



CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL
Building Education Support Systems for Teachers



Summary

School Management and Instructional Leadership Competencies: A Framework and Strategy for Strengthening Local School Administration

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Summary
School Management and Instructional Leadership Team
Competency Framework

Introduction

Countries invest a great deal of trust and responsibility in the hands of the Team (e.g. headmasters, principals, and head teachers) who manage the schools in which teachers teach and children learn. The school management team plays many roles in managing schools as institutions that provide quality development and learning for students and for the communities which send their children to the school.

Afghanistan naturally desires to provide its children with the highest quality education possible. The Ministry of Education has initiated a new primary school curriculum and is designing teacher training and school support strategies. To achieve the desired results, the Ministry requires the best possible teaching, good subject matter knowledge, and the support for this work from local school instructional management.

Each school has some combination of principals, headmasters, and/or head teachers who are charged with organizing and supporting instruction. Additionally, staff from Provincial and District Education Offices are charged with supervising and supporting, or being resources to support, quality education. This is, essentially, a School Management and Instructional Leadership Team

On the one hand, of course, the Principal, Headmaster and Team is responsible for implementing the policies of education officials higher up in the system, and responsible to the Minister of Education. On the other, hand, the Team is responsible for leadership in assuring the security, well-being, and education of the children in his or her care - the children sent to the school to learn in order to improve their ability to take advantage of economic opportunities and to fulfill their responsibilities for their families, communities and the country.

No single manual, handbook of guidelines, or training curriculum can list everything an administrator needs to know, all the skills he or she needs to do their job well, or exactly how they should go about their job—because there are always new, unforeseen problems and because the challenges an administrator faces vary from community to community. However, it is possible to articulate a framework explaining the kinds of things instructional managers need to do well. This is a framework to provide such guidance.

A Guide for What to Focus on in the Job

This framework we present here serves as much as a guide for school principals and others to question themselves about their individual strengths and weaknesses and how they might want to go forward to do their job. The questions, they would ask themselves are, for example? What do I have to do well to be effective? How do I know when I am being effective? How do I make



decisions (given the need to follow education system guidelines but also to take initiative every day to deal with problems which arise)?

This framework can also help us frame the questions we must ask and answer if we want to provide practical assistance to headmasters and principals who want to strengthen their skills. How do we teach a school administrator how to be effective; and then how can we best foster growth in areas where the person is weaker; and teach them how to build on their strengths?

These are crucial questions for any country, but especially for Afghanistan at this point, as the school administrator is (or should be) a crucial partner in fostering improvement of teaching and learning in primary schools. This paper aims to provide a framework for conceptualizing and assessing administrator competencies, and developing skills development strategies for enhancing administrator effectiveness.

Range of Tasks for the School Management/Instructional Leadership Team – Competency Domains

Instructional management team activities are many. They include activities related to finances, school building management, fostering effective teaching, and others. To support instruction effectively, instructional management teams need to have skills, knowledge, and strategies that they use and which are effective in four important arenas of action – arenas that we call “competency domains.” These are:

1. Facilitating Learning and Personal Growth
2. Cultivating Partnerships to Support Learning
3. Engaging in Ongoing Learning and Professional Development
4. Managing Schools Professionally

All the tasks that specifically relate to supporting teachers and students directly in their instruction and learning can be categorized in one of these four areas. These competency areas or ‘domains’ are ones that are mentioned in both Afghanistan’s own literature and other professional literature describing and analyzing what Instructional Management Teams need to do to effectively support high quality instruction and learning in schools.¹

This paper provides a brief overview of these competency domains, so that we can review the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that should be employed by Instructional Management Teams (i.e. principals, headmasters, and headteachers, as well as their supervisors from the Provincial and District Offices of Education) to support effective schools and school planning.

¹ A separate review of the national and international literature is available related to the development of this framework. The literature review included talking to Central and local Ministry staff, as well as reviewing literature provided to us as well as that sought through the Internet, and our own experience.



The Foundation for the Competencies

The vision of school leadership on which the competencies are based and which is described here is consistent with and infused with the Islamic principles of the Ministry of Education. The foundation is built on and delineates knowledge, skills, and behaviors that demonstrate and support exemplary moral character among all facets of school leaders' behaviors. The principal and all members of the Instructional Management Team must comport themselves impeccably. They are the model of proper ethical and civic behavior for the children in the schools, just as the teachers themselves are. The Instructional Leadership team should inspire teachers, students and the community, and assure them that what they say is what they do. They have *taqua*. This is not just something we believe, it is something which is identified as a crucial factor in effective school leadership in the literature both in Afghanistan and internationally; and it is the foundation on which the competency domains are built.

