



Preparing to Lead



Hong Kong

Preparation for
Principalship
Program



CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION BENCHMARKING
LEARNING FROM THE WORLD'S HIGH PERFORMING EDUCATION SYSTEMS

This report was commissioned by the Center on International Education Benchmarking® of the National Center on Education and the Economy®. For a complete listing of the material produced by this research program, please visit www.ncee.org/cieb.

This work may be cited as:

Ben Jensen, Phoebe Downing, and Anna Clark, “Preparing to Lead: Hong Kong Preparation for Principalship Program. Case Studies for School Leadership Development Programs in High-Performing Education Systems” (Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy, 2017).

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Preparing to Lead: Hong Kong Preparation for Principalship Program

Case Studies for School Leadership Development Programs in High-Performing Education Systems

Ben Jensen, Phoebe Downing and Anna Clark

September 2017

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View from the Principal's Office

Rita Yeung is principal of Yan Chai Hospital Law Chan Chor Si College (YCHLCCSC), a band 1 secondary school built in 2001 in the most densely populated district in Hong Kong.

Yeung has over 20 years of experience as an educator and has worked at YCHLCCSC since 2002. In 2008, she was appointed as vice principal. She left for another school for two years and returned to YCHLCCSC in 2015. She therefore has extensive experience in and commitment to shaping the culture and growth of YCHLCCSC. It is not unusual in Hong Kong for teachers and principals to spend a considerable period of their careers at the same school, or at schools under the same school sponsoring body. This is, in its own way, a form of leadership development.

Yeung considers her most important duties as principal to find out what students need, and then to ensure all school policies are designed to meet these needs and are well implemented.

Every morning, Yeung arrives at her office at 7:30am to plan her schedule and reply to e-mails. She then conducts the morning meeting or inspects the school premises. She estimates that she spends at most one to two hours daily handling paperwork. Most of her time is spent on class observation and external communication.

Every day, Yeung finds time to go through past documents to understand every detail of the school's operations and management. Although she has served at her school for years, she considers it vital to her role as an effective school leader to find out more about the school's daily operation in every aspect.

The turning point in Yeung's pathway to the principal's office was in 2007, when she planned to undertake further study.

Yeung was the Subject Head of Information Technology, and was looking to progress in her career by developing her academic qualifications. Yeung had considered taking a Master's in Education, but was then advised by an experienced principal to apply for the Preparation of Principalship program at Hong Kong Baptist University. Compared to a two-year academic Master's, the Preparation of Principalship program was less of a time commitment, and was specifically designed to help her advance in her career, so she applied for the first stage, the needs analysis.

Soon after Yeung completed the Preparation for Principalship program, she was recognized as a qualified candidate by her principal, and was promoted to be vice principal that same year.

According to Yeung, one of the most valuable aspects of the Preparation for Principalship program was the personal reflections she and other participants were required to submit after each of the six core modules. Yeung appreciated these reflection requirements for her

development, as they enabled her to think about what she was learning, and to think through critical issues with her peers.

Yeung also strongly believes that the action research project she undertook in the Preparation for Principalship program prompted her to reflect on using what she was learning in the modules to improve the daily operations of her school. It was a crucial part of her leadership development experience.

That action research project also demonstrated for Yeung's peers and her principal her capability for leadership and school improvement. And for Yeung, it enabled her to understand education change from a broader perspective: not only as a school leader but as a policymaker and change agent as well.

Yeung found mentoring to be vital for her leadership development. She considers herself luckier than many of her peers on the Preparation for Principalship program, because she knew many experienced school principals outside of the Preparation for Principalship program who could give her advice on questions of leadership and school management.

Yeung had been a member of several professional associations in Hong Kong, and drew upon her contacts at those associations in her time as an aspiring principal. She continues to do so. When it comes to technical issues of daily operation at school, Yeung turns to the "Chat Groups" of her peer principals, where useful contacts and recommendations for quotations are shared. At times, she will consult some experienced principals when seeking advice in handling problems like workplace conflicts.

Now that she is principal, Yeung is dedicated to building a cadre of future leaders at YCHLCCSC. She uses the Framework of Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals to identify and develop talented teachers and future leaders.

Yeung believes that there are many potential leaders at the school, because most teacher leaders have participated in building the school from the start—intensive training in school leadership. Thus, Yeung has a competent team of teacher leaders who have demonstrable leadership capacities and have already shown significant achievement in their careers. This has implications for her own leadership roles and responsibilities: she is a leader of leaders, and not the sole leader in the school.

Yeung's strategy for school improvement is to encourage and support innovative practices by her teachers. Yeung believes that planning, implementing, and assessing a school improvement project is itself a process for one's personal growth, whether the project itself is successful or not. This is why action research is a core professional development requirement for principals in Hong Kong, and why the action research project was such an important part of her own experience.

Yeung emphasizes that listening to her teachers' ideas is crucial. She encourages teachers at her school to pursue hands-on experiences and ongoing professional development, as she believes through these experiences they will be nurtured and gain a sense of ownership over their achievement and personal development. Yeung sees her own role as supporting teachers and giving advice from the viewpoint of a school leader: she believes that, through those achievements, teachers will gain greater commitment to their work.

She also has taken steps to create channels for communication with students, since many students tend to consider the principal as a somewhat distant figure. For example, Yeung holds a fortnightly lunch gathering with a class, which allows her to meet every student in her school. Students can ask Yeung questions at these lunch gatherings: this ritual has created a special bond between the students and the principal.

Every year, Yeung writes personalized notes on 180 bookmarks and Fai Chun (a traditional Chinese New Year decoration) as gifts for the school's graduates. At times, she receives feedback from the parents that the students greatly value her gifts, which she sees as mutually encouraging for both the students and herself.

School Leadership Development in Hong Kong

Hong Kong forged its school leadership development approach in the context of two massive scale changes.

The first was Hong Kong's reinstatement as a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China in 1997, after 156 years of British colonial rule. The transfer of political governance had both a direct and indirect impact on school leadership.

The second was Hong Kong's transition to School-based Management (SBM), initiated in the early 1990s and consolidated through the early 2000s. To improve teaching and learning, SBM conferred upon schools greater freedom over curriculum design and delivery (within centralized curriculum standards), personnel policies, and resource policies.¹ With decentralized decision-making came tighter accountability mechanisms, including external auditing, Codes of Aid, and public accountability. The greater autonomy and accountability demands of school-based management expanded the roles and importance of school principals in school improvement.

Today, the role of the principal in Hong Kong is heavily influenced by the autonomy and accountability context of School-based Management.

Under SBM, principals are expected to be leaders of teaching as a “learning profession” and schools are “professional learning communities.”² They are responsible for the organization's self-improvement, which includes overseeing teacher development and school improvement planning. Principals are also held accountable for managing the School Development and Accountability Framework processes, including annual planning and school self-evaluation.³

The Education Department Bureau recognizes that the success of School-based Management depends upon school leadership capacity, specifically on the professionalism and expertise of principals. It therefore commissioned a structured Continuing Professional Development Framework for principals as a matter of priority.

Since 2002, the Education Department Bureau has used the Continuing Professional Development Framework for principals to structure leadership development. The framework was developed in recognition of the burden that School-based Management placed on principals, and their need for targeted development and support.

The Continuing Professional Development Framework articulates professional requirements—including formal leadership programs and school-based professional development activities—for principals at three key stages:

Aspiring principals are required to complete the Certification for Principalship. Certification includes a needs analysis program, a Preparation for Principalship program, and a professional development portfolio assessed by the Education Department Bureau.

Newly-appointed principals are those within the first two years of practice. They are required to undertake a needs assessment, a designated program (including induction, a leadership development program and an extended program), and continuing professional development activities.

