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Appendices
(Available from the Ministry of Education upon request at 416-212-2172)
   A. Principal and vice-principal Interview Protocol (English and French)
   B. Principal and vice-principal Survey (English and French)
   C. Tabular summary of principal and vice-principal interview results
   D. Technical report of principal and vice-principal survey data analysis and results
Secondary Principals’ and Vice- Principals’ Workload Study
Final Report

1. Purposes for the Study

Describing the results of research about the workload of secondary principals and vice-principals, this report follows the same format as the earlier elementary principal and vice-principal workload study. When appropriate, the text of the elementary report has been retained, in order to create two “stand alone” research reports. This report does include, however, analyses of differences between the results of the elementary and secondary studies.

Considerable research indicates that practices and “personal resources” or dispositions of principals and vice-principals, such as optimism, efficacy and resilience\(^1\), explain a significant amount of variation in the success of school improvement efforts\(^2\). Leadership practices aimed directly at improving instruction underlie much of this explanatory power\(^3\).

While most principals and vice-principals seem to appreciate the value of orienting their efforts toward instructional improvement and student learning, managing the unavoidable operational demands on their working time, as well, has proven to be an exceedingly “sticky” problem. The best of intentions notwithstanding, evidence indicates that operational demands, significant in their own right\(^4\), typically eat up about 90% of most principals’ and vice-principals’ time\(^5\). If substantially more of the potential contribution of principals and vice-principals to school improvement is to be realized, we need to better understand the sources of principal and vice-principal 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

\(^1\) The Ontario Leadership Framework provides evidence about the importance of these and other personal leadership “resources”
\(^2\) For example, see Leithwood et al (2004) and Day et al (2010). Most of the research linking school leadership to student learning has been conducted with principals; vice-principals’ work being viewed as an extension of principals’ work.
\(^3\) Robinson et al (2009)
\(^5\) For example, see Terosky (2014), Cuban (1988) & Spillane, Camburn & Pareja (2007)
making. We also need to be much clearer about how excessive workload demands might be ameliorated so that more time is available for leaders to focus on the challenges of school improvement. Filling these gaps in our knowledge in the Ontario context was the purpose of this study⁶.

⁶ A more detailed outline of the study’s purposes can be found in the Terms of Reference (2013)
2. Framework for the Study

The framework for the study includes four sources of principal and vice-principal sense making about their workload; such sense making is conceptualized as influencing both the day-to-day work of principals and vice-principals, as well as their emotional responses to their workload\(^7\). Summarized in Figure 1.1, the framework was explicitly used to design both the interview questions and the surveys used to collect, as well as to report, the data for this study.

A testable causal model, Figure 1.1 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 students, the greater the workload perceived by principals and vice-principals).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{framework.png}
\caption{Framework Explaining Variation in Principal and Vice-principal Workload}
\end{figure}

Principal and vice-principal sense making about their workload is mediated (explained) by their sense of both individual and collective efficacy, as well as their job and career satisfaction. The status of these Mediating Variables is a consequence of principal and vice-principal workload conceptualized as the Independent Variables in the model, each of which is

\(^7\) Leithwood (2013)
an external manifestation of one of three “latent” or underlying variables – Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, and (lack of) Social Support.

**Independent Variables**

Explicit sources of principal and vice-principal workload identified through the preceding elementary study, along with more secondary school-specific background evidence (about departments and department heads, for example) are the Independent Variables in Figure 1.1 (e.g., Staff, School organization, School system). Building on a recent line of research, each of these original categories of workload sources have been further interpreted through three underlying lenses used by principals and vice-principals to view - or make sense of - each source of their workload - Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict or lack of Social Support.

- **Role Ambiguity or Clarity:** aspects of the principal and vice-principal role or context that are confusing or unclear (e.g., uncertainty about how much authority one has), contributing to perceptions of additional workload, or aspects of the role or context that clarify for principals and vice-principals what and/or how to carry out their work, contributing to perceptions of the work as manageable. Ambiguity makes principal and vice-principal sense making about their role more difficult, whereas clarity simplifies that sense making.

- **Role Conflict or Coherence:** aspects of the principal and vice-principal role or context that introduce competing work conditions or expectations (e.g., being required to initiate something in their schools without the human or other resources that are needed), contributing to perceptions of additional workload, or aspects of the role and context that reinforce principals’ and vice-principals’ understanding of the work required to do their jobs well and how manageable is that work. Conflict makes principal and vice-principal sense making about their work more difficult, whereas coherence simplifies their sense making.

- **Extent and nature of Social Support:** aspects of the principals’ and vice-principals’ social context that are perceived as offering some form of cognitive or emotional assistance to carry out the job effectively. Evidence points to four types of social supports including (a) reassurances of worth, (b) reliable alliances such as peer
networks, (c) guidance of the sort an effective supervisory officer might provide, for example, and (d) opportunities for professional development or nurturance\textsuperscript{9}. The greater principals’ and vice-principals’ access to these forms of social support, the more manageable the work is perceived to be; restricted access contributes to a sense of workload being unmanageable. Social support has been found to be especially important for novice-principals and vice-principals\textsuperscript{10} - perhaps as many as 30\% of the school administration cohort in any given year\textsuperscript{11}.

**Mediating Variables**

According to Figure 1.1, increased levels of role conflict and ambiguity, along with diminished or inadequate levels of social support result in reduced levels of both efficacy and job satisfaction, the Mediating Variables in the study. A variable is classified as a mediator when it helps explain the nature and/or strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Variation in both efficacy and job satisfaction, Figure 1.1 indicates, will have a significant influence on principal and vice-principal perceptions of their workload.

*Individual and collective efficacy.* Research on leader efficacy, in general\textsuperscript{12} and principal and vice-principal efficacy, in particular\textsuperscript{13} associates such efficacy with both effective leadership practices, as well as organizational performance - student achievement in the case of principals and vice-principals. Leaders’ efficacy has also been associated with several of the moderators in Figure 1.1 including school size and school level, potentially represented by “grade configuration” in Figure 1.1. As Bandura explains:

*Given appropriate skills and adequate incentives . . . efficacy expectations are a major determinant of peoples’ choice of activities, how much effort they will expend and how long they will sustain effort in dealing with stressful situations*\textsuperscript{14}.

Levels of efficacy depend on clarity about one’s job, expectations about having opportunities to enact tasks central to one’s job\textsuperscript{15}, one’s ability to influence what goes on in the

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\textsuperscript{9} Bell (2006) and Varvel et al. (2007)

\textsuperscript{10} Bauer & Brazer (2013),

\textsuperscript{11} O’Doherty & Ovando (2013)

\textsuperscript{12} Chemers, et al, 2000

\textsuperscript{13} Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008

\textsuperscript{14} Bandura, 1997a, p.77

\textsuperscript{15} Fisher (2014) introduced the term “conditional control” to help explain the variation in sense of efficacy found in his study with principals in Israel.
work environment through effort and persistence, and the malleability of the environment itself\textsuperscript{16}. Sources of both role conflict and ambiguity, therefore, are likely to have direct negative effects on levels of principal and vice-principal efficacy, as will lack of social support and this is likely to result in higher levels of perceived workload on the part of principals and vice-principals. The survey includes two reliable, multi-item scales measuring individual and collective efficacy adopted from the study of principal and vice-principal efficacy alluded to above.

\textit{Job satisfaction.} Research on job satisfaction in many sectors is both extensive and longstanding\textsuperscript{17}. In general, the outcome of that research supports the not very surprising claim that satisfied workers perform at higher levels than those who are less satisfied\textsuperscript{18}. Results of research on principal and vice-principal job satisfaction, entirely aligned with this general finding\textsuperscript{19} support the assumption that those features of principals’ and vice-principals’ work environment that create role conflict, role ambiguity or fail to provide sufficient social support will significantly diminish principal and vice-principal job satisfaction. As Bauer and Brazer\textsuperscript{20} explain, for example, evidence indicates that “role ambiguity and role conflict are among the most potent predictors of job satisfaction.” Wexler\textsuperscript{21} also found that job satisfaction is inversely related to role conflict for all principals, role conflict is inversely related to age, and longer experience leads to more job satisfaction. According to Figure 1.1, higher levels of job satisfaction, as well as efficacy, generate more manageable perceptions of workload and more positive emotions related to that workload.

The survey used to collect data for this study includes a seven-item scale developed by Bauer and Brazer to measure both job satisfaction and the closely-related concept of career satisfaction including items such as “how satisfied are you with the chance your job gives you to do what you are best at?” and “how satisfied are you with the opportunity you have to contribute to important decisions?”

\textsuperscript{16} Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008  
\textsuperscript{17} Lock et al, 1988  
\textsuperscript{18} Chambers, 1999  
\textsuperscript{19} Wexler & Eckman, 2004  
\textsuperscript{20} 2013, p. 169  
\textsuperscript{21} 2004, p. 308
Moderating Variables

A variable is classified as a “moderator” when it influences the direction or strength of an independent variable (a “cause” of something) on a dependent variable (an “effect” or outcome). For example, principals’ perceptions of the extent to which initiatives from outside their school influence their workload may vary from not much, to very significant depending on their experience. Long experienced principals may have learned how to buffer themselves and their schools from excessive numbers of external initiatives that distract them from their school improvement goals whereas relatively new principals may feel obligated to implement almost everything that is suggested to them by the province or their districts.

Figure 1.1 identifies seven variables acting as moderators in this study. All seven of these moderators were identified as having an influence on principal and vice-principal workload in the interview data collected during the first phase of the study. In addition, most have also been identified as consequential in previous research, for example:

- proportion of students in the school who are disadvantaged or require extra support (e.g., Ulrich & Bauer, 2011);
- extent to which student misbehavior is perceived to be a challenge in the school (e.g., Ulrich & Bauer, 2011);
- proportion of students whose tested achievement is below standard (e.g., DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003);
- school size, either too small or too big, is associated with both workload and student achievement challenges (e.g., Leithwood, 2009);
- grade configuration of the school (no previous evidence yet located on this variable);
- location of the school: both fully urban and fully rural locations appear to have the greatest influence on principal and vice-principal workload (indirect evidence reported by Young, 1998, for example);
- years of principal and vice-principal experience: less experience is associated with greater uncertainty about the job leading to greater workload and the associated emotional stress (e.g., Wexler, 2004; O’Doherty & Ovando, 2013).
Dependent or Outcome Variables

Our account of the three underlying variables helping to explain perceptions of workload, mediated by principal efficacy and job satisfaction, depends on the concept of “manageability”. Principal and vice-principal perceptions of workload vary along a continuum ranging from manageable to unmanageable depending on the extent to which principals and vice-principals view the work as ambiguous or clear, presenting them with conflicting or coherent priorities and expectations, and the degree to which social support is available for doing the work. So the central conception of workload in this study is an individual social construction.

Workload, it might be argued, can also be conceived of as an objective phenomenon. From this point of view, for example, workload is about the actual number of hours principals and vice-principals are observed to work, the number of tasks they are observed to perform, the number of interactions they are observed to have over the course of a day, the volume of decisions required in a week and the like. An objective conception of workload might also include the complexity of the work (e.g., number of steps in the procedures used to solve problems) and the difficulty of the work (e.g., the proportion of challenges or problems faced in a selected period of time that require novel as compared with already-mastered responses).

Such an objective conception of workload, however, is more subjective than surface appearances suggest. High levels of domain-specific knowledge (expertise), perhaps acquired through relevant, repeated, experience, make objectively complicated work subjectively easy – or at least not very difficult – for those possessing such knowledge. Furthermore, with increasing levels of such expertise comes “automaticity”, the ability to quickly solve problems with minimum expenditures of time and cognitive energy.

