

the school office

This year, most Ontario elementary and secondary schools have full-time principals and at least one office staff. These staff are more vital than ever because so many of the administrative tasks that were formerly the responsibility of school boards have been downloaded onto staff in the school office.

affected school principals and vice-principals. The agreement reduced the amount of time the teachers are required to supervise students outside the classroom. As a result, more principals and vice-principals are supervising in school yards, taking time away from school leadership duties.

2007 survey results:

- ❑ 89% of elementary schools and 97% of secondary schools have a full-time principal, a result that has remained fairly steady over the last five years.
- ❑ The percentage of elementary schools with a vice-principal, full- or part-time, has increased slightly over the last two years, but has declined by 24% since 1997/98.
- ❑ Only 74% of Northern elementary schools have a full-time principal, a decline from 80% last year.

Principals now act as human resources managers, building superintendents, school council facilitators, school record keepers and implementers of new policy ranging from Literacy and Numeracy initiatives to Daily Physical Activity requirements – all *in addition* to providing educational leadership, monitoring teaching, dealing with discipline issues, overseeing curriculum changes and bolstering student success.

Supervising students

A new provincial agreement with Ontario's elementary teachers has also

Regional disparities

While our surveys have shown a clear upward trend over the last five years in the percentage of elementary schools with full-time principals, this year that trend reversed in Northern and Southwestern Ontario.

In 2007, only 74% of Northern elementary schools have a full-time principal, compared to 80% last year. In Southwestern Ontario, 86% of schools have a full-time principal, compared to 94% last year.

Experienced principals key for student success

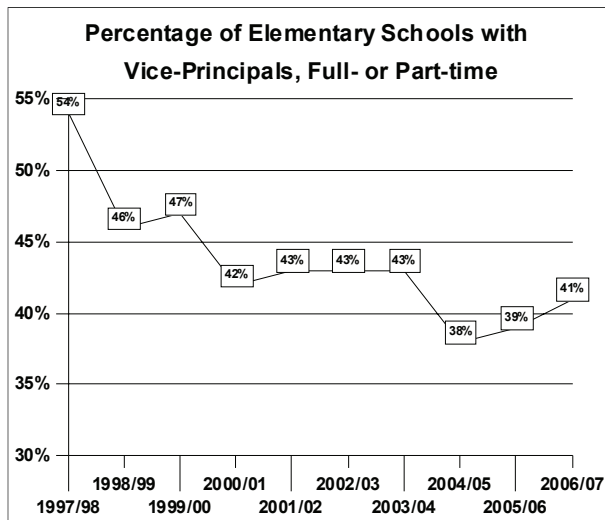
The EQAO principal questionnaire shows that more than half of elementary school principals have five years of experience or less. The relative inexperience of the majority of principals is of particular concern because the job of principal has expanded significantly over the last ten years.

According to a Queen's University study, "many of the recent educational change initiatives in Ontario's public schools are based on the assumption

that well qualified principals and vice-principals will be in place to lead their implementation....” But other studies have shown that most school boards are finding it difficult to recruit qualified principals and vice-principals.²

There is ample evidence that the leadership provided by a school’s principal is fundamental to the success of a school. But Ontario’s principals are burdened by twin pressures: inexperience and increasing middle-management duties.

Q. How can we ensure that principals are fully able to act as school leaders?



what schools told us...

“The educational system in this province continues to improve immensely from the late 90s. However, as the workload for school secretaries continues to increase (e.g., OSIS, new June report, new suspension report, downloading of Trillium data forms, etc.), there needs to be a minimum of 35 hours of secretarial time for every elementary school.”

An elementary school in Waterloo Region DSB

“The Ministry has downloaded many requirements onto principals, e.g., bullying, character building, EQAO improvement plans. These are all good programs but they are time-consuming to implement on top of regular work.”

An elementary school in Upper Canada DSB

“Teaching principals have a huge workload, and the agreement that capped supervisory duties at 80 minutes has resulted in a loss of time for programs. Our rural school has a compressed school day, and yard supervision exceeds the legislated time cap, so we now have no afternoon recess for the kids. This year the students have spent most recesses, 15 minutes in the morning and 40 minutes at lunch, in the recreation room. Which means there is no space then for the intramural program, since the recreation room also acts as the gym.”

An elementary school in Upper Grand DSB