School leaders engage and reveal spiritual aspects of behavior, including vision, love, and devotion to the school community, respect for students, a positive outlook, loyalty, helpfulness, friendliness, and decisiveness. School leaders are also community leaders who are respectful of others and earn others' respect. They are good listeners even when facing dissent and ensure that every community member's voice is heard. They interpret professionalism as more than a finite list of duties or procedures prescribed by regulations. Core Islamic values infuse everything school leaders do in implementing the 4 domains of school management and instructional leadership. Although we will not repeat this in each domain, is the necessary foundation for making use of the skills and knowledge in each domain and reflecting on how to meet the challenges facing effective school leadership in Afghanistan.

The Purpose of the Framework

The premise of this vision is the understanding of the Ministry that it is not enough to train teachers to be effective in the subject matter knowledge and teaching skills. The staff in a school needs to work as a team. Effective teaching and effective instructional management - both - are required to support student learning and students abilities to make use of that learning outside the classroom. Principals, Headmasters, and Head Teachers constitute an instructional support team for teachers (and for students); and there are particular areas of knowledge, skills, and implementation strategies that can be learned to assist the Instructional management team foster effective teaching and learning. Therefore, the competency domains interweave strands of leadership together with administrative responsibilities that comprise the fabric of management teams' work; and all of this is infused with the moral principles crucial for effective leadership. The intent of this competency framework is to create or reinforce an ascending spiral of action, that will build and maintain an educational system worthy of Afghanistan's children. It will guide school administrators in reflections on their own work and continually improving their ability as leaders and managers.

Challenges for the Framework

A pressing challenge Afghanistan faces is to build an educational system that maintains uniformly high standards and expectations across the nation but also encourages local responsive



resourcefulness in responding well to specific school circumstances and needs. Geography, family education, economic, and other factors, each has effects on the challenges school management and instructional leadership faces. Therefore, an effective competency framework must apply equally well to management teams in all locations; and it should provide guidance about the skills, knowledge and behavior necessary, about how to assess if the outcomes from their application is adequate, and how to respond to unique needs, and address unforeseen problems. Instructional Management Teams must be capable of reflection about what they do and how well they do it. This is crucial to being able to implement national policies, guidelines, and standards while simultaneously addressing the needs of local schools and communities,

The competency domains presented here are developed to meet these challenges and provide a foundation for assessment and training to build and reinforce school management and instructional leadership for Afghanistan's primary educational system, worthy of Afghanistan's children and communities.

Domain 1: Facilitating Learning and Personal Growth

To meet their fundamental responsibility for the quality of education, school management seeks to ensure students' personal growth and to create a community of learning among managers and teachers. They interact with teachers and students to set high but achievable expectations, to monitor and evaluate instruction and learning, to encourage the application of learning both in the school and in the community, and to assist teachers to become better mentors and guides for their students.

Both the quality of teachers' instruction and students' learning are monitored and evaluated. Teachers and students work to meet achievable expectations. The extent to which students master their subjects is not regarded as the only measure of success. The School Manager also monitors how well and productively they interact with teachers, fellow students, parents, and the community at large.

The competency framework identifies three ways - or "sub-domains" - in which principals and other effective school leaders – the school management and instructional leadership team – act to facilitate learning and personal growth. The Instructional Management team needs to have the knowledge, skills and behavior to a) foster student growth; b) lead the teaching and learning process; and c) plan, assess, record, and report learning outcomes.

1a: Fostering Student Growth

Between the ages of 7 to 11, students learn to become competent and productive, and grow in understanding the values on which their communities are based, or they learn to distrust their ability to do anything well. Children cannot mature and achieve a fulfilling life outside of a consistently safe and nurturing environment. This is an environment that principals and the school management team need to work with teachers and community members and students to seek to secure.



School Management teams should demonstrate and promote responsibility. They should ensure that teachers and students see learning as a shared responsibility, and that students are encouraged to take initiative for acting responsibly and for assisting their fellow students. They need to foster student welfare, protection, and civic skills, as well as student social and emotional development.

- *Fostering Student Welfare, Protection, and Civic Skills*

School leaders should maintain policies and guidelines that encourage responsible interaction, problem solving, and conflict resolution, and that provide for consistent enforcement of boundaries when digressions inevitably occur. They should help teachers maintain clear, enforceable rules for classroom behavior without resorting to corporal punishment. They should maintain a school environment in which students see themselves as (and where they are) a positive contribution to a useful and constructive environment, in which all participants respect each other, understand the ‘rules’ and expectations for their compliance with them, and where the applications of the rules is done ‘fairly.’