The outcome or Dependent Variable in this study is principal and vice-principal workload conceived of as an individual social construction – principals’ and vice-principals’ perceptions of their workload - both “cognitive” estimates of the amount of workload and “emotional” responses to such workload. Cognitive estimates of workload include overall perceptions of its manageability, varying from “light” to “frequently unmanageable”, as well as estimates of the number of hours worked both in and out of school. In this case, the assumption is that if you think you work many more hours than you do, the cognitive and emotional effect is the same whether or not you are “objectively” correct. Emotional responses to workload include

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22 For background evidence about these features of expertise, see Leithwood & Steinbach (1995)
judgments of the extent to which workload invokes positive emotions such as enjoyment, along with negative emotions such as frustration.

According to Figure 1.1, both types of perceived outcomes or “sense making” about the job will vary significantly in response to the status of principal and vice-principal efficacy and job satisfaction, along with the moderating variables.
3. Research Methods

3.1 Design

A two-staged, mixed-methods design was used for this study 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, that is, relatively in-depth accounts of the phenomenon of interest, along with the external validity associated with quantitative methods, that is, estimates of how representative are the results across the entire population of interest.

Qualitative and quantitative data can be mixed (or ordered) in several different ways; the province’s teacher workload study, for example, employs these methods in reverse order to this study23. This study began with the collection of qualitative interview data because existing evidence did not provide sufficiently “robust” responses to the questions it was designed to answer.

3.2 Interviews

Sample. As Table 1 indicates, phone interviews were conducted with 61 principals and vice-principals representing Ontario’s three principals’ associations. This sampling plan reflects potential workload-related differences created by regional contexts (northern, south/central east and south/central west – not shown), as well as differences in language and religion (English, French, Catholic, Public).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPC</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPCO</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADFØ</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Interview Sampling Plan

23 Ungerleider (2014)
Data collection. Phone interviews, typically lasting about one hour, were conducted using the questions included in Appendix A (English and French versions). These interviews were conducted in either English or French depending on the preferences of the interviewees. The main questions in the protocol were provided to all interviewees in advance of the interview.

These qualitative data supplement existing evidence in several different ways: they identify factors related to principal and vice-principal workload that had not emerged from previous research and estimate the relative salience, in the Ontario context, of factors identified in previous research. The concern in this case was with the sensitivity of evidence to the context in which Ontario P/VPs (Principals/Vice-principals) work\(^4\). Quantitative survey data was then used to test the relative importance and representativeness of the interview findings.

Data analysis. A detailed précis was developed for responses to each of the main interview questions for principals and vice-principals. The volume of data resulting from the 61 principal and vice-principal interviews required considerable additional synthesis. At the core of this synthesizing work was the coding and counting of specific responses to each of the main questions using a series of tables which:

- Listed all specific, non-overlapping responses to each main question;
- Recorded the number of interviewees identifying each different response; and
- Identified the provincial principal association of each respondent.

These tables, included as Appendix C, are referred to extensively in the reporting of principal and vice-principal interview results in Section 4.

\(^4\) The technical term for this concern is “ecological validity”.
3.3 Surveys

Sample. All secondary school members\textsuperscript{25} of the three principals’ associations (N = 2139) were invited, using their individual email addresses, to respond to an online version of the survey (Appendix B). A total of 970 principals and vice-principals provided responses, for a 45% response rate. The maximum possible number of responses from each association and the actual number of responses were as follows:

- Ontario Principals’ Council = 612 of 1358 possible responses (45% )
- Catholic Principals’ Council of Ontario = 272 of a possible 678 (40%)
- Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes = 86 of a possible 151 responses (57%)

Data collection. The online survey, both English and French versions (Appendix B), was created and used to collect data aimed at testing the framework summarized in Figure 1.1, as well as answering several key questions lying outside of the framework. All questions in the survey were closed; respondents selected answers from a fixed list developed primarily from the results of the principal and vice-principal interviews collected during the first stage of the study. A small number of multi-item scales were added as a result of the literature review. These scales are included in the section of the survey measuring principal and vice-principal job satisfaction, and both individual and collective principal and vice-principal efficacy, the “mediating variables” in Figure 1.1.

Data analysis. Responses to the survey were first summarized in the form of means and standard deviations for each item and for each multi-item scale. Factor analysis was used to test the underlying structure of the survey variables and scale reliabilities were calculated (Cronbach’s Alpha). These descriptive analyses will likely serve the interests of many of those with a stake in the project, and will be the only form in which results of some of the survey questions are reported, specifically those not directly associated with the framework (how principals and vice-principals cope with their workload; the extent to which principal and vice-principal workload influences the recruitment of potential school leadership aspirants; and how principal and vice-principal work can become more productive). Path analysis was conducted with all evidence directly related to the framework.

\textsuperscript{25} This does not include administrators of K-12 schools since they were part of the elementary principal and vice-principal workload sample.
4. Secondary Principal and Vice-principal Interview Results

Results of phone interviews with 61 principals and vice principals randomly selected from three different regions of the province and the three provincial principals’ associations, are reported in this section. As with the Elementary Principal and Vice-principal Study, the nature of this reporting was determined by our position on two key questions about interview data analysis and reporting. One of these questions is to what extent should the number of interviewees providing similar answers to the same question influence what is reported (as distinct from a largely qualitative description of responses).

There is a longstanding debate in the research literature about this question, a debate which hinges on the purposes to be served by the research. The present study of principal and vice principal workload is clearly intended to inform policy. Furthermore, most policies are primarily designed to govern the actions of the many while exceptions to policy are designed to govern the actions of the few. So the policy intentions of this study, we argue, place a premium on knowing how many people provided the same answer to most of the questions asked as part of the interviews. Of course, reporting frequencies of responses need not exclude additional efforts to deepen understanding about the meaning of especially those answers provided by relatively large numbers of interviewees; the report contributes modestly to that objective by recording relatively extensive, rather than abbreviated, précis of responses from the interviewees.26

Having chosen to focus especially on the frequencies of responses, an unavoidable follow up question is: How many respondents need to provide a similar answer for that answer to be considered noteworthy? As the tabular summaries of responses to the interview questions indicate (Appendix C), all questions generated many answers. But there was wide variation in the numbers of respondents identifying any single answer. Many answers were provided by only one or several persons, while as many as 92% of the respondents agreed on several answers to some questions. Our approach was to highlight, in the narrative portion of this section, answers that had been provided by at least 20% of respondents from all principals’ associations as a whole (12 of 61), or 20% of respondents from at least one of CPCO (5 of 23), or OPC (7 of 34)

26 An original digital audio record was kept of each interview, along with detailed notes, should additional levels of analysis be desirable.
or 2 of the 4 interviewees from ADFO. In the case of several questions, no response achieved this threshold of agreement so the most frequently identified response(s) are reported.

4.1 Independent Variables: Sources of Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload

A detailed outline of the sources of workload reported by the 61 principals who were interviewed can be found in Appendix C, Tables 1 - 12. Each table includes sources of workload associated with one of the 10 independent variables identified in the framework (e.g., staff, school system). The left column of each of these tables lists unique categories of responses (unique sources of workload associated with one independent variable), the percentage and number of respondents who identified each source from each of the three principals’ associations (middle three columns) and the total number and percentage of respondents who identified each source.

Five interview questions asked about respondents’ school improvement initiatives, what the research contract refers to as their “professional” work. The first and second of these questions were aimed at better understanding the purpose and nature of those initiatives, while the third question aimed to unpack the consequences of those efforts for principal and vice-principal workload. The fourth question asked about external initiatives that enter the school sometimes detracting from, or not adding much value to, their school improvement priorities. Factors to consider when faced with the implementation of an initiative from the ministry or school system was the fifth question.

Focus of Respondents’ School Improvement Efforts (Appendix C, Table 1)

This question asked administrators about the primary student outcomes that their school improvement efforts were intended to achieve, as well as the main strategies being used to foster that achievement. Respondents identified 56 discrete sets of outcomes, although some clearly overlap or are a subset of others (e.g., 21st Century Learning and critical thinking). Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of respondents’ school improvement efforts were aimed at improving either literacy skills (44% overall, 52% CPCO, 38% OPC and 50% ADFO), math skills (36% overall, 48% CPCO, 29% OPC and 25% ADFO), or both (16% overall). This focus on math and literacy mirrors results of the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study.
Few respondents identified the strategies being used as part of their school improvement efforts and none garnered more than two adherents.

**Deciding On the School Improvement Focus for the Year** (Appendix C, Table 2)

Respondents identified a list of some 46 discrete approaches or structures through which their school improvement focus was determined but only “Analysis of EQAO/OSSLT, report card and other student data” was identified by significant numbers (54% overall, 35% CPCO, 68% OPC, and 50% ADFO); this was also the most frequently identified strategy by elementary school administrators. While no other approach attracted much support from secondary school respondents, many elementary school administrators identified several other approaches.

**Implications for Workload of Taking on Ambitious Improvement Goals** (Appendix C, Table 3)

Interviewees were asked to identify the workload implications of taking on ambitious improvement goals such as those they identified in Appendix C, Table 1. Only one such implication (of 39 in total) was identified as especially consequential, and only 18% of respondents in total identified this implication – “Significant effort required to build the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals” (17% CPCO, 18% OPC and 25% ADFO). This workload implication was also the most frequently cited implication by elementary principals and vice-principals (25% overall), but significant numbers of elementary administrators also identified the effort required to develop their own capacities and allocating the time needed for school improvement work.

**External initiatives detracting from, or not adding value to, school improvement priorities** (Appendix C, Table 4)

Some 59% of respondents agreed that there were such initiatives, while 16% did not share that view. As with the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-Principal’s Study results, secondary administrators identified almost forty external initiatives that they viewed as distractions, or not adding value, to their school improvement efforts. Only one of these external initiatives was identified by significant numbers of both groups of administrators, however - “Excessive numbers of initiatives from the Ministry of Education, initiatives lacking connection to one another, switching from one initiative to the next rapidly, frustration with lack of clear
direction on roll out” - twenty-three secondary school administrators pointed to this as a distraction (30% CPCO, 15% OPC, 50% ADFO). This response likely includes initiatives from both the province and interviewees’ school systems.

**Factors to Consider When Implementing New Provincial or Board Initiatives** (Appendix C, Table 5)

Interviewees identified almost three dozen factors they thought should be considered when they were faced with a request to implement a new provincial or board initiative. Most of these factors were identified by a relatively small number of respondents. However, three factors (two of which were also identified by significant numbers of elementary school administrators) were identified much more frequently than the rest. These included:

- Availability of resources needed to adequately implement the new initiative such as finances, human resources or professional development to support implementation (33% overall, 35% CPCO, 35% OPC and 0% ADFO);
- The number of initiatives already underway in their school (23% overall, 22% CPCO, 24% OPC, and 25% ADFO), also among the three most frequently identified factors by elementary school administrators;
- The school’s existing needs/priorities/goals - schools are at different places and have different needs; educational solutions are needed that fit the particular student needs (23% overall, 13% CPCO, 29% OPC and 25% ADFO). These were among the four most frequently identified factors by elementary school administrators (including the time required of P/VPs to implement, manage, and ensure new initiatives will be sustained; 34% overall, 38% CPCO, 39% OPC and 0% ADFO).

