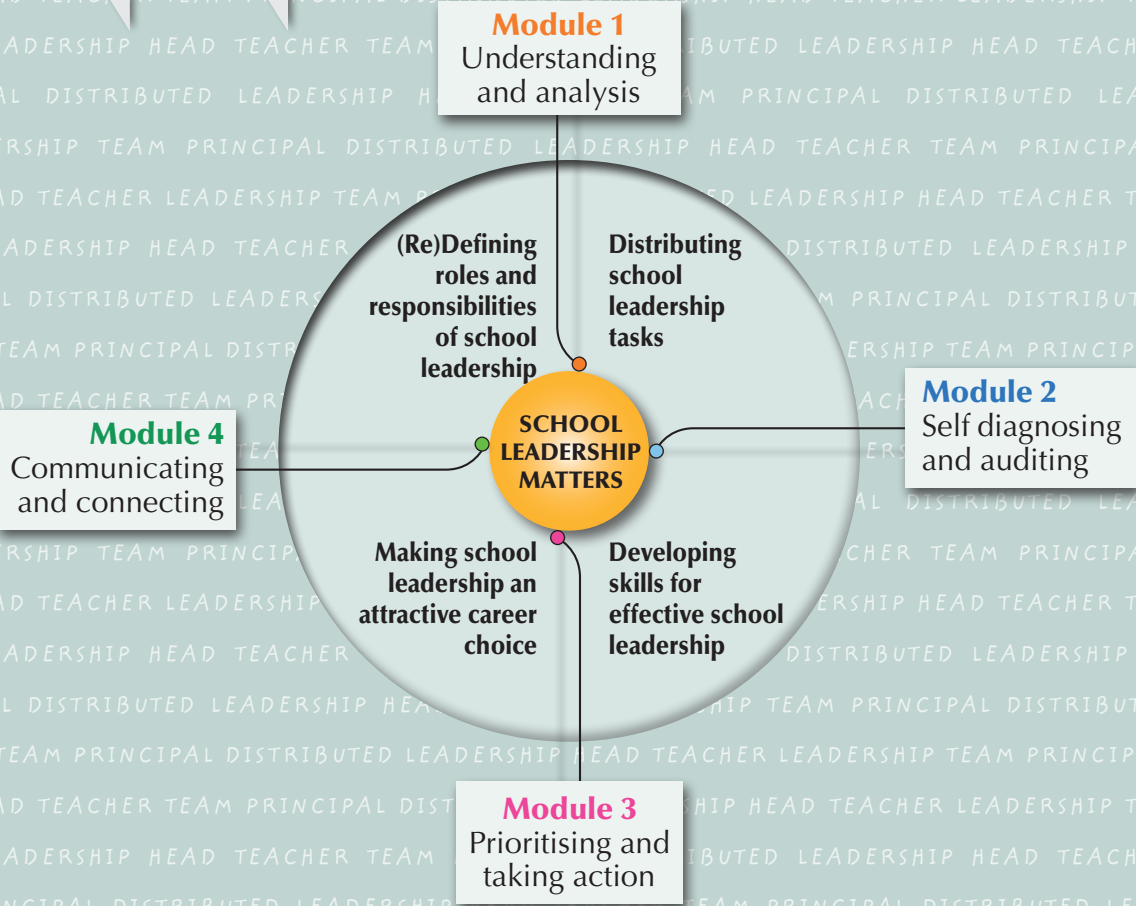


Improving School Leadership

THE TOOLKIT



Improving School Leadership

The Toolkit

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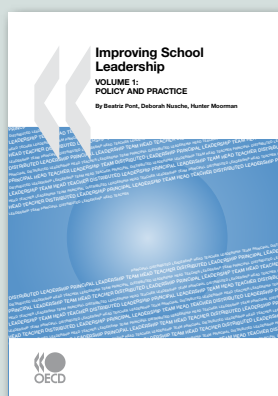
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Foreword

School leadership is an education policy priority around the world. Increased school autonomy and a greater focus on schooling and school results have made it essential to reconsider the role of school leaders. From 2006 to 2008, the OECD conducted a study of school leadership around the world with the participation of Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders and French Community), Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Korea, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland and Scotland).

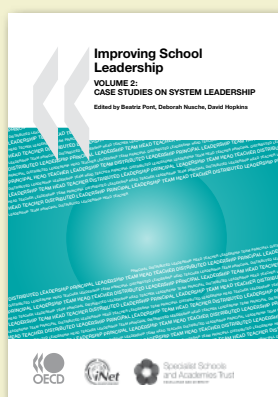
The *Improving School Leadership* project produced a significant body of knowledge on this issue in the form of country background reports and innovative case study reports, all of which are available on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership.

The findings were reported in two volumes published by the OECD in 2008:



Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice reports on the overall findings of the OECD study of school leadership. What leadership roles are most effective in improving student learning? How to allocate and distribute different leadership tasks? How to ensure current and future school leaders develop the right skills for effective leadership? These are questions facing governments around the world. Offering a valuable cross-country perspective, this report identifies four policy levers and a range of policy options to help governments improve school leadership now and build sustainable leadership for the future.

Authors: Beatriz Pont, Deborah Nusche, Hunter Moorman



Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership explores the emerging systemic role of school leaders. One of the new roles school leaders are being asked to play is to work beyond their school borders to contribute to the success of the system as a whole. Case studies on Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Finland and the United Kingdom (England) illustrate how countries are encouraging school leaders to become system leaders and how they are developing and training new generations of school leaders to contribute to system transformation – so that every school is a good school.

Editors: Beatriz Pont, Deborah Nusche, David Hopkins

This Toolkit is a professional development tool for individuals or groups. It is designed to help policy makers, practitioners and relevant stakeholders to analyse their current school leadership policies and practices, and develop a common understanding of where and how to take action based on the OECD *Improving School Leadership* policy recommendations.

For more information on the OECD *Improving School Leadership* activity, contact the project manager, Beatriz Pont, Senior Analyst, Education and Policy Division (beatriz.pont@oecd.org).

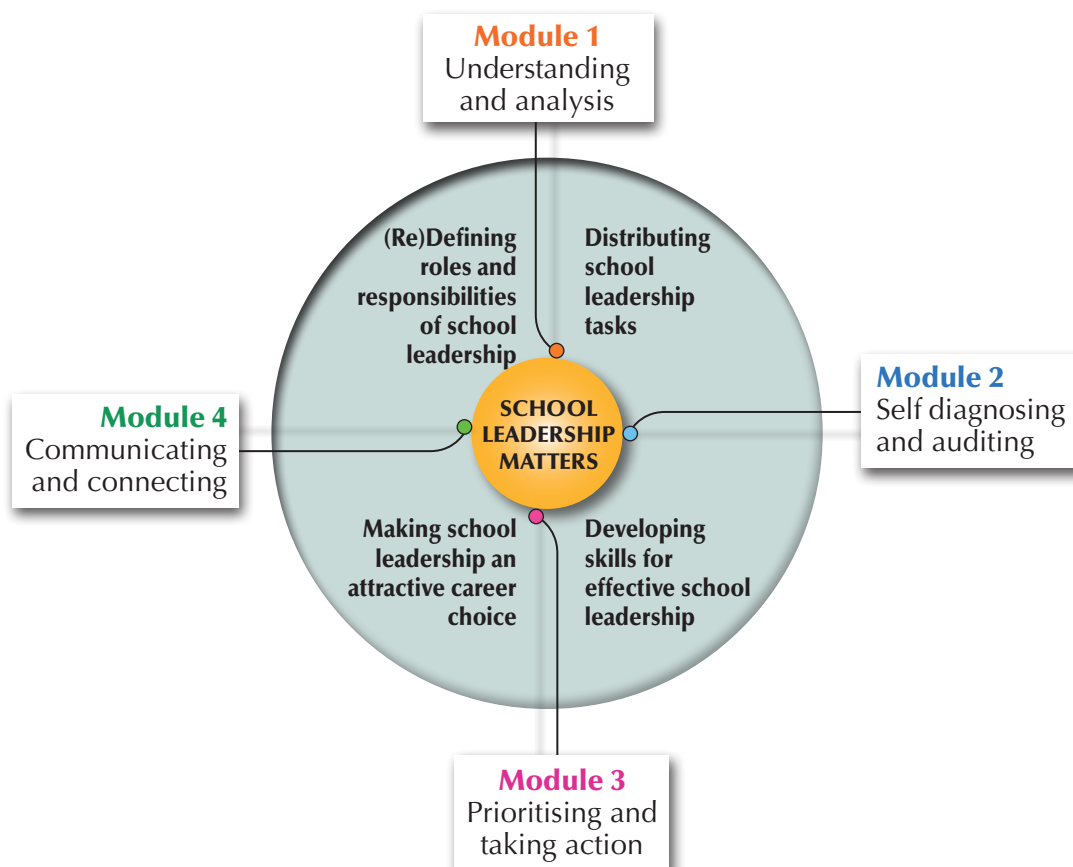
Acknowledgements

The Toolkit is based on the two *Improving School Leadership* books. It was developed and written for the OECD by Louise Stoll and Julie Temperley, UK researchers with extensive experience on school leadership, professional learning communities and helping practitioners and policy makers use research findings. The authors wish to thank the national coordinators and experts involved in the OECD *Improving School Leadership* project for their input and feedback on the content and shape of the Toolkit, particularly those in Northern Ireland whose work inspired the *Communicating and Connecting Workshop* in Module 4. They also extend special thanks for support and insight to the *Improving School Leadership* team in the Education and Training Policy Division of the OECD Directorate for Education: Beatriz Pont, Deborah Nusche, Hunter Moorman, Deborah Roseveare, Susan Copeland and Jennifer Gouby.