School Management and Instructional Leadership staff need to be reflective, and systematically monitor the progress and performance of teachers and other staff in ensuring students can and are having a positive school and learning experience and that no students are left out. Staff should work with parents and the community, as well as with the teachers and students, to increase their emotional well-being, positive behavior, and school attendance. Active committees or groups of parents and school staff can work together to identify and respond to challenges to student attendance and participation—for example, working with parents to foster attendance of children who are needed by families for chores or work, helping students make up school work if they are sick or need to be absent.

- *Fostering Student Social and Emotional Development*

The School Management and Instructional Leadership staff work with teachers to cultivate student self-confidence, to set responsible and achievable learning goals, for all students, and to understand how to identify problems and foster student success in achieving goals. All school staff need to abandon preconceived expectations regarding the learning capacity of individual children, and learn how to foster learning for all children. Diversity of talents among students can be celebrated and a resource for the school and the classrooms, rather than feared or discouraged in schools. Teachers need to recognize talents in students and have a chance to see how those talents can be developed and successfully contribute to their communities. Students need to have opportunities to meet and learn from people who exemplify successful role models both inside the school community and from all sectors of the communities from which they attend the school.

Student academic achievement is inextricably linked to social and emotional development that in turn develops confidence and encourages exploration and lifelong learning. School management needs to work with teachers to encourage students to apply what they learn and be active citizens within the school community. They encourage all school staff to monitor the social and emotional growth of students, and to be alert for changes in behavior or external factors that



undermine educational opportunities. School management and instructional leadership staff are responsible for providing institutional structures that support student learning, positive attitudes toward learning by the students, the families and communities, their abilities to develop strategies to continue their education, if desired.

Challenges for leadership will be to identify and pay attention to the ways in which policies or school organization interact with community values, individual student characteristics and experiences to constrain students' positive learning horizons or outcomes in some ways. For example, School leadership needs to pay attention to which sub-groups of students are having poor attendance or dropping out and foster understanding that primary school attendance is integral to the success of all students, for the sake of their families and communities, as they assume the varied roles of family, community, and national life.

An obvious example of a student characteristic that may call for specific attention is gender; another is students with disabilities. School Leadership needs to work to confront negative stereotypes – whether about gender or other student characteristics, and enable school staff to be proactive as well as responsive to the respective social pressures and expectations faced by children in the school. This work may need to be with both teachers and students. Leadership needs to promote high expectations for all students and illuminate their respective talents, needs and interests – reinforcing with policy and actions ideal of the school as a learning community for students and staff alike.

1b: Leading the Teaching and Learning Process

School management raises the quality of teaching and learning by inspiring and supporting effective teaching. They enthusiastically model a commitment to education for all, demonstrate a high level of pedagogical skills with the staff, and identify need for instructional support. As part of their responsibilities for instructional oversight, instructional leadership management improves student outcomes by encouraging teachers to learn from each other to effectively address common teaching issues and improve teaching skills, and to create needed learning resources for teachers and students.

Improving the knowledge, skills, and behavior of school leaders in this sub-domain will ensure that the quality of teaching and learning will rise and lead to better student outcomes. Members of Instructional Management Teams should exemplify knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning, and ability to develop resources in support of improving teaching and learning in support of effective instruction for students with a variety of learning styles, talents, and needs.

- *Foster Development and Dissemination of Effective Instructional Methodologies*

School Management is responsible for identifying effective instructional practice and providing the incentive and opportunity for other teachers to learn how to use the practice and to make use of it. There are a variety of techniques to do this, but beyond individual techniques the Team has to develop a teaching environment and structure, with policies and activities, that foster a



learning community. For example, successful experienced teachers can be paired with those who have less experience. Or teacher committees could identify special issues on which to focus, and an internal school development plan can be implemented. The Management Team can assist teachers to collaborate in creating lesson plans that include locally developed instructional aids and identifying community members who can demonstrate the application of learning to their work life. They encourage teachers to stimulate “active learning” in the classroom. They can even set up learning circles to discuss radio-based teacher education. However, whatever the techniques used, given the tight resources available for each school, it’s crucial that the School Management and Instructional Leadership Team reflect and develop a process with the teachers for fostering the development and dissemination of effective practice.

Instructional leaders needs to understand what effective practice for teachers would be, how to identify it in classrooms, and to help teachers understand what is expected from instruction and to reflect on what works well and what does not - how to identify effective outcomes and build on them. They need to be able to ‘explore’ different techniques, yet ensure that the exploration is responsible and based on sound principles. The Leadership team needs to have a good understanding of what is going on in classes, to observe teacher performance and respond with helpful critique, learning opportunities, and monitoring. School leaders need to support teachers to address the different learning styles and needs of the diverse students in their classes – e.g. high-performing students, at-risk students, boys or girls, intellectually disabled students, physically disabled students, students speaking another language than the one of the texts for their home language.

