STUDY OF SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE PRACTICES FOR NEW SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND VICE-PRINCIPALS

SUMMARY REPORT

Québec ✚✚

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SUMMARY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Québec has undergone a general restructuring of its school system in the past few years, as have a number of Western nations. School administrators undoubtedly play a strategic role when it comes to implementing such changes and are called upon to take action, regardless of the type of reform that is taking place. School administrators play an important role, whether in terms of changes resulting from the adoption of the *Education Act*, curriculum and education reforms, the establishment of organic ties with the surrounding community or the development of an educational project that takes into account the values espoused by professionals in the school. This type of restructuring also leads to profound changes in school administrators' duties, rendering them more complex.

Since all these changes involved the rapid replacement of school administrators, it was necessary to develop support and guidance measures whose ultimate aim was to encourage the successful integration of the greatest number of new school administrators. To this end, this study, entitled *Study of Support and Guidance Practices for New School Principals and Vice-Principals*, is designed to provide an account of the various forms that support and guidance can take. It seemed appropriate that the study be carried out jointly by representatives of all bodies involved in the training, support and guidance of new school administrators, that is, school organizations, universities, professional associations and the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS).

Following an invitation by the Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire (DFTPS) of the MELS in March 2004, a meeting of representatives of the following organizations was held: the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec (FCSQ), the Association des directeurs généraux des commissions scolaires du Québec (ADIGECS), the Association des cadres scolaires du Québec (ACSQ), the Fédération québécoise des directrices et des directeurs d'établissement d'enseignement (FQDE), the Association des administrateurs des écoles anglaises du Québec (AAEAQ), the Association montréalaise des directions d'établissement scolaire (AMDES), and the Association québécoise du personnel de direction des écoles (AQPDE) of the school administration departments of Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and Université Laval. Also in attendance were newly appointed school administrators and a candidate for such a position, a student registered in an educational leadership program at Université de Sherbrooke. Participants at the first meeting agreed to conduct a joint study on support and guidance practices for new school administrators. Moreover, they agreed to form a committee to coordinate the operations needed to conduct the study. This initiative attests to the importance the coordinators of the study place on new school administrators' integration, and the individual and collective value of performing this study in partnership.

Members of the coordinating committee demonstrated increasing levels of enthusiasm and determination throughout the study. They began by developing action plans, and then assigned each partner's specific tasks and responsibilities. In addition, they put in place mechanisms for monitoring, regulating and evaluating operations following joint decisions made at the meetings.

Experts from a number of fields specializing in either the study topic or methodology were occasionally brought on board to assist the coordinating committee.

In short, the success of the *Study of Support and Guidance Practices for New School Principals and Vice-Principals* is the result of cooperation among various specialists who made occasional contributions and members of the coordinating committee who contributed their expertise on a more regular basis.

The research report on which this summary is based is available on the Web site of the MELS at <http://www. mels.gouv.qc.ca/dftps.>

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to classify and analyze existing support and guidance practices for new school administrators in order to help improve and adapt these practices to the needs of both the people and the school organizations concerned.

ADOPTED APPROACH AND STUDY PARTICIPANTS

An interpretive approach was adopted for this study, which was ultimately designed to describe the existing situation in order to better understand it and to guide future support and guidance practices. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting information from those providing support and guidance to new school administrators. The following people and organizations were surveyed:

School principals or vice-principals who have held these positions for five years or less, and who receive support and guidance, referred to as MENTEES

People whose role is to contribute their knowledge and skills, and devote time and energy to developing the work skills of at least one mentee, referred to as MENTORS

School board senior management responsible for implementing support and guidance practices for new school administrators, referred to as SUPERVISORS

People registered in an educational leadership program for school administrators offered at a Québec university, or people whose names are in a school board's reserve pool, referred to as CANDIDATES

UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS associated with the practical training of school administrators and those responsible for educational leadership programs

Representatives of five professional associations of school administrators that offer their members professional development activities

The first four groups were surveyed by means of a questionnaire, while the professional associations took part in semi-structured interviews. In addition, investigative interviews were conducted in some school boards to complete the information collected.

The following two terms were referred to throughout the study:

School organization, a generic term that refers to the council of commissioners, senior management, various administrative and pedagogical services, and schools within a school board.

Support and guidance structure, which includes all measures instituted as part of professional development or support and guidance activities for new school administrators who have held these positions for five years or less, with a view to favouring their professional integration and increasing their level of job ease and competence.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In order to correctly place support and guidance measures in the context of school management, it was necessary to determine how the job of school administrator is viewed, the reasons that lead a person to occupy such a position, the needs that must be satisfied in order for people to assume their responsibilities and the school organization's needs with regard to its expectations of school administrators. The characteristics of the structure and those of the school organization's main support and guidance model were then identified. To conclude, the level of achievement of objectives targeted by the measures and the degree of participants' satisfaction was estimated.

The response rates from the 44 school boards in the 16 administrative regions of Québec[1] made it possible to conclude that the data collected accurately reflect the situation for all of Québec. It is important to take into account that each group described the elements of the questionnaires based on its own experience. As beneficiaries of the support and guidance practices, the mentees described the situation in all the school boards. Since the mentors provide a particular type of support and are not present in all the school boards, they offered a more limited point of view than the mentees. Although the supervisors provided an overview of the situation in the school boards, caution must be taken when comparing their responses with those of mentees and mentors since the number of people that each one supervises varies significantly.

"As beneficiaries of the support and guidance practices, the mentees described the situation in all the school boards..."

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1.   Only the Nord-du-Québec region was not represented.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

AGE AND SEX

The mentees were relatively young—nearly two thirds were under 45—with women making up 58.8% of the group. The candidates were even younger—80% were under 45—with women making up 63.4% of the group. Most of the mentors were 45 and over, with men making up 52.7% of the group. Among the supervisors, 90% were 45 and over and most were between the ages of 45 and 54. Men made up 59.5% of the group.

FIGURE 1   AGE GROUPS

under 35
- Mentees: 22.2%
- Candidates: 41.5%

35 to 44
- Mentees: 43.4%
- Candidates: 39.0%
- Mentors: 13.8%
- Supervisors: 9.5%

45 to 54
- Mentees: 30.1%
- Candidates: 18.0%
- Mentors: 49.2%
- Supervisors: 64.3%

55 to 64
- Mentees: 4.3%
- Candidates: 1.5%
- Mentors: 36.9%
- Supervisors: 26.2%

% 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

Mentees   Candidates   Mentors   Supervisors

EDUCATION

The highest level of education completed for more than half of the mentees and nearly two thirds of the candidates was a Bachelor's degree. A considerable number of them, especially the candidates, were in the process of completing the training required of a school administrator.

Two thirds of the mentors and 80% of the supervisors had obtained at least a Master's degree, making for highly educated groups. Since completion of a Master's program has been a prerequisite for a position as a school administrator only since September 2001, a significant number of mentors did not have a Master's degree while they occupied the position.
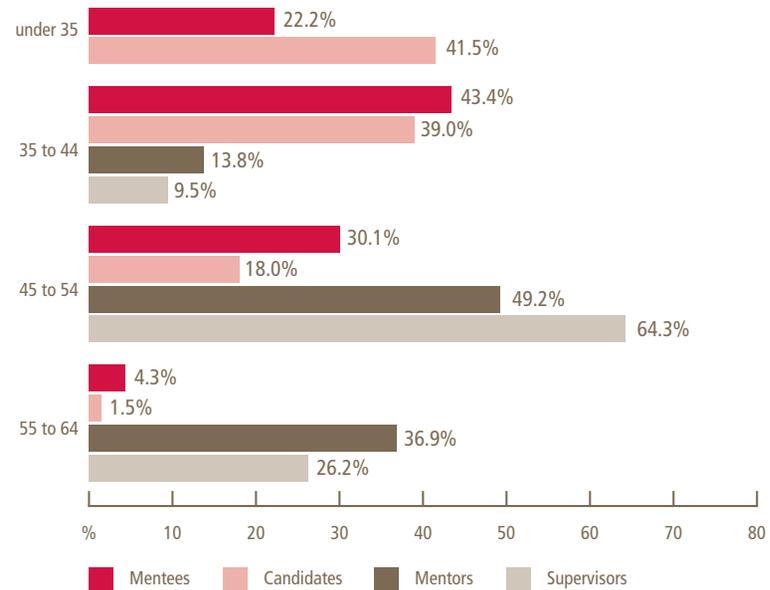
FIGURE 2   HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

Bachelor's degree
- Mentees: 51.8%
- Candidates: 67.7%
- Mentors: 32.3%
- Supervisors: 19%

Graduate university diploma
- Mentees: 30.5%
- Candidates: 18.3%
- Mentors: 23.8%
- Supervisors: 26.2%

