Executive Summary

**Elementary and Secondary Principals' and Vice-Principals'
Workload Studies**

by

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Purposes

The two studies described in this summary aimed to better understand the sources of both elementary and secondary principals' and vice-principals' workload, how principals and vice-principals make sense of that workload, and which features of their working context have a significant bearing on such sense making. As well, the studies were intended to clarify how excessive workload demands might be ameliorated so that more time is available for leaders to focus directly on the challenges of school improvement. Filling these gaps in our knowledge in the Ontario context was the purpose of the studies.
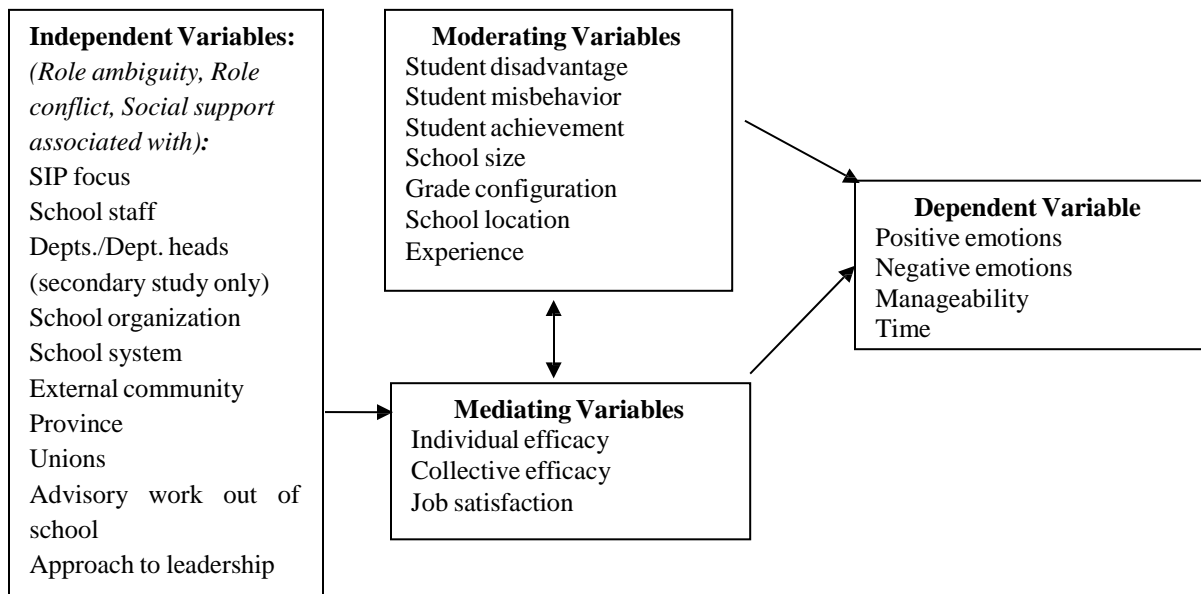
The two studies were undertaken in sequence, the first concerned with elementary school principals and vice-principals, the second concerned with secondary principals and vice-principals. Both studies were guided by very similar frameworks and conducted using the same research design.

It is important to acknowledge that the results of these studies, as they are reported, capture the "average" or "typical" contexts in which school administrators work in Ontario. Significant numbers of school administrators, however, work in contexts that are not typical, that deviate significantly from the average. So results of the studies need to be interpreted with this in mind.

Framework

The framework for the studies is summarized in Figure 1. This figure identifies the sense principals and vice-principals make of their workload - their perceptions of the extent of their workload - as the outcome or dependent variable in the model. Principals' and vice-principals' workload sense making is moderated (influenced) by, for example, the extent of students' disadvantage (the more special support is required for the students, the greater the workload perceived by principals and vice-principals).

Principal and vice-principal sense making about their workload is mediated (explained) by their individual and collective efficacy, as well as their job satisfaction. The status of these Mediating Variables are a consequence of principal and vice-principal workload conceptualized as the Independent Variables in the model, each of which is an external manifestation of one of three " latent" or underlying variables – role ambiguity, role conflict, and (lack of) social support.

