The Neubauer Program for Excellence in Educational Management

Principals Training Program | Department of Education Tel Aviv-Yafo

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# Executive Summary

## The challenge

In April 2021, Tel Aviv-Yafo was in flames. It was one of the main cities to suffer from the nationwide violent riots that broke out between Jews and Arabs, resulting in deaths and injuries. Educators from the Jewish and Arab communities working together in the same schools struggled not only to calm the spirits and mediate the complex reality for their students, but also to restore the values of democracy and co-existence.

Tel Aviv-Yafo is comprised of a diverse ethno-demographic population that includes Jews, Arabs, foreign workers and asylum seekers. Aside from the tensions that exist between these groups, there is great diversity in terms of language, educational backgrounds, perceptions, and attitudes regarding education, not to mention the enormous socioeconomic disparities.

There are powerful and well-connected communities in the city that can naturally exert enormous pressure on school principals. Yet these are situated no more than a mile away from severely socioeconomically marginalized populations, the majority of which struggle to support, be involved in, or even have awareness of the frameworks and institutions that educate their children.

The need to **educate for values of democracy and coexistence**, and the need to **create equal opportunities for every student** of every denomination, regardless of socioeconomic status, are just part of the challenges facing school principals in Tel Aviv-Yafo.

Alongside all this, the city faces the fundamental and difficult problem common to education systems around the world—namely how to pave the way to relevant education in a changing reality, one which fundamentally undermines traditional perceptions about education?

Finally, the role of principal can often be very taxing, and **the recruitment and retention of principals constitutes a real challenge**. Many retire early—in the last five years alone, about 40% of principals in the city have resigned. Few teachers from the city aspire toward management roles, and the city needs to invest in the import and acclimatization of principals from the outside.

In the field of early childhood education addressed by the present program there are additional challenges, consisting mainly of **managerial skills acquisition** and **establishing standards and status** for the role of head kindergarten instructors and kindergarten principals.

Nevertheless, together with these challenges, the unique circumstances in the city place it in a singular position to accomplish a particularly ambitious step: **a systemic breakthrough**.

The Israeli education system is characterized by a frustrating dynamic: breakthroughs often remain the heroic efforts of individuals, and are not carried on or replicated throughout the system. They remain mere “islands” in time and space, thus leaving many children to continue to receive inadequate education. Our education system has yet to find a way out of this restrictive dynamic.

Tel Aviv-Yafo strives to be the first city in Israel to succeed in creating systemic change and to set an example of sustainable change and of first-rate education for all. Doing so will have a ripple effect and serve as inspiration for other institutions and communities nationwide.

The city has the spirit of excellence, the leadership, and the work culture required to achieve such an important systemic change. During the COVID-19 Crisis, for example, the city preceded the National Ministry of Education in providing creative solutions to the challenge of returning to school and initiated collaboration with a neighboring city to create an innovative return outline. Principals indicate that the Department of Education gives them the autonomy and the authority for trial and error experimentation, allowing for learning and adjusting along the way. This is an excellent platform from which to strive to fulfill an educational dream.

## The strategy—creating a community of trailblazing principals

If there is one tier in the system that can have the greatest impact on the realization of this vision, it is principals. They are the make or break factor—a vision can only be achieved if the school has a vision, if the full potential of the team is realized, if the resources are used properly, and if there is an innovative culture and educational space.

Research has shown that the **action principles of trailblazing principals** can be divided into two groups: directional and motivational principles.

**Directional** **principles** include the formulation of a practical vision and its translation into concepts, procedures, and organizational structures derived from a sufficient understanding of both the overall picture and the essential details. A change-driving manager knows how to be flexible and change direction along the way when needed, but always demonstrates involvement and is present every step of the way.

**Motivational principles** include harnessing and creating enthusiasm, exemplifying behavior that is a model for action, overcoming resistance, and building confidence and a sense of competence among teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

**Designated training for principals can create an urban professional community where these operating practices are no longer limited to specific individuals but are translated into general norms.**

Studies show that successful training programs for principals always combine theory and practice, and should have a local context, integrate professionals from a variety of fields and methodologies, and espouse a clear perception of school management as a career.

The existing training mechanisms do not do this well enough. The only training course for principals in Israel is through the "*Avnei Rosha*" Program (“Leadership Stones”), which it is not kept sufficiently up-to-date. It is not comprehensive enough, does not facilitate encounters with diverse education professionals, lacks an affinity for place, and the personal accompaniment it provides is not always effective. Other learning frameworks to which principals have access also lack two essential elements needed for a breakthrough: **budget**, the shortage of which limits the depth and individuality of the learning experience that can be achieved in training for such a complex and difficult position; **a succession planning program** that will create a continuum of professional growth and a community of principals of the desired variety.

## The concept

The program addresses four target populations, which converge on certain aspects and diverge on others: **future principals, new principals, veteran principals, and principals in early childhood education**.

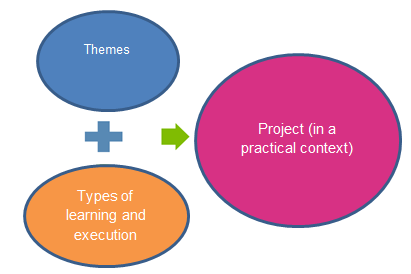
The program will create a **training sequence**, beginning with attracting candidates and qualifying for the succession planning program, putting them through a demanding and substantial program, selecting people with the appropriate managerial skills, closing gaps in the current training of designated principals, and significantly bolstering training throughout the career of veteran principals, especially through support for instructive visits abroad, which have proven to be a **promoter and catalyst for educational breakthroughs**.

The program will strive to set an example of a **breakthrough educational model** by implementing up-to-date learning practices including personality- and learner-oriented learning. Participants will not only “learn about” advanced and desirable work norms and cultures but absorb them through practice. Each training module will have **group goals** and individual goals. All participants in any of the training sequence stages will keep track of a **personal career development program** with updated goals, which will be coordinated, for example, with a supervisor and a representative of the Department of Education, who will accompany them throughout their careers as principals.

## Pedagogical model

The learning itself must be connected to the field, and therefore it will be based mainly (although not exclusively) on **projects in a practical context**, each of which will have a practical and relevant product, i.e., a product that goes toward achieving a feasible goal in the role of principal. For example, a program to improve the learner's experience, the teacher's experience, or the experience of other staff.

**Project planning will consist of two main components: topics for learning (themes), and ways of learning.**



The project will allow for the acquisition of desirable **knowledge on relevant topics (themes), and for the integration of said knowledge**. Participants will strive to leverage the project planning process toward the acquisition of relevant and interesting knowledge while harnessing their natural curiosity. The themes that will be incorporated into the project may include areas of management (such as drafting a managerial vision), pedagogical and social issues (such as concepts of education from around the world), aspects of developmental psychology, and organizational aspects such as marketing.

For each topic, participants will also find **preferred learning modes** such as lectures, interviews with experts, media, simulations, tours, and even ethnographic research—as needed, and the program will be updated throughout the training.

In choosing projects, themes, and ways of learning, one can consider any approach from designing everything from scratch to using existing methodologies (partial or complete). For example, design thinking, or a project to plan an educational environment following an orderly methodology developed by an expert in the field of education, possibly with the latter’s guidance.

**The projects will be jointly supervised by an experienced principal or a municipal official, and a professional facilitator from the project’s particular field.** They will enable participants to **experience** the managerial aspects of a school, on the one hand, and **to identify and maximize their own individual inclinations and relative advantages** throughout the process, on the other hand.

During the implementation stage of the project, the trainees will encounter at least some of the following types of experiences, each of which represents different aspects of a principal’s role:

1. Communicate, collaborate, and support each other
2. Confront objections
3. Raise new ideas that will change over time
4. Deal with difficult challenges on the way to realizing ideas
5. Implement the solutions appropriately and effectively

All this while maintaining **close contact with relevant interfaces in the city**, with a hands-on approach, while **acclimatizing** to the city environment. The direct experience of the trainees will open the door for advanced models of learning and the legitimacy of their application to enter the schools as well, and we will soon begin to see more innovation in the schools’ organizational routines.

## Organizational model

The **operating mechanism** of the program will allow it to **evolve over time, fix issues as they come up, and update itself**. At the general level of all training groups, the mechanism will include a **steering committee** that will meet twice a year and be responsible for maintaining the mechanism’s relevance and precision, ensuring the fit between the trainings and their goals, introducing innovations, creating connections, securing resources as needed, and controlling the quality of the training.

In each cycle, **planning and pedagogy teams** will be selected in advance from among the participants. These teams will set learning objectives and select the learning outcomes (projects) accordingly, define the themes and the main learning modes of these themes, monitor the successful implementation of the training, and adapt the program they designed to field requirements according to insights as they emerge.

To ensure that the training leads to a breakthrough, and does not constitute “more of the same,” the teams will be instructed to reach the detailed planning stage with a suitable mindset: a broad definition of results that leaves plenty of room for trial and error, humility and open-mindedness in any case of conflict regarding elements of the plan, curiosity and a willingness to re-examine accepted paradigms or personal views, and radical lack of judgment. The teams will have to arrive at a general consensus regarding the principles of the plan, alongside a willingness to confront issues that will arise and threaten to void the plan of its content or nullify substantive ideas within it.

To support the learning process and career development of each principal, an advanced technological platform for smart management of professional development will be provided, including follow-up and documentation of training activities, seminars, and their results. The platform will also serve as a database that will enable smart tagging and retrieval of additional information in an easy-to-navigate way, e.g., case descriptions, practicums, research, project summaries, and diverse management materials.

The platform will facilitate advanced interactions between users as part of learning, and provide tools for planning and monitoring professional and career development. The system will serve both trainees and the intermediate management position holders who are interested in developing professionally and may apply for the succession planning program.

## Measurement and evaluation

Measurement and evaluation of the program will be performed by the **Measurement and Evaluation Administration of the Center for Educational Technology (CET)**, a non-profit organization that works to advance the education system in Israel.

The measurement and evaluation procedure will give **unique added value to the program due to the trainees’ participation** in the measurement and evaluation processes. They will us have the opportunity to learn the key principles of professional high-standard measurement and evaluation, so that they can perform these independently at the schools under their management. This process will strengthen aspects of **accountability, professional development, reflection, and motivation for further action**.

In line with the program’s organizing principles, the evaluation and measurement procedures are aimed at creating change, this by focusing on measuring the results of the program rather than its implementation, and by optimizing the evaluation tools throughout the program. The evaluation findings will be accessible to all relevant target audiences and will be presented frequently in the interest of allowing the evaluation results to be translated into practical actions that can be implemented already during the program and help achieve the desired impact.

The evaluation questions will not only focus on assessing the quality of the program and its achievements among the target audience but also examine whether and how it produces a significant change in the city’s education system, for example, by reducing dropout rates among underprivileged populations, bolstering students' sense of belonging in their educational institutions as well as their self-efficacy and self-esteem, and encouraging more positive attitudes toward democratic values and increased involvement in multicultural activities.

The program will be evaluated using a logical model and will measure results in the short, medium, and long terms. Evaluation procedures will be carried out on a large scale among all stakeholders (principals, school staff, students, parents, decision makers in the education system, etc.).

There will be insistence on high-level response rates and sample sizes that will minimize sampling error. The procedure will include built-in mechanisms to neutralize random or unintentional biases and select information through qualitative assessment operations conducted by an external assessment body.

Considering the great variability between and within the target audiences, the evaluation procedures will provide a quality response, among other things, by measuring and personally evaluating each participant according to their personal starting point and the personal resources with which they entered the program.

The control group will be randomly sampled while maintaining as high a fit as possible, e.g., by comparing trainees to a group of principals who have not yet joined the program, who have similar seniority and experience, or by assessing the performance of principals with similar seniority before entering the program as a comparison group.

The evaluation procedure is based on the third tier of the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (SMS), and the Differences in Differences analysis method.

## Supportive actions

To strengthen the program’s chances of success, there will be a particular emphasis on branding, a lot of thought and effort invested in each component, and top-notch production to transmit the required materials, to encourage participants to adopt corresponding attitudes.

And of course, even if the training program is successful, with all the beneficial influence of the graduating principals, it too cannot fulfill the vision alone. To support the success of the program, it is recommended to launch a public relations campaign to strengthen the status of school principals among residents, to invest in a campaign to recruit quality teachers for the succession planning program, and to provide principals with financial management support.

## Emphasis on training a succession pool

The sequence of managerial training starts with participants of the succession planning program. The succession planning program, in particular, will be designed to provide great value not only in the experience and the process of deciding whether to proceed to the level of school management, but also in significant job preparation, which will facilitate adaptation difficulties, and reduce the risk in selecting new principals.

To advertise the program and attract candidates, the barriers that hinder teachers from applying to management ranks will be examined and mapped, and a new, informed way to approach teachers will be designed. It may even be necessary to redefine the role of management, so that it may not only attract more women to management, but also reduce the gap between job perception and reality, improve the job experience in relation to expectations, and increase the satisfaction and effectiveness of principals on the job.

Principals in schools will be encouraged to personally contact teachers who they believe are suitable for the program, and to actively encourage them to apply.

In practice, the heart of the program will consist of activities in the context of a learning community composed of teachers from different schools. In addition, regarding those teachers who will have already demonstrated their suitability for the role of principal, it is advisable to adopt a model of cognitive tutoring—learning by performing de facto management duties alongside a more veteran principal, allowing them to gradually take over most responsibilities and assisting them with feedback, reflection, and interrogation.

## Emphasis on training new principals in the municipal system (management prospects)

New principals are already receiving large-scale guidance and accompaniment as part of the main training for management prospects—“Avnei Rosha” (“Leadership Stones”)—as well as from their supervisors and managers, among others. We therefore chose to focus most of the hours on intensive summer seminars (instead of courses throughout the year), **pedagogical excursions around the country, and augmented personal guidance** **as needed**.

In designing the curriculum for each cycle, we recommend considering building modules or learning groups **unique to specific principal populations**. Such an approach can be manifested in terms of learning content, projects that are more relevant to a particular population group, creating a community and a network of contacts with principals who work with the same type of population, and so on.

With regard to augmented personal guidance, it is recommended to examine the option of providing an accompanying facilitator for a predetermined number of hours per year, whom the principal will select from a catalogue of facilitators with different profiles after an introductory conversation and coordination of expectations. For example, an organizational consultant, a veteran Tel Aviv school principal, etc.

## Emphasis on professional development for veteran principals

A core tool in leveraging the capabilities of veteran principals to reach breakthroughs is sending them on **pedagogical excursions abroad**, which can imbue principals with new energy and ideas, and which has been proven to have an impact on the implementation of actual changes.

Beyond that, since the range of needs veteran principals may have is much wider than those of new or future principals, the concept of **learning on demand** is particularly relevant to this training population. That means giving them the flexibility of choosing from a wide range of processes on demand rather than insisting on one uniform process that everyone must go through. Emphasis will be placed on developing the ability to deal with **high-level managerial complexities** through deep learning in areas more familiar to principals (such as pedagogy) and through broad learning in areas less familiar to at least some principals (such as human resource management, marketing, and branding).

## Emphasis on professional development for early childhood principals

The term “early childhood principals” refers to kindergarten leaders who spend one day a week performing observation, assistance, or guidance for a group of kindergartens in a certain area. A smaller number of kindergartens participate in “kindergarten clusters,” which employ full-time principals who manage the cluster of institutions in a given geographical area.

These principals are responsible for managing kindergarten groups without any extensive management training, and often without even a period of shadowing.

Thus, training for this population will consist of a **practical counseling process, in the format of personal guidance /counseling** in the case of new principals and of **guidance in** **small groups** in the case of more seasoned principals. Accompaniment will be provided by an organizational consultant or another professional who has experience with organizational change or transition processes, such as those required at the kindergarten level. The training will focus on, among other things, entrepreneurship and community leadership. Programs and projects that are created in the course of training and receive initial evaluation will be incorporated into pilots in additional kindergartens and will be expanded upon proof of success. This will create an evolution for the better.

## Budget

Quality measurement and evaluation will require a significant allocation of resources; therefore, at least 7% of the total cost of operating the program will go toward the evaluation operations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **122,850** | **One-time establishment cost for applicant recruitment, selection, and classification system:** Research among teachers regarding factors affecting the decision to go into management, creating a marketing campaign, recruitment process, classification and accompaniment, strategic measurement, and evaluation tools |
|  | **Annual costs:** |
| **156,415** | **Trailblazing Principals planning program:** Instruction, operations, production, pedagogical excursions in Israel, mentoring, monitoring measurement and evaluation, and miscellaneous—overall annual cost |
| **122,970** | **New principals (managerial prospects) program:** Instruction, operations, production, pedagogical excursions in Israel, mentoring, monitoring measurement and evaluation, and miscellaneous—overall annual cost |
| **345,971** | **Veteran principals training:** Budget for course selection, personal accompaniment and existing training, pedagogical excursions abroad, monitoring measurement and evaluation—overall annual cost |
| **138,645** | **Early childhood principals program:** Mentoring for new and veteran principals, monitoring measurement and evaluation—overall annual cost |
| **100,000** | **Digital platform:** License and operations for about 1,000 users, measurement and evaluation—overall annual cost |
| **311,429** | **Training program operations:** Including program manager salary and measurement and evaluation costs established at roughly 7% of the annual budget |
|  |  |
|  | **Total costs** |
| **122,850** | Establishment costs |
| **1,175,430** | Annual costs |
| **6,000,000** | **Total cost over five years** |

# The Challenges Faced by the Education System in Tel Aviv

In recent years, the Department of Education has been in dialogue with the Neubauer Foundation with the aim of determining how principal training can better meet the city’s educational needs. This program is the result of said dialogue and we are enormously grateful to the Neubauer Foundation for setting this challenge before the Department. The success of the Neubauer Foundation and the repute of the principal training programs it operates in the United States have been an inspiration and a source of ideas.

The planning process confronted us with many questions. Why should we invest so much in training principals of all things? What would this training program add to the existing training interface? Would the investment be justified? How can we create a training program that would make a significant difference, make the best use of the investment, and be practical in terms of the demands it would impose on future/existing principals?

After hundreds of hours of research and development, interviews with education professionals and academics, brainstorming sessions and validation by stakeholders, we are now able to answer these questions in full and will do so in the present document to demonstrate that the proposed Trailblazing Principals Training Program has the power to make a deep, long-lasting systemic change and successfully meet the challenges described below.

The city of Tel Aviv-Yafo has over 120 schools and over 630 kindergarten classes. The prominent factors that distinguish our city from most municipalities in Israel are its size and diversity of populations. These two factors combined inherently limit the ability of any one person working in the system to grasp the full complexity of the state of affairs on the ground. The city’s size does not allow for effective centralized control and necessitates the strong intermediary leadership of school principals.

That being said, the city possesses all the resources needed for success: it has recently experienced major successes in reducing the dropout rate and increasing the matriculation eligibility rate, has made tremendous improvements to infrastructures as well as significant progress in community outreach and care for at-risk youths, and inaugurated many new programs, including the *Portzey Derech* (“Trailblazers”) program, new professional development content for principals, and a contact-oriented grasp of education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Education, together with its counterpart in Bnei Brak, exhibited leadership on the national scale and initiated a movement that led to students’ return to the classroom across the country.

Nevertheless, multiple challenges remain. To face these complex problems, we must recruit, cultivate, and keep the best principals in the country. First, we will examine the range of challenges before us. For the sake of convenience, the following table presents a summary of the challenges that are discussed at further length below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Social challenges | Pedagogical challenges | Organizational challenges |
| **Challenges particularly present in Israel**  Instilling values of equality, tolerance, and equitable practices  Creating a democratic atmosphere and imparting tools and values for a democratic way of life  **Challenges particularly present in Tel Aviv**  Giving children from all the diverse populations in the city equal opportunity for success  Creating a bond between the pedagogical staff and pupils from different backgrounds  Making every pupil feel like they belong  Turning the diversity of the human capital in the city into an educational opportunity | **Challenges common to education systems around the world**  Enabling every pupil in the system to recognize and maximize their skills and abilities  Creating a school that adequately prepares pupils for the challenges of the 21st century  Creating a school that pupils love and enjoy attending | **Challenges particularly present in Israel**  Decreasing principals’ turnover, improving retention and alleviating job burnout  **Challenges particularly present in Tel Aviv**  Attracting more candidates from the municipal education system to management positions  Strengthening the status of principals in a city where (alongside vulnerable populations) there is a concentration of powerful and well-connected elites capable of putting significant pressure on them |

## Social challenges: equal opportunity, democratic values, multiculturalism, and taking advantage of diversity

Tel Aviv-Yafo has some of the poorest and richest families in Israel, intellectual families and families with low levels of education, thriving neighborhoods and neighborhoods saturated with crime and violence, and great urban and ethnic diversity consisting mainly of Jews, Arabs, foreign workers, and asylum seekers.

The influence of diversity is palpable in the mesh of urban life, and especially in the municipal education system, which serves a wide variety of students. Although it consists of a large majority of secular students, there are other student populations of significant absolute size that require resources and separate managerial attention.

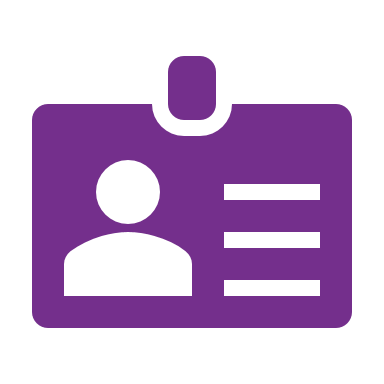
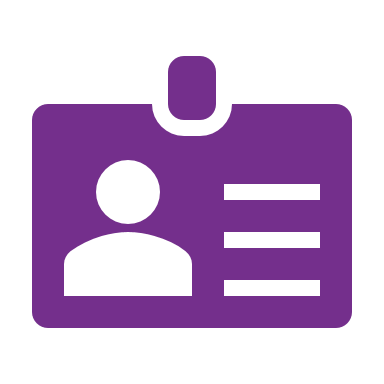
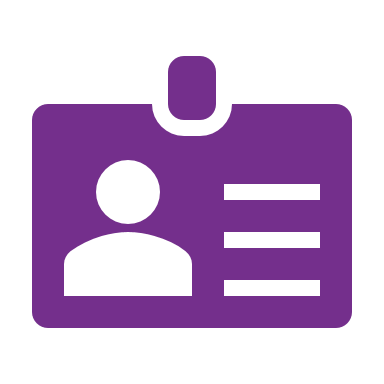
The figure below describes the approximate demographic distribution of twenty students, based on the Department of Education’s data:





Secular Jewish

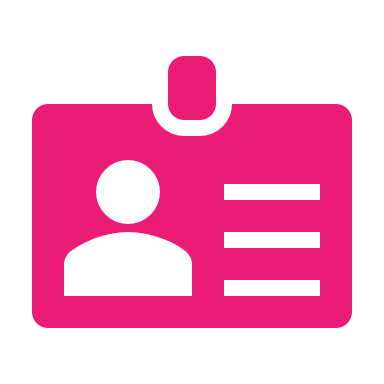




Religious and ultra-Orthodox (in equal proportion)



Arab



Foreign workers and asylum seekers

Aside from this demographic breakdown, we can also classify the population according to the **“Nurture Index”**—an ad hoc measurement tool developed by the Ministry of Education that categorizes students according to the parameters of **parents’ education, level of income, central/peripheral place of residence, immigration and status of country of origin**.

According to the Department of Education’s data, roughly a **quarter** of the secular Jewish primary state schools place **low to medium on the Nurture Index**, as do **two-thirds** of the religious and Arab primary state schools. The aim of the scale is to give differential treatment in terms of teaching hour allocation at the school level. However, there is evidence to show that these kinds of disparities between student populations also create additional complexity at the management level, as opposed to merely requiring additional resources.

For example, see the following quotes from pedagogical staff members from two different kinds of schools, as presented in one of the studies we consulted:[[1]](#footnote-1)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Low socioeconomic level school | High socioeconomic level school |
| “As soon as you take your shoulder off something it goes backwards. You don't ever get to the stage here where you can say that it is in place. It's because the value system you are pushing doesn't sit naturally with the kids —you are trying to impose those values on them.” | “(This is) one of the luckiest schools in the country ... the intake is a good intake in the sense that the reading age, the comprehension age, the ability of the students academically, gives us a group of students who are going to get School Certificate three years later…”  “I suppose you do have all these social skills that other kids are not exposed to. And I think because of that there is a flexibility about the place here, I mean that in a good way...” |

While these statements are not particularly politically correct, and were probably more acceptable at the time when the study was conducted, it is likely that children from families with an academic background, a factor correlated with greater economic success, find it easier to acquire learning and work habits correlated, in turn, with academic and therefore also economic success, all because of their circumstances.

**The essence of the challenges in this category is to bring about a correction**—a correction of social injustice, a transformation of widespread views and values that do not serve the individual or society, and the strengthening of marginalized societies and of constructive views and values.

In addition, we might mention the progressive challenge that aims to **consider diversity not as a threat or weakness, but as a fortunate opportunity offering us fruits which we can enjoy**. After all, a diverse city constitutes fertile ground not only for conflict and disparity but for synergy, for cross-fertilization, for expanding one’s consciousness and for breaking down stereotyping attitudes. The education system, too, can take advantage of diversity to create an educational environment that is more beneficial and meaningful for all.[[2]](#footnote-2)

### The challenge of equality—equal opportunity for success for every child

The first social challenge is that of providing equal opportunity to succeed and flourish to children embarking on their educational journeys from very different starting points and with very different support resources along the way, whether it is differences in gender, personal or family background, or demographic or socioeconomic status. As Gandhi is reported to have said: “The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.”

The Arab community, for example, is very much aware of **the particular difficulties experienced by its sons and daughters trying to succeed in the Israeli job market,** which is predominantly Hebrew-speaking and requires cultural adaptation. Accordingly, the two most important economic issues on the Israeli agenda in their view (when asked to select three issues out of eight) are reducing unemployment and improving the education system, compared to the Jewish population, who prioritize lowering the cost of living and improving the health system.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Therefore, the first part of the challenge entails the **personal reinforcement of those who require additional resources** in order to fit in. The education system can help by directing suitable resources, support, and reinforcement to students who come from circumstances of marginalization or disadvantage of any sort.

The second part of the challenge has to do with **integrating multiculturalism**—the way in which the education system handles the need to serve a diversity of students: creating bonds between the pedagogical staff and students from different backgrounds, enabling a culturally sensitive and supportive environment, and finding a way for different populations to connect for educational purposes.

The third part of the challenge has to do not with the individual but with the **deep-seated discrimination in society**.

One out of three Jews have reported that they would not be willing to work directly under an Arab manager, and only one out of four Jews is certain they would agree to do so.[[4]](#footnote-4) Since the majority of those in the Israeli job market is Jewish, it is reasonable to conclude that an organization that promotes an Arab manager would, unfortunately, run the risk, at the very least, of a lack of enthusiasm and, most likely, opposition on the part of its Jewish employees.

The education system can certainly contribute to a shift toward egalitarian values and practices. In fact, the change is already underway. When it comes to gender, for example, statistics show that girls are less confident than boys about their ability to solve mathematical and scientific problems, a lack of confidence that does not reflect their actual ability. When the confidence gap is eliminated, the gender gap in performance disappears as well.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The Department of Education and the Authority for Social Resilience and Equality in Tel Aviv-Yafo are already working on a strategic plan to promote gender- and equality-conscious education, and the Ministry of Education has invested in programs for encouraging female students to be exposed to and to pursue STEM disciplines.

### The values challenge—instilling democratic values and discourse toward a healthy civil society

“Researchers agree that schools are agents of knowledge about democracy, pass on democratic attitudes and values, and instill democratic norms of behavior… success also depends on hands-on experiences that will facilitate the internalization of these values.

Likewise, there is great importance to discussing dilemmas, problems, and concrete topics that confront Israeli society… Schools must begin to think reflectively and critically about the reality in which pupils live. They must relate to events and figures from reality and assess them according to the criteria of democratic values. The education system must teach pupils to cope with conflicts and disagreements on a personal and collective level.

