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National School Management and Governance in Armenia

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Abbreviations

AMD	Armenian Dram
BOT	Board of Trustees
CSI	Center for Strategic Initiatives
DOE	Department of Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EFMR	Education Financing and Management Reforms
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science
NCET	National Center for Educational Technologies
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RA	Republic of Armenia
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
USD	United States Dollars
WB	World Bank

I. Executive Summary

Introduction

In the second half of 1990s, the Government of the Republic of Armenia initiated education system reforms that continued throughout the following two decades, with school management and governance being an important constituent. In this context, backed with international donor assistance, decentralization and school-based management have been the main area of governance reforms.

Legislative Framework and Institutional Setting

Armenia employs a dedicated legislative framework and institutional setting regarding the management and governance of general education. The schools have the legal status of state non-profit organization and as such employ in-house management, while being subject to external governance.

A set of legal acts define the duties and responsibilities of the participants of the system and the relationships between them. The main bodies involved in the external governance range from the Government of the RA and the MoES to territorial governing authorities. The latter (Marzpetarans) are the state authorized bodies for the majority of schools – basic and 12-year. The Ministry of Education and Science oversees 106 separate high schools.

The dominating participants in internal governance and management are the School Boards and the School Principals, other structures include the advisory bodies – Pedagogical, Parent and Student Councils, and Boards of Trustees. The School Board is a collegial governing body, comprised of the following main representatives: territorial administration, local self-governing body, Ministry of Education and Science, teacher and parent communities. The Board approves the school budget and appoints the Principal. Operational management of the school largely relies solely on the Principal.

The schools are subject to internal and external assessment aimed at the school administration and quality of education.

Key Issues

Overall, while there is a vast legislative framework and institutional coverage in the education sector, gaps in the aforementioned and malpractices in actual implementation adversely affect the management and governance practices in the public schools.

There are still noticeable shortcomings in the school management and governance area that impede the effectiveness and adversely impact the quality of general education in Armenia. The main gaps include the subscale involvement of the community, gaps in the competence of leadership at the schools, issues in national and subnational policy and poor institutional support that hinder the future progress of schools. These issues are augmented by deficient school boards. While improvements in school management and governance have been on reform agenda since years, unsatisfactory progress has been achieved so far.

International Best Practice

There are numerous approaches to local governance throughout the world that can offer best practices and lessons learned in the areas of school based management and school leadership as well as the relationship between local and regional governance in education. The Russian Federation and Republic of Georgia represent two peer countries that have undergone similar attempts at decentralization in recent years. Russia, because of its size and diversity, has found it difficult to equitably distribute resources from the central to local level, and in actual practice school boards have not been consistently active. In the case of Georgia, principals are highly politicized, resulting in a policy of re-centralization and a diminished role for school boards. Other examples of decentralization in Egypt and Spain show that boards can be made more effective at the school level through training and system reform, while the highly decentralized systems of education administration in Finland and the United States indicate that boards can be effective if they are actually accountable to the general public: When more board members are elected, the degree of accountability is higher.

Best practices in school leadership may be found in Spain, Finland and the United States, where principals are trained in school leadership and understand how to delegate and distribute their authority. Spain increased the professional status of its school principals by instituting new training in school leadership and policy making, while in the United States currently school principals and school administrators are expected to complete a university degree in school leadership. The training provided to Finland's principals in leadership and teamwork, policy and decision making presents a good model for Armenia to follow to build upon the school administration certification it already has in place.

Co-principalship is a relatively new organizational model for school leadership. The strength of the co-principalship model is that decision-making is shared, easing the burden of accountability and stress.

Recommendations and Conclusions

In order to move forward the process of decentralization and democratization of Armenian schools, it is important to find a balance between the national level system of education, local governance of schools and school autonomy. In this setting, ideally, the MOES would be responsible for long range strategic planning, policy making and data collection, while finances for schools and local operations would be channeled through local authorities.

School boards should be designed to ensure the autonomy of schools as well as their accountability to the community at large. School boards will function more effectively in Armenia if they are more independent and if they are accountable for the principal's performance. Thus, moving boards from the individual school to the regional level in Armenia would protect schools from favoritism and nepotism at the local and village level and give them independence from principals. Local communities could continue to be involved in schools through the parent, student and teacher councils that are already established in Armenia. Continued and regular training for new board members in school governance, ethics and in understanding their roles and responsibilities is essential to engaging communities in school governance.

A recommended in-school model is the replacement of current position of School Principal by two managing positions in the school – Headteacher and Operations Manager who will take over educational and administrative aspects of school operations, respectively.

School Development Plan shall become an important toolset for school management to enhance the school. A rigid performance-based approach of Regional Boards shall be in place to assess progress of School Development Plan and evaluate school management thereupon.

Best practices in school leadership call for the addition of training in school leadership, data driven policy making and ethics. In the long-run, the further development of university degree programs in school leadership would improve education decision making at the level of schools and local education authorities.

Since the 1990s the decentralization of education in Armenia has been an important component of the overall democratization process. As in other democratizing and decentralizing nations, school boards have become one of the central features of this process. Local governance through school boards has not achieved initial successful everywhere, but new strategies and reforms have enabled boards to be more effective in a number of country contexts. However, it should be remembered that education is country specific and the wholesale borrowing of reforms in education from a different country context is not always feasible without making appropriate adjustments. Armenia benefits from the lessons learned and best practices of peer countries that would fit Armenia's specific development phase, current challenges, resources and limitations and overall envisaged development trajectory.

II. Report Findings

1. Introduction

Background

In the second half of 1990s, the Government of the Republic of Armenia (RA) started nationwide educational system reforms.

In this context, the World Bank (WB) provided guidance and financing. In the period 1998-2002, WB 'Education Financing and Management reforms' project was implemented in Armenia, with a key area being the enhancement of school management and governance. Main target areas were the improvement of normative-legislative base for state school system management, democratization of in-school management and transition to governance through school boards. Overall, the decentralization reforms were aimed to enable community participation in school governance and to increase the effectiveness of state budget allocations to schools. These were targeted to lead to democratic and effective decision-making through engaging representatives of the main stakeholders on school boards. To support the reforms in process, trainings were launched for school principals and school board members. Throughout 1998-2002 period, the trainings engaged about 1,800 school board members, 315 school principals, and 200 school accountants. Overall, the trainings covered 42% of schools in Armenia.

The succeeding WB project – 'Education Quality and Relevance project (2004-2009)', continued the trainings in school management and leadership. From 2003 to 2005, around 820 school principals and 2,700 board members underwent trainings.

Overall, throughout 2000s, school management and governance aspects have been important components of the state programs in education sphere. The "RA Education Development State Program 2001-2005" envisioned the full transition of schools to a new form of governance through school boards. Subsequently, "The RA Education Development State Program 2011-2015" highlighted the need to enhance the effectiveness of management in the general education system.

Current Situation

While in the last two decades the RA government has been implementing a set of reforms aimed at enhancement of the management and governance at the public schools, there are still significant shortcomings that hinder the effectiveness of school management and governance and adversely affect education quality. The implemented decentralization reforms have failed to generate wide community involvement. Noticeable gaps in a set of other critical areas - competence of leadership of the schools, shortcomings in national and sub-national policy and inadequate institutional support, jeopardize the future development of schools. These issues are furthered by the deficient school boards and by the school principals acting as political functionaries, under the strong influence of regional administrations.

Overall, while improvement in school management and governance has been a reform agenda since long time, inadequate progress has been recorded so far.

