Chapter 5

School leaders in the Slovak Republic

This chapter is about policies to improve the effectiveness of school leadership. It analyses the profile of school leaders as well as how responsibilities for school organisation and operation are distributed in Slovak schools. Furthermore, it discusses school leader preparation, recruitment and career development. The chapter places particular emphasis on areas of priority for the Slovak Republic such as the lack of attractiveness of the school leader profession, the low salary levels, the limited capacity for school leader appraisal and the need to improve the approach to professional development. The chapter also reviews approaches to the selection of school leaders, school leaders' use of time, administrative and management support structures and links to school development.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

This chapter addresses policies to improve the effectiveness of schools through effective school leadership. Among other things, it analyses how responsibilities for school organisation and operation are distributed; how school leaders are prepared and improve their skills while in the profession (e.g. initial preparation, professional development); how school leaders are recruited into individual schools; how school leaders contribute to school development; and how school leaders are incentivised to perform at a high level (e.g. school leader appraisal, recognition and compensation).

Context and features

Profile and distribution of school leaders and deputy leaders

In 2014, the average age of Slovak school leaders in mainstream schools varied from 50 years in a basic school to 55 years in a vocational secondary school (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Table 7). According to TALIS (OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey), the Slovak school leaders in schools providing lower secondary education were on average one year older than their counterparts in other countries (see Table 5.1).[1] However, the TALIS sample also indicates a slightly higher proportion of younger school leaders in Slovak schools than on average. Among other things, this may reflect that the teaching experience requirement to become a school leader is set at five years (see Box 5.1). On average, however, school leaders in Slovak mainstream schools have 27 years of experience (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Table 7).

While female school leaders are the majority in Slovak schools, they are not evenly distributed among different school types. Among mainstream schools, the proportion of female school leaders varies from 70% in basic schools, through 51% in *gymnasiums* and 43% in vocational secondary schools (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Table 7). Compared to other countries, the proportion of female school leaders at the lower secondary level in the Slovak Republic is higher (by 10 percentage points) (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. **Profile of Slovak school leaders in international comparison, lower secondary education, TALIS 2013 and 2008**

	2013		2008	
	Slovak Republic (%)	Average in TALIS (%)	Slovak Republic (%)	Average in TALIS (%)
Aged 60 years and more	17.4	17.1	11.7	11.5
Aged under 40 years	9.7	7.2	4.6	9.5
Mean age	52.5 years	51.5 years	-	-
Females	60.0	49.9	60.3	47.0
ISCED 5A qualification	98.1	92.7	99.4	92.8
ISCED 6 qualification	1.9	3.3	0.6	1.3
Full-time employed and teaching	91.3	35.4	-	-
Full-time employed, but not teaching	5.0	62.4	-	-
Part-time employed and teaching	3.7	3.4	-	-

Source: OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, Tables 3.8, 3.8c, 3.9c and 3.13, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en*.

Box 5.1. **Requirements to become a school leader (director)**

School founders publish the open school leader position, including details of the selection procedure, in the press, Internet and sometimes via the radio or television. To be eligible for the position of school leader (director) a candidate must:

- hold a qualification to be able to teach
- hold at least the "1st certification" (this is a prerequisite for promotion to a higher level; see Chapter 4 for a detailed description of the procedures for certification)
- have at least five years of teaching experience.

In addition, the school leader is required to complete "functional training", which is an officially approved professional development course in specific management competencies. Functional training courses are offered by the central Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (MPC), universities and other providers (see Chapter 4). The course comprises between 160 and 200 hours of training over a two-year period (Shewbridge et al., 2014a). The course has several different modules: i) school legislation and finance; ii) pedagogical management (preparing the School Education Programme and working with the curriculum); iii) human resource management (the school as the employer); iv) conceptual management (responsibility for the school development plan and strategic issues); and v) school leader's professional development.

A school leader must complete functional training no later than three years after his/her appointment. In order to successfully complete functional training, a school leader must pass an examination and defend a written thesis in front of a three-member examination committee. Once successful, this functional training qualification is valid for a maximum of seven years.

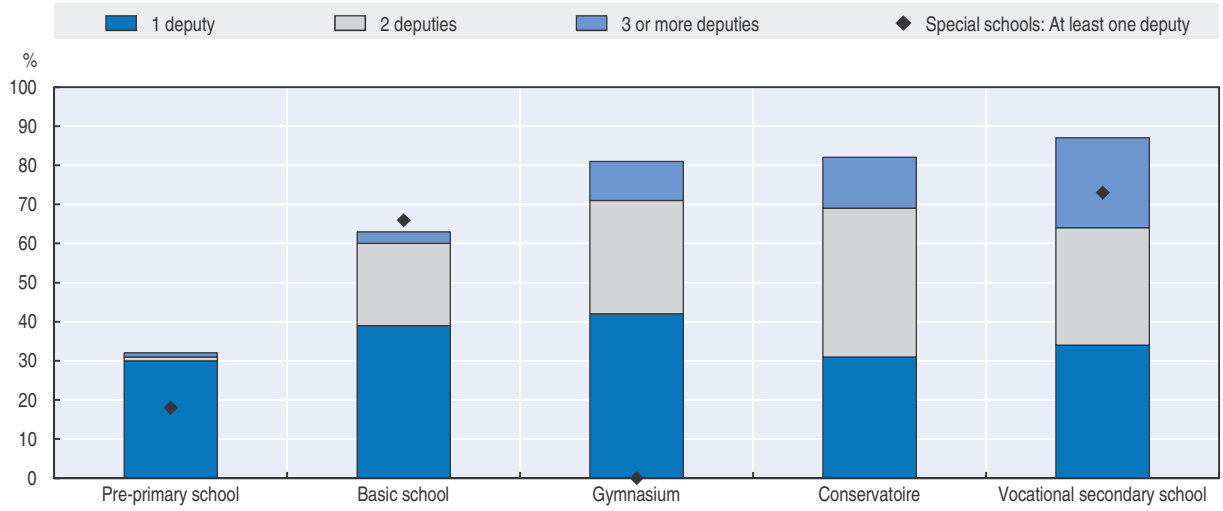
Sources: Interview of the OECD review team with the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (MPC); Educational Policy Institute (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for the Slovak Republic*, *www.oecd.org/edu/school/schoolresourcesreview.htm*; Shewbridge, C. et al. (2014a), *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Slovak Republic 2014*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264117044-en*.

Typically, Slovak school leaders have an official deputy leader with whom to share responsibility. It is even more likely that a deputy leader is female (on average, 85% of deputy leaders are female). Deputy leaders, on average, have two years of experience less than school leaders (25 years of experience) and are a year younger (49 years) (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Table 7). Depending on the size of the school, there may be more than one deputy leader. For example, roughly one in five vocational secondary schools have three or more deputy leaders (see Figure 5.1). However, school leaders in roughly one in five *gymnasiums*, conservatoires and vocational secondary schools do not have a deputy leader (see Figure 5.1). It is more common in basic schools that school leaders do not have the support of a deputy leader (this is the case for roughly two in five basic schools and is related to the size of these schools).

Employment status and compensation

School leaders in Slovak schools have civil servant status and are awarded five-year contracts (OECD, 2013a). These contracts are renewable and are linked to professional development requirements: each established school leader must successfully complete a "functional innovative training" in a maximum period of every seven years. School leaders may have different employers: in schools that are a legal entity the employer will be the school; in other cases, i.e. for schools that are not a legal entity, the employer will be the

Figure 5.1. **Distribution of the number of deputy leaders, by school type, 2014**



Source: Educational Policy Institute (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for the Slovak Republic*, Table 8, *www.oecd.org/edu/school/schoolresourcesreview.htm*.

school founder. 74% of schools providing primary and lower secondary education and all schools providing upper secondary education have the status of "legal entity" (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Annex No. 7). Schools that are not a legal entity tend to be small schools which are deemed not to have the capacity to deal with the administrative requirements associated with such legal status. The school founder decides on whether or not to grant individual schools the status of legal entity.

Compensation for school leaders comprises a general teaching salary or basic salary ("tariff salary") plus an "allowance for managerial activities", and possibly a "personal allowance". The general methodology to calculate the basic pay for teachers is also used to set the basic pay for school leaders (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Annex 16 and Tables 4.6 and 4.7 in Chapter 4). This means that the basic pay for a school leader depends on his/her acquired qualifications and career grade (category/level of salary and corresponding "tariff pay") and workload (one of two work classes or the "work tariff") (see Chapter 4). However, unlike for teachers, school leaders do not receive an increase for each year worked ("tariff pay increase") and their pay level is set to the maximum amount after 32 years of experience as a teacher (Eurydice, 2015). The personal allowance is used to award extraordinary work results or additional duties and can be a maximum of 24% of the basic salary.

The allowance for managerial activities varies. It is an additional percentage (anything from 3% to 50%) of the school leader's basic salary increased by 24%. Various factors influence how the additional percentage is set (Act No. 317/2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Specialist Employees):

- Ultimately it remains at the discretion of the employer to set the percentage within a given range.
- The given range varies depending on:
  - The school's legal status:
    - School is a legal entity (from 12% to 50% depending on whether the school founder has local, district, regional or national authority, as defined by law).

