



## **The Appointment of School Principals in the Israeli Education System**

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*This paper seeks to examine the crisis in school principals' recruitment, analyzing the available source material on training and appointment processes in Israel and abroad; and conducting a series of interviews with parties on the ground involved in the education system. The shortage of suitable candidates can be traced to the Ministry of Education's overly stringent qualification requirements and to the deficiencies of the tender process.*

After an introductory **first chapter**, the **second chapter** provides background to the school principal crisis.

The **third chapter** describes and critiques the current official method of appointing school principals.

The **fourth chapter** details the ways in which local education authorities and school networks deal with the deficiencies of the official appointment method.

The **fifth chapter** summarizes the conclusions and the **sixth chapter** outlines recommendations for the future.

### **Summary:**

The past two decades of research points to a growing shortage of school principals, despite their critical influence on education systems. Many countries have sought to resolve the crisis by various pedagogic and administrative solutions, such as new training programs and better mechanisms for recruitment. Israel has also made efforts in both directions, such as raising salaries (although they are still relatively low - it is not unknown for teachers to refuse promotion to an administrative position due to the lack of proper compensation for the additional workload and responsibility) and establishing an institution for training school principals named "*Avney Rosha*" (the Israel Institute for School Leadership). Still, numerous local authorities are experiencing a crisis in recruiting skilled school principals. The Ministry of Education's official method for appointing school principals simply does not work,

leading to it being circumvented in many, if not most, cases. The major issues are threefold: (i) The shortage of suitable candidates to the position of school principal is in large measure a result of the Ministry's stringent requirements to apply for a candidacy, which are more severe than in other OECD states; (ii) the Avney Roshah Institute has become a sieve that filters out many candidates deemed worthy of managerial positions by colleagues who have known them for many years; and (iii) the selection process by tender prevents the location and selection of suitable candidates. In a great many tenders, only few candidates, if any, apply, and in a significant portion of tenders, unsuitable candidates come forward despite the fact that they must officially meet the stringent requirements formulated by the Ministry of Education. The involved parties on the ground stress the importance of long-term acquaintance and thorough vetting of candidates' personal attributes as the best measures for finding worthy candidates most suited to their particular institution.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Discard a substantial amount of the Ministry of Educations' qualification requirements for school principal candidates.
- 2) Discard the tender system and replace it with an active recruitment process carried out in advance by local authorities to find, select and train candidates for administrative positions.
- 3) Candidates should be appointed by a selection committee headed by local authority representatives, who are authorized to research the candidates beyond what is possible today through the tender recruitment procedure.

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