In short, the School Management Team needs to listen carefully to teachers’ concerns and to encourage teachers to develop and improve, to provide opportunities for that improvement and to recognize it. The team has make the teachers in the school resources for learning themselves; as well as making use of other resources available to support them.

- *Commitment to Education as a Resource for Students and Communities*

The School Management team is a primary interface for parents and community members. It is to them, as well as the students themselves, that they have to attest that the education provided in their school is useful and important and a valuable contribution to the community. The School Management and Instructional Leadership team is the front line for the Central Ministry of Education to show that the investments in education work, that students can apply the knowledge and skills gained to their daily life, further learning, future workplace, and civic life. To do this, the team needs to be actively involved in supporting student learning and the visibility of the outcomes for the students and the community at large. There are a variety of techniques that can be used for this, but the Team has to not just use one technique or another but foster a learning environment with a consistent emphasis and activities related to this

1c: Planning, Assessing, Recording, and Reporting Student Learning Outcomes

Principals lead schools in a professional process in which lesson plans include clear expected outcomes; student performance is regularly assessed against expected outcomes; student results



are analyzed and recorded; and student learning outcomes are reported honestly and meaningfully to students, parents, teachers, the school's community, and the Central Ministry of Education (MoE).

This requires the Instructional Management Team to ensure that teachers systematically follow a series of important steps. These include planning lessons, assessing student progress, and reporting student performance. The team ensures that teachers plan and manage classroom activities so that all students have an opportunity to participate. The team also ensures that student information and performance results are collected, recorded, and analyzed, as well as carefully managed, reported, and applied. The principal is ultimately responsible for guaranteeing the relevance, reliability, and integrity of performance information.

- *Course of instruction and individual lesson plans include clear expected student outcomes.*

The Instructional Management Team ensures that teachers can understand and articulate the learning outcomes they seek to achieve. This enables students to understand the learning objectives for each grade and moves teacher planning and approaches beyond just completing the textbook. Articulating the learning objectives has to be more than 'read pages 2 to 5'. It has to support and be consistent with specific learning objectives for the students in the class (e.g. write a two paragraph explanation of the meaning of a poem).

Clear expected outcomes help shape support for teachers. This support begins with Instructional Management Team classroom observation of teachers, includes annual teacher reviews, and leads to training and peer mentoring tailored to each teacher. The team also helps identify learning resources that supplement and reduce reliance on the textbook.

The Instructional team may find that teachers are not adequately identifying what their expected outcomes from the lesson of the day are. This may be because of lack of skill, lack of time to write them all down, or some other reason. In this case, especially for the weaker teachers, the Instructional team has to develop strategies to support a change in practice. The Instructional team cannot accept inadequate support for student learning. Rather they have to set up, maintain and foster an environment that supports responsibility for implementing and reaching to improve the quality of instruction and learning on behalf of the students, their families and communities.

- *Student performance is regularly assessed against lesson outcomes.*

School management sets standards that move student assessment beyond reliance on just written examinations. They assist teachers to employ a variety of techniques that make assessment more systematic, reliable, and relevant. These may include observation, as well as collection of work samples, student presentations, and review of student assignments.

- *Student results are recorded and analyzed.*

Principals ensure that student assessment results are recorded accurately, fair, and lead to school system responses that benefit students. Because the school is a learning community, teachers cannot be punished for bad results; the issue rather is whether they can improve on them and



learn to be effective instructors. For this, teaching and learning outcomes need to be accurately recorded; and the Instructional Management Team needs to work with teachers to understand the outcomes. They need to ensure that comparisons of students' past and present performance, and evidence of 'un-mastered' skills among students are analyzed and lead to needed changes in the teaching and learning process.

- *Student learning outcomes are reported honestly and meaningfully to students, parents, teachers, the school's community, and the MoE.*

Principals inspire the confidence of education stakeholders by honestly reporting student-learning outcomes to students, parents, teachers, communities, and MoE officials. This leads directly to greater stakeholder interest and involvement in the school and larger contributions from them. They also need to help stakeholders understand the outcomes and what they mean in context. This provides the foundation for collaborative efforts to improve school performance.

Domain 2: Cultivating Partnerships to Support Learning

Principals build partnerships to support effective teaching and learning, good student attendance and well-being, development of learning resources, and school responsiveness to emerging issues. The principal fosters and coordinates teamwork within and among school colleagues, families, and community people to generate practical activities and concrete results that benefit students. This work includes the principal's own contributions to overall education system improvement efforts mounted by the MoE.

