

Challenges of School Leadership

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Abstract : The main purpose of this paper is to examine the different theoretical approaches and relevant empirical evidence and thus, recognize some of the most pressing challenges faced by school leaders. This paper starts from the fact that the new mission of the school is characterized by the need for stronger coordination among students' academic, social and emotional learning. In this sense, school leaders need to focus their commitment, vision and leadership on the issues of students' attitudes, language, cultural and social background, and sexual orientation. More specifically, they should know what a good teaching is for student's at-risk, students whose first language is not dominant in school, those who's learning styles are not in accordance with usual teaching styles, or who are stigmatized. There is a rather wide consensus around the fact that the traditionally popular concept of instructional leadership of the school principal is no longer sufficient. However, in a number of "pro-leadership" circles, including certain groups of academic researchers, consultants and practitioners, there is an established tendency of attributing school principal an extraordinary influence towards school achievements. On the other hand, the situation in which all employees in the school are leaders is a utopia par excellence. Although leadership obviously can be efficiently distributed across the school, there are few findings that speak about sources of this distribution and factors making it sustainable. Another idea that is not particularly new, but has only recently gained in importance is related to the fact that the collective capacity of the school is an important resource that often remains under-cultivated. To understand the nature and power of collaborative school cultures, it is necessary to know that these operate in a way that they make their all collective members' tacit knowledge explicit. In this sense, the question is how leaders in schools can shape collaborative culture and create social capital in the school. Pressure exerted on schools to systematically collect and use the data has been accompanied by the need for school leaders to develop new competencies. The role of school leaders is critical in the process of assessing what data are needed and for what purpose. Different types of data are important: test results, data on student's absenteeism, satisfaction with school, teacher motivation, etc. One of the most important tasks of school leaders are data-driven decision making as well as ensuring transparency of the decision-making process. Finally, the question arises whether the existing models of school leadership are compatible with the current social and economic trends. It is necessary to examine whether and under what conditions schools are in need for forms of leadership that are different from those that currently prevail. Closely related to this issue is also to analyze the adequacy of different approaches to leadership development in the school.

Keywords : educational changes, leaders, leadership, school

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