Table of Contents

3	FOREWORD
7	INTRODUCTION
8	Purpose
8	Contents
9	How to use the Toolkit
11	MODULE 1: UNDERSTANDING AND ANALYSIS
11	<i>IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP</i> : SUMMARY AND QUESTIONS
12	How to use Module 1
12	School leadership matters
13	OECD <i>Improving School Leadership</i> activity
14	Policy lever 1: (Re)Defining school leadership responsibilities
17	Policy lever 2: Distributing school leadership
19	Policy lever 3: Developing skills for effective school leadership
21	Policy lever 4: Making school leadership an attractive profession
25	MODULE 2: SELF DIAGNOSING AND AUDITING
25	ANALYSING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN YOUR CONTEXT
26	How to use Module 2
26	Administering, collating and analysing the responses
27	How to analyse the findings
28	Questionnaire: Analysing school leadership in your context
28	Part 1: (Re)Defining school leadership responsibilities
29	Part 2: Distributing school leadership
29	Part 3: Developing skills for effective leadership
30	Part 4: Making school leadership an attractive profession
30	Part 5: System leadership
31	Part 6: The four <i>Improving School Leadership</i> policy levers
32	Interpreting your questionnaire results
35	MODULE 3: PRIORITISING AND TAKING ACTION
35	DIAMOND 9 PRIORITISATION PROCESS AND ACTION PLANNING GUIDE
36	How to use Module 3
37	How to facilitate the process
38	Diamond 9 – Statements for prioritisation
40	Action planning guide
45	MODULE 4: COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING
45	COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING – A ONE-DAY FACILITATED WORKSHOP
46	The importance of facilitation
46	Participants
47	How the process works
48	Completing the day and securing commitment
49	ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Introduction



The OECD *Improving School Leadership* project identified four policy levers which, taken together, can help school leadership practice to improve school outcomes. These policy levers highlight the need to:

- (re)define school leadership responsibilities, focusing on roles that can improve school results;
- distribute school leadership, engaging and recognising broader participation in leadership teams;
- develop skills for effective school leadership over different stages of practice;
- make school leadership a more attractive profession by ensuring appropriate wages and career prospects.

PURPOSE

These four policy levers and examples of good practice based on international analysis are presented in *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice* and *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership* (published by OECD in 2008).

Improving School Leadership: The Toolkit is a professional development tool for policy makers, practitioners and relevant stakeholders to conduct discussions on how the OECD recommendations can be used to design and implement policy in different contexts. It is designed to help analyse current school leadership policies and practices and develop a common understanding of where and how to take action. The Toolkit is available as a free download at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership.

The two volumes of *Improving School Leadership* are now available for download free of charge at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership. The books offer many examples of good practice, describing how countries have addressed challenges in the various policy areas. We encourage you to use these examples in conjunction with the Toolkit to explore how different countries are dealing with issues similar to those you face.

CONTENTS

The Toolkit is divided into four learning modules which can be tailored for specific groups or to fit particular contexts. The modules provide frameworks for a diverse range of stakeholders to work together to explore their beliefs, values and practices. In dialogue, new and shared understandings are formed, commonly held priorities can emerge and people are more likely to commit to action.

The main users are likely to be national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners. These include school leaders (principals and others); district, regional or local education authority officers; members of school boards, councils or governing bodies; representatives of unions and professional associations; and higher education institutions involved in the training and development of school leaders. It may also be valuable to use the materials with national and local politicians, policy advisors, students, teachers, parents and local community members.

Module 1 *Understanding and Analysis*

This module contains a summary of the *Improving School Leadership* findings, interspersed with questions to aid understanding and promote reflection and dialogue. It makes a compelling case for the importance of reform of school leadership to improve school outcomes and uses examples to explore the four policy levers for reform, emphasising the connections between the levers.

Module 2 *Self Diagnosing and Auditing*

In this module, a gap analysis questionnaire invites people to consider the report's findings in relation to their own beliefs and context. It asks the questions "Where are we currently?" and "Where would we like to be?" and provides space to reflect on the results and implications of the gap analysis for policy and practice.

Module 3 *Prioritising and Taking Action*

This module is designed to help people decide which of the *Improving School Leadership* policy levers or recommendations to engage with first, by answering the questions "What are our priorities for action?" and "How do we go about achieving them?" The first part of the activity encourages prioritising based on a set of choices. This is followed by a process that promotes action in line with the chosen priorities.

Module 4 *Communicating and Connecting*

This module provides guidance for a one-day facilitated workshop designed to bring together a broad range of stakeholders. It draws on and brings together activities from the previous modules to help make connections between different areas of development and improvement.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

Anyone can use the Toolkit, but extra benefit will be gained if it is possible to involve a facilitator. Facilitation enables participants to come to a more powerful understanding of the modules and deepen their learning. Facilitators can also help people see whether the recommendations are understandable and have the same meaning for everyone. People who have leadership of this topic in their context may choose to facilitate a group (or groups), or they may prefer to invite an external facilitator and be part of the group. However, the workshop outlined in Module 4, *Communicating and Connecting*, requires an experienced facilitator.

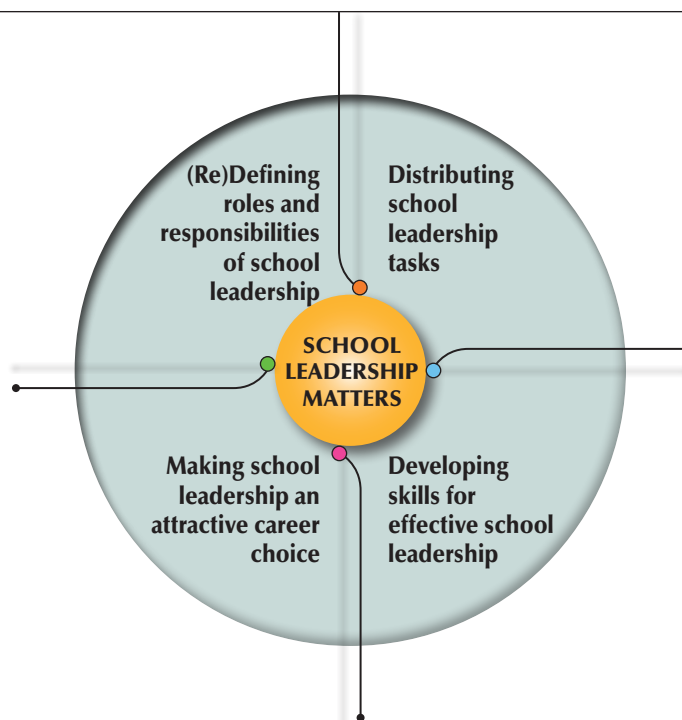
There is logic to the ordering of the modules, starting with understanding the content, moving to assessing the participants' own situation and then working on prioritising needs and planning a coordinated strategy. People may choose to select from different modules rather than use all parts of them. For example, if there is particular interest in exploring one policy lever, the modules allow for this, while encouraging people to think about the interconnections between all four policy levers. Alternatively, findings of the self-diagnosis questionnaire activity itself can suggest priorities. Further instructions about use of individual activities are provided in each module.

Symbols used throughout the toolkit

	This symbol indicates a piece of reading.
	This symbol invites people to engage in dialogue.
	This symbol introduces an activity.
	This symbol indicates a page to photocopy.
	This symbol highlights paper to cut up.
	This symbol invites you to write a response.
	This symbol introduces questions for reflection.
	This symbol indicates time required for an activity.