2a: Fostering Community Relationships

School leaders ensure that the school's educational purpose is understood, shared, and supported by the community. Community partnerships facilitate this and ensure that a range of community interests is addressed in school plans and decisions. The desired outcomes of these partnerships are that the school operates as an integral part of the community, the school uses community resources effectively, and the community helps determine school objectives and evaluate progress. These outcomes contribute directly to greater school credibility, support for student participation and learning, appreciation of school contributions to the community, and community attention to the provision of security and resources for the school.

- *The school operates as an integral part of the community.*

School leaders promote the school as a community resource for adults as well as children. To the extent that the school can have linkages with other organizations in the community, it can add value to its services to the community and the students. For example vocational education, adult literacy, and other programs could be linked to the school, as well as health and hygiene, or medical needs assessment. The school is a community meeting place, and a site for adult as well as student extracurricular events. It is a resource to be valued by the community. However, to achieve this the School Management and Instructional Leadership team has to work actively to make this happen. School leaders have to explore what would make the school more effective,

its standards and outcomes and fair practice more visible, and the contribution of the Ministry of Education more recognized and if appreciated. This enables the school to identify and address community issues and concerns that, unattended, would negatively affect the school.

- *The school uses community resources effectively.*

Principals identify and find ways to appropriately incorporate the knowledge and skills of community people in the school as learning resources. Examples of community member contributions might include tutoring, assisting in extracurricular activities, and providing role and career models. Shura members can visit and observe and learn how best to support the education process in their role. The school is a member of ‘the community’; and students who graduate have to be able to participate in the community in the range of roles adults play. Involving the community in the school is a way of creating mutual understanding of how the school and community/family life/economic experience can be more mutually supportive of each other. Principals listen carefully to critiques, respond respectfully, and engage critics in efforts to improve the school.

2b: Engaging Effectively with Students’ Families

The School Management and Instructional Management Team deepen both their own and their teachers’ relationships with students’ families in order to assist families to help students overcome daily routine difficulties and ensure that they attend class, complete assigned schoolwork, identify their interests and abilities in order to focus on career directions, continue in school as long as necessary, and pursue self-directed learning once they leave school. Principals lead school efforts to mobilize families in the education of their children; invite, acknowledge, and respond to family concerns about the personal, social, and educational needs of their children; and include families in review of educational objectives student progress, and what this means for the student, the family, and the community.

- *Mobilize families in the education of their children.*

Principals and Instructional Management Teams engage parents in children’s learning, promote the value of education, demonstrate the benefits of education to the family, and address issues that arise. They build families’ confidence that they are capable of being a valuable partner in their children’s education. They help teachers and parents collaborate to improve children’s learning in activities like tutoring, improving facilities, or securing classroom materials. When parents are not well educated, there are special burdens for understanding concerns and helping them figure out how to support their children’s education and how it will ‘pay off’ for them. School management has to work with teachers and students and student families so that they can see the progress in learning and contribute positively to it. Afghanistan depends on the collaboration of Ministry schools, students, families, and communities to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

- *Invite, acknowledge, and respond to family concerns about the personal, social, and educational needs of their children.*

School leaders listen and flexibly address family concerns regarding such issues as the influence of misbehaving children and curriculum content, school safety, the relevance of schooling, or other issues that are brought up. They are accountable to both the Ministry of Education and the community participating in the learning opportunities offered, and are transparent in management, and dialogue with education stakeholders.

2c: Recognizing their Contributions and Working Collaboratively with School Colleagues

Principals value and acknowledge the ideas and other contributions of their colleagues. They encourage their management team colleagues to do the same. The principal and the team encourage and assist teachers and others to try out new responsibilities and continuously increase their skills and knowledge. Principals help create a school culture that values teachers and boosts their morale. They respectfully deal with staff problems, issues, and concerns, regardless of any individual's position or background.

Effective principals share leadership by delegating responsibilities to others and then empowering them with mentoring, advice, and consultation. They recognize the unique interests, strengths, and weaknesses of each colleague and respond to each individually.

Domain 3: Engaging in Ongoing Learning and Professional Development

The principal and the school management team are responsible for building their own skills in school management and for developing a learning community that supports and expects instructional staff, individually and collectively, to strive for professional excellence. On-going learning and professional development includes informal collegial learning (such as within school-based work groups), as well as formal structured learning (such as within workshops), and individual self-initiated learning and application of skills. The role of the Management Team is to foster self-appraisal, professional integrity, and to promote an environment and a process which upholds high standards for improvement in effective teaching.

3a: Identifying Pathways for Individual Development

Principals regularly review the professional practice of teachers, members of the Instructional Management Team, and themselves. They set standards for excellence and model systematic self-appraisal. They and the management team compare their own competencies and practice to the Instructional Management Team Competency Framework. They promote an environment in which teachers are safe to share personal strengths and shortcomings. They also solicit feedback from others in the school community regarding a particular individual's performance. They motivate staff to follow up on self-assessment and feedback from others with action steps that generate observable results. In short, school leaders ensure staff professional development



through critical self-reflection on personal performance and feedback on staff member professional development from a variety of sources, including students, teachers, head teachers, principals, inspectors, methodists, and the community.