Likewise, they must teach the critical and skeptical consumption of information that reaches pupils through the mass media, and critical and constructive thought regarding all types of information…

The political, social, and educational systems in the State of Israel have not adequately coped with the challenge of democratic education. They have not succeeded in passing on the solid foundations of democratic norms and values, which are particularly vital in this multi-cultural and divided society, to citizens in Israel.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

These statements were made in an article dating from 2006. We cannot say that things have improved since then. Judging by public sentiment, Israeli democracy has been in crisis for the past few years:[[7]](#footnote-7)

* **The majority of the public estimate that democracy is in danger and perceive the following problems:**
  + **Fragility**—Approximately 53.5% of citizens agree that the democratic system of government in Israel is in grave danger, an increase of 8.5% over the course of just three years.
  + **Exasperation**—Approximately 45% of citizens feel that “it doesn’t matter who you vote for, it makes no practical difference,” as opposed to only 31% five years earlier.
  + **Lack of trust**—The Trust Index in most state institutions is in decline in comparison to a year ago.
  + **Discrimination**—Only one out of three Arab citizens feels that the Israeli regime is democratic toward the Arab population, as opposed to two out of three Jewish citizens. Nevertheless, in both cases we see a 6–10% decline over the course of three years.
  + **Polarization**—Two out of five citizens feel that the strongest tension in Israeli society today is between the left and right poles of the political spectrum, as opposed to one out of ten in 2012.
* **There is inherent and constant tension between the definition of the state as Jewish and democratic**—Only one out of five citizens thinks that there is balance today between the Jewish and democratic elements. Different segments of the population tend to think that one element is stronger than the other, according to their worldviews. Furthermore, Jewish and democratic are concepts that are perceived differently by different people. To reach any kind of equilibrium and understanding amidst all this tension, there is need for constant dialog.

The creation of a democratic environment and a culture of democratic values in schools, along with the pedagogical aspects of a democratic education, fall under the responsibility of the Department of Education and depend both on the “leadership spirit” and vision that a principal chooses to instill within a school.

**The COVID-19 crisis has further underscored the need for an improved education for democratic values.** The similarities between the concerns voiced in 2020 and the statements quoted above from 2006, are striking:

“The COVID-19 crisis and the extraordinary measures taken to overcome it has sharpened and emphasized the understanding that dealing with the democratic crisis in Israel means dealing with the citizens’ notions of what democracy is, what functioning institutions look like, and the importance of the commitment to democratic values for democratic and social resilience.

A healthy and democratic civic behavior also entails the ability of every citizen to filter information and identify false news, manipulations, and even propaganda, as well as the ability to ask questions about statements, claims, and positions heard in public discourse routinely, and even more so in times of crisis.

Such democratic literacy is not automatically conferred on those born in a democratic state. It is acquired ... to a large extent from the learning processes that take place, first and foremost, in the education system. The Israeli education system waves the banner of instilling values as an integral part of the learning process during a child’s school years. However, even in normal times, it does far too little in this area.

The social and values-oriented education imparted by the Israeli education system over the years emphasizes national education and the particular Zionist and Jewish values associated with it. While this is an important part of civic education, without a part that also deals with democracy in its essential sense, future citizens may find themselves living in a country where the rule of law has been eroded along with the protection of the most basic rights without the tools to even detect such an erosion of democracy...

The unequivocal call for the promotion of a democratic education throughout the scholastic process has not been taken up. This need is addressed with lip service at best and a shrug of the shoulders at worst… In recent years, the need for a democratic education is even more conspicuous. The public discourse has become violent, racist, inflammatory. The political class has turned the term ‘democracy’ into a dirty word identified with one particular political camp; social media is flooded with ‘fake news’…

Research in Israel and the world points to the importance and power of intervention at the earliest possible stage to ensure the creation of a foundation for social democratic resilience to preserve the country’s social future.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

### The multicultural challenge—coexistence and mutual respect in a diverse space

Continuing from the previous section, there is a particular sense of difficulty in integration among the Arab population, and, on the other hand, suspicion toward it on the part of the Jewish population.[[9]](#footnote-9)

* **Muslims feel discriminated against and out of the game**
  + Three out of five Muslim Arabs in Israel do not feel like they are a part of the State of Israel or feel concerned by its problems (as opposed to only one out of seven Jews).
  + Four out of five Arabs (and two out of three Jews) are convinced that the police do a less thorough job controlling crime in Arab neighborhoods. There is no chance of seeing a parallel statistic in Jewish schools in Tel Aviv, and possible the entire country, to that described by a high school principal in Yafo: “I’ve got 350 students from the most complicated families…Fifty of them have experienced murder in their immediate family, from cousins and closer, and some of them witnessed the murder with their own eyes.”
* **Most Jews are doubtful about the existence of systemic discrimination, on the one hand, and the positive intentions of the Arabs, on the other**.
  + About half of Arabs agree with the statement that most Arab citizens of Israel wish to integrate into Israeli society and be a part of it, as opposed to only one out of seven Jews.
  + When we add those who “somewhat agree,” that gap is narrowed to one out of five Arabs, as opposed to three out of five Jews.
  + On the bright side, about half of all citizens think that the COVID-19 crisis has improved relations between Jews and Arabs, as opposed to one out of six who think it has damaged relations.

## Pedagogical challenges: realizing learning potential and imparting a culture of relevant action

### The effectiveness challenge—realizing learning potential

Realizing students’ learning potential is not the only goal of the education system, but it is certainly one of the central ones. A graduate who leaves the education system without knowing their strengths and potential, whether it is in physics, songwriting, or business negotiations, represents a pedagogical failure. A system that looks at only one type of skill, and values those who are not gifted with that particular ability as less successful, does wrong by a large proportion of students and misuses funds allotted to it by the public for the purposes of care and nurture. Every student should be able to discover their own relative strengths, just as every teacher and principal should know the same about themselves.

And here is the occasion to propose a new concept that ought to be considered when we think about what it means to realize one’s learning potential. In the field of employment, the state of “underemployment” is defined as one where an employee is employed in a job that does not fully take advantage of their abilities and skills. Similarly, we might define a state of “**underlearning**” as one where a student learns in a way that does not fully take advantage of their most pronounced abilities and skills and those they prefer or might prefer to use if exposed to adequate activities.

Therefore, the challenge is not only to optimize learning in the narrow sense, as measured by matriculation results or exams such as PISA. The conventional measures of student success may even distort the picture. If the successful graduate is defined as, among other things, a person who has identified and developed their natural abilities and skills during their school years, then **there is a gap between the current measures of success and the true realization of abilities and skills, and there may be situations of high success scores coinciding with underlearning and vice versa**, for the following reasons:

1. A student can do well according to conventional measures, but the data will not show that the student in fact has **unexploited or dormant abilities that could have potentially led to even greater success**.
2. A student can do well according to conventional measures, but the data will not show that a large part of their success is a result of **utilizing abilities that they do not care for and from which they derive no emotional satisfaction**, so that there is no point in focusing on them, and if the student should come to identify themselves with those skills and abilities, this will lead them to choose a suboptimal career path.
3. A student can fail according to conventional measures, but the data will not show that the student has in fact acquired skills that will prove tremendously important to them in the future, for example, leadership skills, salesmanship, or empathy.
4. The statistical measure does not take into account the fact that **learning weaker or less preferred subjects is not necessarily a good use of time and effort**. In fact, most students are better off not striving to get more than a passing grade in a large part of the subjects and skills emphasized by the education system over the twelve-year scholastic period, and focusing on other skills instead—both in order to optimize their learning and to improve their self-image. Variance among the population is healthy, and in any measure of abilities and skills, a result that shows low variance in the general population may indicate a problem of the oppression of diversity. On the other hand, when the system knows how to allow each student to make significant progress in their areas of strength and preference, greater variance will appear in any success index.[[10]](#footnote-10) That means that the average index score will probably not be the highest, and that is a good thing. Admitting the tragic constraint that a full matriculation is required in order to be accepted for almost any academic degree, it must be recognized that **the sweeping encouragement of students to improve in areas of weakness while neglecting areas of strength is a serious pedagogical mistake.**

The challenge, thus, is to develop **an educational environment that will realize the learning potential of every student, alongside diverse and sophisticated metrics to measure the success of the effort.**

### The relevancy challenge—imparting perceptions, knowledge, and skills that are relevant to the students’ lives and future

To achieve personal success and to maintain a harmonious and sustainable society, today’s schoolchildren will be required to adopt very different behaviors and modes of action than the ones we currently employ.

The present program description was written mostly at a time when the coronavirus was dominating the headlines, but if we take a broader view, there is widespread scientific consensus that life on Earth is undergoing a traumatic and devastating transformation that is accelerating all the time due to climate change and other processes that invite us to change our perceptions, patterns, and systems.

There is also widespread consensus among researchers regarding the fact that the job market is facing unprecedented challenges due to the rise of artificial intelligence and other automation trends. Leading scientists and senior high-tech managers have called attention to mechanisms that are endangering democracy worldwide due to diverse digital addictions, fake news, the influence of social media on the way we think, make decisions, communicate, and act.

On the local and national level, there is also no shortage of challenges. Demographic shifts, widening income disparities, political crises and polarization, and population density are only some of the challenges awaiting our children. Even as we speak, some teachers have already begun trying to impart content relating to these challenges to their students.

The education system, as it stands, is not equipped to teach our children to face this future. Moreover, despite the wonderful people involved and all the good will in the world, it is not changing fast enough. Even if we did try to change in all the ways we know how, we still wouldn’t be able to keep up with reality. Therefore, we need to widen the perimeter of our thoughts and actions, and adopt more daring strategies.

The Strauss–Howe generational theory devised by William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1990 describes history as a sequence of four generational cycles.[[11]](#footnote-11) The theory correctly predicted that humanity would enter a period of social, political, and economic crisis in the first decades of the 21st century. According to this and other theories, today’s generation of children is growing up in conditions of overprotection, which hinders the development of their psychological resilience and capacity for initiative, and encourages dependency and conformity. This begs the question of whether the road to psychological resilience and initiative runs exclusively through pedagogical content about psychological resilience and capacity for initiative, or whether it might also include designing learning environments inspired physically and metaphorically by the “[playwork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Playwork)” concept rather than by padded playgrounds with their safety barriers and saccharine imagery.[[12]](#footnote-12) After all, today’s generation of children will have to take the reins from today’s youth and operate the new world order of the future. Should their first encounter with the freedom to take risk take place in the army, if at all, and their first encounter with total freedom of choice happen after their military service?

For the sake of the present, we must create schools that children and teens love to attend and feel enriched by, one that is built around the assumption that children and teens who excel in their studies yearn to learn and deserve to be more involved in and take more responsibility for their own learning and actions, if presented with the right conditions to do so. For the sake of the future, we must create a school that gives them the skills to handle the personal, national, and global challenges of tomorrow.

In all actuality, perceptions, knowledge, and skills are not stand-

alone items; they are part of a culture of action. We must create a space for the acquisition of a culture of action that is relevant to the 21st century, rather than a collection of fields of knowledge and skills.

## Organizational challenges: recruitment and retention of a management class from the city, and implementation of school policy

### The challenge of retention and burnout prevention—recruiting more principals from the city and retaining them for longer

There is evidence to show that principals get better with time. Principal retention is thus highly important, in particular when it comes to retention within the same school rather than the system as a whole (for a number of reasons), and even more so when it comes to schools in poor neighborhoods.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Furthermore, principal turnover has an enormous impact on pupils’ achievements and teacher turnover. This means that the longer we can keep principals in the same school, the more likely we are to see a steady rise in achievement and a decrease in organizational difficulties.

**According to the Municipal Department of Education’s data, in the past five years, approximately two out of five principals have vacated their positions.**

The three factors most strongly linked with principal turnover are school performance, accountability policy, and professional development.[[14]](#footnote-14) It is therefore reasonable to assume that principal training is a factor that may contribute positively to retention.

It bears mentioning here that becoming acclimatized in a new city, including developing a network of contacts and colleagues, learning about the city’s job culture, its unique programs, the parent and student populations, the particularities of the neighborhood and the city’s infrastructures, as well as its special “language”—all take time and effort, and there is therefore a great advantage in raising the proportion of principals coming from within the city’s educational personnel, as they require a much shorter acclimatization period.

Undoubtedly, external candidates might also prove excellent and clearly there should be some “outside forces” coming in and bringing fresh ideas into the system. Nevertheless, these principals will take longer to arrive at harmonious work processes within the system, to develop effective communications, and to feel like they belong in the community. In other words, beyond a certain percentage of new principals coming from the outside, the efficacy of the system decreases and it takes longer to develop the education culture in the city.

**According to the Municipal Department of Education’s data, the proportion of management candidates coming from within the education system in Tel Aviv is still lagging at about two out of five candidates.**

### The school governance challenge—implementing the principal’s policy in light of multiple constraints and weak formal authority

Despite what the title of “principal” might imply, officially, principals are not the managers of their educational staff and they do not have the authority to, for example, fire a teacher. A principal who wishes to do so has to traverse an obstacle course of red tape and, in most cases, fail to reach the finish line. A principal who wishes to change the school’s operational procedures in a way that is perceived as threatening employment conditions may find themselves facing off against teachers’ unions, or even summoned to a hearing.

This challenge in and of itself is not unique to Tel Aviv; however, there is an additional factor that complicates the situation, which is the power wielded by the parent organizations specifically and by parents in general in many of its neighborhoods. Tel Aviv’s population, for better or for worse, is made up of a majority of powerful and well-connected people. For better, because when the school can establish a fruitful collaboration with the parents’ community, it can achieve phenomenal success. For worse, from the principal’s perspective, when the parents are not supportive of the principal or oppose the initiatives principals promote within the school, they may receive negative press both on social media and via traditional media outlets, as well as tremendous pressure applied through other means.

## Challenges in early childhood education: disparities in managerial know-how, reinforcing the principal’ status, networking, and community orientation

In this addendum, we shall give special and separate attention to the area of early childhood education, representing the last of our four target populations of principal trainees. The field of management in the early childhood education system is very different from school management, both pedagogically and in terms of the organizational structure. There are fewer tiers of management for early childhood education, and therefore principals are faced with significant challenges in managing their time resources, managerial know-how, and limited budgets.

The addendum mainly addresses the managerial tier that consists of “leading” kindergarten instructors and kindergarten clusters, the latter being a numerical minority. Unlike the principals of kindergarten clusters, kindergarten leaders are not the de facto managers of the other kindergarten teachers in their area; rather, they fulfill functions such as accompaniment, administrative consulting, and leading pedagogical and professional growth. However, for the sake of simplicity, we shall henceforth refer to kindergarten leaders and cluster principals with the all-encompassing term “early childhood principals.”

### The training needs to provide a solution to a lack of basic management skills

The hundreds of kindergartens in the systems are mostly concentrated in autonomous educational spaces in specific geographical districts, under the direction of a kindergarten leader (there are currently 24 kindergarten leaders), with a minority aggregated under the kindergarten cluster system, that is, several kindergartens belonging to a centralized structure with a cluster principal (there are currently 28 cluster principals). Early childhood principals are subordinate to supervisors as well as to a regional administrative board of four regional administrators on behalf of the municipality.

Beyond the numerous differences between kindergartens and school, if we take a schematic look at the managerial aspect, we will see that unlike schools, where in most instances there are at least two additional hierarchical tiers between teacher and principal—those of grade principal and vice principal, as well as other support management positions—in the case of kindergartens, principals are solely in charge of kindergarten classes, without the help of middle management, and without thorough management training.

Unlike school principals, early childhood principals, at best, participate in a course that gives them the basic tools of management and training. While these are indeed important tools, they are nowhere near sufficient to meet the challenges these principals face.

In contrast to school classes, kindergarten classes are mainly run autonomously by the kindergarten instructor; consequently, the managing role of principal is very different. Likewise, the amount of attention a kindergarten leader can accord to each kindergarten is tiny—they have one day a week for the observation, assistance, or guidance of about twenty kindergarten teachers.

And even though cluster principals devote their full time to this function in a model that is more parallel to the school model, some of them must devote a lot more time to administrative functions, and they, too, have no management training. For the most part, they do not even have a shadowing period, since the majority of the clusters consist of new kindergartens.

### Recommendation to boost the status of early childhood education in general and early childhood principals in particular

Many professionals today estimate that some of the barriers to development on the professional level in general, and on the pedagogical level specifically, in kindergartens stem from the traditional perception of the kindergarten instructor as fulfilling a static role and having low motivation to change, experiment, initiate new models, and evolve.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The above is even more applicable to kindergarten assistants, since their role is traditionally perceived as consisting more of administrative and cleaning tasks than education, a role whose essence is to get things done quickly, to streamline, to operate, to organize, and, overall, to work efficiently with minimal deviations. The problem is that pedagogical action and growth are often influenced and, to a great extent, even dependent on cooperation on the part of the assistant.

Improving and updating the image of the early childhood education professions may provide a significant reinforcement to early childhood principals seeking to motivate kindergarten teachers to develop the kindergartens and their own personal careers. In order to position the profession as complex, rich, and evolving, and the kindergarten teachers and assistants as experts in their field, it is recommended to consider a variety of steps alongside recommendations for the training itself:

* We should eliminate the title of “assistant” and replace it with “educational aid” or “pedagogical aid.” The word “assistant” helps cement outdated thought patterns and it is equally associated with education as it is with dentistry. We cannot expect systemic advancements in thought and action without changing the branding of the role and the values associated with it.
* The principals can create joint forums of kindergarten teachers and aids in their area or in collaboration with other areas in various formats, which will spearhead a certain field of professional development. Some may even be eligible to receive funding for expert accompaniment, some of whom can be volunteers, for example, retirees with a certain expertise. The forums would work to expand the chosen professional capacity as well as impart it to the kindergarten teachers and parents through various means of training.
* Professional development can be initiated for kindergarten teachers and educational aids with the aim of learning how to “package” the knowledge they have accumulated, enrich and validate it, and transfer it in various formats, such as lectures to parents, podcasts, blogs, etc.
* The municipality can create a platform to facilitate expression, sharing, and learning via old and new media, such as a parenting podcast with the participation of kindergarten teachers and educational aids from the city. Of course, the same applies to school teachers and principals. Another possible example is a series of TED-like lectures delivered by kindergarten teachers and educational aids at parenting centers about various topics, such as supporting a child experiencing social difficulties in kindergarten.
* Regarding the principals themselves, we can consider creating an accredited process of certification (where one is lacking), for example, “early childhood pedagogical staff training” or “early childhood education leadership,” to be given on condition of completion of a certain learning syllabus and possibly of the accumulation of a certain number of consulting hours and managerial experience.

### Recommendation to strengthen networking and community spirit among early childhood principals

The lack of any intermediate management between the principal and the kindergarten teacher, together with the vague definition of the role, give the early childhood principal great independence and the opportunity to make their mark. On the other hand, in many senses, these principals also feel like they are going into battle alone. Taking into account their limited resources, the yearly layoffs of some of them, the lack of managerial knowledge and experience, and the lack of clarity about what is expected of them on the part of the kindergarten teachers as well, we find ourselves once again relying on the “[Heroic model](file:///C:\Users\Windows\Documents\Translation\ALE\insert%20hyperlink)” to create progress and breakthroughs.

In order to establish an “[Idealistic model](file:///C:\Users\Windows\Documents\Translation\ALE\insert%20link)” (see explanations about the two models in the section titled “[From ‘Eric Mandlebaum’s trap’ to holistic, consistent, and sustainable change](file:///C:\Users\Windows\Documents\Translation\ALE\Eric_Mandlebaum’s#_From_)”) there is a need to encourage community identification and create professional management norms within the community, which will facilitate greater mutual influence between the principals. Perhaps there is also a way to reinforce communication with school principals (certainly at the primary school level).

While we should encourage the establishment of a general forum of early childhood education principals in the city and boost collaboration, it is equally if not more important to encourage district forums and even examine the possibility of holding regular meetings and events. For example, awards or recognition ceremonies that will receive high public visibility, or conference events that will attract parents and include award presentations.

Programs and projects that pass an initial evaluation will be incorporated into pilots in additional kindergartens, and will be expanded upon success. This will create a chain reaction of evolution for the better. Of course, this relies on custom **measurement and evaluation** of the success of these programs and projects.

In addition, we might consider creating additional hierarchical tiers in the district management system, such as a top tier “senior kindergarten leader” that would coordinate several kindergarten leaders while giving them guidance and consulting, or a lower tier “deputy kindergarten leader” that will support the main kindergarten leader in every district.

Since the relatively large number of early childhood principals sets a limit on how much we can invest in the training of each individual, the addition of a senior management tier would also enable us to channel the limited training resources to a smaller group of principals who would then be able to impart the concepts and practices they learn to their subordinates.

### To create an effective training, the position must be well structured, with clearly gauged assistance

The role of kindergarten leader and cluster principal are vague and fail to produce the required results. This lack of clarity is convenient in the sense that every principal can choose what they want to do; however, it can also lead to conflict due to mismatched expectations. The role is lacking the drive created by setting specific aims, and much of the energy is wasted on internal and external discussions of what the job actually entails.

For example, should the kindergarten leader focus on the kindergarten or on the kindergarten teacher? Is their role to mainly make sure there are no incidents or anomalies, to design growth and development programs for each kindergarten, or to encourage “pedagogical experiments” and create breakthroughs? If part of the job is to focus on the kindergarten teachers, is it limited to the accompaniment of their professional growth only, or does it also include career mentoring and accompaniment of their personal growth? What does each part comprise and what is the difference?

There is a clear need to structure these roles at the level of the local authority, including the creation of **performance gauges**, personal oversight and development, and direct feedback to let each principal know where they stand. This will also help reduce the uncertainty involved in the problematic practice of firing a certain number of kindergarten leaders every year without communicating with them and without imbuing them with the confidence that the question of whether they will be employed next year or not is decided according to a clear and fair process.

It is important to note that the gauge in question would not require that the principal be “good at everything”; rather it would demand that they develop their natural abilities and methods of advancing the kindergartens in their care. Therefore, the gauge may include some basic elements, and some optional elements divided into different tracks according to the principal’s preferences in combination with the needs of the relevant district or cluster.

The gauge would serve the function of constructive assessment and as a compass to guide the principal in their managerial activities.

This gauge may also serve as a model for the creation of an additional gauge for kindergarten teachers, which will also include some common elements and some optional elements. No less importantly, it can serve as a model for the creation of a new gauge that will express a new attitude to the position of **educational aid**.

### Early childhood principals need to formulate their own approach to balance between standardization and diversity

Most of us probably expect the level of standardization of different classrooms in a school to be higher than that of kindergarten classes in a district. In elementary school, we would expect to see a great deal of uniformity in terms of structure, routines, and approaches between classes 2B and 6C because they belong to the same school under the direction of one principal, with a specific vision of the school’s organizational and pedagogical identity. A kindergarten cluster, in this sense, is somewhere between the two.

On the other hand, the person we perceive to be running the kindergarten is the kindergarten teacher, rather than the kindergarten leader above them, and we would not be surprised to see that different kindergarten teachers in the same district or under the same kindergarten leader have taken their kindergartens in fundamentally different directions over time.

If we assume that the goals of the early childhood principal are to have a real impact on the vision and the organizational and pedagogical identity of kindergartens in their district or cluster, we must accordingly take an activist approach to their role. In the spirit of the present program, we would want them to lead breakthroughs in their clusters and districts, a combination of improving and bringing kindergartens that are lagging behind up to an adequate level, but also finding pathways toward growth and an increasingly higher quality of education that would be relevant to the 21st century. Even concepts like Project Based Learning (PBL), which are most often discussed in school contexts, can be successfully implemented in kindergartens.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Clearly, the realization of any such vision must be approached with intelligence and sensitivity, and the stakeholders must be primed to accept it. However, it is legitimate for a school principal to demand of its staff to align itself with such a vision. Does the same legitimacy extend to an early childhood education principal?

If we assume that it does, it is important for this point to be extremely clear, which means that principals need to receive support and approval from educational management. Only then can we honestly say that we expect early childhood principals to initiate change and even make breakthroughs in kindergartens under their jurisdiction.

What will be the accepted “range of maneuver” for each kindergarten to be able to choose how to realize the vision or to what extent they want to mobilize behind the vision? What types of independent approaches and actions will be encouraged and which will be met with a request for alignment? The policy enacted at the level of the district or cluster will follow the same rule as the policy at the level of the region or the authority. That is to say, the approach and mode of action concerning these issues will have to be formulated by each principal individually, according to the guidelines and in cooperation with the authority and the supervisor.

# The Program Will Help Develop a Tier of Principals Who Will Promote Educational Goals in the City

This program has been prepared for the municipal Department of Education in Tel Aviv-Yafo and is designed to serve an array of short-, mid-, and long-term goals through the personal and professional development of the principal community.

## The link between principal training and school success

Principals can dramatically improve educational outcomes. They have a significant impact on the development and retention of teachers and others staff members and the optimal use of their capabilities, as well as on the creation of an appropriate educational culture and atmosphere, constructive problem solving, obtaining and utilizing resources for the school, and more.

The person leading the school is almost as important as the teacher for the individual student. For example, taking into account the limitations of the metrics involved, one study showed that the principal has a 25% impact on achievement compared to the 33% impact of the teacher.[[17]](#footnote-17) The principal is the one person in the best position to ensure the provision of consistent quality education and, in fact, it is the combination of good principals and teachers that is the most conducive to schools’ success. Without one of the components, the school will have a hard time keeping maintaining itself, much less succeeding.

The body of research on the causal link between the quality of management and school success is not yet large enough to draw firm conclusions, but there is, at the very least, a positive correlation between principals who get high evaluation scores and student performance growth, student attendance,[[18]](#footnote-18) school climate, retention of successful teachers[[19]](#footnote-19) and turnover of less successful teachers, and the sense that there is leadership in the school.[[20]](#footnote-20)

As for the causal link between the quality of principal training programs and the quality of school management and success, the research body is modest, yet it does show links between certain training programs and the low or high performance of principals.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Thus, there is significant, if not conclusive, evidence to corroborate the widespread impression that good principals not only affect the achievements of the school according to various metrics, but are vital to its success.

Therefore, the first question we should as is, what should **our program’s objectives** be in light of the challenges and the array of goals set by the Department of Education?

## Aligning with the unique goals of the municipal education system—the three beacons

A successful principal in Tel Aviv-Yafo can break through to relevant, value-driven, and egalitarian education

In light of the human diversity in Tel Aviv-Yafo and the challenges described above, the city has set itself the goal of providing real equal opportunity to every child and impart to them values that will help create a sense of coexistence and community between for all the different populations within its borders. The value position chosen by the city is the joint development of an urban community that emphasizes the diversity and uniqueness of each person.

The city’s unique goals have been formulated as the three “beacons” with which the present program has aligned its overarching objectives:

1. **Breakthrough education**—Pedagogical breakthroughs, transformation of the scholastic space, a shift in paradigms and existing educational structures, school climate, managing the learning process, study programs, professional development, measurement and evaluation.
2. **Values-based education**—Promotion of civic education for shared “Israeliness” that strengthens democratic values and promotes an open and tolerant lifestyle within the community and culture, through discourse, exposure, and imparting tools for critical thinking and personal expression.
3. **Promotion of equality**—The system aspires to become a model of quality, egalitarian public education, while providing unique solutions to the challenges faced by different populations, cultivating egalitarian practices, and developing practices to minimize particular growth hinderances.

It can be seen that the second and third beacons are goals in and of themselves, while the first beacon is a means to achieving the goal of relevant education, the accomplishment of which includes beacons two and three. At the same time, it is important to note that a breakthrough culture, with all the approaches, skills, and abilities that it requires, is likewise indirectly important as a model for students seeking to integrate into the twenty-first-century labor market.

As for the principals, it seems statistically more common to find, and easier to select and train principals who hold values in line with beacons two and three than principals who already manage to implement groundbreaking education in the full sense of the word, as formulated in beacon one.

#### Derived city-wide objectives

To attract more principals to grow within the Tel Aviv-Yafo education system and retain them for longer.

Based on the broad consensus that the principals’ tier is key to achieving the overarching goals defined by the beacons, immediate direct objectives were set for improving this tier, i.e. growing the tier from the city’s human capital, and reducing the turnover of principals. In other words:

**Sub-objectives** that emerged in response to contemporary challenges during the study, and have been added to the organizational challenges:

1. Boosting the status of middle school principals in the city, and providing unique tools for this population of principals who are constantly struggling to contend with the magnitude of their responsibilities, the expectations placed upon them, and their sense of responsibility, on the one hand, and their subordination to six-year school principals, on the other hand. There is lack of internal and external clarity in terms of the scope of their authority. This measure may both facilitate the work of six-year school principals and encourage middle school principals to become future principals of six-year and/or primary schools.
2. Development or strengthening of principal communities to increase mental resilience and the ability to deal with difficulties through peer support and to create new collaborations, all while reducing feelings of suspicion and competition that sometimes fester between principals.