Module 1

Understanding and Analysis



IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP – SUMMARY AND QUESTIONS

The OECD *Improving School Leadership* study offers strong evidence that improving school leadership policy and practice can improve school outcomes. Before people can act on this evidence, they need to understand the findings clearly and analyse the implications in their local context. This summary of the report, interspersed with related questions, is designed to stimulate thinking and aid understanding of the findings. It contains a compelling case for the importance of reform of school leadership, and explores the four levers of reform with examples, emphasising the connections between the levers.

HOW TO USE MODULE 1

Each section of Module 1 includes questions to promote reflection and space to record personal and group notes. To encourage collaborative learning and provide a foundation for decision-making, it would be valuable to organise a session where people discuss the summary together. You may choose to have all participants read the entire piece or divide up the reading among them.

Some possible options:

- have everyone read the first section, “School Leadership Matters”, and then divide people into smaller groups to each read a section on one policy lever which they can summarise for their colleagues;
- send the first section as pre-reading and focus on one policy lever in a particular session.

The summary can also be used as pre-reading for the other activities in the Toolkit.

Depending on the approach chosen and the size of the group, expect to spend an hour on this module.



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Children and young people in schools around the world will graduate to face a very different future from previous generations. Technological advances and scientific discovery are significantly accelerating the amount of knowledge and information available. We now live in an increasingly interdependent international community, where success or failure in one country has consequences for many others.

There is a growing concern that the role of school principal, designed for the industrial age, has not evolved to deal with the complex challenges that schools are preparing children and young people to face in the 21st century. As expectations of what school leaders should achieve change, so must the definition and distribution of school leadership roles. Succession planning is also a high priority in order to ensure high quality school leadership for the future.

This rapidly changing context for schools gives rise a series of issues to which policy and practice on school leadership must respond.

Teaching and learning need to improve

Standards of teaching and learning need to improve and improve continuously if schools are to ensure that children and young people can be successful in the future. School leaders play a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivation and capacity of teachers and affecting the climate and environment in which they work and learn. To increase their influence, school leaders need to play a more active role in instructional leadership by:

- monitoring and evaluating teacher performance;
- conducting and arranging for mentoring and coaching;
- planning teacher professional development; and
- orchestrating teamwork and collaborative learning.

Pedagogy is changing

To be successful in today’s knowledge society, children and young people need to engage in more powerful forms of active, constructivist learning that teach understanding and independence. There is also a growing demand for individualisation and personalisation that can offer inclusive and multiculturally sensitive learning opportunities for increasingly diverse groups of students. School leaders need to master these new forms of pedagogy so that they can monitor and evaluate their teachers’ practice. Principals as leaders of learning can establish communities of effective practice in which continuing professional development becomes more sophisticated and is embedded into the fabric of the working day.

Centres of autonomy and accountability are shifting

School leaders can only have an impact on student outcomes if they have sufficient autonomy to make important decisions about the curriculum and teacher recruitment and development and if their major areas of responsibility are focused on improving student learning. Countries are increasingly opting for decentralised decision making, and balancing this with greater centralisation of accountability regimes such as standardised testing. Decentralisation has disadvantages as well as benefits. For example, school-level control over devolved budgets creates opportunities for school leaders to allocate resources to priority development areas, but it increases the burden of financial administration, leaving less time to focus on teaching and learning. School leaders are now often accountable for learning outcomes for teachers and students, where previously their accountability was for input into learning processes.

Policy and practice need to work better together

Government policy designed to change practice in schools can only work when it is coherent with school-level processes, systems and priorities. Effective implementation depends on the motivation and actions of school leaders. Policy makers need to engage school leaders in meaningful and continuous dialogue and consultation on policy development and formulation. School leaders who feel a sense of ownership of reform are more likely to engage their staff and students in implementing and sustaining changes.

Schools are confronted with an increasingly complex environment

In rapidly changing societies, the goals for schools and the means to achieve them are not always clear and static. Schools are under tremendous pressure to change and school leaders must enable teachers and students to deal effectively with the processes of change. Leaders of the most successful schools in challenging circumstances are typically known to, engaged with and trusted by both parents and the wider community. They seek to improve achievement and well-being for children and young people by involving businesses, sports clubs, faith-based groups and community organisations. School leaders are also increasingly collaborating with leaders of other schools and with the district to share the resources and skills needed to deliver a diverse range of learning opportunities and support services.

Three main barriers must be overcome for schools to successfully address these challenges:

- **Principals' roles are intensifying** – As the job of leading a school has expanded and become more complex, it has become increasingly apparent that the roles and responsibilities expected of principals far exceeds what one person alone can achieve.
- **The profession is ageing** – The average school leader in OECD countries is 51 years old and will retire over the next five to ten years. In addition to improving the quality of current school leadership, it is also imperative to develop clear plans for future leadership and effective processes for leadership succession.
- **Working conditions are unattractive** – Many countries are facing decreasing numbers of applications for principal positions. Negative images are attached to a job which is often viewed as overburdened, offering insufficient training and preparation, inadequate salaries and poor working conditions. In particular, deputy principals and teachers feel that the additional rewards offered to principals are too small to compensate for the large increase in workload.

OECD IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

School leadership has become a priority development area in many countries. During 2006 and 2007, 22 educational systems in 19 countries took part in an OECD activity to evaluate the state of school leadership and investigate different countries' approaches to enhancing the quality and sustainability of school leadership.

The activity identified four policy levers which, taken together, can improve school leadership practice. They are:

1. (Re)defining school leadership responsibilities
2. Distributing school leadership
3. Developing skills for effective school leadership
4. Making school leadership an attractive profession

The rest of this summary deals with each of the policy levers in turn.

POLICY LEVEL 1: (RE)DEFINING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

The challenges facing schools are growing in complexity and there is a need to (re)define the way school leadership is viewed and carried out.

Supporting higher degrees of autonomy

Greater autonomy for school-level professionals is associated with better student performance. However autonomy alone does not guarantee improved school leadership. School leaders also need an explicit mandate and the capacity, motivation and support to use their autonomy to focus on the responsibilities most conducive to improving school and student outcomes.

Schools that have a greater say in curricular decision-making demonstrate higher student performance. In settings where school leaders can barely influence course offer and content, steps should be taken to strengthen school leaders' responsibilities so that they can manage and adapt the curriculum to local needs, ensure coherence, and match their offer to school learning goals.

What scope exists in your context for school leaders to shape and adapt the curriculum?

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Leadership roles that improve learning outcomes

School leadership makes a difference to student outcomes when it creates the right environment for teachers to improve classroom practice and student learning. Some leadership roles influence teaching and learning more than others:

i. Supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality

Teacher quality is the most important school-level determinant of student performance, and school leadership focused on improving the motivation, capacities and working environment of teachers is most likely to improve student learning. School leaders influence teacher quality through:

- **Teacher monitoring and evaluation** – School leader involvement in classroom observation and feedback is associated with better student performance. However, school leaders do not always have sufficient time and capacity to focus on this important responsibility. Policy makers need to address constraints limiting the capacity of school leaders to engage in meaningful teacher evaluation activities, including providing appropriate training.
- **Teacher professional development** – Providing, promoting and participating in teacher development that is relevant to the local school context and aligned both with overall school improvement goals and teachers' needs is a key responsibility for school leaders which policy makers need to emphasise. Devolving discretion over training and development budgets to the school level enables school leaders to offer and coordinate meaningful professional learning opportunities for all their teachers.

- **Collaborative work cultures** – Effective teaching in modern schools is collegial and transparent, cooperative and collaborative, and conducted in teams and larger professional learning communities. School leaders need support and encouragement in promoting teamwork among teachers.

What obstacles prevent principals from focusing on leadership roles that improve learning outcomes?



ii. Goal-setting, assessment and accountability

School leaders need to have the discretion to set strategic directions, so they can develop school plans and goals aligned with broader national curriculum standards and responsive to local needs. If external accountability is to benefit student learning, “data-wise” school leadership is important. This means developing the skills needed to monitor progress and interpret and use data to plan and design appropriate improvement strategies. Involving other staff in using accountability data can also strengthen professional learning communities within schools, engaging those who need to change their practice to improve results.

What skills development opportunities exist to support teachers and school leaders to improve their ability to handle and interpret data to inform improvement?



iii. Strategic resource management

Using human and financial resources strategically and aligning them with pedagogical purposes help to focus school activities on improving teaching and learning. School leaders need access to appropriate financial expertise, for example by appointing someone with budgeting qualifications to the leadership team. Leaders’ involvement in teacher recruitment decisions is also important. Being able to select teaching staff is central to their ability to establish a school culture and capacity conducive to better student learning. It is difficult to hold school leaders accountable for learning outcomes when they have no say in selecting their staff. As one principal explained, using a football metaphor: “If I cannot choose the members of my team, I cannot be responsible for winning on the field”.