**School Staff** (Appendix C, Table 6)

Five features of school staffs which make administrators’ workload more manageable were especially noteworthy of 13 identified as a whole, only the first of which was frequently identified by elementary school administrators:

- High performing office staff, teaching staff and members of the leadership team.

These staff members are eager to “chip in” and support each other and embrace
professional development. Twenty percent of respondents, as a whole, identified this source of workload (13% CPCO, 26% OPC and 0% ADFO). This was the most frequently identified response by elementary school administrators.

- Medium to high proportion of staff who believe and act as though all students can learn (66% overall, 65% CPCO, 76% OPC, and 0% ADFO)
- Medium to high proportion of staff with genuine interests and commitments to continuous professional learning (64% overall, 61% CPCO, 74% OPC, and 0% ADFO)
- Strong leadership provided by departmental head (48% overall, 57% CPCO, 47% OPC, and 0% ADFO).
- Medium to high proportion of staff interested, willing and capable of providing teacher leadership to school improvement plans. This includes strong leadership provided by department heads (16% overall, 13% CPCO, 21% OPC, and 0% ADFO).

A total of 49 features of school staffs were viewed as adding to workload, but most were identified by only one respondent. Five features identified by significant numbers of respondents were as follows:

- Some staff uninterested, unwilling or not capable of providing teacher leadership to school improvement (57% overall, 57% CPCO, 65% OPC, and 0% ADFO);
- 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 of specialization (52% overall, 52% CPCO, 59% OPC, and 0% ADFO);
- Department Heads needing high levels of support (21% overall, 9% CPCO, 32% OPC, and 0% ADFO);
- 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 students for the first time) (10% overall, 9% CPCO, 0% OPC, and 100% ADFO). This feature was the most frequently identified by elementary school administrators.
Although agreement on the workload implications of many staff features, there are more differences in the interview responses of elementary and secondary administrators to features of school staffs than is evident in other data described to this point in the report.

**Unions** (Appendix C, Table 7)

Significant numbers of secondary administrators identified three of the same six union-related workload conditions that dominated elementary administrators’ responses; all three had negative effects on workload including:

- Regulation 274, occasional teacher legislation that, for example, requires principals and vice principals to keep up with changes in hiring processes, and be out of their buildings to interview prospective staff. Regulation 274 was considered a significant addition to workload by 66% as a whole (74% CPCO, 65% OPC and 25% ADFO); these frequencies are two to three times the frequencies reported for elementary school administrators. As in the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study, Regulation 274 was identified in response to several other questions although it is only identified in this section.

- Contracts which prevent staff from being flexible and willing to support students (16% overall, 22% CPCO, 6% OPC and 75% ADFO).

- Safety in school is compromised by limits on supervision. An 80-minute limit on duty scheduling means some principals and vice principals may be doing, for example, various forms of supervision before and after school hours. Thirty-four percent of all respondents identified this condition (35% CPCO, 38% OPC and 0% ADFO).

**School Board/System/District** (Appendix C, Table 8)

While the school district or system was responsible for more than 50 distinct sources of workload, there was very little consensus about those sources; many were identified by only one or several respondents. Indeed, only three of the more than 50 sources were identified by the minimum number of respondents to meet our threshold for attention in this section of the report. These were the same three highlighted by elementary school administrators, as well. The first of these sources, viewed as positive, was:
A supportive central office staff that facilitates administrative work in schools. Many examples of what it meant to be supportive were provided, for example, open and fluid relationships with superintendents and the director, awareness of the needs of the school, being very responsive and listening carefully to the views of school administrators, supportive of the principal’s role, supporting data use in schools, and giving principals release time. This response was provided by 61% of interviewees overall (61% CPCO, 68% OPC, and 0% ADFO), a substantially larger proportion than was the case for elementary school administrators.

The two sources meeting our reporting threshold viewed as having negative effects on workload included:

- Large amounts of required documentation including the preparation of various reports. This was primarily a concern to ADFO members, as was also the case in the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study. Thirteen percent of principals overall reported this challenge (8% CPCO, 6% OPC, and 100% ADFO).
- Too many memos and emails from the district which increase workload and distract principals and vice-principals. This source met the reporting threshold in Table 8 because 2 of the 4 ADFO respondents identified it; only one other interviewee spoke about this. However, when asked later in the interview if other sources of workload had been overlooked (Table 10), 39% of respondents identified this source (48% CPCO, 38% OPC, and 0% ADFO); no other sources of workload were identified by a significant number of secondary administrators in response to this question.

**Provincial Ministries** (Appendix C, Table 9)

Five influences on workload associated with provincial ministries were viewed as having a positive influence, but none was identified by enough respondents to be described here. Of the sources of workload associated with provincial ministries viewed as having a negative effect on workload, only four attracted a significant number of respondents, the first three of which were also identified by significant numbers of elementary school administrators:

- Progressive discipline and bullying investigations, interviews, guidelines to follow. Sixty-two percent of respondents overall identified this source of workload (52% CPCO, 76% OPC, and 0% ADFO). This is perceived to be a significant source of
workload by a much higher proportion of secondary as compared with elementary school administrators.

- The time-consuming nature of administering occupational health and safety regulations especially the time involved in follow-up reports (51% overall, 61% CPCO, 38% OPC, and 100% ADFO); as with the demands of progressive discipline policies, this is perceived to be a significant source of workload by a much higher proportion of secondary as compared with elementary school administrators.

- Regulation 274 was mentioned in response to many of the interview questions. In this case it was associated with “Staffing procedures designed by senior management to comply, which influence operational issues at school level if the wrong person is hired.” Regulation 274, interviewers asserted, “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 building so principals must work extra hard with unskilled teachers). This regulation is a source of much frustration” (30% overall, 35% CPCO, 24% OPC, and 50% ADFO).

- The policy on suspension and expulsion is not clear. For example, some respondents noted it is positive and supports students, but district administrators appear to think that it does not add to workload. However, the paperwork associated with expulsion is time consuming, and trustees sometimes interfere at expulsion hearings, so retroactive practices is a big workload. (15% overall, 9% CPCO, 21% OPC, and 0% ADFO).

**Own Capacities and Experiences** (Appendix C, Table 11)

As asked about whether their own “capacities, preferences, experiences and the like” influenced their workload, interviewees identified some 14 personal qualities positively influencing their workload, and 6 which influenced their workload negatively. All but one of these personal qualities was mentioned by just one or several people. Mentioned by 6 interviewees (2 CPCO, 2 OPC and 3 ADFO members) was:
Experience in the role: long experience as principal generates confidence in ability to carry out the role. Experiences inform practices and often increase the autonomy one has to make decisions. Experience has also resulted in a balance of work and family life.

Secondary school administrators, in sum, had much less to say about the effects on workload of their own capacities and experiences than did elementary school administrators.

**Advisory Work out of School** (Appendix C, Table 12)

Interviewees were asked about the extent to which they engaged in advisory or consultative work for their districts or with the Ministry and how that influenced their workload? While this question generated 18 types of responses, only two types were identified by (barely) enough people to meet our reporting threshold of 20%. A total of 12 interviewees (13% CPCO, 26% OPC, and 0% ADFO) said that “Due to the impact on their workload, they limit their time in committees (e.g., one day per month) in order to stay in school”. Four interviewees (1 CPCO, 3 ADFO) said that they “do board consultative work but do not initiate such work because of the time it takes; they only participate when asked”.

Unlike their elementary school counterparts, secondary administrators saw little positive value for themselves in advisory work outside their schools, and reported much less participation in such work.

**Summary**

Table 4.1 lists all workload sources identified by at least 20% of both secondary and elementary school interview respondents collected for this study as well as its predecessor. Eight positive influences on workload are listed first, followed by 20 influences viewed by principals and vice-principals as having a largely negative effect on their workload. Of the 8 positive influences, 2 were identified by both groups of administrators (#s 1 and 6), 3 by only secondary school administrators (#s 2, 3, 4) and one only by elementary school administrators (#5).

In sum, a comparison of secondary and elementary school administrators’ responses in this table indicates that:
• Almost twice the proportion of secondary, as compared with elementary school administrators, perceive supportive central office staff to be a source of reduced workload;

• Secondary school administrators view their own school staffs as a larger influence, both positive and negative on their workload than do elementary school administrators. Workload is much more manageable for the secondary administrators when their teachers believe and act as though all students can learn and when those teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to their own professional learning;

• In contrast, workload is significantly increased for secondary school administrators when few staff members are prepared to exercise leadership with their colleagues, and when department heads only provide weak leadership;

• Secondary principals and vice principals also find it a struggle to fill teaching assignments in some areas of the curriculum (e.g., senior physics, technical education, French, French Immersion, automotive, woodworking, etc.);

• Both Occupational Health and Safety and Progressive Discipline and Bullying policies are of concern to much larger proportions of secondary, as compared with elementary principals and vice-principals.

Table 4.1
Most Frequently Identified Sources of Workload

Comparison of Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Interview Results

(Sources identified by at least 20% of respondents overall)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Workload</th>
<th>Total % Sec. (Elem.)^27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Influences on Workload</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. High performing office staff, teaching staff and leadership team; eager staff that chip in and support each other and embrace PD – helps with workload</td>
<td>20 (43)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Medium to high proportion of staff who believe and act as though all students can learn | 66 (--)

^27 The designation “--” indicates that the source was identified by fewer than 20% of respondents not that no one identified it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Workload</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sec. (Elem.)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. Medium to high proportion of staff with genuine interests and commitments to continuous professional learning | 64 (--)
| 4. Strong leadership provided by department heads | 48 (--)
| **Own Capacities, Preferences, Experiences** | 32 |
| 5. Experience in the role (long experience as principal generates confidence in ability to carry out the role – experiences inform practices) – autonomy to make decisions – experience has resulted in a balance in work and family life | --
| **System/District** | 31 |
| 6. Supportive central office staff facilitate admins’ work (e.g., open and fluid relationships with SOs and director – aware of the needs of the school, very responsive and listen; district is supportive of principal’s role – supports data use in schools, giving Ps release time) | 61
| **Advisory Work** | 25 |
| 7. Contributes to professional learning and provides opportunities to understand education in the system and province | --
| **Own Capacities, Preferences, Experiences** | 20 |
| 8. High expectations (strong desire to do the very best job that the principal can, drives principals’ work to ensure school is well-run) | --

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Influences on Workload</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. 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 building so principal must work extra hard with unskilled teachers.) This regulation is a source of much frustration. | 30
| 2. 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). | --
| 3. 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) | --
| 4. Occupational health and safety (time-consuming nature of follow-up reports) | 51
| 5. Progressive discipline and bullying/cyberbullying investigations, interviews, guidelines to follow; most of the good stuff comes from the police and not from the ministry | 62
| 6. Excessive numbers of initiatives from the board/Ministry of Education – initiatives lack connection – switching from one initiative to the next rapidly – frustration with lack of clear direction on roll out and value of initiative preventing staff from focusing on student improvement | 23
| **Unions** | 39 |
| 7. Safety in school is compromised by limits on supervision - 80-minute limit | 34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Workload</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>on duty scheduling means P/VP may be doing yard supervision before and after school hours</strong></td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.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)</strong></td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9 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 supervision schedules (e.g., duty schedules have to be aligned with safety). It takes time earlier on to schedule, but once done, this helps to reduce workload.</strong></td>
<td>(66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. Regulation 274 is the worst piece of regulation – hiring practices for occasional teachers is a serious problem</strong></td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. 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)</strong></td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total %</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. 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)</strong></td>
<td>(34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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)</strong></td>
<td>(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14. Department Heads needing high levels of support</strong></td>
<td>(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15. Some staff uninterested, unwilling or not capable of providing teacher leadership to school improvement</strong></td>
<td>(57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. 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</strong></td>
<td>(52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIP Focus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total %</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17. Efforts required to develop the capacities needed to lead the school improvement initiatives; stressful preparing materials and ensuring that PLCs are facilitated properly</strong></td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18. Significant effort required to build the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals</strong></td>
<td>(25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19. Allocating the time needed for school improvement work (e.g., planning around multiple goals) while still ensuring that school operations are managed effectively</strong></td>
<td>(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisory Work</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total %</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20. Time spent at the board level attending meetings takes time away from the building, increases workload and interferes with teaching and administration time</strong></td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources of Workload

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Workload</th>
<th>Total % Sec. (Elem.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System/District</td>
<td>21. Too many memos and emails from district increases workload and distracts principals – untimely emails result in admins becoming reactive as opposed to being proactive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Moderating Variables (Appendix C, Table 17)

The framework for the study (Figure 1.1) identifies seven variables which are expected to moderate principals’ and vice-principals’ estimates of their workload; they either mute or exacerbate perceptions of workload, aside from other sources of principal and vice-principal workload perceptions. These moderating variables, all of them relatively difficult to change in the short to intermediate term, include features of the student population served by the school (extent of special support needed, misbehavior, levels of achievement), the school organization (size, location, special school programs\(^{28}\) and special classrooms\(^{29}\) and the amount of principal and vice-principal experience. This section of the report describes respondents’ views of the nature and extent of impact of these moderating variables on their workload.