Serving principals with more than two years' experience are required to undertake 150 hours continuing professional development over three years, and draw up a Continuing Professional Development plan that references the six core areas of leadership, their own developmental needs in relation to the school, and societal needs.

Like the Ontario College of Teachers, the Education Department Bureau provides program guidelines that providers must adhere to when applying for a license to deliver the Preparation for Principalship. These guidelines reflect the six core areas of leadership specifically developed by Professor Allan Walker et al. (2000) to capture effective principal leadership in School-based Management.⁴

Hong Kong System Context

“Quality schooling is increasingly dependent on leadership—particularly the quality of the educational leadership of the principal.”⁵

—Hong Kong Education Department Bureau (2014)

In 1984, the Hong Kong government established the Education Commission to review the education system’s status and to advise on policies.

In 1997, the Education Commission’s seventh report—Raising Professional Standards of Principals and Teachers—signaled a new system-level commitment to designing an integrated strategy for school leadership development. The report authors announced:

“To provide quality school education, we need quality principals and teachers with a strong sense of mission, appropriate personal attributes, adequate academic and professional qualifications. They should be prepared to initiate and participate in the development of quality education. In return, they should be provided with suitable support and development opportunities.”⁶

This central commitment to leadership preparation and development led to diverse policy interventions along the full human resource and organizational spectrum.

The emphasis on school leadership development accelerated in the early 2000s. Hong Kong’s transition to School-based Management (SBM), which began in 1991, initiated “a new era” of education, which—like Singapore’s Thinking Schools, Learning Nation agenda—recast the nation’s understanding of schools, the teaching profession, and the role of the principal. The nation’s current requirements for principal professional development and certification were designed in response to this new vision for education in Hong Kong.

Under SBM, schools in Hong Kong were remodelled as “dynamic and accountable professional learning communities.”⁷ They became responsible for their own continuous improvement, with a strong focus on student learning outcomes, lifelong learning, and school-based reforms in teaching practices and curriculum.

At the same time, schools operate in a highly accountable environment. The *quid pro quo* of the greater autonomy granted under SBM was external and internal school review requirements that expanded the role of principals and led to the restructuring of the School Sponsoring Bodies and Incorporated Management Committees.⁸

A new generation of school leaders was needed, capable of leading instructional and curricular reform at the school level, but also of managing the system’s tight school self-evaluation (SSE) and external school review (ESR) accountability requirements. These

responsibilities required skillful leadership, and a new approach to leadership development. As the SBM Advisory Committee recommended in 2000:

“School based-management is not a superficial change. It requires a new professionalism from teachers, enhanced leadership from principals, and deeper commitment from parents and the community.”⁹

In the early 2000s, academic experts and consulting principals working through the Hong Kong Institute of Educational Leadership (which in May 2016 became the Education University of Hong Kong) responded to the call for enhanced principal leadership by developing the foundational school leadership documents and frameworks that continue to provide the main architecture for leadership development in Hong Kong today.¹⁰

A core element of that architecture is the notion of lifelong learning. Leadership development in Hong Kong is founded on the expectation of continuing professional development (CPD) across the whole career of the principal, from the initial certification stage through to the end of a principal’s active service. Principals’ CPD activities are expected to accommodate personal growth needs, the specific needs of their school, and evolving policy needs—such as curricular and education reforms—determined at the system level.

This approach to leadership development is supported through Hong Kong’s Continuing Professional Development Framework (CPDF) for principals. Professor Allan Walker, with consulting principals, laid the foundations for the CPDF for principals in the early 2000s. The Framework outlines how a teacher can progress from the classroom to the principal’s office through sequenced leadership development programs, needs analysis, and ongoing professional development (See Figure 1).

Roles and Responsibilities of School Leaders in Hong Kong

The shift to School-based Management in Hong Kong transformed the role of the principal. The change was akin to Singapore's reinvention of the principal as a "CEO plus" after the launch of the Thinking Schools, Learning Nation reform agenda in 1997 (see Singapore case study).

Philip Hallinger has characterised the recent transformations in what it means to be a principal as tantamount to an "identity crisis" for principals in Hong Kong and other East Asian systems.¹¹

In Hong Kong, the transition to a more autonomous school system changed the roles of principals from that of central enforcers to being leaders of professional learning organizations, with professional workforces, responsible for their own continuous improvement. This inevitably had a huge impact on how Hong Kong prepares its school leaders.

Under SBM, the principal is required to:

- "Manage the school in accordance with the Education Ordinance and in line with the governance directives of the School Management Committee;
- Provide the School Management Committee with adequate information and give advice for school improvement;
- Lead and promote teaching and learning;
- Lead and manage the staff of the school; and
- Oversee and be accountable for the day-to-day operation of the school and make decisions on particular educational, personnel and administrative matters."¹²

The Continuing Professional Development Framework has helped transform this culture of school leadership in an autonomous system. It highlights the principal's role in strategic planning and teacher development, and promotes the concept of schools as professional learning communities based on continuous self-evaluation and improvement. Programs and training associated with the Framework emphasize the role of the principal in School-based Management and provide a common point of reference for aspiring, newly appointed, and serving principals working in Hong Kong.

Continuing Professional Development Framework

“Principals are the key to quality education.”¹³

—Hong Kong Education Department Bureau (2012)

Prior to 2000, school leadership development in Hong Kong was haphazard. Sporadic developmental opportunities were provided by the Education Department Bureau (EDB), School Sponsoring Bodies, tertiary institutions and some professional associations. School leadership preparation and development was largely treated as an administrative, rather than educational, undertaking.¹⁴

In the 1980s and 1990s, for instance, new principals were required to attend either a 10-day (primary school) or a nine-day (secondary school) administrative training course.¹⁵ These programs were designed and delivered by university providers. The curriculum tended to reflect the priorities of current academics rather than system objectives.