What mechanisms exist to support school leaders to make resource and recruitment decisions that are consistent with their school improvement priorities?



iv. Leadership beyond school borders: system leadership

Local education authorities, districts and municipalities in some countries facilitate relationships between schools in order to develop and spread good practice. Working successfully with other schools and school leaders, collaborating and developing relationships of interdependence and trust, is a new role for many school leaders that is not always easy, particularly in environments still dominated by competition. System leadership, as these forms of collaboration are sometimes described, means directing leaders' energies beyond their own schools to the welfare of all children and young people in their city, town or region. Focusing on improving the profession as a whole in ways that access learning support from others provides benefits to everyone's schools and communities. Reaching out to local communities in ways that influence the external conditions affecting students' learning is also a critical feature of the school leader's role, and some countries have long viewed the community as an essential resource in the improvement of schools.

What structures and incentives exist in your context that encourage school leaders to connect with others beyond their own school to the benefit of student learning?



Frameworks to improve the definition of responsibilities

In many countries, the core tasks of school leaders are unclear. Some countries have developed school leadership frameworks or standards for the profession that provide coherence and guidance on the characteristics and responsibilities of school leaders. In developing leadership frameworks, it is important to consider the evidence on effective leadership practice as well as the needs of national education systems.

Representatives from the school leadership profession must be involved with policymakers in designing and developing these frameworks in order to feel ownership of them.

Frameworks can and should be used as a basis for recruitment, training and appraisal of school leaders.

What benefits do or could leadership frameworks offer in your context?



POLICY LEVEL 2: DISTRIBUTING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The roles and responsibilities of school leadership are rapidly expanding beyond what it is reasonable to expect one individual to achieve. School leadership teams and school boards can play a vital role in school development. A clear definition of school leadership roles and how they are best distributed can contribute to increased effectiveness and better provision for future leaders.

Reducing the burden of school principals

Principals are becoming increasingly autonomous and accountable. While school leaders' responsibilities (and even what they are called) may vary from country to country, all are required to lead their organisations safely through fast paced change processes, sometimes in very difficult contexts. To do this they need to connect with other school leaders, district staff and representatives from their local community. Most important of all, they need to keep up with developments in teaching and learning in order to supervise continuing improvement in teacher and student outcomes.

Where roles and responsibilities are shared with other professionals in and beyond the school and with school board members, the principal's position remains very strong. An increase in the power and influence of others does not diminish the power and influence of the principal, but rather extends and enlarges it while reducing the individual burden of school leadership tasks.

What contribution might others make to reduce the burden of school leadership on principals in your context?



Distributing leadership for school effectiveness

One way to meet challenges is to distribute leadership across different people and organisations, for example deputy principals, middle-level managers and people in other schools. This can improve school effectiveness by building capacity for continuous improvement, for addressing within-school variation and for succession planning. This may require developing incentives and development opportunities to reward and support participation and performance in distributed leadership teams. Some countries have also distributed leadership beyond school borders, sharing leaders with other surrounding schools in order to benefit from economies of scale.

What incentives exist in your system to encourage people to become involved in distributed leadership teams?



Supporting school boards in playing their part

Effective school boards can also contribute significantly to the success of their schools. But they must be well prepared and supported and have a clear definition of their roles and responsibilities, especially in relation to their principals. Recruitment and selection processes for school boards should encourage representative, high quality candidates with suitable skills and commitment to apply for membership. Support structures to ensure active participation and opportunities for skills development on relevant topics should be provided.

What measures are currently taken in your context to ensure that school boards are representative and demonstrate an appropriate level of skill and commitment?



Reflecting distributed leadership in policy

There is a need to broaden the concept of school leadership to include a wider group of professionals in and around schools. Steps are necessary to modify policy and working conditions to reflect distributed leadership, for example in national leadership frameworks and in relation to levels of decision making and accountability mechanisms.

To what extent does existing policy (e.g. relating to accountability) support or hinder distributed leadership?



Sustaining distributed leadership

Distributed leadership may be made more sustainable through team structures or committees *i.e.* by giving it long term institutional form. However, effective distributed leadership is based on expertise rather than formal position or years of experience. Teams may be developed in response to contextual or current challenges or opportunities. Encouraging distributed leadership can also build leadership capacity among potential leaders, strengthening succession planning. This type of leadership works most effectively in a climate of trust and mutual support.

What challenges and opportunities in schools might be most productively tackled by distributed leadership teams?



POLICY LEVEL 3: DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Leadership development can play a key role in shaping leaders' performance, and evidence indicates its positive impact on leaders' practice. School leadership development has become a reality across OECD countries in the past 10 to 15 years and is frequently seen as critically important, but more coherent approaches are needed.

Strengthening practice through leadership development

Changing roles and responsibilities and broader distribution of leadership require principals to develop new skills. Leadership tasks required for schools of the 21st century include guiding teaching and learning by enhancing teacher quality that will lead to improved learning outcomes, managing resources, setting goals and measuring progress, and leading and collaborating beyond school borders.

What new skills do you think are needed to lead a school in the 21st century?



Analysing needs and context

Analysis of needs helps to develop effective programmes and to ensure that appropriate leadership development is offered to the right people. Furthermore, contextual factors that influence leaders' practice must be considered in order to target the right provision.

What mechanisms exist to identify school leaders' development needs? What scope is there to tailor development opportunities to meet individual needs?



Seeing leadership development as a continuum

In some countries, leadership development is seen as a lifelong learning process, related to the continuum of school leadership. Leaders need formal and informal support processes throughout the different stages in their career, with particular support when important changes occur. This support can be aligned with a leadership framework that has been developed through an open, rigorous and objective process. Leadership development provision should be part of a larger, ongoing and coherent set of experiences for career-long personal growth and professional skill enhancement, and should be available during and suited to the three different stages of a leader's career:

- **Initial training** – Decisions must be made about whether such training should be mandatory or voluntary and whether it becomes a prerequisite for the job of principal, as occurs in some countries. Incentives may help encourage school leaders to participate. Orientation courses are other ways of attracting good potential candidates, as is including components of leadership training in initial training.
- **Induction** – If initial training cannot be provided, it becomes even more important to offer strong induction programmes to support development of basic leadership skills. Providing support for members of school leadership teams can also be beneficial. Networks (virtual or real) are a valuable and cost-efficient way to provide informal development and support.
- **In-service training** – In-service training is particularly critical in changing educational environments. Others involved in leadership teams also need this support. Networks can also be used as an informal mechanism at this stage. Some systems require a certain number of days or hours of professional development of their school leaders.

In your context, at what stage in a school leader's career does the majority of skills development take place?



Ensuring consistency and quality of provision

Leadership development and training is often managed by a range of different providers. It is important to ensure consistency between providers, to ensure appropriate expertise, flexibility and alignment with frameworks in the programmes offered.

Some countries have established national school leadership institutions to serve this purpose, while universities play this role in other countries. It is important to find appropriate ways to evaluate the quality of leadership development and mechanisms to evaluate its impact.

What criteria do you think should be used to evaluate the impact of leadership development programmes?



Varying leadership development strategies

There is no one way to provide leadership development opportunities. Training programmes must draw on research about effective leadership learning and include an appropriate balance of theoretical and practical knowledge and self-study. Many countries use group work, networks, coaching and mentoring to engage learners in managing their learning and ground their knowledge and skill development in real contexts. Workplace learning should complement formal learning. While different types of skills are needed for leading in certain contexts, it is increasingly accepted that there is a set of leadership constructs that are broadly applicable across cultures as long as cultural values, behaviours and sensitivity to context are applied as they are used.

How broad is the range of approaches used in leadership development programmes in your context?



POLICY LEVEL 4: MAKING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AN ATTRACTIVE PROFESSION

Large numbers of principals will be retiring over the coming years and few teachers and middle managers say they intend to apply for senior leadership roles. It is crucial to find ways to retain and sustain existing leaders and ensure that more leaders come forward for the future.

Focusing on leadership succession planning

Succession planning is essential to expand the applicant pool for school leadership and increase the quantity and quality of future school leaders. Leadership succession cannot rely on self-selection by talented candidates. Proactive strategies are needed to identify and develop future leaders with high potential early in their careers. They then need to be supported in participating in leadership experiences and encouraged to develop their leadership skills.

How is talent recognised and nurtured in your context? What leadership development opportunities can talented staff access?



Professionalising recruitment procedures

Recruitment processes can have a strong effect on the quality of school leadership. To make the process as effective, objective and transparent as possible, it is essential to develop systematic frameworks for recruitment procedures and eligibility criteria. Selection criteria must address a wide range of aspects, highlighting talent, competence and expertise as well as seniority. An important issue to consider is whether the wide range of leadership tasks makes it advisable to recruit both a pedagogical leader with a teaching background and a leader with competencies in areas such as communication and financial and human resource management. Consistent recruitment procedures are also critical, and recruitment panels need guidance and training in using different tools and procedures to assess candidates' knowledge, skills and competencies.