*Size of student population.* In both small and large schools, administrators experienced increased workload with significant decline in enrollment (30% overall, 13% CPCO, 41% OPC, and 25% ADFO). A common problem associated with such declining enrollment is the loss of staff, especially the young, extraordinarily talented teachers, and decreased VP time. So when more things get added from the Ministry and board, it takes a toll on administrators with limited human resources to get the job done. In one isolated case, increasing enrollment resulting from the expansion of the school from a grade 9 to 12 school to a grade 7 to 12 school increased workload as administrators coordinated efforts towards the construction of more classrooms, a gym and science lab.

*Physical condition of the school.* New, newly renovated and old school buildings impact workload. Respondents reported that new and newly renovated schools minimized their workload (25% overall, 26% CPCO, 26% OPC, and 0% ADFO). Old schools with issues (such as a leaking roof, heating problems etc.) requiring more maintenance, inadequate facilities for equipment-oriented subjects like science, technology and computer studies increase workload.

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\(^{28}\) For example, dual track English and French, single track French Immersion.

\(^{29}\) For example, classrooms serving students with significant developmental and behavioral issues
Workload is increased, as well, during renovations; during the repainting of schools; when changing locks; meeting with concerned parents; communicating with the community at large about a change of schools that sometimes follows renovation. Asking for authorization to do the work and the often considerable follow up and fire drill issues also add to workload. Principal and vice-principal work is increased when they have to add the number of classrooms, add a gym and science labs to accommodate the creation of new grades in the school. Issues such as these increased principal and vice-principal workload according to a sizeable proportion of interviewees (59% overall, 52% CPCO, 71% OPC, and 0% ADFO)

Parent approaches to school. Both parental involvement and lack of involvement influenced principal and vice-principal workload. Respondents who identified parental approaches as supportive of their work were primarily speaking about fairly affluent parents (57% overall, 43% CPCO, 74% OPC, and 0% ADFO). These parents had high expectations for their children to go to college, university and to get into apprenticeships. Very active school councils also supported principals through fundraising, the proceeds of which paid the cost of field trips for students and helped to purchase technology for the school.

Schools in which few parents were actively involved meant more effort by school administrators related to fundraising and preparing for special school events (e.g., student dances) (16% overall, 9% CPCO, 21% OPC, and 25% ADFO). Non-involved parents had widely varying socio-economic circumstances. At one extreme, a few high income parents (predominantly in professional occupations) demanded more of principals’ time to be engaged in discussions about educational matters. At the other extreme, some low income (and sometimes illiterate) parents were difficult to communicate with and did not feel they had a role to play in their children’s formal schooling.

Community connections. The nature of a school’s community at large could have either negative or positive influences on the workload of principals and vice-principals. Workload was ameliorated when the local community provided free services of the type needed by children and their families (67% overall, 48% CPCO, 88% OPC, and 0% ADFO). Students in schools located in, or close to, well-developed urban and suburban centers, for example, had access to a multitude of services and opportunities (e.g., the arts, hockey, piano, indoor swimming facilities). Community associations and groups used school buildings after school hours, and schools in turn received free services from the community, for example, free skating through an agreement with the city. Communities without facilities and opportunities of the sort mentioned
above, however, added to workload (8% overall, 4% CPCO, 12% OPC, and 0% ADFO) and school administrators assumed more of a parental role to ensure that children were ready for learning.

*Student behavior, level of student need and student achievement.* Student need, behavior and achievement often seem to go hand-in-hand in the view of many interviewees. In most cases, principal and vice-principal workload was considered to be quite manageable when serving relatively advantaged, well behaved (polite, respectful) students (25% overall, 22% CPCO, 29% OPC, and 0% ADFO) with high levels of achievement (61% overall, 61% CPCO, 62% OPC, and 50% ADFO), and low levels of needs (8% overall, 0% CPCO, 15% OPC, and 0% ADFO). A manageable workload was also associated with a caring school climate in which most members of the school, not just the administrators, felt responsible for student discipline.

Greater levels of support needed by students (84% overall, 96% CPCO, 85% OPC, and 0% ADFO), greater incidence of student misbehavior (57% overall, 43% CPCO, 68% OPC, and 50% ADFO), and lower levels of student achievement (21% overall, 9% CPCO, 32% OPC, and 0% ADFO) were viewed by principals and vice-principals as adding to their workload. In most cases, behavior issues increased as school enrollment increased. In schools with high levels of student misbehavior, principals and vice-principals spent most of their days dealing with such student behavior issues. Schools serving a significant proportion of students with disabilities such as blindness, deafness, autism or behavior, or students with academic and mental health challenges also consumed a great deal of principal and vice-principal time.

Some interviewees’ schools had a designated class for students with behavior issues and administrators were responsible for discipline in those classrooms. Respondents also noted that students from low SES families with high needs, and significant number of newcomers to Canada lacking English and/or French-language proficiency increased their workload. Many of these students are bussed to school and there is a significant workload cost to supervise such bussing.

*Vice-principal in school.* A full-time, experienced and competent vice-principal made the principals’ workload much more manageable (21% overall, 4% CPCO, 35% OPC, and 0% ADFO). Vice-principals, in most cases, helped with transportation, student discipline and employee absences. Absent a full-time vice-principal, principals found it difficult to set up their schedules for administration and teaching/library duties, and they ended up with much more work to do (7% overall, 9% CPCO, 6% OPC, and 0% ADFO).
4.3 Questions beyond the Framework

Interviewees were asked five questions directly related to workload but not encompassed by the framework. These were questions about:

- Strategies for coping with workload
- Workload influences on responses to personal illness
- Workload influences on recruiting teachers for school administration
- How to make the work more satisfying and productive
- Factors to consider when implementing a new provincial or board initiative

1. Strategies for coping with workload pressures (Appendix C, Table 13)

Three strategies were identified by significant numbers of respondents (similar to the strategies most frequently identified by elementary principals and vice-principals). These strategies included:

- Exercise (56% overall, 39% CPCO, 62% OPC, and 100% ADFO). Some of the other 57 strategies identified by a very small number of respondents could also have been coded as “exercise” (e.g., have a personal trainer, be active on weekends, network with a group of guys playing basketball);
- Know what and how to prioritize; move any paper work that does not impact students, staff and instructional leadership to the bottom of the pile (25% overall, 26% CPCO, 18% OPC, and 75% ADFO);
- Spend time with friends and family (23% overall, 13% CPCO, 32% OPC, and 0% ADFO).

2. Workload Influences on Response to Personal Illness (Appendix C, Table 14)

Principals and vice-principals were asked how their workload influenced their responses to their own illnesses; for example, was it decisive in determining whether they took time off to recover and why? As with their elementary school counterparts, secondary school administrators’ responses clearly indicated that workload was a very significant factor, often bringing them into their schools when they might be better off recovering at home. Interviewees spoke about, for example, the accumulations of work in their absence (21% overall, 22% CPCO, 15% OPC, and 75% ADFO) and the lack of other staff (e.g., vice-principal) to take charge.
Several also identified some of their strategies for avoiding illness such as adopting a healthy lifestyle, getting lots of rest, and avoiding work on weekends (also see Appendix C, Table 13).

3. Workload Influence on Recruiting Teachers for School Administration (Appendix C, Table 15)

Interviewees were asked if their teachers’ perceptions of the nature and extent of principal and vice-principal workload had an influence on aspirations to become a principal or vice-principal. A very high proportion of respondents (59% overall, 70% CPCO, 56% OPC, and 25% ADFO) reported a negative influence “absolutely”. This negative perception was formed, for example, “by observing principals’ busy schedules, long working hours, never getting lunch, struggles in dealing with parents, kids and their own issues.”

The most common reason secondary school teachers eschewed school administration as a career path, the same reason provided by elementary school administrators, was that “some teachers believe the pay and amount of responsibility is not worth it” (21% of secondary respondents, 26% CPCO, 21% OPC, and 0% ADFO). Twenty-one percent of secondary school respondents overall (as compared with 17% elementary administrators) did report that “a few teachers have been interested in becoming [school] administrators”.

4. How to Make the Work More Satisfying and Productive (Appendix C, Table 16)

Secondary school interviewees were asked, “If you could change some aspects of your work and the context in which you do it to make it more productive and satisfying, what changes would you make?” There was no shortage of suggestions (80 in total), although only two were mentioned by at least 20% of respondents from at least one of the three principals’ associations (elementary administrators mentioned 4). These two suggestions were as follows:

- Reduce the number of initiatives that come from the province; get initiatives up and running and evaluate them before dropping them and moving on to something else (15% overall, 4% CPCO, 18% OPC, and 50% ADFO). This suggestion met our reporting threshold, but only 8 of 61 respondents mentioned it- a relatively small number. It is, however, consistent with evidence collected in response to other interview questions asked of both secondary and elementary principals and vice-principals.
• Provide working conditions that require less administration and allow for greater emphasis on instructional leadership (16% overall, 9% CPCO, 18% OPC, and 50% ADFO). As with the first suggestion, this suggestion was made by a relatively small number of respondents (10). This suggestion was also mentioned by a similar proportion of elementary school administrators (14% overall).

5. Factors to Consider when Implementing New Provincial or Board Initiatives (Appendix C, Table 5)

Three factors to consider when deciding on the implementation of a new initiative were identified by significant percentages of secondary school respondents:

• Availability of resources needed to adequately implement the new initiative as, for example, finances, human resources or professional development to support implementation (33% overall, 35% CPCO, 35% OPC, and 0% ADFO); overall, 22% of elementary administrators concurred with this as an important consideration.

• Number of initiatives already underway in the school (23% overall, 22% CPCO, 24% OPC, and 25% ADFO); 28% of elementary administrators, overall, pointed to this factor.

