Educational Accountability

International perspectives on challenges
and possibilities for school leadership

Edited by
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School leadership challenged by double accountability towards schools

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Literature distinguishes between different forms of accountability that respond to different purposes. Leithwood (2001) shows how pro-accountability policies have existed in pursuit of different objectives, such as making the decision-making process more accessible to schools, favoring the performance of the education market, promoting professionalism amongst me leading players of the schooling process (teachers and administrators), or improving the educational and institutional management of schools. Similarly, differentiating accountability types according to their main aims, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2009) has distinguished between accountability focused on the requirements of the school system (contractual accountability), accountability focused on responding to the needs of students and parents (moral accountability), and accountability designed to meet the expectations of teachers and administrators (professional accountability), creating the concept of multi-accountability in order to describe the way in which tHese simultaneous processes operate. Meanwhile, Darling-Hammond (2004) identifies (though not exclusively) similar types of accountability: legal and bureaucratic accountability, in which schools operate according to legislation or to regulations set by the state that are intended to ensure that schools follow certain procedures; market accountability, which allows parents to choose courses or schools; and professional accountability, in which the school staff are expected to acquire specialized knowledge in order to meet professional standards of practice in their wor~. The later can be understood in terms of internal accountability, a concept introduced by Elmore (2010) alluding to the link between the results and the development capacities of the school, showing the need to prioritize it over external accountability.

The presence of accountability conceptualization in educational research is related to a pro-accountability trend in school systems, which has been described, among others, by OECD (2009) and specifically for the United States by Darling-Hammond (2004). This trend has gone hand in hand with an increasing decentralization of educational decision-making, as well as with a greater observance of countries that comply with the quality of learning achieved at different levels of the system as a whole, requiring improvement on the effectiveness of school systems in the context of a more demanding and globalized economy and society (OECD, 2009). This process would not have been possible if the techniques of measurement of the quality of education had not had a dramatic change from their focus on the integration and preservation of community values and knowledge to individual results of performance based on quantitative goals (Mauroy and Voisin, 2013). These different forms of accountability implicate schools and their administrators to take responsibility for the quality of the education they provide, having to respond to the consequences derived from their results. Market accountability considers that families have the possibility to choose their school, and by choosing it over others, reward it for its performance, a material reward that implies payment to the school. For example, one may assume that a family's preference could express particular satisfaction with the education provided by, and would contribute to, greater quality levels from education service across providers, thus having a positive systemic effect. This subject has been put at issue by different studies (Carrasco and Flores, 2013; Corvalan and Roman, 2012) in particular due to its impact on greater social segmentation (OECD, 2004). Therefore, schools would have incentives to improve their results in order to attract families. However, state accountability's rationale is to set incentives for schools in order to foster the achievement of certain standards that have been set by educational authorities, expecting by this to enhance school improvement efforts. If the expected outcomes are not achieved, consequences collld imply even the closure of the school as an educational organization. This chapter addresses only those types of account·ability that could be considered as external, examining their consequences over schools and specifically their influence over principals' professional behavior.

In school systems, some types of accountability tend to predominate among the others, and it is not unusual that they coexist. The features of a certain combination of accountability types will depend on the history and reality of each school system. There are socio-political and institutional dynamics that may push a certain system in one direction or another. There are school systems, such as those in the English or the U.S. contexts, which have evolved from forms of accountability structured around the state, to other forms that are open to the market (Ravirch, 2013), while other systems, such as the Chilean one, have gone in the opposite direction, adding state regulations for schools to a system that historically has been mostly market based (Cox, 2012). Either way, the resulting system of school accountability may end up being a combination of elements from different origins, as shown in Table 5.1.

When both types of external accountability, market and state, are present in a certain school system, a model of double accountability emerges. Inasmuch, competition between schools to obtain the approval of families coexists with the requirement to comply with performance standards set and monitored by authorities. Hence, the resulting pressure on schools is

