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International Studies in Educational Administration
Volume 44, No. 3, 2016

Contents

Editorial Note KATINA POLLOCK	1
Embracing Work Passion: Perspectives of Filipino Principals and School Heads JEROME BUENVIAJE	5
Principals' Changing Work in a Time of Hong Kong Education Reform: Challenges and Opportunities ANNIE YAN-NI CHENG AND ELSON SZETO	21
Dare to Make a Difference: Successful Principals Who Explore the Potential of their Role LAWRIE DRYSDALE, DAVID GURR AND HELEN GOODE	37
Principals' Work in Ontario, Canada: Changing Demographics, Advancements in Information Communication Technology and Health and Wellbeing KATINA POLLOCK	55
School Leadership Practices of Headteachers in Kathmandu SHANKAR BIR SINGH AND DEREK J. ALLISON	75
Leading with Data: An Increasingly Important Feature of School Leadership JINGPING SUN, BOB JOHNSON AND ROBERT PRZYBYLSKI	93
The Changing Nature of School Principals' Work: Lessons and Future Directions for School Leadership Research MOOSUNG LEE	129

Principals' Work in Ontario, Canada: Changing Demographics, Advancements in Information Communication Technology and Health and Wellbeing

Katina Pollock

Abstract: *Contemporary agendas of high-stakes accountability initiatives, national and international competitiveness drives, and standardised curriculum policies have significantly influenced the work of principals. This article explores how these changes influence the work of Ontario principals in English-speaking public schools. We know the changing nature of principals' work, as compared to the work of teachers, has not been as well represented in the literature and research. Over the last two decades in Ontario, school principals have had to deal with sweeping reform measures that have re-engineered and reconfigured the educational terrain of school administration and leadership. This article takes a broad approach to understanding what contemporary principals do. Among other things, it acknowledges the wide-ranging, diverse and complex nature of what principals do. Most importantly, it adopts the concept of 'work' to explore principals' worlds. While the study in this article utilised a mixed-methods approach using interviews and school site observations, findings reported in this article come from the principal interviews only. This article focuses specifically on changing student demographics, information and communication technology, and health and wellbeing.*

Keywords: Principals' work, information and communication technology (ICT), population demographics, health and wellbeing

A growing body of research suggests that recent reforms are having an impact on what principals do. Contemporary agendas of high-stakes accountability initiatives, national and international competitiveness drives, and standardised curriculum policies have significantly influenced the work of principals (Ball 2003; Court & O'Neill 2011; Fink & Brayman 2006; Goodwin, Cunningham & Childress 2003; Goodwin, Cunningham & Eagle 2005; Harvey & Houle 2006; Haughey 2006; Törnsén 2010; Wallace 2001; Whitaker 2003). The centralisation of power associated with these reforms (Gidney 1999; Hargreaves 1994; Lingard & Douglas 1999; Pollock 2008) has reduced principals' autonomy, changed their management tasks, and created expectations for them to collaborate (Court & O'Neill 2011; Fink & Brayman 2006). Rising levels of student diversity also increasingly complicate principals' work. Issues of culture, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion, among others, continue to alter principals' approaches to their work (Harvey & Houle

2006; Ryan 2006). Technological advances have also affected how principals communicate and share information, intensifying their work (Haughey 2006). Finally, the changing nature of labour relations has altered the way in which principals interact with other educators and staff. In Ontario, for example, the expulsion of administrators from teacher unions has formalised the relationship between the two groups and made collegial enterprises more difficult (Wallace 2001). Given these changes and challenges, recruitment and retention of principals in Ontario has become a critical issue (Campbell 2015; Edge, Armstrong, Dapper, Descours & Batlle 2013; Pollock & Hauseman 2015; The Learning Partnership 2008). This article explores how these changes influence the work of Ontario principals in English-speaking public schools.

Ontario Context

Over the last two decades in Ontario, school principals have had to deal with sweeping changes that have re-engineered and reconfigured the educational terrain of school administration and leadership (Ben Jaafar & Anderson 2007; Flessa 2012; Gidney 1999; Hardy 2010; Larsen 2005; Rezai-Rashti 2003; Wallace 2001, 2010; Winton & Pollock 2013). The ramifications of these changes are all-encompassing, shaping educational discourses, giving rise to political debates about the value and purpose of education, and dictating the kinds of formal, legislated standards and expectations that are articulated for school administration (Ball 2008; Bottery 2004; Lessard & Brassard 2009; Pal 2010; Smith & Piele 2006).