Independent Variables:
(Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Social support associated with):
SIP focus
School staff
Depts./Dept. heads (secondary study only)
School organization
School system
External community
Province
Unions
Advisory work out of school
Approach to leadership

Moderating Variables
Student disadvantage
Student misbehavior
Student achievement
School size
Grade configuration
School location
Experience

Dependent Variable
Positive emotions
Negative emotions
Manageability
Time

Mediating Variables
Individual efficacy
Collective efficacy
Job satisfaction

Figure 1: Framework Explaining Variation in Principal and Vice-principal Workload

Research Methods

A two-staged, mixed-methods design was used for each of the studies, including the initial collection of qualitative interview data followed by the collection of quantitative survey data. This design aimed to achieve the internal validity associated with qualitative methods (e.g., relatively in-depth accounts of the phenomenon of interest), along with the external validity associated with quantitative methods (e.g., estimates of how representative are the results across the entire population of interest).

Phone interviews were conducted with principals and vice-principals representing Ontario's three principals' association - 102 for the elementary school study and 61 for the secondary school study. In addition to those interviews, during the elementary school study:

- One focus group interview was conducted with a selected sample of 10 trustees from across the province nominated by the Ontario School Boards' Associations;
- Focus group interview data were collected from 65 Directors of Education at the annual meeting of the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE).

Results of the director and trustee focus groups applied, with few exceptions, to the workload of both elementary and secondary administrators.

All members of the three principals' associations were invited, using their individual email addresses, to respond to an online version of a survey. Responses were received from approximately 2600 elementary and 970 secondary school principals and vice-principals.

Results

In the early stages of the two principal/vice-principal studies and the parallel provincial study of teacher workload, five questions were identified as important for both studies to answer about the workload of those in roles (teacher, school administrator) they were investigating. In the case of the two school administrator studies, these questions (slightly adapted and so reduced to four) were:

1. What are the main factors (personal, district, Ministry) challenging the manageability of principal and vice-principal workload?
2. What factors (personal, district, Ministry) help keep principal and vice-principal workload relatively manageable?
3. What changes (unions, district, Ministry) might better support principals to manage workload?
4. What professional learning or training might be helpful to principals in managing workload?

The Principal and Vice-principal Workload studies asked five additional questions unique to school administrators' roles:

5. What strategies do principals and vice-principals use for coping with workload?
6. How does workload influence principal and vice-principal responses to personal illness?
7. Does principal and vice-principal workload have a significant influence on recruiting teachers for school administrative roles?

8. How can the work of principals and vice-principals be made more satisfying and productive?

9. What factors should be considered when implementing new provincial or board initiatives?

Evidence from all relevant sources is summarized in response to these questions for both elementary and secondary administrators[1]. In the case of the principal and vice-principal interviews, this summary is limited to responses provided by at least 20% of respondents from all principals' associations as a whole, or 20% of respondents from at least one of CPCO, OPC or ADFO. Survey evidence is included about items for responses which achieved a mean rating of 3 or more on the four point scales used for most questions. The text below explicitly notes responses provided only by elementary or only by secondary administrators.

1. What are the main factors challenging the manageability of principal and vice-principal workload?

Table 1 identifies the sources of administrators' workload identified by a substantial proportion of respondents. This table also compares secondary and elementary school administrator results. Sources of workload which appear in bold type are those identified only by secondary school administrators. Sources which appear in italics are those identified only by elementary school administrators and sources which appear in regular type followed by double asterisks (**) were identified by both groups of administrators.

The column of *survey results* in Table 1 indicates that, of the 18 workload sources identified by a substantial proportion of survey respondents, 9 were identified by both elementary and secondary school administrators, 7 only by elementary school administrators and 2 only by secondary school administrators.

