The West Wind vs. The East Wind: Understanding Leadership Preparation to improve Teacher Learning Jenny Lewis

Strand: leadership and teacher learning across cultures

 To consider the principal's role in teacher learning. This is important given what we know about the impact of teacher learning on student outcomes both in Asia and the West.

The role of the principal in influencing student outcomes is second only to teaching among recognised school influences on student improvement (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, Wahlstrom, 2004). Principals strongly shape the conditions for high-quality teaching and for policymakers, this means that the effectiveness of principals is vital to the effectiveness of the country's schools, especially those serving the students in challenging circumstances with the fewest advantages (Manna, 2015 p. 5).

"It is the work they do that enables teachers to be effective as it is not just the traits that teachers bring, but their ability to use what they know in a high-functioning organization, that produces student success ... and indeed, the number one reason for teachers' decisions about whether to stay in a school is the quality of administrative support, and it is the leader who must develop this organization".

Darling-Hammond (2007, p. 17)

It is also globally recognised that the role of principal has changed substantially over the past 20 years and this has given rise to a set of expectations and working conditions that many extremely capable middle and senior school leaders have found unattractive (Anderson et al. 2010, p.15; Ball, 2008; Barber et al., 2010; Cowie and Crawford 2008; Howson and Sprigade, 2011; Lee et al. 2012b; MacBeath 2011; Walker & Ko, 2011). Whereas some would argue that the principal role has been transformed from a focus on management to that of improving student outcomes; evidence that the role has not so much transformed as expanded to include heighted community expectations and policy reforms is recognised (Manna, 2015, p. 5).



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To address changing roles and increasing role expectations, many countries have introduced and/or updated principal preparation programs, and in many incidences, made completion of these programs mandatory before aspirants can enter the principalship (Barber et al., 2010; Crawford, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2010; Huber and West, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Pounder, 2011; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2011). Excellent preparation of high-quality school leadership programs is also seen as one way of giving prospective principals confidence that they can do the job despite the challenges of the role; and there is emerging evidence that aspiring principals completing a well-designed principal preparation program have greater impact on student achievement in English and mathematics when compared to similarly tenured principals (Corcoran, Schwartz & Weinstein, 2009, 2011).

This paper seeks to review recent international practice, policy and research regarding principal preparation programs and details emerging practices in terms of formation and implementation. A specific lens on teacher learning as a principal responsibility is analysed.