For the most part, Ontario has a history of centralised control of education (Ben Jaafar & Anderson 2007; Gidney 1999; Paquette 1999; Wallace 2001), legitimising the thrust and involvement of the Ontario Ministry of Education in the administration of schools. Standards and policies regarding school administration are explicitly laid out in the relevant education documents (Ben Jaafar & Anderson 2007; Ontario Ministry of Education 2007). The legislated authority governing schools is set out in the Education Act and the Ontario Regulations; school boards are required to oversee the operations of their schools and are concomitantly accorded the legally enshrined jurisdiction to oversee school administration. In keeping with this legal mandate and the duties outlined in the Education Act and the Ontario Regulations, school boards articulate policies and other expectations to guide the work of principals in their jurisdictions. School principals are school *managers* hired by school boards to ensure adherence to stipulated mandates. This legal structure establishes the parameters of management decision-making that is *bureaucratically* enforced to ensure its legitimacy.

In addition to the formal, legislated expectations for school principals outlined in the Education Act and the Ontario Regulations, school principals' work is also guided by the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF). The OLF is a leadership document that is a part of a broader initiative called the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) that was launched in 2008 (Ontario Ministry of Education 2013a). While the Education Act and the Ontario Regulations detail the list of administrative duties that principals must perform, the OLF describes a set of *leadership skills* and *competencies* principals are expected to develop and articulate in the management of their schools. Principals are also formally evaluated by the superintendents of their employing school boards, as per Regulation 234/10 (Ontario Ministry of Education 2013b; Ontario Ministry of Education 2013c).

Legislation enacted in 1995 and 1997 added affirmation and texture to the bureaucratic situation described above. Bill 30, An Act to Establish the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), changed the practice of school administration in Ontario, especially with regards to educational standards, testing and accountability (Allison & Paquette 1991; Wallace 2001). Bill 30 was legislated to produce and administer tests of student achievement in Ontario, and was

accompanied by specific standards regarding the preparation, execution and dissemination of the test results (EQAO 2011). In particular, principals were expected to complete annual school improvement plans aligned with EQAO standards and test scores (EQAO 2011).

Theoretical Framework

This article takes a broad approach to understanding what contemporary principals do. Among other things, it acknowledges the wide-ranging, diverse and complex nature of principals' work. Most importantly, it adopts the concept of 'work' to explore principals' worlds. Work is defined as labour or effort expended to achieve a particular set of goals.¹ Keeping in mind that it is difficult in this day and age to erect clear boundaries around principals' work efforts, just as it is to define organisational boundaries (Ryan 1996), this study includes employment-related paid and unpaid work, and excludes other kinds of unpaid work such as volunteering or family responsibilities (Drago 2007). For the purposes of this article, work includes labour expended both within and outside of position-related roles enacted by principals. Work can take place on and off the school site, and it can occur after the official opening and closing of the school day. Work also comprises particular experiential components such as physical, mental and emotional aspects (Applebaum 1992; Gamst 1995). This is certainly the case for principals who are deeply engaged in emotional labour (Leithwood & Beatty 2007) in addition to cognitive and observable activities. In line with other studies that look at work engagement (Bakker, van Emmerik & Euwema 2006; Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen 2006), this study employs a lens that acknowledges the behavioural, cognitive and emotional elements of work.