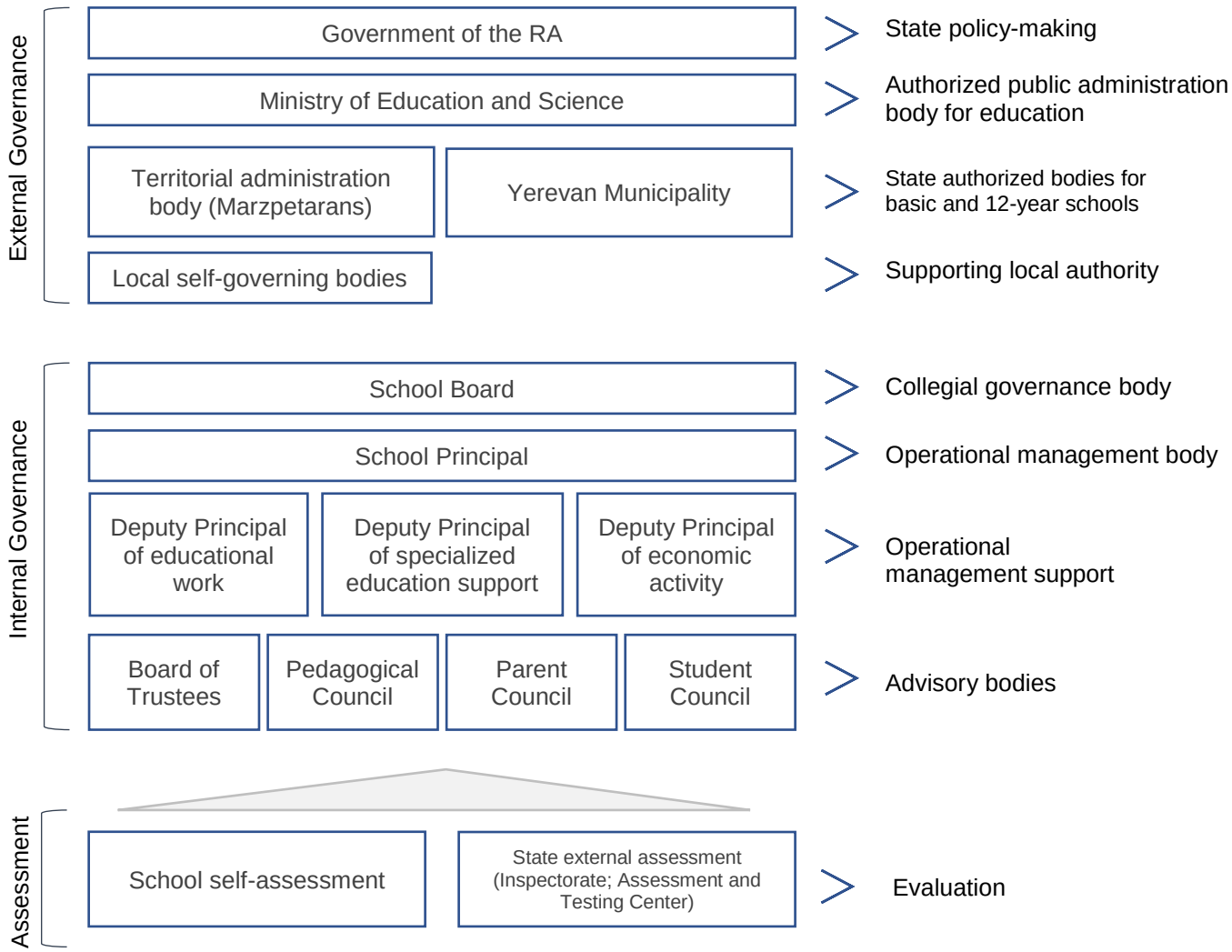
Setting for the Study

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in collaboration with the Center for Strategic Initiatives (CSI) is in the process of developing the Education Development State Program 2018-2030. Reforms in school governance and management is among the priority areas. In this context, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) finances the current study developed by national and international consultants. The study is aimed at assessing the current situation in the area of school management and governance in Armenia, presenting the international best practices and providing recommendations for reforms.

2. Legislative Framework and Institutional Setting

The state schools in Armenia are subject both to external and internal governance[1].

Legislative framework and institutional setting for state schools



[1] See also Appendices for more information on the legislative framework and institutional setting.

2.1 External Governance

The Government of the RA implements the state policy of education through the Ministry of Education and Science - the authorized public administration body for education. The MoES has organizational, financial, licensing, certification and monitoring functions.

The governance of state schools is implemented on 5 levels:

- Government of the RA
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Territorial administration body
- Local self-governing body*
- School

* Communities and municipalities in cities other than Yerevan

Supervision of most of the state schools is performed by the territorial administration bodies (Marzpetarans and the Municipality of Yerevan); and partly remains with the MoES. Thus, the territorial administration bodies are the state authorized bodies for the basic and 12-year schools. Separated high schools are under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science. Local self-governing bodies (communities and municipalities in cities other than Yerevan) are not direct supervision authorities; their function is mainly to assist in the implementation of the state educational policy throughout the territory of the community.

External Governance Bodies

2.1.a Government of the Republic of Armenia

Policy-making

The Government implements the state policy in the field of general education. The Government is the founder of state schools and approves their model Charters. According to the RA Law on Education and the RA Law on General Education, the Government is responsible for the following aspects regarding the state schools:

- Establishes the list of job positions at schools, their descriptions, qualification categories, work regime, attestation and recruitment procedures.
- Approves the establishment and acting procedures of territorial and republican commissions for pedagogical qualifications.
- Approves the standards for internal and external evaluation and implementation procedure.
- The financing from the state budget, as well as additional financing procedures.

2.1.b Ministry of Education and Science

The MoES is the authorized public administration body for education. It develops and implements the policy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the field of education.

The MoES is the state authorized body for the separated high schools.

It assures the implementation of state policy and oversees the activities of the separated high schools.

Educational process

The MoES contributes to the staffing, educational and methodological support of schools, by:

- Developing and approving the model procedure for calling competition for the vacant position of a teacher
- Defining the requirements to the content of training of pedagogical staff and principal
- Giving consent to training programs for teachers

The MoES implements budgetary allocation in the field of education. It also makes recommendations for allocation, on a competitive basis, of additional targeted financing to schools from the state budget.

Formation of school management bodies

As an executive authority, the Ministry establishes the procedure for the formation of collegial management body, i.e. the School Board, and for termination of their power. It also provides an expert opinion on the early termination of powers of the School Principal.

Coordination

The MoES takes the role of a connector between various institutions in the field of education. It develops and implements interstate cooperation programs, participates in the process of elaboration and discussion of international agreements on educational issues, as well as organizes joint educational events, conferences and other events with the other Ministries of the RA, other public administration bodies, state administrative institutions and local self-governing bodies.

Assessment and evaluation

For the purpose of evaluating the efficiency of implementation of educational programs and their compliance with the stated requirements, the MoES exercises supervision over state educational institutions and carries out assessment of their activities. To this end, the Government of the Republic of Armenia established the State Inspectorate for Education, which performs external evaluation of schools.

The National Center for Educational Technologies publishes the rating list of schools.

2.1.c Territorial Administration Body

In the context of decentralization reforms, the supervision of basic and 12-year schools is under the authority of the territorial administration bodies. The latter implement the state education

policy, approved by the MoES throughout the territory of Marz. For schools in Yerevan (has the status of Marz), the state authorized body is the Municipality of Yerevan while in the marzes – the Marzpetarans.

Overseeing school management bodies

The territorial administration bodies approve the Charter of the schools under their authority. They have the power to:

- participate in the School Board formation process, as well as terminate the power of its authorized members
- conclude an employment contract for a period of five years on behalf of the founder with the elected Principal
- early terminate the employment contract concluded with the Principal
- cancel or revoke the decisions, orders, directives and instructions adopted by the School Board or Principal which contradict to the legislation or Charter requirements
- approve the annual cost estimate, staff lists and payrolls and funding application for the following year, upon the Principal's presentation

The territorial administration body implements supervision over the compliance of schools under its authority with the legislation and regulatory acts adopted by the MoES, ensures school's regular operations, and takes responsibility for law violations.

Educational process

As the state authorized body, the territorial administration body is accountable for the following regarding the schools under its authority:

- ensuring the implementation of educational programs in accordance with state educational standards
- coordinating and controlling of keeping on records school-age children and ensuring their enrolment in schools
- ensuring the construction, use and maintenance of buildings delivered to public schools by the right to use.

Other responsibilities

The territorial administration body takes the responsibility in case of emergency situations for all schools in its territory, including those under the subordination of the MoES.

2.1.d Local Self-Governing Body

Local self-governing bodies also take part in school governance. This is mainly through co-engagement in the organization and management of community supervision of schools. The local self-governing body has a representative member in the School Board.

The head of community is responsible for co-involvement in:

- assisting in the implementation of state education policy throughout the territory of the community
- organization and management of community supervision over schools

- keeping on records school-age children and ensuring their enrolment in schools
- other responsibilities prescribed by laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Armenia.

2.2 Internal Governance and Management

Schools are self-governing entities. Organization and implementation of the methodical support, arrangement of admissions and academic process, staff selection and allocation, scientific, financial, economic and other activities are under the responsibility of the school.

For the implementation of its self-management, schools have management bodies. The responsibilities and competences between the governance and operational management bodies are distinguished by the Charter.

Schools have a collegial governing body – the Board, approved by the state authorized body.

The operational management of the school is carried out by the Principal, who is elected by the Board of School.

For the purpose of effective organization of educational activities, advisory bodies, i.e. pedagogical, parent, student councils, subject related methodology units are established, that participate in school management, to certain extent.

2.2.a. School Board

School management is implemented through Boards, comprising members from the main groups of stakeholders.

Formation procedure

After the establishment of a school, the state authorized body*, within 30 days ensures the selection process of the members of the Collegial management body (the Board).

The Board member candidates are nominated by:

- MoES
- Territorial administration body
- Local self-governing body
- Pedagogical council
- Parent council

Only individuals can be nominated as a Board member.

The School Principal cannot be nominated as a Board member.

Within 10 days after the submission of candidatures, the state authorized body taking into account the decisions of the Pedagogical and Parent Councils, approves the Board nomenclature or rejects the candidature(s) of the nominees in the case of procedure violation.

In case of termination of powers of a Board member, his/her nominating body nominates a new candidate within 20 days.

** MoES – for separated high schools, territorial administration body – for basic and 12-year schools*

Board structure

The Board is elected for the period of 3 years and is composed of:

- 2 members of pedagogical staff (with 3 years of pedagogical experience in the given institution)
- 2 members of Parent Council, elected by secret ballot
- 3 representatives of Marzpetaran in schools under its subordination, 1 of whom is nominated by the head of the local self-governing body (community)
- 3 representatives of the Municipality of Yerevan, appointed by the Mayor, in schools under the subordination of the Municipality
- 1 representative of the Ministry, appointed by the Minister, in schools under the subordination of Marzpetarans and Municipality of Yerevan
- 3 representatives of the Ministry in schools under the subordination of the Ministry, appointed by the Minister
- 1 representative of the Marzpetaran in schools under the subordination of the Ministry, appointed by the Marzpet or by the Mayor of Yerevan, in schools of Yerevan

Board composition in schools* under the subordination of territorial administration bodies	Board composition in schools*under the subordination of the MoES
• 2 members of Pedagogical Council • 2 members of Parent Council • 3 representatives of territorial administration body (1 appointed by the head of local self-governing body) • 1 representative of the Ministry	• 2 members of Pedagogical Council • 2 members of Parent Council • 3 representatives of the Ministry • 1 representative of the territorial administration body
**Basic and 12-year schools*	**High schools*

Board responsibilities

The School Board has the following responsibilities:

- elect a Principal
- examine and approve the staff lists and payrolls
- approve the organizational structure, internal disciplinary rules and development plan of the school
- oversee the implementation of the development plan of the school
- establishes the main directions for disposing of the profit of school, as prescribed by the founder

The Board is accountable for finance management of the school:

- discusses the annual cost estimate of the school, as proposed by the Principal

- Gives consent for the budget request for the following year proposed by the Principal to be presented to the state authorized body for approval
- discusses the statements on financial and economic activities

The School Board examines the results of implemented internal and external evaluations of the school.