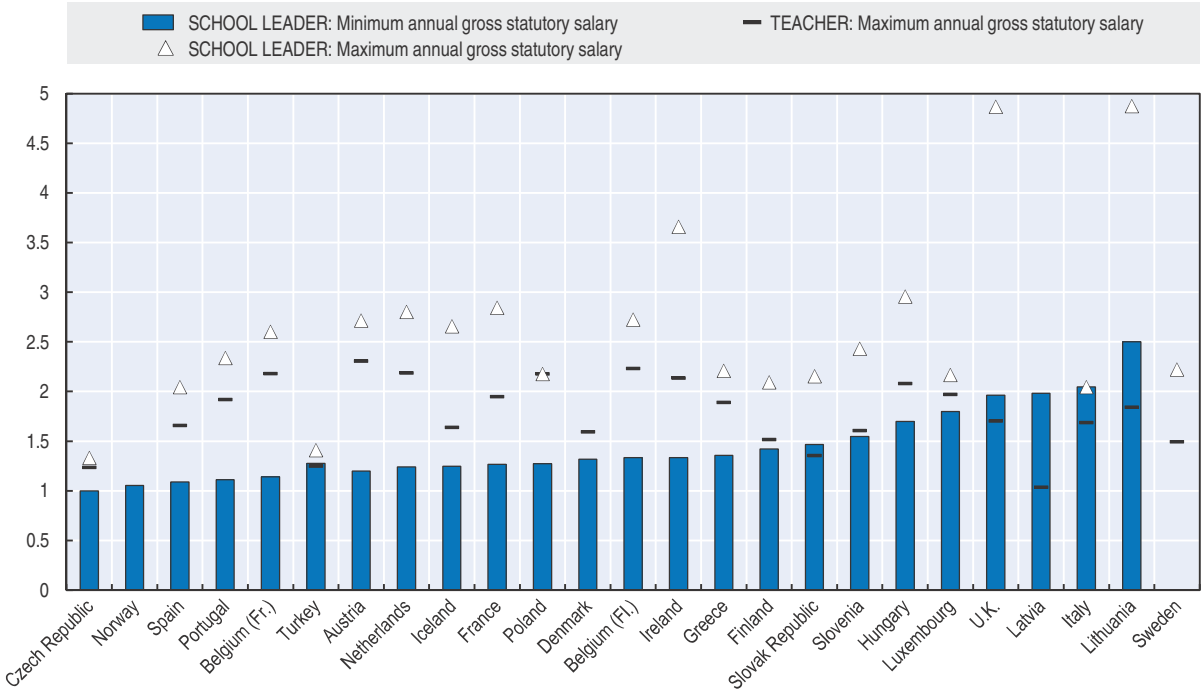
– School is not a legal entity (from 3% to 20%, irrespective of the school founder).

❖ The size of the school (number of students).

The minimum annual gross salaries of full-time and fully-qualified school leaders in Slovak state schools is reported to be EUR 9 882 and the maximum EUR 14 514 (at the upper secondary level; EUR 14 100 at the primary and lower secondary level) (Eurydice, 2015). This is, respectively, 1.47 and 2.16 times the minimum annual salary for a Slovak teacher (see Figure 5.2). However, the average actual salary for school leaders is reported to be exactly the same as that for teachers (EUR 10 994) (Eurydice, 2015).

Figure 5.2. **Relative attractiveness of school leader salaries across European countries**

Ratio of salaries to minimum annual statutory salary for teachers, 2013-14



Notes: Countries are presented in ascending order of ratio of minimum school leader salary to minimum teacher salary. For Sweden, salaries are negotiated and a value for "Minimum annual gross statutory salary of a school leader" is not available.

Source: Calculated from data in Eurydice (2015), *Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2013/14, Eurydice Facts and Figures*, *http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/salaries.pdf*

School leader appointment and dismissal

The school founder officially appoints and dismisses the school leader. However, in each case there are procedures in place to ensure input from other stakeholders.

For appointment, both the School Board and the State Schools Inspectorate (ŠŠI) play a leading role in the selection process. An inspector from the ŠŠI must be a member of the school board's selection committee in basic and secondary schools. In the case of state schools, until June 2015, the school founder (i.e. self-governing region, municipality or regional state authority) was obliged to accept the candidate nominated by the school board for the position of school leader (director). This was changed as part of an amendment to the School Act approved on 15 June 2015. State founders can now reject the candidate proposed by the school board twice. On the first instance of rejection, the state founder must provide a justification in writing (and then the selection committee led by

the school board proposes a second candidate). The second instance of rejection must be approved by a three-fifths majority of the members of the municipality's or the region's council (this requirement does not exist in the case of regional state authorities). Following the second rejection, the founder is required to form a selection committee with at least three members, whose composition is entirely at its discretion. This selection committee makes the final choice and the founder cannot override its decision. In the case of private and church schools, the school founder is not obliged to appoint the candidate nominated by the school board and can ask the school board to nominate a different candidate. In the scenario that the second nomination by the school board is deemed unsuitable, the founder may appoint the candidate of its choice.

For dismissal, the school founder takes responsibility but only within the given set of cases defined by legislation. The ŠŠI may play a role and the school board also carries influence. As part of the system of external school evaluation (inspection) of Slovak schools, the ŠŠI identifies schools with shortcomings, e.g. the school violates a particular regulation or has poor quality in a certain area of the central inspection framework (Shewbridge et al., 2014a). In such a case there is a system of "follow-up inspections", where school inspectors return to the school to verify if and how the identified shortcomings have been addressed. If inspectors note that serious problems persist, the ŠŠI can issue a binding recommendation to the school founder to postpone the re-appointment of the school leader at the end of his/her five-year contract or even to dismiss the school leader. For all schools, the ŠŠI has the right to ask the school founder to replace a school leader who does not meet the qualification requirements (see Box 5.1). This includes the requirement for a school leader to successfully complete "functional innovative training" within a maximum period of seven years (60 hours of professional development). The school board may also submit a proposal to dismiss a school leader and has the right, in certain circumstances, to comment on a school founder's proposal to dismiss a school leader (if no comment is submitted within 15 days the school founder can dismiss the school leader) (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 28).

More specifically, the founder should dismiss the school leader: i) if the school leader has been convicted of an intentional criminal act; ii) if there was a violation of some obligations or laws (e.g. budget law), following consultation of the school board; iii) if the school is closed down; and iv) on the proposal of the Head School Inspector. The founder can dismiss the school leader: i) on a proposal from the school board; ii) if the school leader fails to complete functional training or functional innovation training, following consultation of the school board; and iii) on the proposal of the Minister of Education (if they are significant violations of some obligations or laws), following consultation of the school board.

Responsibilities and evaluation

Slovak school leaders are responsible for teaching duties and management activities. Teaching duties vary from 5 to 18 hours in basic schools and from 3 to 8 hours in secondary schools. Their specific responsibilities for management include (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 76):

- Compliance with corresponding National Education Programme (NEP).
- Development and implementation of the School Education Programme (SEP).

- Development and implementation of the yearly plan of continuing professional development.
- Compliance with binding legal regulations related to the school's activities.
- Annual evaluation of the teaching staff and specialist employees.
- The quality of the upbringing and education work of the school.
- Budget, funding and efficient use of the school's financial resources.
- Proper management of assets held or owned by school.

There are requirements for regular compliancy reporting that school leaders must meet. All school leaders must prepare a report on school upbringing and education activities (the annual school report) which includes a financial statement for the school. School leaders in schools that are a legal entity (the majority of schools) must prepare an "economic report" for the school which gives details on the sources and use of funds for the given year.

School leaders are also responsible for preparing other official documentation. In collaboration with school founders, they draw up financial management guidelines for the school which includes basic responsibilities of school managers and other school staff. School leaders are responsible for preparing and evaluating progress against a School Development Plan and development plans for staff in their schools. Finally, school leaders are responsible for leading the preparation of the School Education Programme (that is, the educational courses and content offered in the school).

There are external services to help support school leaders in performing these responsibilities. School founders provide expert and consulting activities, legal advisory services and co-operate with school leaders during the recruitment process. The regional state authority provides consulting to school founders and school leaders on matters such as the organisation of upbringing and education, catering services, activities with children and young people, free time education, and health and safety regulations (Educational Policy Institute, 2015).

Employers (in most cases, schools themselves) are legally required to appraise school leaders annually, with implications for their contract renewal (at the end of a fixed-term five-year contract), but there are no central specifications on appraisal procedures (OECD, 2013a). As representatives of employers in matters concerning school leaders, school founders take responsibility for school leader appraisal. Founders are free to set school leader appraisal procedures, e.g. regularity of appraisal, criteria used. The appraisal usually takes the form of an interview and the impact on school leader compensation is fairly low, with public recognition and the expression of gratitude being a more frequent form of reward (NÚCEM, 2012).