We know that the changing nature of principals' work has not been well represented in the literature and research. Most certainly it has not received as much attention as the work of teachers (e.g. Adams 2009; Belfield 2005; Ben-Peretz 2001; Grimmett & Echols 2000; Hall 2004; McGregor, Hooker, Wise & Devlin 2010). The majority of the research on the work of school principals in Canada has been taken up predominantly around the principal's role in school improvement and effectiveness (Barber, Fenton & Clark 2010). In Canada, between 2001 and 2011 only a few studies focused on the changing nature of principals' work. Yashkina's (2012) review of the literature from that time period pinpoints external changes that influenced principals' work. Other studies identify a number of influences that affect principals' work (Alberta Teachers' Association 2009; Association of Administrators of English Schools of Quebec 2008; Barber et al. 2010; Cattonar et al. 2007; Fink 2010; Flessa, Gallagher-Mackay & Ciuffetelli 2010; Love 2000; MacNeill 2000; Moos, Krejlsler & Kofod 2008; Newton, Tunison & Viczko 2010; Savoie-Zajc, Brassard, Corriveau, Fortin & Gelinas 2002; Smith 2009; Stewart 2010; Sumanik 2003; The Learning Partnership 2008; Volante, Cherubini & Drake 2008; Williams 2001). These influences include changes to school regulations, pedagogy, budgetary cuts, changing perceptions of parents' roles in education, demographics, competition, technology, and views of the principal's role. Changes to principals' work have increased workload, job complexity, skill requirements, the focus on instructional leadership and external relationships, and have subsequently increased stress levels. The changes have also altered leadership styles, decreased autonomy and reduced family/personal time. While the aforementioned studies represent a starting point for understanding contemporary principals' work, they have limitations. Among other things, the studies concentrate on specific issues, are based on self-reports, focus on particular provinces, and have non-representative and small samples (Yashkina 2012). More recent, large-scale research has refocused on what principals do to provide a contemporary picture of principals' work (Leithwood & Azah 2014; Pollock, Wang & Hauseman 2015, Alberta Teachers'

1 Source: www.merriam-webster.com.

Association 2014). This article will address some of the gaps within the current social context in Ontario. Specifically, it explores principals' responses to changes in student demographics, information and communication technology, and issues surrounding health and wellbeing.

Canada has a high immigrant population. While diverse student populations can include a multitude of different groups based on race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, learning abilities, sexual orientation, gender, religious affiliations, language, and so on (Harvey & Houle 2006; Ryan 2006), principals in this study predominantly referred to student diversity in terms of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. With a population of just under 13 million people, Ontario is Canada's largest province, and accounts for 38.4 per cent of the country's total population (Statistics Canada 2016). Ontario's birth rate is 10.8 per 1,000, which implies that the 5.7 per cent increase in Ontario's population between 2006 and 2011 was largely fuelled by immigration (Statistics Canada 2015b). Immigration trends have changed over the past few decades – most newcomers no longer come from Western Europe but from all over the world, including China, India, Pakistan, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea (Statistics Canada 2007). Ontario's publicly funded school system also serves students from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds. In 2014, Ontario's average income was \$49,088 (Statistics Canada 2015a) while the average family income was \$82,058 (People for Education 2013). Among the lowest 10 per cent of Ontario schools based on family income, the average income was reported as \$44,455 in 2013, while the average family income for schools in the top 10 per cent was \$152,773 (People for Education 2013).

In addition to changing global migration patterns, the majority of workplaces are also influenced by advances in information communication technology (ICT) (Towers et al. 2006). In public education, the awareness and use of ICT in schools was first embraced from a curriculum, teaching and learning perspective (Conference Board of Canada 2001; Government of Canada 2002). Educators hoped that the innovative use of ICT would lead to eventual improved student outcomes (Dibbon & Pollock 2007; Pollock 2008). Advances in ICT that include software (programs, apps) and hardware (smart devices including phones, watches and tablets) have influenced not only pedagogical practices (Cheung & Slavin 2013; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich 2010) and student learning (Common Sense Media 2012; Higgins, Xiao & Katsipataki 2012), but also the ways in which school organisations operate. ICT has redefined the workday (Duxbury, Towers, Higgins & Thomas 2007) as technological advances have blurred the boundaries around when and where work may occur, generally (Golden 2011). Recent studies demonstrate this is also the case for school principals in Ontario (Pollock & Hauseman 2014, forthcoming). Besides boundary blurring, the use of ICT has other unintended consequences for employees. It can help principals work faster and more efficiently (Pollock, Wang & Hauseman 2015), but it can also increase stress, burnout, work-life conflict and job dissatisfaction (Wright et al. 2014).

Besides global migration and advances in ICT, principals' work is also influenced by an increased awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing for both students (Mental Health Commission of Canada 2013) and teaching staff (Simbula 2010). Most of the research on the topic of teacher health and wellness is still framed in relation to how it influences student learning (Suldo, Gormley, DuPaul & Anderson-Butcher 2014). This article targets principals' concerns with the health of students and teachers. Health includes physical, mental, emotional and cognitive aspects of a persons' life. Wellbeing consists of a state of being where 'every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community' (World Health Organization 2014: para. 1).