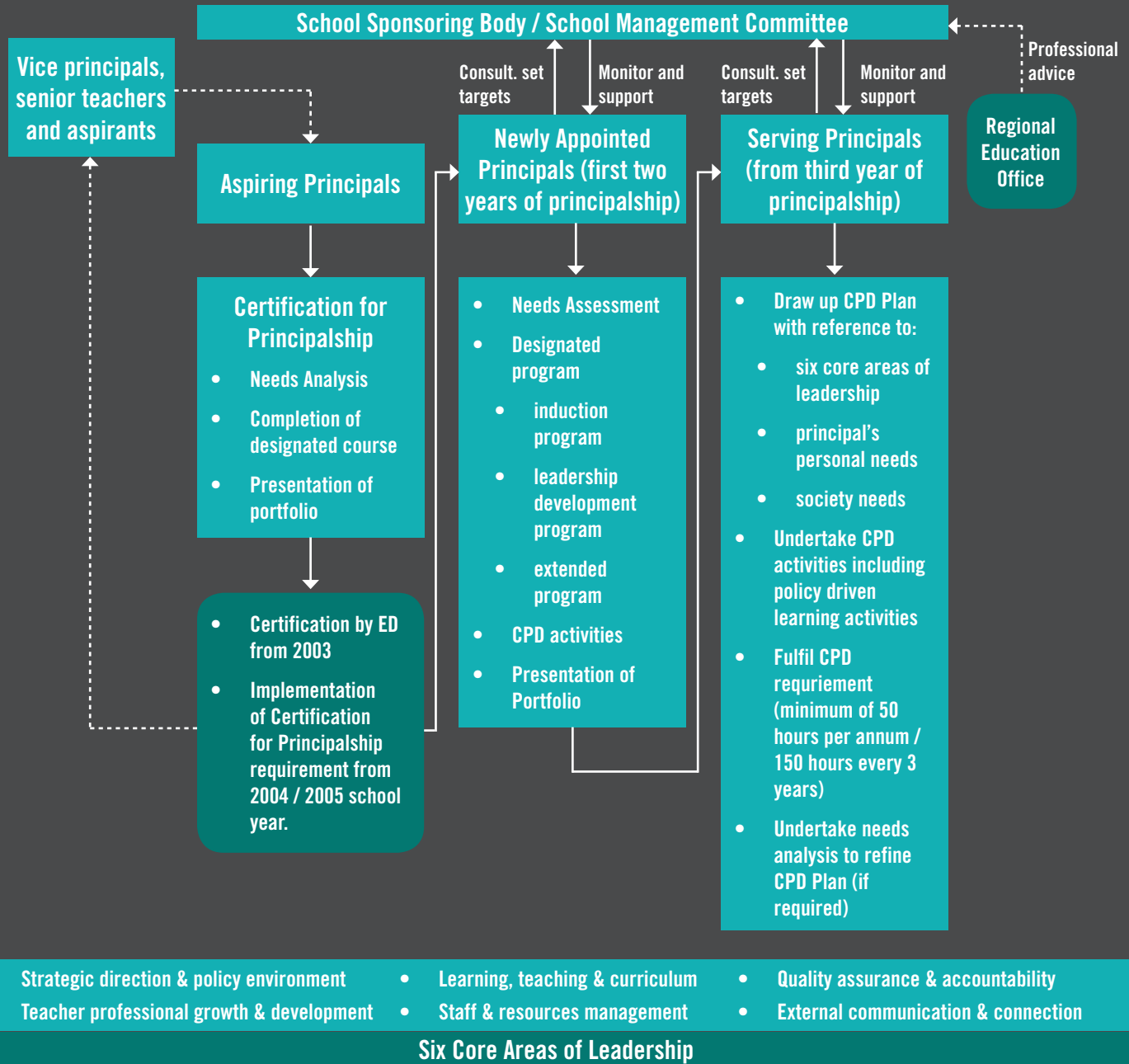
Since 2002, however, Hong Kong’s official leadership development and qualification requirements for principals have been structured around the Continuing Professional Development Framework for principals.

According to the document, it is designed “to empower principals to become effective leaders of schools as dynamic and accountable professional learning communities in facing the challenge of an ever-advancing knowledge-based society.”¹⁶ The Continuing Professional Development Framework is therefore directly tied to the language and vision of the Education Department Bureau’s School-based Management system.

This Framework spells out certification requirements for **aspiring principals**, and ongoing professional development requirements for **newly appointed principals** (those within the first two years of practice) and **servicing principals** (those with three or more years’ experience). Completing these formal programs and continuing professional development requirements is mandatory for principals serving in Hong Kong’s schools. Principals can register for the programs associated with the Continuing Professional Development Framework for principals through the Education Department Bureau’s central calendar system. These programs are part-time, and occur outside of school hours (though arrangements vary among providers).

The Continuing Professional Development Framework conceptualizes the principal to be a lifelong learner, which is reflected in mandatory ongoing professional development requirements. Unlike in Singapore or Ontario, there is no single isolated leadership development program for school leaders. Instead, there are several programs and teaching and learning activities that are required of principals at different stages of their careers.

Figure 1 Distinctive Features of the Continuing Professional Development Framework



Source: Adapted from Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2002b

As discussed below, the Continuing Professional Development Framework for principals has four distinctive features:

- There are three tiers of leadership development for lifelong learning, with specific requirements for aspiring principals, newly appointed principals, and serving principals;
- It includes varied modes of in-school professional learning complemented by formal training programs and a Needs Analysis to benchmark individual principals' personal developmental needs;
- It outlines the role of School Sponsoring Bodies and the Regional Education Office in school leadership development; and
- It is underpinned by the six core areas of leadership.

Framework design and sequencing

“CPD is an on-going process and there should not be any cut-off point. This accords with the concept of lifelong learning.”¹⁷

The suite of development programs and requirements for principals associated with the Continuing Professional Development Framework were designed to encourage a culture of continuous professional development, or “lifelong learning.”¹⁸

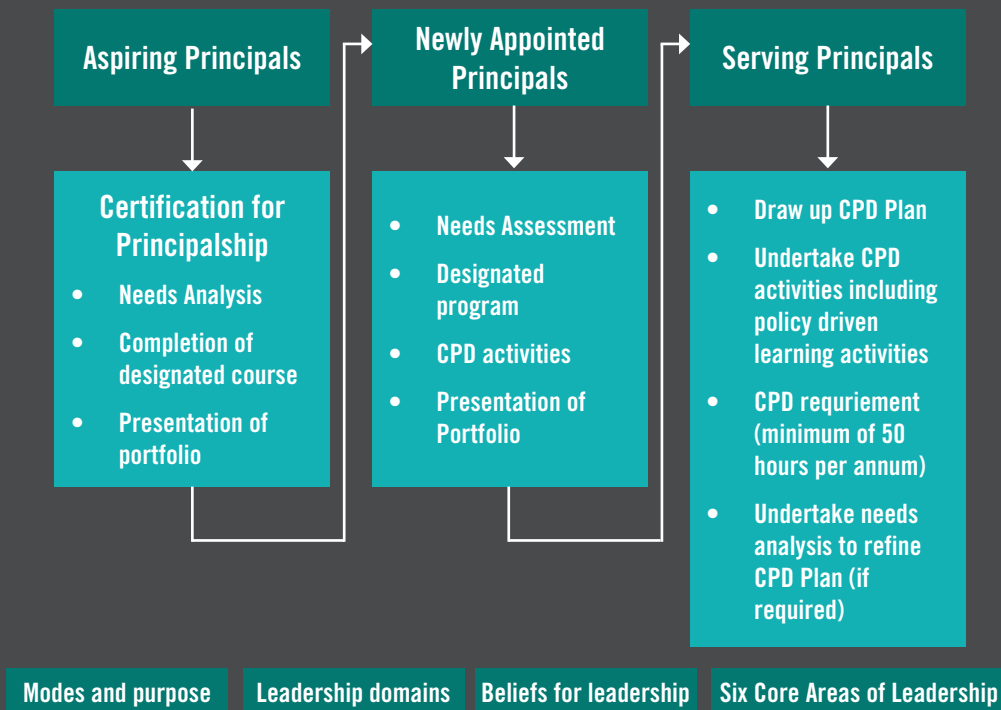
Lifelong learning is a cornerstone of School-based Management, and is a professional expectation for all school leaders in the system. This is reflected in the delineation of three specific stages for leadership development— aspiring principals, newly appointed principals, and serving principals. It is also supported through four interlinking components that shape the framework (bottom tier Figure 2).

This structure has been designed to support the core purpose of the Continuing Professional Development Framework, which is “to enhance the professionalism and competence of school principals to lead their schools towards excellence in students’ learning.”¹⁹

The four original cornerstones of the Continuing Professional Development Framework expressed by Walker *et al* are:

- modes and purpose
- leadership domains
- beliefs of leadership
- six core areas of leadership

Figure 2 CPDF Programs, Requirements and Foundational Components



Source: Adapted from Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2002b; walker et al. Key Qualities (2000)

These inform the formal programs and continuing professional development activities associated with the framework.

Modes and purpose

Principals need to undertake three main modes of professional development to satisfy continuing professional development requirements. These modes are included in continuing professional development for principals at the school level, and in formal programs along the Continuing Professional Development Framework.²⁰

Serving principals are expected to undertake development activities from each of the following three categories over their three-year personal development cycle.

Structured learning, such as higher education qualifications/ degrees, and attending training courses, workshops, tours, conferences and symposiums organized by the EDB, SSBs/IMCs, and local or international universities/ providers.