The State Schools Inspectorate (ŠŠI) evaluates both "pedagogical management" and the quality of upbringing and education at schools (for which school leaders are responsible) as part of regular external school evaluation procedures (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 81). School inspection reports are provided to school founders and this can be helpful input. However, the regular cycle of school inspections is set at every seven years (Shewbridge et al., 2014a).

Strengths

Mechanisms to heighten the objectivity of school leader appointment and dismissal procedures are in place

In a system with such high autonomy at the school level, the school leader is arguably the most important resource. It follows that key tools to effectively manage school leaders are the selection, appointment and dismissal procedures. There is a transparent procedure for the announcement of a school leader position, as this must be announced publicly. The OECD review team gained the impression that the procedures for selecting a new school leader had also become more objective thanks to the promotion of a "recommended approach" by the ŠŠI. The OECD review team heard reports from different school boards on the procedures followed to select a school leader: read over applications received; check all candidates' qualifications for the position; conduct interviews of suitable candidates during which each candidate presented his/her concept of management; and finally held a secret ballot in which each member of the school board voted for his/her preferred candidate. The OECD review team also learned of an example where the district school office, in collaboration with the ŠŠI, had prepared a methodology on the school leader selection process (e.g. application deadlines, publishing requirements, etc.) and had offered targeted training to school boards. This was part of a regular district-wide approach to bring together the chairs of all school boards on an annual basis.

Giving the school board a prominent role in school leader selection is an important mechanism to heighten the objectivity of this process. During the OECD review, various representatives of school boards described the selection of the school leader as the school board's major responsibility. Slovak school boards have a broad composition with eleven members representing the three major stakeholder groups (see Table 5.2). During the OECD review, various stakeholders reported their support for the school board's leading role in selecting the school leader as this reduces opportunities for "political appointments". A relatively recent requirement (for the past two years) also sees the ŠŠI represented on the selection committee (i.e. the school board plus one or two school inspectors) in basic and secondary schools. This brings in professionalism and experience from school inspectors, who conduct an evaluation of school management against specific indicators in the school inspection framework as part of the external school evaluation process. School inspectors also heighten objectivity as they bring in a perspective both external to the school founder and to the immediate school community (as represented by the staff, parents and students).

Table 5.2. **Composition of school boards in Slovak schools**

	School founder	Staff	Parents/students
Pre-primary and basic schools	4 representatives.	2 teachers; 1 non-teaching staff.	4 parents.
Gymnasiums	4 representatives.	2 teachers; 1 non-teaching staff.	3 parents; 1 student.
Vocational secondary school	3 representatives; 1 employer/industry representative.	2 teachers; 1 non-teaching staff.	3 parents; 1 student.

Note: The Student School Board, in schools where it exists, nominates a student to be represented on the school board.
Source: Educational Policy Institute (2015), *OECD Review of Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of Resource Use in Schools: Country Background Report for the Slovak Republic*, *www.oecd.org/edu/school/schoolresourcesreview.htm*.

The current approach to school leader selection also facilitates a more coherent management of school leaders as the specific group taking the ultimate selection decision (school founder) is also in charge of the other relevant dimensions of human resource management (appraisal, development, career advancement). This should facilitate the alignment between the selection, appraisal and development of school leaders with the founder's educational objectives and financial resources. Also, in order to hold employers (mostly schools, represented by their founders in matters related to school leader employment) accountable for the use of their school leader resources, they need to take ultimate responsibility for their selection. However, the prominent role of school boards and the ŠŠI in the selection of school leaders is essential in reducing pressures for the political appointment of school leaders. In addition it adds greater capacity and levels of expertise to the decision.

The OECD review revealed examples of how active school boards can effectively manage school leaders and intervene when there are quality concerns. For example, one school board reported that it had taken a more active role in monitoring the performance of the school leader over the past ten years, including dismissing an unsuitable leader and selecting a new school leader, and had seen a notable change for the better in school climate and a growing student intake. School founders also reported examples where school boards had initiated the process to dismiss a school leader. There are also central procedures in place to intervene when there are concerns with the effectiveness of the school leader. The ŠŠI can request the school founder to dismiss and replace the school leader in the case that: the school leader does not hold adequate qualifications; and the ŠŠI has identified serious deficiencies with a school leader (although this is quite exceptional) (Educational Policy Institute, 2015).

School leaders are subject to both horizontal and vertical accountability

There are clear mechanisms for vertical accountability in Slovak schools, with well-established compliancy reporting requirements. Regarding school resource management, school founders should conduct an annual audit of the school accounts (see Chapter 3 for more details). The school leader must submit a report on the school's educational activities, results and activities (the annual school report) to the school founder for approval and to the school board for comment. School leaders have a formal annual appraisal by their employer (conducted by the school founder) and "school management" is evaluated as part of the ŠŠI inspection process (see Table 5.3).

As noted above, there are ways for the school community to give feedback to the school leader. There are also formal, "self-governing" bodies, including, notably the school board, but there may also be a students' board. The school board is an official channel to help parents, and in some cases, students and/or employers to report their opinions on activities and developments at the school (see Table 5.2). The school board has the chance to comment on all major school documentation that is prepared under the responsibility of the school leader, including compliancy reports (the annual school report and economic report) and reports and information on planned activities and resources (the School Development Plan, the draft budget, information about human resources and the draft school education programmes).

There may be an association representing the parents of children at the school, which is an informal channel to give feedback to the school leader. An earlier OECD review had noted the important and growing role of student voice in the Slovak school system

Table 5.3. **State School Inspection criteria to evaluate school management, 2014-15**

Evaluation criteria	Indicators
1.1. School Education Programme (SEP)	1.1.1. The school has developed a SEP. 1.1.2. The objectives set out in the SEP are intended to prepare students for further education. 1.1.3. The SEP supports the implementation of education and training in accordance with the principles and objectives in the Education Act and the relevant National Education Programmes (NEP). 1.1.4. The SEP supports the development of student key competencies in line with learning objectives in the relevant NEP. 1.1.5. The SEP provides educational opportunities for students with special educational needs. 1.1.6. Teachers, legal guardians of students and the public are familiar with the SEP.
1.2. Pedagogical management	1.2.1. Leading development of pedagogical documentation and other documentation related to the process of education, the organisation and management of the school. 1.2.2. The school leader supports the professional development of teaching staff. 1.2.3. Governance in state school and decision making in private or church schools is in accordance with the applicable law. 1.2.4. The school leader uses technical assistance from a methodology association and subject commissions in establishing a single procedure to manage education and training.
1.3. The internal control system and evaluation	1.3.1. The school leader uses consistent evaluation procedures in line with established internal control systems for student assessment and staff appraisal.
1.4. The climate and culture of the school	1.4.1. The school engages students in school and extracurricular activities significantly affecting the educational activity. 1.4.2. School's educational activities promote a positive climate and culture.
1.5. School services	1.5.1. Educational counselling is provided at school.

Note: These evaluation criteria are used for all schools, but specific indicators may vary for pre-primary schools, basic schools, *gymnasiums* and vocational secondary schools. The indicators listed here are used in basic schools and *gymnasiums*.
Source: State Schools Inspectorate Evaluation criteria for school year 2014-15, *www.ssiba.sk*.

(Shewbridge et al., 2014a) and in 2011, 58% of upper secondary schools had a student board (Educational Policy Institute, 2015). A survey of school leaders indicated that three quarters reported that the student board made a positive contribution to governance at their school (Bieliková et al., 2012 in Educational Policy Institute, 2015).

It is expected that school leaders play a strategic and development role in the school

The school leader is responsible for developing the School Development Plan and must submit this to the school founder for approval. The School Development Plan should cover a period of two years, but often covers a five-year period corresponding to the length of the school leader's appointment at the school. The school leader is also responsible for preparing an Annual School Report and this includes a report on progress in implementing the School Development Plan. An important part of the school leader selection process is an assessment of the candidate's leadership skills. This is supported, also, by the presence of a school inspector on the selection committee who can contribute experience in judging "leadership" skills as specified in the objective criteria within the inspection framework. During the selection process, the school founder and the school board may also ask the candidate to present a five-year concept plan for the school's development (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 79). In TALIS 2013, 96% of Slovak school leaders reported that they had worked on a professional development plan for the school, compared to 79% on average in participating countries (OECD, 2014, Table 3.3).

Most school leaders benefit from good administrative and management support structures

Slovak school leaders have a high level of responsibility and need to undertake numerous complex and different tasks. Although some smaller basic schools may not have a deputy leader, the majority of school leaders have the support of at least one deputy leader (see Figure 5.1). Typically, schools also have administrative staff to support the accomplishment of school responsibilities.