Table 5.1 **Three** models of accountability

Measure	Market	State	Marketplus state
Who is accountable?	The school and its administrator	The school and its administrator	The school and Its administrator
Accountableto whom?	To the families (within the existing legal and administrative frame)	To the Ministry of Education	To the families and the Ministry of Education
How does one yield accountability?	Through the satisfaction of the families for the educational services offered	Through meeting the required standards	Through the satisfaction of families and meeting the required standards
What are the consequences in cases of success in meeting accountability expectations?	Preference showed by families (viability) leads to success of the school unit and its administrator	More incentive for good performance and greater autonomy in management	Preference showed by families, more incentive and greater autonomy in management
What are the consequences in cases of non -success in meeting accountability expectations?	Exit by families (or not showing up) and failure of the school unit and its administrator	Progressive sanctions (could even dose down) and greater external control in educational management	No preference showed by families, sanctions and greater external control in educational management
What basic systemic prerequisites must be met?	Existence of diverse educational offers available to families and the freedom for them to choose	Existence of quality standards and the capacity from the Ministry of Education to monitor and sanction (if needed)	Existence of diverse educational offers available to families together with standards that are monitored with consequences

amplified, as discussed later in the description of how this impacts on the work of school principals in Chile.

However, these models of accountability do not necessarily follow the conceptual itinerary as planned because sometimes certain assumptions or conditions of viability are not met. The last line of Table 5.1 exposes this shortcoming: unsatisfied families are not always able to exert options for changing schools within the market model. In fact in Chile, schools can select their students. For example, the lack of nearby alternative high-quality schools available to families, in case their own low-quality schools close

down, has been documented (Elacqua *et at.,* 2011). Furthermore, public bureaucracies do not always have the skills to effectively develop appropriate standards, nor to monitor and enforce them. However, it is clear that the organization of the system based on these two main orientations leads schools and responsible authorities to try to respond to a number of significant results in terms of standards achievement and enrollment.

An education system built on competition with increasing public regulation

Under the dictatorship of General Pinochet (1973-1989), Chile experienced a sort of "capitalist revolution," becoming a country where the neoliberal ideas of Milton Friedman were put into full swing, elevating the market as playing a significant role in national development. In the educational field, market-based influence was observed via the establishment of a system governed by competition between public and private service providers throughout the school system, requiring schools to try to attract students and their families, In theory, families would "vote with their feet" for the best possible deal available. In fact, state financing consisted of the payment of a subsidy to the service provider named the *"sostenedor"* for each student attending classes. The *sostenedor* is responsible for defining the educational project, for staffing school and managing the financial and other resources. While the municipality administrates public schools, *sostenedors* of private schools typicaHyown the school itself. The amount of the subsidy does not depend on whether the *sostenedor* is public or private. The system also promotes the installation of new private providers by means of low entrance barriers to access this market and by making low-quality compliance require· ments for the school service itself. In addition, public education is *deeply decentralized,*as the management of school services was transferred from the Ministry of National Education to over 300 municipalities, due in part to a lack of experience in school administration and insufficient institutional capability (Marcel and Raczynski, 2010). Meanwhile, subsidized private education greatly expanded, accounting for nearly 60 percent of national enrollment.

The main achievement attained by this market system was the growth in numbers of students inside the school systeme. This achievement has also been made possible by non-education-related factors, such as the sustained increase in living standards (Gutierrez and Paredes, 2011), significant poverty reduction, down from over 38.3 percent to 14.4 percent between 1990 and 2011 (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social de Chile, 2012), and the general increase in educational expectations. In fact, the percentage of the Chilean population under 25 years old that is expected to complete upper secondary is higher than the average for OECD countries (OECD, 2013).

We cannot say the same in terms of the learning quality of students and even less in terms oflearning equity., areas where this model failed to achieve

significant progress and even increased preexisting levels of class-based segregation. When compared with other OECD countries, taking into account the variance of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009 results that are explained by socio-economical factors, Chile ranks above the OECD average (Ministerio de Educaci6n de Chile, 2013).

Once Pinochet's dictatorship concluded, democratic governments (post-1990) introduced improvements to the original model by placing greater demands on the quality of school service, empowering the state as the central governing agent of the education system, systematically multiplying sector financing and encouraging a set of compensatory measures to the most socioeconomically disadvantaged schools and students (Weinstein and Munoz, 2009). Additionally, with the Statute of Professionals in Education (1991), teachers' working conditions improved (e.g., increased salaries, job security, diverse benefits, erc.), especially for those teachers working in the public sector (Weinstein and Munoz, 2009). The improvements were implemented in phases. In the first phase (1990-2007}, reforms were focused on building educational infrastructure, improving school staff working conditions, investing in educational resources, introducing changes to curricula, extending the school day and implementing centrally defined programs for learning improvement (Raczynski and Munoz, 2007). Finally, the co-finance law strengthened the conditions of private, subsidized schools. This allowed these schools to charge students' families whilst continuing to receive funds from the state.

