Developing Teachers as Individuals and Professionals: Strategies Adopted by Chinese Principals

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This paper focuses on the strategies adopted by primary school principals in China to develop teachers. The paper draws data from interviews with school principals in 5 provinces in China and attempts to delineate some common strategies adopted by principals from both urban and rural schools. One major commonality across the different principals is that they deem the personal and professional development of teachers as equally important. Chinese principals emphasize developing informal inter-personal relationships with teachers and promoting teachers’ professional development. In promoting teachers’ professional development, they provide platform and stimulus in welfare, promotion to encourage individual excellence, while stress ongoing professional development, collaboration and sharing among teachers at the same time. In evaluate teachers and teaching, they use student exams as major indicator, observe teaching, and use a wide range of performance indicator such as publication, morality, research in evaluate teachers and teaching. They emphasize informal inter-personal relationships with teachers, and use role modality, benevolence and emotional support to motivate the teachers. The paper is comprised of five sections. Following the introductory section, the second section reviews the socio-political and educational reform context that may influence the principal-teacher relationships. The third section introduces the background of the study and the research methodology. The fourth section reports the findings under these two sub-headings: strategies to promote personal development of teachers and strategies to promote professional development of teachers. The final section further discusses the reasons underlying the way school principals in China develop teachers.