To what extent does your system have procedures in place to ensure that the most talented people with the greatest potential are appointed? Are seniority and experience the most important criteria?



Making school leaders' salaries attractive

Salary levels can have an impact on the attractiveness of school leadership. School leaders' salaries must compare favourably with similar jobs in the public service and leaders in the private sector. The huge increase in workload and responsibilities of principals demands that their salary be significantly higher than that of teachers and other members of school leadership teams.

Introducing more flexible salaries may provide incentives for school leaders to choose to work in disadvantaged schools or difficult locations. Salaries linked to school-level factors may make it possible to adjust supply and demand, ensuring that all schools benefit from leaders of similar quality, and they may also contribute to raising school leaders' motivation. Performance-related salary systems also sometimes raise motivation, when the systems are considered fair, but they can be counterproductive in promoting efforts to build more collaborative school climates. Rewarding those with distributed leadership responsibilities and who are involved in school leadership teams can provide further incentives.

How does a principal's salary compare with other public service leaders in your context? What pay increase can a teacher or deputy principal expect on promotion? Is a performance-related pay system used?



Acknowledging the contribution of professional associations

If workforce reforms are to be implemented successfully, it is important that school leaders are actively involved in policy formulation and feel a sense of ownership of reform. By participating in professional organisations, school leaders can have agency over workforce policy issues and contribute to shaping the conditions in which school leaders work.

What opportunities exist in your system for school leaders to contribute to policy formulation and implementation?



Offering flexible career development options

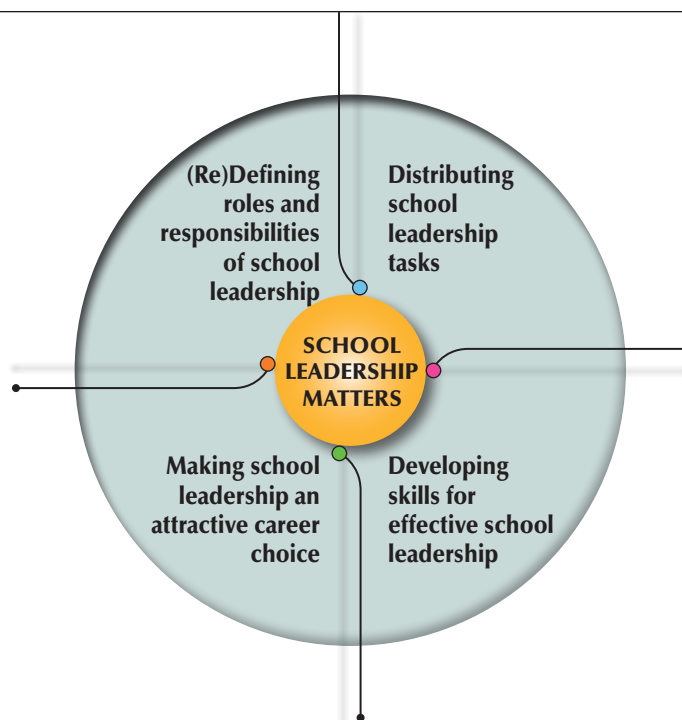
Expanding career opportunities for school leaders can make the profession more attractive to future applicants, increase the motivation of serving school leaders and bring benefits to the system by making it possible to use school leaders' knowledge and skills for advisory, consultant or coordination activities. Renewable contracts provide the opportunity to periodically reassess, recognise and acknowledge high-performing principals and offer them incentives to develop their skills and improve their practice. Other ways to make the profession more flexible and mobile include opportunities to work in a variety of contexts, directing a "community of schools" and facilitating the learning of others in school leadership positions.

What opportunities now exist in your system for schools principal to enhance their career and extend their leadership practice?



Module 2

Self Diagnosing and Auditing



ANALYSING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN YOUR CONTEXT

This module enables people to consider the OECD *Improving School Leadership* recommendations in the context of their own experience and aspirations. It contains a questionnaire designed to facilitate reflection and discussion on the current state of school leadership and raise challenging questions about future directions. Building consensus on what a preferred future might be helps people to understand their starting point – as a first step towards planning where they want to go next. The questionnaire can be used by individuals (policy makers, practitioners or researchers) or by groups. The items have been developed to be inclusive, so some items will be more relevant to policymakers and others more relevant to school leaders or other participants. The goal is to bring together people with diverse perspectives so that they can hear and discuss different points of view. It is important to keep in mind that the questions are not about individual schools or school systems, but about participants' observations and analysis of what is happening in their context.

HOW TO USE MODULE 2

The statements in the questionnaire are drawn from recommendations relating to the four policy levers set out in *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice* and the findings outlined in *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership* (both published by OECD in 2008). The policy levers – (re)defining school leadership responsibilities; distributing school leadership; developing skills for effective school leadership and making school leadership an attractive profession – form the basis of the parts one to four of the questionnaire. Part five contains items related to system leadership. Part six is a composite, offering a selection of questions on all four policy levers and system leadership.

For each statement presented, there are two questions. The first asks about people's perceptions of reality in their local context: what they see as *currently happening* in relation to the recommendation. The second question asks them about their preferred future – what they think policy or practice *should be* in order for school leadership to improve. Analysing the gap between what people perceive to be happening now (the current situation) and what they believe to be important (their preference) helps identify strengths and areas of need. The questionnaires present a number of statements drawn from the *Improving School Leadership* findings. Participants are first asked to circle the number on the left side of the page that best reflects their view of the **current situation**, using a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly agree* to *Strongly disagree*. Then they are asked to circle the number on the right side of the page that best reflects how important they think this is to improve school leadership (the **preferred future**), using a five-point scale ranging from *Crucial* to *Not at all important*.

Before people complete the questionnaire, ideally they should be familiar with the findings of the OECD *Improving School Leadership* project, by reading the summary in Module 1 of the Toolkit or having someone present the main findings. (A PowerPoint presentation on the findings and the Executive Summary of the two books are available at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership.)

ADMINISTERING, COLLATING AND ANALYSING THE RESPONSES

The way you administer, collate and analyse the questionnaire responses will depend on the number of respondents, how many items they fill out, and the use you want to make of the results.

Depending on time available, people may choose among the following options:

- complete all of the four policy levers parts of the questionnaire (40 items);
- complete all of the parts, including system leadership (50 items);
- focus on one or two parts of the questionnaire relevant to a particular policy or practice area, bearing in mind that all of the levers are connected;
- complete the short (20 item) composite questionnaire in the sixth part, which includes items all five parts; and
- develop a customised questionnaire, selecting items from each of the parts that are particularly relevant to your situation.

With a small number of participants and fewer items, the facilitator can call for and tally individual responses on a flip chart or other recording device. With larger numbers and amounts of data, individually completed responses might be handed in for collation during a break. It is also possible to form groups of participants who discuss and collate their individual responses or possibly respond to the questionnaire as a group. The group responses can be tallied on the spot or handed in for collation, again depending on the amount of data.

Larger amounts of data (items x respondents) will require more systematic recording and tallying procedures, and a more sophisticated or detailed analysis will call for more rigorous statistical procedures. Under the assumption that most groups will use the questionnaire to stimulate discussion, rather than for deeper analytic purposes, we suggest below a simple method for organising and presenting the data for discussion. For more sophisticated statistical analysis, you might want to use a commercial statistical package such as SPSS, one of the several available online survey tools, or Excel.



Depending on the approach chosen and the number of participants, you can expect to spend an hour on this module, allowing time people to start discussions in groups of two or three and for the whole group to share their discussion.

HOW TO ANALYSE THE FINDINGS

Current situation

5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Uncertain
2	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree

Preferred future

5	Crucial
4	Important
3	Fairly important
2	Not very important
1	Not at all important

Participants will rate each of the statements on the five-point scales. For the analysis of responses, collapse the five categories into three, as follows:

Current situation

Strongly agree (5) & Agree (4)	= Agree
Uncertain (3)	= Uncertain
Disagree (2) & Strongly disagree (1)	= Disagree

Preferred future

Crucial (5) & Important (4)	= Important
Fairly important (3)	= Less important
Not very important (2) & Not at all important (1)	= Unimportant

For each item, lay out the agreement percentages directly above the importance percentages. Bear in mind that if the number of responses is small, you should be cautious about using and interpreting percentages. Laying results out this way makes it easier to see gaps and identify issues.

Example: School leaders have discretion over strategic direction setting.