Action learning, such as school-based projects in which the principal takes a leading role; action study; attachment/ secondment schemes; and publications. These must be supported by written products or outcomes.

Service to education and the community, including service on committees, advisory boards, or religious bodies; and contributing to training programs or other CPD activities for teachers and principals as speakers, mentors, assessors, or master teachers.

Leadership domains

The leadership domains describe the general forms of leadership required of principals in Hong Kong, as determined by School-based Management. These are:

1. **Strategic leadership** that focuses on developing a vision, commitment, inspiration, appropriate values, and a firm belief that all students can learn, as well as leading and managing change.
2. **Instructional leadership** that focuses on strengthening learning, teaching, and curriculum, ongoing professional development, accountability, and data-driven decision making.
3. **Organizational leadership** that focuses on personal relationships, culture building, dispersed leadership, teamwork, communication, planning, and management of resources.
4. **Community leadership** that focuses on an awareness of the role of the school in the broader society, close relationships with parents and other community members, and an ability to build and utilize community resources in developing students into global citizens.

Box 1 Distributed and Shared Curriculum Leadership in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong and high-performing systems around the world, “curriculum leadership” is not exclusively the responsibility of principals.

To help implement school-based curriculum reform (announced in 2000), the Education Department Bureau piloted a new senior teacher leadership position in primary schools. These new primary school curriculum leaders received specialized training—typically alongside their school principal—to ensure coherent curriculum reform across the school. The EDB provided funding, training, and support mechanisms for these new senior teacher leaders, and ensured that the position was suitably accommodated within existing school leadership structures.²¹

After a pilot review, the primary school curriculum leader role was instituted system-wide in 2006. The role has grown to include leadership of teacher professional learning in schools. It is a core position within “change agent” leadership teams in primary schools

See Part I of *Preparig to Lead* for more information on how primary school curriculum leaders are trained and identified.

Source: Lee and Dimmock (1999).

Beliefs for leadership

For the benefit of student learning, and to cultivate an expectation of lifelong learning, the following core beliefs for principals' conduct and mindsets provide the underpinning of all continuing professional development activities:

- Principals are responsible for their own professional growth;
- Principals have a mandate to be professionally up to date and to provide a role model for their own teaching staff in terms of continuing professional development (CPD);
- CPD enhances principals' professionalism and leadership for the benefit of students and students' learning;
- CPD builds on principals' individual strengths and is by nature developmental;
- CPD opportunities need to be varied to reflect the needs of aspiring principals, newly appointed principals, and serving principals, and open to individual selection; and
- CPD embraces collegial input and support from the education as well as other professional sectors.²²

Six core areas of leadership

The Continuing Professional Development Framework for principals is underpinned by the six core areas of leadership first published by Allan Walker *et al* in *Key Qualities of the Principalship* (2000).²³

These core areas are not intended to be comprehensive, but contribute to the basis of a system of professional development for principals leading continuous “school improvement and better student learning outcomes” in the context of School-based Management.

These core leadership areas have shaped programs associated with the Continuing Professional Development Framework since reforms began in the early 2000s.

Aspiring principals must cover all six core areas to receive the Certification for Principalship (CFP). The Preparation for Principalship program—which is a key component of the certification process—for aspiring principals is designed around these six areas of leadership.²⁴

Newly-appointed principals can target their coverage to meet demands from their specific school context (alongside the designated program).

Serving principals tailor their engagement with the six core areas in line with their personal professional development plan. This plan is set in consultation with the principal's School Sponsoring Body and/or School Management Committee, in response to specific school and system-level needs.

The six core areas of leadership articulate the structure of values, knowledge, skills, and attributes of the principalship in Hong Kong. These are:

1. **Strategic direction and policy environment**, where principals plan for the future and ensure school community involvement in the process. They strategically integrate relevant aspects of policy from the social, educational and political environments into their planning for school and student improvement.
2. **Learning, teaching, and curriculum**, where principals coordinate school programs to achieve coherence across the curriculum, learning, and teaching. Together with their school communities, they ensure that all students experience a broad, relevant, and balanced curriculum through formal and informal activities.
3. **Teacher professional growth and development**, where principals promote and enable continuing professional and career development for teachers and themselves. They foster the sharing of up-to-date professional knowledge and informed practice aimed at accommodating change as well as the diverse needs of students within a general commitment to student and school improvement.
4. **Staff and resources management**, where principals create a collaborative team management ethos focused on empowering human resources as well as deploying physical and financial resources effectively and efficiently towards the goals of school improvement and student achievement.
5. **Quality assurance and accountability**, where principals in concert with their school communities build quality assurance and accountability systems that provide feedback to students, teachers and others with a view to securing school improvement. These systems also meet the information requirements of external agencies regarding school performance.
6. **External communication and connection to the outside world**, where principals build connections between the school and the local, national, and global communities. By doing so, they enable their school communities to contribute to the wider world and its development.

Programs associated with the Continuing Professional Development Framework

Who delivers the programs?

There are multiple providers of leadership development programs in Hong Kong. The School Sponsoring Bodies and IMCs deliver some options, the Education Department Bureau organizes the program for teacher leaders and CPD options, and universities bid for the provision rights of the programs for the Continuing Professional Development Program on an annual or biannual basis.

Providers are evaluated on one- to two-year cycles (depending on the program), when the program tender comes up for review. Providers therefore invest considerable time in reviewing their programs, and considering the next bid cycle.

There are currently three main tertiary institutions in Hong Kong that compete for government tenders to run and develop programs that meet the government’s continuing professional development requirements for school leadership. These are the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Baptist University of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong University.

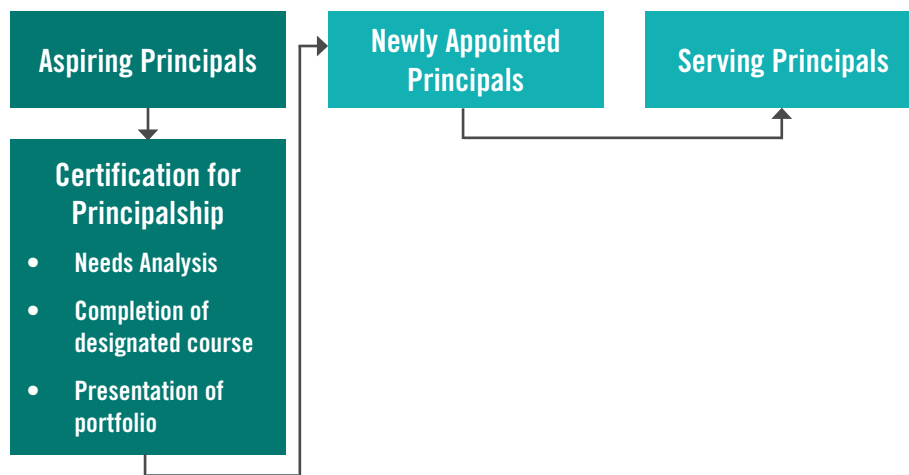
Who takes the programs?

Unlike in Singapore, the central office in Hong Kong does not operate a highly integrated talent identification and management process across the whole system.

Rather, the EDB places the onus on individuals to take responsibility for their own development as a leader. Indeed, this is one of the core beliefs of leadership development for the system.

Framework sequencing and program content

Aspiring principals and the certification for principalship



In 2002, the Education Department Bureau announced that all aspiring principals need to complete a “Certification for Principalship” (CFP), to take effect beginning in 2004. Aspiring principals are senior teachers looking to be certified as a principal, including deputy principals, and department heads.

Applicants apply to the EDB to undertake the certification process. The EDB runs a series of programs to support continuing professional development, including an overview session on the certification process.