According to reports from school directors in the TALIS 2013 international survey, school directors in the Slovak Republic spend a similar amount of time on administrative and leadership tasks and meetings as their peers in other countries on average. However, they reportedly spend comparatively less time on specific administrative tasks: 48% of school directors reported they "often" or "very often" check for mistakes and errors in school administrative procedures and reports, which is lower than the OECD average of 61%; similarly, 24% reported they resolve problems with the timetable in the school, compared to 47% on average in the OECD (OECD, 2014). This corresponds to the typical situation where a school leader has a deputy. Among other duties, the deputy leader typically is responsible for preparing documents for the school budget, the school timetable and statistical summaries (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 76). Where appropriate, there may be a deputy leader responsible for a distinct type or level of education offered within the school. For example, the OECD review team visited a vocational secondary school that had one deputy leader for general education and one for vocational education and a basic/pre-primary school that had one deputy leader for the pre-primary section and one for pedagogical activities in the basic school.

Also, each school typically employs administrative staff responsible for regular administrative arrangements (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 76). All schools visited by the OECD review team had a member of staff with responsibility for administering the school budget. Larger schools have both an "economist" and an "accountant". The economist assumes responsibility for the payroll, planning the school budget for staff salaries and the accountant assumes responsibility for operational costs, planning the school budget for goods and services. Smaller schools may merge the functions of the economist and accountant into one administrative position or employ two members of staff on a part-time basis. Such support seems invaluable to school leaders in meeting their overall responsibility for the school budget. Larger schools visited by the OECD review team also employed a secretary to help with administrative support.

School leaders may also benefit from different advisory bodies to support their work. Given the responsibility for each Slovak school to develop School Education Programmes, the schools visited during the OECD review all had structures in place to support this: for the development of the pedagogical programmes in the school overall (pedagogical board); and in some schools, for the oversight of education in particular sub-groups within the school, including all teachers of students in Years 0 to 4 (methodological associations) or all teachers of students in Years 5 to 9 in specific subject areas (subject committee). Each subject committee has a Head who may also help school leaders and deputy leaders with classroom observation in that particular subject. The most recent State Schools Inspection criteria include an indicator on whether the school leader uses such support mechanisms (see Table 5.3). At the lower secondary level, international data indicate that the majority

(around 70%) of Slovak school leaders share responsibility for choosing learning materials and determining the programmes offered and their content and this is a more regular practice than in schools in other countries.[2]

The importance of managerial professional development is underpinned legally

The Slovak Republic requires school leaders – both newly-appointed and well-established – to undertake specific professional development to support their management responsibilities. This is known as the "functional training" requirement, that a newly-appointed school leader must complete within the first three years of his/her appointment, and the "functional innovative training" requirement that every school leader must undertake at least every seven years. Both requirements are an essential part of the school leader's "qualification validity" and this information must be submitted by the school as part of the annual school compliance reporting. During the OECD review, the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (MPC) reported that there was a high rate of success on the functional training courses (around 95% of school leaders successfully complete this). However, newly-appointed school leaders who do not successfully complete the course do not have valid qualifications and must be dismissed by the school founder.

In TALIS 2013, 96% of Slovak school leaders at the lower secondary level reported having completed a school administration or school leadership training programme or course as part of their formal education, compared to 85% on average in participating countries (OECD, 2014, Table 3.10). 58% reported they had undertaken such training after taking up the position of school leader (compared to 38% on average); 18% before taking up the position (compared to 25% on average) and about 20% both before and after taking up the position (compared to 22% on average). The functional training aims to develop: basic managerial competencies in managing staff, teams and workload/stress; expert managerial competencies for specific projects and using different management tools, e.g. auditing (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 77; see also Box 5.1).

The functional innovative training aims to update managerial competencies in these areas. During the OECD review, the MPC reported that the demand for functional innovative training is fairly high (which, of course, results from its mandatory nature). The MPC offers training to ensure existing school leaders are up to date with new legal requirements. For example, there is currently more focus on teacher appraisal procedures. The MPC also reported that demand for functional innovative training is more focused on real needs that school leaders have identified in their work. As such, the MPC offers functional innovative training courses for particular school types, e.g. for basic schools, for vocational secondary schools, etc. This format of course also brings together school leaders with common interests and provides a platform for professional exchange.

There are professional standards for school leaders

An initial set of professional standards for the teaching profession was developed by the MPC in 2006. The MPC standards included defined knowledge and competencies for school leaders, e.g. being familiar with the operation of a school. A research study in Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia in 2009 highlighted that the Slovak Republic was leading in this area, as the one system in which such professional standards for school leaders had been developed (Tempus Public Foundation, 2009). In general, the existence of a set of professional standards is desirable, as it can serve as a basis for the development of professional training and provide a common reference for

Table 5.4. **Mapping of school leader functional training to school leader standards**

Initial competency areas in school leader standards (Tempus Public Foundation, 2009)	School leader functional training module
1.1) Take decisions in accordance with regulations (school law, acts, ministry direction, etc.) 1.2) Manage the development/implementation of the school strategic plan 1.3) Develop various projects of/for the school	1) School legislation and finance 4) Conceptual management (responsibility for the school development plan and strategic issues)
2.1) Develop a School Educational Programme (SEP) 2.2) Establish a SEP 2.3) Evaluate a SEP	2) Pedagogical management (preparing the school educational programme and working with the curriculum)
3.1) Create a teacher's job specification and define expectations for a specific teacher position 3.2) Develop a school's teacher appraisal system 3.3) Develop a system of human resources at the school	3) Human resource management (the school as the employer)
4.1) Demonstrate one's managerial improvement; 4.2) Identify oneself with a leader position and to represent the school	5) School leader's professional development

Sources: Interview of the OECD review team with the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (MPC); and Tempus Public Foundation (2009), *The Role of School Leadership in the Improvement of Learning – Country Reports and Case Studies of a Central-European Project 2009*, *www.schoolleadership.eu/sites/default/files/the_role_of_school_leadership_in_the_improvement_of_learning_-_tpf_2009_9.pdf*.

school leader appraisal (OECD, 2013a). In fact, the different modules in the school leader functional training are closely mapped to the competency areas in the initial school leader standards (see Table 5.4).

An updated set of professional standards for the teaching profession as a whole has been developed over a number of years by the MPC and universities (Shewbridge et al., 2014a, see also Chapter 4). This was part of the European Social Fund project "Professional and career progress of pedagogic employees". At the time of the OECD review, the professional standards were undergoing a review exercise (see Chapter 4). The updated standards for school leaders include "efficient resource management" and "strategic school management" (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 77).

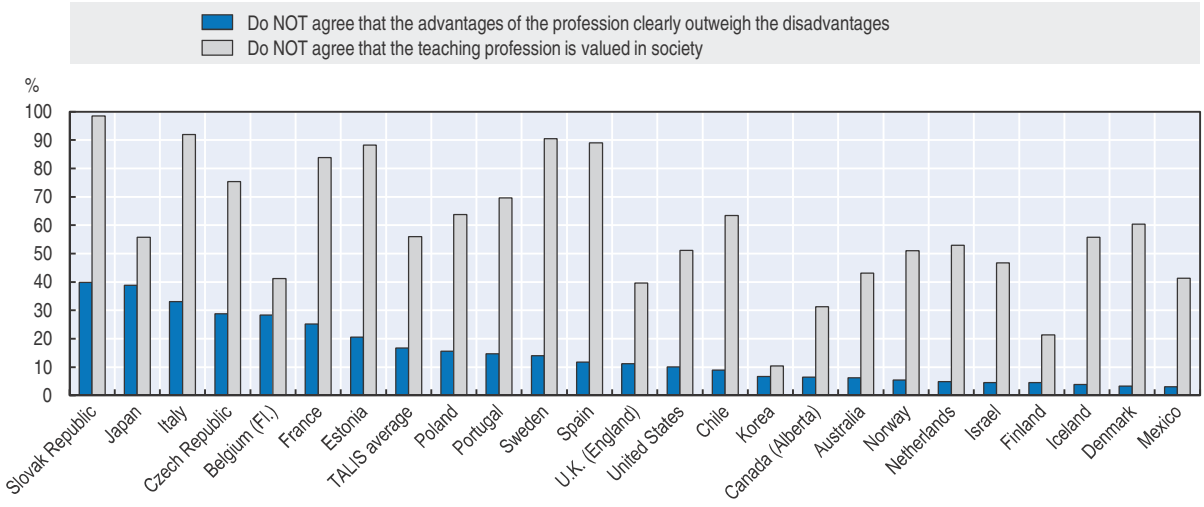
Challenges

The position of "school leader" is perceived as unattractive and not a distinct career

The OECD review team noted during the review a general perception that the position of "school leader" is not particularly appreciated. The use of the term "position" rather than "profession" is deliberate. As noted below, the position of "school leader" is rather an extension of "teacher" and does not adequately enjoy a distinct professional status. Reports from lower secondary school leaders in OECD TALIS 2013 indicate Slovak school leaders are satisfied working in their schools (99% reported this), but that a significant proportion report misgivings about their profession. Forty per cent of school leaders did not agree that the advantages of the profession clearly outweigh the disadvantages and 98% did not agree that society values the teaching profession (see Figure 5.3). Results also indicate a stronger level of job dissatisfaction among male school leaders (OECD, 2014, Table 3.20). This is an additional challenge in trying to attract males to take up leadership positions, in particular in schools where they are currently severely underrepresented: only 30% of basic school leaders are male and there are no male leaders in pre-primary schools; in general, only 15% of deputy school leaders are male (Educational Policy Institute, 2015, Table 7).