	Agree (Important)	Uncertain (Less important)	Disagree (Unimportant)
Current Situation/Agreement	51%	31%	18%
Preferred future/Importance	91%	6%	3%

In this example, just over half of the people (51%) agree that school leaders currently have discretion over strategic direction setting while just under a third (31%) are not sure and nearly a fifth (18%) disagree. In contrast, nearly everyone (91%) thinks that it is important.

The last two pages of Module 3 contain questions to stimulate group discussion and space for people to make notes on the discussions.



QUESTIONNAIRE: ANALYSING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN YOUR CONTEXT


This questionnaire has been designed to help you think about school leadership in your country/system as it is currently practiced and as you would like it to be. The questionnaire results will be used as a basis for discussion. Please complete the questionnaire, circling two numbers.


Current situation					Preferred future				
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

First, to the left of the item, circle the number that best reflects your view of the current situation.


Second, to the right of the item, circle the number that best reflects how important you think this is to improve school leadership.


.....

Current situation					Preferred future				
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
<p><i>Part 1</i></p> <p>(RE)DEFINING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES</p> 									
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

Current situation						Preferred future				
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
					<i>Part 2</i>					
					DISTRIBUTING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP					
										
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership tasks are widely distributed in schools.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Staff are given incentives to participate in leadership teams.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Roles and relationships of principals and school boards are clear.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Teachers are encouraged to participate in leadership to strengthen succession planning.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Accountability mechanisms reflect distributed leadership arrangements.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Board members have opportunities to develop their skills for school governance and improvement.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Teams of expert staff come together to address contextual or current challenges.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Middle-level managers and other potential leaders have opportunities for leadership development.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Distributed leadership is recognised and reinforced in existing policy (e.g. in national leadership frameworks).	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Structures in schools encourage the development of leadership teams.	5	4	3	2	1

Current situation						Preferred future				
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
					<i>Part 3</i>					
					DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP					
										
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development provision is offered throughout all stages in school leaders' careers.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development provision includes the right balance of theoretical and practical knowledge and self-study.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development strategies focus on skills for strategic, financial and human resource management.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Efforts are made to find the right candidates for initial leadership development.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Networks (virtual or real) exist to provide leadership development opportunities for principals and leadership teams.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development strategies focus on skills for goal setting, assessment and accountability.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development provision addresses contextual factors that influence practice.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Principals are given incentives to invest time in their development.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development provision is based on analysis of need.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development provision is designed to be coherent with a leadership development framework.	5	4	3	2	1

Current situation					Preferred future									
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important				
					<p><i>Part 4</i></p> <p>MAKING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AN ATTRACTIVE PROFESSION</p> 									
5	4	3	2	1	Potential leaders are identified and encouraged to develop their leadership practices.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	School leadership salaries compare well with similar levels in the public and private sectors.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders are actively involved through their representative organisations in developing and implementing reform.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	A wide range of tools and procedures is used to assess leadership candidates.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Opportunities for diverse career pathways are available to school leaders.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Recruitment panels receive guidance and training for assessing the knowledge, skills and competencies of leadership candidates.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Talent is considered as important as seniority in considering candidates for school leadership.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Renewable fixed-term contracts are available to school leaders.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	A principal's salary is sufficiently greater than a teacher's salary.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Financial incentives are offered to school leaders in difficult areas.	5	4	3	2	1				

Current situation					Preferred future									
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important				
					<p><i>Part 5</i></p> <p>SYSTEM LEADERSHIP</p> 									
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders care about the success of other schools as well as their own.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders participate in networks focused on improving learning.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development supports leaders to reduce achievement gaps between schools.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders work together in partnership with leaders in other schools.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	There is system-wide consensus that the engagement of school leaders in collaborative activities is important and valued.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Principals support the work of other schools in their district or municipality.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders share resources.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development and support are offered to build the necessary competencies for effective collaboration.	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	Incentives exist to encourage school leaders to work for the success of other schools (e.g. rewards, recognition etc.).	5	4	3	2	1				
5	4	3	2	1	There is a culture of trust and collaboration between school leaders in different schools	5	4	3	2	1				

Current situation						Preferred future				
Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree		Crucial	Important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important
<p><i>Part 6</i></p> <p>THE FOUR IMPROVING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP POLICY LEVELS</p> 										
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders have sufficient autonomy to lead the practices most likely to improve student learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Teachers are encouraged to participate in leadership to strengthen succession planning.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development is offered throughout all stages in school leaders' careers.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders' salaries are attractive.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders participate in networks focused on improved student learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders take an active role in teachers' professional development.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Evidence about effective leadership learning informs the design of leadership development.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership is sometimes distributed across surrounding schools.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Recruitment panels receive guidance and training for assessing the knowledge, skills and competencies of leadership candidates.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Roles, responsibilities and skills of principals and other leaders are defined in terms appropriate to the challenges of achieving improved student outcomes.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Frameworks exist that provide coherence and guidance on the characteristics, tasks and responsibilities of school leadership.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership development strategies focus on skills for the roles that contribute to improving student learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders are actively involved through their representative organisations in developing and implementing reform.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Opportunities for diverse career pathways are available to school leaders.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	School leaders are encouraged and supported to collaborate with surrounding schools.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Potential leaders are identified and encouraged to develop their leadership practices.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Leadership tasks are widely distributed in schools.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Board members have opportunities to develop their skills for school governance and improvement.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Evaluation according to clear standards ensures that quality leadership development is offered by all providers.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	Accountability mechanisms reflect distributed leadership arrangements.	5	4	3	2	1

INTERPRETING YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

What seem to be your strengths? (High percentages indicating topics on which there is agreement that they are currently happening and that they are important for the future.)



What does it mean when a high percentage of people use the rating "Uncertain"? What might this indicate?



Why might it be that a high percentage of items had the rating "Disagree"?



What does it mean when people don't consider a topic very important?



For items when people rate an issue as important but feel it is not currently happening, what do you need to explore to reform your policies and practices? Associated questions include: "Why is it not happening?" and "What may need to be done about this?"

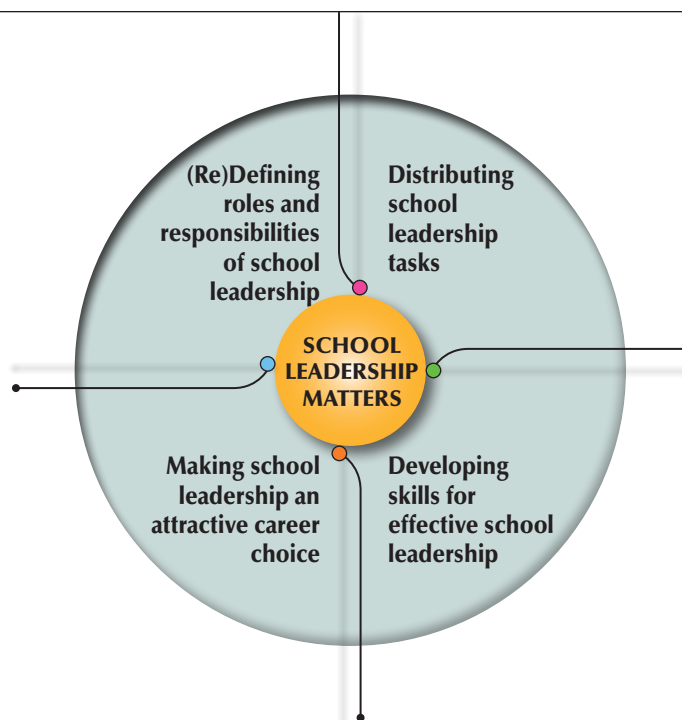


Taking into account the needs identified in this questionnaire and your context, how will you set priorities on the issues that need to be addressed, including prioritising among the four policy levers?



Module 3

Prioritising and Taking Action



DIAMOND 9 PRIORITISATION PROCESS AND ACTION PLANNING GUIDE

This module contains lists of possible priorities based on the four policy levers identified in the OECD's *Improving School Leadership* report and outlines the "Diamond 9" facilitated process to help groups determine their priorities for action. Following this is an action planning guide to help move from prioritising to action. Clarifying priorities helps people begin to plan and allocate resources effectively.

The Diamond 9 process is a facilitated exercise that helps people to debate and work together to select from a long list of possible priorities and build understanding, consensus, shared ownership and a sound foundation for collective action planning.

HOW TO USE MODULE 3

For the Diamond 9 process, participants are divided into groups of three to five people. Each group is given a set of priorities and asked to select the nine most important items and place them on a diamond-shaped grid. Ideally people will have read the summary of the relevant policy lever in Module 1 of the Toolkit or have had a chance review the Executive Summary or PowerPoint of the findings of the *Improving School Leadership* project which are available on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership.