The column of *interview results* in Table 1 shows that there were also 18 workload sources identified by a substantial proportion of interview respondents. Five of these were

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[1] The results reported in response to these 9 questions do not distinguish responses across principal associations. While responses to many individual survey questions and multi-item scales differed significantly based on principal associations, there was no clear pattern evident in these differences. Some members of the project advisory committee anticipated, in particular, a pattern of unique responses by principals and vice-principals in French-language schools which did not materialize. Detailed evidence related to this issue is reported in the full report of the Elementary Principal and Vice-principal Study on pages 48-49 and Table 9 in Appendix D of that study.

identified by both elementary and secondary school administrators, 10 were unique to elementary school administrators and 3 unique to secondary school administrators

Table 1 indicates that, among the 18 workload sources identified in both the survey and interview results, 4 sources are common to both elementary and secondary school principal and vice-principal results:

- Allocating the time needed for school improvement work;
- Building the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals;
- Regulation 274;
- Volume of emails received daily.

Table 1

Factors Challenging the Manageability of Principal and Vice-principal Workload

Survey and Interview Results

Independent Variables	Survey Results	Interview Results
SIP Focus	1. Finding time for staff to meet and work together in the context of current contractual regulations while still ensuring that school operations are managed effectively** 2. Building the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals** 3. Persuading some staff and students of the need for the school's improvement initiatives** 4. Complexity of the work created by the need to assist teachers to implement new approaches to instruction while ensuring them the discretion they need to do their best work** **5. Fostering a collaborative approach to school improvement** 6. Developing the capacities you need to lead the school improvement initiatives**	*1. Efforts required to develop the capacities needed to lead the school improvement initiatives; stressful preparing materials and ensuring that PLCs are facilitated properly* *2.Significant effort required to build the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals* *3. Allocating the time needed for school improvement work (e.g. planning around multiple goals) while still ensuring that school operations are managed effectively*

Independent Variables	Survey Results	Interview Results
	7. Managing the sometimes unrealistic expectations of some parents.	
Province	8. Regulation 274 and the hiring challenges which distract from a focus on school improvement**	4. Regulation 274 and the staffing procedures designed by senior management to comply (these procedures influence operational issues at school level if the wrong person is hired). Regulation 274 adds an incredible amount of workload for admins, tasks to manage LTOs, conducting LTO interviews, doing performance appraisals – challenging to deal with the union if a wrong person gets hired - very frustrating; principals are getting staff placed in their schools.** *5. Heavy documentation involved in violence in the workplace and all forms associated with health and safety, safe schools, lock down policies (these are important but add significantly to workload and it takes time to do the training involved in understanding each new initiative)* *6. Safe schools policy – lack of consistency in understanding the policy (increases workload as admin maintains an active visibility in the building even when there's a teacher on duty for students' safety)*
System/ District	9. Volume of emails received daily** 10. Numbers of new programs and policies to be implemented in your school **	7. Volume of emails received daily**
Unions	**11. Regulations sometimes prompt you to delegate delivery for professional development of teacher leaders** 12. Collective agreements sometimes seem to contradict what is in the students' best interests**	8. Safety in school is compromised by limits on supervision - 80-minute limit on duty scheduling means P/VP may be doing yard supervision before and after school hours ** *9. Limits on PD (once a month) hinders school activities and increases workload (e.g., meeting with small groups of people when they are willing, chasing staff)* *10. Key feature of the teacher contract is about timetabling and ensuring everybody receives fair and equitable prep time and teaching load (even more difficult scheduling with French and English panel). This also applies to*

Independent Variables	Survey Results	Interview Results
		supervision schedules (e.g., duty schedules have to be aligned with safety) and it takes time earlier on to schedule. But once done, this helps to reduce workload 11. Regulation 274 is the worst piece of regulation – hiring practices for occasional teachers is a serious problem** *12. Contracts increase workload when they prevent staff from being flexible and willing to support kids – (e.g., teachers who feel unappreciated tend to become embedded in union practices)*
Approaches to Leadership	*13. Relationship-building skills* *14. Preferred approaches to leading and organizing (e.g., open door policy, collaborative decision-making processes)* *15. Willingness to delegate to, or share leadership with, others* *16. Knowledge of effective approaches to instruction* *17. High expectations for your students' performance*	
School Staff		*13. New staff members and teachers new to their role (e.g., admin has to do PAs for LTO on NTIP, pairing new staff with mentors, coaching, monitoring their progress, supporting them to deal with their emotions as they deal with difficult kids for the first time)* *14. Some mid-career and late career staff members (e.g., increase workload when they do not want to implement practices called for by the school improvement plan or need to be mentored in order to make such changes)* **15. Department heads needing high levels of support** **16. Some staff uninterested, unwilling or not capable of providing teacher leadership to**