Figure 5.3. **School leaders' perception of their profession**

Percentage of school leaders in TALIS 2013 reporting that they:



Sources: Table 3.26 on *www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis.htm*; OECD (2014), *TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en*.

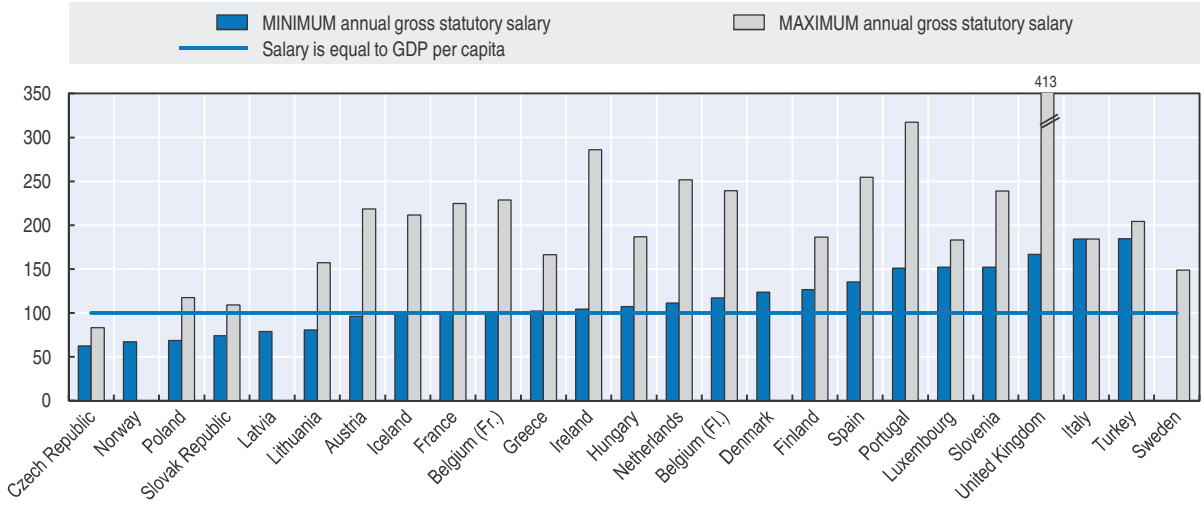
The OECD review team notes that there is currently no distinct career structure for Slovak school leaders. A school leader is conceptualised as "a teacher who performs specialised activities" and receives additional salary allowances that correspond to these activities (an allowance for managerial activities) (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 74). The compulsory "functional training" for each newly-appointed school leader aims to provide training in the skills required to perform this function over and above his/her duty as a teacher. Although professional standards were developed for school leaders, these are only a subsystem of a higher-level complex system of standards covering all categories of teaching staff and school specialists (Tempus Public Foundation, 2009).

Salaries are low in the education sector and compensation for management responsibilities is inadequate

The basic statutory salary for school leaders in primary, lower and upper secondary education is EUR 9 882; with 32 years' experience plus management allowances, the maximum school leader salary is EUR 14 100 in primary and lower secondary education and EUR 14 514 in upper secondary education (Eurydice, 2015). According to these data, the maximum school leader salary is around the level of the Slovak GDP per capita (see Figure 5.4). The minimum school leader salary is only 75% of Slovak GDP per capita. The Slovak Republic is one of only six European countries where the minimum school leader salary is below GDP per capita. On this indicator, the position of school leader is not financially attractive and, indeed, this may add to the reported perception of school leaders that it is not an attractive career (see above).

Given that the "management allowance", among other factors, depends on the size of the school (the normative system pays per student), school founders or the school (depending on the legal status of the school) have a limited ability to compensate management responsibilities in small schools. During the OECD review, representatives from the Association of State *Gymnasium* School Leaders reported that it is quite typical for a school leader to be paid less than some teachers in his/her school. As such, despite the

Figure 5.4. **School leader salaries as a percentage of GDP per capita across European countries, 2013-14**



Note: GDP data for Greece and Turkey refer to 2012 and 2011 respectively. No minimum salary data for Sweden are available.
Sources: Calculated from data in Eurydice database (*http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice*); and Eurydice (2015), *Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2013/14, Eurydice Facts and Figures*, *http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/salaries.pdf*.

fact that the minimum school leader salary is reportedly 1.47 times more than the minimum teacher salary (see Figure 5.2), there may still be little financial incentive for some teachers to take on the responsibility of deputy school leader or school leader. Representatives from the Association of Self-governing Schools reported that there is a political element involved for compensation of school leaders in basic schools, as the municipal mayor could decide to allocate an additional personal allowance to school leaders. However, school founders generally reported that there was a limited margin for them to reward school leaders (due to the general drop in student numbers and thus funding received by the school) and that any financial bonus would come from savings made by the school.

Time and capacity to undertake management and leadership responsibilities raise some concerns

Typically, Slovak school leaders have teaching responsibilities in addition to their specific management responsibilities. In fact, at the lower secondary level, 91% of Slovak school leaders working full time reported in TALIS 2013 that they had teaching obligations, as compared to 35% on average in the OECD (see Table 5.1). Teaching responsibilities may prove a challenge to leadership responsibilities particularly in small schools. The number of hours that a school leader teaches each week is set in function of the number of classes at the school, ranging from 5 to 18 hours at a basic school and 3 to 8 hours at a secondary school. A school leader in a basic school with only one class would need to teach 18 hours per week (Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 72). The OECD review team visited two basic schools each with around 180 students (the average size being 198 students in 2013, Educational Policy Institute, 2015: 53). In each school, the school leader would teach 7 hours per week and the deputy leader would teach 12 hours per week (one of the schools had two deputies). Again depending on the number of classes, a deputy leader could teach from 8 to 12 hours at a basic school and from 5 to 11 hours at a secondary school. Roughly two in five basic schools

and one in five secondary schools do not employ a deputy school leader (see Figure 5.1). This would likely mean that the school leader would be fully responsible for managerial activities and also teaching the maximum number of teaching hours.

At the same time, compared internationally, there is a high level of autonomy and responsibility for school leadership in Slovak schools. In the area of school resource management, Slovak school leaders report a much greater degree of responsibility lies fully within the school, either for the school leader and/or shared with teachers (see Figure 5.5). The majority of Slovak school leaders report that they assume full responsibility for these school resource management responsibilities and do not share these tasks: 57% appointing teachers; 62% dismissing teachers; 66% determining teachers' salary increases; 75% establishing teachers' starting salaries. However, the notable exception is in the area of deciding budget allocations within the school, where 37% of Slovak school leaders report they share this responsibility. As described above, each school typically has an economist and/or accountant to offer administrative support on budget issues. Also, school leaders discuss the draft allocation of central funds and the annual school report including budget information with the school founder (Educational Policy Institute, 2015).

Another part of the Slovak school leaders' responsibility for human resource management includes the regular appraisal of teachers and other staff in their school. An OECD review of evaluation and assessment in Slovak schools noted concerns about the appraisal competencies of school leaders (Shewbridge et al., 2014a). In particular, the OECD review noted that the teacher appraisal process appeared to be overly focused on bureaucratic and administrative matters, such as creating mandatory professional development plans for teachers, rather than on the core aim of improving teaching and learning. This was despite the very positive feature of an open-door culture in schools, where school leaders or other members of the management team would observe classroom instruction (see also Figure 5.6). The OECD review, therefore, concluded that a culture of pedagogical leadership had not fully developed due to other pressing responsibilities (Shewbridge et al., 2014a).

Although the existence of a set of professional teaching standards is an important element in making teacher appraisal practices more objective and coherent (OECD, 2013a), the initial set of professional standards for the teaching profession was not adequately communicated and as a result was not widely used by schools (Shewbridge et al., 2014a).

