachers to review classroom teaching and learning approaches xiv. Planning self-evaluation activities and programs to facilitate on-going review of pedagogy

Community Partnership

Leadership involves interaction between the leader and followers. Successful relationships are predominantly significant in leadership as principals have to communicate with the entire school community. A sustained form of interactions between the principals and teachers contribute the development of professional communities. This explicates that leadership entails building a professional learning community which makes it possible for all the stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes.

Table 2: Partnership with Community

The Standard	Professional Actions
A. Establishing and using processes for the standard review of students in order to identify students requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Applying appropriate diagnostic mechanisms to review student's progress ii. Communicating outcomes with various relevant partner iii. Ensuring effective planning and provision for learning are centered to the principles of equality and social justice
B. Building partnerships with parents and carers to hold up the needs of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Providing parents and carers with ordinary information about the progress of their children v. Seeking regular opportunities to present parents with adequate information about developments in the prospectus, teaching and learning approaches
C. Ensuring efficient provision of adequate space and opportunity for dialogue between the school with all education practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Promoting partnership between the school, Ex-students, Donors and NGOs on supporting the work of the school vii. Developing relationships and consultation between the local community and school, on how to support the school. viii. Consulting with peers, via principal's association, other professional bodies, etc how to develop the general leadership in the school via sharing of best practices.
D. Facilitating the establishment of steady and suitable tools of information distribution to and from all educational stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ix. Developing efficient and interactive mutual communications strategy using several established communication protocols as a means of informing community, parents and educational practitioners. x. Maintaining positive relationships with both the community leaders and parents so as to uphold the interest and reputation of the school while serving as the school's key public relations representative xi. Communicating information regarding the school on expected and predictable basis through several mediums and keeping communication records.

Recommendations

There is a growing consensus among the educators around the world that school principals need to be professional, have deeper understanding of their work, and have improved skills and knowledge. Moreover, they are expected to demonstrate what they are familiar with and are able to perform up to their potential to benefit the community. Therefore, attention to the quality of school principals is essential. Recognizing this, professional practitioners in the field of education must undertake various reforms initiatives in the process of accreditation and professional preparation. However, it is important to note that what is frequently missing is the alignment between professional standard-based reforms and restructuring of their responsibilities in relation to the set standards.

While making recommendations to improve the performance of school principals, several countries are investing in mechanisms in order to identify and recognize potential individuals who are performing their duties with advance skills. The KSA government together with educational players should reiterate their recommendations for the accreditation programs, highlighting the significance of quality fieldwork. Below are some of the recommendations tailored to have certified principals leading and managing schools in Saudi Arabia.

Development of Accreditation Board for Principals

The board should be built on leadership improvement efforts by governing main groups and experts representing principal's interest. Accreditation committee should be formed with education stakeholders involved who can develop foundational suggestions and standards for the advanced accreditation process. Also, there is a dire need of nationwide teachers' involvement in the developmental process and feedback provision. Through in-depth process, the board will ensure the principal's accreditation process that could meet high-quality standards coupled with unified efforts that move qualified and potential principals towards common goals.

School Principals Professional Development Institutions (SPPDI)

These are innovative and progressive institutions which were developed through a partnership between the government and the professional education programs across the country. As their mission is professional preparation of potential and prospective principals, directed at improvement of principal service delivery and practices, and enhance student learning. They are real schools in challenging settings, redesigned and restructured to support the multifaceted responsibilities of school heads.

Thus, SPPDI will support professional accreditation of principals and student learning through the application of an inquiry-oriented approach to teaching.

Standards: Key Concepts

The standards will apply to all school principals' accreditation in all types of schools. The basis standards should center on four key topics; Leadership, Management, Teaching and Learning, and Community Partnership. All school principals must be in a position to comprehend and able to perform the set standards irrespective of their particular content areas. The accreditation standards will be described in more detail with knowledge and performance of the individuals in a given context. The school principal must understand the key concepts, structures of their responsibilities, and tools of inquiry to effectively manage schools and create conducive learning experiences that make aspects of education meaningful to students.

Field-tests and set standards will allow the authorities to critically examine these standards in real settings, to learn more about them and their applications to SPPDI. Pilot test will lead to new understanding and redefinition of key concepts about the uncovered aspects of SPPDI. The key concepts will then be reflected in content and structure of the final draft.

Conclusion

Education is one of the key features of a national economy and improved leadership quality as one of its cornerstones. This implies that principal's responsibilities will become more challenging, creating pressure to produce and develop the leadership system and training. School effectiveness can partially be attributed to the school's leadership system. This is achievable through intensive training, establishment of set standards to supervise the role and responsibilities of principals through accreditation. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is currently aiming to establish principal's leadership capabilities and transform school leadership training programmes. In future, there is a likelihood shortage of accredited school principals hence the reason behind the study: Suggest standards to bring together accredited principals. However, due consideration should be given to strategies for instance, re-conceptualizing the duties and responsibilities of the principal, reviewing school's conditions, and providing standards for mentoring and supporting principals in their work. The process of principal selection, training and accreditation must ensure that capable and qualified applicants make it to the top and gain more confident about the entire process and not discouraged by the features of the process itself. Consequently, accreditation will add to the development of leadership skills and competencies portfolio. This approach to leadership will blend various approaches and experiences; therefore, acknowledging the most effective mentors and leadership facilitators.

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