



Promoting Public Sector Education in an Age of Austerity

ETUCE Policy Paper on School Leadership

Submitted for adoption by the ETUCE Committee to the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International, meeting in Budapest on 26-28 November 2012, adopted on 27 November 2012

Preamble

School leaders play a vital role in the provision of quality education and in ensuring equity and equal educational opportunities for all learners. School leaders must create conditions for effective teaching and learning in their institutions by providing the necessary resources, support and motivation for their teachers and students. School leaders can help to create and maintain a positive school climate and a culture of peace, tolerance, equity, inclusiveness, cooperation, hard work in their institutions for the benefit of the whole school community. It is also important to establish a positive learning environment.

Political management of education can occur in different ways, including legal control by laws and regulations, financial management through the allocation of resources and management through ideological goals, curricula and guidelines etc. Some European governments have responded to the recent economic and financial crisis by following devolution, decentralisation or centralisation policies. In many instances, decentralisation has not been accompanied by adequate financial support, while in certain instances centralisation policies have taken away the rights of management, finance and governance from the local authorities, mainly from the schools to the national government level. This has serious consequences on school autonomy and school leadership. Schools should have a certain degree of autonomy, thus allowing school leaders to shape and develop the school. The trend of devolving decisions down to school level should not be used as an excuse to cut resources from education systems.

The professional autonomy of school leaders and teachers is important and must be maintained. It is also important that teachers have a high degree of autonomy in their professional practice in order to make professional choices, individually and collectively. Autonomy is the basis for decision-making based on the profession's own assessments.

In a rapidly changing society, education systems are facing challenges brought about by economic pressures, new technologies, and globalisation, to mention just a few. School leaders have to strengthen their capacities in order to respond to these challenges, meet the needs of various stakeholders and to improve collaboration with teachers, students, parents and authorities. They should meet the diverse needs of students, be equipped with various management techniques,



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health and safety rules. Modern management requires shared leadership and the development of management teams to enhance the educational experience of learners.

Most European countries struggle with attracting sufficient numbers of qualified school leadership applicants. Many European countries prioritize a teaching qualification and experience when recruiting school leaders, with no mandatory requirements regarding leadership training and experience. Approximately 70% of the ETUCE member organisations report that school leaders in their country need special training before they can be recruited. The special training can vary from preparatory courses, initial training, to continuous professional development or other forms of special training.

1. ETUCE's position on school leadership

ETUCE takes a broad view of school leadership, encompassing, not only the head or principal of the learning institution, but also other individuals with leadership roles such as deputy principals, departmental/subject heads, senior teachers and other individuals entrusted with leadership responsibilities. ETUCE believes in distributed leadership, shared or collaborative leadership involving teachers and the whole pedagogical community. Through such collaborative leadership, school principals can work with the whole pedagogical community to develop a shared vision for the school, to set the school goals and to work systematically towards their fulfilment.

2. Leadership principles

1. School leaders should be formally trained both as teachers and in leadership skills.
2. School leaders should focus on managing short-term as well as long-term goals of the school. It is important that the principal can be engaged and use time for pedagogical leadership role to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms.
3. A school leader should be not only an administrator but a pedagogical leader who contributes to a greater degree of collaboration among teachers and better teacher-student relations. It is therefore important to ensure that school leaders give sufficient attention to pedagogical leadership and that they are given the necessary means to support teaching and learning.
4. School leadership requires formal teaching skills in order to relate to and support teachers and students in their teaching and learning, in order to facilitate and plan for quality enhancement, professional development, and to ensure good working conditions.
5. School leaders must provide the teachers, students, and managerial and other staff with the appropriate support and resources, which are required to carry out their duties effectively.
6. School leaders have a vital role in the development of the school as a model for democracy and

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democratic involvement. School leaders should delegate duties and foster collaboration between themselves and teachers, between teachers and among the whole pedagogical community in order to create a democratic lifelong learning environment for both teachers and students.