2.2.b. School Principal

The School Principal manages the operational activities of the school. He/she is responsible for the organization of education process in compliance with the state educational and subject related criteria for general education, for the health maintenance of students, staff recruitment, observation of the requirements of the Labor Code, as well as for the fulfilment of other obligations prescribed by law and the Charter of the school.

1. Training and certification procedure

The mandatory condition for being eligible for the position of Principal is having passed trainings and received the right of managing a school (certificate).

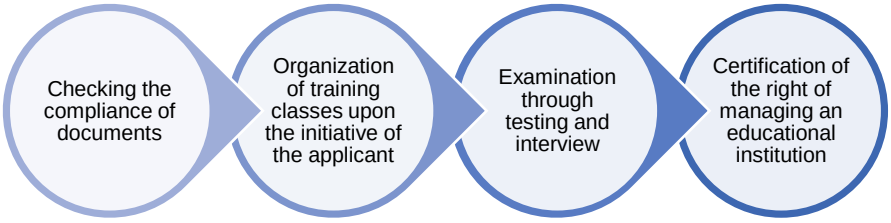
Procedures related to training, examination and certification of managing a school, as well as the procedure of establishment of the authorized certification body are established by the Ministry.

A person with a higher education degree and possessing, in total, at least seven years of experience in pedagogical and scientific activities or in the field of education management during the last ten years, may undergo training to be granted with the right (certificate) of managing a school. The course of training lasts around three weeks and costs around USD 150, paid by the participants themselves. Currently, 6 organizations are licensed by the MoES to conduct trainings and certify grant certificates to the candidates for Principal's position.

For participating in the competition held for the vacancy of Principal, the candidate should submit:

- Documents complying with the prescribed list
- Certificate on the right of managing an educational institution
- School development program

Training and certification are held according to the following stages:



The examination is conducted by the authorized certification body through testing and interviewing. The content of the test questionnaires complies with the content of the training and is distributed in the following ratio:

- public education legislation - 45%.
- managerial knowledge - 35%.
- pedagogical, psychological, educational and methodological knowledge - 20%.

Interviews are held with candidates who have passed the test. Interview questions are related to issues that identify candidate's legal, managerial and pedagogical skills and abilities.

Candidates, who have been trained and passed the examination, are awarded a "Certificate of the right for managing an educational institution" for a five-year period. A person having been granted with a certificate may, until the expiry of the validity period of the certificate, apply for and undergo the training and be granted a new certificate on the right to manage a school.

2. Election procedure

A person, having obtained the right to manage a school, may participate in a competition held for the vacant position of a Principal during five years from the date of being granted the certificate. The Principal of a school is elected upon a competitive procedure approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

After the submission of an application, as well as the school development plan, the Board conducts an interview in which the candidate presents the school development plan verbally and is asked respective questions.

The state authorized body, within 10 working days, concludes an employment contract with the elected Principal by the Board for a period of 5 years. The contract refers to the requirements in the RA Law on General Education for the Principal's job description and functions.

Functions of School Principal

The School Principal oversees the operational management, educational and administrative activities in the school.

Collaboration with the Board

The Principal of the school:

- submits the school development program, staff list with employee positions and their descriptions, tarification and profit distribution model to the Board's approval
- develops and submits to the Board approval the procedure of the competition called for the vacant position of a teacher, based on the model procedure approved by the Ministry
- submits the financial report, internal and external evaluation reports, budget request of the following year to the Board for consideration
- assists the Board in its general activities.

The School Principal may not simultaneously hold other state position or engage in any other paid occupation, except for scientific and pedagogical as well as creative work

Staff management

Acting as the head of the Pedagogical Council, the Principal has the following functions:

- implements the selection, appointment and distribution of pedagogical staff according to the position list and description, as well as the signed contracts
- defines staff responsibilities and working mode, creates opportunities for employees' professional growth and accelerates their creative initiatives
- appoints his/her deputies and methodology units, implements work allocation between them
- controls staff performance
- implements coordination between staff members
- ensures a favorable working environment

Finance management

The Principal is in charge of school's annual budgeting. He/she ensures the efficient use of budgetary allocations, the funds from the founder and other sources not prohibited by the legislation.

The Principal draws up the staff tarification, cost estimates for the school and, upon the Board approval, submits to the state authorized body.

Educational process management

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of educational programs according to the plan, organization of educational process and takes responsibility for the quality and content of education. In addition, the School Principal is in charge of:

- monitoring the observance of internal rules of discipline, labor protection and safety conditions
- introducing and processing internal disciplinary regulations, maintenance of children's lives and health, as well as the rights and freedoms for students and staff members
- defining the student cohort and ensuring their social protection, as well as the right of education of children with special needs
- providing children with appropriate conditions (space, professional and/or organizational assistance).

2.2.c Deputy Directors

The operational management body, besides the Principal, includes the Deputy Principals who are responsible for the appropriate organization of the educational process in the school and are accountable to the Principal.

Generally, there are 3 Deputy Principal positions at a public school, responsible for the educational work, specialized education support and economic (financial) activity, respectively.

2.2.d Advisory Bodies

For the purpose of effective management of educational activities in schools, as well as support to the development programs and communication with community, advisory bodies are established in the form of:

- Pedagogical Council
- Methodology Units
- Parent Council
- Student Council
- Board of Trustees.

Other advisory bodies may also be formed.

Pedagogical Council

Formation of the Council

Pedagogical Council is formed in August, at the first session of the teaching staff. It is formed by the Principal for the period of one academic year. The nominal composition of the Council is recorded in the register of the Council.

Pedagogical Council is formed as follows:

- In schools with more than 40 teachers, the Pedagogical Council is composed of the School Principal, his/her deputies, heads of methodology units, headmasters, 3-5 teachers nominated by the methodology units, representatives of Parent Council and Board of Trustees, as well as of other advisory bodies.
- In schools with less than 40 teachers, all pedagogues are members of the Pedagogical Council.

Responsibilities of the Council

Pedagogical Council is in charge of organizing the educational process. It is responsible for elaborating the educational content and ensuring the teaching quality. For the purpose of assisting the learning process, the Pedagogical Council is also providing consultancy on available services (informational, psychological, social and educational, methodological, health).

Pedagogical Council makes decisions on:

- length of the working week and mode of operation of the school
- formation of the class flows in high schools
- student transfers
- final exams for high school students
- allowing students to take exams, awarding certificates
- exempting students taking a specific subject
- list of examination subjects and exam schedule for students with low attendance rates

The Pedagogical Council has two representative members on the School Board. These members are elected during a closed election by the Council.

- list of students taking second round of exams or reduplicating the course
- awarding school graduation certificates and/or Medal of Excellence
- applying penalties or encouraging students
- distribution of teaching hours and submitting it to the Principal for approval
- other issues concerning the educational process.

Methodology Units

Methodology units are established if there are 3 or more teachers for the same subject in the school. In other cases, methodology units are composed of teachers of related subjects. By the initiative of schools and teachers, interscholastic methodology units may be established.

Subject methodology unit performs the following functions:

- reviews the draft versions of educational programs, curriculum, new textbooks, manuals, instructional manuals according to the standards, and informs teachers about their decisions
- studies, generalizes and promotes the best pedagogical experience in practice
- contributes to the professional development of teachers (trainers)
- prepares novice teachers without qualification for certification
- organizes vocational and educational-methodical discussions and consultations
- communicates the latest advances in pedagogy to teachers, organizes seminars, educational-methodical workshops
- organizes the examination of learning materials
- after the discussions at the Pedagogical Council meeting, submits recommendations to the School Principal concerning the curriculum hours
- makes an initial distribution of curriculum hours and recommendations to the School Principal
- organizes school Olympiads, contests and other events.

Parent Council

The Parent Council supports the school in the implementation of compulsory general education and in upbringing process, as well as provides social assistance. It strengthens the links between the school and parents.

Composition of the Council

The class parent councils, composed of the President and two to four members, are elected by the general meeting of parents of students per academic year.

The Parent council of the school is formed by the chairmen of class parent councils. Parent Council Chairman is elected by secret ballot, with a majority of votes. The president of the Parent Council is a member of the Pedagogical Council.

Collaboration with other school bodies

The Parent Council ensures the linkage between the school management bodies and parents. It cooperates with school management and advisory bodies.

The Council has representative members in the School Board. It nominates candidates for the Board membership. Two candidates are elected by secret ballot with the majority of votes.

Cooperation with the School Principal concerns the improvement of the learning process, motivation of pedagogical staff, penalties for inadequate performance. The Council considers the report of the Principal on the state of long-term programs and school activities and gets clarifications on the issues of interest for parents. In case of dissatisfaction, the Parent Council may express distrust to the Principal, presented to the School Board.

The Parent Council has also the advantage of taking part in the organization of auxiliary paid services, contract signing on behalf of the school, as well as involvement and management of off-budget funds.

Student Council

The Student Council is established to facilitate school's activities in accordance with the principles of democracy and autonomy, to ensure the free expression of the opinions of students on issues directly related to them and to oversee the provisions of their rights and obligations stated in the Statute.

The Student Council is a representative body with autonomy and self-governing power whose core principles are volunteerism, equal rights of students, collegial management and publicity.

Responsibilities of Student Council

The Student Council:

- participates in the sessions of the School Board and the Pedagogical Council by the right of consultative voting, concerning the learning content and its quality, organization of extracurricular activities
- makes suggestions to the Pedagogical Council concerning the disciplinary penalties to the students for violating the internal disciplinary rules of the school, in certain cases
- responds to the individual and collective offers and applications of the students, within its competence
- works towards improving the discipline, attendance, and academic progress of students
- assists the School Board, Pedagogical Council, Parent Council and School Principal in the implementation of their activities directly related to the students.