After the emergence of a student movement in 2006 called the "Penguins' Revolution," where the claim for higher quality and educational equity enjoyed massive public support, a new phase of educational reforms began, with especial focus on educational quality and equity improvement. Hence, in 2008 the Preferential School Subvention Law (SEP) was announced: a vast initiative for schools serving disadvantaged students to receive significant additional funding to be used in improvement plans they themselves developed and in which certain academic goals were to be met within four years. The SEP law revolutionized the top-down support forms, based on centralized programs, which in the 1990s the Ministry of Education set in motion in order to boost the educational quality of the most vulnerable facilities (Nunez and Weinstein, 2008; Weinstein *et al.,* 2010). In 2009, the General Education Law (LGE) deepened the definition *of* roles for each school player, including a greater participation of the state as guarantor of education quality (Weinstein and Muñoz, 2009). The LGE refashioned institutions' responsibility for guaranteeing educational quality by setting learning stan-<lards, measuring student learning, and defining consequences for those schools that failed to meet the standards set. In this respect, LGE emphasized the state's leading role (Banco Mundial, 2010) and even questioned some pillars of the market model (Cox, 2012).

For these recent policies to be implemented, the national system for measuring student learning played a major role. Having a national, standardized test

to measure student learning has been a prerequisite to rank schools while establishing the conditions to set incentives and to deliver state support. This system, called Sistema de Medici6n de la Calidad de la Educaci6n (SIMCE), has been in operation for more than 25 years. As a result, information on curricular coverage and different subjects is periodically collected at the student, school, municipality, and national levels. Every year, language, math, and science census tests are carried out with 4th grade students, and every other year with students from the 8th and 10th grades. These tests have recently been enhanced by the introduction of new levels (6th and 2nd grades) and disciplines (English, technology, and physical education). This system is considered a big jump forward compared to the information provided previously regarding the educational system (Meckes and Carrasco, 2010).

SIMCE results were not initially made public. This changed *in* 1995, leading to an annual ranking of the schools published in the press, thus becoming a tool for families' school choice. Although it should be noted that even though Chilean families can choose among schools, the criteria they use to make school choice decisions are not always reliant on the SIMCE scores. Studies have shown that their decision is likely to be based more on school proximity, the social status of the family, the school's infrastructure and other factors (Elacqua and Fabrega, 2004; MacLeod and Urquiola, 2009). Nevertheless, SIMCE has increasingly been used as a key tool for building and regulating actions that the state has been assuming regarding the school system, by promoting a standards-based reform that takes SIMCE ~ores as its main source of information (Espinola and Claro, 2010). For example, SIMCE has been a key factor for the implementation of the law of preferential school subvention (SEP). In effect, schools that do not meet the SIMCE goals they have committed to may be sanctioned for closure (Elacqua *et al.,* 2013), thereby introducing key principles of high-stakes school accountability. Therefore, SIMCE has put learning information at the center of the two forms of accountability that the Chilean school system has been settling into throughout the last decade. The main milestones of the Chilean double accountability system are synthesized in Table 5.2.

The role of the school principal and the results promised by double accountability

In line with international trends (Leithwood, 2001; West *et al.,* 2010) over the past decades, and particularly in the past five year period, there has been an important transformation of the role of the school principal; primarily from implementing and administrating centrally defined educational policies in the school to rapidly becoming the person in charge of certain key results that the school must reach (Monn *et al.,* 2006; Nunez *et al.,* 2012). This includes a shift towards a stronger emphasis on managerial aspects. School leaders are responsible for leading the educational and institutional projects

Table 5.2 Policies and institutional changes shaping the double accountability system in Chile