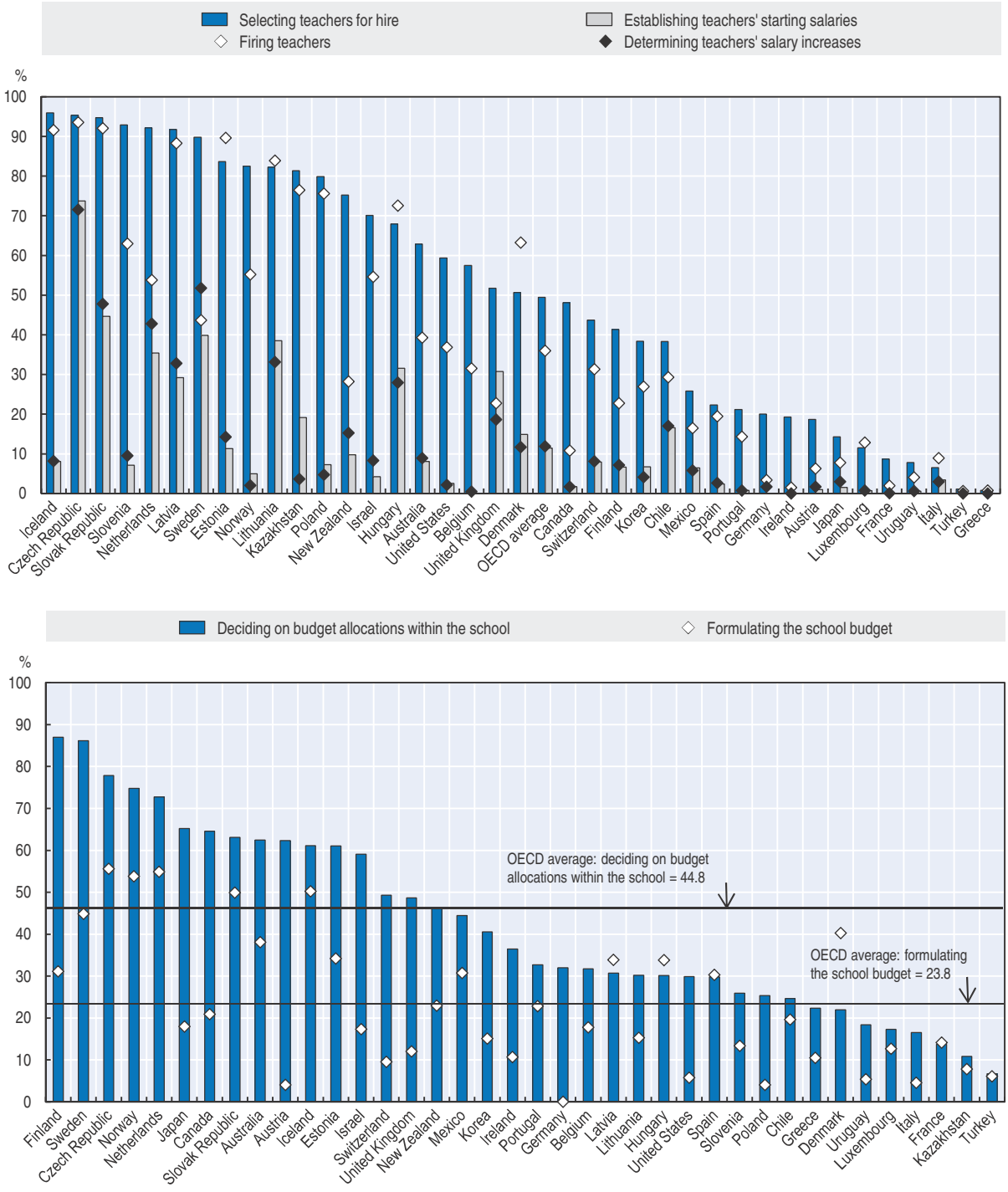
Capacity for and approach to school leader appraisal varies among school founders

In the Slovak Republic there is a legal requirement that the school leader undergoes a formal appraisal process on an annual basis. All representatives of school founders (which take responsibility for school leader appraisal) during the OECD review reported that this official appraisal was undertaken normally at the end of the academic year. Common elements included the attention to official documentation that the school leader is legally responsible for (annual school reports, economic reports) and a discussion of the school budget.

However, procedures and criteria used for school leader appraisal varied among different school founders. For founders with only a few schools there would be more regular contact with the school board and parents. Such feedback, in addition to the regular audit of finances, is deemed adequate information to feed into school leader appraisal. For founders with a larger number of schools, the OECD review team learned of different procedures used to gather more regular information, for example meeting once or twice a

Figure 5.5. **School leader reports on school responsibility for resource management, 2012**

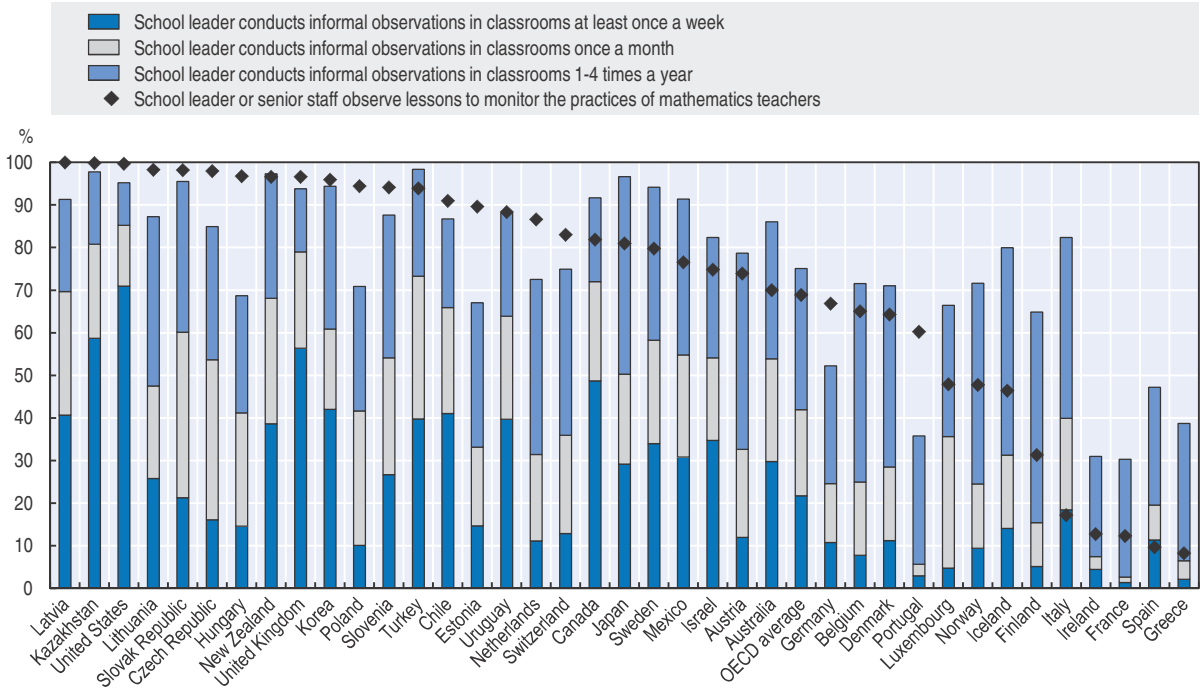
Percentage of students in schools whose leader reports only he/she and/or teachers are responsible for (PISA 2012)



Note: Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Uruguay, which are not OECD Members, are participating in the OECD School Resources Review.
Source: Data from OECD (2013b), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful (Volume IV): Resources, Policies and Practices*, Figure IV.4.2, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201156-en*.

Figure 5.6. **School leader reports on classroom observation**

Percentage of 15-year-old students in schools where leaders reported the following practices (PISA 2012)



Note: Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Uruguay, which are not OECD Members, are participating in the OECD School Resources Review.
Sources: PISA 2012 Compendium for the School Questionnaire (*www.pisa.oecd.org*); and OECD (2013b), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful (Volume IV): Resources, Policies and Practices*, Figure IV.4.16, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201156-en*.

year at each school and/or the use of a standard questionnaire to gather feedback from school leaders. Different criteria identified during the OECD review ranged from a general perception of community satisfaction with the school or an assessment of school progress against goals in the School Development Plan, to a specific set of criteria established by the founder, such as the size of the school and evidence on school performance (student examination results, indicators of students' further studies after school or entry into the labour market, student success in Olympiads).

The capacity to conduct school leader appraisal varies enormously among different school founders. Some founders may have a specific department with responsibility for schools, but the number of employees will vary and may be only one. One of the larger school founders the OECD review team visited had four people in the Education Department, each responsible for a particular group of schools (basic schools, *gymnasiums*, vocational secondary, school facilities).

The current professional development approach has some limitations

As noted above, the OECD review team considers the Slovak approach to set professional development requirements for school leaders – and to ensure that school leaders meet these requirements – as a considerable strength. However, there are certain aspects that could be improved to better meet the needs of professionals. During the OECD review, representatives of school leaders did not think the seven-year requirement for professional development (functional innovative training) was sufficient. Professionals

need to adapt more quickly to regular changes in legislation and other areas. Also, the "theory" of functional innovative training was behind the practice and the day-to-day challenges and solutions identified by school leaders.

NÚCEM (2012) identifies concerns with professional development training for school leaders to develop competencies and skills in evaluating the quality of the teaching at their schools. This is not adequately addressed in the functional training courses and has only marginal treatment in programmes of other training providers. The OECD review team heard feedback from school leader representatives that while the compulsory professional development for new or aspiring school leaders (functional training) had extremely useful content, it could sometimes be better tailored to challenges in different school types and include specific content on resource management and budgeting (see also Chapter 3). Finally, the time commitment for functional training is challenging as it requires the participant to be absent for several days from his/her school.

All school leader representatives were unanimous in their feedback that the greatest perceived benefit of professional development was the opportunity to meet with other professionals and to share experience. However, the functional training and functional innovative training courses reportedly did not actively promote collaborative exchanges and this rather came from the initiative of participants.