7. The loyalty of school leaders towards their employer must not hamper school leaders' possibility and right to take part in the public debate on education and other issues, including the right to warn publicly of unintended and negative results of political and administrative decisions.
8. School leaders should be committed to their profession and be fully supported in their quest to ensure that the rights of learners, teachers and other education personnel are respected and promoted in accordance with the principles and values of the teaching profession as stated in the EI Policy Paper on Education: "Building the Future through Quality Education (2011)"¹ and the EI Declaration on Professional Ethics (2004)².

Recommendations to the teachers' trade unions:

The European teachers' trade unions should

1. Urge the governments at all levels to require formal teacher qualifications when recruiting school leaders.
2. Raise awareness among school owners, school leaders and teachers to facilitate leadership in schools.
3. Encourage and demand high quality initial and continuous professional development training of school leaders.
4. Advocate a collaborative working and learning environment and democratisation of the school.

3. School leadership Preparation and Recruitment

9. ETUCE considers it a critical role for principals as pedagogical leaders to ensure quality, equity and equality of educational opportunities.
10. School leaders must have working conditions and a wage level that can attract high quality applicants for school leadership positions.
11. The recruitment of school leaders should be gender balanced.

¹ http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/Education_Policy_Paper_AS_ADOPTED_BY_CONGRESS_E.doc

² <http://download.ei-ie.org/docs/IRISDocuments/EI%20Publications/Declaration%20of%20Professional%20Ethics/2008-00165-01-E.pdf>

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Recommendations to the teachers' trade unions:

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5. Advocate for school leaders to have the necessary teaching and leadership education and personal and professional development trainings to ensure that teachers and students have an appropriate learning and work environment.
6. Advocate that school leaders must be supported by appropriate support staff and overarching management structures in order to carry out their role effectively.
7. Promote peer learning and mentoring, through various continuous leadership trainings, including those led by school leader educators experienced both as teachers and school leaders.
8. Campaign for participation of all school leaders in at least one EU and European mobility programme during their career in order to raise the quality of education and of leadership practice.
9. Recommend that leaders should have essential skills to be involved in European education projects in order to enhance the quality of education in their schools.
10. Promote policies to improve equitable access of women and men to leadership positions in schools and working conditions that makes it possible to reconcile family and professional life.

4. Induction, Professional Development and Support

12. School leaders need induction programmes and mentoring in order to acquire specific knowledge, operational skills and values related to the leadership function.
13. School leaders must be familiar with the national education system, as well as its challenges, rules and procedures to manage their institutions well.
14. Professional development and support programmes for school leaders are essential to make it possible for them to respond to new challenges, such as disability, migration, academic, social and economic issues.
15. Education support personnel have an essential role to play in supporting the principal, teachers and students and should be fully involved in the management of the school.

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Recommendations to the teachers' trade unions:

The European teachers' trade unions should

11. Advocate high quality initial and continuous school leadership training and induction and mentoring in order to strengthen the capacities and competences of school leaders.
12. Advocate the school leader obligation to connect to the local community and to promote social cohesion both inside and outside of school.
13. Promote external support systems for school leaders and the formation of professional team building between school leaders in different schools both inside and across school districts.

5. Working conditions and Attractiveness

16. Working conditions and remuneration of school leaders must be good enough to attract a talented and well-educated workforce. Salaries in numerous countries are not attractive enough to recruit the best school leaders and to provide them the appropriate pay for their work.
17. Teachers should have more opportunity and facility to become school leaders. Trade unions should encourage leadership from an early stage of teachers' training and provide them training on the abovementioned issues.
18. School leaders work under huge workload and in long, many times unpaid overtime. All qualified candidates, women and men, should be encouraged to apply for school leader positions. Work-life balance of school leaders should be promoted and respected.

Recommendations to the teachers' trade unions:

The European teachers' trade unions should

14. Monitor the importance of an appropriate work life balance of those willing to take on school leadership roles.
15. Advocate the need to raise the quality of school leadership in cooperation with governments and all the education partners.
16. Urge the governments/employers to ensure that the salaries of school leaders are in accordance with the qualifications, responsibilities and complexity of school leadership positions and that it can attract the most motivated teachers to become school leaders.
17. Advocate a career path for school leaders that includes continuous professional development and opportunities to enhance their expertise through further qualifications.
18. Initiate with the competent national, regional and local authorities, to define the working time of school leaders.