Board of Trustees

Members of the Board of Trustees could be stakeholders of the school, entrepreneurs and representatives of local authorities.

The Board of Trustees consists of at least five trustees. Its sessions are valid if more than half of the board members participate in it. Sessions are held at least 4 times a year. The decisions of the Board of Trustees are made by simple majority of votes.

The function of the Board of Trustees is to assist the school in fundraising, strengthening the base of technical materials and forming extra-budgetary funds. The funds provided by the Board of Trustees are transferred to the off-budget account of the school. These funds are allocated by the School Principal, in accordance with the budget approved by the Board. In the case of lump sum payments, a targeted program may be offered by the Board of Trustees.

2.3 Financial management

The school is funded by its founder(s). Financial means of state schools are generated from the state budget and other resources not prohibited by the legislation. Financing of schools from the state budget is carried out as of implemented programs of general education depending on the number of students.

Schools may, on a competitive basis, receive from the state budget additional financing for the following purposes, as well:

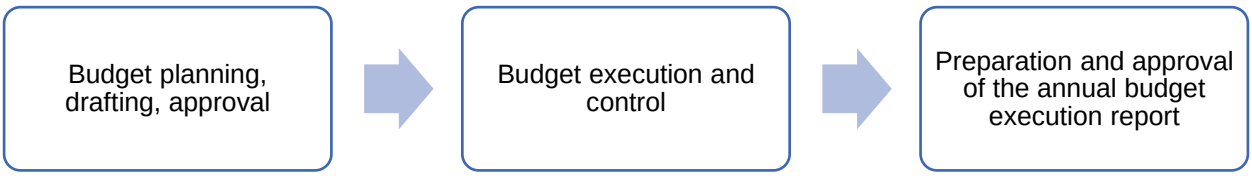
- implement special or supplementary educational programs for the children having demonstrated outstanding abilities
- carry out educational and methodical scientific experiment and (or) to implement an alternative program
- organize preparatory meetings and courses for international Olympiads of schoolchildren
- develop educational and methodical manuals and instruction materials (including in electronic form).

The profit arising from the activities of a state school is used for the achievement of objectives stated in the Charter.

Procedure of annual budget planning

The policy for the anticipated budgetary year is developed in accordance with the fundamental provisions of the development program goals and takes into account the budgetary limitations, priorities and objectives of the current year. The execution of the school budgeting is a regulated process, under the responsibility of the School Principal.

Implementation of budgeting process is presented below.



I. <u>Budget planning, drafting and approval</u>

The Principal of the school, starting from 1st of September of the current year, launches planning and making the draft budget for the following year, based on the agreed principles of the

uniform budgetary system, on the basis of the unified methodology of budget classification, accounting and reporting.

The first phase of the budgeting process, includes 3 sub-phases:

- preparation and arrangement of budget planning, project development activities
- drafting of the budget
- approval of the draft budget.

Until 15th of December of the current year, the School Principal submits the draft budget, as well as the summary of the comments and suggestions on it to the Board. The Board considers the submitted draft and the summary of proposals and remarks, and makes a decision:

- Either approve the draft budget
- *or* return the draft for further improvements, indicating the deadlines of execution.

The School Principal submits the draft to the state authorized body after the Board approval.

II. Budget execution and control

After the approval of the school budget by the state authorized body, the Principal:

- plans the quarterly budget of the school, based on the information provided by the state authorized body
- submits the cost estimates to the Board for consideration
- prepares and submits to the Board semester and annual reports on the execution of the budget

III. Preparation and approval of the annual budget execution report

The School Principal submits to the Board a budget report on semi-annual and annual basis or upon the request of the School Board.

The annual report contains:

- information on the budget receipts and outcomes in the reporting year, their comparative analysis between preceding year indicators and indicators predefined for the actual year
- information on the distribution and amount of budget expenditures with appropriate justifications
- other information that the Principal considers necessary to present and justify the results of the budget performance.

2.4 Assessment of School Performance

For the purpose of ensuring supervision over the school activities, internal and external assessment of school performance are conducted, the procedure of which is established by the Government of the RA.

Internal evaluation is a self-analysis of own activities.

External assessment is performed by the authorized public administration bodies and assesses the school's performance in comparison to peers.

The supervision over the activities of schools is exercised by the founder, the school itself, the MoES, State Inspectorate of Education, as well as by other authorized public administration bodies prescribed by the law.

2.4.a Internal Assessment

Internal assessment of the school is conducted through monitoring and quality control of provided educational services. It is carried out once a year, prior to the start of the new academic year. Internal assessment engages the pedagogical and administrative staff, students, and parents.

Assessment Procedure

Internal assessment is carried out by the commission formed in accordance with the order of the School Principal. It is composed of:

- at least two members of the Board
- at least one member from Pedagogical and Parent Councils each, who are not School Board members
- at least two members of the local self-governing body (or Yerevan Municipality).

The Principal is the head of the commission and ensures the appropriate performance of the Commission. The latter approves work procedures, establishes an internal evaluation program, methods and schedule.

Internal assessment includes the following three stages:

1. Assessment of conditions (resources),
2. Assessment of current activities,
3. Evaluation of results.

The assessment is based on data collection and analysis methodology. The following means are employed:

- Analysis of statistical data: Analysis of statistical data assumes statistical data collection, illustration and analysis.
- Analysis of documents: Study of internal documents and reports that provide insights into the school's activity.
- Implementation of surveys and analysis of results: Survey involves a variety of indicators that reflect on the school's activities. Surveys are conducted among the School Principal, teachers, administrative staff, parents, etc.

Reporting

In the result of the internal assessment, the head of the commission (the Principal) prepares a report according to the form provided by the MoES.

The Principal submits the report to the Board, Pedagogical, Parent and Student Councils by September 5th of the current year. The mentioned bodies hold a discussion of the Report findings and make respective suggestions. The school also publishes the report in local and/or republican press, and on the school's website.

2.4.b External Assessment

State Inspectorate of Education

For the purpose of assessing the efficiency of implementation of educational programs, the Government of RA established the State Inspectorate of Education. It is a separated subdivision of the MoES, which carries out control and monitoring of education, on behalf of the Republic of Armenia. It operates upon the Charter approved by the Government.

State Inspectorate of Education implements state control over the realization of state development programs of education, application of state educational standards, quality of education, training, assessment, and statutory requirements for the organization of general education in Armenia.

The main principles of the Inspectorate's activities include the following:

- legitimacy, transparency and publicity of the school activities
- ensuring equal and impartial application of the education legislation
- implementation of educational program activities according to priorities
- ensuring the quality of education through cooperation and assistance with territorial administration bodies, local self-governing bodies and schools.

Implementation

1. Thematic inspections

The annual work program approved by the MoES is the basis for thematic inspections. Based on the approved annual work plan, the Chief State Inspector of Education approves the schedule of inspections nationwide.

2. Monitoring

In case of revealing a breach of requirements in the course of the monitoring, the Inspectorate instructs properly the subject of the violation of the education legislation. The investigated school is obliged to inform the Inspectorate in a proper manner about the implementation of the preventive measures.

In case of law violations, mandatory assignments are given to the governing bodies of the school (Principal and Chairman of the Board), as well as recommendations are submitted to authorized state and local authorities, in accordance with the subordination of the schools, for the elimination of the consequences of identified violations and for the school development.

The responsibilities of the State Inspectorate include also providing schools with methodological assistance for minimizing the level of irregularities, errors and drawbacks revealed through inspections and improving the quality of education.

For ensuring efficient inspection process, the State Inspectorate involves experts and NGO representatives.

Reporting

The Inspectorate publishes a report within three months after the end of each year on its activities. It includes information on:

- activities of the Inspectorate, inspections and investigations
- identified violations and imposed administrative penalties
- evaluation of the work conducted and suggested actions
- good practice identified through inspection.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

Armenia employs dedicated legislative framework and institutional setting in the internal and external governance of the general education. The schools have the legal status of state non-profit organization and as such employ in-house management, while being subject to external governance.

A set of legal acts define the duties and responsibilities of the participants of the system and the relationships between them. The main bodies involved in the external governance range from the Government of the RA and the MoES to territorial governing authorities. The latter exercise significant power over the majority of the schools nationwide.