Thus, in the detailed design and implementation of the program, it is important to emphasize the development and strengthening of principal community, and especially the empowerment of middle school principals.

#### Derived school-wide objectives

Looking at the picture at the school-level, the research we have conducted shows a number of widespread organizational and pedagogical challenges, the handling of which can be facilitated by training in the broad sense of the word (diverse types of concentrated or continuous training):

1. Cultivating succession planning (principals) within the school
2. Tools for effective communication with parents
3. Tools for effective communication with staff
4. Consolidating a managerial identity and a personal-managerial vision
5. Sharpening and boosting personal knowledge in diverse fields, such as management under conditions of uncertainty, hybrid learning, SEL, learning communities, and more.

Let us note that the autonomy challenge is less present in Tel Aviv-Yafo than in other cities. On the contrary, principals claimed to receive backing for their decisions from the municipal Department of Education, as well as support in situations of conflict with various elements, autonomy, and legitimation for trial and error experimentation, including the containment of failure along the way.

## Educational goals that are not unique to the city

A successful Tel Aviv-Yafo principal manages to create a positive and empowering socialization experience that is relevant to the future within the community.

Education in all its forms is always forced to contend with the tension between the needs of the present and the needs of the future, and in the case of the education system, with the additional tension between the individual perspective and the communal and state perspectives.

Dedicated educators ask themselves the question: “Who should we be and what should we do to be useful to students and the society?”

In other words, looked at from the broad perspective, the measure of successful education goes beyond performance on standardized tests, as shown by the 2007 McKinsey Report.[[22]](#footnote-22)

What is this benefit that so many thinkers have tried to define? A value decision is required here, and the West currently tends to define the supreme personal and social goal as happiness. For example, as one of the world-renowned experts in positive psychology, Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar, writes in his book “Happier”: “A human being, like a business, makes profits and suffers losses. For a human being, however, the ultimate currency is not money… The ultimate currency for a human being is happiness.”[[23]](#footnote-23)

Happiness, according to Ben-Shahar, is a combination between present and future, between present enjoyment and future meaning. If so, we can split our question into four parts:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Timeframe  Perspective | **Present**—Current needs | **Future**—Years and decades from now |
| **Individual**—The individual perspective of the student or parent that principals have to recognize and consider | How do we give students a happy (positive and meaningful) experience during their childhood and teenage years? | How do we increase the likelihood that they grow up to be happy adults who enjoy themselves and fill fulfilled? |
| **Collective**—The perspective of the public administration in charge of the collective benefit of the municipality or the state, for example. | How does the education we provide benefit the community or the country? | How does the education we provide benefit the future of the community or the country? |

To answer these questions, we need to define:

1. What do children require to be happy?
2. What do adults require to be happy?
3. How can education benefit the community and the country? Why is education required in these contexts?
4. How do we invest in these four goals in a balanced way and what do we do in case of conflicting interests?

Here we must answer these questions in the local context. In Tel Aviv-Yafo, for example, we can sketch out a similar matrix of goals that is more specific to the city (including additional content, of course):

**Present**

**FuturE**

Egalitarian society

Harmony

**Sustainability**

Democracy

Career

Family

Relationships

Community life

Leisure

Health

Success

**Individual**

**Friends**

**Self- expression**

Self-confidence

Safe environment

**Collective**

Health

Order

Coexistence

To sum up, what we wish to create is an education system that provides each child in the city a positive and empowering socialization experience that is relevant to the future within the community. That is the fundamental condition for successful public education as defined by the consensus in Tel Aviv-Yafo, and the overall anchor of the program.

## We are still far from reaching our education goals

Most schools in Israel in general and in the municipality in particular are still far from attaining the desired results.

The state of education in the system is not very different from the state of education nationwide:

1. **The weight of the past**— The Department of Education in Tel Aviv-Yafo aspires to make profound changes in the system from a local perspective, but this aspiration and, especially, its implementation in practice are relatively recent developments. In the past, the Department focused more on achieving success according to the national indices. The structures, routines, culture, and approaches of the past continue, and noticeably so.
2. **Partnership with the Ministry of Education**— Even given the new aspirations and practices of the municipality’s Department of Education, the national Ministry of Education plays a role in the management of the municipal education system. Therefore, while it is certainly possible and worthwhile to strive to promote local changes, the municipal education system must be acknowledged as part of the national education framework.

If so, how close is the current state of education in the country to fulfilling the goals we have outlined? Let us first qualify by saying that it is very difficult to measure the answer to this question. Educational initiatives are long-term processes, and their success in relation to future goals is measured against present assessments about the future and its requirements. Ideally, the quality of education should be assessed from a historical vantage point several generations removed and, preferably, with a good-resolution crystal ball.

That being said, it would seem that with the exception of some local successes, the education system in Israel presents mostly mixed or low results for all targets, on the individual and collective levels, and in terms of present and future needs.[[24]](#footnote-24)

# The Strategy: Creating a Community of Trailblazing Principals

The main purpose of the present programs can be formulated as selecting, training, and retaining trailblazing principals who will pave the way toward the fulfillment of the city’s goals.

As we’ve shown, in the current state of the education system, reaching the program’s targets requires a transformative approach, rather than approach oriented toward the maintenance, retention, or optimization of existing elements. This can only happen in a culture of breakthroughs and trailblazers, as described in the following chart:

**Selecting trailblazers**

**Accompaniment and retention for trailblazers**

**Training for breakthroughshs**

**Program**

**Recruitment, training, retention**

**Infrastructure: systemic breakthrough culture**

**Equal opportunity**

**Democracy, coexistence**

**Results**

## Eight principles of breakthrough action

**All other goals**

**Ongoing work and initiatives at the school**

In general, and especially when the goal is to make a breakthrough, a principal needs to combine two types of action:

1. Driving change and managing change, including its transitional phases, which requires flexibility, the ability to improvise, dealing with conflict, daring, and curiosity.
2. Systematic management that instills order and organization, structures space and time, focuses, simplifies, and unifies.

The 2015 report titled “School Principals as Drivers of Change: Action Patterns of Principals Who Made Significant Pedagogical Changes” submitted to the Avnei Rosha Institute, describes a qualitative study conducted among five principals who managed to implement profound changes in their schools—four at the middle school level and one at the primary level, three at secular public schools and two at religious public schools.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Despite the differences between the principals, it turned out that in all cases, the same eight principles of action (“pillars of action” to use the wording of the report) had been applied. Despite the limitations of the report as qualitative research only, it is worthwhile to have an in-depth look at its findings, especially in light of the fact that “to this day, no research has been conducted that distinctly focuses on the concrete patterns of action of principals who successfully brought about fundamental pedagogical changes.”

The following is an adapted version of the action principals of trailblazing principals, some of which are borrowed from the report and some of which are reformulated for the sake of broadening, precision, or adjustment of their language to suit a practical program. As mentioned previously, **we are not talking about “breakthroughs” in the narrow sense of the word. The following principles encompass not only the initiating or trailblazing aspect of a principal’s activity, but also the functional and systematic aspect of running a school properly and effectively.** The principles are divided into two categories—directional and motivational principles:

1. **Giving direction**—Outlining and updating principles of action and ensuring that all action and decisions are in line with them.
   1. **Formulating a practical vision**— Giving the basic push toward significant change even if it is not formulated at the beginning, formulating it along the way, translating it into a clear perception, practices, and organizational patterns at the school, and communicating and marketing it inside and outside the school. To achieve a breakthrough, a disruption in the current structure or mode of operation of the school is required. Such disruption always creates resistance. The principal has to make this disruption clearheadedly, creatively, and out of a deep conviction that this is the right and proper thing to do for the sake of the students and that it should be fought for in defiance of the familiar, ordinary, and convenient.
   2. **Being flexible and adaptable**—Constantly improving the formulation of the desired change, looking for new elements, adjusting action patterns, and striving toward personal development in the process.
   3. **Understanding the big picture**—Connecting the parts to form a cohesive, holistic approach, never losing sight of the big picture, understanding how one factor affects all other factors, fitting new and diverse elements into the transformation process.
   4. **Insisting on the small details**—Remaining highly involved at all levels of the process, imparting the feeling that the principal is in touch with everything that is going on, and making sure that the desired direction is embodied, in practice, in every detail, rather than “on the whole.”
2. **Motivating**—Making sure that the direction is combined with the practical drive to action on the part of the staff, the students, and other stakeholders.
   1. **Propagating emotional contagion**—Creating and encouraging feelings of excitement, commitment, and determination that spread through the staff, the student body, and beyond. [Emotional contagion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emotional_contagion) is considered an essential leadership skill.
   2. **Serving as a role model for action**—Behaving in a way that models commitment to goals and the willingness to do whatever it takes beyond the formal definition of the job in order to create norms and values that inspire staff and students to invest effort in their part of the work.
   3. **Overcoming resistance**—Dealing with internal and external resistance in an effective, proportionate, consistent, stable, and determined manner and, when possible, leverage them in favor of the desired change while creating fruitful alliances.
   4. **Projecting faith and confidence**—Projecting trust, faith, and confidence in the change and in the people around you, building up teachers’ and students’ sense of confidence and capability, and inspiring the same among other stakeholders.

Some of these principles are familiar to us and are already integrated either directly or indirectly in the Trailblazers Program. But what does the principal who applies these principles of action actually look like?

## What do Trailblazing Principals have in common?

Every school has its own unique attributes and challenges and, therefore, the range of trailblazing principals is very wide, as is the range of possible connections between principal and school and the range of roads to success and ways to get there.

What we can say is that every principal has to be fluent in several “languages” in order to efficiently promote a large number of issues—the language of intimacy, the language of operations, the organizational language, the language of pedagogy, the language of entrepreneurship, the language of waging battle, and the language of conflict resolution. Their work and its interaction with who they are as a person, as well as the cultural, national, regulatory, and socioeconomic context in which they work are so complex that it is impossible to create one failproof “recipe” for training principals, let alone a sustainable one.

On the other hand, it is not the principal’s job to be a superhero, adored by all, and able to solve all problems by the sheer force of their inimitable personality. Such a model is limited, limiting, and provides no systemic solution, as we shall see further on.

To quote Ken Robinson (RIP), “The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it’s to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they’re valued.”[[26]](#footnote-26) Let us add—a culture where everyone can also mobilize others and realize their ideas in practice.

However, this culture is created differently in each managerial situation, as a result of the encounter between different people and different environments. Different principals need to be provided with ways to grow that are right for them.

The report revealed that every principal applied the same principles of action in very different ways. That is, the strategies or courses of action that create qualitative change are a variable matter—there is no one right way. The very application of the principles of action, however, requires that the person applying them possess certain characteristics.

These characteristics can be defined in two ways:

1. **Internal characteristics**, such as attributes, values, capacities. For example, resilience.
2. **Behavioral patterns**, such as skills, habits, and patterns of action. For example, tenaciousness.

Just from looking at the above examples, it becomes clear that the distinction is not always clear-cut, since tenaciousness can sometimes be defined as an internal characteristic (“tenaciousness is one of my prominent personality traits”) or as a habit/pattern of action (“I tend to be tenacious when fighting for things that are important to me”).

**When it comes to training**, internal characteristics may be more difficult to change through cultivation and learning, but when they do change, these transformations are considered more profound. On the other hand, internal characteristics can also be affected by behavioral changes – the influence is mutual.

However, when selecting people suitable for leadership, an interview is today considered fairer[[27]](#footnote-27) and more valid[[28]](#footnote-28) if it aims to reveal behavioral characteristics rather than internal characteristics. Moreover, there are those who question whether personal qualities are indeed as stable as is commonly assumed and whether they are manifested in all types of situations.

Regardless, since the two approaches are useful for our needs, we decided to use both and sometimes left the distinction deliberately vague.

The selected characteristics, in accordance with the principles of action, are as follows. For the purpose of the analysis, we relied, among other things, on interviews with principals and professionals conducted as part of the program. There is probably no one person who high exhibits high levels of all of these characteristics, and one can succeed of course without having the “full package.” However, we generally would want principals to have as broad a fit as possible for the following:

1. **Giving direction**
   1. **Formulating a practical vision**—This requires:
      1. **Personal maturity**— A stage of personal development wherein one has sufficient self-knowledge about one’s personal values, motivations, and inclinations, and the willingness to shift the emphasis from further self-inquiry to action informed by the existing self-knowledge, alongside continued development as a secondary endeavor.
      2. **Ability to make choices**— The ability to commit to a particular vision out of all the options out there, and to strive for it powerfully, while letting go of other possibilities and not looking back.
      3. **Conceptualization**—The ability to communicate a coherent and clear picture of reality and clear guiding principles in order to pass one’s vision on to others.
      4. **Ability to implement**—The ability to translate one’s vision into practical steps for implementation in structures and routines.
   2. **Being flexible and adaptable**— Constantly improving the formulation of the desired change, looking for new elements, adjusting action patterns, and striving toward personal development in the process.
2. **Humility**—The ability to listen to others, avoid over-decisiveness, and recognize and reject the tendency to over-value and overestimate one’s own opinions, ideas, and perceptions.
3. **Flexibility**—The ability to act amidst unanswered questions and with very partial control over the situation, to take risks and adjust expectations.
4. **Quick recovery**—The ability to quickly overcome the frequent emotional upheavals that come with failure and disappointment, to let go of past expectations, and make room for fresh ideas.
5. **Opportunity management**—Thought and action patterns that seek and find opportunities in various circumstances and take advantage of them to outline new goals and advance in the pursuit of existing ones.
6. **Intelligence**—The tendency to improve over time through honest self-reflection and the willingness to identify, consider, and experience a wide range of possibilities for one’s next move and for solving challenges, including the habit of engaging in creative thinking and mindfulness processes before proceeding to action.
   1. **Understanding the big picture**— Connecting the parts to form a cohesive, holistic approach, never losing sight of the big picture, understanding how one factor affects all other factors, fitting new and diverse elements into the transformation process.
      1. **Human insight**—Empathy for the people and groups involved and an understanding of their needs; the ability to recognize their degree of flexibility and main patterns of action.
      2. **Systemic vision**—The ability to understand the rules guiding the whole or parts of the system and recognize patterns of change, as well as future directions and trends.
      3. **Patience and perspective**—The ability to rise above the events of the present and invest time, attention, and concerted efforts in considering the broad perspective and long-term processes.
   2. **Insisting on the small details**— Remaining highly involved at all levels of the process, imparting the feeling that the principal is in touch with everything that is going on.
      1. **Diagnosis of critical points**—The ability to recognize the limited number of factors that have the most impact on the results and to give them the necessary attention.
      2. **Filtering out the small stuff**—The ability to mentally let go of non-critical points and not deal with them out of the understanding that working in education (unlike directing a feature film, for instance) means not being able to execute all of the ideas, and that micromanagement of every action or result is impossible.
      3. **Multitasking**—The ability to internalize important information while moving through a complex environment rich in internal and external details and stimuli.
7. **Motivating**
   1. **Propagating emotional contagion**—Creating and encouraging feelings of excitement, commitment, and determination that spread through the staff, the student body, and beyond.
      1. **Emotional intelligence**—Emotional intelligence in general is an overly broad term, but it includes elements that allow one to lead and to “infect” others with emotion, which is why we used this familiar term for the sake of simplicity.
      2. **Charisma**—Effective use of complex and nuanced spoken language, as well as tone and rich body language.
      3. **Guidance skills**—The ability to lead groups through structured meetings and effective communication with different people in diverse situations; the ability to manage group dynamics, to handle opposition, and to lead assertively.
   2. **Serving as a role model for action**— Behaving in a way that models commitment to goals and the willingness to do whatever it takes beyond the formal definition of the job in order to create norms and values that inspire staff and students to invest effort in their part of the work.
      1. **Integrity**—consistency between what one says, intends, and does, and the ability to justify oneself in cases where such consistency has not been achieved.
      2. **Dedication to the cause**—Setting goals, targets, and aspirations informed by the welfare of the students alone, while disregarding prescribed external metrics when necessary.
      3. **Achievement-orientation**—Striving for ever-higher standards by the measures that count.
      4. **Risk-taking**—Not a love of risk, but the willingness to take risks in situations where they are worth taking.
      5. **Tenacity**—Pursuing important targets in spite of obstacles (but not out of stubbornness, that is, while being flexible when appropriate, as mentioned above).
      6. **Responsibility**—Owning the ambition to achieve results and focusing on it, as opposed to settling for insufficient results or effort alone, sometimes while creating the impression of achievement where there is none.
      7. **Decision-making**—The ability to make ongoing decisions under conditions of uncertainty, decisions that both perpetuate the vision and its spirit and take into account each situation individually, balancing between the need to listen, investigate, and minimize risk, on the one hand, and the need to decide and move forward, on the other hand.
      8. **Sharing**—Beyond transparency, one has to actively share the deliberations behind one’s decisions, one’s feelings, thought processes, and action patterns in order to teach others the proper way to conduct themselves, to create norms, and, in the long-term, build a desirable work culture for all.
   3. **Overcoming resistance**— Dealing with internal and external resistance in an effective, proportionate, consistent, stable, and determined manner and, when possible, leverage them in favor of the desired change while creating fruitful alliances.
      1. **Swimming against the stream**—The willingness to be disagreeable, to risk conduct that is not aimed to please and that defies the conventional and the acceptable, and the ability to maintain these stances for long stretches of time when necessary.
      2. **Political skills**—The ability to recognize centers of power and influence, to build coalitions, to navigate decisions, and to obtain resources.
      3. **Behavioral maneuvering**—Knowing how to create built-in incentives to nudge staff and students toward the desired behavior.
      4. **Psychological resilience**—The ability to continue functioning effectively and hold one’s ground in situations of conflict.
   4. **Projecting faith and confidence**— Projecting trust, faith, and confidence in the change and in the people around you, building up teachers’ and students’ sense of confidence and capability, and inspiring the same among other stakeholders.
      1. **Self-efficacy**—Internal belief in one’s personal capability to make the necessary change and face its consequences.
      2. **Commitment to others**—Making the choice to dedicate one’s life to facilitating the development of others, and making it wholeheartedly, based on one’s authentic inclinations.
      3. **Projecting psychological security**—Creating a space of acceptance and recognition of others, with all their strengths and weaknesses, while minimizing judgment, displaying supreme listening capacities and the desire to hear out feelings, thoughts, and ideas; appreciating others for who they are and building them up whenever possible.
      4. **Branding and marketing skills**—The ability to create an engaging story around one’s initiatives and communicate it effectively through the use of the right channels and the right language to all parties—the Department of Education, the Ministry, partners, teachers, students, and parents.

For each characteristic, it is possible to build a scale that will define different degrees of the characteristic in behavioral terms.

## From “Eric Mandlebaum’s trap” to holistic, consistent, and sustainable change

Trailblazing principals are a wonderful boon to the thousands of students who are privileged to study at the educational institution they lead, a boon to their families and a boon to the community. However, the above-listed characteristics of trailblazing principals very rarely coincide in a single person. They are not always easy to identify, and some are difficult to learn. We can surmise that this is why, to date, breakthroughs have occurred in sporadic places, “islands,” and have not been widespread in any systemic way. While we recognize all the good that such schools do, we must admit that, at least so far, they have not been able to spread their benefit to the whole system and most of its students. In the words of a frustrated educator with whom we once spoke, “Good things happen, yes, but how many Eric Mandelbaums are there out there?”[[29]](#footnote-29)

It is difficult to put one’s finger on what makes a person become a trailblazer of their own initiative, without any visible external motivation. We can assume that they correspond to various definitions in psychological theories. For example, Personality Theory describes certain traits that characterize entrepreneurs, while Edgar Schein’s Career Anchors Theory claims that only one in eight people is driven to face particularly difficult challenges, which most people prefer to avoid.[[30]](#footnote-30) Whatever the model might be, it currently exists in specific “islands,” which do not have enough pull to drag the entire system along with them.

**Systemic breakthroughs** cannot rely on the **heroic model** of principals who pave the way on their own, making changes out of nowhere, setting their own targets, and inventing new ways of execution.

As happy as we might be with the unique schools the model produces, its overall results are tragic. If we believe that groundbreaking education really only happens when a singular principal, in an exceptional, heroic effort, develops an exceptional school, there is no choice but to accept that most children are doomed to have an inadequate educational experience.

Moreover, the **heroic model** is limited not only in space but also in time. After these legendary principals retire, we’ve all heard it said—“Yes, it’s still a special school, but it’s not what it used to be when so-and-so was around…” And most of the time, this assessment is correct.

How, then, do we create state of affairs in which each child having access to excellent and meaningful education is standard? We must come up with a model that relies not on exceptional heroes, but on very good and not overly rare people who work in a well-designed system with a very good work culture. The inadequate education so unfortunately common today should be the exception, to be corrected as soon as possible.

We might imagine a few other models for generating a system in which breakthroughs are the norm:

1. **The organic model** (or the apprentice model)—Trailblazing and exceptional principals, over time, produce students who become principals in the same vein. This model gives these principals an advantage over most principals who studied and worked in non-groundbreaking schools by providing them with a coherent example, belief in what they are doing, and practical experience in implementing action principles. This is the model of the lucky few (or rather, their lucky students) who have worked in outstanding and groundbreaking schools, and succeed in replicating this success in other schools. Such a model is important, but insufficient in and of itself. It is slow and limited, since it still requires a rare combination of characteristics. It takes a long time to replicate the success, the attempt is not always successful, and its spread is ultimately restricted since the innovation is based on a single prototype. Any one groundbreaking design, wonderful as it may be, cannot be suitable for all schools and principals.
2. **The eclectic model**—Regular import of principals from other fields who will come equipped with ideas and action patterns. These principals will adapt the goals and operational procedures they acquired from other excellence contexts, such as informal education, the high-tech industry, or service in certain military units, to the context of education. This, of course, also requires a high degree of initiative, originality, and daring. This model is perhaps more scalable than the first two, even though it, too, is limited in that it poses the unique challenge of personal assimilation to a new framework, the complex adaptation of ideas, and the risk of importing elements that, in the long run, will prove unsuccessful alongside successful ones. Such importation may turn out to be very positive; however, it, too, cannot singlehandedly bring about the systemic transformation that is required.
3. **The subversive model**—A group of idealistic and ambitious principals with innovative ideas and approaches, who together will achieve a breakthrough as a supportive community, one whose members provide each other with legitimation for breakthroughs, spare each other some of the hardships of trial and error by continuously sharing insights, set steadily rising standards for each other, and establish norms of innovation and progress that defy the status quo. Examples of this kind of model abound in modern art, for example, but not in education. The proven way to bring it about is, paradoxically, by suppressing innovative thought, clinging to conservatism, and frustrating principals until they reach a boiling point from which creative and productive rebellion can emerge. Such a scenario may be very useful if and when it should occur naturally; yet, it is very difficult and problematic to bring about intentionally.
4. **The idealistic model**—Institutional espousal of ideology, as opposed to the subversive model, and ideological indoctrination of principals to create a new norm wherein everyone aligns with the desired values and there is no need to be outstanding in order to realize educational goals. On the one hand, this model has the disadvantage of requiring, at least initially, a “top-down” prescription of principles, which limits freedom of action, risks instilling erroneous approaches alongside productive ones, and may suppress original thought. On the other hand, it has the power to sweepingly and conclusively eradicate the unproductive action principles that are rife in the current system de facto, and help institute new, better, and more positive standards.

To this end, clear action principles must be formulated rather than just values, since these are often subjected to such a wide range of interpretation that any practical implication can easily be lost in the mix, or alternatively, they can be misused or even knowingly exploited. An example of the type of action principles we have in mind can be gleaned from the formulation of the principles of the Norwegian education system.[[31]](#footnote-31)

It is important to note that the idea is not to outline a “groundbreaking model” (for example, turn all schools into Montessori schools) but a “model for breakthroughs,” whereby the whole system and all its components can become more progressive and better able to facilitate the fit between the principal and all they have to give, and the nature and needs of the school. And of course, the same model can be adopted within the school at the staff level.

**The idealistic model that creates an organizational environment and culture wherein breakthroughs are the norm** is the one that can broaden the boundaries of the exclusive trailblazing principals’ club, release us from the “Eric Mandelbaum trap,” and give a much wider range of principals—all of them, eventually—the confidence, power, and energy to make breakthroughs.

Groundbreaking excellence is out there, but it is not the status quo. The aim of the program, if so, is to make the outstanding standard. Or, if we wish to put it another way, to make the current normal abnormal. **This is similar to the teacher-student dilemma: how does the teacher get the group to a state where they can all flourish and succeed, each in their own domain, rather than the elite few?**

To implement the idealistic model it is necessary, as stated, to formulate clear principles of action, put them to practice, and change the discourse and culture. Accordingly, this program specifies both principles of action that can be implemented through routines and structures, and recommended principles for application at the level of discourse and culture. This will be a long process that will take many years to complete, but the model has already begun to take shape to some extent in the city of Tel Aviv-Yafo. According to one of our sources, it took the lauded Finnish education system about two decades to achieve such an environment of exceptional education. For Israel, having experienced over seventy years of inadequate education, this may be a deal worth taking. Israelis being Israelis, however, we will strive for quicker outcomes.

## Recommended steps for supporting culture-level change

For promoting the idealistic model, within the scope of the present program, we recommend thinking along the following lines:

1. **Structuring the profession**—What makes a good principal? What is good management? In many cases it is difficult to assess, even in retrospect, to what degree any particular principal’s contribution outweighed their shortcomings (or didn’t), in which instances they had acted optimally, and in which less so. Today the only explicit evaluation of principal is entrusted in the hands of supervisors and performed using a tool developed by Rama (the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education), which is difficult to implement in practice and, to the best of our knowledge, has not been updated since 2011.

In many other organizations and specific areas of activity, there is an explicit professional hierarchy which dictates each position’s influence, responsibilities, remuneration, explicit promotion processes, including a promotion trajectory and threshold requirements, and clear and significant metrics for each rank looking at results, patterns of action, and range of expectations, which make it easy to assess one’s performance and to develop a wide array of professional development tools that can be integrated into a development and improvement program.

We can define a professional hierarchy ranging from pre-management (non-principal teachers) or succession pool members to principals of six-year schools. We might also consider other significant ranks, such as “expert principals” who can train future principals. Such professional definitions give the potential principal a clear horizon, coordination of expectations, a comprehensive checklist of requirements, and a clear path of progress.

Structuring the profession will be especially useful in the case of middle school principals, in light of the ambiguity of the existing expectations and boundaries of responsibility between them and six-year school principals. It will make it possible to coordinate expectations between all parties regarding their status, or regarding the range of possible answers to the question of their status.

Structuring the profession is a project that can be carried out with the help of an external supplier—company or consultant—in collaboration with stakeholders in the city, and should include a plan for implementation that anticipates changes in structures and routines, as well as management and monitoring of the changes and their results.

1. **Public relations**— A public relations campaign for principals of the city’s schools among the residents may correct negative attitudes that are often rooted in ignorance and create positive, encouraging, supportive, and appreciative attitudes toward principals.

Such attitudes will help prevent aggressive or disrespectful treatment, increase trust and cooperation, and strengthen the status of principals. They can go a long way toward creating legitimacy and even a public expectation for the implementation of complex changes, out of understanding and agreement with the motives, and with gratitude to those who bear the burden of dealing with the transition.

With time, to take a broader perspective, it may even create a new ethos of educators in the city and take advantage of its positive image in the long-term to attract quality teachers and encourage talented people to choose a teaching career with a view to reaching an administrative position in a Tel Aviv-Yafo school.

The idealistic model can, of course, be promoted by various means beyond the recommendations listed above.

## Recommended steps for supporting change at the practical level

For systemic breakthrough to be implementable, it must rely on additional strategic measures.

Even if all of the abovementioned steps are implemented, it is not certain that they will suffice. The heroic model contains one other misleading element: we notice the people who succeeded only in retrospect, and miss the supportive conditions beyond the character of the principal themselves, which were often necessary to achieve said success. These might be:

1. Extraordinary resources and freedom of action granted by the municipal Department of Education or the Ministry of Education.
2. The recruitment of a dedicated and particularly high-quality educational team who are attracted to the school precisely because it is exceptional.
3. Students from families who are naturally more enthusiastic early adopters of the institution’s extraordinary approaches.
4. Circumstances that provided a pre-existing practical and / or emotional “backwind,” such as building a new school in a new city.