• The school’s existing needs, priorities and goals: schools are at different places and have different needs (23% overall, 13% CPCO, 29% OPC, and 25% ADFO). Twelve percent of elementary principals and vice-principals overall raised this issue.
5. Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Survey Results

All members of the three principals’ associations were invited to respond to an online version of the survey in either French or English (Appendix B). This section describes the results of our analysis of responses as follows:

- A description of survey results (means, standard deviations)
- Relationships among variables in the framework (correlations, regressions)
- A test of a model of principal and vice-principal workload (path analysis)

Results described in this section are based on analyses reported in considerable detail in the Tables included in Appendix D. Reference is made to these tables throughout this section.

Table 5.1 reports the means and standard deviations for all variables included in the survey, as well as the internal reliabilities (Cronbach’s Alpha) for all multi-item scales; all such scales reached acceptable levels of reliability typically considered to be about .60 or higher. Nine hundred and seventy (970) principals and vice-principals responded to the survey (OPC = 612, CPCO = 272, ADFO = 86) - a 45% response rate from OPC members, 40% from CPCO members and 57% from ADFO members.

**Table 5.1**

Summary of Survey Results: All Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rel</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Improvement Focus</td>
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<td>.60</td>
<td>.888</td>
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<td>School Staff</td>
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<td>Department Heads</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Work Outside School</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderating variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Advantage</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Behavior</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Configuration</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Location</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in Current Role</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in Role in Current School</td>
<td>968</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mediating variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Efficacy</th>
<th>885</th>
<th>2.53</th>
<th>.52</th>
<th>.879</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collective Efficacy</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job/Career Satisfaction</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dependent variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Positive</th>
<th>971</th>
<th>3.10</th>
<th>.66</th>
<th>.881</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Negative</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manageability of Workload</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Worked</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variables not in model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special School Influence</th>
<th>505</th>
<th>1.62</th>
<th>.66</th>
<th>.887</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Province/District Influence</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.903</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive influence on workload</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response Options:**

1. 1 = No impact; 2 = small impact; 3 = moderately large impact; 4 = very large impact
2. 1 = Not at all; 2 = to some extent; 3 = to a considerable extent; 4 = very extensive
3. 1 = No influence; 2 = small influence 3 = moderately strong influence; 4 = very strong influence
4. 1= disadvantaged to 5 = very advantaged
5. 1= much misbehavior to 5 = no misbehavior
6. 1= below provincial standards to 5 = uniformly above
7. 1= fewer than 600 to 5 = more than 1501
8. 1= grade 7-12, 2 = grade 9-12, 3 = grade K/1-12
9. 1= mostly urban to 5 = mostly suburban
10. 1 = less than year to 5 = 10+
11. 1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = dissatisfied; 3 = neutral; 4 = satisfied; 5 = very satisfied
12. 1 = very inaccurate; 5 = very accurate
13. 5 unique options

Appendix D, Tables 3, 5 and 7 provide comparable summaries of results for OPC, CPCO and ADFO respondents respectively.

### 5.1 Independent Variables: Sources of Workload (Appendix D, Table 2)

For scales measuring each of the 10 categories of workload this section reports the impact on workload, from most to least, of specific sources within each category. Note that asterisks (*) indicate order of ratings within categories that are identical to the order found in the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study. Of the specific sources of workload identified
below, the order of ratings within the categories across the two studies was identical in 14 of the 21 cases. Elementary and secondary school administrators had very similar views about the primary sources of their workload.

As compared with their elementary colleagues, secondary administrators were more concerned about reaching out to community agencies for support for their students, lack of commitment by some teaching staff to improving their own practices, special programs offered by some of their schools (e.g. focus on the arts), and the need to assist students in their transition from elementary to secondary. Secondary principals and vice-principals also responded to a set of specific workload sources related to Department Heads and not relevant for elementary administrators.

Highest rated sources of workload within each workload category (ordered by overall category ratings) are as follows:

1. Approaches to leadership (m = 3.08): highest rated items in this scale include:
   (a) Relationship-building skills (m = 3.39)*
   (b) Preferred approaches to leading and organizing (e.g., open door policy, collaborative decision making processes) (m = 3.27)*

2. SIP focus (m = 3.04): highest rated items in this scale included:
   (a) 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 (m = 3.31)*
   (b) Building the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals (m = 3.17)*

3. Province (m = 2.91): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Regulation 274 and the hiring challenges which distract from a focus on school improvement (m = 3.42)*
   (b) Other regulations demanding time to implement and reducing the time available to focus on school improvement (e.g., health and safety, lockdown policies) (m = 3.02)*

4. Unions (m = 2.60): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Prompt you to delegate the delivery of professional development to teacher leaders (m = 3.18)*
   (b) Sometimes seem to contradict what is in the students’ best interests (m = 3.05)*

5. School system/district (m = 2.58): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Volume of emails received daily (m = 3.44)*
6. Advisory work outside school (m = 2.57) the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Allow you to influence at least some province-wide decisions (recoded) (m = 3.49)*
   (b) Allow you to influence at least some board-wide decisions (recoded) (m = 2.88)*

7. Department heads (m = 2.54): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Union regulations severely limiting department heads’ engagement with teachers’ instruction (m = 2.74)
   (b) Difficulty in balancing ongoing teaching responsibilities with learning about how to introduce significant changes in their departments (m = 2.69)

8. External community (m = 2.32): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Mental health challenges faced by parents in the community and lack of resources to support them (m = 3.04)
   (b) Reaching out to community agencies to seek support for students and their families (m = 2.79)

9. Staff (m = 2.30): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
   (a) Effort required to build a collaborative working environment (m = 2.83)*
   (b) Little commitment by teaching staff to improving their own practices (m = 2.73)

10. School organization (m = 2.25): the most highly rated items in this scale are as follows:
    (a) Inadequate number of support staff and professional support services (m = 2.59)*
    (b) Special programs offered by the school (e.g. focus on the arts) (m = 2.39)
    (c) Needs to assist students in their transition from elementary to secondary (m = 2.39)

Table 5.2 identifies those specific survey items, across the 10 categories, that received a rating of 3 or more on the four-point survey response scale (extent of impact on workload; 1 = not at all, 4 = very extensive). Of the 21 items listed in this table\(^{30}\), 6 are features of principals’ and vice-principals’ own approaches to leadership (four of which contribute positively to workload as indicated by the italics), and 6 are part of principals’ and vice-principals’ school improvement focus. Three items are attributed to the province (Regulation 274, other regulations, and excessive initiatives), three to unions (serving as guidelines for decision making, inhibiting delegation of PD for teachers, and sometimes seeming to be in contradiction to

\(^{30}\) 20 items were rated as 3 or more by elementary principals and vice-principals.
students’ best interests) and two to school systems or districts (volume of emails, numbers of new initiatives). One item is associated with the external community (mental health challenges faced by parents and lack of resources to support them).

According to evidence in Table 5.2, then, a high proportion of principal and vice-principal workload is attributable to the professional leadership dimensions of their work inside their own schools (12 of the 21 specific sources). A small number of external sources contribute significantly to this workload, however. These overall findings are very similar to those reported by elementary school administrators.

Table 5.2
Variables Adding Most to Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Across All Categories
(Rated as 3 or more on a 4-point scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIP Focus</td>
<td>Building the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing the capacities you need to lead the school improvement initiatives</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persuading some staff and students of the need for the school’s improvement initiatives</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fostering a collaborative approach to school improvement</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>Volume of emails received daily</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers of new programs and policies to be implemented in your school</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Comm.</td>
<td>Mental health challenges faced by parents in the community and lack of resources to support them</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>Excessive numbers of initiatives from the Ministry of Education</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regulation 274 and the hiring challenges which distract from a focus on school improvement</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other regulations demanding time to implement and reducing the time available to focus on school improvement (e.g., health and safety, lockdown policies)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions</td>
<td>Serving as guidelines for you during decision making and grievances</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibiting delegation of PD for teachers</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometime seem to contradict what is in the students’ best interests</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>High expectations for your own and your staff’s performance</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High expectations for your students’ performance</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship-building skills</td>
<td>Knowledge of effective approaches to instruction</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willingness to delegate to, or share leadership with, others</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferred approaches to leading and organizing (e.g., open door policy, collaborative decision making processes)</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 *Moderating Variables* (Appendix D, Table 2)

The status of 7 variables potentially moderating principal and vice-principal workload were measured by the survey. Table 5.3 reports the means and standard deviation of responses to each, ordered from highest to lowest rated as influences on workload. The relative influence of these variables by elementary school administrators is identified in the far right column of the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moderating Variables</th>
<th>Sec. M</th>
<th>Sec. SD</th>
<th>Elementary Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Experience in Current Role</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student Advantage</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student Achievement</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Student Behavior</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School Size</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. School Location</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Experience in Current School</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Grade Configuration</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratings in Table 5.3 mean that principal and vice-principal respondents had about 6 to 9 years of experience in their current role and had been in their current school 3 to 5 years. Their schools, on average:

- had grade configurations of either 7 to 12 or 9 to 12;
- served moderately advantaged students achieving at or above the provincial standard of achievement in some areas;
- were between 400 and 900 students in size;
- experienced some student misbehavior;
were located in rural or mixed urban/suburban communities (although the large standard deviation for this item makes the “average location” a bit meaningless).

As the third column of Table 5.3 indicates, grade configuration was not viewed by secondary administrators as a significant influence on their workload, in contrast to their elementary counterparts (fourth column). This difference in rankings may be due to the greater number of grade configurations that elementary administrators encounter. Experience in their current role and degree of student advantage are similarly important variables influencing the workload of administrators in both secondary and elementary schools. Both groups of administrators rank as relatively low the influence of both school location and years in current school.

5.3 Mediating Variables (Appendix D, Table 2)

Job satisfaction and both individual and collective efficacy, measured using multi-item scales, served as the mediating variables for the survey. As Table 5.4 indicates, principals’ and vice-principals’ ratings of individual items within each of the scales measuring efficacy and job satisfaction did not vary much. Secondary principals and vice-principals reported feeling moderately efficacious individually (m = 2.53 on the 4-point scale) and collectively (m = 2.37), and had moderate levels of job satisfaction (m = 3.35 on a 5-point scale), as well. These ratings are a bit higher for job satisfaction and a bit lower for individual and collective efficacy than was the case for their elementary colleagues.

With respect to job satisfaction, in particular, the item receiving the lowest rating from both secondary and elementary administrators (The extent to which conditions enable you to be effective) is directly concerned with working conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediating Variables</th>
<th>Sec. M</th>
<th>Sec. SD</th>
<th>El. M</th>
<th>El. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Efficacy Aggregate</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate your teachers</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Variables</td>
<td>Sec. M</td>
<td>Sec. SD</td>
<td>El. M</td>
<td>El. SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate enthusiasm among your staff for a shared vision of the school</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage change in your school</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a positive learning environment in your school</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate student learning in your school</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise student achievement on standardized tests</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collective Efficacy Aggregate</strong></td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in your school have the knowledge and skill they need to improve student learning</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your school continuous improvement is viewed by most staff as a necessary part of every job</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your school, problems are viewed as issues to be solved, not as barriers to action</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central district staff communicate a belief in the capacity of teachers to teach even the most difficult students</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Satisfaction Aggregate</strong></td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The progress you are making toward the goals you set out for yourself in your present position</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chance your job gives you to do what you are best at</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extent to which conditions enable you to be effective</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity you have to contribute to important decisions</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your opportunity for professional growth and development</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your present job when you consider the expectations you had when you took the job</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your present job in light of your career expectations</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 Dependent Variables (Appendix D, Table 2)

As Table 5.5 indicates, the survey measured both “cognitive” (Manageability, Time) and “emotional” (Positive, Negative) dimensions of workload from the perspective of principals and vice-principals. Of the two cognitive measures, one asked for an overall opinion (5-point scale) about extent of workload, ranging from light (1) to frequently unmanageable (5). The mean response of 3.75 falls between “excessive but manageable” and “sometimes unmanageable”.
The second cognitive measure of workload asked principals and vice-principals to estimate the hours per week worked both inside and outside the schools. The mean response of 3.86 identified in Table 5.5 indicates that principals and vice-principals report working in excess of about 50 - and likely closer to 55 - hours per week.