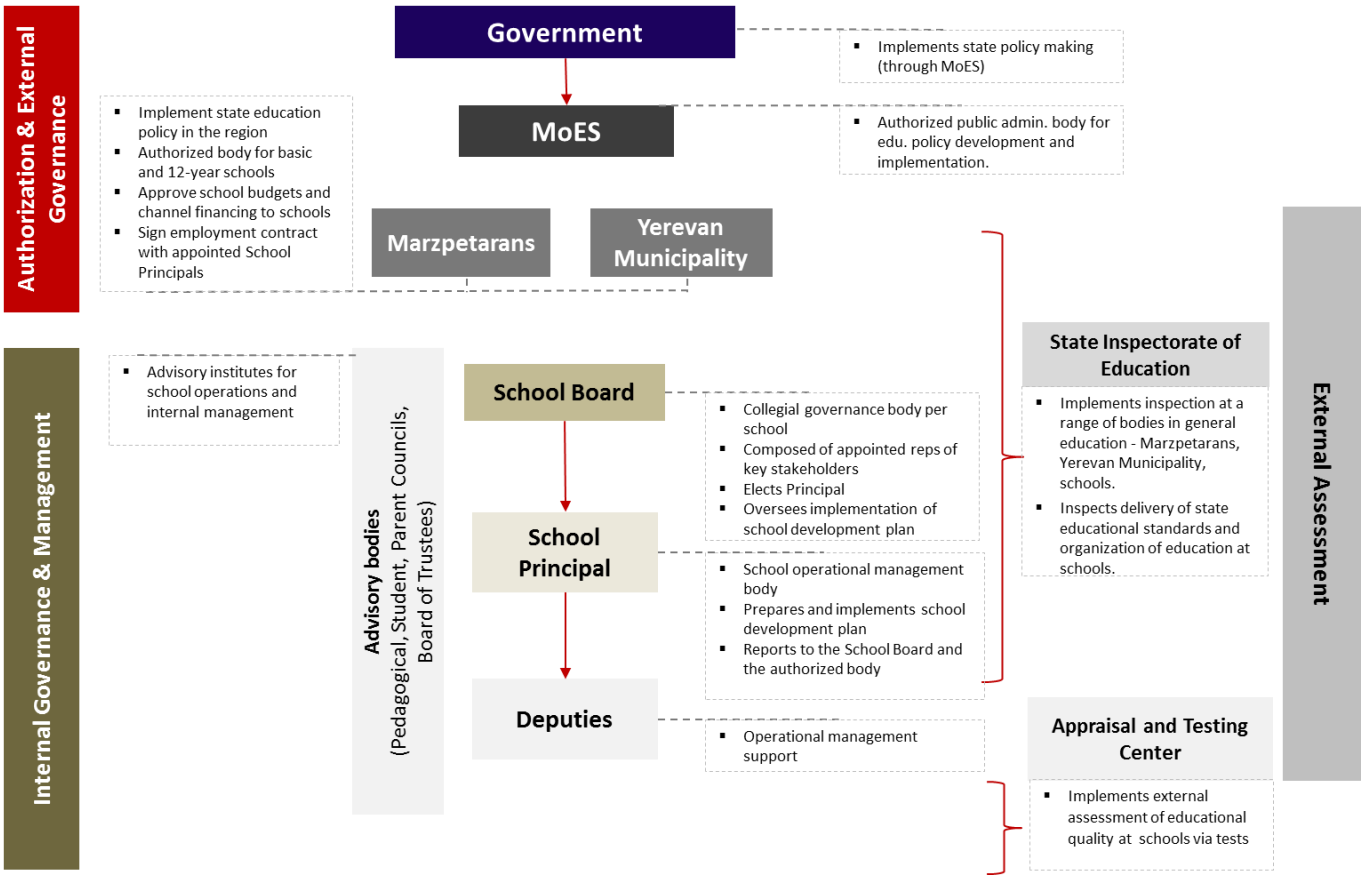
The dominating participants in internal governance are the School Boards and the School Principals, other structures include the advisory bodies – Pedagogical, Parent and Student Councils, Board of Trustees. The School Board involves representatives from the main stakeholders. Operational management of the school largely relies solely on the Principal.

The schools are subject to internal and external assessment aimed at the school administration and quality of education.

Overall, while there is vast legislative framework and institutional coverage in the sector, gaps in the aforementioned and malpractices in actual implementation adversely affect the management and governance practices in the public schools. The next section of this Study identifies the key gaps and issues.

3. Key issues

School Governance & Management in Armenia: Current Ecosystem

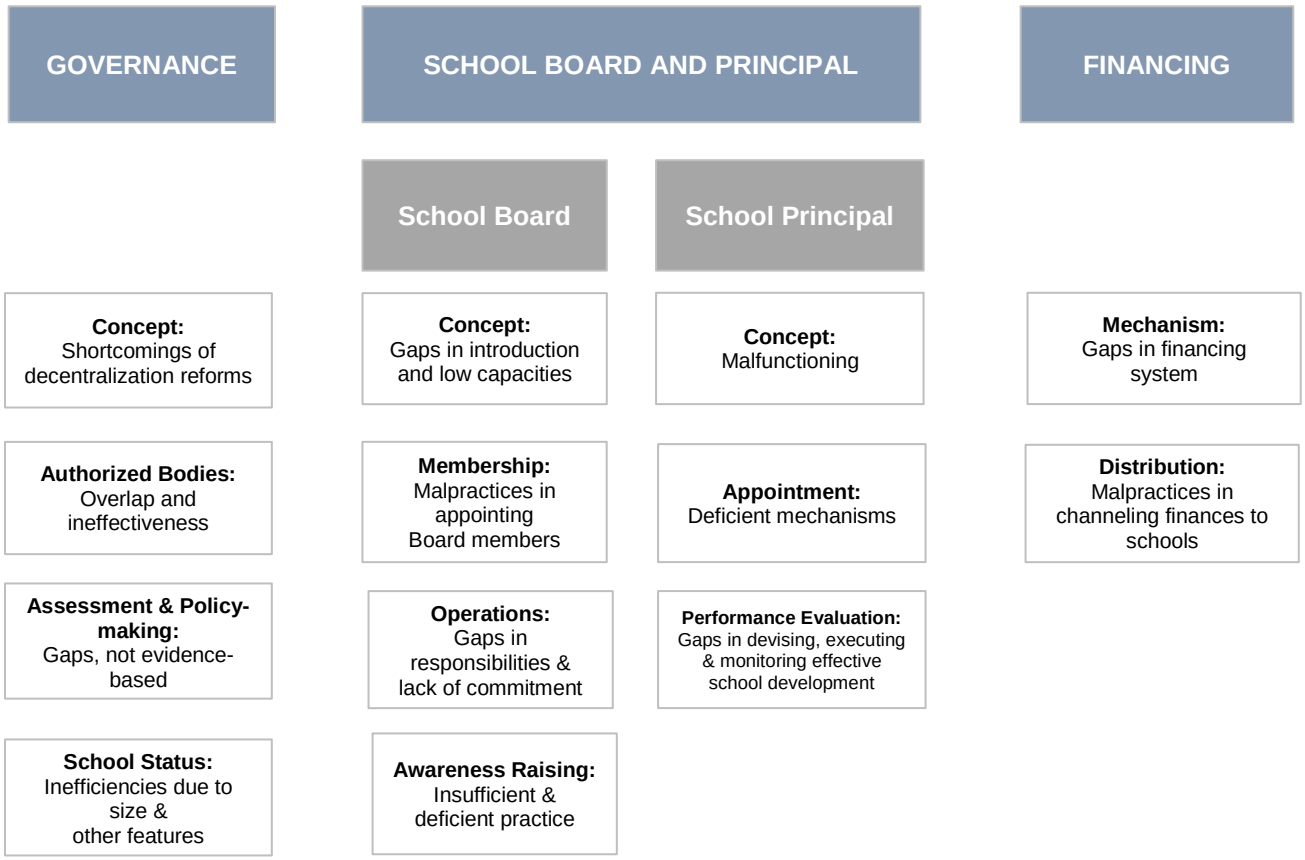


Introduction

Overall, while since the 2000s the government has been implementing a series of measures aimed at improving the management and governance of the state schools, these areas are still marked with noticeable gaps that impede running the schools effectively and achieving high quality education. The decentralization reforms aimed at school-based management have failed to secure strong buy-in and wide participation by the stakeholders (community, parents, etc.).

The key gaps are mapped next.

Framework of root causes in management and governance of state schools



Governance

Local territorial bodies – Marzpetarans and Yerevan Municipality, are the authorized bodies for basic and 12-year schools. This makes schools largely dependent on the territorial bodies both formally (through representation in School Board) and informally. Overall, there is noticeable overlap between governance and management functions of the authorized bodies.

Concept: Shortcomings of Decentralization Reforms

- Failure of expected outcomes.
- Marzpetarans concentrated regional power rather than local self-governing authorities (regional communities).
- No respective increase in governance capacity (skills to plan, implement, manage, evaluate) of local authorities.
- Thus, merely transfer of power and financial resources to local authorities, lacking capacity enhancement.

Authorized Bodies: Overlap between Governance & Management Functions

- Functions of state governance and public management of organizations (delegated authority by the Founder) are not distinctly separated.
- Due both to current legislation, perception and individual interests of participant institutes, gaps in capacities and scarce resources (MoES, Marzpetarans, Yerevan Municipality).

Ineffectiveness and Malpractices

- Undue control exercised by local territorial authorities.
- Current legislation allows local authorities to redistribute financing between schools.
- Malpractices and favoritism by authorities.
- Running the school is significantly shaped via established relations of Principal with local authorities.
- Schools in rural communities are among few mainstream workplaces locally with stable wages. Capture of school management by local clans, leading to nepotism, corruption and sub-quality staffing risk.

Assessment & Policy-Making: Gaps and Not Evidence-Based

State Inspectorate of Education

- Punitive rather than guiding form of inspections.
- Focus on administrative aspects rather than educational quality.

System-wise

- Overall, no effective performance monitoring mechanisms & evaluation practice, throughout the general education system.
- Lack of data-driven decision-and policy-making practices.

School Status: Inefficiencies due to Size and Other Factors

- Currently, all schools are self-governing entities and have the status of state non-commercial organization.
- Falling number of students along with poor physical infrastructure and deteriorated quality of education has left a number of schools with quite low number of students.
- This raises concerns on the rationale of their future effective functioning.

School Board

Concept: Gaps in Introduction and Low Capacities

- No guidance and adequate capacity building activities was provided for the set-up of the Boards.
- The society was largely not prepared to embrace board governance in schools all over Armenia.

Membership: Malpractices in Appointing Board Members

- Territorial authorities often appoint Board members that meet their narrow interests.
- The same person often sits on a number of boards, adversely impacting the focus and commitment.
- The scheme of appointing Board members has loopholes. E.g. if the Community Head fails to appoint a member within 7 days, the Marzpet (Yerevan Mayor) makes the appointment, indicating additional power.

Operations: Gaps in Responsibilities & Lack of Commitment

- School Board elects the Principal but bears little responsibility for the Principal's performance.
- Election of Principal and review of Budget request prepared by the Principal are often the only involvement areas of the Board.
- Lack of motivation and initiations, insufficient engagement and fulfilment of duties and responsibilities.

Awareness Raising: Insufficient and Deficient Practice

- Establishment of Boards was not coupled with sufficient awareness raising among general public and sector stakeholders.
- Members of the School Boards lack social status within the community.