To attain their principalship certification, aspiring principals must complete the following activities within a two-year period:

1. Needs Analysis program;
2. Preparation for Principalship program; and
3. Professional development portfolio.

The Needs Analysis program, professional development portfolio, and six modules of the Preparation for Principalship program (including an action research component) are non-negotiable elements of the certification process. Higher degrees—such as Master’s or Doctorate of Education and/or school management—are not accepted as equivalent or alternatives.²⁵

These three components are designed to provide “a solid basis” for aspiring principals’ “continuing education in leadership development,” and to “assess their readiness” for the role.²⁶ The content is designed not just to prepare aspiring principals for the role, but to prepare them to take responsibility for their own continuing development for the duration of their careers.

Preparation: Needs Analysis program for aspiring principals

“The Needs Analysis is an integral component of a broader policy designed to improve both the performance and preparedness of future school leaders in Hong Kong. The Needs Analysis strategy assumes that future leaders will be charged with implementing school-based management leading to school improvement and be dedicated to the notion of lifelong learning.”²⁷

A key component of the certification process is the Needs Analysis program. Candidates can undertake the Needs Analysis either as a stand-alone program, or as part of a university-provided course that includes the Preparation for Principalship program for aspiring principals and further developmental activities.

Described as the “beginning of a new phase of leadership development,” the Needs Analysis program helps to identify and develop high-potential aspiring principals before they step into a leadership role in schools. It provides an opportunity for aspiring principals to assess their own capacity and to benchmark their personal leadership development plan. The Needs Analysis program also sets the expectation of self-reflective personal development throughout the participant’s career.

The Needs Analysis program reflects a concept of leadership that is aligned with the School-based Management system in Hong Kong, and provides a platform for aspiring school leaders to take ownership over their own professional and leadership development.

Aspiring principal requirements are seen by some as a hurdle for teachers who do not see themselves as leaders but who may in fact make excellent principals. Succession planning and talent identification processes vary between schools and school sponsoring bodies, so this is more of a problem in some schools than others.

The Needs Analysis program can also serve as a filter for aspiring principals. Some teachers who undertake the Needs Analysis decide upon reflection that school management and leadership is not in fact for them, and do not proceed to do the program and portfolio components. As the cost of the needs analysis program is taken on by teachers—not the EDB—this filter can help the EDB maximize its investment in the subsequent, funded, principal programs.

Preparation for Principalship program (PFP)

After completing the Needs Analysis program, aspiring principals in Hong Kong are required to complete a Preparation for Principalship program as part of the certification process. This need not immediately follow: some aspiring principals decide on reflection to postpone the Preparation for Principalship program, or decide not to undertake it at all.

The Preparation for Principalship and Needs Analysis are the only programs associated with the Continuing Professional Development Framework that the EDB does not fund, and that is open to more than one provider per tender cycle. There are currently three providers (Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong). Fees, schedules and delivery vary accordingly.

The Preparation for Principalship program is also recognized as management training for candidates aspiring to appointment as a deputy head (i.e., principal graduate master/mistress in secondary and senior primary or school master/mistress in primary schools).²⁸

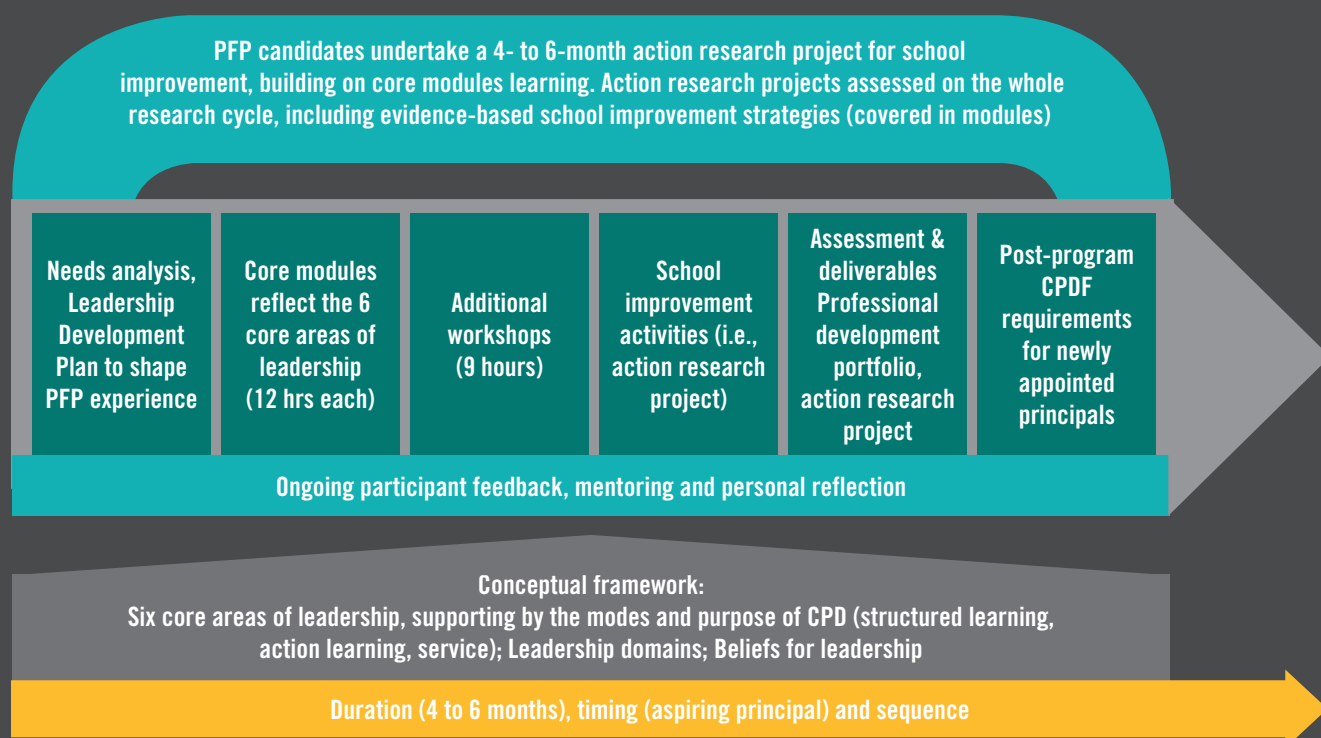
The Center for Educational Leadership at Hong Kong University is one of the providers commissioned by the Education Department Bureau to deliver the Preparation for Principalship. CEL offers a combined program that includes the Needs Analysis. The cost of the combined program at Hong Kong University is US\$3,500 per participant (including the Needs Analysis).

Figure 3 on the next page illustrates how Hong Kong University has designed a PFP in accordance with Education Department Bureau requirements.

The Preparation for Principalship program is designed around the six core areas of leadership and the policy context in Hong Kong. Providers are required to periodically update core content to address the needs of aspiring principals and the changing policy and educational landscape in Hong Kong.

Figure 3 Preparation for Principalship Program (Modeled on Hong Kong University 2016)

This program aims to: enhance the professionalism and competencies of aspiring principals; use simulation exercises and reflective practice to help aspiring principals familiarize themselves with the situations and conditions of the principalship in context; and better equip participants for a career they will undertake in the near future.



Source: Adapted from Hong Kong Universtiy (2016)²⁹

Box 2 Combined Aspiring Principal Program at the Centre for Educational Leadership (HKU)

The Faculty of Education at Hong Kong University offers a six-month program for aspiring principals. This program includes both the Needs Analysis program and the Preparation for Principalship program of the Certification for Principalship. Participants cover their own course costs: US\$3,500 (HK\$25,000) for both components, or US\$2,700 (HK\$20,800) for those who have completed the Needs Analysis.