Two separate measures were used to determine principals’ and vice-principals’ emotional responses to their workload. One of these measures asked principals and vice-principals (on a 4-point scale) to indicate how accurately four positive emotions represented their feelings about their work (1 = very inaccurate, 4 = very accurate). The mean response of 3.10 to the four positive emotions as a whole falls between “somewhat accurate” to “very accurate”. Of the four positive emotions included in the survey, highest ratings were given to “meaningful” (3.29) followed, in order, by “satisfying (3.10), rewarding (3.08) and enjoyable” (2.93). The job is worth doing but it is not much “fun”, these results suggest.

The second measure of principals’ and vice-principals’ emotional response to their workload asked how accurately four negative emotions represented their feelings about their work. The mean response of 2.42 to the four negative emotions as a whole falls between “somewhat inaccurate” to “somewhat accurate”. Of the four negative emotions included in the survey, highest ratings were given to “stressful” (3.25) followed, in order, by “frustrating (2.79), annoying (1.97) and resentment” (1.68).

The two right columns of data in Table 5.5 indicate that secondary school administrators’ responses to the dependent measures closely parallel the responses of elementary school administrators in both magnitude and order.

**Table 5.5**

**Dependent Variables: Measures of Workload**

(1 = very inaccurate; 4 = very accurate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Sec. M</th>
<th>Sec. SD</th>
<th>El. M</th>
<th>El. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived manageability of workload</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive emotions in response to workload</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• satisfying</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• meaningful</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• enjoyable</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rewarding</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotions in response to workload</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• annoying</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variables</td>
<td>Sec. M</td>
<td>Sec. SD</td>
<td>El. M</td>
<td>El. SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stressful</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frustrating</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resentment</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.5 Responses to Questions outside the Framework

The survey included six questions not encompassed by the framework for the study but clearly important in a study of principals’ and vice-principals’ workload.

- strategies for coping with workload
- workload influences on responses to personal illness
- workload influences on recruiting teachers for school administration
- how to make the work more satisfying and productive
- factors to consider when implementing a new provincial or board initiative
- challenges associated with leading special schools

#### 1. Strategies for coping with workload.

One of the five questions asked how extensively principals and vice-principals used four types or categories of strategies for managing their workload pressures. Receiving the highest rating (m = 2.81) by a small margin, organizational strategies were followed in order by family-related strategies (m = 2.77), health-related strategies (2.46), and peer-related strategies (m = 2.29).

While the relative ranking of these coping strategies by secondary and elementary school administrators differs, only differences in the rating of peer-related strategies are substantial. Secondary principals and vice principals appear to rely less on such strategies than do their elementary counterparts (m = 2.29 vs. 2.42)
2. Workload influences on responses to personal illness. The survey asked respondents about the extent to which their workload prevented them from taking time off to recover from illness. The four response options for this question ranged from “rarely preventing time off” (1) to “almost always preventing time off” for illness (4). The response to this item (m = 3.05, SD = .97) suggests that secondary principals and vice-principals consider workload to be a significant barrier to taking time off to recover from illness, as did elementary principals and vice-principals (m = 3.14, SD = .91).

3. Workload influences on recruiting teachers for school administration. Survey respondents were asked about the extent to which their teachers’ perceptions of the nature and extent of principal and vice-principal workload had an influence on their aspirations to become a principal or vice-principal. The mean response of 2.98 (SD = .83) indicates that such workload was an influence “to a considerable extent”, a response almost identical to the response provided by elementary school administrators (m = 2.96, SD = .85).

4. How to make the work more satisfying and productive. A fourth question asked respondents to rate 18 suggestions for keeping principal and vice-principal workload more manageable (“To what extent would the following changes have a positive influence on your workload?”). As Table 5.7 reports, 10 of the
suggestions received a rating of 3 or more on the 4-point response scale indicating that their positive influence would be considerable.

As with elementary school administrators, two of the three highest rated suggestions concerned modifications to Regulation 274 (m = 3.48), and some features of collective agreements (m = 3.26); this finding is consistent with most other data collected for the study from those in all roles providing such data.

Five of the remaining highest rated suggestions listed in Table 5.7 entail increases of some sort (mental health resources (m = 3.51), vice-principals (3.08), autonomy (3.08), support staff (m = 3.20), and release time for department heads (m = 3.13)).

Secondary administrators would value improved leadership training and support for department heads (m = 3.07), as well as a significant reduction in the number of new initiatives in the future from the province. They also rated quite highly “a stop to the habit of telling us to do more with less” (m = 3.22).

The largest differences in secondary and elementary administrators’ ratings, leaving aside issues related to department heads, concerned four suggestions. Secondary administrators were less enthused about reducing the number of vice-principals with teaching responsibilities (m = 2.58 vs. 3.00), increasing the number of vice-principals (m = 3.08 vs. 3.36) and changing some features of collective agreements on the running of the school and school improvement efforts (m = 3.26 vs. 3.38). But secondary administrators’ ratings of the value of having more resources to deal with mental health challenges was higher than elementary administrators’ ratings of this suggestion (m = 3.51 vs. 3.39).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Sec. M</th>
<th>Sec. SD</th>
<th>El. M</th>
<th>El. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate of all influences</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary halt on new provincial or district initiatives for schools to implement</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A significant reduction in the number of new initiatives in the future from the province</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications to Regulation 274 so that principals have</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions</td>
<td>Sec. M</td>
<td>Sec. SD</td>
<td>El. M</td>
<td>El. SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>considerably more autonomy to hire teaching staff for their schools</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to some features of collective agreements on the running of the school and school improvement efforts</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased P/VPs autonomy in the running of their schools</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and procedures for responding to unreasonable and aggressive parents</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quicker responses of central office staff to requests from schools</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced public attention to EQAO scores and greater opportunity for schools to tell their own story</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stop to the habit of telling us we need to do more with less</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased staff resources in schools for managing non-instructional matters</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the time and effort required for teacher performance appraisals</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the time and effort required for the performance appraisals of non-teaching staff</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased resources (staff and other) for dealing with mental health challenges</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of vice-principals with teaching responsibilities</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in the number of vice-principals</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved leadership training and supports for department heads</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased release time for department heads so they can assist with school leadership</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased district support for department heads</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Factors to consider when implementing a new provincial or board initiative. A fifth survey question asked about factors that enter into principal and vice-principal decisions about implementing new initiatives proposed by the province or by their own school system. Respondents rated 11 possible factors; these are listed in Table 5.8, along with elementary school administrators’ ratings of these factors (two far right columns).

Nine of the 11 factors received ratings of 3.00 or more (moderate to strong influence, the highest rated being the “Time required to fully engage those staff whose work will be influenced by the new initiative” (m = 3.41)). Two other factors also received quite high ratings:

- Number of initiatives already underway in the school (3.36)
- Availability of resources needed to adequately implement the new initiative (3.30)

The mean ratings of the 11 factors by elementary as compared with secondary school administrators differed by a quite small .10 or less.
Table 5.8
Factors Influencing Decisions about Implementing Provincial or System Initiatives
(1=no influence; 2=small influence; 3=moderately strong influence; 4=very strong influence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors Influencing Decisions</th>
<th>Sec. M</th>
<th>Sec. SD</th>
<th>El. M</th>
<th>El. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate influence of all factors</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required of P/VP to implement, manage, and ensure new initiative will be sustained</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required to fully engage those staff whose work will be influenced by the new initiative</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of initiatives already underway in the school</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of resources needed to adequately implement the new initiative</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which existing initiatives are being implemented in the school</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of paperwork associated with managing the new initiative</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of staff understanding of new initiative</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification, rationale and/or motivation giving rise to the new initiative</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood of eliminating some existing tasks to create time for tasks associated with the new initiative</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of trust among staff and between staff and P/VP</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice from department heads</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Challenges associated with leading special schools. Respondents leading special schools, schools offering French immersion programs in particular, were asked to rate the extent (4-point scale) to which 7 challenges associated with leading such schools placed demands on their workload. Only principals and vice-principals of special schools responded to this item, hence the number of respondents was many fewer than responses to other parts of the survey.

Table 5.9 lists the 7 challenges from those rated as most to least demanding. By a wide margin “Difficulty finding replacements for French teachers when they are off because there is a shortage in the district” (m = 2.55) was rated highest, as was also the case for elementary school administrators. None of these challenges, the ratings indicate, were extensive workload creators especially for secondary school administrators.
Table 5.9
Workload Demands of a Special School
(e.g., Dual Track French and English, Single Track French Immersion)

(1 = not at all; 4 = very extensive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demands of a Special School</th>
<th>Sec. M</th>
<th>Sec. SD</th>
<th>El. M</th>
<th>El. SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate influence</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding replacement for French teachers when they are off because there is a shortage in the district</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable scheduling with French and English panel</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding resources for French second language students</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing French candidates</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning professional development for teachers in both French and English panels</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing EQAO math results for French and English</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District requests for additional tasks related to French-language (e.g. hiring French teachers, teaching French course) that take you away from your school building</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Comparison of Principal Association Members’ Survey Results (Appendix D, Table 9)

Table 9 in Appendix D provides a detailed comparison of responses organized by the principal association of respondents. This table also describes the results of an Analysis of Variance to determine the statistical significance of each of these differences at the level of the individual survey item and the multi-item scales (far right column of Table 9).

There are many differences reaching statistical significance among association member responses, but no overall pattern distinguishing the responses of members of one association from another. Limiting attention to the Independent Variables (sources of workload), for example:

School improvement focus: responses to 1 of 8 items measuring this variable are significantly different with OPC members rating this item highest.
School staff: responses to 4 of 11 items measuring this variable are significantly different but there is no pattern of members of one association accounting for these differences.

School organization: responses to only 1 of the 7 items measuring this variable are significantly different with ADFO members assigning a lower rating than either OPC or CPCO members.

Departments and department heads: responses to 4 of the 9 items measuring this variable differed across the three associations. In the case of all four items, ADFO members were least concerned about them as sources of workload.

School system or district: responses to 2 of 9 items measuring this variable are significantly different. ADFO members rated both items higher than did OPC members.

External community: responses to 5 of 8 items measuring this variable are significantly different, but there was no pattern of differences across associations.

Province: responses to only 1 of 4 items measuring this variable are significantly different (the item concerned Regulation 274). Members of each of the three associations all differed from one another with highest ratings awarded by OPC members and lowest ratings awarded by ADFO members.

Unions: responses to 7 of 16 items measuring this variable are significantly different. CPCO members tended to rate these items higher than their other association colleagues - a pattern also evident among elementary school administrators.

Advisory work outside school: responses to 2 of 7 items measuring this variable are significantly different. ADFO members rated both items lower than did members of the other two associations.

Approaches to leadership: responses to all 8 items measuring this variable are significantly different. ADFO members rated all but one of these items lower than did members of the other two associations, and CPCO members generally rated these items highest.

For additional information about the specific items rated differently by association members see Appendix D, Table 9.