Masters degree
- Mentees: 17%
- Candidates: 13.1%
- Mentors: 42.3%
- Supervisors: 52.4%

Doctoral degree
- Mentees: 0.3%
- Candidates: 0.9%
- Mentors: 1.5%
- Supervisors: 2.4%

% 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80

Mentees   Candidates   Mentors   Supervisors
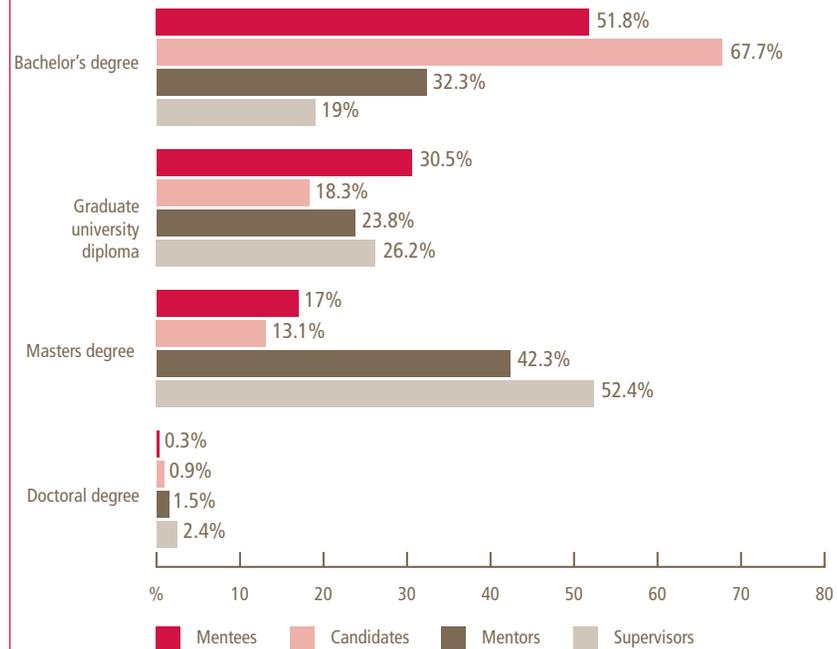
POSITION OCCUPIED AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

At the time of the study, three quarters of the candidates occupied teaching positions and 14% were non-teaching professionals. Most mentors were school administrators (68.7%), or had been before retiring (11.4%). Some (6.9%) were senior staff members or officials, or had been before retiring. The supervisors were assistant school board directors (33.3%), directors general, or senior staff members or officials (19% in both cases).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND AVERAGE LENGTH OF CAREER IN YEARS

Respondents occupied various positions throughout their careers. It is interesting to note that almost all held teaching positions and had a comparable number of years of teaching experience. These results reveal that respondents wish to reorient their careers after having acquired a little more than ten years of teaching experience.

Supervisors had considerable experience as school administrators. It is important to mention that only those with considerable experience as school principals or vice-principals were entrusted with guidance roles, and that most continue to hold these positions.

▶ TABLE 1

	MENTEES	CANDIDATES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS
Teacher % who occupied position Average years	98.3 12.8	98.7 11.1	95.3 11.6	88.1 11.9
School vice-principal % who occupied the position Average years	79.1 2.3		64.6 5.3	61.9 3.9
School principal % who occupied the position Average years	41.0 2.3		90.0 10.3	78.5 7.8
Non-teaching professional % who occupied the position Average years	10.2 5.2	14.0 5.5	21.5 7.0	26.2 4.2
Senior staff member or official % who occupied the position Average years	1.9 5.4	15.2 2.9	16.1 6.8	64.2 9.9
Senior school board management % who occupied the position Average years				

■ Mentees ■ Candidates ■ Mentors ■ Supervisors

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE JOB OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

All mentees mentioned that they applied for a position as a school administrator because they were encouraged to do so by a school administrator, a school team or another person. Other reasons cited by far fewer new administrators were as follows: a third mentioned job appeal, greater social status and salary increase, and a little more than a quarter mentioned the desire for a new challenge, a need for change and an opportunity for personal development.

MENTORS' REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE OF NEW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

An opportunity to share acquired experience was the reason that most mentors (45.6%) gave for offering guidance to new school administrators. The second reason was to provide assistance and support (38.4%). School board solicitation was mentioned by 28.8% of mentors, while 19.2% indicated that it was a matter of interest and personal satisfaction. It should be noted that 8.8% participated in order to pass on what they received or wished they had received and 4.8% did so for their personal development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR MENTORS AND SUPERVISORS

The main training or professional development activities for mentors were self-training (e.g. courses or reading) and participation in a training session offered by a university. Other activities included mentoring or coaching by someone with more mentoring experience, involvement in action research and involvement in professional mentoring networks. Fewer than a quarter of mentors participated in one of these last three activities.

Self-training was the most popular form of professional development among supervisors. The second most popular was involvement in professional mentoring networks, and the third was participation in a training session.

FIGURE 3   **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

Activity	Mentors	Supervisors
Self-training (courses, reading, etc.)	63.0%	88.1%
Participation in a training session	53.0%	47.6%
Mentoring or coaching by someone with more mentoring experience	23.9%	26.2%
Involvement in action research	23.1%	30.9%
Involvement in professional mentoring networks	21.5%	52.4%

VIEWS OF THE JOB OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
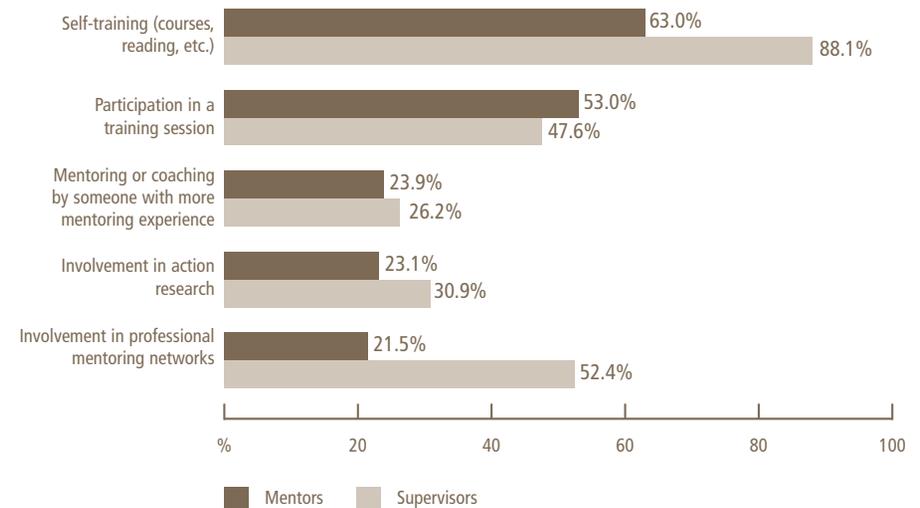
The job of school administrator requires numerous competencies. They are based on job requirements and the school board's expectations of how school management satisfies the needs of the community and adheres to its strategic plan and the existing legal frameworks. Some of these competencies may have been acquired previously through teaching, an ideal springboard to a position of school administrator. Others can be developed by alternating between periods of learning and periods in the workplace.

COMPETENCIES REQUIRED TO PERFORM THE JOB OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Respondents shared perspectives on the competencies required to perform the job of school administrator. Leadership, which makes it possible to guide and support individuals, and to mobilize, motivate and influence them was the first competency mentioned by all groups of respondents. Interpersonal competencies, which make it possible to communicate, listen and express ideas, was the second competency mentioned. Although the other competencies did not appear in the same order for each group, they were perceived as necessary for successful job performance. They include managerial competencies, competencies with a collective dimension and the appropriate attitudes. Meta-competence and knowledge were the least mentioned by respondents.

COMPETENCIES ACQUIRED IN TEACHING THAT ARE ADAPTABLE OR TRANSFERABLE TO THE JOB OF A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

When asked about the relationship between professional competencies required of a teacher and those of a school administrator, the vast majority of respondents considered the competencies to be adaptable or transferable. Consequently, teaching seems to serve as a foundation on which new administrators are able to build competencies. Not all competencies, however, have the same degree of adaptability.

Generic competencies that are not specific to teaching were considered adaptable or transferable by more than 98% of respondents. Those that have a collective dimension were seen as adaptable or transferable by more than 95% of respondents. Competencies that refer to teaching-learning situations, however, were viewed as adaptable or transferable by approximately 70% to 80% of respondents. Competencies related to teaching-learning situations were considered transferable by somewhat fewer respondents. This suggests that candidates, who have yet to perform the job duties, and mentees, who have done so for only a short period of time, have distanced themselves from their professional teaching experience.