Independent Variables	Survey Results	Interview Results
		school improvement plans **17. Challenges in fulfilling assignments in certain subject areas (e.g., senior physics, technical education, French, French Immersion, automotive, woodworking, etc.) – more and more teachers teach outside their area**
Advisory Work		18. Time spent at the board level attending meetings takes time away from the building, increases workload and interferes with teaching and administration time**
External Community	*18. Mental health challenges faced by parents in the community and lack of resources to support them*	

2. What factors help keep principal and vice-principal workload relatively manageable?

Results of the principal and vice-principal interviews and surveys combined pointed to eleven factors that made significant contributions to the manageability of workload. The first three listed below (in italics) were unique responses by secondary school administrators while the remaining eight were also identified by elementary school administrators:

School Staff

- *Medium to high proportion of staff who believe and act as though all students can learn;*

- *Medium to high proportion of staff with genuine interests and commitments to continuous professional learning;*

- *Strong leadership provided by department heads;*

- High performing school office staff, teaching staff and leadership team members: eager staff willing to "chip in", support each other and embrace ongoing learning help with workload;

Own Capacities

- Experience in the role: significant experience as a principal and vice-principal generates confidence in one's ability to carry out the role; it also informs one's

practices because a significant level of expertise has been developed for responding efficiently to many routine tasks. Experience also often results in more autonomy to make decision as others come to trust one's judgment. According to some administrators, experience also results in a better balance between work and family life because the job is placed in a broader perspective;

- High expectations for your own and your staff's performance, as well as the performance of your students: a strong desire to do the very best possible job drives school administrators to ensure their schools are well-run;

School System/District

- Supportive central office staff: these members of the central office facilitate principal and vice-principal work when relationships with them (especially the director and superintendents) are open and fluid. Central office staff help keep workload manageable when they are aware of the needs of the school, are very responsive and listen carefully to the needs, concerns and advice of principals and vice-principals. Both directors and trustees echoed these views;

Advisory Work

- Advisory work outside the school: often conducted in teams, committees and task forces typically for the district or province, this work adds to one's professional learning and provides opportunities to understand education in the system and province;

Approaches to Leadership

- Relationship-building skills: these skills were considered especially important because of the "people-intensive" nature of the school administrators' job, something noted not only by principal and vice-principal respondents but by trustees and directors as well;
- High expectations for your students' performance;
- Willingness to delegate to, or share leadership with, others: this disposition distributes some of the workload that would otherwise fall to the principal and vice-principal while taking advantage of the range of capacities available among other staff members.

3. What professional learning or training might be helpful to principals in managing work load?

Although a question not explored directly, evidence from the two studies has at least four implications for the professional learning of principals and vice-principals.

Differentiated training unique to the nature and amount of work anticipated by school assignments. Evidence from the elementary school workload study, in particular, justifies this recommendation. While on-the- job experiences are widely believed to be the most powerful sources of leadership learning, those experiences provide opportunities for acquiring some of the capacities needed by school leaders in most professional circumstances, as well as some capacities uniquely useful in the specific contexts of that experience. Each practicing school administrator also possesses a set of leadership "resources" likely to be, in some measure, unique because they are "personal". The main implication of unique existing leadership capacities is that districts attend closely to the individual learning needs of their school leaders. As experience in the role grows, the chances of a one-size-fits-all leadership learning initiative being useful diminishes.