Methodology

While the study in this article utilised a mixed-methods approach involving interviews and school site observations, because of limited text space in the journal, the findings reported in this article come from the principal interviews only. Seventy principals from seven school districts in southwestern Ontario were involved in the study. A number of strategies were used to generate the sample of principals interviewed for the study. To begin, an official invitational email was sent to all active principals in each participating district. This method of recruitment provided a limited number of participants; some districts initially had better response rates than others. Next, supervisory officers from each board were asked to identify and invite principals working in a range of contexts to participate in the study. Elements of both snowball and convenience sampling strategies were used to populate the dataset during the latter stages of data collection as participants identified colleagues they thought might be interested in participating. The final recruitment effort included getting permission to email principals directly rather than going through the district office. Boards contacted agreed to allow the research team to email principals directly. Principals recruited for the research in this manner were asked to self-select by sending a positive response to the email invitation sent to them by the research team. Table 1 provides a breakdown of study participants characteristics.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics

District	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary	EX	LE	Total
1	2	4	2	4	5	1	6	0	6
2	8	8	13	3	13	3	12	4	16
3	1	3	0	4	4	0	2	2	4
4	3	7	7	3	8	2	8	2	10
5	5	5	6	4	8	2	6	4	10
6	4	7	4	7	10	1	8	3	11
7	5	8	12	1	9	4	10	3	13
<i>Total</i>	28	42	44	26	57	13	52	18	70

Legend: EX = Experienced (>5 years); LE = Less experienced (<5 years)

The interviews occurred between January 2012 and April 2013. The interviews were semi-structured and about 1.5 hours in length. During the interviews, principals were asked to describe a typical day of work and how, if at all, their work had changed, and also to discuss the challenges they face. This article focuses specifically on changing student demographics, changing population demographics, information and communication technology, and health and wellbeing.

Each interview was analysed independently using a combination of a priori and open coding approaches (Lichtman 2010; Miles and Huberman 1994). A priori codes were developed based on the literature review and framework mentioned earlier. Open coding occurred during the qualitative analysis process to document supplementary and unexpected themes that emerged from the dataset. The cross-comparative method was utilized to analyse the interview data (Merriam 2009; Savin-Baden & Major 2012). Dedoose, a web-based software application designed for qualitative and mixed methods data analysis, was utilised to both organise and manage the transcriptions, but also to help with coding and analysing the principal interviews.

Findings

Principals in this study commented on a number of trends that they felt influenced their work. These included changing demographics, wellbeing, impact of advancement in information communication technology, changing managerial roles and responsibilities, practicing instructional leadership, working with the various labour groups within the school sites and competing accountability systems. Because of the page limitation for this article, I chose to highlight those trends that are less common in the current literature but appear to be emerging and could possibly play a more central role in the near future. Specifically, I chose to concentrate on the changing population demographics, information communication technology, and health and wellbeing.

Population Demographics

Principals indicated two demographic changes that have influenced their work: increasingly diverse student populations, and declining student enrolment. Each of these topics is discussed in the subsections to follow.

Student Diversity

A total of 26 principals (37 per cent) indicated that they were aware of an increase in diversity in terms of student population. Fifteen percent of the sample (nine principals in total) suggested that as opposed to simply promoting an awareness of diverse student populations, they felt their role was to 'celebrate' diversity at the school level. Principals described trying to create a welcoming school climate in order to engage newcomer students and families who may have a limited understanding of the English language. Among principals who identified engaging newcomer families as additional work, those who reported having successfully addressed the issue highlighted the importance of maintaining patience with the process and making sustained and continued efforts to engage newcomers.