DUTIES THAT A SCHOOL ORGANIZATION EXPECTS A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR TO PERFORM

All respondents recognized that the 11 duties contained in the questionnaire correspond to the school board's expectations of school administrators. This illustrates the scope of responsibilities that a school administrator must assume, as well as the fact that new school administrators and candidates are well aware of this situation.

It is, however, interesting to note that the mentees stood out from other groups in their belief that exploring new programs of study, teaching methods and teaching strategies is a major expectation of the school organization. This point of view, in relation to views on the transferability of competencies related to teaching-learning situations, suggests that new administrators believe that it is their responsibility to assume educational leadership that is closely tied to teaching-learning measures.

TABLE 2

	MENTEES	CANDIDATES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS
Provide student support	98.7	96.3		90.5
Solve problems and settle conflicts	98.7	94.1	98.4	100
Establish a network and associate with various partners	98.4	88.0		95.2
Manage the material and financial resources under their responsibility	98.4	97.2	98.4	100
Oversee the quality of teaching	97.3	86.6	95.3	97.6
Oversee the implementation of measures prescribed by the school board	97.3	92.0	96.9	95.2
Motivate staff with positive feedback	97.0	87.6	93.8	100
Manage the human resources under their responsibility	96.2	96.0	98.4	100
Explore new programs of study, teaching methods and teaching strategies	95.7	84.8	89.1	85.7
Act as school team facilitators and mediators	94.3	87.6	99.2	95.2
Aim for a high level of academic performance by students	93.8	87.2	93.0	85.4

■ Mentees ■ Candidates ■ Mentors ■ Supervisors

2. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation et de la titularisation du personnel scolaire, *Teaching Training, Orientations, Professional Competencies* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001).

THE NEEDS OF NEW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND THOSE OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The support and guidance measures intended for new school administrators satisfy two types of needs. On the one hand, they enable new administrators to fulfill their role with greater ease; on the other, they monitor the school organization's expectations regarding its administrators' accomplishments.

THE NEEDS OF NEW SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Overall, there were no contradictions between the needs that the mentees felt must be satisfied in order to effectively perform their new duties and the perceptions of mentors and supervisors. Differences concerning three particular needs, however, brought to light the specific concerns of each category of respondent. Although appropriation is a need that all mentees considered important, it was less important to mentors and even less so to supervisors. Mentors and supervisors placed greater importance on guidance than did mentees. The third need, the time to take a step back from one's actions, to reflect and to integrate new knowledge was much more important for mentees than it was for the other two groups.

Candidates clearly understood the needs of new administrators. The needs that they considered most important were the same ones mentioned by mentees describing their own reality. The shared views of these two groups suggest that support and guidance measures that take mentees' needs into account will also allow candidates to integrate into their new position as administrators. The need for increased knowledge, more important among candidates than among mentees, will undoubtedly be satisfied to a great extent by the compulsory training that they are receiving.

▶ **FIGURE 4**   **NEEDS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

Appropriation — Mentees 98.0%, Candidates 77.5%, Mentors 88.3%, Supervisors 48.8%

Guidance — Mentees 36.7%, Candidates 50.6%, Mentors 51.3%, Supervisors 65.8%

Increased knowledge — Mentees 28.7%, Candidates 42.4%, Mentors 9.9%, Supervisors 26.8%

Training and support — Mentees 25.2%, Candidates 19.0%, Mentors 16.2%, Supervisors 24.4%

Time for reflection, distancing and integration — Mentees 21.1%, Candidates 1.9%, Mentors 13.5%, Supervisors 9.8%

Networks for exchanging and sharing — Mentees 20.0%, Candidates 20.6%, Mentors 40.5%, Supervisors 31.7%

Communication and climate of confidence — Mentees 15.3%, Candidates 7.6%, Mentors 10.8%, Supervisors 9.8%

Constructive feedback — Mentees 10.6%, Candidates 10.7%, Mentors 33.3%, Supervisors 9.8%

Recognition — Mentees 7.6%, Candidates 0.9%, Mentors 12.6%, Supervisors 2.4%

Information — Mentees 2.8%

Legend: Mentees | Candidates | Mentors | Supervisors

ACCOMPLISHMENTS EXPECTED OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS THAT CONSTITUTE A MAJOR NEED FOR THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

For a large majority of respondents from each group, all the accomplishments contained in the questionnaire were expected. Moreover, each one constituted a major need for the school organization. The most important, especially for the supervisors, was promoting student success and improving educational services.

For the mentees, the individual need to appropriate organizational vision and culture, as expressed by all groups, was entirely consistent with the importance that they placed on the school organization's expectations regarding integration into cultural organization and the understanding of their role and their contribution to the organization's mission.

▶ TABLE 3

	MENTEES	CANDIDATES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS
Ensure greater academic success of students	82.5	82.4	70.9	92.7
Improve educational services	80.6	81.7	69.3	90.2
Integrate new principals and vice-principals into the organizational culture	79.8	76.8	71.7	75.6
Continually improve competencies	79.2	74.6	71.7	82.9
Understand the role of new principals and vice-principals and their contribution to the organization's mission	77.4	74.5	78.0	85.4
Manage new principals and vice-principals and matters that have a direct impact on the school	76.0	73.9	68.5	80.5
Consolidate professional practices	70.1	66.8	69.3	70.7

■ Mentees　■ Candidates　■ Mentors　■ Supervisors

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MEASURES
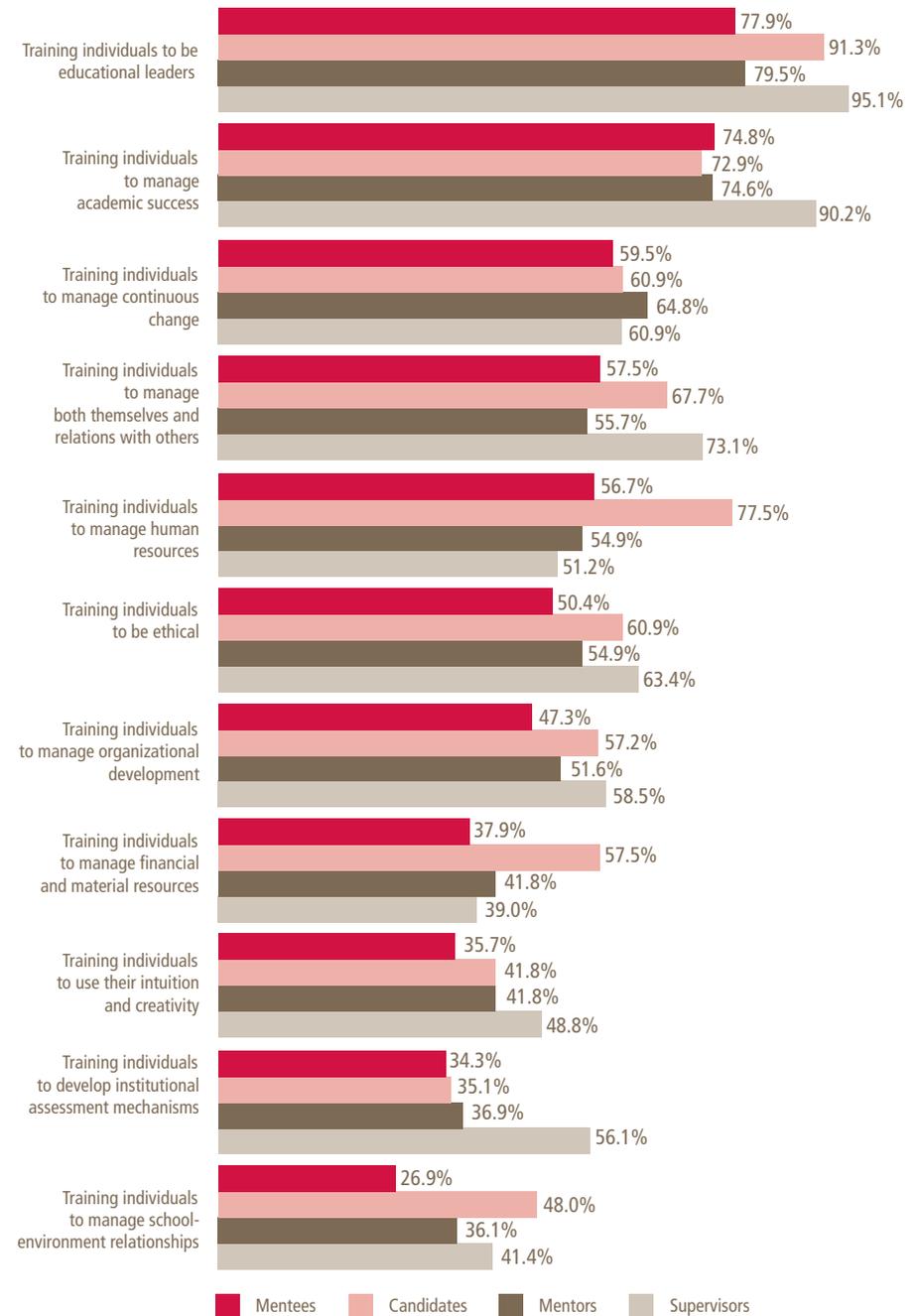
FOUNDATIONS OF THE STRUCTURE

The great majority of mentees, mentors and supervisors believe that the measures from which new school administrators benefit are based on the following three foundations: the development of competencies required to plan, organize, coordinate and monitor; the development of critical thought and analysis; and the development of competencies required to lead, motivate, mediate and evaluate. The differences in perceptions of the three groups are minimal, although fewer mentees and mentors recognized the importance of the development of competencies required to lead, motivate, mediate and evaluate.