- *Critical self-reflection of professional performance*

When promoting critical self-reflection among staff, principals take into account people's tendencies for humility, fear of testing, and fear of negative consequences upon revealing weaknesses. They work to develop the abilities of their staff in a culturally sensitive manner and both assure and concretely demonstrate that it is safe to be honest about skill development needs.

- *Developing a professional development feedback process for school staff*

Principals develop processes and expectations for the delivery of professional development feedback. They advocate for skills among provincial monitoring staff to provide constructive, useful feedback to teachers. They recognize that when administrators solicit feedback from other colleagues, it can be difficult for those colleagues to comment honestly. Principals build confidence in the process. They willingly receive feedback from colleagues; subsequently take demonstrable steps to improve their skills, knowledge, or approach; and when appropriate, credit the role of feedback from colleagues in advancing their own development.

3b: Implementing School-Level Processes and Activities for Professional Growth

Instructional Management Teams ensure that teachers and support staff use individual action plans to promote professional growth. They help track participation in self development, support the sharing of effective practices that are developed, and provide regular opportunities for school staff to seek assistance from colleagues to address professional learning needs.

- *Use of individual action plans to promote professional growth*

School leaders tailor professional development plans that have clear learning outcomes to each staff person. Then, principals nurture the professional development of their staff while also positively and productively monitoring the development and application of their skills. Principals ensure that individual development plans actually lead to professional development, that new individual skills will be shared with colleagues, and that new skills leverage observable improvements in school functioning. The school leader ensures that training is not focused on abstract concepts, but rather on practical steps teachers and other staff can take to support children's learning. To increase teacher training relevancy, principals also ensure that training is linked to a well-articulated curriculum framework for primary school and beyond.

- *Regular opportunities to seek professional development support from colleagues*

Principals and Instructional Management Teams within (and among) schools create and support academic committees to help teachers address subject content difficulties by providing explanations and employing head teachers to model techniques in a teacher's class.

3c: Contributing to the Development of a Local Learning Community

Principals widen development opportunities for their staff by building bridges between their schools and surrounding educational institutions. They help build inter-school professional support networks, including school clusters among schools in close proximity. They encourage their staff to take on such inter-school activities as research, presentations, coaching, and mentoring. They also seek partnerships with teacher training colleges to support staff training and test emerging pedagogical theories in practical settings. Principals also invite input and cooperation from MoE departments.

Domain 4: Managing Schools Professionally

The principal takes initiative for the school's development and ensures that it is in accordance with MoE policy guidelines and regulations. The principal and the Instructional Management Team strive to carry out their work with integrity—always behaving professionally, ethically, and fairly. The principal upholds and reinforces these standards.

Principals supervise and manage teachers and support staff by providing mentoring, advice, and evaluation; supporting skills development; and taking corrective action when necessary to ensure teaching and cost effectiveness. Principals help rebuild Afghanistan's schools by setting high expectations, but also by ensuring that development is carefully phased and built upon early achievement of the most basic objectives. For example, they place early emphasis on working with the appropriate Ministries to have teachers paid on time and provide students with textbooks.

Principals and the Instructional Management Teams build school accountability for financial and human resources applied to children's education. They willingly use good communication skills to respond to the questions and concerns of students, teachers, parents, community members, and MoE administrators.

They also attend to the effective functioning of the educational system as a whole. They contribute to local, district, provincial, and national initiatives to rebuild and improve education. They assist fellow principals.

Sustainable access to resources requires that principals use and augment available resources wisely, build a solid foundation for further development, learn from mistakes, present information and requests clearly and persuasively, and advocate for resources that build toward a clear vision of future goals and possibilities. Principals base these actions on systematic monitoring and evaluation.

4a: Managing School Operations

Principals ensure compliance with MoE policies and regulatory guidelines. They are aware of relevant constitutional, legal, and regulatory mandates that govern schools. They apply policies



and guidelines with the highest standards of professionalism and ethical behavior. Principals ensure accountability in assessing and enhancing school staff skills, and in evaluating school programs and policies; understanding and compliance with MoE regulations, policies, and guidelines; and the participation of all relevant school staff in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of school program and policy.

- *Accountability in assessing and enhancing school staff skills, and in evaluating school programs and policies*

Principals collaborate and consult with staff. They manage via fair and transparent performance reviews, program evaluation, and school policies and procedures that follow MoE guidelines and advance the overall goals of the educational system. Principals are accountable to MoE officials at all levels, as well as to students, families, educational colleagues, and the community. They foster collective responsibility among school improvement groups organized to ensure top-quality education.