The exceptional principal often enjoys unique benefits that cannot be enjoyed across the system as a whole. Principals are almost always working with a scarcity of money and teachers. At least with regard to **increasing resources**, the following are some ideas that may already be implemented or planned, and should be encouraged as part of the program:

1. **Teacher recruitment campaign**—Including recruitment fairs, publicity, branding the municipality as a preferred employer for teachers. Here, it is appropriate to admit that this maneuver may come at the expense of other municipalities; however, in the broader perspective, it may boost the entire profession’s image and attract more suitable candidates to the education system in the long run.
2. **Financial management consulting**—Mentors to help principals manage areas and activities that involve a financial aspect, beyond accountancy. For example, mentors procured from organizations in other fields. A large portion of the financial success of manufacturing enterprises, for example, stems from reducing costs by various and creative means, and a volunteer mentor from this kind of organization, who will help principals with their advice and know-how, may help them learn to use the budget more effectively, save a lot of money, and free it up for good causes.

# Factors Informing the Program’s Design

## Existing training mechanisms, advantages, and shortcomings in relation to challenges

### The main training program for future principals—Avnei Rosha

The main training program for principals in Israel is run by the Avnei Rosha Institute, and has existed in its form as a regulated and uniform compulsory procedure since 2008. Before then, principals in Israel underwent training courses similar in structure to teachers’ courses, which were not effective and did not prepare them to drive teaching/learning changes. Participation was the responsibility of the individual principal or groups of principals organized at the local, district, and national levels.

The basic premise of the Avnei Rosha mission statement from 2008 states that principals should experience continued learning throughout their careers, rather than settling for learning before taking on the position or sporadic training on the job.

The document addresses two significant aspects of continued learning: the need for **personal reflection as a method and as primary content in principal training, and for professional development accompanied by personal guidance**. The accompaniment is based on interpersonal interaction that aims to promote both personal and professional development, and that takes place in the principal’s managerial space. The training itself takes place at colleges and universities, and there are also learning communities.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The personal guidance during the principal’s first two years in the position is usually given by a mentor who is a senior administrator in the education system.

A relatively recent study conducted in Israel among new principals found several challenges that have yet to be addressed by Avnei Rosha’s existing training process.[[33]](#footnote-33)

First, new principals typically do not get enough time shadowing the previous principal so they have to spend a lot of time at the beginning **learning the technical and administrative aspects of their job** such as system preparation, management software, school leadership practices, and the like.

Second, many of principals noted that the **conversations with their accompanying mentors** focused mainly on giving **advice and feedback** on specific issues, such as technical and administrative details, as well as decision-making and team-management situations, and **less on** **pedagogical leadership**, for example, a topic with which school principals around the country particularly struggle.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Third, and perhaps most importantly, it was found that the success of the mentorship, at least the interviewees perceived it, is greatly influenced by the **emotional and pedagogical fit** between the parties. The new principal requires [psychological safety](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_safety) to express themselves freely in front of the mentor, and in matters of educational leadership, the mentoring works when they share **similar educational views**. This is the part the process that has the potential not to only yield practical help but to make a real difference.

There is no doubt that one’s accompaniment by an “unsuitable” mentor can also be viewed as an education experience in and of itself, however, when it comes to investing a significant amount of time at a critical period when they require real guidance, **some of the principals** we interviewed felt that the mentorship was a **waste of time**. The policy that denied them the option of choosing their mentor or refusing the one they got, lead to situations of being **stuck with the wrong person**.

Beyond the issue of fit, the good mentors were described as authentic and open to sharing their experiences, including points of weakness and failures, which strengthened the bond, was beneficial to the process, and, unlike in cases of bad fit, made it possible for the new principals to go beyond the narrow range of practical subjects and talk about **their dreams, their vision, and their plans for the future.**

In addition to the issue of mentorship, the interviews we held with principals and other professionals in the field of education in preparation for this program gave us the impression that alongside the virtues and importance of the Avnei Rosha group training program, it has a few significant shortcomings:

1. **Too short**—The training is not long enough to complete the necessary process. In the past, the training course was twice as long and was considered more effective.
2. **Not thorough enough**—The course fails to touch in any significant way on many subjects, including practical matters such as using the administrative computer system, pedagogical matters such as raising the proportion of female students in STEM tracks, and more.
3. **Lack of consistent quality**—The theoretical portion of the course varies in terms of quality and depends on the learning institution, the training staff, and the training group. Some come out of it satisfied, others less so. The same applies to the practical learning portion, which very much depends on the host school.
4. **Not personalized enough**—The personal accompaniment portion of the program consists of only 18 hours out of the 500. Some principals testified that, at the end of the day, the practical part is targeted toward the lowest common denominator of future school principals and does not provide enough personal development.
5. **Not local**—The training is not adapted to the local context and often fails to include the networking aspect when it is conducted outside the area where the principal will actually work in the future. In other words, the training fails to create a learning community of principals who will later work together under the same municipal authority.
6. **Lack of variety**—The training is conducted by education researchers and principals but involves no encounters with other professionals, a factor that has been found critical in shaping effective training programs (see chapter titled “[What makes a training program successful](#_What_makes_a)”).

There is also circumstantial evidence for the training program’s limitations:

1. **Not innovative enough**—The training provided by the institute is the only one available, so there is no real competition over content and format, just as there is no productive process of developing alternatives. In addition, the instruction takes place in the academic context, and the academic community is not considered among the leaders in training innovation. Naturally, when the basic approach is not innovative, the training itself can hardly be expected to be a model of innovation.
2. **Not based on the local context**—One of the academics we interviewed told us he had by chance discovered that the Avnei Rosha program is closely based on an American program. Thus, it is a program that has, perhaps, been adapted to the local context, but was not conceived as a way to address the unique needs of the Israeli education system.
3. **Conservative**—The schools chosen to host the practical experience portion of the program are undoubtedly successful schools, but this is according to the conventional metrics used over the past few decades, which do not necessarily reflect the full, up-to-date meaning of “good education.” Many schools from which new principals could learn a lot from are not hosts in the program, and the learning is based on accumulated experience, which is certainly worthy, but is not necessarily oriented toward future innovation and change.
4. **Not a necessary condition for success**—There are quite a few very successful principals active today who have not gone through the Avnei Rosha training program.
5. **Minimizes diversity**—Finally, a training program that is uniform and consistent in its format and main content, which does not include a mechanism for constant updates and evolution, both in terms of dictating the structure to everyone in a centralized manner from up high, and in terms of providing a learning experience that is “one size fits all,” does not allow for differential learning and the creation of a community of principals who have had diverse experiences with diverse content, and who can bring different and stimulating points of view to the table.

Accordingly, the proposed program will include appropriate content and practices of adjusting the personal accompaniment process as part of the training.

### Overview of existing training and professional development options for principals

In addition to Avnei Rosha, principals currently have access to training and participate in programs such as Superintendent and Principals, Tfisa Megadelet (“Growing Perspective”), Portzey Derech (“Breakthrough”) and more. Outside of the COVID-19 pandemic period, all the training courses are based on frontal instruction.

**Succession pool**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target audience | Existing programs and scope in hours/year | Main content and comments | Measurement and evaluation  Body in charge, metrics, methodology |
| Succession pool | 60 h/y in collaboration with HaPisga Center Tel Aviv-Yafo (secondary education) | New training course conducted with a small group in 2020/2021 | The Secondary Department of Education and HaPisga Center Tel Aviv-Yafo |

**Future principals**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target audience | Existing programs and scope in hours/year | Main content and comments | Measurement and evaluation  Body in charge, metrics, methodology |
| New principals in their training year | Avnei Rosha,500 hours in the course of the school year | Theoretical half, including pedagogical leadership and school improvement.  Practical half at the host school, including several dozen hours of practical research. | Avnei Rosha |

**Active principals**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Target audience | Existing programs and scope in hours/year | Main content and comments | Measurement and evaluation  Body in charge, metrics, methodology |
| New principals (first two years) | 40 hours complementary training, Avnei Rosha | Formulating a vision and basics of practical administration | The metrics will be determined in collaboration with the academic consultant selected to accompany the program and create a comprehensive evaluation program |
| 60 hours of mentorship with a mentor provided by Avnei Rosha | Personal accompaniment | The metrics will be determined in collaboration with the academic consultant selected to accompany the program and create a comprehensive evaluation program |
| All active principals | 30 hours Superintendent and Principals (all) | Varying subjects selected from year to year | Combined budget Ministry-Department of Education, standard evaluation by HaPisga Center |
| 30 hours Tfisa Megadelet | Processing the principal experience and social-emotional learning | Department of Education budget, no formal evaluation |
| Other principals and special programs | Hamad—for religious school principals  Shahar—schools for students at risk  Mifras—program for entrepreneurship in education, accompanied by training  Conferences, seminars and other meetings | Various content on targeted topics | Budgets from the Ministry of Education, education networks, or other bodies. The municipality is not involved or informed in the measurement and evaluation. Up to an estimated 200 hours per year, as needed. |
| Total | **Roughly 30–70 hours per year** |  |  |

In the case of new principals, for example, the training content of the Avnei Rosha complementary training program in the second year of accompaniment may include:

* Work with interfaces
* Formulating a vision and outlining a work program
* Data-based administration
* Non-authority-based motivation
* Organizational change and improvement processes

The learning experience includes frontal instruction, peer learning, self-reflection, and feedback.

## How the present program fills in the gaps

The training will provide:

* **Contemporary learning culture**—Implementation of up-to-date learning principles such as differential learning and student-centered learning through the instruction itself and via approaches, structures, and routines, in a way that creates desirable norms and a work culture that is unique to this training.
* **Close connection to the city**—Learning projects centered on the three beacons, including qualitative studies of neighborhoods, populations, graduates, and future students in different life circumstances. The training will provide a kind of checklist form that includes seminars, tools, and learning experiences for the purpose of assimilation and orientation, both on the city and the school levels.
* **Individuality**—A personal development track through that starts with creating a personal plan with goals, topics, and ways of learning based on conversations with the trainee and in accordance with their assessment during the (digitally supported) screening process. Continuous monitoring and updating goals throughout their career as principal.
* **Filling in additional gaps**—For example, financial administration of the school and using the administrative information systems at the school.
* **Adequate mentoring**— Preliminary screening of mentors for accessibility, authenticity, leadership, guidance skills, and openness, complete with close guidance and training for mentors on how to impart more value through the process, and a mechanism to match mentors and trainees based on personality, educational perceptions, and desired background.

## What makes a training program successful

Most of the criteria for the success of a training program for principals concern ways of learning rather than content, and these should be practical, experiential, and linked to the field. In essence, the question of how precedes the question of what.

In Israel, as in most other countries, academic institutions operate the major training programs for principals, the most successful among which are ones connected to the field. A 2017 study that used interviews with experienced principals listed the key characteristics of effective programs. Its main conclusion indicated the need for principals to undergo preparation that is connected to the field:[[35]](#footnote-35)

* **Combination of theory and practice**—Theoretical courses that are not backed up by practical learning are basically useless.
* **Relevance (“authentic learning”)**— The training must match the skills the principals will need to use in their actual role, such as team building, networking, critical discussions, motivation, leadership and guidance, coaching and mentoring, critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis of data and large amounts of information. Therefore, there is a need for a variety of learning experiences and in particular experiences such as PBL, case research and cognitive tutoring, and general exposure to the kind of leadership activities principals engage in at the school.
* **Collaboration with district schools**—Learning that is connected to the schools in which the principals will operate.
* **Integration of professionals from various fields and methodologies**—to enrich learning.

The principals who participated in the study felt that certain training courses were disconnected from the field because they did not play enough of a part in shaping the curriculum and felt like their voices were not heard. Most of the policy makers and the lecturers leading the course were not principals and had not involved principals in designing the program or making the necessary decisions

Another study corroborated the need for the integration of theory and practice by way of **quality practical experience**, as well as the coherent organization of the training program, and recognized the following additional aspects that influenced success:[[36]](#footnote-36)

* Relevant leadership content
* A knowledgeable team
* The explicit perception of school administration as a **career**

It would seem that the combination of these aspects within the program had the strongest effect.

In addition, there were aspects that had an independent positive effect on the success of the training:

* Focusing on school improvement
* The opportunity to experience responsibility, leadership, guidance, and decision making of the kind educational leaders have to engage in

A document issued by the RLA program consortium lists other important themes.[[37]](#footnote-37) We have highlighted those which, in our estimate, especially require boosting in light of the existing programs, with a particular emphasis on the practical side of things:

* **Communication skills**—Internal and external (PR, building staff relationships, community leadership, community building)
* **Cultural competence**
* **Culture of high expectations**—A “can do” culture, high expectations of everyone
* **Innovation and change management**—Not settling for the status quo, working toward change as a necessity
* **Using data**—To improve learning and teaching
* Human leadership(management and development of human capital, development of teaching and leadership skills, personal leadership—self-awareness, resilience, ethics and integrity, strategic thinking, discretion)
* Operational management (building, equipment, budget)
* Systemic thinking
* Organizational leadership (preparing and adjusting budgets, systems and structures, vision, values)

## Before we get to work, getting rid of old perceptions and adopting new ones is an essential condition for success

Before we continue on with hope for change and a song in our hearts, we must pause to ponder: Surely, we are not the first training to claim to be truly connected to work in the field. In that case, what makes our claim an actual reality?

This issue raises another question, in addition to the questions of what should we do and how should we do it, and that is: Who should we be? Who do we need to be to train in a way that produces benefit rather than outputs?

The answer to this question is somewhat bit complex because, in a sense, we are all products of the same education system we are trying to change. Many before us have written that mainstream education is based on a nineteenth-century paradigm designed to prepare students for a future job market based on proper implementation of the principal’s instructions, and using common sense, at best, to deal with cases that do not yet have a predetermined solution. According to this paradigm, compatible with nineteenth-century industrial enterprise, value is created based on the pre-definition of a desired product, almost perfect knowledge of the optimal method of producing it, and the meticulous and precise application of this method.

It is no wonder then that the field of education in Israel and around the world is heavily criticized for the fact that its leaders speak the language of adopting innovations and changing perceptions, while, in practice, at the most profound level they continue to conduct themselves as part of an outdated work culture that thwarts their efforts and creates a sense of disturbing internal contradiction.

Shedding such perceptions is not enough. Any attempt to act differently will encounter internal and external obstacles and requires a commitment to determined and dogged swimming against the stream, and the ability to stand firm in situations of conflict.

The basic cultural paradigm still leads to the following patterns of action that are part of the education that has penetrated our professional identity by default. Notice how perfectly the bullet points match the requirements of nineteenth-century enterprises. While each is not a negative thing in itself to have in one’s toolbox, their domination of managerial thinking is the factor that blocks education as we would like to see it:

1. **We must strive for standardization, measurement, and quantitative assessment based on the bottom line**—Piling up tools and methods designed to minimize anomalies and ensure uniform and measurable results on a uniform scale that reduces human diversity to a single standard to be looked up to at the expense of a space and climate in which faculty and students are given the freedom to evolve their own way, by non-standard means, while discovering their significant and outstanding qualities and not according to a narrow agenda that is foreign to them.
2. **Anomalies must be sanctioned**—Any process of personal development, learning out of curiosity and by practical doing, or taking initiative, involves trial and error, and requires tolerance of failure and “waste of time.” The education system is built to punish or “align” those who deviate from the standards at any level, whether practically or psychologically. A classroom that develops a rich and passionate discussion on an issue that is not in the curriculum makes the teacher face the difficult dilemma of whether to encourage curiosity and learning or worry about grades.
3. **Decisions must be made hierarchically and knowledge must be transmitted top-down**— Each task requires finite and limited knowledge, decisions are made centrally and executed and supervised within a hierarchical system. The various factors in the system have a duty to obey rather than act with autonomy, as their knowledge and original thinking are not important; in fact, these will only interfere with the proper and efficient production process designed by the experts.

These three maxims are joined by a fourth, newer one stemming from our anxiety over the well-being of our children and the conception that, in order to have a happy life, they must be spared any unpleasant feelings or struggles:

1. **The learning experience should be pleasant and easy**— Those at the bottom of the hierarchy, especially the students, are a helpless population that must be protected from themselves and from the difficulties of life, and must not be made to face difficult challenges, discomfort, situations of conflict, ambiguity, obstruction, and frustration.

The standardization, the sanctions, the centralized control and hierarchy, and the coddling of students are what produces the educational experience familiar to us—one that makes the system smaller than the sum of its parts. They go against the three essential human needs according to the theory of self-determination:[[38]](#footnote-38)

1. **Autonomy**—The feeling of control over one’s time and actions, that the things one does are meaningful and important. Most students do not feel this way.
2. **Competence**—The feeling of being good at things. This feeling develops when there is psychological safety for trial and error, honest assessment free of judgment and stress for a wide range of human abilities and propensities, and a space that provides opportunities for fun and helpful action while receiving mentoring and guidance.[[39]](#footnote-39) Psychological safety does not mean that all activities must be pleasant—on the contrary, it is the factor that allows for unpleasant but necessary and desirable steps in the learning process such as feeling stuck, dealing with feedback, and disillusionment with previous ideas on the way to formulating and incorporating new ideas.
3. **Relatedness**—The feeling of belonging and authentic connection to others, enabled by a space where social and community dynamics are free from subjugation and from any attempt to “engineer” a standard recipe for creating closeness and caring.

**So who should we be?** We propose to adopt and implement the following guiding values as much as possible in the detailed design and coordination stages of the present training program. Of course, we probably will not be able to do so perfectly, but we will do so consciously, intentionally, and explicitly. The application of these values, some of which are rare in our environment, at least in combination, can also result in doing this differently:

1. **Mental flexibility**—The ability to remain in uncertainty, to let go of expectations and adopt new aspirations quickly. The desired results of the training will be defined broadly and leave a lot of room for trial and error and ongoing discoveries.
2. **Modesty**— Willingness to minimize the number and rigidity of personal perceptions about what constitutes “correct” management and the “right” way to achieve it, while understanding that good things can happen in a very different way from the way “I personally would act or plan.” Similarly, we treat everything written in this program description as a draft, and we hope it will be modified by those smarter than us, even if some particular changes may upset or frustrate us. Humility will allow the training to be a constantly improving process, to express the contributions of many, and to curtail clashes of ego.
3. **Radical respect**— Wholehearted commitment to the development of others, from a basic belief in their underlying good intentions regardless of personal feelings towards them (positive or otherwise), recognition that the hidden virtues and potential of each person outnumber the visible, that each person is knows themselves and the best way for them to develop better than I do (with proper assistance and accompaniment if they so desire), intelligent questioning of personal intuition, whether positive or negative, about each person out of an understanding that the labels we assign to ourselves and others are what constitutes reality, acknowledging that we are as likely as anyone else to fall prey to biases, such as [confirmation bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias), or our own self-righteousness that gives us a pleasant sense of superiority over others. A culture of non-judgmentalism will create psychological safety and allow participants to be authentic, to take required risks as they learn, and to develop an authentic managerial persona that is less influenced by [social-desirability bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social-desirability_bias). A key transformative tool in an organization that cultivates radical respect is listening (more on that later).
4. **Willingness to engage in confrontation**— Alongside humility, we will have to identify certain principles of action that must be adhered to out of a belief in our way of doing things and the desire to move forward. This requires a willingness and ability to deal with opposition of all kinds, from objections from “up high” to resistance on the part of the participants. The willingness to confront opposition will yield results that are truly different and will ensure that what we produce is not just lip service as a façade for just “more of the same.”
5. **Optimism**— Active rejection of the attitude dictating that if an unclear situation arises, the outcome of which is ambiguous, we must take control of the situation, otherwise it can only be a source of trouble. Instead we must adopt the perception of ambiguity and open question marks as sources of opportunity. The training will place the participants in unpleasant situations that will require them to actively choose to believe that the future will yield positive results if they continue to strive for them proactively.

## Pedagogical principles

The principles underlying the training are consistent with those known as constituents of meaningful learning in principal training, as mentioned above, and in education in general.[[40]](#footnote-40) For the most part, these principles have long since begun to be adopted by the Department of Education based on the overarching principle of modeling as the primary driver of organizational change. What the principals will experience in the course of the training will trickle down to the tier of teachers, from them to the students, and from them to the parents, the community, and society.

The program described here is designed in accordance with these principles, but they will also guide the more detailed design to be performed at the implementation stage.

Fairly similar principles have been around in educational parlance for a while now, and it has certainly informed our thinking.[[41]](#footnote-41) At the same time, we have chosen not to cling devoutly to the familiar educational jargon for the following reasons:

1. Preference for grounded definitions, i.e. arising from the fieldwork, versus terms defined and handed down by a central authority in an administrative or professional, national or international hierarchy. As the Chinese proverb goes: “You cannot help plants grow by pulling them up.”
2. Preference for local definitions that will allow us to more accurately represent the spirit of the Tel Aviv-Yafo Department of Education.
3. Preference for definitions in simple, everyday language that can be immediately understood by people other than education professionals, in order to facilitate collaborations with stakeholders outside the school.
4. Preference for free definitions that will allow us communicate a way of thinking that diverges at least slightly from the existing definitions and is more precisely suited to our needs.
5. Preference for unimposing definitions, so as to not allow ourselves to be captivated by their power or cleverness and be tempted to think that in coming up with such an impressive definition our work is halfway done.

Those with a keen eye and sufficient knowledge of educational parlance will notice that these preferences directly refer at least to the spirit of the principles of personalization, glocalization, self-integration, collaboration, informalization, and adaptivity, as they are articulated in professional parlance. The last preference refers to a principle formulated in *Pirkei Avot*: “Speak little and do much,” since we are always in danger of achieving “wind and clouds but no rain,” rain here standing in for educational change, especially when the incentive is to [create a semblance of change while, in fact, perpetuating the industrial order](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoGwD-Ik7R8) is greater than the incentive to actually rain down and maybe wash away some of the existing infrastructures.

With that in mind, our **pedagogical principles** (by overarching category) are:

1. **Personalization**
   1. **Personally adapted growth**—Just as every student can excel in relation to different goals, so can every principal. Of course, there should be common goals that we must not overlook, derived from the goals common to all schools in general, but there must also be personal goals dictated by the principal and the school themselves that will encourage the principal toward optimal learning in accordance with their strengths (see “underlearning” above). Consequently, a customized assessment tool will be designed for each principal, which will inform the design of the training program, follow-up, and personal evaluation for each principal.
   2. **Educational administration as a career**— Broadening the perspective from value-based personal reflection to the reflection on the educational vocation as a career, while taking into account personal perceptions, needs, expectations, intentions, occupational tendencies, development of occupational identity, career decision making, and how all these translate into action.
   3. **Reflexivity and feedback**—Integration of reflection habits aimed at continuous improvement: learning about learning from both internal and external sources, in order to continue constantly improving it on the personal and the organizational levels. Among other things, a long-term diagnosis of the most beneficial types of learning for each topic will be performed. On a personal level, as a follow up to the previous section, the training will link the content and the learning experience to the outlining of a “personal career map” for each principal, with one of the tools being reflection on the activities performed during the training.
   4. **Personal balance**—An African proverb states: “No man can sail two canoes at once.” The trainees are human. The training can be challenging but it must also be realistic, take their welfare into consideration, try to be as enjoyable as possible, fit into a synergy with their life outside of work, make things easy when possible, and not lead to overloads when it isn’t necessary or productive. Balance will also be maintained via considerations of rhythm and body: variable rhythms, embodied learning, time for meditative activity, time for recreation and free conversation, including full permission for each principal to find their own balance as long as they fulfill the tasks adequately.
2. **Progressiveness**
   1. **Advanced learning experiences as a model**—Mixed, practical, and collaborative learning by various means and methodologies that break existing assumptions and paradigms of learning, including methods and principles that principals can adopt and implement in their school and their work with teachers.[[42]](#footnote-42) Among other things: PBL, case studies, and cognitive mentoring through practical experience. Further on we describe a practical model for linking learning needs with practical projects in the training.
   2. **Learner-centered learning**—Broad definitions of content and modes of learning with room for additions to be determined later and plenty of room for the learners to make their own decisions, as a group and as individuals, regarding the content, place, and time of learning. This is reflected in the design and operating committees of the training program (see details in the chapter on [Program Operation](#_Program_Operation)).
   3. **Nonconformity**—Treating every paradigm as temporary. As Professor Adam Grant put it: “I feel like for a lot of my life I’ve created cultures of conformity… For example, in teaching my classes, I teach a course on evidence-based management essentially and the goal is for students to internalize the best social science evidence about how to lead and make decisions and build teams, and I felt over time like they weren’t actually evolving their own thinking, and I wasn’t being challenged because the expectation was, when something is supported by a series of rigorous, randomized, controlled experiments in the lab and longitudinal studies in the field we’ve kind of figured it out, we know what works for most people most of the time—check! Yet we know, as social scientists, that the world is complex and there are always conditions where the effect goes away or where it even reverses. And so I decided that it would be really powerful in the classroom to create a culture of nonconformity, where students were encouraged to question the best evidence, to explore the boundary conditions of when something we believe to be true might actually be false. And I think you can obviously think about that outside the classroom, you can think about that in a company, you can think about it in a community, in a government, in a neighborhood, in a school… cultures of conformity stifle creativity and innovation because people are either discouraged from thinking of original ideas or, if they do have original ideas, then they don’t have the psychological safety to speak up about them.”[[43]](#footnote-43) The training, therefore, includes self-examination mechanisms that can change it according to the observed results and the changing needs of the principals and their environments. It will, on the one hand, encourage the trainees to learn about the most current ideas from the best experts, and on the other hand, to challenge them and innovate. It is recommended that the projects be managed flexibly, taking inspiration from Agile—frequent feedback, “sprints,” and changes when appropriate—and the same, of course, goes for the training mechanism itself, with the help of the committees that run the program.
3. **Relevance**
   1. **Inspiration and emotional contagion**—Learning from people who embody the topics of study and not just from those who research and develop theoretical knowledge on the subject. We recommend integrating educational encounters with a wide variety of people.
   2. **Exchanges of ideas**—The learning process should introduce instructive examples that participants have not yet encountered, ranging from examples in the immediate circle of municipal institutions, through external educational institutions, and on to global educational and knowledge institutions.
   3. **Multidisciplinarity**—Learning should not revolve around topics from different disciplines that are not really connected to each other or the field, as few school administration issues involve only one single disciplinary aspect. Instead, the training program will strive to place learners face to face with challenges that will require a multidisciplinary approach, so that the specific study and learning of each discipline will be carried out in the context of a realistic issue and will, therefore, be meaningful.
   4. **Modeling**—Of principles, beliefs, and goals, on the level of the program, the instruction, the mechanism, and the participants’ learning process.
4. **Collaboration**
   1. **Inter-cycle modification mechanism**—Each cycle of trainees will make changes to the learning mechanism, experiences, and content, and will pass the baton to the next cycle, which in turn can make its own modification in consultation with graduates of previous cycles and any other elements they wish to consult. Such a process raises the likelihood that the training program will not rest on its laurels and will continue to continually improve and be relevant. The mechanism will be implemented by the operating committees.
   2. **Building a network of community relations**—Collaborative work and community building within the education system, including developing ties with schools in addition to less obvious connections, which will require learning about the environment of the educational institution and the lives of students outside it through meetings with the community in order to examine possibilities for cooperation and raise ideas in this regard.
   3. **Co-instruction with veteran principals (suggestion)**—One of the best learning experiences is becoming a teacher yourself. In addition to tutoring activities by veteran principals, which are already included in the current training program, it is possible to teach topics under the co-instruction of a veteran principal together with a professional instructor, depending on the topic. Of course, the veteran principal must find the time to do so and be remunerated, not only for the classroom time itself but also for the generous amount of preparation required, including conceptualizing, developing content, and coordinating it with the co-instructor.

## Marketing principles

In the implementation stage, we also recommend acting based on the following principles:

1. **Branding**—Branding is the visible expression of the authentic quality of the training program, which amplifies and creates an immediate impression of its assets. In interviews with principals in the education system and managers in other fields who have undergone training and leadership programs, it seemed that whenever they talked about training programs that they were enthusiastic about and felt had made a real contribution, they often mentioned their prestige and visibility.

It would seem that trust and dedication come more easily when the packaging looks luxurious and thought-through, rather than sloppy or basic. More than once we heard phrases such as “It was amazing!” in close proximity with phrases such as “Everything looked like a million dollars!” not to mention the fact that the interviewees retained a strong impression of the program many years later.

