

**Calling for Bravery:  
On Principals' Instructional Leadership in the Context of Hubei Province**

**LI Jiacheng, CHEN Xiaoyan, LI Yan, WANG Juan and DENG Rui**

In Chinese culture, Kindness (仁), Wisdom (智) and Bravery (勇) are regarded as the top three characters of human being. When people live in disadvantage situations, Bravery is greatly valued.

Hubei is in central China, and 11 principals from different districts, including the rural, suburb and downtown schools, were interviewed by the authors from November to December 2014. The authors found they are struggling in the system, and the challenges come from many levels.

Based on the qualitative method, the paper puts forward the following points from the research.

1. Teacher supply and teacher quality. In most of the schools, there is a shortage of quality teachers. College gradutors did not show high skills, and the senior teaches in the school don't have the enthusiasm of reform in the context of Chinese curriculum reform.
2. Financial support. Comparing to the East China, the teacher's salary and school finance cannot meet the demands, and this leads to large class size, little access to teacher's professional learning, etc.
3. Assessment. The evaluation from the government is stressful and frequent, and the exam-oriented governance makes the principals struggling very hard. The principals do have the understanding of education reform, but cannot fulfill the potential of schooling without enough autonomy.
4. Social context. As neighborhood schools, principals have to communicate with the parents and community. From the perspectives of principals, parents don't care for the students well, and the community support is quite weak. School is fighting with many obstacles from the society.
5. Principal's dream. As the leader of teachers, the Hubei principals are still trying to make a difference. They involve into the teaching and learning themselves, put forward some reforms, and looking forward to the systematic change.

While focusing on the relationship of principals' leadership and the context, the paper will discuss the values, mindsets and leadership style of the principals. At last, the authors will put forward some suggestion to the principals and policy makers.



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