- *Understanding and compliance with MoE policies, regulations, and guidelines*

Principals communicate policies and guidelines and their implications to students, parents, teachers, and support staff. They query MoE officials to ensure that they fully understand the meaning and implications of MoE policies, regulations, and guidelines. They ensure that MoE officials understand the impact of new policies and guidelines, and alert them to existing ones that appear unfair or dysfunctional. They manifest loyalty and thoughtfulness as they advocate for good policy and engage fellow administrators in dialogue about which policies and guidelines work well and how. In order to do this, principals monitor and evaluate the impact of MoE policies on student learning outcomes and provide the evaluation to MoE in order to provide useful local school guidance for the policy process. Principals take care to provide input that is not primarily based on self-interest but which do accurately reflect local circumstances, needs, and priorities.

- *Participation of all relevant school staff in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of school program and policy*

Principals engage their Instructional Management Teams, teachers, and other staff to assess how effectively the shared vision for a school is supported by their common efforts and policy. Principals expect and support teachers and school staff to regularly assess their respective contributions to the school and student learning, and participate in collective organizational self-assessment. Corrective action by principals that flow from this evaluation process are timely; conform to regulations, administrative procedures, and guidelines; are fair; and ultimately resolve the identified problem.

4b: Supervising School Staff Fairly and Effectively

Principals ensure that professional behavior is expected, respected, and recognized. School leaders model professional ethics and behavior. They set high standards and support others to



reach them. They maintain high standards, endorse and enforce accountability, and take corrective action as needed.

- *Maintaining high standards*

Principals treat all school staff with fairness, dignity, and respect. They neither commit nor tolerate gender, family, tribe, ethnic, or socioeconomic discrimination. They expect honesty from all, even under difficult circumstances. They ensure that teachers' assessments and treatment are fair and unbiased.

- *Endorsing and Enforcing Accountability*

Principals hold students, teachers, and other school staff accountable for transgressions. They serve as mentor, counselor, arbitrator, and disciplinarian. They orient this role toward facilitating and encouraging success rather than punishment. Their corrective enforcement of MoE policies and regulations is transparent and equitable. In larger schools, principals necessarily delegate some supervision duties to head teachers. They advocate for their schools and their teachers with District, Provincial, and (when appropriate) National education officials.

4c: Using Resources Wisely

School leaders organize and manage staff and resources to ensure an efficient, effective, and safe learning environment. They ensure that financial resources are used responsibly and accountably; identify immediate-, and conduct planning to identify, short-, medium-, and long-term resource needs; and monitor and evaluate the allocation of resources to meet those needs.

- *Ensure financial resources are used responsibly and accountably.*

Education system decentralization will require principals to take charge of more school operations, make difficult choices among competing priorities, and develop a good reputation for responsible use of financial resources. They will be accountable to the community by providing information regarding progress and expenditures while protecting confidential data. They will develop sound school accounting procedures and recruit, train, and supervise accounting staff.

- *Conduct planning to identify short-, medium-, and long-term resource needs, and monitor and evaluate the allocation of resources to meet those needs.*

Education system decentralization will require principals to effectively plan in order to identify short-, medium-, and long-term resource needs. This planning includes identifying community partnerships to help overcome anticipated resource shortages. Principals will establish systems of data-driven decision making and planning.

Principals will assist teachers in developing the most reliable and fair tests of student competencies. They will insure the integrity of the test results. They will continue to annually provide detailed information to central and provincial MoE officials regarding school facilities, teaching staff, and student enrollment.



Principals will become advocates for their schools—documenting, justifying, and presenting the case for resources that will be needed to provide top-quality education to their students.

4d: Planning to Enhance Future School Performance

Principals work within MoE guidelines to create strategic plans, updated annually, which inspire all members of the school community. These plans include a vision of core educational values and moral purpose, including stakeholders' values and beliefs, as well as how the school community will work together to improve school functioning and student outcomes. Principals base plans on expectations of excellence but set realistic goals that are linked to anticipated resources and available time. School leaders who show strength in planning facilitate the planning efforts of other schools.

4e: Contributing to the Well Being of the Overall Education System

Principals contribute to the achievements of the national education system. This begins with their provision of annual accurate reporting on important aspects of the school to the MoE. This contributes to the credibility of the system overall and helps secure resources for education. They also participate in special applied research studies to assess policies or other aspects of school functioning, provide assistance to neighboring schools, and consult with regional or provincial officials.

Summary and Next Steps

This paper is an initial outline of key issues, based on what others have done and written, observations in the field, direct experience in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and our conversations with current practitioners in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The next steps involve further consideration, testing, and revision of the competencies, development of an assessment system to guide administrator training course development, and work with a Standards Board of some sort to formulate the structure of a process that would put this in place.