Evidence from this study points to many common sources of workload for school leaders. But it also highlights organizational contexts that demand unique responses from principals and vice-principals. Different school sizes, different family conditions and different local community contexts, for example, clearly make different demands on principals and vice-principals. These data suggest the possibility of creating a classification of school profiles each of which makes different demands on school leaders' capacities. Profiles such as these might then be used to help prepare leaders for their school assignments.

Productively managing multiple initiatives. While evidence from the two studies strongly recommends to districts and to the Ministry a substantial reduction in the number of initiatives that schools are expected to implement at any one time, it is unlikely that such reductions will fully solve the problem from the perspective of principals and vice-principals. Managing multiple initiatives is a challenge experienced by school administrators in most educational jurisdictions. So how to manage multiple initiatives should be considered a problem for which systematic training is provided, training about both solution processes and effective solutions.

Rebalancing the focus of initial preparation. This balancing or rebalancing needs to be between the knowledge and skill related to curriculum, instruction and assessment (the typical

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focus for "instructional leadership") and the knowledge and skill required to enact those operational functions necessary to the development of a supportive organizational infrastructure; such operational functions, it should be noted, contribute as significantly to improvements in student performance as do those practices typically associated with "instructional leadership". Beginning principals' workload would be much more manageable if they "hit the ground" with good background training in the efficient execution of operation functions within a "learning imperative" mindset.

Further development of department head leadership and principals' ability to leverage department head leadership potential. While evidence from the secondary administrator workload study reinforces the second and third implications for professional learning mentioned above, it also adds a fourth implication unique to secondary school structures. This implication emerges from results indicating that department functioning and the quality of leadership provided by department heads significantly impact the workload of secondary school principals and vice-principals. High functioning departments and effective leadership from heads make the workload more manageable; when neither of these conditions prevail, workload increases significantly.

A recent review of evidence points to wide variation in the functioning of departments and heads across secondary schools, variation explained by teacher cultures, department head preferences, opportunities for leadership development for heads, and approaches to leadership distribution by principals[2]. This evidence also points to: departments as key centers for initiating and implementing improvements in secondary school student performance (more promising than just schools as a whole), and the impact of department head leadership on student learning as significantly greater than just the impact of principal and vice-principal leadership.

Evidence from the secondary school administrators' workload study, in combination with the review of evidence about department head effects, strongly argues for including in the content of secondary administrators' professional learning opportunities, the characteristics of high-performing departments, effective department head leadership and how to go about developing both. The effects of secondary school administrators implementing such learning should be improvements in the manageability of their workloads, as well as the learning of their students.

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[2] Leithwood (2014)

4. What changes in district practice might better support principals to manage workload?

Evidence used to identify six promising changes in district practice comes from the survey results, as well as the focus group interviews with directors and trustees.

Align resources for schools with equity in mind[3]. This proposed change in district practice is an implication from especially the elementary school administrator study. One of the suggestions for leader preparation outlined above recommended differentiated training matched to the profile of one's school assignment. These profiles of different school types could also be used when determining levels of school resourcing. For example, a small school serving a large proportion of disadvantaged students with high levels of need and low levels of existing achievement located in communities with difficult access to social services is likely to be one of the more challenging assignments a principal can face.

In such a context it is very difficult for most principals to do much more than respond to student, family and community needs, with minimal time to engage staff in significant school improvement efforts if resources appropriate to the specific set of challenges facing the school are not made available[4]. School leaders' role conflict and role ambiguity are likely to be extensive in such contexts leading to very low levels of job satisfaction. Failure to allocate resources in response to such challenging contexts, furthermore, is a clear violation of the province's commitment to equity in educational provision. District leaders need to have close knowledge of their schools and school leaders to equitably align resources with the challenges faced by schools and their leaders.

Ensure central office support. One of the factors both elementary and secondary administrators pointed to as contributing most positively to the manageability of their work was supportive relationships with central office leaders and other staff. "Supportive", in this context, meant that central office leaders and other staff were open, knowledgeable about the needs of

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[3] This suggestion, it should be noted, is about aligning existing resources, not adding new resources. Districts have little control over their resources, as a whole, but more discretion about how those resources are distributed. Furthermore, district leaders, unlike some private-sector leaders, work in highly politicized environments requiring them to negotiate the distribution of resources with multiple interest groups while keeping in mind restrictions on resource distribution demanded by the province. Equitable resource distribution creates different winners and losers than does inequitable resource distribution, and often the losers in equitable redistributions have considerable political savy and resources. So this implication of the study, while highly defensible on many grounds, is not an easy one to implement.