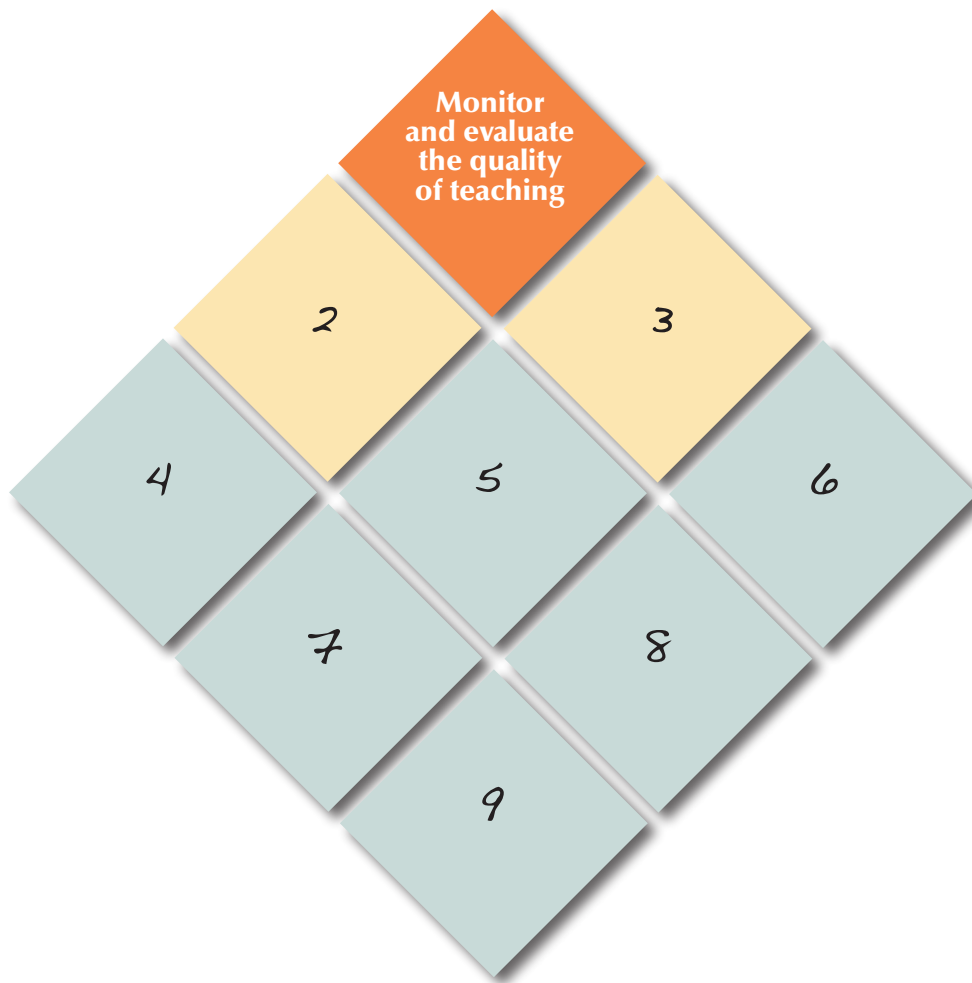
Each group needs:

- A set of labels or cards of the priorities that can be made from the material on the following pages. The priorities can be numbered on the Toolkit, or written or printed onto cards or post-it notes so that they can be sorted by the group.
- A diamond-shaped base sheet like the one below that can be drawn on a large sheet of paper.

The issue given the highest priority is placed in the top of the diamond and the lowest priority issue at the bottom of the diamond. Below is an example of an issue in the top priority location. Issues in each row are of equal importance.



Depending on the approach chosen and the size of the group, you can expect to spend an hour on the Diamond 9 exercise and about the same on the action planning process.





HOW TO FACILITATE THE PROCESS



- Give each group one set of labels from the following pages and ask them to read them together.
- Ask each group to choose the nine most important issues for them and organise them on the Diamond 9 base in order of importance – highest priority at the top of the diamond and lowest priority at the bottom. Set the task according to which of the following policy levers you are addressing:

(Re)Defining school leadership roles	Choose the nine most important roles that school leaders should undertake if they are to improve students' learning outcomes.
Distributing school leadership	Choose the nine most important things that need to be addressed to create the conditions necessary for effective leadership distribution in schools.
Developing skills for effective leadership	Choose the nine most important features of effective leadership development, using the sentence starter: <i>Leadership development programmes need to...</i>
Making school leadership an attractive profession	Choose the nine things most likely to make school leadership an attractive profession.



- It is helpful to post the diamond on the wall so that everyone in the group can see it. Allow around 20 minutes for the groups to complete this task.



- If you are working with more than three groups, merge two groups at this stage and ask them to explain their selections to each other. Give the merged groups time to identify a common choice. Allow 10 minutes if you use this task.



- Invite each group to present their top three selections to the whole group and explain briefly how they arrived at this selection. Test each group's decision making by asking them to explain why they prioritised one item over another. Allow approximately 3 minutes for each group.














- Challenge the whole group to identify patterns and common choices that would suggest shared priorities and arrive at a top three that represent the majority view of the group. Allow 15 minutes for this activity.





DIAMOND 9 – STATEMENTS FOR PRIORITISATION



(Re)Defining school leadership responsibilities	Distributing school leadership
Lead curriculum development.	Encourage the distribution of leadership tasks across the school.
 Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching.	Facilitate the development of leadership teams.
 Lead teacher professional development.	Strengthen succession planning by encouraging staff to participate in leadership.
 Build a culture of collaboration amongst teachers.	Extend leadership development opportunities to middle-level management and other potential leaders.
 Set the strategic direction of the school.	Hold schools to account in ways that reflect distributed leadership arrangements.
 Use data effectively to improve practice.	Recognise and reinforce distributed leadership in leadership frameworks.
 Ensure that resource allocations are consistent with pedagogical priorities.	Offer incentives for participation in leadership teams.
 Select and appoint teachers.	Make clear the relative roles of school leaders and school boards.
 Collaborate with surrounding schools.	Ensure that the composition of school boards is consistent with their objectives and responsibilities.
 Distribute leadership tasks and responsibilities.	Provide opportunities for school board members to develop skills relevant to school governance and improvement.
 Contribute to the development of policy on school leadership.	Facilitate the distribution of leadership across surrounding schools.
 Refer to evidence about effective leadership practice.	Encourage teams of expert staff to come together to address challenges.




DIAMOND 9 – STATEMENTS FOR PRIORITISATION (suite)

Developing skills for effective school leadership <i>“Leadership development programmes need to...”</i>	Making school leadership an attractive profession
Focus on leading curriculum development.	Make support staff as well as teachers eligible for leadership roles.
Focus on monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching.	Identify and encourage potential leaders to develop their leadership practice.
Focus on leading teacher professional development.	Train recruitment panels to assess candidates using a wide range of tools and processes.
Focus on using data effectively to improve practice.	Use criteria other than seniority when inviting and assessing applications.
Take into account contextual factors that influence practice.	Offer salaries that are comparable with similar roles in the public and private sectors.
Be based on an analysis of need.	Ensure that principals are paid sufficiently more than teachers.
Be available through all stages in the school leadership career.	Ensure that principals are paid sufficiently more than others in the leadership team.
Include a balance of theoretical and practical knowledge.	Offer financial incentives to school leaders in difficult areas.
Be quality assured according to clear and shared standards.	Offer flexible fixed-term as well as permanent contracts of employment.
Draw on evidence about effective leadership learning.	Involve school leaders in policy development and reform through their representative organisations.
Have impact that can be evaluated using a range of methods.	Evaluate performance using clear and reliable assessment criteria.
Address individual, team and school needs.	Encourage teams of expert staff to come together to address challenges.





ACTION PLANNING GUIDE

What are the implications of the outcomes of the Diamond 9 process for policy and for practice?

Using the priorities identified and agreed in the Diamond 9, you can organise a follow up session to develop a plan for action. As a starting point, work on the top three priorities agreed by the group (use the following planning process for each of these priorities).



Step 1

What is your priority for action?

Review the outcomes of the Diamond 9 to confirm or modify priorities for action.



Step 2

What exactly is the present situation?

Clarify and agree on present practice.





Step 3

What needs to be done?

Brainstorm and agree on the main action steps.



Step 4

What resources are needed?

Identify the resources needed – in terms of time, space, equipment, funding – and how they will be accessed and organised.





Step 5

What are the main driving and restraining forces?

List the forces that are working for and against you and see if you can find ways to increase the driving forces and decrease the restraining forces. You may want to use a force field analysis to help you with this.

Driving forces
prompting change

Restraining forces
resisting change

.....>	<.....
.....>	<.....
.....>	<.....
.....>	<.....
.....>	<.....
.....>	<.....



Step 6

How will you know what has been achieved?