Era	*Tear*	*Milestones*
Pinochet dictatorship	1980	The establishment of financial system based on student attendance. The amount of financing is the same for municipal and private subsidize schools. This marked the beginning of "competition for students."
	1981-1986	The development of a decentralization process. Schools stopped being managed by central government, as management was transferred to the local level (municipalities).
	1988	The creation of SIMCE, which realized national examinations for the students of certain grades and certain subjects to determine quality of learning.
Democratic governments	1991	The introduction of Statute of Education Professionals regulated the working conditions of teachers, in particular for those in the public sector.
	1993	The approval of co-finance law allowed private schools to charge students' families whilst still receiving funding from the state. This created an imbalance in the funding between the public and the private subsidized sectors.
	1995	The SIMCE results were made public and the press began to construct league tables among schools.
	2008	The New Preferential Subvention Law (SEP) was established, where schools accepting underprivileged students received extra funds, in return for committing to achieve certain established learning goals.
	2009	New General Education Law established education quality objectives to be accomplished by schools and *sostenedores*. Quality standards were put in place.
	2012	The New Quality Assurance Law created institutions such as the Quality Agency to monitor the schools achievement of the national standards.

of the school in their charge, making sure they meet the goals and processes necessary to achieve the agreed targets in the context of SEP and the Educational Quality Guarantor System. Weinstein *et al.* (2012b) explain that this task implies that they must not only transform their relationship with res~e~t to the upper levels of the school system, but they must also change their inward work towards the school-acquiring authority and decision-making as expressed clearly in the new legal requirement for which principals should observe classes and discharge teachers. This new legal scope of the principal's role focuses on the capacity for leading the school's educational

project and also includes new administrative powers that, in general, provide greater autonomy.

In this context, school leaders are compelled to try to achieve two kinds of results, directly related to each type of accountability present in the Chilean educational system. First, a direct *derivative* of the competitive financing system, in which schools receive their funding according to student attendance, indicates that school principals must deal with matters of enrollment. Not having a suitable number of enrolled students leaves the school not *only* with an "idle capacity," but also generates a financial deficit for the *sostenedor.* However, ensuring the necessary annual enrollment is not a simple task as the number of educational service providers is growing, particularly in light of the expanding private subsidized sector. Paradoxically, there are fewer students, due to changing youth demographics (Marcel and Raczynski, 2010). Hence, the *sostenedor puts* pressure on principals to assure "proper" enrollment numbers by increasing the existing enrollment rate, if found insufficient, or by maintaining it, if found satisfactory. This goal is part of the usual discussion between *sostenedores* and principals. Yet, an analysis of enrollment (Macl.eod and Urquiola, 2009) reveals that despite these demands, municipal schools have shown a trend of declining enrollment whereas private, subsidized school enrollment is growing.

The second result expected of principals follows from the growing weight of quality measurements of student learning, which is expressed by individual schools' ranking in the SIMCE annual standardized tests. Even though this information originally was supposed to only have a referential value for the school and its *sostenedor* (who could learn of the school's health and take remedial measures), for the families (who could use the information for school choice) and for the Ministry of Education (which could identify problems and establish ad hoc improvement programs), SIM CE test scores have had increasingly direct consequences on schools (Meckes and Carrasco, 2010). At first, these consequences were only positive. For example, in schools reaching a certain SIMCE score, teachers were awarded additional economic incentives through the National System of Performance Evaluation (SNED). More recently though, with the implementation of the SEP and its resulting SIMCE goals to be reached in four years, these consequences could also be negative, including the possibility of school closure. The *sostenedor,* therefore, puts pressure on principals to assure a certain SIMCE score or student outcome level.

The main results that principals are supposed to achieve are in line with the two forms of accountability that have become prevalent in the Chilean school system. So while achieving and maintaining adequate student enrollment meets the requirements of a market-based system for the attraction and retention of families, getting and maintaining adequate SIMCE results is in line with the requirement to comply with the academic standards fixed and operationalized in the SEP act. While these matters do not necessarily correspond to the discourse on the alleged role principals should fulfill (Pont *et*

al., 2008), these two requirements determine the work of the principals, setting the priorities by which they will be evaluated by their employers, whether public or private.

School principals response to double accountability

In this context of double accountability, school principals have developed specific strategies to mobilize their schools towards meeting the enrollment targets and developing SIMCE score strategies. These strategies were identified in the qualitative phase of a research project entitled School Leadership and Educational Quality in Chile, directed by Jose Weinstein and Gonzalo Munoz between 2009 and 2011. The research is based on an in-depth study of 12 urban elementary school principals in disadvantaged social educative situations and aims to identify the strategies they implemented in compliance with the two accountability demands. Figure 5.1 presents the conceptual device underlying the identified strategies.

The strategies are a set of initiatives that are strongly aligned to goals for increasing student enrollment and learning agreed upon by principals and their school boards. The principals operate different strategies to achieve those results, and so they must get families to choose their school and their pupils must reach a certain level of academic performance.