Principals also spoke of taking special action in economically challenged areas. While providing meals for students is not necessarily a new phenomenon in urban areas, this practice has recently expanded to include care for entire families and for essentials beyond food. One elementary principal indicated that their school had become tasked with 'providing the basics for some families; whether it be Health Unit support for head lice, or clothing or Christmas presents, those sorts of things'. These kinds of support require resources. One principal stated: 'Our students come to school, many of them with a great financial need... we buy \$18,000 of food a year to feed each student, every day.' It is important to note that purchases such as those listed above can place a strain on school budgets (Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention 2015). However, principals interviewed had absolutely no reservations about reallocating school funds, fundraising money or drawing from their personal accounts to ensure that students at their school had access to basic necessities, such as nutritious food. Engaging in fundraising activities has become commonplace for many Ontario principals (Winton 2016; Winton & Brewer 2014). Not only is engaging in fundraising a new work demand placed on principals, but such practices also have the potential to create and/or exacerbate existing inequities among schools and school districts (Winton 2016; Winton & Brewer 2014).

Declining Enrolment

Declining student enrolment is a recent demographic change that has led to changes in the work of 14 per cent of the principals who participated in this study. Nine principals discussed declining enrolments. As one principal explained, fewer students attending school in some regions reflects the 'changes in your community economics'. Another principal described the situation as follows: '[teachers] are getting laid off. There are a lot of good people out there I wish I could hire.' Principals reported that in situations involving declining enrolment, staff members were often extremely concerned about job security. For instance, one secondary school principal mentioned: 'The teachers have been there a long time and because of the declining enrolment and the politics of small schools they feel deeply threatened at times: certainly sensitive to the fact that they are vulnerable.' Some principals mentioned the importance of considering the possibility of teachers feeling vulnerable when building professional learning communities.

An unintended consequence of declining enrolment is that administrative teams have been reduced in size as the number of vice-principal positions has decreased (People for Education 2009 2012; Toronto District School Board 2015). The loss of vice-principal positions appears to have increased some principals' workload. One principal described her situation:

We've been reduced by one vice-principal, this means the workload has increased on my remaining vice principals, and I get the spillover, so if parents are coming to see me and a student arrives at the office... I'm usually dealing with them as well.

In this case, the principal indicated that in the past her vice-principals would take the lead on matters concerning student discipline, but now that she has one fewer vice-principal, she is forced to handle discipline issues and other urgent issues such as parent matters herself.

In addition to dealing with an increased need to multi-task as a result of an augmented workload, principals indicated that they engaged in further proactive steps to respond to challenges related to declining enrolment. One strategy mentioned involved seeking out or expanding special programmes to ensure that the school would maintain a stable enrolment in the short and medium terms. Because of Canada's two official languages, some principals described relying on language programmes to attract students, as this principal explained:

We have a dual track school, for French Immersion and English. We have, all together, around 640 students, about 400 of that is French right now and 250 are English and that's ... what's happening is more of the French are coming and some of the English classes are dwindling cause of that.

In this principal's situation, English programmes had been prominent in the past, but as enrolment decreased the principal began building the school's French immersion programme because it drew more students. Other secondary school principals in the study were actively involved in recruiting students to attend their schools, competing with other schools and school districts for students. An experienced principal at the secondary level noted: '...declining enrolment is hitting secondary schools overall... We've worked very hard to recruit grade 8 students and have increased that number by 10%, but we still have a ways to go.' Additional recruitment efforts add to principals' workloads, and in many ways go beyond the Ontario principals' formal role expectations.

Information and Communication Technology

In some cases, ICT has fundamentally altered professional roles. Public schooling is no exception. Principals in this study described a number of ways in which their work had changed with the use of ICT. There were two specific ways that ICT influenced principals' work. The first was the increased use of email as an additional method of communicating, and the second had to do with an increase in cyberbullying.

Communicating

Fifty-four percent of principals in this study indicated that the use of email made it easier for them to communicate with others. One participant stated:

It's created more communication, some of it may be unnecessary, some maybe not but to me I feel as though I'm better prepared for what's coming at me because of how readily available the communication is. I like it, it's been a big help for me. Teachers are now using our electronic communications a lot better than they were five years ago. We have shared calendars online where events are and it's facilitated a lot of communication. Email is a lot easier to get your point across than finding the right time to sit with the person you talk to. I don't like it to replace face-to-face time, but sometimes it's more efficient.

In this principal's experience, ICT – particularly email and an electronic calendar – helped to improve communication with teaching staff. As he described, email afforded him the opportunity to communicate with people without having to wait for a time to do so face-to-face. Others indicated that ICT allowed them to work virtually from their school site. As one principal indicated:

I am embarrassed to say this on tape but the reality is the last thing I do before I am going to bed is checking emails. My iPhone and my iPad are charging beside my bed. Even before I am up in the morning I will look. If somebody happened to e-mail me between midnight and 6:00 a.m. I have got that information about something that I need to do.