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6. Autonomy, Evaluation and Accountability

19. Schools should enjoy a certain degree of autonomy which is well balanced between professional autonomy and political aims set for the school both at central and local political level.
20. School leaders should be accountable both to their staff and students and to their employer. The accountability demands of public authorities and employers and the time used on systems to collect information about results must be kept reasonable.
21. School leaders' competence and the time needed to conduct self-evaluation are essential in order to improve their work.
22. School leaders must be given assistance to set up and conduct inclusive teacher evaluation and feedback.

Recommendations to the teachers' trade unions:

The European teachers' trade unions should

19. Promote a good balance between the professional autonomy of school leaders and teachers and instruction through political and administrative decisions.
20. Encourage development and use of inclusive teacher evaluation and feedback mechanisms in schools.

7. Social dialogue, participation in democracy

23. School leaders, like any other worker, have the right to exercise freedom of association and to organise, in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and international labour standards. They have the right to join trade unions and professional associations in order to promote their interests.
24. Social dialogue should be institutionalised and regulated by law or through collective agreements in which the parties have clarified which issues should be the subject of information sharing, consultation and collective bargaining.
25. School leaders should be involved in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of education policy in their school, at local, national and European levels. School leaders should involve teachers, support personnel, and students in the development, implementation and evaluation of school policies and programmes.
26. ETUCE welcomes and promotes the recruitment of school leaders in member organisations and facilitates sharing of information and experiences among school leaders at local, national

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and European levels.

27. The role of school leaders should not weaken the democratic functioning when decisions have to be taken on the school policy's strategies within the limits of its autonomy. The role of the education personnel, students and parents in this decision making process is really legitimate and rightful. School leaders need to be encouraged and supported in the development of effective relations with relevant governmental structures.

Recommendations to the teachers' trade unions:

The European teachers' trade unions should

21. Advocate for strengthened institutionalised social dialogue for school leaders at all levels (local, national and European).
22. Promote the rights of school leaders to freedom of association, to organise and collectively bargain, which should be respected.
23. Engage in social dialogue concerning education policy and practice at school, local, national and European levels.
24. Encourage school leaders to involve the whole pedagogical community - teachers, students, support staff, parents - in school development programmes.
25. Promote the recruitment and mobilisation of school leaders to join trade unions and speak with one voice in addressing educational, austerity and other issues confronting schools and education systems across Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TEACHERS' TRADE UNIONS

The European teachers' trade unions should

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4. Advocate a collaborative working and learning environment and democratisation of the school.



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5. Advocate for school leaders to have the necessary teaching and leadership education and personal and professional development trainings to ensure that teachers and students have an appropriate learning and work environment.
6. Advocate that school leaders must be supported by appropriate support staff and overarching management structures in order to carry out their role effectively.
7. Promote peer learning and mentoring, through various continuous leadership trainings, including those led by school leader educators experienced both as teachers and school leaders.
8. Campaign for participation of all school leaders in at least one EU and European mobility programme during their career in order to raise the quality of education and of leadership practice.
9. Recommend that leaders should have essential skills to be involved in European education projects in order to enhance the quality of education in their schools.
10. Promote policies to improve equitable access of women and men to leadership positions in schools and working conditions that makes it possible to reconcile family and professional life.
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12. Advocate the school leader obligation to connect to the local community and to promote social cohesion both inside and outside of school.
13. Promote external support systems for school leaders and the formation of professional team building between school leaders in different schools both inside and across school districts.
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- 18.** Initiate with the competent national, regional and local authorities, to define the working time of school leaders.
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- 25.** Promote the recruitment and mobilisation of school leaders to join trade unions and speak with one voice in addressing educational, austerity and other issues confronting schools and education systems across Europe.