Two caveats are needed. Considered in isolation, the strategies have a rather tactical purpose and do not necessarily point towards further development of school capacity. As other authors have claimed about the American school
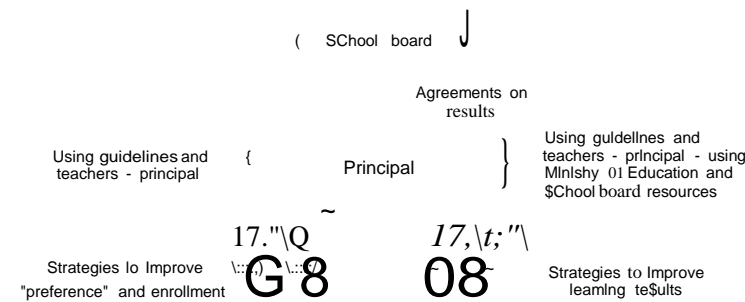
system, some policies of accountability can reach academic goals at the expense of other long-term educational aims (Jacob, 2005; Ravitch, 2010). Additionally, the possibility of implementing some of these strategies, as well as their chances of success, depends heavily on factors outside the principal's control, such as the administrative unit of the school, the school's previous results and the socio-economic profile of the families it serves. Research in primary schools (Weinstein *et al.,* 2012a) identified 12 strategies carried out by the directors, five of which are focused on improving the results of enrollment (see Table 5.3), while the other seven are designed to increase scores on SIMCE (see Table 5.4).

Figure 5.1 Directive strategies

Source: Weinstein*ttril.* (2012b)

Table 5.3 Strategies and practices developed by school principals to improve enrollment results

Stratw	*Examples ofpractices related ta the strategy*
l. Starting pupils earlier at school	- Offering lower levels (such as pre-kindergarten) which enables children to start school earlier - Setting up a special needs language school in the institution, for preschool children with (suspected) language difficulties
2. Gaining loyalty, developing a local identity for lite families living in the area near the school	- Facilitating the use of the sports facilities, the stage, computer rooms, and the library by neighbors in the area and their organizations - Developing courses and training for adults aimed at the parents, but open to other neighbors
3. Promoting differentiated characteristics of the families accepted by the school (by selecting students and attracting the target group)	- Economic filter: the family accepted must have some ability to make co-payments for the child's schooling - Values ideological filter: the family accepted must share certain principles or specific beliefs promoted by the institution - Academic merit filter: the applicant accepted must have certain academic qualifications that differentiate him/her from other pupils
4. Improving school's supply by complements and features that distinguish them among others	- Offering infrastructure (such as buildings, land, or equipment) that make the school different from others - Offering full-time schooling - Offering additional learning opportunities (school activities and extracurricular activities)
5. Informing families of the good academic results	- Having their results in official standardized tests and university selection examination known to the families, by comparing them with those of other institutions in the arcaMaking parents and pupils aware that the school provides good opportunities to continue their secondary education

In terms of improving school enrollment, the first strategy, *starting pupils earlier at school,* consists of schools offering an educational service at lower levels (such as pre-kindergarten). Another alternative is to set up a special needs language school in the institution, for preschool children with (suspected) language difficulties that welcomes and provides treatment for them, acting as a *bridge* to later attend normal school, where they can continue their schooling by being integrated gradually into different courses while having the possibility of continuing their remedial classes at the same time.

The second of these strategies, *gaining loyalty, developing a local identity among the families living in the area near the school,* has to do with the schools offering an education service that is renowned for its identity within the proximity of the local community, maintaining a close link with families in the area and social organizations (neighborhood associations, sports clubs, etc.), which other schools find difficult to do.

A third strategy for enrollment results is *promoting differentiated characteristics of the families accepted by the school,* which implies the integration of pupils and families that share the same social and cultural characteristics distinctive to them. This strategy was also validated by other studies demonstrating that many subsidized private schools selected those students with more resources and academic skills (Elacqua and Fabrega, 2004). In many cases, these resources are not available to public schools. There seems to be three filters that principals must use during selection: (1) an economic filter, which incorporates families as long as they can make a prepayment in addition to the scholar grant, (2) a values ideological filter, which only incorporates those families who share certain principles or specific beliefs promoted by the institution and, (3) a filter related to the pupil's academic merit, which favors the incorporation of those pupils that are able to comply with schools' predetermined academic requirements.