This principal demonstrates that some work can happen anywhere; in this case she uses her iPhone and iPad and checks her email before retiring for bed. This quote also demonstrates the volume of work that some principals are experiencing – 59 per cent of principals identified that they faced a seemingly endless barrage of work emails each day and argued that technology had increased, not reduced, the amount of paperwork they were tasked with completing. One of the elementary school principals interviewed said: 'You are available every minute of the day. On a typical day I will receive 40 emails that are important. I will receive other ones, but I will probably receive 30 to 40 that would require me to respond.'

The number of emails principals receive indicates changes in expectations. Approximately 49 per cent of principals mentioned that technology had changed other people's expectations for their work, and described feeling as though they were constantly 'on call'.

[The school board] has provided us with our Android phones, so they are always on, so people can always reach you, so people can always send you a text message or an email... you can never get away from it, it is there 24/7. That is the tough part, and then just everyone thinks because they sent you an email, you will stop everything and get what they want done. And it will be there, number 20 on my priority list.

This secondary school principal described how her district school board provided each principal with a smart phone with the expectation that they be available by phone or email at any time. As a result of ICT, principals in this study indicated that they had changed the way they structured their days, as well as how they assigned support staff. Based on personal preference, some principals

mentioned reading and responding to email using a remote connection on their laptops or cell phones to save time, or coming to work earlier in the morning or staying later in the evening. As one elementary principal explained:

I have a Blackberry and I have a laptop. Thank God, because otherwise, I would be stuck [at school] until late. I have to be able to go home and eat with my family, put my children to bed, and then pull out my laptop and do what I've got to do.

As this principal mentioned, communication devices have become an integral part of a principal's work. These devices are utilised both as a way to accomplish work expectations and to realise some sort of work-life balance that allows them to avoid spending long hours on the school site. Other principals, however, indicated that they preferred to arrive at school early or stay late in an effort to catch up on any digital communications missed throughout the day.

Generally coming in, in the morning... I try to get in to the office a little bit early to take care of some paperwork or some emails, because one of the things that has changed is rather than some one-on-one conversations with staff there's quite a bit of staff emailing asking questions.

This principal preferred to arrive at the school site earlier to answer emails rather than bring work home. When it comes to increased work volume, it appears that principals either complete the work from home, or stay late or arrive early and complete the work at the school.

Cyberbullying

Another way in which advances in ICT and innovative mobile devices have contributed to principals' work concerns cyberbullying. Specifically, the growing use of ICT and smart devices has increased instances of student discipline issues directly connected to cyberbullying (Hvidston, Hvidston, Range & Harbour 2013). Eight principals in this study indicated that cyberbullying through social media and students' use of cell phones and other communication devices in the classroom were emerging issues.

Bullying and all those things that are around that social media piece, it's one of our biggest challenges. I think the local police forces would tell you the same thing. It's a total different animal today, when we're talking about. It used to be if someone was bullying somebody, they'd say it to them in the hallway, or you'd see it on the washroom wall, maybe 500 people see it. With the click of a button, millions of people see it. So it's a totally different... We need to do a lot of education around the use of social media, the positive use, it's an incredible tool, but we put it into hands of people that don't know how to use it properly.

The reach of cyberbullying is extensive, and principals find themselves thinking about and engaging in additional education around what cyberbullying is, how to prevent it, and what to do if a student is a victim of it. The volume of work brought on by instances of cyberbullying is only now being recognised. For example, one principal mentioned an increased number of visits to their school by police because of 'bullying on social media, it's horrible. And how many times we'd have to call the police and go into someone's Facebook and see what they were saying about kids...' Principals' interactions with outside agencies such as the police have increased because of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has not only increased principals' work in terms of amplified student discipline, however, it has also exacerbated student health and wellbeing issues.

Health and Wellbeing

Awareness of and concerns around health and wellbeing appear to be increasing. All principals interviewed for this study cited changes in mental health and wellbeing (either in students, teachers or themselves) as impacting their daily work. Health and wellbeing can mean many things to people, but in this case health includes physical, mental, emotional and cognitive aspects of a person's life. Not surprisingly, principals mostly talked about student health and wellbeing, particularly with respect to mental health issues, but they also talked about the wellbeing of their teachers.