[4] This emphasis on appropriate levels of resourcing for schools serving students in challenging contexts is also noted in a review of educational effectiveness research by Reynolds et al (2014)

individual schools, and willing to listen authentically to requests for assistance and to provide such assistance when it was possible.

Revise district expectations. Directors indicated that they could review and possibly revise district expectations, and the interview and survey evidence from elementary and secondary administrators highlights three such revisions: putting a temporary halt on new district initiatives for schools to implement; reducing the time and effort required by principals and vice-principals for the performance appraisals of both teaching and non-teaching staff (how that could be done was not discussed) and: "stop telling us we need to do more with less". Directors also claimed that they could better align the work of the district and its schools (e.g., buffer principals and vice-principals from some external demands that do not align with either district or school priorities).

Streamline work processes. Directors indicated that they could streamline work processes (e.g., use technology such as Adobe video conferencing and teleconferencing as a means of limiting travel time for principals and vice-principals) and reduce the tasks facing principals and vice-principals as, for example, the number of out-of-school meetings and committee work; they could also provide their school administrators with additional support in the form of consultation, counseling and professional development in areas of need.

Focus on priorities. Trustees spoke about limiting their own expectations of principals and vice-principals to "things that matter most for students", allowing more autonomy for principals and vice-principals in their own schools, and managing the board through its strategic and operational plans. Trustees also indicated that school administrators' workload could be reduced by helping to ensure that people were hired with the skills that schools needed and providing additional training to principals and vice-principals. A number of suggestions of shorter term nature were also provided by trustees.

Principals and vice-principals offered districts five suggestions that they believed would create meaningful opportunities for them to focus on their priorities:

- Significantly reduce the number of new initiatives in the future from the district;
- Increase the autonomy available to principals and vice-principals to manage their own school improvement priorities;

- Reduce time required for operational tasks in order to provide more opportunities for direct instructional leadership[5];
- Dramatically reduce the number of emails sent to schools by central office staff.
- Provide significant support for department heads and department head leadership development.

Use principal and vice-principal job satisfaction as an important criterion for district decisions affecting schools. Results of testing a model explaining principal and vice-principal estimates of, and attitudes toward, their workload (an adaptation of Figure 1) indicate that job satisfaction is central to the way school administrators view their work. When sources of workload measured by the surveys eroded job satisfaction, workload was viewed as less manageable and attitudes toward work were less positive; when those sources increased job satisfaction, workload was viewed as more manageable and attitudes were more positive. Job satisfaction, in sum, is pivotal to principal and vice-principal perceptions of the extent and nature of their workload. District leaders aiming to realize the full contribution of their school leader partners to achieving district goals would be well advised to carefully weigh the consequences of their initiatives on the job satisfaction of those leaders. Some evidence suggests, for example, that undertaking challenging district improvement initiatives in ways that reduce principal and vice-principal isolation (e.g., through the use of principal networks or principal learning teams) is likely to enhance principal and vice-principal job satisfaction[6].

5. What changes in Ministry practices and expectations might reduce the impact of principal workload?

Four clear answers to this question emerged from the results of the two studies.