1. **Investment in every component**—In standard trainings, the budget allotted for the preparation of the program and its adjustment to the population of participants is proportionately small; for example, a quarter of the budget for actually running the program. In the best training program, however, the preparation budget may significantly exceed the operational budget. Such preparation strives to take into account every possible scenario, to calibrate the training to be suitable for the entire spectrum of participants and the needs they might express, to make every activity precise, special, and useful, to foresee possible failings and have an alternate plan at the ready, and, in many cases of co-instruction, to coordinate and script the joint work process. This may double or sometimes even triple and quadruple the expenditure relative to a standard instruction budget, and it should be examined over time in which cases the expenditure is justified.
2. **Production**—Interesting programs make use of different study spaces, take participants on educational trips, take care of quality refreshments, etc. The Yahda brand, for example, which operates the Jerusalem Education Administration’s principal training programs, engages the professional services of a producer and a graphic designer funded by the municipality (see branding section), at the level of each individual program. Alongside the interviewee responses mentioned in the previous section, other expressions we encountered frequently included “meticulous,” “of the highest standard,” and variations thereof.

# Program Concept

## Target populations

To reach its objectives, the program addresses four target populations that are similar in some ways and different in others:

1. **Teachers and other staff suitable for succession planning**—To attract educators to the career path of school administration, to identify those with interpersonal and entrepreneurial potential, to train them gradually, and to encourage them to choose the transition to management.
2. **New principals in their first two years on the job**—To provide the tools that will increase these principals’ chances of succeeding in the challenging early years, to formulate their managerial identity and the sense of belonging to the urban principals’ community.
3. **Veteran principals**—Retention through tools for constant innovation, “self-reinvention” in the face of new challenges or unexpected changes, refreshment and precision of their managerial identity, and viewing the cultivation of a succession pool as part of their job.
4. **Early childhood principals**—We addressed this population in the Challenges chapter above separately because of the great differences between the two education systems, including the principal’s role in them. The body of the program will focus mainly on the first three target populations mentioned above.

## Training stages

Stage 1–4 below are targeted toward succession planning, while 5–6 are aimed at principals:

Graphical user interface, diagram, application

Description automatically generated

This program will deal in more detail with the training phases (3, 5, 6) than with the recruitment phases (1, 2, 4), as this is its central concern. It is possible to create detailed and high-quality attraction and selection processes once the program is underway with an external supplier or consultant and create procedures around them.

Stage specifications:

1. **Attracting educational staff to enter the succession pool[[44]](#footnote-44)**— Education staff in schools will be able to apply for the succession planning program, which will open every two years, have high visibility, and be publicized through a variety of channels,[[45]](#footnote-45) including encouraging principals to recommend potential future leaders and convince them to apply. Principals will be evaluated, among other things, on the extent to which they have been able cultivate managerial leadership within the school. Applications will include a selection mechanism, such as detailed answers to interesting questions, or writing exercises.
2. **Selecting the succession pool**—The selection can be conducted according to criteria determined by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Supervisor’s office, and can include additional screening tools such as behavioral interviews— situations, simulations, or group dynamics.[[46]](#footnote-46) The selection process will be established on the basis of studies examining minimization of bias in relation to different populations, and it is recommended to consider affirmative action for populations that may be under-represented, such as Arabs, women with disabilities, and possibly even foreign workers, or asylum seekers.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Those selected will receive a personal development plan and a personal mentor who will accompany them from that point on throughout their years as a managerial candidate or principal at a Tel Aviv-Yafo school. The personal plan will be built based on the results of the selection process and diagnosis of areas of strength and weakness. It will be technically stored on the municipal digital platform, at least as a cloud document. We can later think about defining and implementing a human resources management system. The personal plan will be updated over the years according to the developments of the candidate’s career.

1. **Succession pool learning communities**—One of the main problems of selecting management prospects (stage 4 below) is the candidates’ lack of managerial or administrative experience similar to that involved in the role of principal. Therefore, the learning will include management experience—projects, existing middle management positions, or new positions to be defined such as replacement principal, and be designed as a rigorous and meaningful program that includes two-way selection (on the part of the participant and the program) of suitability for principal training. We can examine whether the program will be recognized as continued education or be added regardless. It is also possible to examine the possibility of running a succession planning program in collaboration with Avnei Rosha (the Jerusalem Education Administration runs such a program in cooperation with Avnei Rosha and the district).
2. **Selection and acceptance into the principal training program**—Similar to the succession pool selection, except that here the process will of course be even longer, more rigorous, and more supervised. In addition, it is advisable to adopt inquiry procedures and metrics for the effectiveness of recruitment processes as well as retention (phase 6). Those accepted to principal positions in the city who have not yet applied to the Avnei Rosha program will be able to receive a preparation workshop for the Avnei Rosha selection process, led by an external contractor or trainer who specializes in Avnei Rosha preparation and specifically tailored to this process.
3. **Training new principals (management prospects)**—The training will begin, when possible, the year before the candidate will enter the position (or potentially enter it) and last two years.
4. **Veteran principals** **(continued learning and retention)**—Veteran principals have a wide range of different needs, and should be provided with a greater degree of choice from a package of learning options. Regarding retention, it is recommended to use an external contractor or consultant to build a retention plan with a methodology for customizing the retention efforts to better suit each principal, as well as retention procedures. It is also possible to consider, as stated in a previous chapter, a public relations campaign to strengthen the status of principals, which may help retains principals and reduce burnout.

**Regarding stages 3 and 5—succession planning and training new principals/prospects—both programs should optimally last two years** (at least, in the future, if the budget allows it, we can consider prolonging), for the following reasons:

1. In order to allow for personal growth and breakthroughs in cases of unsuccessful beginnings and obstructions. Data from parallel experiences shows that these do not always occur in the first year (for example, in the case of teachers who started “on the wrong foot” but eventually became leading teachers).

In order to create a separation between two training periods and give the trainees time to pause and reflect, make personal progress, and turn over a “new leaf” in the second half

**For the sake of the present program outline, we have assumed that these stages will last two years each.**

# Main Pedagogical Model—Project-based Learning

Let us remind ourselves of the conclusion we reached earlier:

Most of the criteria that determine the success of principal training programs are to do not with content but with modes of learning, and these gave to be practical, experiential, and field-based.

This means training dictated by reality, one that directly touches on the urgent need to integrate and succeed in a difficult and taxing position. The training has to provide solutions to the central needs the position entails and be connected to the field in order to make sure that the pedagogical material can be directly leveraged toward the fulfillment of objectives of the position.

If so, what is this “field” to which the projects must be linked? To put it more precisely, we are striving for projects to be completed in a practical context. Having read the explanations, we recommend seeing the section “[Choosing and defining projects](#_Choosing_and_defining)” for examples.

**One such practical context could be an accomplishment that might be expected of a principal:** Learning that accompanies the acting principal must be directly linked to their job if it aims to affect their performance. This applies to acting principals, mid-level administrators, and Trailblazing Principals program participants assigned new significant roles as part of the program.

**In these cases, it is recommended to choose projects that will serve a result-, accomplishment-, or improvement-based aspect specific to the job** that we wish to promote through the training, and define the project’s objectives accordingly.

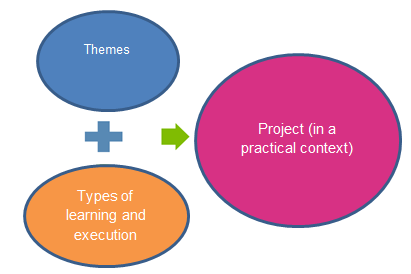
But what about training for contexts that are different than the ones in which the trainees presently work, such as the need to train a teacher in the reserves program for a future position as principal, or the need to train a new principal for a task far removed from their routine duties, such as leading a school-wide change? A good answer to this question might be gleaned from [an interview Professor Yoram Harpaz gave TheMarker magazine in 2018](https://yoramharpaz.com/interviews/2018_08.pdf).

When asked “What would a twenty-first-century school look like in your eyes?” Professor Harpaz replied: “There are many options. I once developed a model of teaching in learning in thinking communities—think-teams asked to deal with real problems. The teachers teach very few ‘subjects,’ and instead extract from them the problems that preoccupy humanity. Their outputs, consisting of applied research papers, are presented to a public of experts, teachers, and parents.”

Therefore, optimized learning in the training modules has to not only support the “day to day” (which is important, of course, but cannot bring about the desired changes), or settle for theory for lack of other options, but to produce applied outputs. In other words, **another practical context can be an applied project for other position holders** to be defined in a way that will obligate the participants to acquire **knowledge on certain themes (content, to use the professional parlance) and integrate this thematic knowledge**—the same thing that was required, to give an example, for the writing of the present program. In the course of planning and implementations, the participants will have to undergo at least some of the following types of experiences, which are also present in the work of a principal:

1. Communication, collaboration, and mutual support
2. Confronting opposition/resistance
3. Introducing new ideas that will change over time
4. Solving difficult challenges in the process of realizing the ideas
5. Implementing solutions in a suitable and effective manner

**Once the projects and its related themes have been defined, the program will define learning and execution modes that seem the most suitable for thematic knowledge acquisition and project assembly**, which may, of course, be modified along the way.



Learning in a practical context will help the participants to gain the following, both for themselves and the parties with whom they will work in the future:

1. Emotional growth and development, including improved psychological resilience
2. Assimilation of new tools and methodologies
3. Change of perceptions and adoption of new values and positions

The outputs or results they produce will likewise have added benefits such as:

1. Optimization, standardization, and minimization of risk where appropriate. For example, procedure for school operations in the principal’s absence.
2. Improved solutions to problems in the system. For example, an instructional module and case descriptions for the implementation of an inclusion and integration reform.
3. Innovations that will bring new benefits to the system, such as, a new spatial development initiative at the school (for example, setting up a market), and its integration within learning experience.

Of course, if all this is to happen, it is not critical whether it happens in small groups or big groups, with more or less frontal instruction, 30% via Zoom and 70% face-to-face or vice versa, by way of fixed weekly sessions or mixed learning, etc. Therefore, we can afford to start out with very loose and flexible definitions of the format and allow for trial and error and learning along the way once we start testing what works and what doesn’t for the participants. We hope that this kind of legitimation will trickle down into the schools and we will start to see innovation that isn’t just following trends, but is truly disrupting to the schools’ organizational procedures and routines.

## Not everything has to be overzealously linked to the “field”

We proposed above that the lion’s share of the program will be devoted to learning that is oriented to the practical context. This kind of learning is more demanding and not always the most convenient, even though it is far more satisfying, growth-inducing, relevant, and meaningful than learning theory that is disconnected from the field. Nevertheless, there is no reason to be fanatical and we do not claim that all learning must necessarily be derived from practical context, certainly not an immediate one.

Learning can also include aspects of personal development, certain built-in required content, optional enrichment content, etc.

The training must also encourage constant learning that is not directly linked to the course subjects or job-linked activities.

The term “life-long learning,” which describes a practice that has become important to the work world of the digital age, often refers not just to the learning one does because one must, but learning that becomes a personal habit because one enjoys it. The learner chooses what they learn freely, they feel unique for having acquired knowledge not many people necessarily have, and in many cases, this learning will also have a “field” application. For example, the education system will be greatly enriched if a large proportion of its principals develop the habit of regularly listening to podcasts that can feed into their professional world, either directly (for instance, podcasts about educational administration, such as *Principal Center Radio, Transformative Principal*, or *Education Leadership and Beyond*, or education such as *Prsona*) or indirectly (for example podcasts about career management, such as the *Popcorn* podcast, creative model application, such as *Asur Lehashvot* [“Nocomparison”], etc.)

This kind of learning often comes at no effort, costs nothing, and is available to anyone who’s interested. It does not require much involvement from us at any rate. Nevertheless, we can also propose Learning on Demand, a “buffet” of learning modules on all the topics the trainees might find interesting to learn for the sake of learning, without any direct practical application. A similar Learning on Demand package is already on offer today at the Pisga Center in Tel Aviv-Yafo.

We shall now describe the methodology for the detailed design of the training.

## Choosing and defining projects

Each project will have precise definitions (which will be updated on the go) of **target audiences, goals, outputs and their impact, a measurement and evaluation plan, and indication of completion (or a mechanism for continuation).** Projects may be started from scratch or constitute an update or upgrade of an existing project to in the event that such a project has already c completed. Projects may serve a school, a group of schools, or the whole city based on its scope and to the extent that the project leaders can convince and mobilize factors to spread the project. The projects will be jointly supervised by a veteran principal or a municipal official, and a professional facilitator according to the project’s field of application and relevance.

The projects make it possible, on the one hand, to actually experience the managerial aspects of running a school, and, on the other hand, to identify and utilize the inclinations and relative advantages of each person, in particular, where each person lands on the priority scale for the following inclinations: academic research, affinity for physical spaces and tools, process management and optimization, entrepreneurship, creating expression or instruction, training and helping others. A sufficiently varied package of projects will give the opportunity for each of these inclinations to manifest itself, with each being more or less dominant in successful principals.

From our conversations with school principals during the research phase of the composition of this program, we identified certain needs that gave rise to the certain ideas. The list that follows is by no means finite or comprehensive; rather it is only a rough outline of initial project ideas:

* **Students’ experience**—Creating an optimal experience for the students at the school, with the accompaniment and the tools provided by a client-experience manager.
  + Treating the students as clients (a similar project can target parents’ experience).
  + Emphasis on the division into different “client-types” and desirable situations in the client’s life to be encouraged (e.g., scholastic success) versus undesirable situations to be minimized (e.g., social ostracism).
* **Vision and practical program for the school**—It is possible for a project to look at the “big picture” and even build an “ideal school” plan while focusing on the process, which includes:[[48]](#footnote-48)
  + Formulating a pedagogical vision, including personal-value-based-professional decisions about the overarching goals of the school and the weight of each in relation to the others.
  + Finding ways to communicate the vision—messaging and school “story.”
  + Defining the figure of the ideal graduate
  + Designing a practical plan for field implementation—curriculum, pedagogical patterns (or learning patterns, in the opinion of some experts), evaluation methods, organizational structure, educational climate, physical environment, and more.
  + Monitoring implementation both before and during.

It is possible to create a project focusing on the practical aspects alone at a school that already has a clear vision.

* **Underlearning**—Evaluation of the incidence and severity of underlearning at a school and composing an outline plan for improvement.
* **Pedagogical innovation**— Projects that pave the way for the adoption of new elements, and for the organizational preparations and transformations they require. For example, place-based learning or project-based learning. If we take, for instance, a project that chooses to introduce PBL into a school, a program must be defined and built according to the following questions, among others:
  + What is the aim of the innovation? How does it relate to the school’s objectives or vision?
  + Who will manage and lead the process of implementing the change?
  + Which disciplines will the projects focus on? At which ages?
  + How will the projects be integrated into existing structures and routines? What new structures and routines must be created?
  + How will the projects fit the existing curriculum and be integrated into the syllabus?
  + How will the innovation be marketed to the staff, the students, and the parents?
  + How will a pilot be run and what are its execution schedules? How will it be evaluated and how will the lessons be integrated in the future?
* **Teacher experience**— Steps toward creating an optimal experience for the teachers at the school out of a desire to cultivate a teachers’ community, improve school climate, promote retention, improve performance, and mode job satisfaction for the students. This will be divided into several projects revolving around several axes:
  + **Experience-based projects[[49]](#footnote-49)**—
    - **Teacher time management** (the ability to address students’ needs, time for collaborations with colleagues, removal of obligations that disrupt educational activity, adjustment of administrative requirements, allotment of sufficient time to non-instructional tasks, with the guidance of an organizational consultant or a work organization expert).
    - **Environmental conditions** (sufficient access to teaching resources, learning technologies, means of communication, office equipment, fast and stable internet, space that facilitates productivity, and a pleasant, safe, clean, and well-maintained environment).
    - **Teacher empowerment/school leadership** (effective processes of team decision-making and problem solving, atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, a clear and implemented student behavior code, teacher support, back-up, and professional autonomy, change leadership, vision-driven team, high professional standards, consistent evaluation and feedback processes conducive to professional growth, a listening ear and efforts on the part of school management to take care of teachers’ demands regarding equipment, resources, time management, professional development, new teacher recruitment and assimilation, and any other need the teachers might have, making the school feel like a good place in which to teach and study overall).
    - **Professional development** (sufficient time, resources, and flexibility for teachers to be able to participate in professional development activities, and adequate instruction so they can take maximum advantage of professional development activities, including use of technology).
  + **School-based projects**— Research to produce evidence-based recommendations related to a single school, several schools grouped according to specific characteristics (e.g., size), or the Department of Education as a whole.
* **Principal experience**—Based on the same rationale as teacher experience projects. To be split into several projects along the followed axes:
  + **Influential factor**—Parallel to teacher experience with necessary adjustments.
  + **Scope**—It is possible to examine and determine recommendations for the Department regarding schools corresponding with the specific characteristics, or throughout the municipality.
* **Transitions from nursery to adulthood**—Research and recommendations for optimizing transitions between institutions. Cooperation between representative of the institutions on both ends of the transition, possibly with the guidance of a developmental or educational psychologist. These kinds of project can comprise, for example, observation, such as the chance for teachers and kindergarten instructors to observe one another, and even experiences such as co-teaching, joint content meetings for preschoolers and first graders, etc., for the sake of mutual enrichment and improvement of the transitions at the emotional, social, and scholastic levels.

These can be divided along several axes:

* + By age (from home to kindergarten, from kindergarten to school, from primary to secondary school, from middle school to high school, from high school to mandatory service)
  + By theme (social-emotional, pedagogical)
  + By population/school attributes, such as secular or religious public institutions, scholastic integration students, etc. (optional)
* **Identifying the factors that influence meaningful education over time**— Qualitative and quantitative research among school graduates examining the more and less beneficial effects of the learning experience in order to identify important parameters that determine the quality of education, evaluate their relative impact, and formulate recommendations for schools. It is also possible to examine the effect of specific parameters such as experimental programs in which the graduates have participated in the past, etc.
* **Educational tourism**—Participation tours, tour guidance, updating tours and themes, and formulating recommendations for the school based on the tours, possibly under the guidance of an instructor from the tourism field, the relevant education field, or both.
* **Parent communication**—Research and recommendations for creating productive encounters with parents, developing mutual listening and learning practices, enlisting parental guidance for various topics, improving the fit between education within the family and the school, and mobilizing parents. Under the guidance of an expert psychologist or parent counselor. The projects can be designed along the following axes:
  + By topic and situation, such as handling opposition during parent-teacher conferences, guide to ongoing communication via WhatsApp, conducting conversations with parents regarding violent incidents, etc.
  + By age
  + By population/school attributes, such as secular or religious public institutions, scholastic integration students, etc. (optional)
* **Crisis management**—Exercise programs and drills for various crisis situations, including defining the nature of the crisis, work stages, and division of roles and resources in crisis management. The goal is not to give a complete “recipe” for crisis management, since during the crisis the principal and the staff must rely on their intelligence more than anything. The goal is to create a greater sense of control, shorten the preparation time for crisis management, learn to make recommendations in advance instead of looking for possible solutions and resources on the spot, suggest possible courses of action, and coordinate expectations with staff regarding responsibilities and how to manage such crises. For example
  + **Absent principal**—Ongoing and incident management at the school in the event that the principal is unexpectedly unable to fulfill their function (for example, due to a medical condition)—under a principal’s guidance.
  + **Media crisis**—A media attack on the school or a social media scandal following an incident or a decision—under the guidance of a PR and spokesperson expert.
* **Systemic improvement**— Research of qualities or phenomena related to the success and preservation of principals and creating tools for improvement across the entire municipal system. For example: gathering information in various ways regarding an event that led to a principal leaving their position shortly after, and formulating recommendations for improving the interview process, placement, preparation for the position, accompaniment, and follow-up —under the guidance of an HR director.
* **Evaluation and measurement**— A detailed program, tools, and/or practical application of the evaluation and measurement of various types of educational goals. For example, creating a questionnaire measuring democratic values, in collaboration with community elements and associations, in which students are asked to express their opinions on age-appropriate stories (e.g., the dilemma of the landlord approached by a family from an ethnic background different from the neighborhood’s ethnic makeup in the interest of renting his flat).
* **Suggested topics for additional projects** (general topics only):
  + The degree of autonomy appropriate to different roles in the school
  + Time, task, and attention management in various roles including that of principal
  + Educational leadership
  + Teamwork
  + Professional development procedures for teachers
  + Fostering teacher leadership
  + Scholastic schedule models, their advantages and disadvantages (e.g., regarding giving students the option of personal customization)
  + Fostering a culture of resilience
  + Designing a physical environment in line with the school’s philosophies
  + Collaborations with local businesses
  + Mapping and evaluation survey of external providers in pedagogical fields
  + Research and recommendations for smart use of local management tools and resources (for instance, Matana)
  + Research, documentation, and media distribution of case studies on particular subjects or themes (for example, learning from successful pedagogical changes)

## Subjects (themes) for PBL

### By management aspect

Each theme contains many sub-themes. The trainees are free to choose which themes they find most relevant or important and integrate them into the practical context.

1. **Formulating a practical vision as principal[[50]](#footnote-50)**—Instruction requires expertise in management, leadership training, career development, sociology, philosophy, and topics related to global citizenship.
   1. **The professional sphere**—Educational management as a career—Profound understanding of one’s own inclinations, motives, values, perception, strengths, and weaknesses in one’s personal career as an educator and principal, and practical action patterns/habits. Resolution of internal conflicts, identification and handling of blockage points. Formulating a vision for one’s career and a precise program for personal and professional development.
   2. **The identity sphere**—Reexamination and reformulation of identity in other life spheres, with emphasis on communities, city, nationality, and humanity (global citizenship) through discussion, including the recognition and resolution of tensions, understanding the narrative of each identity, creating a map of threats and influences on relationships with others. Learning about different approaches to multiculturalism and adopting a personal approach. Discussion of the notion of national education.
   3. **The school’s vision**—Analysis of “client experience” in several spheres: the personal sphere, the principal’s experience, the teacher’s lounge sphere, the students’ sphere, and the sphere of parents and the community. What experience would they like to give each sphere? What experience do they get in the present and what will they get in the future? How?
   4. **Connecting one’s personal and professional identity to the school’s vision**—Finding the guiding principles for one’s management style that will fulfill one’s personal needs and desires, on the one hand, and the school’s educational values and ideals, on the other hand, in the best possible way. Finding the North Star for one’s activity (for instance, the definition of an ideal graduate). In other words, formulating where one wants to steer the school so as to create a winning combination of satisfaction and enjoyment,[[51]](#footnote-51) on the one hand, and a real contribution to the students, the school, and the system, on the other.
2. **Running a school in an era of uncertainty and serving as a model for action**—The instruction requires, on the “soft” side, expertise in organizational development, with an emphasis on ODT, dynamic work, meditation techniques, mindfulness, and NLP, and on the “hard” side, tools for managing risks and opportunities and making decisions such as risk matrices, creating deliberate disruptions (e.g., “no presentations” week for teachers, working in groups with limited resources such as markers, etc.), Quick Wins.
3. **Crisis management**—Personal and organizational preparedness for crisis situation, crisis operations, successfully managing complex crisis situations, analyzing reality, decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, dealing with multiple sources of stress, communication under pressure, risk and opportunity management, dynamic formulation of a crisis exit strategy, and post-crisis growth.
4. **Seeing the big picture**—The instruction requires expertise in management methodologies, general entrepreneurship and educational entrepreneurship in particular,[[52]](#footnote-52) with an emphasis on working with case studies, systemic thinking, and computational thinking.
5. **Taking care of the little details**—Organization and time management tools, working with checklists, methods for dealing with perfectionism including the possibility of short-term cognitive-behavioral therapy, scientific thinking and problem analysis tools, designing an environment that fits the vision.
6. **Organizational culture management and driving change**—Study of the organizational culture, analysis, comparison to the desired ideal, management of cultural changes, foregrounding and management of internal conflicts, creating a climate of psychological safety, identification and thwarting situations of abuse and emotional blackmail, understanding processes, catalyzers and hindrances, process dynamics, stages and means of mobilization, community ties, and community development.
7. **Interpersonal relations and influence**—Various types of SEL,[[53]](#footnote-53) image consulting, media consulting, NLP, listening, enlisting different media based on message style and situation, presentation skills, mobilization, bridging and resolving conflicts.
8. **Overcoming resistance**—Principal development processes, simulations, roleplay, behavioral economics, CBT and mindfulness tools, applying informal [authority](https://www.tivonpsychology.org/articles--mastering), setting boundaries, identifying manipulative communication, personal and systemic confrontation with emotional blackmail and narcissism, creating interest maps and support networks, political mobilization,[[54]](#footnote-54) obtaining resources, reaching a consensus, forming collaborations, and obtaining room for action in creative ways.
9. **Instilling confidence and trust**—The key skill here is [listening](https://www.avi-kluger.com/), which is a powerful and highly effective leadership tool for creating not only confidence and trust, but many other desirable effects: transformational leadership, internalization of democratic values, capability of quality reflection, resilience, climate of closeness and caring, improved achievements, excellence, learning, creativity, and reduction of violence.[[55]](#footnote-55) Learning will include practicing uninterrupted listening, reflecting on the other’s words, naming emotions, and asking proactive and transformative questions. In addition to listening practice, it is possible to perform case analysis, simulations, and role-plays.
10. **Self-management**—Mindfulness, mental self-management, home-work balance, job crafting.

### By pedagogical subject and satellite topics

1. **Methods and approaches from around the world**—Ideally taught by principals who know these methods, have practical experience with them, and will be able to translate their principles to other principals who can then consider adopting them. These include approaches such as:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Montessori | Democratic | Dialogical | Open |
| Sudbury | Waldorf | Forest kindergarten | Co-teaching |
| PBL | Place-based learning | Research-based learning |  |
| Community school | Co-management |  |  |

1. **Designing an environment that encourages learning**—Designing the learning experience and the learning environment involves social psychology and behavioral economics, and encourages quality performance both from the students’ and from the teachers’ perspectives.
2. **Child and adolescence development and its repercussions on the future**— Developmental psychology, educational psychology, occupational psychology, job market, relationships, parenting, community involvement, happiness and positive psychology, sociology.
3. **Extreme cases**—
   1. **Identification and treatment of special cases**—Selected subjects from the fields of developmental psychology, social work, psychiatry, and criminology. Preferred modes of learning: research on the city’s populations, neighborhoods, and the school community, including:
      1. Types of developmental delays, mental disorders, addictions, domestic violence, sexual assault, physical, mental, and sexual abuse among students.
      2. Mutual effects between the above and educational activities.
      3. Telltale signs, methods of treatment, care providers, ways of accompaniment and cooperation, legal aspects.
      4. The impact of poverty on development, perceptions, and future success and fulfillment in various aspects of life, and ways to intervene.
   2. **Integration, inclusion, and treatment of special cases**— Learning about the strengths of different treatment methods and education modes for special cases, including study tours in inclusive and integrative institutions and in special education institutions. Learning from the treatment, accompaniment, and progress of each student and from the institutions’ approaches. Addressing the subject of dealing with parents.
4. **Twenty-first century challenges**— Income disparities and economic challenges, the climate crisis and environmental challenges, digital citizenship, criticism, and literacy and the challenge to democracy (Prof. Karine Nahon, [Dr. Micah Goodman](https://open.spotify.com/episode/1x5u6MgvcqK2YQx5XYKioD?si=iTtZUXptRM-i054obntMew&dl_branch=1)), new multiculturalism and *mamlachtiut*,[[56]](#footnote-56) artificial intelligence and the labor market, futurism, the Strauss-Howe generational theory, the impact of the global environment, and internationalization in education.
5. **Getting to know the city, its people, and the municipality**—The multicultural perspective, examination of personal and community identity while gaining in-depth knowledge of different population groups and neighborhoods, knowledge of communities and interfaces in the private, public and third sectors in neighborhoods and in the municipality.

### By organizational field

1. **Human resources**—School branding targeting candidates (employer branding), sourcing, sorting, recruitment, building promotion tracks at the school, developing a managerial reserve: procedures, [bus-factor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bus_factor) strategy, career mentoring for teachers—including putting in place a discrete, experienced, attentive, open, and knowledgeable support and consulting service, proactive management of team satisfaction and horizons, talent retention, managing staff with low levels of motivation or competence.
2. **Operations**—structures and routines, procedures, computer system, organization, and methods.
3. **Marketing**—PR and spokespersonship, social media marketing, setting up and running a website, branding, marketing, copywriting.
4. **Health and safety**—Types of risk: nutritional, physical, health, mental health, cyber, healthy environment design, preventive medicine.
5. **Legal**— The legal side of a principal’s work in interfacing with different parties, legal aspects of responsibility for them and the resources at the principal’s disposal, constraints and ways of overcoming them, legal aspects of activities and projects, bypassing bureaucratic barriers and legal constraints in creative ways.