Candidates, for their part, practically all agreed that support and guidance measures should be based on the three previously mentioned foundations that appeared in the questionnaire.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MEASURES

The objectives targeted by the support and guidance measures, as presented by the three participating groups, indicate a strong trend toward training individuals to be educational leaders and manage academic success. The fact that mentees make little mention of objectives aimed at training individuals to manage financial and material resources, use their intuition and creativity, develop institutional assessment mechanisms and manage school-environment relationships suggests that these aspects are not very well integrated in the schools.

FIGURE 5   **OBJECTIVES OF THE MEASURES**

Objective	Mentees	Candidates	Mentors	Supervisors
Training individuals to be educational leaders	77.9%	91.3%	79.5%	95.1%
Training individuals to manage academic success	74.8%	72.9%	74.6%	90.2%
Training individuals to manage continuous change	59.5%	60.9%	64.8%	60.9%
Training individuals to manage both themselves and relations with others	57.5%	67.7%	55.7%	73.1%
Training individuals to manage human resources	56.7%	77.5%	54.9%	51.2%
Training individuals to be ethical	50.4%	60.9%	54.9%	63.4%
Training individuals to manage organizational development	47.3%	57.2%	51.6%	58.5%
Training individuals to manage financial and material resources	37.9%	57.5%	41.8%	39.0%
Training individuals to use their intuition and creativity	35.7%	41.8%	41.8%	48.8%
Training individuals to develop institutional assessment mechanisms	34.3%	35.1%	36.9%	56.1%
Training individuals to manage school-environment relationships	26.9%	48.0%	36.1%	41.4%

AIMS OF THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MEASURES

While improving theoretical knowledge and communication and interpersonal skills were primary aims, the use of intuition and creativity in school management was not favoured. Can this be an indication that the support and guidance measures currently in place favour the reproduction or adaptation of existing models over innovation? In addition, the little value that seems to be placed on the development of policy-making strategies and skills suggests that individuals are not being sufficiently well prepared to fully assume these responsibilities, which cannot be ignored in the current context of school management.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

Group discussions were, by far, the most widely used activity. The importance of activities that involve learning strategies based on observation of real-life case studies or the transfer of professional experience and, conversely, the weakness of those that are based on hypothetical cases, indicate that support and guidance practices are well established in the field. Moreover, they enable new school administrators to act directly in accordance with the realities of their schools.

Finally, since only a little more than half of the mentees considered personalized follow-up to be important, how can the various practices encourage the development of a new professional identity?

▶ **TABLE 4**

	MENTEES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS
Type of activity			
Formal courses	52.2	29.3	29.3
Lectures by experts	67.5	54.0	65.9
Group discussions	86.9	77.8	95.1
Teaching-learning strategies			
– Analysis of a simulated or hypothetical situations	66.8	55.2	65.9
– Role-playing	40.8	33.3	48.8
– Actual case studies	76.1	68.3	82.9
– Solving day-to-day problems mentees encounter	76.4	85.5	92.5
Metacognition			
– Reflective and distancing activities	78.5	84.1	95.0
– Knowledge consolidation and transposition activities for use in real-life situations	71.2	64.5	90.0
Personalized follow-up			
– Preparation of a personalized development	57.5	55.6	82.1
– Development of a performance benchmark	51.9	48.4	82.5
– Implementation of a plan integrating knowledge and competencies	56.0	48.4	70.0

■ Mentees   ■ Mentors   ■ Supervisors

THE USE OF GUIDANCE TOOLS

Guidance tools were seldom used. The mentees' logbook—the most frequently used tool—was used only by 37% of mentees and the reference framework of core competencies, by less than one third of mentees. Approximately 25% of mentees used the knowledge evaluation grid, the work portfolio and the progress report. Questions remain about the poor use of tools for recording aspects of what was done, determining what remains to be done and regulating support activities.

THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MODEL ADOPTED BY THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

THE CHOICE OF SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MODEL AND THE TARGETED DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Choosing a support and guidance model for new school administrators is based primarily on the following three operations: setting competency development objectives on the basis of the characteristics and needs of a number of new school administrators; determining competencies that will enable them to improve their school management performance and skills; and identifying their expectations with respect to the school organization's need for progress and innovation.

The responsibility for determining development objectives is assumed in large part by the school organization, which consults school administrators and works with them to establish needs and objectives. Since the school organization is responsible for overseeing the support and guidance of new school administrators, the model reflects its culture and vision.

TOPICS COVERED DURING SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES

According to mentees, the development of a success plan was the subject most often covered in support and guidance activities implemented by the school organization. Stress management was next, followed by the legal framework of the Québec school system and psychological harassment management. Three quarters of mentees also mentioned human resources management and planning. Besides daycare management and vocational training centre management, the least explored subjects were political issues affecting the school organization, factors in student retention, the art of effective meetings and public speaking.

The relative importance of subjects can be explained by the methods for choosing them. The most widely used method for choosing subjects was a survey of all new administrators. The requests or suggestions might appear to be the result of experiences involving new duties or problems encountered. The variety of subjects and the considerable number of objectives targeted by the support and guidance model implemented by the school organizations, however, suggest that some are being dealt with superficially and inconsistently.
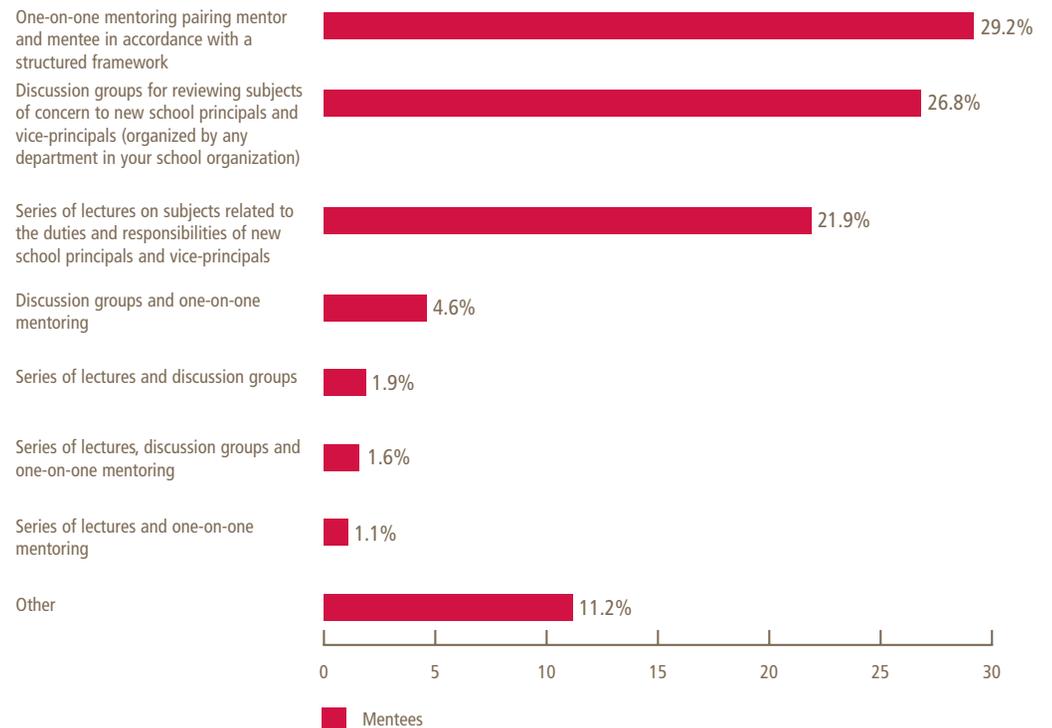
MENTEES' MAIN SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MODEL

The most frequently used model was one-on-one mentoring pairing mentor and mentee in accordance with a structured framework. It was followed closely by group discussions, which deal with the subjects that concern most new principals and vice-principals. A series of lectures on subjects related to the duties of new school principals and vice-principals ranked third.