The fourth strategy is *improving the school's supply by complements and features that distinguish them among others.* This means that the school provides an education and non-academic services that make it different from other schools. Families will associate it with achieving better welfare and the comprehensive development of their children. Therefore, this prestige is not based on the type of education provided or the academic performance of the pupils. For this reason Chilean parents have been labeled as uninformed consumers when it comes to choosing a school for their children. Other researchers (Waslander and van der Weide, 2010) in other contexts have distinguished between internal and external answers to market pressures, demonstrating that the latter (which does not touch upon the hardcore of education) were prevalent.

Finally, the fifth strategy is *informing families of the good academic results.* The school actively presents the results achieved every academic year, which are officially recognized by education authorities and the media, in order to convince new families to choose that school and for their children to remain in the schools they already attend.

With regard to compliance with standards of academic performance, research has identified seven alternatives commonly developed by principals in schools to improve scores on standardized tests (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Strategies and practices developed by school principals to improve SIMCE outcomes

Strategy	Examples of practices related to the strategy
6. Selecting pupils in a way that excludes problem students	- Selecting applicants to the school in the admission process (pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or first grade at primary level) - Dismissing *'problem' students* in third or fourth grade so that they are no longer in the school to take the national standardized examination
7. Organizing pupils' support according to academic ability	- Offering remedial classes for pupils experiencing the most difficulties in school, who are also responsible for *lowering* the SIMCE results - Provide specific support to students with the greatest difficulty, either individually or collectively, by psychologists or other special needs education specialists - Sorting pupils into groups of the same academic level (or tracking them down)
8. Giving priority during school time to SIMCE assessed subjects	- Dedicating time that could be used for different types of workshops and activities of interest to the pupils (such as sports, art, or culture) to assessed subjects - Complementing language and math classes (usually identified as core subjects) with some of the activities carried out in non-core subjects to practice them as well
9. Enhancing or maximizing reaching skills in accordance with SIMCE	- Designating teachers with the right skills for grades that must take the SIMCE examination, in particular fourth grade - Seeking secondary school teachers, particularly language specialists and math teachers to support those grades
10. Adopting a specific teaching method for the assessed subject	Training teachers to use a specific technology for teaching pupils and monitoring them when using it - Adopting specialized support from private technical assistance institutions or the Ministry of Education
11. Training the pupil with SIMCE practice assessments	- Conducting trial SIMCE tests throughout the course of the school year - Incorporating the SIMCE format of evaluation into regular learning assessments that teachers use from first grade level
12. Awarding special incentives for achieving good SIMCE results	- Rewarding teachers with either symbolic (a tribute of some form or a small gift) or material incentives (computers, training courses, trips) - Rewarding classes that achieve good SIMCE results

The sixth strategy consists of *selecting pupils in a way that excludes 'problem' studen:ts.* This means that the school examines the applicants' academic ability and discards those who are *problematic* in terms of SIMCE results. This can be *done* by way of selection in the process of student admission, or subsequently, by expelling those who may underperform in SIMCE. These strategies are similar to those found by Figlio and Getzler (2002) and by Cullen and Reback (2006) in the U.S.

Strategy number seven, *organizing pupils according to academic ability*, m~es the s~ool ~stitute teaching methods used with pupils according to their academic ability and difficulties, This strategy recognizes that each pupil, re~ardless of fi!s/her background or competencies, is different, and that the Implementanon of the teaching support system for pupils accommodates their differences. This approach has been a great change for many schools.

The eighth strategy developed to improve scores is *giving priority during schooltime to SIMCE assessed subjects* by focusing on subjects relevant to the SIMCE examination, under the assumption that more class time focused in this regard will mean that pupils perform better. The first decision made in this res~ect is to use the "free time available" on the current course program and dedicate tt to assessed subjects so that the number of hours for languages and mathematics would *be* more than is required. Hannaway and Hamilton (2008) and Ravitch (2010) warn about this curriculum distortion in the U.S.

T~e ?i~th strat~gy id~ntified by the research has to do with *enhancing or maximizing teaching skills in accordance with SIMCE.* This means that the school allocates its teachers in a certain way in order to achieve the best SIMCE results possible. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that there is a sharp contrast between principals' *room for manoeuvre* in private subsidized schools and municipal schools. Principals in municipal schools contend with sev~ral constraints, for example, they cannot dismiss teachers who they believe are mco?1petent; they cannot hire new teachers; and they usually have to deal with greater levels of teacher absenteeism (Weinstein and Munoz, 2013). For this reason, they must resort to ingenious and intricate ways to encourage their teaching staff.