## Modes of learning the themes and project advancement

1. **Lecture**— A frontal lecture that may be interactive, include aids, and be accompanied by questions and discussion. It is possible to conduct these in more creative or experimental ways, such as the “flipped classroom” method.
2. **Interview**—Unlike a lecture, an interview is led for the most part by the interviewer, i.e., the student, rather than the instructor. Nevertheless, in a successful interview, the interviewee also learns from the experience.
3. **Media**— Reading texts, listening to audio clips, or watching videos. It is possible to combine interactive elements such as tasks, games, or tests and feedback. We might also consider setting up a municipal portal for tools and tutorials for principals and educators in general.
4. **Discussion**— Purposeful discussion or group activity that can be conducted in various ways, including guidance by participants, for example, by using methodologies from the [Liberating Structures](https://www.liberatingstructures.com/) and [Workshop Bank](https://workshopbank.com/) databases, to be modified as necessary, of course.
5. **Demonstration**— Presentation of a real-life situation, shadowing, educational field trips, or any live illustration, for example, educational encounters with managers from other disciplines which participants can draw inspiration, field trips and meetings with principals that have brought about changes, and even more advanced ideas, such as reciprocal live streaming broadcasts with schools from abroad—classrooms, projects, meetings, learning spaces.
6. **Simulation**—Reproduction of a real-life situation, including reflection and feedback.
7. **Instruction**—Teaching others or guiding them by any of the abovementioned means.
8. **Personal accompaniment**—Mentoring, peer feedback, training, reverse mentoring (for example from a teacher or a student).
9. **Internship**—Completing certain tasks in the field as part of ongoing work.
10. **Field trip**—Educational tours in Israel and abroad (either physical or virtual). For example, a tour of the Bing Nursery School in Princeton, NJ, which is a kindergarten that has hosted dozens of studies and is a kind of pilgrimage site for people wishing to learn about early childhood education methodologies. See more details about field trips abroad in the chapter “[Emphasis on the Professional Development of Veteran Principals](#_Emphasis_on_Professional).”
11. **Ethongraphic research**—Independent visits in neighborhoods inhabited by less familiar ethnic minorities, possibly even getting hosted by families and getting to know their lifestyles.[[57]](#footnote-57)
12. **Combinations of the above**—Recognized combinations from the field of [blended learning](https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%9C%D7%9E%D7%99%D7%93%D7%94_%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%91%D7%AA), or any other combination.

Trainees will be able to decide on the most suitable combinations of themes and modes of learning and execution, as well as consult suppliers. In addition, it is recommended to offer supplementary social activities and not just purely academic ones.

## Ready-made or custom assembly?

In choosing content and suppliers for the program we can consider how much we wish to rely on ready-made methodologies and entities that provide a pre-structured service as opposed to custom assembly of the content.

For example, guidance toward an output can be given by facilitators using the free/personal/multidisciplinary style, but also by experts in one of the latest methodologies, and, of course, it is recommended that participants have the opportunity to be exposed to different methodologies and determine how appropriate they are for them. Some examples of specific methodologies, which are of course supported by certain perceptions and ways of thinking:

* [Collective impact](https://wiki.sheatufim.org.il/w/upload/sheatufim/3/3e/Collective_impact_insights.pdf)
* [Design thinking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Design_thinking)
* [Social innovation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_innovation) and [impact entrepreneurship](https://impactointernational.com/complete-guide-to-impact-entrepreneurship/#:~:text=The%20term%20Impact%20Entrepreneurship%20refers,problems%20they%20aim%20to%20tackle.)
* [Lean startup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_startup)

The same applies to outputs and themes—we can design a new track from scratch or take existing elements for external sources as long as it serves the training and the process itself leaves enough room for the participants to experience everything we want them to experience. For example, a project based on the methodology described in Yoram Harpaz’s book [*Educational Design in Six Steps: A Strategic and Practical Scaffold*](https://yoramharpaz.com/books/author/how-to-plan-educational-environment-in-six-steps/) (Routledge, 2020).

# Program Operation

The program’s operation mechanism is designed to allow it to evolve over time, to repair any shortcomings, and update itself continuously. At the highest level encompassing all the different training groups, the mechanism will include a **steering committee** that will convene twice a year and be in charge of continued honing of the mechanism, ensuring the fit between the training modules and their goals, introducing innovations, making connections, securing resources as necessary, and monitoring the quality of the training.

## Creating a new position: full-time training program director

A successful and comprehensive operation requires the establishment of an array to fulfill the following functions:

1. Initial research and strategy formulation. For example: How do we overcome the factors obstructing one’s choice of principal as a career path?
2. Planning, management, and accompaniment of training.
3. Interfacing with evaluation and measurement factors and managing the long-term improvement of the trainings and other activities (advertising, recruitment, etc.).
4. Publicity and candidate recruitment, winning over and mobilizing acting principals in order, for instance, to encourage them to send candidates to the reserves program, ongoing communication with principals in this respect.
5. Screening, selection, and assignation of candidates to the Trailblazing Principals program.
6. Course participants’ evaluations, managing professional development, career development, and mentoring processes.
7. Managing ongoing contact with graduates

It is possible, of course, to try and run the program within the existing frameworks, but it is worth noting that this will significantly limit us, and we will have difficulty attaining the desired scope and quality of the program and achieving our goals for the following reasons:

1. This is an operation of significant magnitude that requires a considerable investment of time and attention and the development of knowledge, experience, and expertise, and, therefore, cannot be easily superimposed onto existing platforms.
2. Regarding the managerial reserves program, the Department is more accustomed to interfacing with principals and has less experience communicating with teachers in schools.

We recommend, in the first phase, finding an existing executive staff member who will be officially promoted to the position of **Director of Municipal Principal Training**. For the sake of flexibility, their work will initially rely relatively heavily on external suppliers until we know what changes are required to arrive at the most successful management model. This person will need to have an affinity for the world of education in combination with suitable values, entrepreneurial ability, breadth of knowledge and experience, and leadership and project management skills.

The director will provide a horizontal service to the divisions; they will be evaluated and will be held accountable for the results of the training tracks, and will facilitate the institutionalization of a powerful program that has a very high chance of achieving its goals in the best possible way. Every division can appoint a designated contact to interface with the director.

## Steering committee

The steering committee will be a kind of board of directors rather than the body actually operating the program in practice, and will convene twice a year. Its responsibilities will include:

* Continued honing of the mechanism and shaping the training to meet its goals
* Introducing innovations, making connections, and securing resources as needed
* Monitoring the quality of the training

Format:

* A group of 5–7 representatives with a certain degree of turnover. For example, it is possible to say, tentatively, that we will try to replace 2–3 committee members per year.
* Beyond the different positions held by the committee members in the organization, it is recommended to have diversity in terms of background, seniority, and style, as long as everyone adheres to the guiding values and principles of the program.
* Possible committee members:
  + A highly esteemed veteran principal
  + A trainee who is currently undergoing training
  + A principal who has completed the training
  + A parents’ association representative
  + Two representatives from the Department of Education
  + A representative of the Ministry of Education (headquarters, Pisga, the Supervisor’s office)
  + An academic
  + A representative of the Tel Aviv Foundation

## Planning teams

In each cycle, planning and pedagogy teams will be selected from among the participants. In fact, the teams can potentially decide on the relevant configuration for each track—reserves, management prospects, or veteran principals.

These teams will set learning objectives and select the learning outcomes (projects) accordingly, decide on the themes and the main learning for these themes, monitor the successful implementation of the training and adjust the program they designed to meet field requirements based on their ongoing insights.

Principals are the leaders of an organization who ideally has the greatest expertise on learning. The greater the principals’ expertise in answering the questions of what is worth learning to reach certain objectives and what are the ideal ways of learning it, the more their pedagogical vision will become effective, well-adapted, sweeping, and precise. In addition, our training should serve as a model for the principle of learner-centered learning. For these two reasons, the training itself will be designed as a PBL, one of the purposes of which is reflective—to design the training of the next cycle.

From the selected participants, a sub-group will be selected to have a hand in designing the learning process. In the first cycles it is likely that this subgroup will be surprised by how much autonomy and how few rules and guidelines it is given. They will likely seek tips or guidance, and will gradually learn to take the reins, chart initial goals, learn on the go, take risks, recognize that not everything you do will be crowned with success, and learn how to learn in a more chaotic process than they are used to, but one that better corresponds to the fast-changing world. An echo of this experience will also be incorporated into the training itself.

As a first step, it is proposed to establish a planning team for each training track in each cycle, most, or at least a large part of which, will be selected from among the participants themselves, alongside representatives from the previous cycle’s graduates, to enable a combination of continuity and renewal. That being said, the learners are the ones who will set the tone in designing the training and will not be a “rubber stamp” for other members of the team. They should be given the opportunity to research, try new things, and make mistakes, out of the understanding that this is an integral part of the learning process and enables the team to amend the program during the training.

The planning teams will be responsible for achieving the learning objectives as a whole, and will therefore deal with setting learning objectives, deciding the main themes and learning experiences, and overseeing other teams, including those regularly appointed by the Department. That is, the ultimate responsibility is on them (the learners) and not on the budgeting element or the program director.

The teams will make their own decisions, such as whether to design the training “from scratch” according to their views and then use this program and/or the learning program from the previous training cycle, or take the previous cycle’s program as their starting point and make changes from there. Either way, the teams will document the process concisely, maintain protocols for later review and insights, reflect on its work, and log its results.

**The proposed output of the planning teams:** A list of desirable learning outputs and general recommendations of content and experiences, ideally limited to 1–2 pages.

Example of the teams’ goal-determining process:

At certain points in the course of the year, feedback, suggestions, and revision. Feedback within the team itself.

The proposal is sent to the learners for comments and is edited accordingly

The planning team and representative of the administration use the suggestions to formulate a program proposal

The planning team sends out a call to all learners and collects suggestions for goals

The planning team will have the autonomy to address additional questions and make decisions about them, such as whether to set separate goals and learning themes for certain subgroups of principals, or whether to invest resources differentially in different groups of principals, and how to do so.

In addition, each participant will have personal goals which will be set, for example, together with their mentor principal and a division principal (in the case of acting principals) as an expansion and supplement of the group goals while addressing the specific needs of their school.

## Pedagogical team

This will be the largest team, also run majoritarily by the participants themselves, whose mission will be to design the specifications for the list of learning outcomes and recommendations set by the planning team, **learn how best to learn them**, and implement:

1. Matching content with needs—research and knowledge construction about each subject and learning experience—what kind of principal will want and manage to implement such content and methods in practice, and in which managerial situations.
2. Finding providers—including vetting, designing the modes of learning or accompaniment, prepping the providers and adapting their knowledge to the training, accompaniment during training, measurement and evaluation during and after training.

The team will amend and adjust the program as necessary on the go, based on what they discover in the field. In cases of major modifications, or if the need arises to make a fundamental adjustment to the program during the training, the planning team will also be harnessed and the two teams will work jointly to coordinate the changes.

**The proposed output of the pedagogical team**: A detailed plan for learning the predefined themes, from the course title to the learning process including technical details, learning interfaces, and budget. The plan will leave room for flexibility and not necessarily define the learning outputs and the entire learning process step by step so as to leave room for the unknown, for the realization of the learners’ desires as they are revealed, and for variance among the learners.

## Digital knowledge and instruction platform

We recommend using an advanced technological platform for all training and career development modules, which will facilitate smart management of professional development, including advanced training, monitoring, and documentation, smart tagging and retrieval of additional information such as case studies, practices, investigations, project summaries, and various management materials in an easy-to-navigate way, advanced user interactions as part of the learning process, planning and monitoring professional development and career development. For an example of such a platform, see the [digital resource system](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GIXVUhhVJygVSBaP0qQEG8JaAqlaE-Hbi57idE7K7ik/edit) utilized by the Neubauer Foundation’s “Fundamental Training” program. Such a system will be helpful to both training participants and middle management position holders in schools who are interested in developing professionally and may apply for the management reserves program. The system can be used for pedagogical purposes, such as the acquisition of cognitive, emotional, and social skills, proper utilization of pedagogical training, and for diverse management purposes such as training arrays, simulations, peer learning, and more.

## Marathon Day

In each of the training tracks, each year the planning team and the pedagogical staff will write a list of recommendations for the training program for the next cycle, which will be based on reflection, and will include lessons learned regarding pedagogical and other topics, for example, supplier management policies.

The document will be presented as part of a “Marathon Day,” which will contribute to the program’s visibility and rally the support of the education system and the community.

Some recommendation for elements to be included in the day’s activities:

* Presentation of summary recommendation for the design of the next cycle’s training program
* Presentations by representatives of the four target populations in the program, including an overview of the training they have undergone, reflection about learning, and the results of the measurement and evaluation procedures in coordination with the external measurement and evaluation provider (but presented by the participants themselves)
* Selected personal or themed presentations to provide an overview of the training’s systemic impact and the results on the ground
* We may consider inviting community representatives and securing media coverage for some of the day’s activities

## Additional recruitment recommendations

* Invitation to tender
* Candidate identification by principals
* Selection and screening process—to be designed with the help of a provider and training in behavioral interview techniques
* Possibility for those who are not accepted of participating in a project and reapplying
* Affirmative action in the assignation process—the best candidates will be assigned to schools that need it most, to the extent that the candidates’ personal desires are insufficient in this respect[[58]](#footnote-58)

## Additional recommendations

* Formulation of the curriculum by the learners with the accompaniment of an organizational development manager, training manager or training developer, with the aim of balancing and combining breadth with depth.
* Formulation of a code of conduct or ethics standards by the learners (for example, regarding the use of phones or side conversations).
* Updating admission criteria for the next year and involvement of the present year’s graduates in the selection process.
* Advanced planning and implementation of measurement and evaluation procedures by the learners themselves.
* Learning communities and teamwork on projects.
* Learning principles and perceptions together without separation into tiers, then separately—for example two-thirds together, and one third alone.
* Social cohesion and personal development via ODT activities in the learners’ spare time
* Receiving significant annual personal feedback, both from the Supervisor’s office and the Department, regarding the personal development plan, and updating growth targets for next year.
* Peer feedback and frequent consultations with peers.

# Outline of the Program’s Evaluation Procedures

This chapter has been composed by the program assessment and evaluation unit at CET—Center for Educational Technology.

## Background and theoretical rationale

The training program will be accompanied by a formative evaluation, which will examine the degree of adequacy between the actions performed and the program’s goals and objectives. The proposed structure for the accompanying research combines the evaluation of the program in the short, medium and long terms, with reference to the components of formative and summative evaluation that are provided and must be implemented once the program begins its operations.

This chapter traces a theoretical roadmap for the assessment and evaluation required by the program in order to provide in-depth insights into the ways the program might attain its objectives among its main target populations.

**The first part** details the goals of the evaluation and its importance.

**The second part** presents the main evaluation questions on which the program is founded, the purpose of which is to help determine the kind of information that needs to be collected, the ways in which it will be collected and the ways in which it will be analyzed, so that it can support decision-making processes and enable the stakeholders to better understand the program’s contribution and the difference it makes among the target populations.

**The third part** deals with the central components required for the evaluation: the program’s logical model, the way the research will be conducted, the necessary procedural array, tentative schedules, data collection methods, and recommended analysis methods.

## The goals of the evaluation and its importance

Evaluation provides the program designer with feedback for the purpose of improving the training program both with regard to the manner in which it is implemented and with regard to meeting the objectives of the program. This will facilitate evidence-based decision- and policy-making, and provide for accountability, i.e. systematic answerability to the main stakeholders for what takes place in the program.

The complexity of the program, the variety of its target audiences, and the heterogeneity that characterizes the program’s field of activity, pose a challenge to its operators. Therefore, the proposed evaluation model provides solutions to the multiple needs of the various stakeholders and target audiences, and is based on the notion that an effective and beneficial evaluation is an evaluation that benefits customers or a defined consumer public.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Evaluation and assessment operations have the potential to make a significant positive contribution to the program, as detailed below:

* Main goal: Improving the functioning and quality of the program’s operations, both from the insights that will emerge from the evaluation and by strengthening the commitment to improvement by virtue of the very existence of the evaluation. Similar to the program’s organizing model, its evaluation and measurement procedures are intended to brings about change, and therefore will focus on measuring the results of the program rather than its operations, and continue to optimize the evaluation tools throughout the duration of program.
* Secondary benefits:
  + The evaluation will promote data literacy and data-based thinking among participants and stakeholders. In particular, the evaluation process will contribute to the development of measurement and evaluation skills among the training participants.
  + The evaluation will serve as a basis for discussions at various levels of the educational system, will constitute a foundation for decision-making processes, and can be used as a test case and as an example to additional programs or for the purpose of expanding the program to additional educational systems.

The three elements at the basis of the assessment of the “Trailblazing Principals Breakthrough Leadership” program

* Organization— Assessment of the quality of the program’s operating mechanism with reference to the definition of the projects and the themes related to their implementation, the relevant modes of learning and execution, and the products and outputs that the participants will produce for themselves and for the entities with which they will work.
* Target audience— Evaluation of the program’s achievements in terms of perceptional, attitudinal, and behavioral changes that indicate the principals’ personal development, a sense of competence, creating professional aspirations and motivation for management.
* System—Evaluation the program’s impact in creating educational and cultural changes that go beyond the participants themselves, while focusing on changing attesting to breakthroughs in the organization culture of the municipal education system.

## Evaluation questions

As mentioned previously, the process of evaluation begins with formulating questions regarding the object of evaluation and the program’s goals. The evaluation questions will later allow us to define the required research procedures and tools within the boundaries of the resources allotted to the evaluation and measurement operations. In formulating the evaluation questions that follow, we focused on examining the following issues:[[60]](#footnote-60)

* Who are the objects of evaluation? This provides focus to the evaluation program.
* Who are the stakeholders and potential clients of the present evaluation process?
* What information needs to be provided to the evaluation’s clients and at what points in time do they need to get it?
* What are the main questions that need to be answered based on the program’s goals?

The following evaluation questions are common to all the target populations of program participants. These will be followed by designated questions that address each target population separately.

### The organizational perspective: Evaluation of the training mechanism, its operations, and the attainment of the outputs around which the program is based

* To what extent does the program’s pedagogical model allow the target population to function optimally in the managerial situations emphasized by the model?
* To what extent does the program enable the target population to experience the managerial aspects of school administration in a real way? To what extend does this experience help them deal with similar problems they encounter in their schools?
* To what extent does the program enable the target population to identify and take advantage of their inclinations and relative strengths in their work as principals? What elements of the program facilitated this and what hindered it?
* To what extent does the program’s steering committee succeed in honing the program’s operating mechanism from year to year? To what extent does the steering committee manage to introduce changes, build relationships, and provide the resources necessary to maintain the quality of the training?
* To what extent do the practical projects contribute to the attainment of the program’s goals? To what extent do the themes and learning modes involved in the project serve its purposes?
* To what extent does the project meet the program’s goals and contribute to the personal achievement of each principal/participant?
* To what extent does the reflection process performed by the steering, planning, and pedagogical teams make a difference and lead to improvements in the program from year to year?
* What are the learning needs that are not sufficiently addressed by the training?
* How does the program address the variance among principals in terms of seniority, gender, educational agenda, skills, values, school attributes, etc.?

### The target population perspective: Evaluation of the training’s contribution to a change in perceptions and behavior among the target population

* To what extent have the program’s participants developed competency and the ability to act in accordance with the eight principles of breakthrough action?[[61]](#footnote-61)
* In what ways does the training program contribute to schools in terms of the following:
  + Instilling values and promoting democratic discourse
  + Promoting coexistence and mutual respect in a diverse space
  + Realization of learning potential
  + Imparting perceptions, knowledge, and skills relevant to the students’ lives and futures
* Have the schools where the program participants work experienced an improvement in school climate in terms of the following:
  + The pedagogical environment and the emotional and motivational aspects of learning; modes of teaching and learning in creating social-value-based education at the school
  + Interpersonal relationships between school attendees and the relationships between the school and the parents
  + Sense of protection and safety
* To what extent have the program’s participants acquired knowledge (internal and external), perceptions, and skills that have contributed to competence, motivation, honing their managerial identity and creating a personal and professional horizon?
* To what extent has the social array created during training contributed to the participants in forming personal and professional ties and amplifying their sense of belonging to a community of principals?
* Has the program made any other perceptible contributions beyond the goals set during project execution?

### The system perspective: Evaluating the impact of the program in terms of changing the organizational culture of the municipal education system

The premise of the program is that the changes it will achieve will extend beyond the training participants themselves and will create ripples among additional target audiences in the organizational culture of the urban education system. The following evaluation questions address this desired effect:

* To what extent is the program’s influence detectable among other principals: is there a marked difference in the discourse among principals (for example, in the context of principal forums)? To what extent has the program created motivation for principals who participated in the training to collaborate with principals in the same community who have not gone through the training (for example, in creating joint initiatives?
* To what extent does the program contribute to other goals formulated by the “beacons”:
  + To what extent has the program created a breakthrough norm at the city level in promoting egalitarian education: fostering egalitarian policies and developing practices to minimize the growth hindrances of various populations?
* Have breakthroughs, as a value, been on the rise?
* How easy/feasible have breakthroughs become?
* Breakthroughs: pedagogical, in terms of democratic values and equality

In addition, the program evaluation will also address questions that relate specifically to the different target populations:

Teachers and educational staff in the Trailblazing Principals program

* Is there an updated definition of the role of principal? To what extent has this definition changed the perception of the role of principal among the target audience? To what extent is the principal’s role seen as adapted to the field and reflective of its state? To what extent is it inspirational or communicating an ambitious vision of the managerial identity of the school principal?
* To what extent does the program create motivation among teachers to transition into management roles?
* To what extent has the program led to a rise in the rate of new principals coming from within the municipal system, as opposed to incoming principals from other municipalities?
* In what manner does the training contribute to teachers who do not advance to the managerial reserves program?
* To what extent does the program strengthen the feeling of belonging and competence? Has there been increased motivation to become school principal?
* To what extent has participation in the program led to the creation of an infrastructure of breakthroughs?
* To what extent has the program shortened the acclimatization period for new principals? To what extent does the program provide new principals with the ability to deal with challenges and form their managerial identity?
* To what extent has the program improved the quality of school management in the principal’s first two years in the position and in the long term? Has the duration for which principals stay in the position lengthened due to participation in the program?

Principals in their first two years on the job

* To what extent has the program increased new principals’ sense of belonging to the municipal principals’ community and the frequency of collaborations between principals?
* Does the accompanying mentor assigned by the program make a unique and distinct contribution to the new principal beyond the tools currently at their disposal (for example, accompaniment in the context of the Avnei Rosha program)? If so, to what extent?
* To what extent has the program shortened the acclimatization period for new principals? To what extent does the program provide new principals with the ability to deal with challenges and form their managerial identity?
* To what extent has the program improved the quality of school management in the principal’s first two years in the position and in the long term? Has the duration for which principals stay in the position lengthened due to participation in the program?

Veteran principals

* To what extent has the program improved the quality of school management?
* To what extent does the program provide tools for continuous reinvention of the job, dealing with new challenges or unexpected changes, updating and honing one’s managerial identity, and the perception of cultivating managerial reserves as part of the principal’s role?
* To what extent does the program help retain veteran principals? Has the duration for which principals stay in the position lengthened?
* To what extent does the program strengthen the principals’ sense of belonging and competence? Has there been an increase in the principals’ enthusiasm for the job?
* To what extent has participation the program led to the creation of an infrastructure of breakthroughs?
* To what extent has the program aided principals to drive complex changes with long-ranging impact?

Early childhood principals

1. To what extent does the program impart basic and advanced management skills that allow early childhood principal to deal with the challenges unique to this target population:
   * A narrow management tier with little time resources: early childhood principals only have one day a week at their disposal for the observation, support, or guidance of about twenty kindergarten teachers
   * Limited budgets
   * The principals are solely responsible for leading kindergarten classes with no middle management
   * Lack of comprehensive management training: the tools at their disposal today are not sufficient for meeting the challenges they face
   * The roles of leading kindergarten instructor and cluster principal are vague and there are no result requirements
   * Traditional view of the role of kindergarten instructor as static, low motivation for change, experimentation, development of new models, and growth
   * Lack of networking and community ties among early childhood principals
   * Lack of balance between standardization and diversity
2. To what extent has the fostering of the principals’ ability to think outside the box, to take controlled risks, to initiate, and to innovate strengthened their capacity to mobilize, to create new norms, to tap into what motivates kindergarten instructors?
3. To what extent has the program created competence among early childhood principals to accompany a diverse population of kindergarten instructors in recognizing and agreeing on personal development needs and the development needs of the kindergarten, and in dealing with change processes while handling resistance?

## Principles of the accompanying measurement and evaluation process

### Knowledge and proven experience in the field of educational

In order for the assessment process to be beneficial and effective, expertise and experience in the field of educational assessment is required, as is the use of verified tools that have been used in the past in similar contexts. The evaluating entity accompanying the program is required to have experience in evaluating and measuring processes that have led to significant and sustainable change in educational or cultural systems in an urban context, and will design its procedures based on this experience.

Designated tools will be developed in consultation with content experts from the field of educational and social programs assessment, as well as pedagogical experts and organizational consultants with proven expertise in operating training programs for the program’s target audiences.

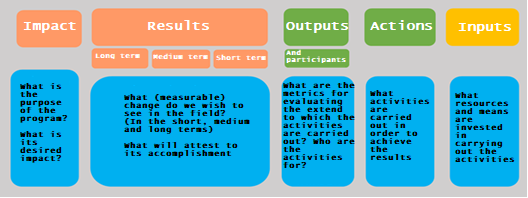
### Timings of the accompanying research

The assessment research will accompany the program from its planning stages, until it is ready to commence operations. Evaluation metrics will be developed before the program is launched. The initial measurements will be performed as the program begins operations and will enable us to get an initial picture of the situation, pre-intervention (what in the assessment field is known as T0 data).

### Using the training program’s logical model

The approach of basing an evaluation on the logical model of the program it is commissioned to evaluate is a common one in the field of evaluating social and educational programs committed to producing results. Among evaluation researchers there is a growing recognition of the benefits inherent in the methodology and tools offered by the logical model approach.[[62]](#footnote-62) The logical model provides a visual, explicit, and detailed organization and illustration of the nature of the training, the resources that will be used, the activities that will be performed, and the changes that are expected to occur as a result of the training activities. The logical model makes it possible to involve all the stakeholders in the training in general and in the assessment process in particular, and to create a common and coherent language.[[63]](#footnote-63)

The logical model is dictated by the program’s premises and the theoretical framework on which it is based. Its main purpose is to enable the program managers and the evaluators to clearly identify the program’s rational and logic, as described in the following chart:



### Proposed logical model for evaluating the attainment of the program’s goals

The logical model detailed in Appendix C is an initial proposal that will be validated and updated in tandem with all stakeholders within the framework of the program. The proposal defines the anticipated resources, actions, outputs, and results in the short, medium, and long terms, with reference to each of the following:

* The school, the teachers, and the students
* The school principal
* The principals’ community
* The district and municipal community
* Kindergarten instructors—early childhood principals

### Determining evaluation indicators

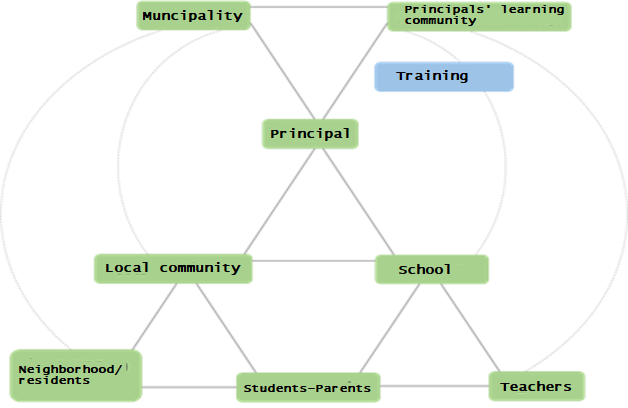
The evaluation indicators for the “Breakthrough Leadership” program will be based on the logical model proposal. The indicators are divided into output indicators and result indicators in the short, medium, and long terms, and will be derived from the anticipated results defined by the logical model. In order to establish the evaluation operations as an integral component of the program, and in order to provide program participants with the key principles required for measurement and evaluation so that they can perform them independently, the evaluation indicators will be determined in collaboration with all stakeholders and participants, once the program is launched. The selected indicators have to be quantifiable and constitute a confirmation of extent and proof of the anticipated change among the target populations. Collection and measurement of these indicators will be performed as part of the evaluation process using the research tools detailed below.