Student Health and Wellbeing

Student health and wellbeing was mentioned by 64 per cent of principals in the sample as the single greatest challenge they faced in their work. One principal stated: 'our kids are coming in with mental health issues'. It appears that the vast majority of principals are aware and knowledgeable when it comes to student health and wellbeing, but they do not necessarily always have the expertise to support students at the school site. One elementary school principal echoed this sentiment, pointing out: '...there are mental health workshops, but they do not change the needs within your own building... the needs of your students still come at you regardless'. One secondary principal pointed out:

I had to have a first day training for mental health. Again, not a bad deal but, wait a minute, I mean its growing, but it's like 'Am I doing education or am I doing social work?' And all that's important because if you don't have the kid ready to learn, they aren't going to be ready to learn.

In this particular case, the principal, while reflecting on organising and supporting professional learning on the topic of student mental health issues, wondered whether his job had expanded to include social work. Though some support (such as professional learning for teachers) appears to be available, it may not be sufficient. One elementary principal stated:

You only have so many bodies to go around, and in many cases you do the very best you can with the staff that you have and people work hard to meet the needs of the kids, but there is no way that you can address all of those needs, all of the time.

Limited personnel means that principals pick up additional work when supporting students' health and wellbeing needs; principals indicated that managing mental health issues put a strain on time needed for other issues and on themselves.

Like yesterday for example, if you had come yesterday around that time, you would have seen me, I was like an hour and forty-five minutes with a parent and a student who has a mental health issue; [the student] totally lost it, the police came and like the whole thing. If you'd come yesterday you would have seen the whole thing in action...

The additional training, the need to step in and support staff when dealing with students in crisis, and the additional time dedicated to addressing student health and wellbeing issues are not the only aspects of health and wellbeing that complicate principals' work; there is also an increasing need to support the health and wellbeing of educators.

Teaching Staff Health and Wellbeing

Whether formally or informally, principals, as the official leaders and administrators of a school site, have always been responsible for the health and wellbeing of their teaching staff. Indeed, it appears as though students are not the only people principals care for, as a little over 10 per cent of principals indicated that caring for the wellbeing of the teaching staff was also part of their work. For example, one elementary principal stated:

...at any given time with 25 staff you've got 5 or 6 that is experiencing some crisis. Like I can tell you right now that one of my teacher's husbands just lost his job, I've got a teacher who just had a diagnosis of cancer. I've got another who's sister-in-law tried to commit suicide... and that all happened within a week... so I'm also trying to help them deal with their emotional turmoil in their lives because it's important. It's what's on their minds and I'm trying to help them.

Even though there is professional support for Ontario teachers through their employers, their professional associations and their unions, this elementary principal indicated that teachers' health and wellbeing was important to her. The health and wellbeing of teachers plays a role in the work that principals do because teachers not performing to the best of their ability can translate into other kinds of work, such as additional teacher appraisals and interventions, that have the potential to impact student success. There is also emerging research that connects teachers' health and wellbeing to student learning (Vesely, Saklofske & Leschied 2013).

Discussion

What do these changes mean for the principals' work? Studies conducted during the similar time period indicate that principals' workload has increased and is more complex (Alberta Teachers' Association 2014; Leithwood & Azah 2014; Pollock et al. 2015). The changes to work described by the principals in this article can contribute to increased volume and affect the quality of their work. We know that principals now work longer hours and they do their work differently than they used to (Alberta Teachers' Association 2014; Leithwood & Azah 2014; Pollock et al. 2015). I have argued elsewhere (Pollock et al. 2015) that one source of increased work volume and change in work comes from the use of ICT such as email, and that this is an issue that has been evident for some time (e.g. Gurr 2001, 2004). Principals in this study demonstrated how ICT can be considered an additional way of communicating for them and a substitute for some of the 'talk' in which principals historically engage. Gronn (1983) has argued that the majority of principals' work occurs through their talk. Talking allows principals to carry out practices such as decision making, information sharing, communicating policy, implementing programmes, facilitating professional learning opportunities, and so on. Before the age of the internet, this talk work occurred through face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, written paper communication and possibly faxes. Now, advances in ICT have added another layer to this communication work. While ICT has replaced some communication work, it appears that it has changed the nature of principals' work. Among other things, it has blurred the work and home boundary to the point that as long as there is an internet connection and a 'smart' device, principals can potentially work from anywhere at any time. More than this though, there is an expectation that they do so.