The aim of the program is to enhance the professionalism and leadership competencies of aspiring principals; use simulation exercises and reflective practices to prepare aspiring principals for situations and conditions that reflect real school leadership contexts; and to prepare aspiring principals for the principalship in Hong Kong's primary and secondary schools.

The Needs Analysis program takes one full day, during which participants undertake personal reflections, work in small groups, and interact with assessors. Aspiring principals undertake various analysis activities, and both give and receive feedback. Based on their feedback, they prepare a Leadership Development Plan that aims to build on their strengths and target identified weaknesses.

Core modules reflect the six areas of leadership. The six prescribed modules are organized into core areas of school leadership and management:

Policy and political environment: Strategic direction and policy environment; quality assurance and accountability (reading includes R. Phillips and J. Furlong, *Education, Reform and the State* (2001), and J. MacBeath, *School Inspection and Self Evaluation* (2006));

Core business of schooling: Learning, teaching and curriculum; Teacher professional growth and development (reading includes M. James, *Using Assessment for School Improvement* (1998); C. Marsh & G. Willis, *Curriculum: Alternative approaches, ongoing issues* (2003); C. Day, *Developing Teachers* (1999); and A. Hargreaves & M. Fullan, *Professional Capital* (2012));

Core leadership and management functions: strategic leadership; staff and resources management (reading includes T. Sergiovanni, *The Principalship* (2006); and A. Harris, 'Leading or Misleading: distributed leadership and school improvement,' *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 37 (3), 2005).

The HKU program also includes additional school improvement activities and additional workshops (9 hours) that focus on school improvement activities.³⁰

During a series of workshops, participants explore the logic and theories of action research. Instructors present on how to use evidence-based data and information to drive school improvement activities. Participants are then required to practice a school improvement strategy or activity over a 4 to 6-month period.

Source: Centre for Educational Leadership (2013).

Core modules

To help providers design accredited programs, the EDB publishes a program guideline, which serves a similar function to the Principal's Qualification Program guidelines drafted by the Ontario College of Teachers. Providers use these guidelines to design certified programs that meet system requirements.

The EDB guidelines illustrate how the six core areas of leadership described above can be adapted to development requirements at a specific stage of principal development. At the certification stage, the six areas provide the modular backbone for content focused on school improvement and strategic planning, Hong Kong's requirements for teacher professional development and specific accountability mechanisms, such as the School Development and Accountability (SDA) Framework requirements.

The EDB guidelines for the Preparation for Principalship program propose that providers consider the following content areas within the scaffold provided by the six core areas of leadership (this is a summary):

1. **Strategic direction and policy environment**, including Hong Kong's education policy context, School-based Management, ethical and distributed leadership, strategic planning, and illustrations of leadership and strategic planning in response to policy initiatives;
2. **Learning, teaching, and curriculum**, including Hong Kong curriculum reform contexts, school-based curriculum, the principal as an instructional leader, learning-centered leadership, and policy contexts;
3. **Teacher professional growth and development**, including policy and practice on teacher development in Hong Kong, teaching and policy implementation, teaching as a learning profession (including learning communities and reflective practitioners), education reform, decentralization, and teacher professionalism;
4. **Staff and resources management**, including Hong Kong system rules and guidelines, practical school finance (planning, budgeting, accountability, resource deployment), autonomy and resources, building a collaborated school culture, legal matters, and human resource management;
5. **Quality assurance and accountability**, including the quality assurance mechanism for continuous improvement, embedding Planning-Implementation-Evaluation into daily practice, School Development and Accountability Framework (SDA), and stakeholder accountability; and
6. **External communication and connection to the outside world**, including local, national, and global communities, stakeholder cooperation on student issues, leadership during crisis management, and handling complaints.³¹

Action Research

The Preparation for Principalship program includes an action research component.

Participants undertake a school-based action research project based on an evidence- or fact-based “problematic aspect” of teaching and learning in the school. They then go through the processes of “planning, acting, observing and reflecting” on their project for improving this problematic aspect.

To communicate their project, participants submit a report that includes: an introduction (introducing the identified problem of practice, and supporting material); an action plan for improving this problem of practice (not just principles for action, but a sequence of acts and timeframe); an implementation and reflections segment, reporting on the acts (dates), observations and reflections (i.e., on self-improvement, supported by incidents and theories), and planning—implementation—reflections action.

To develop their understanding of action research, participants in the Preparation for Principalship program at the Hong Kong Baptist University are encouraged to ask questions along the lines of:

- How would you differentiate ‘experimental research’ and action research?
- How would you differentiate action research and ‘trial and error’?
- Would you support the notion that ‘all teachers should be action researchers’?
- The main interest of action research is to change/improve: if actions are found to be ineffective, should the action research project be considered a failure?
- What are the “core values” of action research?
- How does the “story-telling” approach fit the rationale of action research?

While there are multiple responses to such questions, they are designed to get at the essential features of effective action research.

How does the EDB address school-based management in the Preparation for Principalship program guidelines?

“Leadership plays a key role in a policy environment of school-based management aimed at school improvement and better student learning outcomes.”³²

The EDB’s guidelines for the Preparation for Principalship program call direct attention to the objectives of School-based Management, and how these can be supported through modules on school leadership and management designed for Hong Kong’s aspiring principals.

Specific School-based Management objectives highlighted at the aspiring principal stage of leadership development in Hong Kong are:

- To strengthen the partnership among key stakeholders through participatory decision-making;
- To enable schools to manage their operation and resources in a flexible, effective, and accountable manner according to the actual circumstances of the schools and learning needs of students; and
- To ensure continuous school improvement and development through systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.³³

Assessment: Certification for Principalship professional development portfolio

After the Needs Analysis and Preparation for Principalship program, the final component of the Certification for Principalship in Hong Kong is the submission of a professional development portfolio.

This is submitted to the EDB, and is not assessed by the program providers. The School Leadership and Professional Development Section of the EDB assesses portfolios with the support of assessors, including experienced principals, academics, and representatives from the School Sponsoring Bodies. Assessment is based on the candidate's coherence, reflection, and readiness for the Principalship as demonstrated throughout the portfolio and supporting documentation.³⁴

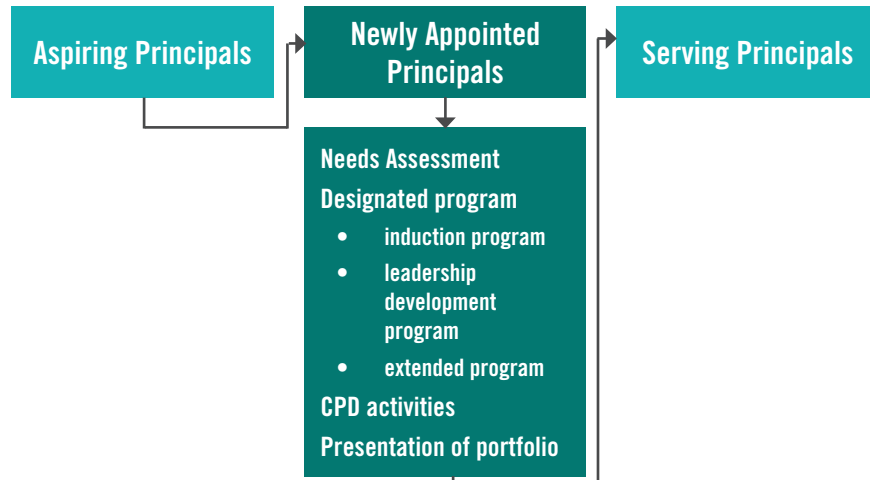
The portfolio is a formative account of the aspiring principal's career successes, with qualitative evidence of professional growth (e.g., reflective journals). It should narrate "where you are now," and cover each of the six core areas of leadership.³⁵ Aspiring principals are not expected to have experience in all six areas, and so are encouraged to state their personal development goals against developing expertise in these areas. Candidates should draw on their experiences from the Needs Analysis program and Preparation for Principalship program assignments to illustrate their self-development summary and goals.