### Using the “formative” and “summative” evaluation approaches

The research design combines the formative and summative evaluation approaches. The summative evaluation is performed at the end of the program and refers to the entire duration of the program’s operation, while the formative evaluation seeks to improve the program during its implementation by identifying strengths alongside challenges and hindrances that prevent the program from operating in an optimal manner. This approach will provide the program’s operators with data-driven support so as to change, improve, and optimize the program’s functioning in accordance to changes on the ground and the cumulative insights gleaned from the evaluation. The evaluation procedure will be carried out in accordance with the standards of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation.[[64]](#footnote-64)

### Combining summative evaluation with academic research

As part of the summative evaluation and measurement of long-term results, at the end of the program’s first training cycle, the evaluating body will invite academic researchers, an invitation to tender, to examine the achieved results using theoretical models. For example, the measurement of cultural change within the system can be aided by a “network analysis”-type academic study that examines the prevalence and intensity of relationships created between the various factors in the networks, according to a relational system such as the one detailed below:



### Combining and integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection methods

The research design will include the collection of quantitative information based, among other things, on self-reporting tools that will be distributed to the program participants, their counterparts, and students at the program participants’ schools.[[65]](#footnote-65)

We will strive for maximal use of quantitative data currently at the disposal of the operating body and the municipality, such as data from the city survey, school climate surveys, Meitzav (Indicators of School Efficiency and Growth) findings, and any other relevant quantitative information.

The quantitative information gleaned from these data collection efforts will be analyzed using conventional, theoretical, and inferential statistical methods, such as distributions, averages, standard deviations, and variance and correlations tests. It is also advisable to use advanced statistical procedures, such as regressions and structural analyzes to track relationships between goals and short- and long-term outcomes as well as to identify characteristic patterns among target populations.

In addition, qualitative research methods will be incorporated for the purpose of data collection: interviews with program operators and participants, principal focus groups, and ethnographic observations aimed at providing complementary knowledge to the quantitative data.

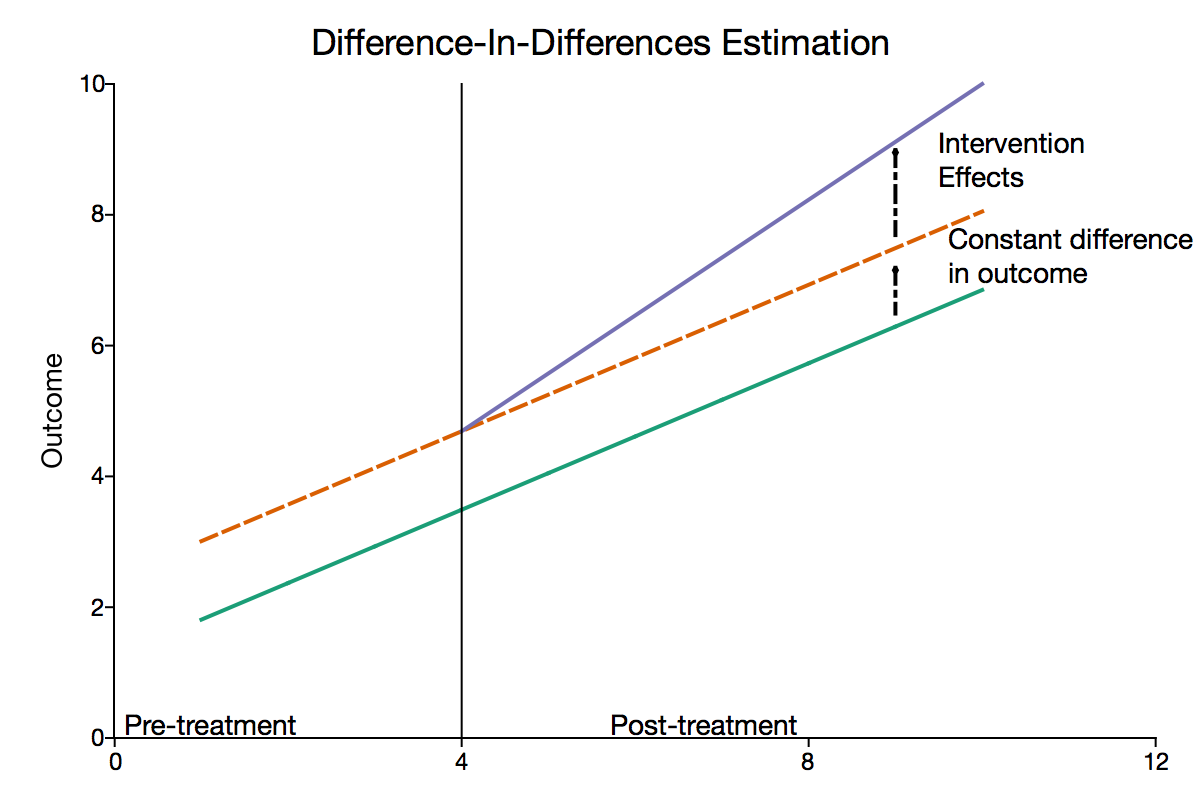
The qualitative data generated from the interviews, observations, focus groups, answers to open-ended questions in the questionnaires, and the data will be analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method, in accordance with the standard procedures in the research world based on identifying categories and motifs, defining them, and measuring their prevalence. The definition of the categories is influenced by the theoretical framework and the evaluation questions.[[66]](#footnote-66)

### Using the “before-after” method on the SMS (Maryland Scientific Methods Scale)[[67]](#footnote-67)

The SMS defines five levels required for the measurement and evaluation of impact. The minimal standard required for evaluating the program’s impact will be based on Level 3 of the SMS scale— “Comparison of outcomes in treated group after an intervention, with outcomes in the treated group before the intervention, and a comparison group used to provide a counterfactual.”[[68]](#footnote-68)

We will define a comparison (control) group for every target population in the program. For teachers and educational staff in the managerial reserves program, the control group will consist of teachers considering a future in management or occupying middle management positions at the school who did not participate in the program. The control groups for new and veteran principals will consist of principals with similar job experience and seniority who did not participate in the program. As for training activities that apply to all principals, there will need to be an examination of the performance of principals with similar job experience and seniority before the program is launched for comparison.

Data analysis and comparisons will be performed using the DID method (Difference in Difference) based on the following model:



### Expressing variance between the target populations and within the target populations

Given the differences between the target populations participating in the program and in light of the differences that exist within each of the target populations, personal assessment and evaluation of each principal is also required based on their personal point of departure and the personal resources with which they came into the program. In assessing the change that has taken place among the various target populations, a distinction is required between the acquisition of skills, and the perception of the importance and capability of existing skills, relative to the skills with which the principal came into the program.

### Reporting the evaluation’s findings

The evaluation’s findings will be communicated to the stakeholders on a regular basis according to a period to be defined for each stakeholder, in accordance with their needs, availability, and data literacy. The findings will be accessible to all relevant target populations and will be presented frequently as per the formative evaluation approach, which allows the evaluation’s results to be translated into practical actions that can be implemented in the course of the program, as well as at the end of each year of activity and at the end of each training cycle as part of the summative evaluation.

Digital tools will be used as much as possible to make the findings accessible. In addition, the evaluation’s findings will be formulated as operational recommendations, including actions that need to be taken to improve and optimize the acceptance and adoption of the recommendations among decision makers and policy makers.[[69]](#footnote-69)

### Risk management and principles for the correct functioning of the evaluation array

The participatory approach to the program’s evaluation, which is also at the core of this program, requires the full involvement of the program’s operators and stakeholders. The stakeholders’ engagement with the program plays a key role in the development of the program’s evaluation capability.

Moreover, involvement in the evaluation program may spark the interest and desire to examine other aspects of the program’s operation, and more broadly, to examine the career path of teachers and school principals in the education system.

It is therefore important that the evaluation process adheres to the principles of openness, transparency, and the creation of dialogue and feedback between the program’s evaluators, operators, and stakeholders. This will have the effect of eliminating basic objections resulting from a lack of familiarity with the evaluation process or from fear that the evaluation findings will be used for purposes other than those for which they were intended.

Thus, the program evaluators will invite the team to become a central part of the process of learning from the evaluation findings, and will emphasize the benefits inherent in this involvement, for example, the ability to develop professionally and acquire tools that will enable the team to measure the impact of its action.

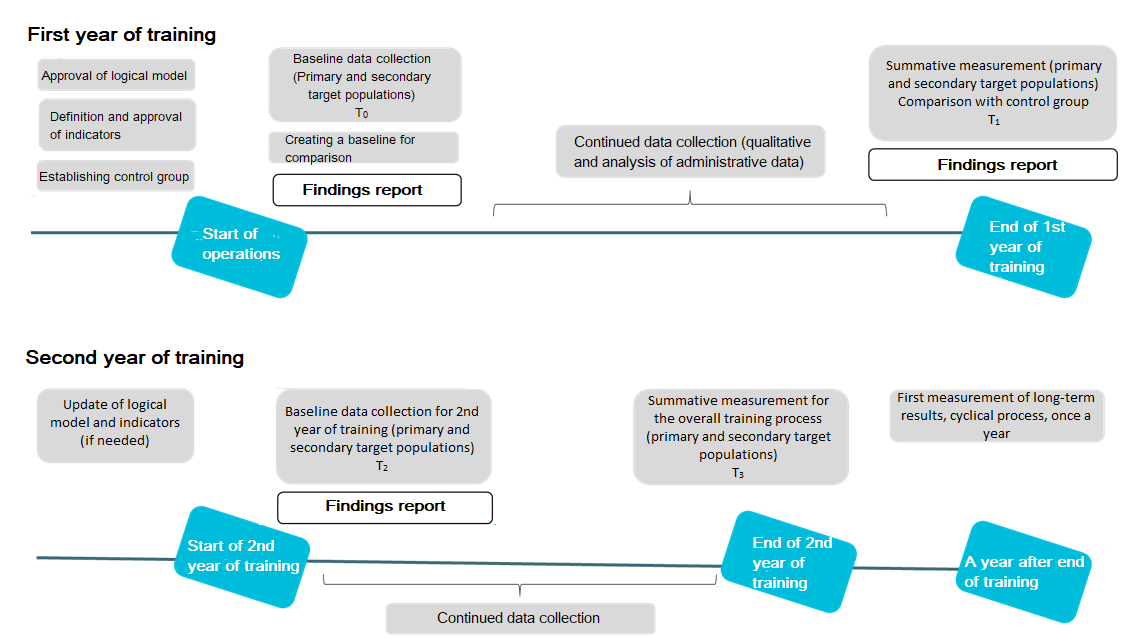
Furthermore, the program evaluators will ensure that all components of the evaluation strategy are clearly and explicitly worded, and that the data collection and use of the evaluation tools are carried out according to ethical and professional rules, including: anonymization of information and maintaining quotas that allow adequate representation, to name a few.

## Proposed research design and theoretical schedules

The diagram below shows the planned research design, with an emphasis on the timings of the required evaluation activities.

Primary target population refers to program participants and any other entity that is directly involved in the training program.

Secondary target population refers to broad circles beyond the training participants, who will be affected by the program’s operations indirectly: students, school staff, the principal community, parents, and other participants in the organizational culture of the city’s education system.



## Specifications of the proposed program evaluation tools

The selected evaluation tools will be based on the program’s objectives and the needs identified by the program operators and leaders, and these are subject to modification and expansion in accordance with the demands that emerge as the program progresses and as dictated by necessity.

The following specifications describe the basic tools we will need to use in order to answer the evaluation questions and the indicators they measure.

### Quantitative tools

* **Administrative data analysis**—Analysis of output reports and data related to the program’s success indices throughout the activity period, including examining the changes in this data since the beginning of the program. Such data includes: rate of bidders for principal tenders and rate of acceptance to principal positions, while distinguishing between principals who came from the program as opposed to those who did not undergo the training, data related to retention in management roles, while segmenting between the accepted reserve group and all other managers.
* **Questionnaires among all target populations**—The questionnaires will be administered at certain points in time, to be determined in the research design. The survey is based on self-reporting and examines the perceptions and attitudes of the primary and secondary target populations as well as the contribution of the program in acquiring skills, strengthening competence, and more. The questions will be phrased using as many as possible unambiguous and behavioral descriptions and less adjectives or non-operative expressions, which can solicit a wide range of interpretations.
* **Feedback during training**—Questionnaires for individual completion that will be handed out to training participants at time points defined in the research design, as part of the ongoing data collection throughout the training. The purpose of the feedback is to evaluate the perceived contribution of the training during the year as well as examine the attitudes of the participants toward specific activities during the training.
* **Participants’ panel for long-term follow-up and evaluation of long-term results**—The purpose of the panel will be to examine, among other things, cultural changes that are reflected in circles of influence beyond the principals themselves, including reduced inequality and increased fairness, stronger democratic values, use of resources for development, learning support and evaluation, and increased involvement of the community, parents, and stakeholders in education.

### Qualitative tools

* **In-depth interviews with program participants, operators, and various stakeholders**—Open discussions with the various actors who will share their impressions and perceptions of the program.
* **Observations of program activities/routine conduct in schools**—The observations are a direct way of learning about the participants’ conduct and ways of implementing the skills they acquired through the program.
* **Focus groups with program participants and operators**—Group discussions that provide information on the attitudes and reactions of the participants and its operators (separately). The purpose of the discussions is to reveal and delve into different and opposing points of view thanks to the dynamics it creates.
* **Review and analysis of documents**—Content analysis of documents and outputs produced by the program along the entire period of activity, including syllabuses, protocols, steering committee meeting summaries, and other administrative data that can attest to the impacts of the program and the ways in which it is operated.

Once the evaluation indices are approved with all program stakeholders, the research tools listed above will be adjusted to correspond to the expected results.

# Emphasis on the managerial reserves program

## Goals specific to this population

The managerial reserves program will be designed to give maximum value not only in terms of experience and making the decision of whether to join the school management tier, but also by way of significant practical preparation for the job. This preparation will save acclimatization time and efforts, mitigate the multiple difficulties of acclimatization, and reduce the risk inherent in choosing a new principal for a school. It is likely, then, that the city will encourage any teacher and educational staff member interested in advancing to management to go through this reserve program. The program will:

* Mitigate the “culture shock” of entering a future position in school management and help the candidate to acquire skills and mental resilience in preparation for the job.
* Provide practical experience to inform the choice of whether to choose a career in school management, within a framework that does not yet require long-term commitment.
* Help build the candidate’s initial managerial identity, including identifying and relating to educational leadership actions and approaches
* Improve middle management and the level of knowledge and professionalism in the sphere of school administration

The training participants of the reserves program will undergo will enable the more mature and high-quality candidates among them to reach the next stage of “management prospects” and enter a managerial position with a significant part of the acclimatization and learning processes already behind them, which will enable them to succeed faster and to a greater extent. For the rest, it will promote better staffing of middle management positions at the school, and it is not inconceivable that the sense of responsibility and notions of management acquired as part of the training will help them lighten the load placed on the school principal.

## Program scope

Based on the Department of Education’s data, approximately 10–15 school principal positions open up every year. Even if we do manage to achieve our desired objective of lengthening the term of principals in the role, it is unlikely that this range will be significantly affected since new schools open up every year and the city’s population continues to grow.

If we make the reasonable assumption that about 2 out of 3-4 participants of the reserves program will eventually be assigned to school principal positions in the city (the rest will not due to incompatibility, reluctance, or leaving the city), then in order to fill about **a third** of the principal positions from the reserves program, we will need to have about 15 participants per two-year cycle.

In the future, provided there will be a sufficient budget, if we wish to staff even more principal positions with reserves, or use them to ensure higher quality candidates in middle management positions, such as subject coordinator or grade coordinator, it will be possible to expand the program and diversify it in terms of scope and format to reach 100 participants per year.

## Candidate recruitment, screening, selection, and assignation

The mere fact of the existence of a reserves program does not guarantee that it will attract the desired number of candidates from among school teachers, and even if it does, it does not guarantee that these candidates will be the most suitable population for the reserves program.

In order to establish an effective selection mechanism, one must define the teacher (or, more precisely, types of teacher) ideally suitable for the reserves program, become intimately familiar with the pros and cons such a teacher might consider in choosing whether to apply for the reserves program and invest in it, and what will motivate them to decide in its favor.

The question of why it is so difficult to attract enough teachers to management positions in schools and the position of school principal in particular is not trivial and is one that demands examination. There are consultants catering to organizations and systems interested in improving this field who refer to their services by names such as “creating an employee value proposition.”

In a study performed in the state of Arkansas in the United States, it was found that teachers avoid transitioning into school principal positions mostly because of the pressures and demands of the job.[[70]](#footnote-70) They felt it to be a position that exacts unreasonable demands, and one in which they could not be effective considering the climate and circumstances under which they would be working. Specifically, they pointed to the following factors, in order of significance:

1. The pressure of responsibility and meeting targets
2. The general strain of the job
3. The amount of time required for the job
4. Difficulties focusing on instruction due to environmental disadvantages (poverty, lack of family support, etc.)
5. Difficulties satisfying the demands of parents or the community

First, we must map the local factors relevant to Tel Aviv-Yafo, possible using different methods that will generate insights formulated in other instructive ways.

It may be necessary to construct a distinct approach to different groups of teachers according to certain characteristics. The Arkansas study, for example, suggests that teachers with different seniority may be approached differently, or that groups of teachers with specific seniorities may be “targeted” because the deterrents vary statistically according to seniority, as well as by gender and school level.

The next stage will be to determine what needs to be done about the deterrents, assuming the circumstances do not change drastically. This is an opportunity to reconsider the role of principal, the kind of person we would like to fill this role in the city, and how it can be defined more precisely for the present. Such a redefinition may not only attract more people to school management, but also reduce the gap between job perception and reality, improve the job experience in relation to expectations, and increase the satisfaction and effectiveness of principals on the job.

We may need to expand the range of the definition and the range of models acceptable to us, and use this as a basis to develop a different way to speak about the role that will also allow for its rebranding. For example, we may find that different teachers who transition to the role of principal and ultimately succeed in doing so based on different considerations and perceptions of the job and of concepts such as leadership, responsibility, and social contribution, and ones that are related to the generation to which they belong (X, Y, Z, etc.), for example, as indicated by one study.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Such a research process may be commissioned from research companies or conducted independently with the accompaniment of an appropriate consultant. After formulating the insights, it is recommended to define the recruitment and development processes, as well as the personal follow-up of participants, taking inspiration from talent-management methodology. This is best done with the help of a consultant or an external company to accompany the process and offer insights on how to make the process efficient and effective based on up-to-date knowledge.

Finally, it is necessary to plan a campaign that will attract candidates to the reserves program with the help of a marketing consultant or, ideally, a publicity firm.

## Program stages

At the core of the program is participation in a learning community composed of teachers from several schools.

It is likewise possible to develop new positions for the purpose of training (while, of course, considering the practical benefit they will also bring to the school), to increase the specialization of middle management levels, and to define the reserves as potential trainees for middle management positions at the school as well.

For example, it would be possible to give a school staff member participating in the reserves program one or a combination of the following:

1. An existing role at the school
2. Definition as a middle management reserve at the school (from which it will be possible to advance to various coordinator roles)
3. A new role, for example, assistant coordinator (e.g., grade coordinator), from which it will be possible to advance to the role of coordinator

Another option is to go one step further and try the model of co-principal, a role that the participants will fulfill in rotation among themselves (or in rotation with a principal).[[72]](#footnote-72) This model works mainly when it is selected by the parties on the ground rather than dictated from above, and it is worth experimenting with it and examining its suitability for the city, its contribution to the process of principal training, and, of course, as a model for running a school in and of itself.

The reserves program will therefore accompany the participants throughout the course of a period where they will acquire thought and action patterns, skills, and perceptions that will serve them in management positions of increasing responsibility.

## Graduate network and activities

Annual enrichment meeting for all graduates of the program who have not yet reached the management prospect or principal levels. The meeting may also include a purposeful activity that aims, for example, to produce a discussion around an issue in the city, etc.

## Recommendation for organizing the training

It is recommended to consider the following points and ideas during the detailed design of program prior to and during implementation:

* Having candidates undergo a municipal management screening before Avnei Rosha, with a view to entering the candidate into a pool of managerial talent, and possibly a pre-management year, the scope of which will be based, among other things, on the actual and statistical assessment of demand for new principals in one to two years.
* Municipal pre-management program—designed to accommodate two populations: trainees at Avnei Rosha, and management reserves who are not yet studying or accepted at Avnei Rosha. Those who don’t get accepted will go into a three-year management position in the city and will be exempt from the training.
* Assessment before transitioning to the second year of the program, which involves screening, as mentioned earlier, using 360º evaluation as well as other tools.
* Assignment to management positions after the program: affirmative action—the best candidates will be assigned to schools that need it most, to the extent that the candidates’ personal desires are insufficient in this respect.

## Recommendation for learning modes

* We recommend joint projects with other populations, for example, veteran principals, for mutual stimulation.
* Cognitive mentorship—Learning through actual school administration with a veteran co-principal who will gradually let the reserve do most of the work and assist them with feedback, reflection, and inquiry. The teaching principals will constitute a learning community that will be trained in instruction, receive periodic guidance (for example, once a month) and/or on demand, and will train their apprentices to perform a range of tasks that include creating innovation (under the guidance of an innovation coach, or, for example, an expert in design thinking), problem solving (under the guidance of a strategic consultant, such as a McKinsey consultant, possibly pro bono), application of methods and tools (under the guidance of an expert in the field of organization and ODT), and gain experience in management methods and team guidance according to need and situation (e.g., based on online guidance material databases as mentioned above, or with the help of an expert in instruction/team guidance/presentations/public speaking).

# Emphasis on Training New Principals in the Municipal System (Management Prospects)

## Goals specific to this population

* Mitigating the “culture shock” of entering the position and building mental resilience while managing self-expectations and expectations from the school
* Formulating a managerial identity, establishing a managerial-pedagogical vision, conceptualizing the vision, and acquiring the skills to communicate and externalize it
* Personal development as an educational leader, including emotional, social, and cultural learning
* Increased ability to self-manage and manage an organization, including learning practices from other types of organizations
* Specialization in managing a diverse teaching staff with optimal utilization of the team’s capacities, development of staff, and managing teachers and middle management as a talent pool
* Acquiring inquiry, measurement, and evaluation skills to be applied to both routine activities and new initiatives, and integrating these practices into structures and procedures

## Other guiding principles

In addition to the above, the learning content will be designed based on the following considerations:

1. Its contribution to fostering qualities of trailblazing principals
2. Its contribution to management that is more adapted to the needs of the city’s various populations and the goals of the Department of Education
3. Its contribution to filling the gaps in existing principal training, i.e., subjects that are not covered by currently available training and professional development programs

The content is to be integrated in practical contexts rather than through theoretical learning. We will address modes of learning in more detail further on.

## Possibility of unique modules for specific principal populations

Such differential treatment can be expressed in terms of learning content, projects that are more relevant to certain groups, creating a community and a network of contacts with principals working today with the same kind of population, etc.

### By student population

Learning about the communities, cultures, and neighborhoods from which the students hail, namely:

1. Arab society
2. Children of refugees and foreign workers
3. Special education students
4. Low income families (students of professional high schools and middle schools, which have their own unique attributes, mostly belong in this category)
5. Religious education

### By students’ age range

Some subjects will be relevant to all principals, and some to only a part of them, or in a way that is unique to each age level:

1. Early childhood principals
2. Primary school principals
3. Middle school principals
4. Six-year school principals

This division also has a significant correlation to the size of the school, which spared us the inclusion of a separate division according to size—high schools and middle schools, in general, tend to be significantly larger than elementary schools, and, in most cases, there is an additional layer of management between the principal and the teachers.

One values-based question that arises is whether this division should also be viewed as a hierarchy that expresses a rising level of skill, with the peak of professional ability in terms of educational institution management being the management of a six-year school, or does it, in fact, represent separate specializations. The answer probably consists of a combination of both approaches. This question is important in the context of establishing educational management as a profession, as suggested above.

### By organizational conditions

Different organizational circumstance demand different perceptions, skills, and work patterns to fully take advantage of the opportunities or avoid the risks they present. Namely:

1. New school—Ideal conditions for a breakthrough
2. School coming out of a crisis—Also good conditions for a breakthrough since, sometimes, the exasperation with the status quo give the principal the legitimation and support they need to make far-reaching changes
3. School that has recently moved, undergone a merger, or split into several institutions
4. School riding high on a wave of success
5. Staff-related situations—Emotionally draining characters, hostile “cliques,” a team that is too homogenous (for example, all veteran teachers), unusually high turnover, etc.

This is not to say that there are situations that can’t be significantly improved, but there are certain conditions that might make it more difficult to create real breakthroughs, which means that they will require more time and effort.[[73]](#footnote-73)

## Recommendations for accompaniment

It is recommended to consider the following ideas and points in creating the detailed design of the program, before and during implementation:

* An accompanying instructor in addition to Avnei Rosha, with a yearly budget of 60 hours.
* Flexible and variable distribution of time as necessary and subject to agreement between the principal and the accompanying instructor.
* Selecting a specific accompanying instructor from a selecting of instructors who all have different profiles after an introductory conversation and coordination of expectations (for example, an organizational consultant, a veteran principal from the city, etc.).
* We also recommend considering the online consultation retainer model, using WhatsApp/email, which is particularly flexible (see the example of Talkspace).

## Unique recommendation: preparation of a management strategy game by veteran principals

* Fully structured (ready-made), semi-structured (a few scenarios), or unstructured (synchronic or asynchronic, with a team of principal instructors or with a mixed instruction team composed of veteran principals and training peers)
* Designing a few initial school scenarios
* Each cycle (once a year, or every semester, according to the perspective we’re seeking), receiving inputs based on previous decisions and devising new decisions to make (for example, regarding time budgeting, choosing a certain program to introduce into the school out of a selection, etc.)
* Examples from the business world: through an application, in academia—with the help and accompaniment of a games-design expert
* Following each game—discussion, supplementary texts to read, or interviews about the real cases on which the simulations were based, reflection, feedback, and inquiry

# Emphasis on Professional Development for Veteran Principals

## Goals specific to this populations

Developing the ability to deal with high-level managerial complexity through in-depth learning in areas more familiar to the principals (such as pedagogy) and broad learning in less familiar areas, at least to some (such as human resource management, marketing, and branding).

* Expanding the capacity to design and foster a school culture and learning environment
* Deepening the understanding of childhood and adolescence developmental mechanisms and their implications for the future, and integrating it into the system
* Developing the ability to identify and handle extreme cases and risks, as well as risky behaviors, and integrating it into the system
* Expanding cooperation between schools and with other stakeholders
* Improving the managerial ability to handle complex situation at various stages in the life of the school
* Deeping the understanding of twenty-first-century challenges—global, local, and personal—and integrating it into the school’s vision and functioning
* Implementing advanced human resources management at the school
* Tools for designing and implementing a branding and marketing program for the school
* Pedagogical paradigms, educational approaches and methodologies from Israel and the world
* Organizational goal—Retention of good principals. We can consider hiring a principal retention consultant, a position that would include managing monitoring, follow-up, and preservation processes, as well as providing ongoing consulting services to the division heads about possible steps to increase principals’ job satisfaction and retain them for longer, on the general and individual levels.[[74]](#footnote-74)

## Special recommendation for educational tours abroad

The Department of Education’s experience shows that tours abroad can be game-changers and allow principals who have already overcome their first hurdles on the job and are ready to take advantage of the experience and maturity they have gained in order to rise above the dictated agenda of tasks and current events, to take in new ideas, and bolster their ability to produce further changes and breakthroughs.

The tours can include lectures, observation, and personal encounters with personnel at various learning institutions and people from governmental education agencies. In particular, such tours allow participants to learn a lot about breakthrough pedagogy, cooperation between various elements in the system, and social-emotional learning.

For example, principals who returned from a tour of Finland in 2017 described the impressions from the tour in posts they published. There was great excitement about the inspiring opportunity to achieve wonderful goals, all of which suddenly seemed possible, as well as expressions of hope, optimism, and belief. The principals described fascinating discussions that developed among the team members following the tour, new and renewed ambitions, social cohesion, the desire to cooperate as a way of achieving new goals, and the momentum for action.