Policy recommendations

The OECD review team notes several strengths in the Slovak approach to the recruitment, development and management of school leaders. There are many mechanisms in place to support appraisal and professional development and also (quite rare in international comparison) to help distribute leadership responsibilities. The challenge is to make more effective use of these, to bring together existing tools and procedures and to make sure that these are relevant and justify the time invested in them. However, the major challenge remains the need to make the school leader position more attractive and this requires a re-thinking of the school leader career and finding ways to make leadership positions more financially attractive.

Make the school leader position more attractive

Slovak school leaders enjoy a high level of autonomy and responsibility. They have direct responsibility for leading the implementation of several key policies, e.g. the development of the School Education Programme, teacher appraisal and professional development opportunities, and hold overall responsibility for the efficient use of school resources. Leithwood et al. (2004) argued that given their potential impact on policy implementation, efforts to improve school leader recruitment and career advancement, including appraisal and ongoing professional development, can constitute highly cost-effective measures for making education policies effective and for improving teaching and learning for all students. In fact, several countries recognised the potential high rates of return on investments in improving school leadership during the 2012 International Summit on the Teaching Profession (Asia Society, 2012; Schleicher, 2012).

The OECD review team has noted a general perception that the position of school leader is not an attractive option among Slovak teachers and that, in general, the teaching profession is not adequately respected in society, in large part due to the low salaries (see Chapter 4). The Slovak Republic is faced with the challenge of attracting new talent to

prepare for and eventually take up school leader positions. The OECD project on Improving School Leadership by Pont et al. (2008) highlighted the impact of a heavy workload coupled with a lack of adequate support and remuneration and uncertain career advancement prospects as some of the reasons for a lack of attracting talented new school leaders. The Slovak Republic does not have a distinct career structure for school leaders. There are no possibilities for advancement to different positions with different levels of responsibility. School leader salaries are based on the pay scales used for all teachers. As the OECD project on school leadership suggested, career development prospects as well as salary scales for school leaders that are separate from teachers' salary scales and that reflect leadership structures and school-level factors may help attract high performing leaders to all schools (Pont et al., 2008).

The mapping out of current responsibilities is an important part of developing professional standards (see Box 5.2). The OECD review team has noted that the updated set of professional standards should include "efficient resource management" (see also Chapter 3). The competencies defined in the professional standards should also underpin qualification requirements for the recruitment of new school leaders. Current requirements for school leader recruitment do not include competencies to manage resources, despite this being a major part of their management responsibilities.

Box 5.2. **Developing a set of professional standards for school leaders**

A set of professional standards for school leaders should be informed by research evidence and involve school leaders in its development. Professional standards should:

- **Map out what school leaders are expected to know, be able to do and how:** reflecting the complexity of school leaders' tasks and responsibilities; providing a concise statement of the core elements of successful leadership.
- **Provide a multi-level career structure:** distinguishing between different levels of experience, development needs and leadership positions; guiding the appraisal of all school leadership positions.
- **Provide a central reference that can be adapted to local needs:** for defining individual objectives and/or the selection of appraisal aspects and criteria; for informing selection and recruitment processes and initial school leadership preparation and induction programmes; for informing ongoing in-service training and professional development opportunities and career advancement.
- **Highlight the importance of school leadership for evaluation and assessment:** practices related to monitoring, evaluation and appraisal, e.g. supporting and observing teachers, and observing students and classrooms.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en*.

In sum, the OECD review team recommends the following to help make the school leader position more attractive:

- **A distinct career structure for school leadership:** Link career progression to specific leadership responsibilities as underpinned in the school leader professional standards. This will give teachers greater incentive to take on leadership responsibilities. For example, the OECD had recommended that all Slovak schools have a member of staff

with clear responsibility for the development and implementation of a plan for designing and developing self-evaluation instruments, as a way to further promote an effective self-evaluation culture in schools (Shewbridge et al., 2014a). A career structure could recognise and promote "system leadership", that is, school leaders who take responsibility for and work toward the success of other schools as well as their own in order to foster improvement across the Slovak school system (Hopkins, 2008).

- **An independent salary scale for school leadership** (see Box 5.3 for examples in Australia and the United Kingdom).
- **Greater flexibility in teaching hour requirements:** The school leader would be able to decide on how much teaching is required according to his/her professional judgement of the school's needs and what the school can afford.
- **Appraisal results to inform career advancement:** Although there is limited research on the effects of such systems, there is a need to ensure fair and objective processes. This requires clear appraisal aspects and criteria, reliable indicators and understanding of the school context (see below).

Support a more coherent approach to school leader appraisal and heighten its objectivity

The use of a central reference on which to base school leader appraisal is highly desirable in increasing the objectivity of appraisal procedures. This is why the existence of professional standards is a clear strength (see Box 5.2). The OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education examined research and practices in OECD countries and recommended different procedures to improve the objectivity of school leader appraisal (see Box 5.4). An important finding is the importance of adapting school leader appraisal to local needs. In general, there are two contextual factors that are prevalent in Slovak schools: the perception that the position of school leader is not an attractive career option; and the high level of responsibilities, and accordingly workload, for school leaders. These indicate a need to emphasise the developmental purpose of appraisal and to ensure that it is does not introduce excessive demands on school leaders' time. The challenge is to develop appraisal processes, frameworks and conditions that do not require an excessive investment of time and effort, that serve as an effective tool for improving practices and that are perceived as useful and relevant by school leaders (OECD, 2013a).

In the Slovak Republic there is an established set of documentation that the school leader is responsible for developing. Given the time commitment required to develop these and the fact that they have a common format/legal basis, these are obvious instruments to feed into school leader appraisal. Indeed, the OECD review team learned of appraisal processes that would involve the discussion of the school annual report and financial information. There are also cases where the School Development Plan is linked with the five-year contract of the school leader and the school leader's vision for school development plays an important part in the selection process.

The challenge is to ensure that these can be optimised as tools for improvement of teaching and learning. An earlier OECD review noted that annual school reports were "statistical in nature" and perceived as simply a bureaucratic process (Shewbridge et al., 2014a; NÚCEM, 2012). Developing a central list of suggested content for annual school reports could be of significant help to schools if it: speaks significantly to the teaching and learning process (and not simply the more easily reported financial and

Box 5.3. **Dedicated salary structures for school leaders in Victoria (Australia) and England and Wales (United Kingdom)**

In the **state of Victoria (Australia)**, school leaders benefit from a specific career structure. The "principal class" structure reflects Victoria's commitment to excellence in educational leadership and management as a key factor in school improvement. Principal class employees have a significant responsibility in the delivery of a high quality school education to the community of Victoria, and to strategically manage people, financial and physical resources within a strong accountability framework. The principal class comprises the following levels:

- principal
- assistant principal
- liaison principal (typically at the district level in non-school locations).

Each of these levels has its own salary structure. The "principal" level has six remuneration ranges. The remuneration range of a principal position is determined on the position becoming vacant but will not be less than the remuneration range determined by the school budget (i.e. the school budget establishes the minimum range level). The "assistant principal" level has four remuneration ranges while the "liaison principal" has six remuneration ranges. The remuneration and/or remuneration range of a principal class employee is reviewed each year in the context of any changes to the work value of the position and the performance of the principal class employee. The performance of a principal class employee is assessed annually based on demonstrated achievement against school priorities and criteria established by Victoria's Department of Education and Training.

In **England and Wales (United Kingdom)**, all members of the leadership group (head teacher, deputy head teacher, assistant head teacher) are paid on the leadership pay spine, which has 43 points divided into eight head teacher groups, based on school size. There are fixed differentials between pay for head, deputy and assistant head teachers. The key features are as follows:

Head teachers: The governing body determines the school's head teacher group based on the number of students for each education stage and the number of students with special educational needs. Then governing bodies set a seven-point individual school range constrained by pay of any deputy or assistant head teacher in the school and the "notional" salary of the highest paid classroom teacher. On appointment, the head teacher must be placed on one of the bottom four points on the range. Governing bodies can then decide if any discretionary payments are payable and may award further payments only in specified circumstances (such as a school causing concern; if there are substantial recruitment and retention difficulties; if a head takes on additional responsibilities).

Deputy and assistant head teachers: The governing body determines a five-point deputy head teacher pay range, constrained by the head's pay range and any assistant head teacher or the highest paid classroom teacher. For assistant head teachers, the process is very similar to that for a deputy head teacher, but constrained by the highest paid classroom teacher; the lowest point of the head's pay range, and by any deputy head pay range. A report by the School Teachers' Review Body analyses the salary structure for school leaders in England and Wales and provides recommendations for further development (STRB, 2014).

Sources: Department of Education and Training (2015), *Career Structure – Teaching Service*, Victoria State Government, Victoria, *www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/Pages/career_structure_ts.aspx*; and STRB (School Teachers' Review Body) (2014), *School Teachers' Review Body: Twenty-Third Report – 2014*, *www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/279038/140207_23rd_Rpt_CM_8813.pdf*.