Nearly 10% of mentees benefited from a combination of models. Discussion groups combined with one-on-one mentoring was the most popular. Although the combination of models did not change the relative ranking of each one, it increased the proportion of mentees who benefited from the models available. As a result, 36% of mentees experienced one-on-one mentoring, 34% participated in group discussions and 26% attended a series of lectures.

Half of the mentees hoped to benefit from one-on-one mentoring and more than a third wished to participate in group discussions. Attending a series of lectures was by far the least popular model.

FIGURE 6   **GUIDANCE MODELS**

Model	Mentees
One-on-one mentoring pairing mentor and mentee in accordance with a structured framework	29.2%
Discussion groups for reviewing subjects of concern to new school principals and vice-principals (organized by any department in your school organization)	26.8%
Series of lectures on subjects related to the duties and responsibilities of new school principals and vice-principals	21.9%
Discussion groups and one-on-one mentoring	4.6%
Series of lectures and discussion groups	1.9%
Series of lectures, discussion groups and one-on-one mentoring	1.6%
Series of lectures and one-on-one mentoring	1.1%
Other	11.2%

Mentees

ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING

The following were the two main reasons for choosing one-on-one mentoring: to favour the integral development of the mentee and to better prepare him or her to become involved in the development of his or her school organization.

According to half of the mentees, the pairing of mentee and mentor should be based on a free and mutual decision by both parties. A little less than 20% of respondents from this group indicated that mentees should choose their mentors from a bank of candidates. The mentors essentially agreed with the mentees on this point, both groups having chosen the top two methods of determining pairings.

Mentees and mentors qualified the type of relationship that exists between them in the same way. A little more than 60% described it as a relationship that alternates between a pedagogical relationship, a professional relationship and personal friend-ship. A quarter of them indicated that it was more of a professional relationship between two individuals working together as equals.

25

"...A QUARTER OF THEM INDICATED THAT IT WAS MORE OF A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO INDIVIDUALS WORKING TOGETHER AS EQUALS."

EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MEASURES

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The supervisors were the most numerous in judging that the objectives were achieved, followed closely by the mentors. The mentees who participated in discussion groups were very positive and those who experienced one-on-one mentoring were somewhat less so. Those who attended a series of lectures were far less numerous in judging the objectives achieved, especially the objectives aimed at satisfying their needs and identifying problems faced by new school administrators.

TABLE 5

	GROUP OF RESPONDENTS %			MENTEE ACCORDING TO GUIDANCE MODEL %		
	MENTEES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS	●●	✷	⁙
Properly address the needs of new school principals and vice-principals	87.7	93.0	95.1	83.5	93.9	68.9
Transmit the knowledge school principals and vice-principals require to perform their duties	87.5	86.6	92.7	91.0	95.9	83.8
Clearly identify the needs of new school principals and vice-principals	79.6	87.5	100	90.2	94.9	86.3
More clearly identify the problems frequently encountered by new school principals and vice-principals	79.1	91.4	95.1	86.5	91.8	65.0
Prevent certain problems frequently encountered by new school principals and vice-principals	78.7	89.8	95.1	78.9	91.8	73.8

■ Mentees   ■ Mentors   ■ Supervisors   ■ One-on-one mentoring   ■ Discussion group   ■ Series of lectures

●●   ✷   ⁙

COMPETENCIES COVERED BY THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MODEL

Supervisors were the most positive about the competencies developed as a result of the measures. Although more specific, the mentors' position was close to that of the supervisors. It is interesting to note, however, that complex professional competencies that extend beyond management are the least developed among all three groups.

The mentees who participated in discussion groups were the most positive, followed by those who experienced one-on-one mentoring. The mentees who attended the series of lectures were much less positive than the others, except where the development of core competencies required to perform their duties were concerned.

TABLE 6

	GROUP OF RESPONDENTS %			**MENTEE ACCORDING TO GUIDANCE MODEL %**		
	MENTEES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS	● ●	(ring)	(cluster)
Develop the core competencies required to perform their duties	89.6	92.2	97.6	91.6	96.9	86.3
Develop professional management competencies	88.3	89.8	97.6	90.2	98.0	83.8
Feel comfortable and fulfilled in their jobs	82.8	88.3	95.1	80.3	85.7	57.5
Internalize and personalize their professional duties	80.3	88.3	90.2	86.4	98.0	67.5
Assume their full responsibilities with initiative and creativity	75.7	79.7	90.2	80.3	84.7	61.3
Develop complex professional competencies that extend beyond management	73.0	72.7	87.8	87.9	85.7	68.4

■ Mentees ■ Mentors ■ Supervisors

■ One-on-one mentoring ■ Discussion group ■ Series of lectures

● ●   (ring)   (cluster)

EFFECTS OF THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE MEASURES

Respondents evaluated the effects of the measures very differently, depending on whether they were referring to the effects on the personal development of new school administrators or the effects on educational services and student success rates. These effects can be evaluated only in the medium term and are judged less positively than those that can be experienced more immediately.

Overall, the mentees who participated in discussion groups were slightly more positive than those who experienced one-on-one mentoring, and both were more positive than those who attended a series of lectures. There was, however, one exception: among the elements affecting the personal development of administrators, mentees who experienced one-on-one mentoring and those who attended a series of lectures judged the development of a common frame of reference in the same way.

TABLE 7

	GROUP OF RESPONDENTS %			MENTEE ACCORDING TO GUIDANCE MODEL %		
	MENTEES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS	• •	(discussion)	(lectures)
The educational services provided to the school clientele	60.1	57.3	73.2	61.8	71.4	53.8
Student success rates	51.2	48.4	63.4	52.7	68.0	41.3
The development of a sense of belonging	78.7	80.2	95.1	81.7	88.8	75.0
The development of an individual and collective sense of worth	73.3	80.0	92.7	80.2	84.7	62.5
The development of a common frame of reference	79.2	80.8	92.7	78.6	93.9	78.8

Mentees · Mentors · Supervisors

One-on-one mentoring · Discussion group · Series of lectures

THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Overall, the views of the different groups on relationships were similar to their observations regarding the previous elements. According to mentees, statements concerning the relationship climate and those referring to job performance were judged more positively than those concerning the organization and the measures themselves.

TABLE 8

	GROUP OF RESPONDENTS %			MENTEE ACCORDING TO GUIDANCE MODEL %		
	MENTEES	MENTORS	SUPERVISORS	● ●	(symbol)	(symbol)
Facilitates problem solving for the mentee	88.2	97.6	97.6	91.7	95.9	83.8
Contributes to the free expression of ideas and feelings	85.2	97.6	95.1	92.5	93.8	75.0
Is notable for its kindness, empathy and encouragement	83.6	96.8	95.1	75.2	77.1	56.3
Facilitates integration of the mentee into your organizational culture	82.0	89.6	92.7	76.7	87.4	66.3
Helps regulate actions and procedures by the mentee in the performance of his or her duties	78.9	83.2	95.1	83.3	87.5	73.8
Helps regulate support and guidance actions and procedures	74.5	80.0	92.5	74.4	78.9	70.0
Encourages development of general strategies that enhance the mentee's professional competencies	71.8	69.1	90.0	85.0	94.8	82.5
Helps identify progress made by the mentee	66.8	84.0	97.5	89.5	94.8	80.0
Contributes to the self-worth of mentors	76.3	87.9	90.2	88.0	87.6	65.0

Legend:
- ■ Mentees
- ■ Mentors
- ■ Supervisors
- ■ One-on-one mentoring (● ●)
- ■ Discussion group (symbol)
- ■ Series of lectures (symbol)

OVERALL SATISFACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING MEASURES

Overall, the supervisors were the ones who most positively evaluated the support and guidance measures. The mentors offered a similar evaluation. The group of mentees gave the measures a more moderate evaluation, which varied depending on the model used. None of the groups judged any of the elements that were being evaluated negatively.

A few suggestions for improvements were made, most of which involved the measures themselves: provide greater flexibility, organize and structure the guidance process and provide administrators with on-site guidance during their first years on the job. A suggestion was also made to improve certain aspects of university training: provide greater flexibility, ensure greater consistency between university training and school boards' expectations, ensure greater consistency between university training and the training offered by the school boards and increase the practical component of university training. The mentees also mentioned that individuals should be given greater consideration, that feedback should be provided and that new school administrators should receive greater recognition.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Throughout 2004, school boards were asked to furnish those responsible for the study with the materials used to ensure support and guidance for their new school administrators. An analysis of these materials, made up of all the tools and documents related to the support and guidance measures, made it possible to identify three specific support models. It was then decided that the information collected by means of the questionnaire would be completed by interviewing users of these three models.