In _tenth place, schools seek to raise SIMCE results by *adopting a specific teaching metho~ for the assessed subject.* S~hool incorporate a particular m~thod o~ teaching for one or several of the SIMCE subjects, believing that this *teaching strategy* will enable them to improve teaching and results. For the adopted method, teachers must be involved; they must be trained on how to use this technology and they must be monitored when using it. Regardless of their technical qualities, the key to lasting success is the principal and teachers' commitment, deciding how to adopt and implement the adoptions.

An eleve~th strategy is *training the pllpil with SIMCE practice assessments* by developmg assessment procedures similar to those used in the national tests. This not only prepares the pupils by familiarizing them with the tests,

but it also gives the school an idea of its *current situation* so that it can implement corrective measures in time. This means that the principal can use the information to intervene, as Jacob (2005) noticed on the impact of the accountability system in the schools of Chicago and Koretz *et al.* (1993) in Vermont.

The last strategy identified to foment the improvement of results of standardized tests, is *awarding special incentive for achieving good SIMCE results.* Whether the incentives are symbolic or material, the objective is to motivate the different players involved with SIMCE, in particular the teachers, to work hard to achieve the best possible result.

In general, the first group of strategies linked to market accountability is less described by the literature than the second. Indeed, the principals' strategies focused on raised test scores have some similarities to other school systems that have implemented these types of accountability policies. Spillane *eta!.* (2002) also reported finding strategies 8 to 12 in Chicago. In the case of strategies 7, 8, and 10, Rouse *et al.* (2007) reported similar results for accountability pressure in the state of Florida.

Conclusion

It is commonplace in the global characterization of education today to say that in seeking to improve educational quality, school systems are involved in significant change processes. These processes often include increased accountability 'bf the various units, beginning with the school, for the desired results to be achieved (Pont *et al.,* 2008). But the institutional improvement sought, as well as specifically who needs to achieve the results, varies according to the history and characteristics of each educational system and its country. These idiosyncratic elements are also reflected in the combinations of different ways of accountability that eventually amalgamate and form the particular system of educational accountability.

In Chile, the accountability system is based on the combination of two different models. The first, foundational and instituted under a dictatorial political order, was based on the creation of an educational market, where competition amongst public providers (municipalities) and private ones is encouraged by state funding for recruiting families. The underlying assurnption is that this competition between different schools leads to the development of a quality school system. It is important to note that this hypothesis has not been verified in the case of Chile, which, although it has achieved historical rates of access and student retention, has not achieved any significant progress in terms of quality of learning and it has had to pay a high price in terms of segregation, being actually the most segregated system amongst those who participate in PISA testing (Valenzuela *et al.,* 2013). Later, under pressure from citizens and a democratic political order, a public System of Quality Assurance has been gradually installed, which is based on the requirement that schools meet certain basic standards of academic

performance. This second model of accountability has been introduced with the implementation of a comprehensive remedial action, the SEP Jaw, in which schools that serve the more disadvantaged students receive substantial financial support from the state, but in exchange, should follow actions for improvement and achieve certain scores on standardized tests of learning (SIMCE). These two accountability systems coexist and have effects upon each other, forming what we call "double accountability."

This system strongly influences the principal's work in the school. It is no coincidence that in parallel to the progress of these new demands, there has been a redefinition of the school principal's role. So if, in the past, they were responsible for the proper implementation of policies and programs that came from other forums and educational levels, particularly the central Ministry of Education, principals are increasingly viewed as the ones who should lead the educational/institutional school project, taking responsibil- ity for the results that are achieved. New laws have sought to enhance the management status and deliver greater power to principals that affect them in their relationships with superiors (Ministry of Education and *sostenedores)* and with their learning communities. So, while greater local leadership is expected from them, it is also demanded that they clearly differentiate them- selves professionally from classroom teachers, acquiring greater decision-rnaking powers and pedagogical supervising obligations.