Box 5.4. **OECD recommendations on procedures for school leader appraisal**

Promote the appraisal of pedagogical leadership together with scope for local adaptation

A focus on pedagogical leadership is essential to encourage school leaders to take direct responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching in their school. However, a focus on pedagogical leadership in appraisal must:

- **Be manageable and relevant:** local selection of criteria in line with central/state guidance that emphasise the importance of pedagogical leadership; focus on priority areas relevant to a particular school and the leadership required in that context; promote individual as well as school needs, e.g. through the mandatory use of a range of reference standards and documents, such as individual job descriptions and school development plans; recognise that successful school leadership requires choices on time investment and management and administration-oriented tasks may at times be equally important as pedagogical leadership tasks.
- **Recognise the need for and promote professional development:** ensuring access to high-quality, targeted and relevant professional development opportunities to develop pedagogical leadership; embedding appraisal for pedagogical leadership within a comprehensive leadership development framework; providing an opportunity for feedback and identifying areas for school leader's development.

Promote the appraisal of school leaders' competencies for monitoring, evaluation and assessment

School leaders play a key role for the effectiveness of evaluation and assessment frameworks, particularly for teacher appraisal and school evaluation. Therefore, school leader appraisal should address their ability to:

- **Manage internal teacher appraisal processes,** e.g. through evaluating school leaders' competencies to manage staff; to authentically evaluate teaching and learning; to understand, observe and recognise good teaching; and to give developmental feedback to teachers.
- **Lead the school's self-evaluation processes,** e.g. ensuring their school's collaboration during external evaluations, and communicating external evaluation results to their school community.

It should also lead to opportunities to improve these competencies. For example, with professional development in how to observe classrooms and interview teachers; how to analyse data; how to use school evaluation results; how to develop school improvement plans; how to involve teachers, students and parents in school self-evaluation.

Promote the use of multiple instruments and sources of evidence

Research has increasingly stressed the benefits of using multiple tools to form a fair, valid and reliable picture of a school leader's performance from a comprehensive perspective. Limited research has provided some insights into the benefits of different tools and the caution needed when using others:

- The use of school leader portfolios, if embedded within wider support structures, may ensure a school leader's views are adequately represented in the appraisal process and help strengthen the formative dimension of appraisal.
- The use of stakeholder surveys requires an awareness among evaluators of the politics that appraisal may involve. Teachers' views may add most value to an appraisal process considering their close insights into a school's daily routine.
- Given the wide range of factors that influence student outcomes within and outside schools, and persistent evidence that the impact of school leaders on student learning is mainly indirect and mediated through others, holding school leaders directly accountable for improved student test scores or the value added by the teachers in their school faces serious challenges and risks.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en*.

summative assessment aspects); is open enough for schools to elaborate and develop these aspects autonomously to best fit their development needs and strategy; and, critically, is connected to a clear concept and framework for self-evaluation (Shewbridge et al., 2014a).

Many OECD countries have promoted the use of the central school inspection framework by schools as a basis for their self-evaluation activities (OECD, 2013a). Since 2011, the ŠŠI inspection framework is published on its website (Shewbridge et al., 2014a). The ŠŠI inspection framework includes a set of quality indicators to evaluate "school management" (see Table 5.3). These can serve as a basis for employers to undertake annual school leader appraisal. The ŠŠI quality indicators are available for pre-primary schools, basic schools, *gymnasiums* and vocational secondary schools. These pay attention to the school leader's responsibility for teacher appraisal (as recommended in Box 5.4) and also to the leader's responsibility for developing pedagogical documentation.

There is also room to strengthen the role of the school board in school leader appraisal. The school board could conduct an annual interview with the school leader, analyse student outcomes at the school and review school leadership processes. Also, consideration could be given to promoting (or perhaps introducing a requirement) for school boards to publish a written statement about the annual school report on the school's website or on paper (Shewbridge et al., 2014a). In such a statement the school board can outline its own priorities for the school's further development, independent from the priorities stated by the school leadership. In future reports, the school board can reflect on how and to what extent the school leadership has addressed its stated priorities for school development, and indeed, the extent of progress made towards the stated goals in the School Development Plan.

Underline the importance of distributed leadership

Without negating the important role of the school leader, research has recognised the value of leadership as an organisational quality that can be undertaken by a range of actors and not just the official school leader (e.g. Bennett et al., 2003 for an overview; Pont et al., 2008; Schleicher, 2012). Given the diversity and complexity of conflicting demands on school leaders' time, there are pressing needs to effectively share management responsibilities (OECD, 2014).

Although in many OECD countries, formal arrangements for distributed leadership are rare (OECD, 2013a), Slovak schools have structures in place that allow teachers to take more responsibility and to collaborate. The pedagogical board – although largely comprised of the school leadership team – provides a vehicle for oversight of School Education Programmes, teacher professional development activities and other key areas related to school pedagogy. At the same time, basic schools benefit from official bodies that assume responsibility for pedagogical matters in particular levels of schooling (methodology association) or specific subjects (subject committee). These foster collaboration among sub-groups of teachers and provide opportunities to take the lead in particular pedagogical areas. If used effectively, such bodies can support a distributed responsibility for the pedagogical leadership of the school. While research on how to effectively distribute leadership and how this influences school outcomes is scarce (Harris and Spillane, 2008), Mulford (2008) highlights the need for school leaders to create conditions to enable teachers to assume more leadership and to provide ongoing support for this (see Pont et al., 2008, and OECD, 2013a, for further analysis on distributed leadership).

To this end, school leader appraisal should pay attention to how the school leader distributes leadership and devolves responsibilities to teachers (see Box 5.5). For example, the ŠŠI inspection framework includes a quality indicator for the evaluation of school management that evaluates the school leader's use of technical assistance from the methodology association and subject committees (see Table 5.3). Another broad indicator could be the extent to which the school leader provides teachers with the opportunities to take on more responsibility and to develop their leadership skills.

Box 5.5. **Promoting shared leadership via school leader appraisal**

The OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education underlined the role that school leader appraisal could play in promoting a more effective sharing of management responsibilities. School leader appraisal could consider how leadership responsibilities are shared within the school and beyond the school by:

- Examining the ways in which school leaders foster distributed leadership in their schools (e.g. school leaders' competencies for building structural capacity, school leaders' efforts to create opportunities for teacher leadership, school leaders' ability to enhance their teaching staff's capacity to lead, school leaders' ability to foster succession planning).
- Providing feedback on the arrangements of distributed leadership. It may help inform professional development and wider support structures. It may also provide an opportunity to provide feedback to school leaders on their efforts to enhance teacher leadership in their schools.
- Reflecting the growing importance of leadership tasks beyond school borders as a way of sharing expertise for system wide improvement.

Source: OECD (2013a), *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment*, *http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264190658-en.*

Promote and support greater flexibility in professional development activities

The OECD review team noted a demand for a more flexible offer of professional development. There is demand to conceptualise this more broadly than an offer of training courses and more as the offer of opportunities for professional collaboration and exchange. There is an opportunity to make use of European Structural Funds to this end. New programmes should integrate school leadership and there could be ways to promote and support more systematic collaboration among school leaders from different schools, for example, through peer evaluation activities. However, any such programmes should be designed in collaboration with the major associations representing school leaders, some of which have already been developing systems to promote collaboration among their members. For example, the Association of Self-Governing Schools has taken a greater role in promoting collaborative discussions and professional exchanges among school leaders in basic schools. School leaders have many demands on their time, but also report the benefit of professional exchange. With this in mind, they are best placed to help design programmes that would be most responsive to their needs.

The OECD review team notes an existing practice that is effective for developing the evaluative competencies of school leadership and should be further supported. There is a mechanism for school leaders to join school inspectors as part of a complex inspection team.

During the OECD review, the ŠŠI reported it gets very good feedback from participants. This matches findings in the OECD Review of Evaluation and Assessment in Education. The Education and Training Inspectorate in Northern Ireland recruits "associate assessors" from school leadership and senior teachers. There is high demand to participate in this process and participants appreciate this as highly relevant professional development (Shewbridge et al., 2014b). In addition to bringing the practical experiences from school leaders to the inspection process, the associate assessors develop capacity to monitor, evaluate and improve teaching and learning in their own schools (OECD, 2013a, Box 6.9).

Notes

1. Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) comprises Years 5 to 9 in the Slovak school system and thus can be offered in basic schools, *gymnasiums*, vocational secondary schools, as well as specialised schools (e.g. conservatoires). However, special education schools are not included in the OECD TALIS sample.
2. Percentage of lower secondary school leaders reporting they shared responsibility for: choosing learning materials (Slovak Republic 69%; average 45%); determining course content (Slovak Republic 71%; average 35%); deciding which courses are offered (Slovak Republic 77%; average 52%) (OECD, 2014, Table 3.4). The international survey asked school leaders whether they shared responsibility in these areas with either other members of the school management, teachers, school governing board, or local, municipal or regional authorities.

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