MODEL A

This model was developed jointly by five school boards and a university. It is applied during a school administrator's first year on the job. Six compulsory training credits are earned through activities organized jointly by the new school administrator's school board and the university. The model includes three types of activities—university courses, meetings with representatives of school board departments and individual guidance activities—designed to help achieve the following three objectives:

- to optimize learning by school administrators during their first year on the job
- to introduce measures that will allow the school board and university to organize complementary activities, with a view to optimizing the learning process
- to facilitate appropriation of the organizational culture specific to each school board

The school board organizes meetings with new school administrators and directors of various services. These meetings are intended to provide administrators with the information they need to perform their duties. The meetings occasionally serve more of a training function, providing an ideal opportunity for reflection and activities that favour adaptation to the organizational culture. In addition, the school board assigns coaches and ensures that pairing takes place.

The university offers an introductory course on the roles and competencies of administrators and supervises integration initiatives in order to ensure consistency among the different activities. It also provides support for individual guidance and coaching activities to people playing a guidance role, as well as to new school administrators who have been paired with mentors.

According to the mentee interviewed, the meetings with school board representatives gave meaning and direction to daily activities. Individual guidance made it possible to make considerable progress, provided that the following three conditions were met: appropriate pairing, confidentiality during exchanges and significant involvement by school board management.

The mentor that was interviewed felt that his school management abilities improved as a result of the distancing that his guidance role required. He felt that a minimum of five meetings was needed to ensure the development of professional competencies.

The supervisor indicated that the model's basic principle was to incorporate the school board's values and practices into the university training. In addition, cooperation between the parties was needed to ensure consistency among the activities. According to the supervisor, successful pairing can take place only in the absence of hierarchical relations between the two people involved.

The university program coordinator felt that professional integration was a major issue for all those concerned and for the three bodies involved in providing support and guidance measures for new school administrators. According to the coordinator, initial training based on cooperation gives rise to challenges involving respect for each person's roles and responsibilities, organizational harmony, and the integration of knowledge and its transfer to professional practice.

"Individual guidance made it possible to make considerable progress, provided that the following three conditions were met: appropriate pairing, confidentiality during exchanges and significant involvement by school board management."

MODEL B

This model is based primarily on a two-year support and guidance program that includes the following three elements:

- initial guidance, which takes the form of supervised coaching by the university, and awards three credits. Its structure is formal and its terms and content are largely predetermined. The school board appoints the coaches and oversees the pairing. Although group activities are occasionally carried out during the first year, activities are generally individual in nature.
- additional guidance coordinated by the school board. The formula is flexible and designed to provide a quick and practical solution for a specific need. This type of support is given to a school administrator in the first two years of his or her new job.
- a training and information component provided by school board managers

These elements are organized according to three focuses of development that interact and evolve in a synchronized fashion. Professional development is provided primarily through training and information activities, as well as individualized coaching. Personal development support, associated with professional development, is provided through the individual guidance of a resource person. Its primary aim is to reduce the new person's stress level and to foster his or her sense of accomplishment. Organizational development relies on individual competencies and their combined effect. The support strategies implemented by the school board favour the ability of new administrators to act independently and effectively, and to know how to make the best possible use of support networks and experts.

The objectives are to provide individual and flexible support and guidance tailored to the specific needs expressed, and to equip administrators with the means to perform their duties by providing them with the necessary tools and information.

The mentee that was interviewed mentioned that the training and information activities facilitated the assimilation of knowledge, procedures and practical tools. The coaching and guidance helped establish benchmarks and gave meaning to the mentee's professional practice. They also helped reduce the isolation and establish networks. The choice of a mentor should be based on mutual affinity.

The school boards are responsible for defining the resource people's mandate. According to the mentor, the pair must establish a relationship of trust and confidentiality during exchanges. Guidance benefits both the people receiving it and the school organization, whose school administrators are able to provide services with greater proficiency.

According to the supervisor, there must be a strong commitment on the part of school board management. Moreover, personal and professional development must be consistent with organizational development, which can be attained by optimizing school principals' competencies. To this end, a profile of competencies and a development plan tailored to the various needs of new school administrators were developed. A support model applied over more than two years would make it possible to introduce a personalized development plan.

"Guidance benefits both the people receiving it and the school organization, whose school administrators are able to provide services with greater proficiency."

MODEL C

This model is part of a mentoring program introduced in a specific context. The school board in question is located in a remote region and must deal with continual staff turnover. The main issue for managers is the retention of trained and experienced school administrators. In an effort to alleviate problems resulting from remoteness and isolation, the school board implemented a mentoring program intended for all classes of personnel, including a two-year program specifically aimed at new school administrators. The program is made up of the following two components:

- a six-credit training component, which includes compulsory training activities from the university training program, some of which are under the school board's responsibility
- a guidance component for which the school board is entirely responsible, made up of support activities that are consistent with some of the guidelines contained in the school board's strategic plan. New school administrators within that school board are required to participate.

The training component is made up of individual and group activities. Six group activities involving discussions about professional practices and the roles and responsibilities associated with the job are organized each school year, including two full days dedicated to developing a school management framework adapted to the needs of the school and the MELS. Individual meetings are held at least four times a year. The dates and duration of the meetings vary according to participants' needs and availability. Over the course of these meetings, the means of exchange facilitate the establishment of reliable benchmarks and the development of reflective competencies.

The other program component, which focuses more on assistance and support, includes eight compulsory meetings a year, each one lasting approximately 90 minutes. Participants meet in pairs throughout the school year. The meetings focus on developing the potential of the new administrator and target the discovery of personal and professional resources. A ninth one-day meeting brings together the mentors, the mentees and the coordinator of the support and guidance component. Its aim is to evaluate the knowledge acquired by those who participated in the program, to provide a summary of activities and to make the changes that will lead to a more focused achievement of the target objectives.

The primary aims of the program are to develop professional competencies adapted to the needs and requirements of the institutions, and to foster a sense of belonging to the organization and the education community.

Both the mentee and mentor who were interviewed felt that it was premature to judge the effects of this mentoring program, which has been in existence only a year. The mentee mentioned, however, that the program activities provided an opportunity to reflect and to develop skills. The mentee also suggested that more meetings should be held. The mentor indicated that his participation in the program enabled him to improve his management skills. The mentoring relationship is an ideal opportunity to develop professional competencies, to assume responsibilities more effectively, to identify resources and to recognize personal limitations.

The program coordinator mentioned that the support component, centred on professional development for new school administrators, focused more on the development of practical rather than theoretical knowledge. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the principles and rules of the learning community remain part of the program. He offered the following assessment: first year mentees of the program gained greater confidence as the mentoring relationship progressed and the tools developed for and with them made it possible to implement a more structured and organized management approach.

"The mentoring relationship is an ideal opportunity to develop professional competencies, to assume responsibilities more effectively, to identify resources and to recognize personal limitations."

POINTS OF VIEW OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATORS

THE FIVE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

All the associations agreed that the most important competency of a school administrator is his or her management and administrative skills, followed by interpersonal skills. General knowledge and skills were also considered important. For one association, however, political skills are of notable importance.

The school administrators' need most often mentioned was the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills. Two other needs—the need to establish a new network to break the isolation and the need for security to reassure the individual in his or her choices—were also mentioned.

The school organization needs administrative personnel who are adapted to the organizational culture. It also needs school administrators who adhere to the school board's strategic plan and who can implement educational projects that are consistent with the plan and that satisfy the needs of the school community.

Associations generally determine their professional development activities by surveying members or by asking chapter coordinators to identify their training requirements. The choice of themes takes into account changes in legislative and educational frameworks. The activities—primarily group activities—focus mainly on managerial and administrative issues. Since little attention is given to theoretical matters, professional development activities are centred on professional practice. Solving real problems related to the school administrators' duties is the most common theme of the activities. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is another of the more common themes.

UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS

The data collected from university instructors revealed the key characteristics of the training offered.

Several parameters are used to establish instructional methods and training content: a reference framework of competencies, the needs established in accordance with education system guidelines, the needs expressed by the various participants of the support and guidance measures and, finally, the means and content considered essential by the scientific community.

Two of the various competencies to be acquired stand out in particular. They are the development of interpersonal competencies (ability to motivate people, direct teams) and the development of analytical competencies (reflective practice, metacognition).

The relationships between the program's theoretical and practical aspects can be described as follows: a spiral relationship that goes from practice to theory and back again, and a linear relationship between ideal practice and actual practice.

The preferred pedagogical approaches are a reflexive approach, a socioconstructivist approach, an approach promoting the transfer of theory into practice and a comprehensive approach.

The strength of the training program resides in its ability to adapt to the needs of new school administrators and to link theory to practice. This can be seen as much through the juxtaposition of scientific concepts and real-life situations as through the quality of the professionals who, in many cases, are experienced administrators.

One of the weaknesses revealed, however, involved a lack of consistency in various training elements: student assignments, instructional approaches, modules and courses. Concerns were raised about the degree of theoretical knowledge needed for a Master's-level course, along with questions about the need to hold workshops on management problems that new school administrators are called upon to solve.