Certain phrases and expressions that came up in these posts included:

“I am writing down ideas to realize at my school tomorrow”; “A taste of endless possibilities”; “With this spark in our eyes we return to work on Sunday and start implementing what we saw and what we liked”; “The greatest of joys was being with my team. Profound talks into the night about insights, brainstorming among ourselves, the desire to improve and innovate, the short- and long-term ideas that were raised with limitless enthusiasm;” and finally—“Now we know what we should be demanding.”

The principals did demand, and those who ask shall receive. For example, within a few months, they managed to initiate a process that culminated in the redesign of the learning environment for the 1st and 2nd grades and of various other spaces in the school to facilitate improved individual and group learning in a pleasant environment that encourages creativity.

Education tours abroad for veteran principals are, therefore, **a catalyst for multiplying breakthroughs, shortening times, empowerment, and motivation.** It is recommended that the tours be accompanied by a delegation from the school staff, and it is also possible to have a mix of veteran principals together with management prospects and/or reserves (the participation of those apart from the veterans will be funded by the Department).

## Principles for detailed design

It is recommended to consider the following ideas and points in creating the detailed design of the program, before and during implementation:

* Learning on Demand (LOD)—In the case of veteran principals, the range of needs is much wider than that of other populations. Therefore, the concept of learning on demand is particularly relevant, i.e. the possibility of constructing one’s own learning process from a wide selection of on-demand modules rather undergoing a uniform process.
* Projects—
  + Possibility of working on them in tandem with reserves, for the sake of mutual stimulation
  + An interesting possible project would be creating a lecture for Fuckup Nights (all principals are welcome to do so, it is also possible to do so via the official organization, which is open to the public)

## Recommended learning modes

* Learning through teaching—Part of the training might include a model within the framework of which highly-esteemed veteran principals could foster their own management prospects through the municipal training program, rather than the existing trainings. Namely, it is possible to create the status of a senior principal who will take charge of one of the themes mentioned above every year, for example, and at the end of the period present their activity to their community or any other forum.
* Reverse mentoring—Connection to the younger generation by mentoring young people—from students to young principals.
* Shadowing managers in other professional fields, for example, the high-tech industry.

# Emphasis on Training Early Childhood Principals

The early childhood education system is different from the school system in terms of its organization and pedagogy, and at the same time it forms part of the educational sequence. A large part of the principles and perceptions described here are valid for early childhood principals as well. The specific challenges which they have to face are described in the chapter titled “[Challenges in early childhood education](#_Challenges_in_early).”

## Goals specific to this population

* Acquisition of basic and advanced management skills in accordance with the specific challenges in the area/cluster and the principal’s individual needs.
* Developing the ability to mobilize, create new norms, connect to the motivations of kindergarten instructors, think outside the box, take controlled risks, initiate, and innovate.
* Developing the capacity to accompany a diverse population of kindergarten instructors through processes of recognizing and agreeing on personal development needs and the development needs of the kindergarten, and in dealing with change processes while handling resistance

## Recommended themes

In order to drive a process of organizational improvement and change in the unique configuration of an area or a cluster, the principal mainly has need of basic tools and guidance. This is the important and immediate thing to provide them with, within the budget limits, to compensate for the lack of proper management training.

Accordingly, project-based learning, [in the format described above](#_Main_Pedagogical_Model—Project-base), with certain connected themes and modes of learning, is also relevant here, in combination with personal accompaniment or accompaniment in a small group. It is much more relevant than frontal instruction as well as learning based on case studies and sharing, since veteran principals often feel that such learning is a waste of time. As one leading kindergarten instructor said, “In my years on the job, I have already learned most of the advanced training offered in the education system.”

Specifically, we wish to address the question of whether early childhood principal training should include educational tours abroad. Of course, much can be learned from successful kindergarten models abroad both at the pedagogical and organizational level, and as an inspiration for setting a high level of ambition. However, at the moment, the situation is such that these principals require more immediate training and accompaniment in processes of which there is knowledge and examples in Israel. In terms of cost-benefit, it seems that we can glean sufficient insights and inspiration from tours conducted within the borders of the country. Moreover, the large number of early childhood principals makes it impossible budget-wise to send them all abroad, although, of course, this can be considered sporadically in the future, for example, in recognition of excellence, or for a specific group interested in studying a particular field for the purpose of importing it into the country.

As one of the early childhood principals we interviewed said: “Personal accompaniment is what will help me most. Flying abroad and seeing and getting to know different ways of leadership and management is of course fun and important, but it is less relevant to my reality. I think that personal accompaniment…that’s something I would invest in.”

Important themes to include in the training (in addition to the many themes [mentioned previously](#_Subjects_(themes)_for)):

* Community entrepreneurship and leadership—the theme that was demanded most frequently in interviews
* Project management
* Group instruction, driving change, and dealing with resistance
* Adult instruction—how to build knowledge and teach the kindergarten instructors the tools they lack
* Communication with parents
* Mentoring and training
* Finding a balance between commonality and autonomy (for example, how to create an area, or cluster-wide theme that is expressed in the common spaces and in each individual kindergarten, while at the same time giving the kindergarten instructors the autonomy to create and implement themes of their own)
* Topics in contemporary early childhood psychology
* Communities and neighborhoods in Tel Aviv
* In clusters—administration and management for new principals
* In clusters—using common learning spaces

## Recommended learning modes

We recommend using all the training time for learning methods that are optimally connected to the individual challenges of each principal. Such training will be given through practical counseling, which means that it is not separate from the principals’ practical activity; rather it accompanies it. For the training to be effective and practical, the most appropriate format is personal accompaniment/counseling in the case of new principals, and accompaniment in small groups of four leading kindergarten instructors in the case of more veteran principals.

The reasons for this recommendation:

1. The need to lead complex processes, mostly without any real management training or experience
2. The limited time that most early childhood principals can devote to managerial work
3. They mostly handle their duties on their own, without a middle management tier to support them
4. There is great variance between early childhood principals and their needs

Therefore, we recommend personal training or consulting with an organizational consultant or any other type of consultant who has experience with organizational change processes that have parallel aspects to those required in kindergartens, as needed, chief among them:

* Creating a process for motivating kindergarten instructors to act and to change, one that includes legitimation for trial and error, inclusion of the kindergarten instructors in the process itself, and the right perspective on the rate at which the change should take place in the space.
* Documentation and sharing the knowledge accumulated in the kindergarten instructor community through media platforms, events, and orally.
* Encouragement and creation of a local culture that includes mutual stimulation and motivation for cooperation
* Building an infrastructure for peer learning with a mechanism that will push the best examples forward
* Formulating a development horizon and a career development plan for kindergarten instructors (within the role, not necessarily vertically)
* Improvement of the job experience in various ways (job crafting)

In addition, the training sessions can include:

* Educational visits to special kindergartens in the city and in the country, experimental kindergartens, kindergartens that serve different populations, kindergartens with progressive or unique pedagogical approaches, or other inspirational organizations outside the sphere of education
* Situation simulations, for example, of complex interactions with parents or with an assistant instructor
* Joint observations with a guide, writing reports on the children and comparing them
* Creating standards for kindergarten outputs, such as reports to the parents about their child’s development progress
* Community outreach and parental involvement
* In terms of educational entrepreneurship, it is possible to hold a group session for raising ideas, and to have a mechanism for proposing ideas for projects and programs, with those who are selected getting accompaniment via a number of meetings for the detailed planning and implementation of the project.

Finally, it is recommended to consider giving early childhood principals the possibility to ask for additional instruction or training for themselves and their team, for example, specific courses or training programs in institutions that are not specifically geared for early childhood education, in order to enhance their competence and knowledge, subject to obtaining additional budgets.

## The training can be used to create a reserves pool

Since the management reserves program detailed here is designed for school management, we here propose another solution, which is to create a reserves pool for early childhood education principals.

Kindergarten instructors interested in joining the early childhood education principals reserves pool will undergo a selection interview, and if they are accepted, will join as observers of the accompaniment sessions of veteran early childhood principal groups. They can attend all meetings together or they can be divided into groups. Similarly, they can be attached to one specific group of veterans, or sample more than one group.

This will expose them to advanced managerial thinking and, over time, they may also be able to contribute to the discussion. The process will last a year or two, and at the end of the process, the Early Childhood Education Department will receive an assessment of the reserves, both from the consultants and from the principals in the group.

The reserves, for their part, will gain additional knowledge, tools, and experience that will enable them to decide whether they wish to become early childhood principals themselves.

# Acknowledgements

Many outstanding and good people assisted with the establishment of the present program, from the bodies that are the direct beneficiaries of the program to professionals who are not directly involved and who have volunteered generously and contributed knowledge and ideas. There is not enough space here to detail the unique contribution of each, but I wholeheartedly cherish their help and support, noting here specifically the academics who have referred us to relevant information, expressed opinions, contributed ideas, read, and commented. The students are the ones who will gain from their involvement.

**Professor Ofer Arazi—** **Department of Information Systems, Haifa University**—Head of Innovation Labs, Haifa

**Professor Yoram Harpaz—Faculty of Education, Beit Berl College**—Author and lecturer, specializing in education for thought and, in particular, thought communities

**Professor Gad Ya’ir—** **Department of Sociology and Anthropology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**—Author and sociologist, formerly head of the NCJW (National Council of Jewish Women) Research Institute for Innovation in Education

**Professor Avi Kluger—** **School of Business, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**—Specialist in organizational behavior, his research focuses on the hidden power of listening

**Professor Chen Schechter—Faculty of Education, Bar-Ilan University, and head of the MOFET Institute (Center for the Research, Curriculum and Program Development in Teacher Education)**—Specializing in leadership, and educational management and policy

**Professor Haim Shaked—President of Hemdat HaDarom Academic College of Education**—Researcher of systemic thinking and the pedagogical leadership of school principals

# Appendix A: Budget

The present budget is based on the research conducted by several suppliers and estimates that correspond to standard market rates. All costs are in shekels (NIS).

VAT was included where necessary. Where VAT is irrelevant, or there is a high likelihood of engaging a supplier who is a non-profit organization, or where VAT is already embodied in a rough estimate of the cost, no VAT was included in the cost.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Establishment cost for applicant recruitment, selection, and classification:** | *One-time cost* |  |
| Research among teachers regarding factors and deterrents affecting decision to go into management | 23,400 |  |
| Creating a marketing campaign | 17,550 |  |
| Building a recruitment, selection, and accompaniment process | 35,100 |  |
| Development of strategic measurement and evaluation tools | 46,800 |  |
| **Total one-time cost** | **122,850** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Management reserves program** | ***Once every two years, about 15 participants, the length of the training is two years*** | |
| Instruction—60 hours frontal instruction and approximately 120 additional hours of accompaniment and development | 63,180 | *A total of 180 hours over two years at the hourly rate of an expert service provider according to the public employment index (about NIS 300 + VAT)* |
| Refreshments, graphic design, advertising, material production | 11,700 | *Rough estimate assuming that we will use the municipality's resources at no additional cost for some of the design and production requirements* |
| Educational excursions in Israel, including accompaniment | 60,000 | *Several times during the training, at least one multi-day trip including accommodation, at an estimated cost of a total of about NIS 4,000 per person including VAT* |
| Mentoring of about 60 hours per participant, space hire, and additional resources | 157,950 | *Calculated based on the assumption that half of them would be free of charge and half at the index rate* |
| Miscellaneous | 20,000 | *Transportation, accommodation during educational tours and other unexpected expenses* |
| **Total cost per cycle** | **312,830** |  |
| **Total annual cost** | **156,415** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **New Principals (Managerial Prospects)** | ***Once a year, about 15 participants, the length of the training is two years*** | |
| Instruction—30 hours frontal and about 90 hours of additional hours of accompaniment, development, and mentoring | 42,120 | *A total of 120 hours over two years at the hourly rate of an expert service provider according to the public employment index, most of the hours will be concentrated over a multi-day seminar in the summer* |
| Refreshments, graphic design, advertising, material production | 5,850 | *Rough estimate assuming that we will use the municipality's resources at no additional cost for some of the design and production requirements* |
| Educational excursions in Israel, including accompaniment | 60,000 | *Once or twice a year, at least one multi-day trip including accommodation, at an estimated cost of a total of about NIS 4,000 per person including VAT* |
| Miscellaneous | 15,000 | *Transportation, accommodation during educational tours and other unexpected expenses* |
| **Total annual cost = cost per cycle** | **122,970** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Veteran Principal Training** | ***A selection of learning activities and yearly options for counseling and accompaniment*** | |
| Selection of courses, personal accompaniment, and existing training (such as Tfisa Megadelet)—overall budget | 45,971 | *Budget for a “buffet” of courses for veteran principals and personal consulting* |
| Educational tours abroad, including accompaniment[[75]](#footnote-75) | 300,000 | *One or two educational tours abroad per year (1.5 per year on average) with the participation of 30 principals each. The Department will assist in the financing of the participation of additional faculty members (principals and their staff).* |
| **Total annual cost = cost per cycle** | **345,971** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Early Childhood Principals** | ***Individual guidance or guidance in small groups for about 24 leading kindergarten instructors and about 28 cluster principals*** | |
| Mentoring in the first two years on the job—20 hours a year with an organizational consultant or other accompanying mentor | 70,200 | *Based on five new principals a year receiving such mentoring for two years* |
| Mentoring for veteran principals (over three years)—15 frontal hours in groups of four | 68,445 | *For both veteran and new principal, at the cost of an expert’s rate per hour. It is possible to concentrate some of the hours in the form of summer seminars* |
| **Total annual cost = cost per cycle** | **138,645** |  |
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| **Digital Platform** | ***Initial estimate*** | |
| License and operations for about 1,000 users | 100,000 | *Based on an estimate regarding an existing preferred platform tested by HaPisga Center.* |
| **Total annual cost** | **100,000** | *Initial estimate* |
|  |  |  |
| **Training program operations** |  | |
| Program director salary (based on NIS 20,000 a month) | 240,000 | *An employee of the Municipal Department of Education but one whose salary is paid from the project funds by the Tel Aviv Foundation* |
| Measurement and evaluation of the managerial reserves program | 21,898 | *Estimated at roughly 7% of the standard project budget, based on the total annual cost* |
| Measurement and evaluation of the new principals program | 8,608 |
| Measurement and evaluation of veteran principal training | 24,218 |
| Measurement and evaluation of the early childhood program | 9,705 |
| Measurement and evaluation of the digital platform | 7,000 |
| **Total annual measurement and evaluation cost** | **71,429** |  |
| **Total annual training program operations cost** | **311,429** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Costs** |  |  |
| Establishment cost | 122,850 |  |
| Annual cost | **1,175,430** |  |
| **Total cost over five years** | **6,000,000** |  |

# Appendix B: Logical Model Proposal

The proposed logical model detailed below is an initial suggestion that will be validated and updated in partnership with all the relevant stakeholders within the framework of the program. The proposal outlines the anticipated resources, actions, outputs, and results in the short, medium, and long term, while addressing each of the following population:

* Management reserves
* New principals (managerial prospects)
* Veteran principals
* Early childhood principals

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| **Logical model proposal for management reserves** | | | | | |
| **Inputs specific to the target population** | **Actions** | **Outputs** | **Short-term results** | **Medium-term results** | **Long-term results** |
| Campaign for recruiting quality teachers | Mapping local deterrents that hinder teachers from applying for management positions | Establishing a screening and selection process for reserves | Increased sense of commitment and connection to the city | An updated and clear perception of the role of principal among new principals | Integration of desirable norms and work culture |
| Part-time municipal reserves director | Creating an up-to-date redefinition of the principal’s role | Selecting X number of candidates for the reserves program | Recognition of a built-in career path and seeing a future in the system | The ability among principals to formulate a managerial identity | Increased proportion of principals coming from within the municipal education system |
| Designated planning team from among the participants | Establishment and operation of a selection process for reserves: a differentiated approach to teachers based on certain characteristics | Attracting X number of candidates to the reserves program | Rise in interest in management positions | Rise in number of candidates for management positions | Reduced burnout rates among veteran principals—reserves vs. control group |
|  | Training management reserve participants: creating managerial experiences in learning communities, a program for personal development, individual mentoring, and peer feedback | Participation in a learning community of teachers from several schools |  | Shorter acclimatization period for new principals | Narrowing the gap between expectations and reality for new principals |
|  | Participation of current-year graduates in the selection of candidates and refreshing the admission requirements for next year | Principals’ recommendation of X number of candidates for the reserves program |  | Participants attesting to growth and development, including a sense of mental resilience within the position as well as sufficient knowledge and skills |  |

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| **Logical model proposal for new principals (managerial prospects)** | | | | | |
| **Inputs specific to the target population** | **Actions** | **Outputs** | **Short-term results** | **Medium-term results** | **Long-term results** |
| An additional accompanying instructor for every principal | Improving the image of the profession: creating a public relations campaign for principals | X number of new principals trained per year before entering the position | Increased sense of commitment and connection to the city | Participants who have undergone significant practical preparation for the position have sufficient knowledge and skills to succeed | School principal is perceived an aspirational and respected position among teachers |
|  | Campaign to identify quality teachers who can be potential principal candidates | X number of principals taking advantage of the learning options package | Each new principal has a structured career path and personal development track | New principals attest to growth and development, including a sense of mental resilience within the position | Increased proportion of new principals coming from within the municipal education system |
|  | Training the prospects using practical, experiential, and field-based learning methods (training participants will gain experience in, for example, confronting objections, communicating, collaborating, and supporting each other) | X number of new principals receive significant annual personal feedback and updated growth targets for the next year. | New principals acquire new tools and practices and operate according to the work norms and culture defined by the program | New principals attest to having the tools to formulate a managerial identity and outline a pedagogical vision, and report advances in formulating and implementing such a vision. | New principals stay within the municipal education system for longer |
|  | Formulating a personal development plan and goals for each prospect, personal mentoring from a veteran principal | X number of principals apply what they’ve learned through practical project | New principals indicate a high sense of competence in adapting to the job | Increased motivation among teachers to advance to management positions | Increased sense of belonging to a professional community among new principals |
|  | Participation in the design of the training program and the outputs defined by the planning team |  | New principal gradually performs most of the de facto management tasks accompanied by the veteran principal | Principals acquire research, measurement, and evaluation skills | New principals are able to implement managerial decisions and communicate them properly to staff and parents |
|  | Assignation of an accompanying instructor in addition to the Avnei Rosha program, with an annual budget of hours |  |  |  |  |
|  | Creating a learning community throughout the year and in intensive summer seminars, as well as online |  |  |  |  |

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| **Logical model proposal for veteran principals** | | | | | |
| **Inputs specific to the target population** | **Actions** | **Outputs** | **Short-term results** | **Medium-term results** | **Long-term results** |
| Division Director, and other inputs in accordance with the specific goals of the school | Formulating a personal development plan and goals for each principal | X number of principals receive significant annual personal feedback, both from the Supervisor’s office and the Department, regarding their personal development plan, and update growth targets for the coming year | New principals implement new tools and methodologies and operate according to the work norms and culture defined by the program | Principals attest to growth and development, including a sense of mental resilience within the position | School principal is perceived an aspirational and respected position among teachers |
|  | Developing a selection of learning options: educational tours abroad, on-demand courses (LOD), a forum in which to share failure experiences, in-depth learning of familiar subjects and broad learning of less familiar subjects | X number of principals make use of the learning options | Principals attest to competence in handling managerial complexities | Principals are able to implement managerial decisions and communicate them properly to staff and parents | Principals persevere in the role: principals stay within the municipal education system for longer |
|  | Guidance for the creation of a practical project | X number of principals practice applied learning through practical projects | Increased sense of commitment and connection to the city | Principal feel a decrease in the tension between job requirements and being subject to supervision and accountability to other stakeholders | Increased capacity of principals to deal with public pressure |
|  | Guidance and instruction of new principals by veteran principals | Principals acquire the work norms and culture defined by the program | Streamlining, standardization, and reduced risk in the right places. For example, procedures for school operation in the absence of a principal | Principals attest to having the tools to formulate a managerial identity and outline a pedagogical vision, and report advances in formulating and implementing such a vision. | Noticeable improvement in problematic areas in the system: the introduction of innovations creates new benefits in the system, e.g., cultivating a new space in the school and connecting it to learning experiences, etc. |
|  |  |  |  | Principals report a desire and motivation to drive change and seize momentum | Principals rely more on their professional network in the city, an increased sense of belonging to a professional community among principals |

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| **Logical model proposal for early childhood principals** | | | | | |
| **Inputs specific to the target population** | **Actions** | **Outputs** | **Short-term results** | **Medium-term results** | **Long-term results** |
| Individual consulting for new principals and accompanied group instruction for veterans | Refreshment and redefinition of the role of early childhood principal: development of a gauge for defining the functions of the kindergarten instructor, development of the natural skills of the kindergarten instructor | Significant annual personal feedback, both from the Supervisor’s office and the Department, regarding the principals’ personal development plans, and updated growth targets for the coming year | Reducing the burden on principals in charge of leading kindergarten classes by adding middle management positions | Early childhood principals have management skills that enable them to deal with the challenges unique to this population | The roles of leading kindergarten instructor and cluster principal are defined and structured |
| Establishment mechanisms of cooperation between kindergarten principals | Official municipal certification for early childhood principals | The early childhood principals have X number of days a month for the observation, support, and guidance of about 20 kindergarten teachers. |  | Early childhood principals have an increased sense of belonging to a professional community in the city | High level of motivation for the role of leading kindergarten instructor |
|  | Redefinition of the assistant’s role as pedagogical aid |  |  |  | Shift in the traditional perception of the kindergarten assistant (pedagogical aid) as an administrative role only |
|  | Supporting a general forum for early childhood principals |  |  |  |  |

**Inputs common to all target populations:**

* Budgets and resources for training
* Program branding
* A technological platform for managing learning and career development
* Public relations for principals among the residents
* Planning team involved in designing the learning program
* Steering committee
* Pedagogical staff

**Suggested long-term results among students:**

* Disadvantaged students receive personal and educational empowerment resources (school and municipal indicators of averages and minimization of variance)
* Reducing school dropout rates, especially among vulnerable populations, and reducing variance in school dropout rates
* Improved scholastic success metrics, especially among vulnerable populations
* Increased sense of self-efficacy and motivation for success among students
* Students attesting that the school environment is sensitive, supportive, and inclusive of cultural diversity
* Increased sense of belonging to a learning institution among students, and the sense of being seen and understood
* Improved levels of students’ self-esteem regarding their personal competence, potential for success, and hopes for success
* Students/graduates demonstrating egalitarian values and practices toward disadvantaged or vulnerable populations, including Arabs and women
* Increased sense of self-efficacy among students belonging to disadvantaged or vulnerable populations, including Arabs and women
* Students attesting that they can turn to educational staff with problems
* Students displaying ability to cope with ethnic tensions, acquisition of emotional skills to deal with ethnic tensions among students
* Students espousing democratic values, increased multicultural knowledge among students
* Increased rates of students involved in multicultural projects and volunteer activity within the school and outside it
* Increased sense of belonging to the state and fairness in resource distribution among Arab students
* Strengthening and developing knowledge and skills for the twenty-first century among students, which will be relevant to their future (such as Independent learning, proactiveness and initiative, critical thinking, creative thinking, and teamwork)
* Improved PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test results among students
* Increased number of student-initiated municipal projects that succeed and are adopted for an X number of years
* Students become aware of their strengths and interests
* Students actively work to develop their interests and strengths
* Increased proportion of time inside and outside the classroom that students invest in activities that utilize and develop their strengths and interests
* Increase in the scope and variance of interests and skills among students

**Suggested long-term results among principals—all target populations:**

* Principals engage in cooperation and mutual support
* Principals initiate new ideas and adjust their implementation over time
* Principals are able to optimally deal with new challenges, unexpected changes, and managerial problems
* Principals work efficiently and methodically, and approach managerial situations in the optimal manner
* Principals are able to meet the personal goals they have defined
* Principals identify and utilize their personal inclinations and relative advantages in their work
* Principals make personal connections and collaborate with other principals, feel a sense of belonging to a principals’ community
* Principals drive complex changes within their schools, which have long-term impacts
* Increased proportion of principals coming from within the municipal education system, as opposed to other municipalities
* Retention of veteran principals and longer terms served in the position
* Honing of managerial identity among school principals, and definition of personal and professional aspirations
* Increased sense of safety and security in the school
* Improvement in interpersonal relationships among staff and between staff and parents
* Improvements in the program and the quality of training the principals receive from year to year

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2. For example, the new comprehensive school “Bikurim” has taken on this challenge. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [The Israeli Democracy Index 2020](https://www.idi.org.il/media/15539/the-israeli-democracy-index-2020.pdf), Israeli Institute for Democracy (Hebrew), 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [The Israeli Democracy Index 2020](https://www.idi.org.il/media/15539/the-israeli-democracy-index-2020.pdf), Israeli Institute for Democracy (Hebrew), 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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6. Eran Halperin and Daniel Bar-Tal, “Democratic values and education for democracy in the state of Israel.” Democracy and Security 2, no. 2 (2006), 169–200. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [The Israeli Democracy Index 2020](https://www.idi.org.il/media/15539/the-israeli-democracy-index-2020.pdf), Israeli Institute for Democracy (Hebrew), 41, 46–47, 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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44. In this program, we deal with succession planning that is ultimately intended for school management, but it is certainly possible to think of additional models, such adding a deputy principal track, or a professional leadership track that strives for professional and pedagogical leadership. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
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52. It is important to learn entrepreneurship not only in the administrative sense of seeking out opportunities and building programs, which is the traditional approach common to all business management courses and adapted to the context of large commercial enterprises, but also including more recent approaches, such as Saras Saravathy’s Theory of Effectuation and similar entrepreneur-centered models. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. “Knowing a lot of emotion concepts and a lot of emotion words, and being able to use those to create very nuance precise emotional events, actually is really helpful – socially, in school, those kids perform better in school, it allows you to be resilient when bad things happen to you, it helps you cope, so kids who (have) emotional granularity… tend to use alcohol less when they’re stressed, people even recover faster from physical illness.” Lisa Feldman Barret,“Balancing the Brain Budget*,*” *The Knowledge Project* (podcast). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. How to motivate people in the system to provide us with resources and make decisions that are favorable to our objectives, based on an understanding of the social dynamics between different actors at different levels of control and prestige, of the interests and motivations of each player, and the implementation of political strategy. Possible lecturer: Haggai Elkayam Shalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. There are numerous testimonies to this effect. See for instance: Itzchakov, G., & Kluger, A. N. (2018). [The power of listening in helping people change](https://hbr.org/2018/05/the-power-of-listening-in-helping-people-change). ***Harvard Business Review*** (May 17) [Invited review, reviewed by editors]; Castro, D. R., Anseel, F., Kluger, A. N., Lloyd, K. J., & Turjeman-Levi, Y. (2018). Mere listening effect on creativity and the mediating role of psychological safety. ***Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts, 12***, 489-502. <https://doi.org/10.1037/aca0000177>; Itzchakov, G., & Kluger, A. N. (2017). The listening circle: A simple tool to enhance listening and reduce extremism among employees. ***Organizational Dynamics, 46***(4), 220-226. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2017.05.005. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The Israeli notion of *mamlachtiut* was first put into use by David Ben-Gurion in relation to Israeli national sovereignty and the centralization of public affairs into the hands of the state. It also describes the idea of putting one’s own interests aside for the greater good. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. What we are referring to here is a certain extent of social immersion for the purpose of getting to know a population. For an interesting example, see the description of Google’s research immersion trips, which are part of their ongoing employee training program: <https://design.google/library/beyond-desktop-research-immersion-trip/> [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. A recent U.S. study uncovered an unfortunate state of affairs: the best principals are not likely to be found in the schools that need them most—school with students who come from low income families, minorities, and students with lower scholastic achievements. If we are to be guided by the “Equality” beacon, we must make sure that we do not allow the same to happen in our city. See Grissom, Jason A., Brendan Bartanen, and Hajime Mitani. “Principal sorting and the distribution of principal quality.” AERA Open 5.2 (2019): 2332858419850094. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
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60. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. For more, see the “Eight principles of breakthrough action” section in the chapter “The Strategy: Creating a Community of Trailblazing Principals.” [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
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73. This brings us to consider the question of under what conditions should the principals most likely to create breakthroughs be referred to schools experiencing scenarios 1 and 2, and when is actually it more advantageous to refer them to schools experiencing scenarios 3 or 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
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