Beyond the rules, this redefinition of the role of the principal can also be analyzed from the main results they are required to achieve by their *sostene- dores* and also by the educational authorities themselves. Therefore, two priority results are clearly shown: (a) achieve or maintain certain student enrollment (which determines the financing of the facility), and (b) achieve or maintain certain results on standardized learning SIMCE tests (fulfilling of the commitments made by the SEP law and others). *As* we have seen, these two results are closely related to the model of double accountability, each corresponding to one of the types of accountability that constitute it.

Attaining these two results is not easy to achieve and principals are under intense pressure to try to reach them. Many times the resources and supports come from their *sostenedor,* and as well, the socio-cultural characteristics of students and the community context affect their action frame.

The importance of achieving both results is so relevant to the "success" of the principal and school in the Chilean context that to some extent it comes into conflict with what the recent literature (Leithwood and Seashore Louis, 2012) has identified as effective and sustainable leadership. In Chile, other strategic areas of management practice have notably decreased (e.g., the development of teacher collective effectiveness or confidence within the educational community) because of this concentrated pressure on short-term results in restricted areas. At the same time, the current legal regulations framing principals' actions make invisible the functions related to "market- ing" and seeking to strengthen the fidelity of families. These are quite often found outside the pedagogical functions of schools, yet are highly relevant in

the actual exercise of principals in school contexts that encourage competi- tion, like the Chilean one does. The conditions are not optimal to develop a leadership focused on building capacities inside the school community.

This makes it difficult, but not impossible, for principals to lead the school improvement process, particularly for disadvantaged schools. Indeed, a recent study (Bellei *et al.,* 2014) followed the results of Chilean primary schools over a period of a decade. It concluded that l 0 percent had managed to achieve consistent improvement, while 40 percent made partial academic improvements. When the researchers looked closer at the successful schools, they confirmed that principals play a crucial, irreplaceable function in the improvement process. These leaders were capable of managing short-term accountability pressures, while at the same time building capacities of the school community and effectively using the resources available to them. More generally, the principals have the strategic role of mediating national policies regarding their own schools (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012). Some leaders are capable of managing accountability pressures and go beyond short-term goals that the system pushes for (Moos, 2005). Others, possibly the majority, only transfer the pressure to their communities or turn to frenetic activism. Only the first ones are able to successfully navigate the tumultuous waters of double accountability.

In sum, the Chilean experience shows that the predominant accountabil- ity in a school system is far from irrelevant for the leadership role. It has significant effects on the practices and priorities established by principals. Therefore, if the Chilean school system seeks to advance towards a genuine improvement of its schools, especially those most disadvantaged, it will require principals being able to exercise powerful pedagogical leadership within a new intelligent and authentic accountability framework (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012). Building a system of accountability, less stressed by the market and state regulations, which guides a more comprehensive view of the quality of education, looking beyond the results on standardized tests, and promoting a better balance between internal and external accountability, seems to be a decisive road for a better future of school leadership.

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6 School accountability policy *in* practice

Learning by comparing Australia, New Zealand, USA, and Chile

James P. Spillane and KatieMertz

The four preceding chapters center on a policy instrument that has become commonplace in education policymaking in many countries over the past few decades, that is, holding schools accountable for their performance. While the authors capture the particulars of accountability in *place*(Australia, Chile, United States, and New Zealand) and *time,* together their accounts document the spread of this policy instrument in four very different geopolitical territories. The rich descriptive accounts document the emergence of accountability as a favored government policy instrument, capturing the particulars in four different school systems nested in distinct systems of government from parliamentary democracies such as Chile and New Zealand to federalist systems such as Australia and the US. Moving beyond describing the accourrtabiliry policy environment of the four countries the authors examine how accountability works in practice inside the schoolhouse. In particular, the chapters examine how school principals apprehend and grapple with accountability policy in their work as school leaders and managers. This commentary identifies three themes and two puzzles prompted by a reading of the chapters in an effort to engage the reader in learning by comparing these four cases of accountability policy and practice.

The potency of government accountability in school principal practice

In all four cases, the reach of standards and accountability into schools is striking, occupying a very prominent, if sometimes problematic, position in school principals' day-to-day work. Even in New Zealand where schools are 'self-managing,' national accountability mechanisms figure prominently inside schools. Specifically, in all four systems we observe school principals heeding government accountability efforts, actively trying to make sense of what accountability initiatives mean for their schools, and struggling to figure out the entailments of these demands for everyday school and class-room practice. Although the accountability mechanisms vary by country and by the stakes attached, principals in all four countries still reported that accountability featured prominently in their work.