CONCLUSION

OVERVIEW AND PERSPECTIVES

The aim of the study on support and guidance for new administrators was to list and analyze existing practices in order to help improve them and adapt them to the needs of both the people and the school organizations concerned. The study was designed to provide additional information about new administrators and the means of offering them support. It was also intended to acquire knowledge useful in coordinating measures implemented by the various bodies concerned. The research data and the opinions of the coordinating committee made it possible to gain an overview of the structure, to specify the elements to which those responsible for the induction of new administrators should pay special attention and to recommend initiatives.

A SUMMARY OF ADOPTED MEASURES

Characteristics

Support and guidance measures are introduced to help new school administrators in their first years on the job. These measures must enable new administrators to adapt to their school board's organizational culture and to develop the competencies required to perform their duties. The measures that are implemented are based largely on the needs of new administrators and those of school board officials, who have certain expectations about how their schools should be managed. The university training required to perform a school administrator's duties is a major component of the measures and, as a result, its guidelines serve as an important foundation.

There are four main participants of the support and guidance measures: new school administrators, who must be personally involved in the learning process in order to foster their own integration into the workplace; school boards; professional associations and universities.

New school administrators generally participate in support and guidance measures adopted by the school boards for one to three years. Compulsory university training can extend over five years, the maximum amount of time specified in the regulation regarding the conditions of employment of school administrators.

FOCUSES OF DEVELOPMENT AND DIMENSIONS OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

Support for new school administrators is three-fold in that it encompasses personal development, professional development and organizational development. The learning process in which new administrators are engaged comprises three dimensions: information, training and transformation.

Personal development

Personal development presupposes the acquisition of knowledge required to perform the job. It generally relies on individual guidance in the form of mentoring or coaching, making it possible to satisfy the specific needs of each individual. The mentee establishes his or her new professional identity, consolidates certain competencies and develops new ones. Through reflective analysis, he or she is able to take a step back, resulting in a transformation of his or her understanding and practices.

Professional development

Professional development requires thorough knowledge of the school organization's operations, policies, procedures and management standards. Moreover, new school administrators must acquire the management tools from their school organization. Information activities give them an opportunity to establish networks for exchanging and sharing. On the one hand, group guidance is an opportunity to share experiences and to develop a sense of their new reality. On the other hand, individual guidance makes it possible to enhance both mentees' and mentors' management practices. Sharing experiences, formalizing knowledge and specifying links between theory and practice facilitate the integration and transfer of knowledge.

Organizational development

Organizational development relies on the appropriation of the culture specific to the school organization. It is reinforced through meetings with managers of school organization services and the creation of information networks. It helps develop a sense of belonging to the organization. Increased individual competencies, especially among new school administrators, represents a definite value for the organization. Combining these competencies with those of personnel already in place contributes to organizational development and the establishment of a community that continues to learn. As a result, established management practices are sometimes brought into question and ultimately improved.

THE SHARING AND COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

New administrators

New administrators must make every effort to collect the information they need and to create networks that will help support and sustain them. They must also fully dedicate themselves to their training through active participation, reading and assignments. In addition, they must take the time to reflect, take a step back and integrate their new knowledge into their professional practice.

School organizations

School organizations are responsible for communicating their guidelines, values and expectations regarding school management by implementing guidance measures. In the case of a model focusing on individual guidance, they define the terms for choosing a mentor and of the pairing. Ensuring confidentiality during meetings between mentor and mentee is essential to the process. School organizations provide the necessary human, financial and material resources. They are also responsible for overseeing the measures, setting the terms for monitoring new administrators and implementing a plan for the development of competencies.

Universities

Universities are responsible for implementing teaching-learning strategies that favour the assimilation of concepts related to the roles, duties and competencies of school administrators. The training that they provide helps establish a link with their students' professional practice. They are also responsible for the activities and initiatives required to incorporate and monitor the training plan.

Professional associations

Professional associations ensure the availability of information and professional development activities. Through the Comité de perfectionnement des directeurs d'établissement d'enseignement (CPD) or the Comité de perfectionnement des cadres et gérants (CPCG), they manage the funds granted by the MELS for school administrators' initial and continuing education and training. They are also involved in establishing the job requirements and professional development needs of school administrators.

OBSERVATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Those responsible for improving local support and guidance measures must examine them in terms of the following four elements.

Quality
- of the dimensions of the learning process
- of guidance and those who provide it
- of mentee follow-up
- of commitment of all concerned parties
- of human, material and financial resources allocated to the measures
- of the guidance structure

Balance
- in the time allocated for information meetings, individual and group guidance, and compulsory training
- between the school organization's performance expectations and university requirements

Consensus
- on the identification of needs of new administrators
- on an appropriate response to those needs
- on optimal and realistic learning conditions
- on follow-up procedures for new administrators

Cooperation
- in order to reach a shared understanding
- in order to define common objectives
- in order to make joint decisions
- that takes into account the expertise and complementary competencies of each participant, while maintaining a steady course with regard to collective achievement

The initiatives resulting from an examination of the measures would focus on the following points:
- the duration and form of the guidance, which must be consistent with the mentee's progress
- the need to take into account the three focuses of development (personal, professional, organizational)
- the need to further specify school administrators' areas of involvement
- the need to have a shared reference framework of competencies, which serves as the basis for the professionalization of school administrators
- the need to arrange the learning content and strategies in accordance with the needs of new administrators
- the need to systematically monitor the development of competencies of new administrators and to include this follow-up in a personalized development plan
- the need to include the dimensions of the learning process (information, training and transformation) for each year of the workplace integration phase
- the need to take into account the support and professional development needs of mentors whose ability to provide guidance is the underlying strength of the guidance measures

AVENUES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The results of the study elucidated several common points for those concerned. Firstly, the ultimate objective for everyone was the development of competencies required for school administrators. There was a strong consensus around leadership and interpersonal competencies, followed by managerial and collective competencies and attitudes. A large number of participants also considered metacompetence to be important.

Secondly, everyone agreed on the importance of implementing guidance measures that would support and facilitate the transition to new administrative duties. A more in-depth examination revealed three focuses of development—personal, professional and organizational—for these measures. Since both individual and collective aspects are taken into account, everyone can benefit from the adopted measures.
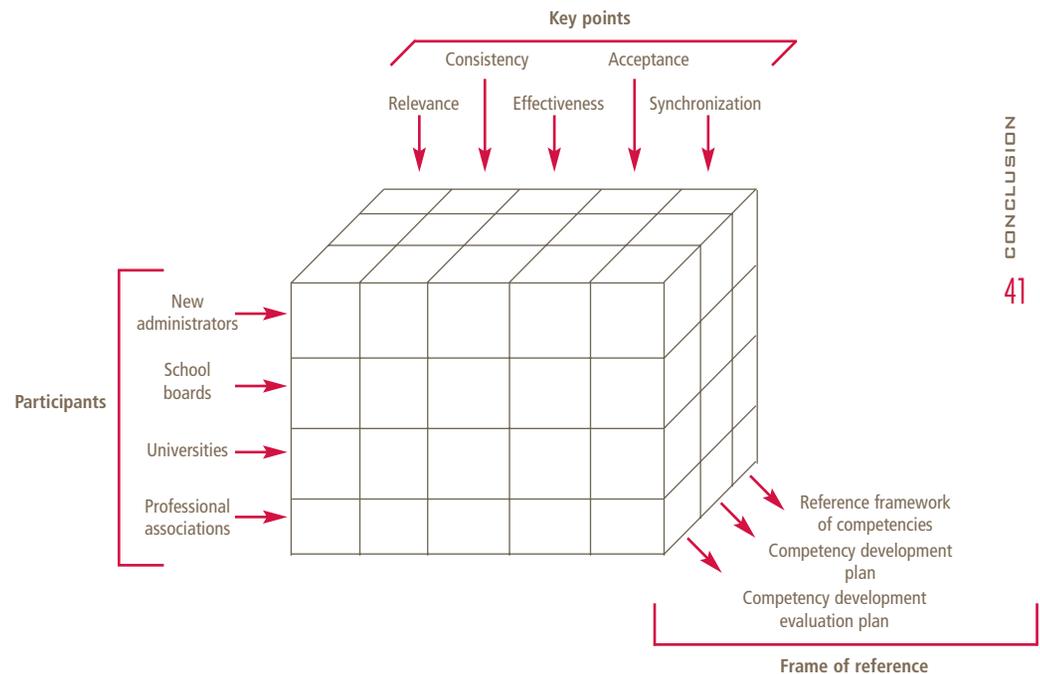
Thirdly, the learning process at the heart of these measures allows for the ongoing development of competencies. Information, training, transformation and duration contribute to the acquisition and integration of knowledge, which leads to competent action. Each of the participants was invited to take part in the process and to contribute according to his or her role, responsibilities and expertise.