The portfolio should also contain a personal vision or belief statement about the aspiring principal's understanding of the meaning of the principalship. Aspiring principals must include a record of the completion of the needs analysis, and statement from referees (if requested).³⁶

Principal certification is valid for five years from the date of completion. In exceptional circumstances, a teacher may be appointed to the principalship on an acting basis without a certification, but must complete the certification within two years from the date of appointment.

Newly-appointed principals

“Bear in mind that most people appointed to the principalship have never done the job before. Your new principal will need room to grow in the job.”³⁷



The second tier on the Continuing Professional Development Framework is training and development for certified principals within the first two years of the role.

Leadership development training for newly appointed principals was a strategic priority for the Education Department Bureau during the reform design stages in the early 2000s.²⁸

The EDB recognized that newly appointed principals needed time: time to find their footing as new leaders in schools, time to reflect upon their learning from the certification stage, and time to understand in more depth their own developmental needs in the context of their first school appointment.

Since 2002, newly appointed principals in Hong Kong are required to undertake ongoing school-based professional development opportunities and structured requirements to help consolidate their learning and build their leader identity and competencies. The EDB reviewed the designated newly appointed principal program in 2004, and found it to have a positive impact on school performance.³⁹

Under the Continuing Professional Development Framework, newly appointed principals are required to complete:

- Needs assessment program;
- A designated program (including multiple components);
- Continuing professional development activities relevant to their own personal and school needs; and
- A professional portfolio.

Needs Assessment for Principals in Hong Kong

The needs assessment requires principals to participate in eight reflective assessment exercises to gauge “their strengths and developmental needs”⁴⁰ ahead of creating a “meaningful Professional Development Plan.”⁴¹ The needs assessment is based on the six core areas of leadership, and aims “to develop, implement and continually upgrade a practical needs assessment package for newly appointed principals in Hong Kong.”⁴²

Designated program

The designated program for newly appointed principals includes:

- Induction program
- Structured leadership development program
- Extended leadership enhancement program

The Education Department Bureau organizes an **induction program** for principals in their first year of the principalship. The aim of induction is to enhance newly appointed principals’ knowledge and skills in fostering school development and addressing issues of school administration.⁴³ The induction process includes seminars exploring these issues, and online learning.

In their second year, newly appointed principals undertake a **two-part structured leadership development program**. Part I is organized by teacher education institutions, and is designed to enhance newly appointed principals’ leadership skills through further workshops, school visits and mentoring.

Since 2015-2016, the Education Department Bureau has also delivered Part II to give newly appointed principals the opportunity to train for participation as External Reviewers in External School Reviews.⁴⁴ As in Singapore, principals in Hong Kong are invited to participate in the external school review process as a leadership development opportunity. They are prepared for this through the EDB’s three-day training workshops of the External School Review process.

Within their first three years, newly appointed principals are also sent on an **extended leadership enhancement program** on mainland China. In 2016, the Education Department Bureau commissioned East China Normal University and/or Beijing Normal University to host these experiences. This overseas experience is intended to expand newly appointed principals’ leadership competencies by exposing them to leadership practices in China. Candidates undertake seminars, school visits, and industry visits to learn about leadership and management from practicing school and industry leaders.

Newly appointed principals also undertake ongoing continuing professional development activities as dictated by their own professional development needs and by the school needs.

School Sponsoring Bodies have a role in determining and approving what activities are approved, including for school-based and externally provided continuing professional development.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a core component for newly appointed principals' continuing development. There are multiple ways and means for newly appointed principals to receive mentoring, including within their schools and through external agencies or institutions.

The Hong Kong Institute of Education (now Education University of Hong Kong), for instance, runs Blue Skies, a fourteen-month mentoring program that pairs newly appointed principals with serving principals to develop their confidence and competence with in-school issues. The program is designed to map onto the Principals' Continuing Professional Development Framework and other elements of newly appointed principals' development.⁴⁵

School-based Professional Development

Hong Kong aims to cultivate teaching as a learning profession. Continuous professional development for all teacher and school leaders is central to this vision for quality education.

The policy document *Towards a Learning Profession* (2009) defines school-based continuing professional development in Hong Kong as activities that 'take place within a school and are focused on the school's context.'

This can include, but is not limited to:

- Seminars and workshops
- In-house sharing sessions
- Mentoring and coaching
- Collaborative lesson planning
- Lesson observation
- Action research
- Projects organized by the Education Department Bureau, teacher education institutions (TEIs) and other professional bodies.⁴⁶

These activities drive serving principals' ongoing professional learning, as well as teacher development.

Professional portfolio

To complete their continuing professional development requirements, newly appointed principals present a professional development portfolio to their respective school sponsoring body/ school management committee on an annual basis.

Renewing the certification for principalship

Certified principals whose certification has expired (that is, those who have not been appointed to a principalship within five years of certification) are still eligible for appointment as a principal. This is pertinent in the Hong Kong context, where aspiring principals can face long waits for a school leadership opening.

Newly appointed principals in this position will serve as acting head for two years, during which time they must renew their Certification for Principalship. Full principalship is effective from the date of renewal.

Acting principals do not need to complete all three components (the needs analysis, PFP course, and the professional development portfolio) to renew their certification. To renew, they must submit a School Development Portfolio to the Committee on Certification for Principalship at the Education Bureau. This School Development Portfolio demonstrates the acting principal's leadership within the school context.

Acting principals need to devise an action plan addressing an area of concern identified in the Annual School Plan. Over the course of the year, the acting principals must implement and evaluate this action plan, and write up findings in the School Development Portfolio.

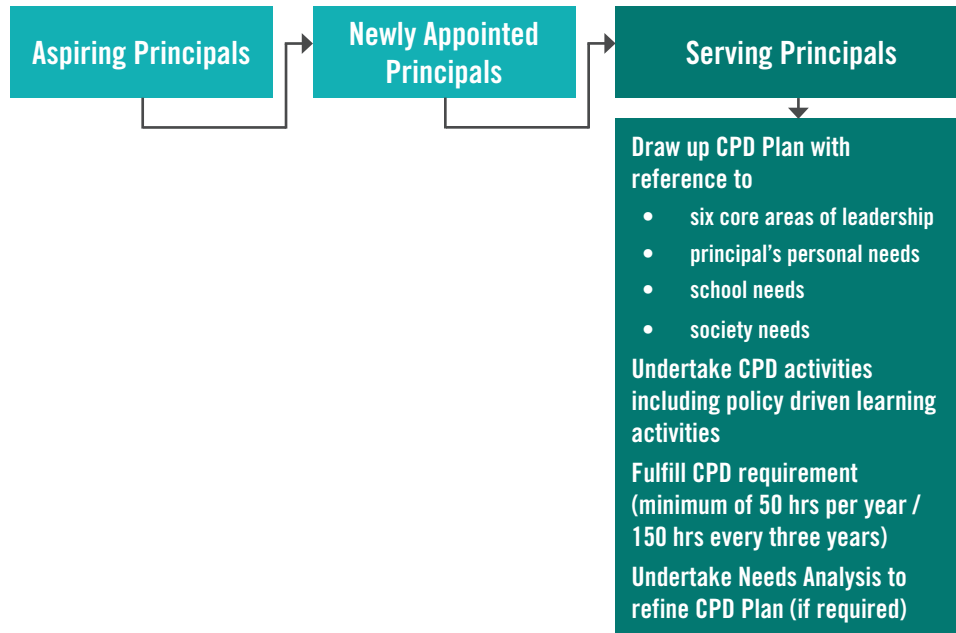
The final Portfolio must include:

- An introduction
- A vision statement
- An action and implementation plan
- An evaluation and reflection
- A concluding statement⁴⁷

Serving principals

It is not unusual for principals in Hong Kong to spend their entire professional lives in one school, or at schools under the aegis of one School Sponsoring Body.⁴⁸ This is markedly different from Singapore, which has 5-7 year cycles for principals, and Shanghai, where principals can expect to be rotated between schools over the duration of their career. Principals' ongoing professional development in Hong Kong is therefore integrated with their specific school context and improvement planning.