School Principal

Concept, Appointment & Performance Evaluation

Augmented role; deficient mechanisms; gaps in devising, executing and monitoring effective school development:

- Inactivity of School Board often makes Principal the sole decision maker.
- The school development plans presented by the Principals are largely formal in nature and often replicated from each other, with no reflection on school specific needs.

- The plans are not duly monitored and lack in comprehensive assessment and respective implications for School Principal.

Financing

Gaps in school financing mechanism; Malpractices in channeling finances to schools

- Student-number based financing.
- Current legislation allows local authorities to redistribute financing between schools.
- Favoritism and undue control by local territorial authorities with regard to schools.

Concluding Remarks

Gaps in a set of critical factors impeded effective implementation of decentralization reforms in Armenia:

- competence of leadership within the school
- engagement of the community
- shortcomings in national and sub-national policy
- poor institutional support.

- Strong and undue non-formal power over the schools by territorial bodies.
- Running the school is largely determined via relations of Principal with territorial bodies – Marzpetarans/Yerevan Municipality.
- Lack of partnership culture among the school governance participants – School Principal, Board, territorial authorities.
- Shortcomings in school funding mechanism and malpractices in channeling finances to schools
- Low civic engagement (parents, community) does not help in improving governance and management of schools.
- Lack of ambition and dedicated efforts exercised towards school development, internally in the school.
- Gaps in evidence-based policy in the entire system.
- Underdeveloped culture of collegial governance in Armenia, in general.
- Overall, while enhancement of school governance has been on reform agenda since long time, progress recorded has been unsatisfactory so far.

4. International Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Overview of Centralization and Decentralization of School Management Systems

Decentralization in the management of education has been considered one of the key components of democratic reform in education as it seeks to involve the opinions of teachers, parents and community members at the local level in school management and decision making. The importance of decentralization and community participation in education reached critical mass by the 2000's as so many world development institutions had been using the concept of community involvement in education development work that it became a core component of the "world model of educational government." According to the UNESCO World Social Forum of 2001, international discourse on education development considers the participation of civil society in education no longer an option but a must.[2]

According to Mark Bray:

> Communities do have elements of knowledge which governments can never achieve. This may include detailed information on the circumstances of particular households and individuals. Village leaders know the families in their villages, church leaders know the families in their churches and members of school committees know the actors in their schools.[3]

However, this intimate knowledge may be limiting, as central governments may be better able to see how local practices better fit regional and national patterns. Central governments may also be better able to take a detached view of interpersonal divisions and provide a unified, potentially more equitable approach to education. There is need for a balance between central and local control of education that includes the voices of local community members, but at the same time prevents corruption and nepotism at the local level, and provides a loosely unified, equitable approach to education.

The World Bank and Decentralization of Education in Armenia

The World Bank's involvement in decentralization of education management in Armenia began in 1997 with the EFMR project and the first phase of the Education Quality and Relevance Project from 2004 – 2008, as described in the previous section. In EFMR school based parent and teacher associates could apply to the World Bank for School Improvement Project grants of up to $15,000. In EQRP 1, principals, board members and accountants were trained to work with a per capita finance formula and schools were given the authority to manage their own budgets and retain savings, to hire and fire teachers and staff. School boards had the authority to appoint principals and approve budgets. In spite of these reforms, at the end of the project, the Marzpetarans (regional administration) and MOES maintained a top down approach to school management and the authority of the school board to control quality of education and accountability for the principal's performance in particular was never fully institutionalized.

[2] El Barade, Laila and Amin, Khaled Z. (2010). Community participation in education: A case study of the Boards of Trustees' experience in the Fayoum governorate in Egypt. Africa Education Reviews. 7(1). Pretoria: University of South Africa Press.
[3] Bray, Mark (2003). Community initiatives in education: Goals, dimensions and linkages with government. Compare, Vol 33(1). Oxford, England: Carfax Publishing. P. 42.

There is therefore a dichotomy between the limitations of local level control vs. national control and the use of school boards and boards of trustees as an intermediary. The following discussion examines several international models of decentralization of education that are both successful and unsuccessful, that can serve as a guide to policy makers in Armenia towards more effective methods of democracy and decentralization in education.

The Republic of Georgia

Armenia's neighbor the Republic of Georgia has an extended history of decentralization in education, devolution of management practices to boards and school principals. Between 2003 and 2012 Georgian schools went through a cycle of decentralization to recentralization of schools. School boards were created by the 2005 Law on School Governance in Georgia, and as in Armenia, were responsible for the election and dismissal of directors and for the budget's approval. However, as early as 2008, amendments to the 2005 Law on School Governance began a process of re-centralization that limited the power of schools and school boards.

Initially the choice to decentralize came from the central government of Georgia rather than from international organizations like the Word Bank and EU. According to Gorgodze, schools lacked capacity for decentralization and per capita financing left schools with insufficient resources. There was no attempt at piloting different school board models and no prior culture of civic and parental participation in education. In the end, most school boards were controlled by the principal and didn't realize that they had the authority to dismiss poorly performing principals. As in Armenia, Georgian teachers and principals are often involved in elections and ultimately the decision to re-centralize the school were driven by the elections as well as the war in 2008, which was cited as the reason for more government control over schools and expanded security measures.[4] The lesson learned from the Georgia model is that the institutionalization of school boards, school based management and community participation takes significant time, and cannot succeed unless teachers and principals are removed from involvement in partisan politics, and unless school boards are made accountable for the performance of the principal and the school.

The Russian Federation

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia also embarked on a program to decentralize school management, with a per-capita financing that was dependent on regional income at the local municipal level. The dependence on regional income has not proven successful in Russia since income varies significantly from one oblast to another. Due to its regional diversity, this policy often resulted in unequal distribution of education funding and lack of compensatory mechanisms, leading to inequities in education, including the misuse of funds assigned to education-sector wages.

Currently, general education in Russia is financed from the regional and municipal budgets (75% from municipalities and 25% from regional budgets). Due to fiscal decentralization, regions rich in natural resources have substantially more funding per student while less wealthy regions have suffered chronic shortages (WB 2012). Central state funding mechanisms tend to favor best performing schools, students and municipalities and provide little to no support to

[4] Gorgodze, Sophia. (2016). Rise and fall of decentralized school governance--decision-making practices in Georgia. International Education Studies, 9(11), Toronto: Canadian Center of Science and Education, pp. 25-39.

schools that might be lagging due to lack of resources. School boards are not a consistent part of the decentralization process in Russia. In a 2016 OECD TALIS study of Russian principals, out of the 14 regions participating in the study, governing boards were available in all of the schools in six regions of the study, and 70-90% of schools in the other regions, however the availability of a governing board alone was not enough to call a school's leadership democratic, since in many instances, school directors made all of their important decisions on their own.[5]

Finally, most Russian regions showed a very low proportion of principals who completed school administration training before taking up their positions, and only Moscow, St. Petersburg and Ryazan oblast demonstrated a proportion of 20% of principals who had undergone training. Russian principals continue to use a traditional, authoritarian approach to education and lack training in collaborative leadership and communication. Russia's model is one that is difficult for Armenia to follow, given Russia's size and diversity. It also seems in many ways to be moving back to a traditional, authoritarian approach to school management, and the de-centralization process has only resulted in increasing inequities. Armenia seems to be moving away from this model, given its consistent approach to training and certifying principals, and its current attempt to revise the per-capita funding formula so that rural schools are not at a disadvantage. In order to achieve significant reforms in education, it is important to move principals away from authoritarian models, and given the increasing complexity of the job, ensure that they have adequate training.

Egypt

In Egypt, boards of education formed the centerpiece of Egypt's school decentralization policy and were established overnight be a central decree of the Ministry of Education, but were preceded by a pilot program in Alexandria and Qena. Egyptian school boards, known at Boards of Trustees (BOTs), are made up of 15 members: 5 elected parents, 5 public figures selected by the governor, 3 teachers elected by the school, and the principal, who serves as executive manager of the board and a school social worker who facilitates the board's affairs. A board chairman and deputy are elected by the board members.

As in Armenia, boards are expected to develop and implement a school development plan. However, rather than simply approving the budget and appointment of the principal, their additional responsibilities are quite extensive. They are expected support innovative financing mechanisms including community contributions and private sector donations, connect with businesspeople, public figures, civil society and involve them in the school, cooperate with school management in designing and implementing school buildings and equipment, support educational interventions for students with disabilities, and promote cooperation between schools and relevant institutions such as universities, NGOs, youth centers and libraries, and provide advice to school management regarding academic outcomes as well as approve final accounts for projects designed by the board and writing an annual report. The board's operations are subject to monitoring and control by the district level department of education and by the Central Agency for Audits. The board is allowed to accept voluntary contributions from citizens, business people and different entities.

[5] Lenskaya, Elena and Brun, Irina. (2016). Are principals of Russian schools ready for transformational leadership?" Moscow: Educational Studies, #2, pp. 62 – 99l

In reality, the Egyptian boards have had little say in significant education functions, such as policy design, curriculum development, teacher hiring and firing and textbook distribution. However, they have been able to influence a number of school issues that bear similarity to those in Armenia, including school drop-outs, attendance, grades and outside private tutoring and lessons. Their roles in this regard bear some similarity to the World Bank's School Improvement projects in Armenia and elsewhere, in that parent committees were allowed to apply for a series of grants.

In a case study BOTs in Fayoum, the community's low awareness and knowledge of boards was enhanced by training in their expected functions. The board's community level measures were helpful in reducing outside tutoring, and the board's role in fundraising to support and promote extra-curricular activities increased attendance by making the school more appealing to students. The board also reached out to drop-outs and communicated with their parents, organized seminars for parents on the importance of education and meetings with teaching staff to discuss student drop-out issues. In general, the boards were effective in making the school an integrated part of the community and a safer and more comfortable environment. Finally, the board followed up on students' exam results and academic performance by organizing after school lessons for low-performing students and by developing recognition for high-performing students. Thus in the case of Egypt, boards were not as influential on the policy side, but nevertheless were valuable for raising funds for extra-curricular activities and in linking schools with the community at all levels and in leveraging the support of the community to solve some significant problems.