5.7 Comparison of Secondary School Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Survey Responses (Appendix D, Table 10)

Table 10 in Appendix D provides a detailed comparison of survey responses by principals and vice-principals. This table also describes the results of an Analysis of Variance to
determine the statistical significance of each of these differences at the level of the individual survey item and the multi-item scales (items and scales where differences in the responses of principals reached statistical significance appear in bold type). Independent sample T-tests were conducted on each variable and item. Most means were significantly different with principals providing most of the higher ratings. These statistically significant differences are shown in italics in Table 10 of Appendix D.

Unlike the comparison of results among members of the three principals’ associations, where no clear pattern of differences emerged, a very clear and unambiguous pattern is evident in the comparison of principal and vice-principal responses. Differences in principal and vice-principal ratings were significant for 45 of the 87 items measuring sources of principal and vice-principal workload; principals’ ratings were highest for 43 of these items. The two items rated highest by vice-principals were:

- Mental health challenges faced by parents in the community and lack of resources to support them.
- [Advisory work outside school] allows you to influence at least some board-wide decisions.

This overall pattern of higher ratings of workload sources by secondary school principals as compared with ratings of secondary school vice-principals is the opposite of the pattern found among elementary school principals and vice-principals. We have no explanation for this difference.

5.8 Relationships among Variables

Section 2 of Appendix D includes four tables (Tables 12 through 15) that report correlations between each of the four sets of variables (independent, moderating, mediating and dependent) included in the framework (the table numbers referred to in this section are those used in the Appendix). This section briefly summarizes relationships in these tables large enough to have some practical significance. Many of the relationships in the four tables are statistically significant but not all are large enough to be of much practical significance. A correlation of .20

31 These were Pearson Product correlations
or more is used in this section as the minimum level to have such practical significance.\textsuperscript{32}

For purposes of examining relationships among variables, as well as for testing the model framing this study (next section 5.3), each of the items used to measure the nine independent variables in the survey were re-conceptualized as representing one of the three underlying variables (explained in Framework section of the report) - Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Social Support. The distribution of survey items used as measures of each of these three variables can be found in Table 11 of Appendix D, along with the reliability of each of the three scales; these scales exceed minimum requirements (about .60) for acceptable levels of reliability (.83 for Role Ambiguity, .93 for Role Conflict and .77 for Social Support).

\textit{Moderating and dependent variables}. While there are many (14) statistically significant correlations reported among variables in Table 12, most of them are quite small. Using .20 as the minimum standard for considering a correlation to have much practical significance, only two relationships achieve this standard. These relationships, both negative, are between student misbehavior and Negative Emotions about workload \((r = -.21)\), and the extent to which principals and vice-principals consider their job to be Manageable \((r = -.21)\). The more student misbehavior is evident in the school, the less manageable principals and vice-principals consider their workload to be - the same result found in our analysis of the data from elementary school principals and vice-principals.

\textit{Mediating and dependent variables}. Seven relationships between mediating and dependent variables meet or exceed .20, as Table 13 indicates. The largest of these correlations is between Job Satisfaction and both sets of emotional responses of principals and vice-principals to their workload \((r = .53 \text{ and } -.49)\), as well as how Manageable they consider their workload to be \((r = -.33)\). When Job Satisfaction is high, emotional responses to workload are generally positive, but there remains a negative relationship between Job Satisfaction and the perceived Manageability of the workload \((r = -.33)\). These results largely replicate findings from the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study.

\textsuperscript{32} Researchers commonly invoke Cohen’s (1992) suggestion about interpreting the significance of correlations and effect sizes. He suggests that .10 be considered “weak”, .30 be considered “medium” and .50 or more be considered “strong”. The type of correlation reported here (Pearson Product Correlation) can also be considered an “effect size”.

50
Both Individual and Collective Efficacy also have positive relationships with emotional responses to workload that meet or exceed the .20 level as was also the case with the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study results.

**Independent and mediating variables.** Table 14 reports 6 relationships between these three variables (Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, Social Support) and the three mediating variables that exceed .20. Role Ambiguity is related to all three mediators with correlations of -.22 (Individual Efficacy), -.40 (Collective Efficacy) and -.35 (Job Satisfaction). Role Conflict is related to both Collective Efficacy (r = -.34) and Job Satisfaction (r = -.29) while Lack of Social Support is related to Collective Efficacy (r = -.22) and Job Satisfaction (r = -.44).

**Independent and dependent variables.** Eight of 12 possible correlations between the three independent variables and the four dependent variables exceed .20 (see Table 15). All three independent variables are related to Positive Emotions (r = .31 to .38) at about the same strength and in the expected direction. Social Support is related to Negative Emotions in the expected direction (r = -.23). Correlations achieve our threshold for practical significance for relations between all three independent variables and the Manageability of workload; Role Conflict achieves this threshold with the amount of Time (r = .23) required for work. These relationships with both Manageability and Time are positive, however, suggesting for example, that greater Role Ambiguity is associated with perceptions of workload as being more manageable. We have no explanation for the direction of these relationships.

**5.9 Test of the Model Explaining Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload**

The third section of Appendix D reports detailed results of path analysis (Structural Equations Modeling, specifically LISREL) conducted to test the model used as the framework for the study (Figure 1.1: Framework Explaining Variation In Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Perceived Workload). This section provides a non-technical account of what can be concluded from the path analysis using Figure 5.1 as a reference point. As with the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study, Figure 5.1 is a revision of Figure 1.1 based on results of the analysis; it differs from the initial framework by its omission of all moderating variables. There were only two correlations between moderating and independent variables that achieved a correlation of .20 stipulated as a minimum for serious consideration. Indeed, only 5 of the 32
exceeded .10. So the path analysis included only three sets of variables (Independent, Mediating and Dependent).

The path coefficients reported in Table 16 of Appendix D go beyond simple correlations reported earlier by showing the strength of the relationship between the linked variables while also taking into account the other variables in the model. For example, the correlation coefficient for Individual Efficacy and Positive Emotions is a significant .29, whereas the path coefficient is much less, a non-significant .05 because the model takes into account the effects of other factors such as Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Social Support and Collective Efficacy on the relationship between individuals’ perception of their efficacy and the extent of their Positive Emotions about their workload.

![Figure 5.1: A revised Framework for Explaining Variation in Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Perceived Workload](image)

As Table 16 in Appendix D reports, the path coefficients between workload sources (RC, RA and SS) and measures of workload are strongest in the case of Role Conflict; it has significant relationships with perceptions of how Manageable is the workload (.26), how much Time is consumed by work (.21), and Negative Emotions about the work (.14). Neither Role Ambiguity nor Social Support have significant direct relationships with workload variables. Relationships are somewhat stronger between workload sources and the mediating variables, as the model framing the study anticipates. Role Ambiguity has moderately strong relationships with Collective Efficacy (-.35), and weaker but significant relationships with Individual Efficacy (-.20) and Job Satisfaction (-.16). Role Conflict is positively related to Individual Efficacy (.22). Lack of Social Support has its strongest relationship with Job Satisfaction (-.33), a weak but significant relationship with Collective Efficacy (-.09) and an even weaker non-significant relationship with Individual Efficacy (.04).
As with the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study results, the primary avenue through which sources of workload (Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Social Support) influence emotions and perceptions about the extent of workload is through Job Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction has moderate relationships with all but time consumed by work (−.03), ranging from .42 (Positive Emotions), to −.31 (Negative Emotions) and −.23 (Manageability of workload). These results are almost the same as results from the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study.

Results of the path analysis described in Table 5.10 (also see Table 17 in Appendix D) indicate how much of the variation in workload is explained by the model as a whole. Considering each of the four measures of workload first, this table indicates that the model as a whole explains:

- 31% of the variation in Positive Emotions; Job Satisfaction (.48) and Individual Efficacy (.22) contribute most to this explained variation (see section 3 of the table). These results parallel the results of the elementary study quite closely.
- 34% of the variation in Negative Emotions; Job Satisfaction (−.35) and Individual Efficacy (−.24) contribute most to this explained variation. Role Conflict rather than Individual Efficacy contributed to this explained variation in the elementary study.
- 31% of the variation in principals’ and vice-principals’ perceptions of how Manageable is their workload; Role Conflict (.31) and Job Satisfaction (−.24) account for most of this variation, as was the case in the elementary study.
- 7% of the variation in principals’ and vice-principals’ estimates of their total time working is explained primarily by Role Conflict (.20).

These results parallel the results of the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study almost exactly.

With respect to the Mediating variables, evidence reported in Table 17 indicates that the model, as a whole, explains:

- 26% of the variation in Individual Efficacy (vs. 31% in the elementary study).
- 16% of the variation in Collective Efficacy (vs. 14% in the elementary study)
- 33% of the variation in Job Satisfaction (vs. 31% in the elementary study)
Table 5.10
Amount of Variance Explained by the Model
(Squared Multiple Correlation or R²)

1. Dependent Variables: the combined influence of the independent and mediating variables on the dependent variables, or the variance in the dependent variable explained by the model as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Emotional Positive</th>
<th>Emotional Negative</th>
<th>Manageability</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Mediating Variables: the combined influence of the independent variables and other mediating variables on the mediating variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediating Variables</th>
<th>Individual Efficacy</th>
<th>Collective Efficacy</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Individual Contribution of Independent and Mediating Variables to Explained Variation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotional Positive</th>
<th>Emotional Negative</th>
<th>Manageability</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.00ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict</td>
<td>-.01ns</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.00ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individual Efficacy</th>
<th>Collective Efficacy</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.48*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fit Indices for the Model: (the model is an excellent fit to the data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit Indices</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMR</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Σ² = 9.61, df = 9, (p=.38)
6. Synthesis and Conclusion

In the early stages of both the elementary school leadership predecessor to this study and the parallel study of teacher workload, five questions were identified as important for each of the studies to answer about the workload of those in the positions (teacher, school administrator) under investigation. For the two school leadership studies, these questions (slightly adapted and so reduced to four) were:

1. What are the main sources of workload for secondary school principals and vice-principals?
2. What factors help keep principal and vice-principal workload relatively manageable?
3. What changes might better support principals and vice-principals to manage workload?
4. What professional learning or training might be helpful to principals and vice-principals in managing workload?

Both Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Studies asked five additional questions unique to the 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 a new provincial or board initiative?

In this final section of the report, evidence from both secondary school administrator survey and interview data are summarized in response to these questions and comparisons are made to the results provided by the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study.

1. What are the main sources of workload for secondary school principals and vice-principals, and how do they compare with sources of workload for elementary school principals and vice-principals?

Table 6.1 combines results reported separately in Tables 4.1 (Interview Results) and 5.2 (Survey Results). These tables identify the sources of principals’ and vice-principals’ workload
identified by a substantial proportion of respondents\textsuperscript{33}. This table also compares secondary and elementary principals’ and vice-principals’ 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 6.1 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, and 7 only by elementary school administrators. The 2 sources identified only by secondary school administrators included:

- The time required to foster a collaborative approach to school improvement.
- Union regulations which sometimes prompt you to delegate delivery for professional development of teacher leaders.

The column of interview results in Table 6.1 shows that there were also 18 workload sources identified by a substantial proportion of interview respondents. Five of these were identified by both elementary and secondary school administrators, and 10 were unique to elementary school administrators. The three unique to secondary school administrators were all about features of school staffs including:

- Department Heads needing high levels of support
- Some staff uninterested, unwilling, or not capable of providing teacher leadership to school improvement
- 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

Table 6.1 indicates that, among the 18 workload sources identified in both the survey and interview results by a substantial proportion of secondary principals and vice-principals, 4 sources are common to both elementary and secondary school principals’ and vice-principals’ results:

- Allocating the time needed for school improvement work;
- Building the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals;

\textsuperscript{33} For the interview results, this is any variable identified by at least 20\% of interviewees. For the survey results, this is any variable rated 3 or above on a 4-point scale about the extent of impact on workload (4 = very extensive).
- Regulation 274;
- Volume of emails received daily.