Reduce the number of Ministry initiatives schools are required to implement over time and slow down the introduction of new initiatives. Few of those providing evidence for the two studies expected initiatives from the province to stop or go away and most provincial initiatives were viewed by many as quite useful and certainly well-intentioned. But almost all of these initiatives take considerable time to implement in schools to the point at which they are actually

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[5] It is important to note, however, that what are commonly referred to as "operational tasks" (e.g., budgeting, timetabling, staffing) make important contributions to student learning; these contributions can be as significant as those tasks often labelled "instructional leadership" tasks (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010).
[6] Bauer & Brazer (2013)

making the contributions expected of them at the outset. The early stages of implementing most significant changes are often associated with a loss of performance - the so-called "implementation dip". So if there is excessive churn in the system created by new initiatives being introduced before the previous initiatives have been well implemented, the long range trend in the system's performance is likely to be downward. Reducing the number of initiatives and slowing down their introduction would be likely to improve the system's performance, as well as making principal and vice-principal workload more manageable. As some principals and vice-principals in the studies pointed out, however, it is also important for those implementing the external initiatives they do find useful to incorporate them into their existing strategies as much as is possible.

Resolve competing priorities among initiatives schools are required to implement. Some attempts have been made within the Ministry over the past two years to better manage initiatives across branches and divisions so as not to overburden or confuse districts and schools about Ministry priorities. Evidence from these workload studies strongly recommends substantially increasing such efforts. Furthermore, whether or not efforts to accomplish this goal have been successful needs to be judged by the understanding of those in schools and districts, not only the understanding of those in the Ministry.

Forecast future initiatives well in advance of their roll out. A source of frustration for some of those in both schools and districts providing evidence for these studies was uncertainty about what future initiatives from the Ministry they would be asked to accommodate. The workload associated with both the number and rate of introduction of new initiatives was exacerbated by being unable to anticipate and prepare for such initiatives. For these respondents, something like a calendar forecasting when changes could be expected two or three years ahead of their introduction would be of considerable value.

Cede much more autonomy to districts to determine future priorities for their schools. Evidence from the studies suggests that principal and vice-principal workload is approaching, if not already exceeding, what can reasonably be expected even from a cohort of exceptionally dedicated school administrators. Indeed, under some circumstances described during the studies, it would be quite unrealistic to expect most principals and vice-principals to have time left for engaging staffs in carefully planned school improvement processes.

If, as the studies suggest, there is little or no school leader "slack" in the system, then determining how existing school leader resources can best be "spent" must be done with great care and with a close knowledge of the needs of schools and the families they serve. Such close knowledge can never be the strong suit of central provincial authorities, no matter how well intentioned and sophisticated. It is no small challenge even for those in district offices, so ceding autonomy cannot end at the district office either. Many principals and vice-principals in these studies spoke about the value of having more autonomy in their schools to determine both the means and ends of their school improvement efforts, something that would also make their workload more manageable.

6. What strategies do principals and vice-principals use for coping with workload?

This question was raised only with principals and vice-principals as part of the interviews and through the surveys. Results pointed to a handful of strategies favored by many but with no runaway favorite. Many respondents aimed at maintaining a suitable work-life balance, carving out time to spend with family – also a key consideration, other evidence suggests, affecting the aspirations of teachers for the principalship.

Many respondents also had adopted health-related strategies such as a regular fitness program of some type, especially popular with secondary school principals and vice-principals. Respondents spoke about the usefulness of establishing and "sticking with" priorities for their work in schools along with developing efficient ways of responding to urgent but predictable issues. Participating in a network of other school administrators provided a ready source of advice and support for many principals and vice-principals, in particular when those networks focused on participants' own priorities and school improvement work. These coping strategies encompass four sets of principal coping strategies found in some earlier research.

Although not mentioned in response to this question about coping strategies directly, responses of principals and vice-principals in the current studies to other questions suggests that they also use the other strategies found in some earlier research. These other strategies include adopting positive attitudes toward their work, occasionally withdrawing from the work in order to " recharge", setting realistic goals for their work and attempting to manage their time as efficiently as possible.

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7. How does workload influence principal and vice-principal responses to personal illness?

An overwhelming proportion of principals and vice-principals said that their workload was sufficiently demanding that they came to school in spite of signs of personal illness that might have recommended staying at home. Their work would pile up if they were not there, no one else would do it in their absence and they did not want to face the backlog that would accumulate if they took time out to recover at home.

8. Does principal and vice-principal workload have a significant influence on recruiting teachers for school administrative roles?