Spain

In Western Europe, Spain has undergone a process of democratization and liberalization of education starting in the 1990s that led to increasing autonomy for schools and local education authorities, and the inclusion of parents and community members in the education decision making process. In Spain a school director can be elected only once and was initially expected to return to the classroom after only four years of service. Directors receive a stipend on top of their regular teaching salaries. Initially no management training was required to become a principal. [6]

In Spain, an elected school council forms the core of school-based management. Board members are elected by peers every two years and membership includes the school director, chief of academic studies, and equal representation of teachers and parents, students, staff and a city government representative. Initially the principal was considered the Ministry of Education's representative at the council, and was also the representative of parents and teachers, creating a conflict of interest, but this was changed in 1985 in measures that resulted in increased authority for the principal. The function of each school board in Spain varies by region, but can include formation of an academic program, extracurricular activities, election of school directors, admission of pupils to school, disciplinary action and budget approval. The law stipulates that a school director is elected by an absolute majority vote of the school board members and can be fired by a two-thirds majority.

[6] Hanson, M. (2000). Democratization and educational decentralization in Spain: A twenty-year struggle for reform. Education Reform and Management Series 1(3). Pp.1-62.

A number of the problems with school boards in Spain are similar to those in Armenia. There was a low level of participation on the part of teachers and parents in particular due to the lack of tradition in civic participation. Because they knew more about the education process, teachers tended to dominate parents when it came to making decisions.

In 1995 an effort was made to establish an administrative career for school principals and local level administrators requiring training and evaluation of a trained pool of educational leaders. A training program for school administrators was passed, along with the establishment of an accreditation committee that monitored and certified candidates. As in Armenia, school principal training focused on the administrative and organizational structure of schools, legislation and tasks, but not communication or leadership and decision making. Universities in Spain developed training programs in cooperation with regional governments for an education management degree or certificate. In conjunction with this the number of years that a director could serve was increased to 12 years, and in schools where no teacher elected to be principal, a school director could be appointed by the local administration.

The new career orientation made the job of principal more appealing by allowing school principals to move up the career ladder into senior leadership roles at the provincial, autonomous and Ministry levels. These changes made the position of school principal more desirable to aspiring teachers. The new career orientation for principals and for senior leadership opened up new possibilities of career advancement and also brought policy oriented thinking to the regional school administration. The development of a new career path for school principals and upper-level administration would also benefit school and regional administrative practices in Armenia, by providing greater expertise in strategic planning, policy development and distributed and shared leadership. Finally, decentralization of education was built into the Spanish constitution and was not the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education.[7]

The United States

In the United States education has always been decentralized due to the federalist nature of the governments and the fact that each state has its own system of education. Instead of a centralized Ministry of Education, there is a Department of Education in Washington DC that contributes 8-9% of financing to the nation's schools, and provides planning and policy, research and data collection as well as funding for poor and disadvantaged schools. Recent reforms in education have sought to give the DOE a greater role in ensuring school accountability through the *No Child Left Behind* program and the Common Core Curriculum standards.

Most U.S. school boards are elected through at large elections, sometimes as part of a general election. Most school board positions are voluntary, although in larger districts some school board members receive a modest salary or stipend. School board candidates are often local parents and other community members, and a school board position can mark the first step in an individual's political career. School boards are not specific to each school, and instead are elected at the district or county level. However, each individual school has a Parent and Teachers Association that is active in school community relations.

A U.S. school board has a variety of responsibilities, including bargaining with teachers' unions, setting the district budget, strategic planning and hiring and managing a district wide

[7] Ibid.

superintendent. The superintendent is the top executive in a district who implements the school board's vision for education by making daily decisions about programs, spending, staff and facilities. The superintendent has typically completed an advanced university degree in school administration and has many years of service as a teacher and principal in the public schools. The district superintendent hires supervisors and manages central staff and principals and reports to the board. The superintendent meets the demands of all constituencies: teachers, principals, students, parents, staff, and the community. If the superintendent is not effective, the Board of Education is held accountable, and those up for re-election may lose their places in the coming election.

In the past, schools in the U.S. were run by the mayor's office. Due to the increasing involvement of schools in mayoral politics, school boards were removed from municipalities in the 1890s, and school administrative offices were re-located to separate facilities. Although the large election of School Board members has led to greater fairness, it also means that minorities, the poor and uneducated individuals are less likely to run for school board positions and are therefore underrepresented.[8] Another problem with U.S. school boards is that parents or community members may run for a seat on the board because they have a particular concern or issue they want resolved. These individuals tend to be less concerned about general educational issues and more focused on their own interests.

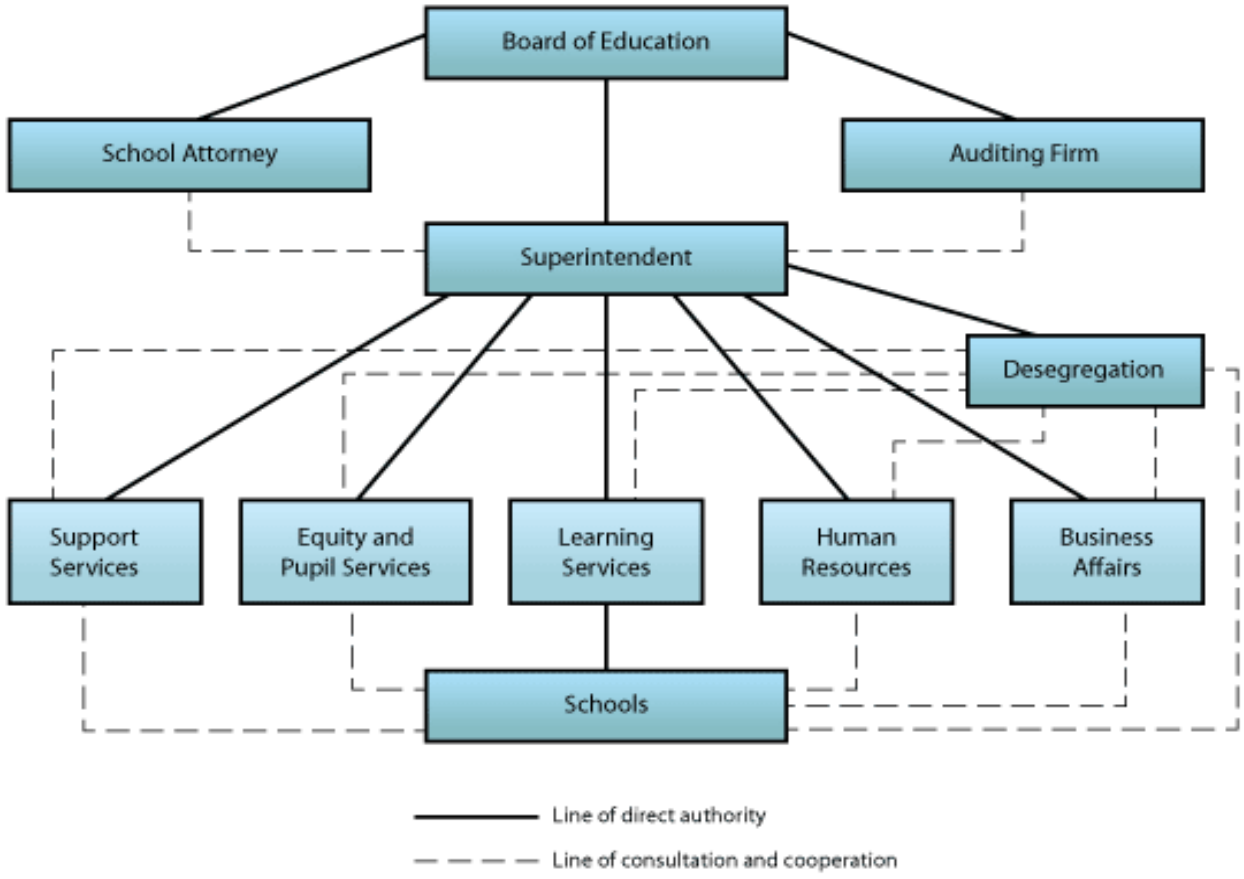
A positive side of school board membership in the U.S. is that these positions are voluntary and yet can attract motivated candidates who wish to advance their careers or simply care about the quality of schools. School funding is largely based on property taxes, so well-regarded schools can increase the value of property in a given community. On the negative side, the use of property taxes has led to inequity in U.S. schools, as wealthier communities with high-value properties and incomes are able to provide more funding to schools.

In addition to a long tradition of civic activism, many states in the U.S. offer newly elected board members training in education issues and budgeting and procedures. School board meetings are open to the general public, and community members are given the opportunity to voice their concerns or ask questions at a specific point during the meeting. The meetings themselves can serve as a form of awareness raising for community members, and can be quite contentious. Principals work with various constituencies in the school, including the Parent Teacher Organization, Student Council and Department Heads.

As elsewhere in the world, school based management and community participation are an increasingly important and popular trend in U.S. schools, and educational leadership and professional development courses are often focused on collaborative leadership skills. The principal manages staff and the student body at the school, day-to-day operations and reports to the superintendent. He or she may evaluate staff, and builds relationships with parents and the community. The principal often has no say in which teachers are hired - those decisions are made at the district level. However, in larger school districts, individual schools and principals have more hiring authority and may review and interview individual teachers to make sure they are a good match for the school environment.