### Table 6.1
**Factors Challenging the Manageability of Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Survey and Interview Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Survey Results</th>
<th>Interview Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIP Focus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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**</td>
<td>1. Efforts required to develop the capacities needed to lead the school improvement initiatives; stressful preparing materials and ensuring that PLCs are facilitated properly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Building the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals**</td>
<td>2. Significant effort required to build the capacities needed by staff to achieve improvement goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Persuading some staff and students of the need for the school’s improvement initiatives**</td>
<td>3. Allocating the time needed for school improvement work (e.g., planning around multiple goals) while still ensuring that school operations are managed effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fostering a collaborative approach to school improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Developing the capacities you need to lead the school improvement initiatives**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Managing the sometimes unrealistic expectations of some parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>8. Regulation 274 and the hiring challenges which distract from a focus on school improvement**</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>Survey Results</td>
<td>Interview Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>placed in their schools.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System/District</td>
<td>9. Volume of emails received daily**</td>
<td>7. Volume of emails received daily**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Numbers of new programs and policies to be implemented in your school **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unions</td>
<td>11. Regulations sometimes prompt you to delegate delivery for professional development of teacher leaders</td>
<td>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 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Collective agreements sometimes seem to contradict what is in the students’ best interests**</td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>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 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Regulation 274 is the worst piece of regulation – hiring practices for occasional teachers is a serious problem**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>Survey Results</td>
<td>Interview Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approaches to Leadership</strong></td>
<td>13. <em>Relationship-building skills</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Preferred approaches to leading and organizing (e.g., open door policy, collaborative decision making processes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Willingness to delegate to, or share leadership with, others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. Knowledge of effective approaches to instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. High expectations for your students’ performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Staff</strong></td>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Department Heads needing high levels of support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. Some staff uninterested, unwilling or not capable of providing teacher leadership to school improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisory Work</strong></td>
<td>18. Time spent at the board level attending meetings takes time away from the building, increases workload and interferes with teaching and administration time**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. What factors help keep secondary principals’ and vice-principals’ workload relatively manageable?

Results of the principals’ and vice-principals’ 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, 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 workload?**

   Neither the Elementary nor the Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Studies explored this question directly. However, evidence from the elementary study included three implications for the professional learning of principals and vice-principals. One of these implications - *differentiated training unique to the nature and amount of work anticipated by school assignments* – may also be relevant for secondary administrators, but data specifically from the Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study does not include this implication. These data, however, do support the value of including, as part of secondary
principals’ and vice-principals’ initial and/or ongoing professional learning, opportunities to learn how to productively manage multiple initiatives (see the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study for more explanation of this direct implication).

As with elementary school administrators’ ongoing professional learning, secondary school administrators should also re-balance the focus of initial preparation. As the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study explained:

This balancing needs to be between the knowledge and skill related to curriculum, instruction and assessment (the typical 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 performance34 as do those practices typically associated with “instructional leadership”.

This balancing…would be assisted, at least modestly, by re-framing the central image of the school administrators’ role from the “provision of instructional leadership” to the adoption of a “learning imperative”35. Considerable evidence in the past has suggested that school administrators have typically adopted a “managerial imperative” toward their work36 and much of the advocacy for an image of the principal as an “instructional leader” has been an effort to change that managerial imperative. But there is little evidence that a narrow focus on the classroom practices of teachers is productive for school leaders’ intent on improving their students’ achievement. Most formal models of instructional leadership37 are actually much more comprehensive than their labels suggest.

Successful school leaders, the bulk of existing evidence indicates, attend to instructional issues as well as the development and alignment of their organizations’ infrastructure to support the classroom and the school-wide practices needed for improving student achievement. The term “learning imperative” seems to reflect the mindset of these leaders, and is entirely consistent with the capacities associated with successful leadership in the Ontario Leadership Framework. The initial preparation of school leaders in the province should reflect the balance outlined here. Beginning principals’ workload would be much more manageable if they “hit the ground” with good background training in the efficient execution of operational functions within a ‘learning imperative’ mindset.”

34 For the effects of principals’ operational tasks on student achievement see Horng et al (2010), for example.
35 Terosky (2014)
36 Cuban (1988)
37 See Hallinger & Heck (1996) for example.
While evidence from the Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study reinforces the two implications for professional learning mentioned above, it also adds a third implication, one especially important for secondary school principals and vice-principals. 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. 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);
- The impact of department head leadership on student learning as significantly greater than just the impact of principal and vice-principal leadership.

Evidence from this 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.

4. What changes in district practice might better support secondary principals and vice-principals to manage workload?

Answers to this question along with the next parallel question about the province are consistent with the “progress principle” which Amabile and Kramer describe as follows:

*People are most motivated, energized, and self-efficacious when they feel they have overcome obstacles and made progress, even small steps of progress in their daily work. They also found that the negative effects of butting onto obstacles or otherwise not*

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38 Leithwood (2014)
39 Amabile & Kramer (2011)
getting anywhere carry three times more negative weight than making progress carries positive weight.

The three sets of changes to district practices suggested by evidence from the Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study, are consistent in direction with those suggested by the study of Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals Workload, which seem designed to reduce the negative effects of “butting onto obstacles” in one’s work.

Ensure central office support. One of the factors secondary administrators (along with their elementary counterparts) 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 individual schools, willing to listen authentically to requests for assistance and to provide such assistance when it was possible.

Revise district expectations. The Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study included focus group interviews with directors of education. During those interviews, many directors indicated a willingness to revise their expectations for the work of principals and vice-principals to make that work more manageable. Interview and survey evidence from secondary school administrators identified three such revisions (consistent with evidence from elementary school administrators):

- 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);
- A stop to the habit of telling us we need to do more with less.

Focus on priorities. “Narrowing the work to things that matter most” is the basic rationale for this suggested change in district practice. Such focusing of work is difficult to do in organizations like schools and districts that are essentially “open systems”. But the well-known organizational principle to the effect that “if you have more than three priorities, you don’t have any” rightly draws attention to the importance of devoting enough time and attention to any new initiative to ensure that it works “as advertised”. So key priorities need to be identified, but if they are to serve as guides for significant attention, distractions from priorities also need to be
managed. Secondary school administrators 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;
- Dramatically reduce the number of emails sent to schools by central office staff;
- Provide significant support for department heads and department head leadership development.

5. What changes in Ministry practices and expectations might reduce the impact of secondary principals’ and vice-principals’ workload?

Results of the Elementary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study led to four sets of suggestions for changes in Ministry practices and expectations as a means of making workload more manageable including:

- Reducing the number of Ministry initiatives schools are required to implement over time, and slow down the introduction of new initiatives;
- Resolving competing priorities among initiatives schools are required to implement;
- Forecasting future initiatives well in advance of their roll out;
- Ceding more autonomy to districts to determine future priorities for their schools.

Evidence from the Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Study largely supports these four changes, as well. More specifically, secondary administrators recommended changes to much of Regulation 274 (and the staffing procedures that come with it), and a reduction in the very time-consuming documentation required by a handful of provincial policies including those governing violence in the workplace, occupational health and safety, safe schools, school lock-down policies, and both discipline and bullying.
6. What strategies do secondary principals and vice-principals use for coping with workload?

Results of both the secondary principals’ and vice-principals’ surveys and interviews were largely the same as the elementary principals’ and vice-principals’ results. Data from both sets of administrators 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 principalship40.

Many respondents (e.g., 56% of secondary school administrators) had also adopted health-related strategies such as a regular fitness program of some type. 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. These coping strategies encompass four sets of principal coping strategies found in some earlier research41.

Although not mentioned in response to this question about coping strategies directly, responses of principals and vice-principals in the current study 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.

7. How does workload influence secondary principals’ and vice-principals’ responses to personal illness?

As with elementary school administrators, secondary administrators reported 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 (M = 3.05 on the 4-point rating scale – moderate to high agreement). During the interviews, 21% overall, said that 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.

40 For example, Cranston (2007)
41 See, for example, Allison (1997)
8. Does principal and vice-principal workload have a significant influence on recruiting teachers for school administrative roles?

Secondary principals and vice-principals provided a mean rating of 2.98 on the 4-point scale to the item, “Workload influences teacher aspiration for principal and vice principal positions” (moderate agreement with the statement). Fifty-nine percent of interview respondents indicated 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 (21% of interviewees as a whole).

These results echo much of the existing research on this issue. For example, Cranston’s (2007) study of potential principal aspirants recommended that:

*The power of such [workload] factors as barriers for potential aspirants looking to the principalship emerges from this research as so significant that it must be a matter of serious debate among system-level decision makers and not dismissed as simply a fact of life today for leaders of busy organizations, as it not only impacts negatively on those aspiring to higher level leadership positions (such as principals) but also impacts negatively on those already in such positions.*

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

Only the survey asked respondents this question, and almost all secondary school respondents put changes in Regulation 274 and some features of teacher collective agreements near the top of their lists, as did their elementary counterparts. Other changes rated as especially important only by secondary school administrators included:

- Increased staff resources in schools for managing non-instructional matters;
- Improved leadership training and supports for department heads;
- Increased release time for department heads so they can assist with school leadership.

In common with elementary school principals and vice principals, secondary school administrators also noted the value to them of:

- Increases in mental health resources;**
- A stop to the habit of telling us we need to do more with less;**
- Increases in the number of vice-principals;**
A significant reduction in the number of new initiatives in the future from the province.

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

Secondary principals and vice-principals, faced with requests to implement new initiatives from the province or their districts, weighed the same small handful of issues in deciding how best to respond as did their elementary school administrator colleagues. 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 were the match between the newly proposed initiatives and the school’s improvement goals and priorities. Both groups of administrators also considered the likelihood of eliminating some existing tasks to create the time required to implement, manage, and ensure the new initiative would 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.

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 opportunities to do such honing, placed in contexts that build on their talents and working in concert with other committed colleagues in order to 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 this study 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”.

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While the OLF describes the practices and personal leadership resources needed to improve a school’s performance, the results of this study 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.

One recent study about educational leaders’ “concerns” described not only the nature of those concerns (many of which are framed as workload factors in the present study), but found that a very high proportion of the efforts made by leaders to address their concerns were, in the leaders’ own opinions, largely ineffective\(^\text{42}\). Juxtapose those findings with recent evidence reported by Amabile & Kramer that:

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\text{People are most motivated, energized, and self-efficacious when they feel they have overcome obstacles and made progress, even small steps of progress in their daily work. They also found that the negative effects of butting onto obstacles or otherwise not getting anywhere carry three times more negative weight than making progress carries positive weight.}^{43}
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Considered together, the results of the Sinnema et al and the Amabile and Kramer studies add weight to the underlying argument giving rise to the Elementary and Secondary principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Studies; we need to understand more precisely the sources of school leaders’ workload and find ways to better help school leaders effectively manage their workload (or concerns) if we are to retain and further develop existing leaders, as well as to recruit new people to the roles. The results of the Elementary and Secondary Principals’ and Vice-principals’ Workload Studies are key resources for re-designing the environments in which principals and vice-principals work.

\(^{42}\) Sinnema et al (2013)

\(^{43}\) Cited in Fullan (2014, page 152)
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