Serving principals are those with at least two years of experience in the principalship.



The Continuing Professional Development Framework was drawn up to reflect the diversity of experienced principals' experiences and professional knowledge. This was an outcome of the consultation stages from the late 1990s and early 2000s, during which serving principals resisted calls to introduce certification for all principals, leading to the differentiated programs and requirements for principals at different stages.

Since 2002, serving principals in Hong Kong undertake a minimum of 150 hours of continuing professional development activities over a three-year cycle (approximately 50 hours per year). These continuing professional development activities must include each of the three specified modes articulated above, including structured learning, action learning, and service to the community and to education.

School Sponsoring Bodies can sign off on continuing professional development activities for principals if the proposed activities:

- relate to the six core areas of leadership;
- belong to the three modes of learning;
- add to the principals' skills and content knowledge;
- enhance the principals' contribution to the school community;
- lead to school improvement in student learning and teaching practice; and
- are intellectually challenging.

Continuing Professional Development Plan

Since 2002, the Continuing Professional Development Plan (CPDP) has been a core component of serving principals' ongoing leadership development.⁴⁹ Serving principals draw up this plan with their School Sponsoring Body and/or Incorporated Management Committee to complement the Annual School Plan. Indeed, the principal's personal development plan is an integral part of the Annual School Plan, and must be endorsed by the School Sponsoring Body or Incorporated Management Committee.⁵⁰ The Annual School Plan is forwarded to the relevant Regional Education Office, which can then provide tailored support to help bring the Annual School Plan and principal's personal professional development plan into action.

The Education Department Bureau also offers a variety of further continuing professional development programs for serving principals. These include:

- Program for Planning Life Education in Primary and Secondary Schools
- Program for School Principals on Legal Issues in the School Context
- Course on Health and Stress Management for Principals and Middle Leaders
- One-day workshop on media skills for serving principals
- Workshop for school leaders on mediation in the school context⁵¹

Serving principals' Needs Analysis Program

If necessary, serving principals can undertake an additional Needs Analysis to help refine their continuing professional development plan.⁵² For instance, principals can undertake 360° feedback, which is a method for self-analysis that gathers observations from multiple perspectives within an organization or work setting.

Serving principals are advised to collect 360° feedback from their supervisor, parents, teachers, and other school staff, as well as students, peers, and representatives from external agencies such as the EDB.⁵³

360° feedback questionnaires are aligned with the six core areas of leadership underpinning the Continuing Professional Development Framework.⁵⁴ This process is intended to help:

- Build openness and trust and promote teamwork within the school;
- Create a highly involved and motivated workforce;
- Detect barriers to serving principals' success;
- Identify performance thresholds;
- Define executive competencies.

Box 3 Professional Organizations and School-Based Leadership Development

As in Singapore and Ontario, professional organizations help cultivate a culture of continuous professional development for school leaders in Hong Kong. The Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP) and the Hong Kong Principals' Institute are two examples.

COTAP advocates a culture of teaching as a learning profession as a driver of improving student learning.

COTAP focuses on continuing professional development and school leadership as part of its mandate to drive teacher professionalism. The sub-committee for school leadership (SCSL) advises on the qualification and professional development of aspiring principals (including teacher leaders and vice principals), newly-appointed principals, and serving principals, as well as leaders on the School Management Committee and Incorporated Management Committee level. The aim of the SCSL is to develop leadership and enhance the quality of school education.⁵⁵

The sub-committee advises COTAP on principals' continuing professional development in the context of changing social and global pressures on education; strategies for developing, implementing, and evaluating an analytical framework on principals' competencies; and the planning, design, organization and evaluation of development programs for aspiring, newly appointed, and serving principals, and school governance members.

The Hong Kong Principals' Institute (HKPI) was established in 2012 through consultation with principals, academics, system leaders, and educators to enhance educational leadership across the system. HKPI's mission is "to enhance professionalism of principals, and to promote excellence in leadership and quality school practice for the betterment of education and society at large."⁵⁶ The two operating principles underpinning the activities of the HKPI reflect the dual priorities of School-based Management, namely to support professional autonomy alongside accountability and sustainability.

The 2013 HKPI Principals' Capabilities Framework (PCF) is a recent framework designed to reflect changes in the school leadership landscape since the Key Qualities Framework was published in 2000. The PCF draws on international literature on principals' practices, competencies and capabilities from different education systems, including Scotland, England, Queensland (Australia) and Ontario (Canada).

The Principals' Capabilities Framework is designed to match Continuing Professional Development programs to meet the needs of school principals, and to facilitate self-reflection and self-improvement for principals to further a self-sustaining culture of leadership development and professional learning.⁵⁷

Source: Hong Kong Principals' Institute (2013b); Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (2015); Interview with the Hong Kong Principals' Institute, Hong Kong 1 September 2016.

Notes

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4. Walker et al. 2000.
5. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2014b, 2.
6. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2010.
7. Advisory Committee on School-based Management 2000.
8. Hong Kong Education Bureau 2014, 1.
9. Advisory Committee on School-based Management 2000, 6.
10. Walker et al. 2000.
11. Hallinger, and Ko 2015, 19.
12. Advisory Committee on School-based Management 2000, 18.
13. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015a.
14. Kwan 2011, 170.
15. Townsend 2007, 669; Kwan 2011, 170.
16. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2013.
17. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2002, 1.
18. Walker and Kwong 2005, 7.
19. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015a, 3.
20. Walker et al. 2000.
21. Lee and Dimmock 1999.
22. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015a, 3.
23. Walker et al. 2000.
24. Walker et al. 2000.
25. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015c.
26. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015c, 5.
27. Chinese University of Hong Kong 2014a.
28. Chinese University of Hong Kong 2014b.
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31. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong.
32. Walker et al. 2000, 3.
33. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong.
34. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015c, 6.
35. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015c, 6.
36. For more information on the assessment and structure of the Certification for Principalship for aspiring principals, see: Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015c.
37. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2014b, 13.
38. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2002, 4.
39. “Report of the Panel for the Review of the Designated Programme for Newly Appointed Principals” 2004.
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41. Chinese University of Hong Kong, n.d.
42. Chinese University of Hong Kong, n.d.
43. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2016a.
44. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2016b.
45. “Welcome to Blue Skies” 2016.
46. Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications 2009, 24.
47. For more information see: Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2015b.
48. Kwan 2011, 169.
49. Walker and Quong 2003a, 6.
50. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2002.
51. Education Department Bureau, Hong Kong 2012.
52. Walker 2003.
53. Walker and Quong 2003b.
54. Walker and Quong 2003b.
55. Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals 2015.
56. Hong Kong Principals’ Institute 2013a.
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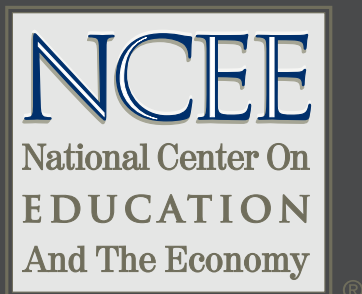
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