According to Le Boterf (2002),[3] acting competently is the result of the intersection of three axes:

- knowing how to act: based on training that sustains the pool of resources, the training needed to use these resources effectively, the analysis of professional practices that makes it possible to take a step back and to take advantage of opportunities to construct competencies
- wanting to act: motivated by meaning attributed to the action, a realistic and positive self-image, a context of recognition and trust that encourages competent action
- being able to act: made possible through effective work organization and implementation of competencies, a facilitating context that brings together the necessary means, networks of resources / proximity of equipment

It is necessary to act simultaneously and consistently on each of the three axes to significantly increase the development of professional competency. Consequently, the training programs contribute significantly to knowing how to act. Wanting to act is reinforced through individual and collective guidance, which establishes a sense of duty and professional identity. Being able to act involves establishing favourable learning conditions and access to networks that help sustain the process.

To ensure the quality of the guidance measures and the development of competencies for new school administrators, several elements must be considered and united in a context of systemic interaction, as illustrated in the following figure. Considering how these elements interact suggests a structure that combines the precision and flexibility needed to appropriately respond to the problems facing new school administrators.

Key points

Relevance Consistency Effectiveness Acceptance Synchronization

Participants

New administrators
School boards
Universities
Professional associations

Reference framework of competencies
Competency development plan
Competency development evaluation plan

Frame of reference

3. G. Le Boterf, *Ingénierie et évaluation des compétences* (Paris: Éditions d'Organisation, 2002), p. 121. [free translation]

Everyone involved must identify their needs and specify their roles and responsibilities in a spirit of cooperation and sharing. The key points are consistency, relevance, effectiveness, acceptance and synchronization. They serve as benchmarks for success and mechanisms that help determine adjustments required to offset any difficulties encountered.

A shared understanding is essential to achieving the desired results. Also, the starting point, the process undertaken and the end point must be identified in a common frame of reference that harnesses efforts, not toward uniform theoretical models, but toward a strong and unifying collective vision. A shared reference framework of competencies could provide support for the individual competency development plan and be a part of the initial training and continuing education plan that supports it. These means would make it possible to monitor competency development in a more rigorous, albeit more stimulating and satisfying manner.

Guaranteeing the quality and support of competency development in school administrators requires an effective mobilization and combination of all of these elements.

A round table made up of school administrators, and representatives of school boards, universities and professional associations should be organized by the MELS in order to explore these avenues and sustain or further develop these cooperative mechanisms. The round table could elaborate on the observations, thoughts and initiatives highlighted in this study and recommend a framework that would both guide the initial training and continuing education of school administrators, and orient support and guidance practices for those who are new to the job.

This would be a tremendous opportunity to develop the competency to cooperate, which, again according to Le Boterf (2002),[4] includes the following three axes:

- knowing how to cooperate through exchanging practices, shared knowledge and competencies and the designing of a common set of tools
- wanting to cooperate through sharing in collective problems, reference points that become visible spaces for professional growth, mutual trust and friendliness
- being able to cooperate through the organization of emerging professionals, the introduction of processes that lead to progress, regulatory bodies and indicators

of collective performance

This research on support and guidance for new school administrators has provided greater knowledge of existing practices and of perspectives that will ensure that those who play a determining role in the Québec school system are able to successfully integrate into their new positions. It suggests establishing key items to be monitored and avenues to be explored. The experiences and the high degree of satisfaction of most participants confirm that the effects of successful professional integration warrant a major investment. It is hoped that these well-received initiatives continue to evolve with the support of this study's results.

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4. *Ingénierie et évaluation des compétences*, p. 157

SUMMARY TABLE OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

MODEL A (p.34)					
Objectives	■ To optimize learning by new school administrators (NSAs) during their first year on the job ■ To introduce measures that allow the school board (SB) and the university to organize complementary activities ■ To appropriate the SB's organizational culture		**Special characteristics**	Tool developed jointly by five SBs and one university	**Duration**	One year
Activities	**Roles and responsibilities**		**Evaluation**			
	School board	University	Mentee	Mentor	Supervisor	Program director
SB meetings	■ Information meetings on the way in which the SB operates and its various departments ■ Opportunities for exchange and reflection on professional practices ■ Adaptation to the organizational culture	■ Ensuring consistency between information received at the SB and the university training offered	■ SB meetings give meaning and direction to daily activities	■ No financial compensation	■ The assistant director-general Basic principle ■ Adaptation to the organizational culture and mandatory training for NSAs	Basic principle: Shared responsibility among: ■ NSAs ■ SB ■ the university Positive evaluation of the model
Coaching	■ Choice of coaches ■ Pairing	■ Training for coaches and coachees	■ Coaching results in the most significant progress ■ Pairing is a major issue ■ Confidentiality must be ensured ■ The involvement of school board senior management (SBSM) is important	■ Renewed professional practice thanks to distancing and reflective activities ■ Rewarding training ■ Five formal meetings ■ Development of individual and collective competencies	■ SBSM pairs beginners with mentors ■ Rule observed: no hierarchical relations	■ Considerable appreciation for coaching
University courses		■ Introductory course on roles and competencies for administrators	■ Not enough time to complete the work		■ SB values and practices incorporated into the training	Challenges of cooperative initiative ■ respect for roles and responsibilities ■ organizational cooperation ■ quality of learning based on integration and transfer
Other		■ Initiatives to establish consistency among the various activities	■ These activities are complementary. They ensure relevant and quality training.	Greater appreciation for coaching	■ Cooperation between SB and university to ensure consistency among activities	

MODEL B (p.35)				
Objectives ■ To provide individual support and guidance that is flexible and tailored to specific needs ■ To enable administrators to perform their duties by providing them with the necessary tools and information	**Special characteristics**	Two types of guidance ■ University component ■ Training-information component	**Duration**	Two years

Activities	**Roles and responsibilities**		**Evaluation**		
	School board	University	Mentee	Mentor	Supervisor
SB meetings (professional development)	Training-information section ■ SB managers organize learning activities for NSAs		■ SB information capsules help with the assimilation of knowledge, protocols, procedures and practical tools	■ The mandate of resource persons is defined by SBSM	The SBSM Basic principle ■ Consistency among personal, professional and organizational development ■ Strong commitment from SBSM
Coaching	■ On-site guidance by an experienced resource person appointed by the SB ■ Choice of coaches ■ Pairing	Coaching supervised by the university (three credits) ■ Formal structure ■ Predetermined conditions ■ Established and scheduled content ■ Individual and occasional group activities	■ Gives meaning to professional practice and establishes reliable benchmarks for the new professional identity ■ Breaks isolation ■ Creates networks ■ Choice of coach based on affinity	Insistence on absolute discretion ■ Advantageous for the people involved and the organization ■ Reception and training mechanisms to be reviewed	■ SBSM pairs beginners with mentors ■ Rule observed: no hierarchical relations
University courses		■ Compulsory Master's-level training			
Other	Organizational development focused on the value and sharing of individual competencies		■ Program helps earn credibility ■ Both types are necessary and complementary	■ Both forms of guidance are distinct and satisfy different needs	■ Development of a competency profile ■ Competency development plan tailored to specific needs

MODEL C (p.36)					

Objectives	■ To develop professional competencies tailored to specific institutional needs and requirements
	■ To develop a sense of belonging to the organization and the education community
		Specific characteristics	■ Two components:
			  – university training (6 credits)
			  – SB support and guidance
			■ Large territory far from urban centres
			■ Mentoring offered to all categories of personnel
			■ Challenge: retaining trained and experienced administrators
				Duration	In place since 2004-2005

Activities	**Roles and responsibilities**		**Evaluation**		
	School board	University	Mentee	Mentor	Supervisor	Coordinator

Activities	School board	University	Mentee	Mentor	Supervisor	Coordinator
SB meetings			■ More individual and group meetings should be held ■ Desire for more stable and competent administrators		■ Involvement by SBSM	Guidance component centred on professional development and reinforced through concrete projects
Mentoring	■ Eight compulsory meetings per year ■ Focus of meetings on developing the potential of the new administrator ■ 9th meeting: mentors and mentees (summary)		■ Opportunity to reflect on and develop behaviours	■ Belief in reflective activities ■ Improved practices ■ Need for improved preparation of resource people	■ No hierarchical relations	■ Mentees have more confidence ■ More structured management process thanks to tools provided
University courses		■ Group activities involving exchanges and sharing of professional practices ■ Understanding of the roles and responsibilities related to the duties of SAs ■ Minimum of six meetings per year				
Other			■ Premature to pass judgment on the effects	■ Premature to pass judgment on the effects		■ Desire for a more personalized approach ■ Importance of tools

collaboration competencies
complexity
development
complexity
collaboration
complexity

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