An large proportion of both elementary and secondary school principals and vice-principals believed that most of their teachers were discouraged from considering a future role as a school administrator by the amount and nature of the work in which they observed their principals and vice-principals engaged. From their teachers' perspectives, the additional compensation was far too little, the demands and stresses too great and the commitment of time far in excess of what was required of them as teachers. These results echo much of the existing research on this issue.

Directors' views on the recruitment question were mixed, although clearly trending closer to the views of principals and vice-principals. Several directors believed that their systems' succession planning, leadership training, mentorships and general support and encouragement were significant, positive, influences on teachers' decisions. The majority, however, cited the same reasons as their principals and vice-principals for teachers being reluctant to consider school administration and suggested a handful of initiatives that might make the roles more palatable for teachers (e.g., do as much as possible to ensure that " messaging" about the roles is positive; offer system support and active forms of recruitment; assist with the cost of the course work required for a teacher to qualify for a principal or vice-principal position; provide a good district leadership development program; and affirm those who are young and new to the role).

9. How can the work of principals and vice-principals be made more satisfying and productive?

Only the surveys asked respondents this question and almost all respondents put changes to Regulation 274 and some features of teacher collective agreements at the top of their lists.

Other changes rated as especially important included increases in mental health resources, vice-principals, autonomy, support staff and policies and (for elementary administrators) procedures for responding to aggressive parents. Four additional suggestions entailed a reduction in the number of principals and vice-principals with teaching responsibilities, the time and effort required for the appraisal of teacher and non - teacher staff, and in the case of elementary school administrators, public attention to EQAO results[7].

10. What factors should be considered when implementing a new provincial or board initiative?

Principals and vice-principals, faced with requests to implement new initiatives from the province or their districts, weighed a small handful of issues in deciding how best to respond: the number of initiatives already underway in their school, the extent of their implementation and the availability of resources needed to adequately implement the new initiative were among those issues, as was, the match between the newly proposed initiatives and the school's improvement goals and priorities.

These administrators also considered the likelihood of eliminating some existing tasks to create the time required to implement, manage, and ensure the new initiative will be sustained. Time, they knew, would be required to fully engage and to build the understanding of staff whose work would be changed in some fashion by the new initiative. The decisions of a significant number of principals and vice-principals were also influenced by the justification, rationale and/or motivation giving rise to the new initiative.

Conclusion

Conventional wisdom and considerable empirical evidence suggests that school leaders, especially those in principal and vice-principal positions, account for an important proportion of the variation in student achievement across schools.

The research indicates that the way to improve schools on a large scale is through highly motivated leaders, willing to hone their leadership craft over time, provided with useful

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[7] Many, although not all of these suggestions are about the provision of more resources. As some members of the project advisory committee noted, however, it seems highly unlikely that districts will be given a significant infusion of new resources. So acting on these resource-dependent initiatives for making principal and vice-principal work more satisfying and productive entails rebalancing the distribution of existing resources. Some of this rebalancing could easily become a significant focus of union bargaining efforts.

opportunities to do such honing, placed in contexts that build on their talents and working in concert with other committed colleagues can usually achieve impressive results with their students. This is about the importance of what is referred to in the *Ontario Leadership Framework* (OLF) as Developing the Organization (or organizational re-design) and "person-environment fit", as well as the capacity for significant learning by people who hold high expectations for themselves and their colleagues.

The results of the Elementary and Secondary Principal and Vice-principal Workload Studies make important contributions to the path to school improvement by demonstrating the range of challenges facing many school leaders, the contexts that make it especially difficult, or relatively easy, to improve their schools, and the underlying dimensions of principals' and vice-principals' sense making about their workload. These results are a direct complement to the *Ontario Leadership Framework* – the other side of the leadership "coin". While the OLF describes the practices and personal leadership resources needed to improve a school's performance, the results of these studies provide a detailed understanding of why leaders with many of the same capacities are able to make very different contributions to their students' achievement and well-being. These results provide guidance, especially to those responsible for designing the environments in which principals and vice-principals work, as well as to those who determine "who goes where".

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