Work volume and the nature of work is also influenced by changes in expectations for student success (Alberta Teachers' Association 2014; Leithwood & Azah 2014). Principals in this study demonstrated how expectations of inclusive education are influencing their work. Ontario principals are obligated to include all students in public schooling and ensure that all students succeed; this means including all of Canada's diverse student populations. This is not just a moral

exercise driven by individual principals' value systems or ethical practices, but forms part of the Ontario provincial government's efforts to ensure all students achieve excellence (Ontario Ministry of Education 2014). One specific provincial policy that guides principals' work in this manner is the equity and inclusion education strategy (Ontario Ministry of Education 2009) with Policy / Program Memorandum 119 (Ontario Ministry of Education 2013b). This strategy requires that principals 'create and support a positive school climate that fosters and promotes equity, inclusive education, and diversity' (Ontario Ministry of Education 2009: 11). Ontario principals are expected to pursue three goals to achieve equity and inclusion for all students: engaging in shared and committed leadership with all stakeholders to eliminate discrimination and removal of bias and barriers for learners; striving for a working environment that is respectful, supportive and welcoming; and demonstrating success through a clear set of measures (Ontario Ministry of Education 2009). These three goals require principals in Ontario to not only think differently about how they enact their role (for example, engaging in different forms of community outreach), but also to bring different skill sets and actions to bear (Ryan 2007, 2010; Ryan & Pollock 2006; Ryan & Tutters 2015), which also requires additional time.

Issues associated with cyberbullying and the accompanying disciplinary work have also influenced the volume and the nature of principals' work. It should be noted here that the statistics actually demonstrate a decrease in incidences of discipline in Ontario as measured by suspensions and expulsions (Ontario Ministry of Education 2015; Toronto District School Board 2013). However, the nature of some of the discipline requires that principals dedicate additional time to investigating cases, making informed decisions and applying appropriate solutions. This is especially true for the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying (Hvidston et al. 2013); principals in this study indicated that they are spending increasing time on discipline issues related to cyberbullying. Student discipline has always been a part of schooling, but in the past, infractions between students occurred either on the school site or within the local physical community (and public space) that the school services. Students involved were often easily identified. Cyberbullying is different – it occurs virtually and therefore geographical location can be irrelevant. It can occur anywhere, at any time; there are no boundaries and the perpetrator can be anonymous. For this reason, dealing with cyberbullying can be very complicated and time consuming. The perpetrator can be in a different country, and interventions can involve international agencies and large multinational companies such as Google or Facebook. Again, while principals have always dealt with student discipline, addressing cyberbullying forces them to change the way they create safe and accepting school environments.

Principals in this study also indicated that they were dealing with increasing incidences of issues relating to the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff. There appears to be no consensus on why these incidences are increasing (Olfson, Druss & Marcus 2015; Whitaker 2010). Some argue that the number of incidences is not increasing, but rather it is awareness of mental health issues that has increased (Whitaker 2010). What we do know is that mental health issues find their way onto school sites and that a growing body of research points to a connection between teacher health and wellbeing and student learning (Bajorek, Gulliford & Taskila 2014; Briner & Dewberry 2007). Ontario recently launched the Open Minds, Healthy Minds strategy that targets mental health. This means that principals cannot ignore the health and wellbeing of students and teachers. For this reason, principals in this study found themselves seeking out additional community services and resources for students and families, engaging in informal counselling and information sharing sessions, and providing support for teacher professional learning in which they would not have been involved in the past. All of these strategies generate an increase in work volume and different kinds of work for principals that require new skill sets and knowledge.

Lastly, it is also apparent that issues associated with communication technology, diversity, and health and wellbeing can intersect. This can increase the complexity of principals' work. For example, creating a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment for an increasingly diverse student population can be challenging. At times, issues of racism and discrimination towards, and exclusion of, groups of student can lead to student conflict such as bullying (including cyberbullying), and this can influence individual students' health and wellbeing.

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