Questions will need to be asked about how well this schematism actually describes the different facets of the School Principal's role in the education system, what's missing that should be there; and what's there that should not be. Answer to those questions will require developing assessment tools and curriculum materials based on this framework.

Overall there are 4 stages of development in establishing a sound analytical framework for describing, assessing, and training to build on School Principals' current competencies and enhance them so they can, in turn, provide still stronger leadership for local schools. These are (1) Development of the Concept (2) Testing acceptance and utility of the concept - Proof of the concept (3) Testing the way the concept will work in action; projecting what we really might find out from the use of the concept - a beta test. (4) Implementation and further refinement of the concept.



In these stages of development, the first is the actual generation of a concept or system, based on existing practice or research, for key stakeholders and professionals in the field to review and react to. This is where we are now. This paper proposes a competency framework based on the review of the literature and talks with stakeholders in Afghanistan about what school management and instructional leadership should look like for elementary schools to be effective.

The second stage tries to validate the concept by taking it to the field and reviewing with stakeholders or those affected by the invention of the system or concept what use of a concept or system like the one proposed for administrator competencies (for example) would add to their professional life. This is a limited test and focuses more on observation and feedback and discussion than on systematic survey data. The third test is a more systematic assessment of the concept and the feasibility of its application. The 'beta test' is often called a pilot test in social science research. However, we're using the term 'beta test' here for this is usually a more comprehensive analysis of the feasibility and utility of the concept. For a survey, as an example, it should address the value of any item proposed for it, whether the data generated from the items provide the needed information (how one would analyze the data provided to generate useful results); the overall burden of the strategy; and the extent to which the results (or likely results) are useful for the policy makers and program managers. This third stage, the beta-test, is crucial to make sure that the strategy in which the Ministry of Education is about to invest a lot of time and resources will yield desired and useful information. The fourth stage - implementation and further refinement - is essentially the continuous improvement of the concept through monitoring, evaluation, and collaborative strategic planning.

Exhibit 1, on the following page, summarizes the stages of development, products, and timeline for developing the administrator assessment and training system.

This paper is a draft of the Stage 1 product, for discussion purposes.

Exhibit 1

Stages of Development of the School Administrator Competency Framework

1. **Process:** Develop Initial Administrator Competency Framework
Product: Stage 1 Concept Paper Articulating Initial Framework (July, 2006)
Methodology elements:
 - a. Review of the technical literature from Afghanistan and elsewhere
 - b. Observation of school administration in practice
 - c. Discussion with school administrators in practice
 - d. Discussion with education stakeholders and managers**Targeted timeframe:** April through mid December, 2006

2. **Process:** Conduct Proof of Concept - Solicit Feedback and Informal Testing
Product: Revised Concept Paper on Framework
Methodology elements:
 - a. Presentation of framework and review by Central MoE
 - b. Presentation of framework and review by other Experts
 - c. Presentation of framework and review by Administrators in the field
 - d. Limited trial using framework for observations by ABEP M+E Researchers
 - e. Revision of Stage 1 Concept paper, based on feedback and findings
 - f. Presentation of Stage 2 findings to Central MoE and management stakeholders
 - g. Revision of Stage 2 Findings, based on feedback from all stakeholders**Targeted timeframe:** October 2006 through March, 2007

3. **Process:** Conduct Administrator Competency 'Beta-test'
Product: Findings on Framework Utility & Practice, Recommendations
Methodology elements:
 - a. Development of study methodology, with instrumentation, sample, and procedures
 - b. Implementation of the test in limited districts in two provinces
 - c. Data entry and analysis
 - d. Report, presentation, and feedback solicitation to MoE managers and stakeholders
 - e. Articulate recommendations for Competency Platform revision and implementation, based on findings and feedback developed.**Targeted timeframe:** March through September, 2007

4. **Process:** Work with Standards Board to Institutionalize Administrator Competency Framework Recommendations
Product(s): Administrator Training Modules, Baseline Data Collection for BESST
Methodology elements:
 - a. Develop assessment tools related to Administrator Competency Framework
 - b. Conduct trainings of MoE managers and other stakeholders in the tools, and solicit feedback for revision
 - c. Incorporate assessment tools as part of BESST School Administrator training
 - d. Conduct assessment of practice related to the Competency Framework - baseline and longitudinal, as part of the ABEP Longitudinal survey of school, teachers and students. Report changes in practice to MoE managers.
 - e. Work with MoE Managers to integrate Competency Framework into institutional preparation of administrator personnel and assessment practices**Targeted timeframe:** October 2007 - January 2010