Brainstorm and agree on the main objectives and targets and how they are to be evaluated.





Step 7

Who will be responsible for what actions?

Agree on roles and responsibilities.



Step 8

What is the timetable?

Agree on when the various tasks are to be completed and a procedure for reporting back.



Module 4

Communicating and Connecting



COMMUNICATING AND CONNECTING – A ONE-DAY FACILITATED WORKSHOP

Successful school leadership policy and practice depends on making connections between different areas of development and improvement. To achieve this, colleagues need to communicate through meaningful professional conversations around evidence. This one-day workshop creates an opportunity to bring stakeholders together. Participants work together to engage with the evidence presented in the *Improving School Leadership* reports. Drawing on activities from the previous modules, the workshop provides a structure to support participants to explore the findings and work out the implications of the report in their context. Bringing a group together to work on this material capitalises on diverse perspectives within the group to scrutinise and test the findings, to make conceptual and concrete practical connections, and to confront possible areas of tension or conflict between the OECD policy levers and participants' own beliefs and practice.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FACILITATION

Effective facilitation is a skill set that many, but not all, people have. Effective facilitators are excellent listeners and are sensitive to group dynamics. They are impartial and scrupulous about letting others' views and voices be heard, while managing their own impulses to join in.

Facilitation is vital to the success of your workshop. You will need at least one facilitator in each discussion group to make sure the workshop goes smoothly and achieves its aims.

Facilitation is also required for the large group phases and the overall process for the day. The main facilitator:

- Explains the purpose of the workshop and the different stages to the group and, as appropriate, reminds participants at each stage of the process what needs to happen next.
- Supports participants in understanding and examining key findings, and manages the pace and timing of the workshop.
- Ensures that everyone is given an opportunity to contribute and be heard. This may mean managing the more dominant and confident members of the group so that others can make an equal contribution, feel that they too "own" the outcomes of the event.
- Stretches and challenges participants and summarises process at each stage of the workshop. The quality of the workshop and participants' experiences of it depend on their being encouraged to "think outside the box", "get outside their comfort zone", and generally examine the policy levers from a range of different perspectives. They will then be expected to turn what they find into practical and achievable recommendations and actions.
- Provides the necessary resources (wall space, large sheets of paper, post-it notes, marker pens) for participants to use in their discussions,

PARTICIPANTS

In thinking about participants, there is a balance to strike. It is important to try to create a community at the workshop that is as diverse as the wider community it seeks to represent or simulate. If you achieve this, you can feel confident that the policy levers are being scrutinised and tested by the full range of people who are likely to influence decisions and actions later. On the other hand, trying to make the workshop fully representative may make it too big, too expensive and too difficult to get off the ground.

Good questions to ask in planning this activity are:

- Who are the people most concerned with/affected by the four policy levers?
- Who will be key to achieving and acting upon the decisions and outcomes of the workshop?

Considering your context, people it may be appropriate to invite include:

- national and local politicians;
- national policy makers;
- district, regional or local authority officers;
- school leaders including but not limited to principals;
- members of school boards, councils or governing bodies;
- representatives of unions and professional associations;
- higher education institutions involved in training and development of school leaders and teachers;
- teachers;
- students; and
- parents.

The minimum number of people required to offer a good range of views and voices in the workshop is 16. This allows for four groups of four participants to work together in the group discussion phase of the workshop. The optimum number of participants for small group activities is eight.

If your group size is larger than 32 you should think about doubling up the groups rather than increasing them in size. Groups that are larger than eight are much harder to facilitate effectively and you run the risk of individuals feeling that they have not been heard, which can lead to difficulties later.

When you send your invitation, let participants know why they have been asked to attend and that you expect them to contribute actively in an energetic workshop. Offer some highlights from the report or, better still, send them the summary as pre-reading. Be honest and optimistic about what you hope the workshop will achieve.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

The workshop takes place over four stages.

Ideally participants will have received the summary in Module 1 of this toolkit as pre-reading for the workshop. Do not worry if this is not possible or feels inappropriate, as the day will work without the pre-reading. However, participants will need to have the summary available to refer to on the day.

STAGE 1

An initial plenary presentation based on the recommendations in *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*.



A facilitator, possibly the country coordinator in countries that participated in the activity, makes a presentation to the whole group. If needed, the *Improving School Leadership* PowerPoint is available at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership. You should allow approximately 30 minutes for this stage, 20 minutes for the presentation and 10 minutes for discussion.



STAGE 2



Small group discussion based on participants responses to the gap analysis in Module 2 of the Toolkit to help build a collective view of the current situation and develop a set of priorities for action.

The large group is divided into four smaller groups, one for each of the four policy levers identified in the report. Each small group has a facilitator and a rapporteur. The facilitator's role is to clarify instructions, keep the group to time and assist them to focus their discussion so that they can arrive at an outcome. The rapporteur's role is to keep an account of the discussion and summarise the outcomes to feed into later discussions. If it is not possible to provide a rapporteur, then each small group needs to appoint a scribe.

Each participant completes the gap analysis questionnaire in Module 2 relevant to the policy area that he/she has chosen or been asked to work on. Participants are asked to evaluate their current situation in relation to each item on the questionnaire and then to say how important they think the item is for their context.

When participants have completed their analysis, ask them all to share any of their responses that surprised them and that they think might interest the group. Pay particular attention to items with a score of 2 or less in the *current situation* column and 4 or more in the *preferred future* column.

Ask the group, through discussion to identify their top three priority items to go forward to the larger group. Criteria for assigning priority might include:

- **Urgency** – a recent or impending change in circumstances.
- **Opportunity** – a new initiative or resource allocation that would make something possible for the first time.
- **Difficulty over time** – a long-standing issue that previous attempts have failed to address.

Repeat the process as many times as you can but at least twice, rotating the groups so that participants are able to discuss at least two of the policy levers. At the end of each rotation, gather in the three priorities and start to collate them.

Each rotation should take around 45 minutes, but allow one hour for the first discussion, when participants are getting used to using the gap analysis and getting to know one another.



At the end of Stage 2, you should have a set of priorities for each of the four policy levers. If you do 4 rotations, you will have a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 48 priorities. However in collating the priorities you are likely to find quite a lot of overlap. The maximum number of items you should allow to go forward into the next stage is 20.

Stage 3

People work in small groups to prioritise from amongst the items they have selected.



Change the groups around so that people are working in new mixed groups. Give each group the priority items identified from Stage 2 and use the Diamond 9 process from the Module 3 of the Toolkit to enable them to choose their top nine priorities, asking them to place the items with top priority at the top of the diamond and the remainder in order towards the bottom. Depending on how many items have been brought forward from Stage 2, they may need to discard some items. Allow 45 minutes for this stage.

Stage 4

The whole group comes back together to build a consensus about at least the top three priorities that should form the basis for action planning.



Back in the whole group, ask each small discussion group to feed back briefly on the three top priorities they have identified and why. If there are rapporteurs, this is part of their role. As each group presents, start to assemble a Diamond 9 of the items that emerge. When all the groups have presented, show the Diamond 9 to the group as you have constructed it, asking the group to judge any decisions about priority that need to be made. Allow one hour for this stage.

The workshop is concluded when the group has agreed on at least the top three priorities as a basis for action planning.



COMPLETING THE DAY AND SECURING COMMITMENT

At the end of the activity, allow a few minutes for people to reflect on the day. You can make a formal evaluation using a feedback form or invite people to offer comments verbally or in writing.

You can encourage people to make a public commitment to the outcomes of the workshop by asking them to identify one thing they will do when they get back into their own context and one thing they would like to ask the group taking the work forward to bear in mind.

Finally, you can invite a group to reconvene to complete the collaborative planning activity that follows on from the Diamond 9 in the prioritising and action planning section of the Toolkit.

About the Authors

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Improving School Leadership

THE TOOLKIT

School leadership is an education policy priority around the world. Increased school autonomy and a greater focus on schooling and school results have made it essential to reconsider the role of school leaders. From 2006 to 2008, the OECD conducted a study of school leadership around the world with the participation of Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders and French Community), Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Korea, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland and Scotland).

The Improving School Leadership project produced a significant body of knowledge on this issue in the form of country background reports and innovative case study reports, all of which are available on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership.

The findings were reported in two volumes published by the OECD in 2008:

- *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*;
- *Improving School Leadership, Volume 2: Case Studies on System Leadership*.

This Toolkit is a professional development tool for individuals or groups. It is designed to help policy makers, practitioners and relevant stakeholders to analyse their current school leadership policies and practices and develop a common understanding of where and how to take action based on the OECD *Improving School Leadership* policy recommendations.

The full text of this book is available on the OECD website at:

www.oecd.org/edu/schoolleadership

Those with access to all OECD books on line should use this link:

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