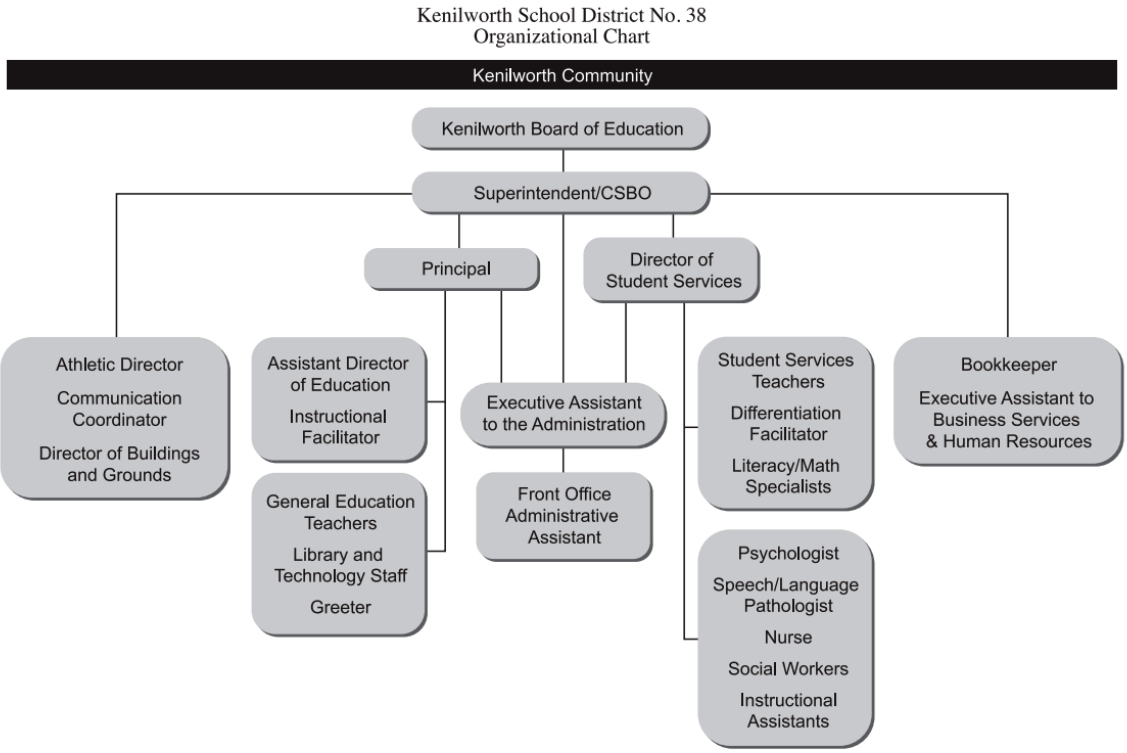
[8] Feuerstein, Abe. (2002). Elections, voting and democracy in local school district governance. Educational Policy. 16 (7), pp. 15 – 36.

Below is a representative organizational chart with a regional/district level school boards in the U.S. The Board of Education is the highest level of authority in the district with a direct line to the superintendent and the schools:[9]



Below is an Organizational Chart for the Kenilworth School District in Cook County Illinois. The Board has the highest level of authority to the district. The Superintendent (chief executive officer) reports directly to the board and the principals (in each school) report directly to the Superintendent:[10]

[9] Retrieved Aug 4, 2017 from: http://www.pcssd.org/publicfiles/4/images/2011/09/cca-org-chart.gif
[10] Retrieved Aug 4, 2017: https://www.kenilworth38.org/uploaded/district_forms/Organizational_Chart.png



Finland

During the past 10 years schools in Finland have undergone efforts to devolve and decentralize authority to the local level. Finnish schools' recent success on the PISA (Program in International Student Assessment) have made Finnish schools a model for other countries. Finnish schools place a great deal of trust in individual school principals and teaches because they have placed all of their resources into making teaching a highly sought-after profession with demanding qualifications for teachers. Finnish schools are able to attract the best and the brightest to the profession—a goal to which many other education systems aspire.

Highly educated teachers and school leaders and good salaries mean that day-to-day education decisions can be made at the local level while the Ministry of Education can focus on long term strategies, policy planning and legislation. This means that the Finnish school system has become increasingly de-centralized and team work rather than hierarchy is encouraged at all levels. Funding comes from the central Ministry of Education (46%) and the municipality (54%) using a per capita funding formula. The Ministry of Education and National Board of Education are responsible for implementing education policy and administering education at the central level. Many matters are also decided by local authorities. The municipality makes decisions on allocating financing to each individual school or district. One municipality gave 5 of its principals the opportunity to spend one third of their time working at the regional education administrative level, thereby giving principals the opportunity to have a larger view on regional or district wide responsibilities and priorities, vs. the priorities of the individual school, resulting in a change in the principals' behaviors:

> In this new web of horizontal and vertical interdependence, new behaviors emerge. Principals start to consider and address broader community needs rather than fiercely and competitively defending the interests of their own organization. This interaction across schools opens new windows for mutual learning. In addition, as they devote less time and energy to their own school, they are obliged to delegate various management tasks to other staff, which leads to more open lateral leadership within the school, stronger development of distributed leadership capacity and a more constructive approach to leadership succession and sustainability.[11]

As in Armenia, schools and educational institutions perform self-evaluations. Finland has strong teachers' unions and most teachers are employed by the municipalities. Although there is a national core curriculum set by the National Board of Education, municipalities determine their own specifications and applications and on this basis the schools design their own curriculum.

In the national legislative framework, a principal's tasks are described broadly with a general statement that each school shall have a principal who is responsible for the school's operation. Finland's legislative municipalities are entitled to make independent decisions on their education administration and on their principal's level of authority. The principal takes a central role in recruiting new teachers. Within each school the decision on funds allocation are based on different guidelines in primary and upper secondary schools. The principal is in charge of the budget, but bookkeeping is strict and checked by auditors.

Municipalities determine how they organize leadership and whom they appoint as school principals. Each municipality makes its own decision regarding the professional development, evaluation and dismissal of principals. Consultation with staff members varies by school. Principal qualifications vary, but large cities like Helsinki look at the following qualifications:

Degrees Attained
Leadership skills/training in school leadership
Pedagogical Skills and Teaching Experience
Other Merits: Development work, research, participation in training, textbooks written, etc.

School Boards are often involved in decisions regarding financing of municipal schools and curriculum matters. School principals may be consulted as experts but the final decision is made in conformity with the municipal ordinance. Parents associations are very involved in schools and teachers and principals are expected to participate actively in extra-curricular activities. School principals can delegate authority to other staff members, but have ultimate responsibility for decisions that are made. Leadership in Finnish schools has become

[11] Pont, Beatriz, Nuche, Deborah and Moorman, Hunter. (2008). Improving school leadership: Vol 1: Policy and Practice. OECD. Retrieved from www.oecd.org/publishin/corrienda.

increasingly delegated to vice-principals, teachers and teacher groups, student welfare staff and janitors and secretaries.

Although the principal's scope of responsibility is large, there is no external instrument for measuring a good principal. Instead trust is placed upon high standards for teacher and principal training and continued professional development. Leadership skills are very important as the principal must lead staff and formulate a strategy. In general, the Ministry of Education evaluates a school's performance by measuring the rate of completion of studies, school enrollment/attendance (occupancy), rate of student placement and how many students find jobs or continue on to higher education. The Ministry of Education's funding of schools are in part based on school performance. Finally, principal positions come with lifetime tenure, and are the most permanent position among the teaching staff.

Because of the increasing complexity of the principal's job, a certificate in education administration, university training equivalent to 25 ECTS or the equivalent administration experience. Due to the number of training programs for principals, Finland is working on developing unified training standards and hopes to improve the quality of school leadership curricula and hopes to train school leaders to use data driven decision making and launch long term training programs for municipals directors of education in policy and planning.

The highly decentralized structure of the Finnish system might prove too great a departure at this point, given Armenia's history as a highly centralized schooling system under the Soviet Union. These are long-term goals that depend upon more education, training and increased salary and further professionalization of the school principals as school leaders. The training provided to principals and local authorities in educational decision leadership and teamwork, policy and decision making presents a good model for Armenia to follow to build upon the school administration certification it already has in place.

Additional OECD Best Practices

In the area of community, most school systems struggle with low board member participation. Although in most places positions on the board are voluntary, board member responsibilities are increasing, making it challenging for parents and community members who lack the time and expertise and often feel no ownership over decisions. In Ireland 50% of board members are elected representatives and all are voluntary but have high legal responsibility. In New Zealand, board members are elected from the school community and all members and school management are accountable to the board. In Slovenia, the school council is the highest level of governance and is made up of parents, teachers, local communities and founders. The board has the ability to dismiss the principal. There are also a growing number of boards in OECD countries where the principal is only a member and does not control the board's decisions.

The OECD recommendations for school boards states that effective school boards lead to better learning outcomes and can strengthen effective pedagogical leadership and promote democratic participation by establishing relationships between the school and community. Boards are most effective if members have clearly defined responsibilities, if they receive support to develop their tasks and are an integral part of the school or school district governance. School board members should be high quality and engaged candidates with suitable skills that reflect the diversity of the community. Boards can function best if their members have training in school evaluation and improvement. If it is too difficult for volunteers

to take on difficult assignments, some districts may need to look for outside expertise in school governance.

Useful practices in school leadership from OECD nations include Chile's 2005 *Good School Leadership Framework* organized around 4 areas of professional competency that group Chile's 18 performance and professional development standards. The resulting framework is the foundation for principal performance evaluation, including the following:

Leadership
Curriculum Management
Management of School Atmosphere and Coexistence
Resource Management

In Denmark in 2008 the Ministry of Education worked in cooperation with head teacher organizations to develop a booklet in which general requirements and evaluation criteria for leadership were formulated. The ambitious requirements are in five areas:

Overall Leadership
Education Policy Leadership
Pedagogical and Academic Leadership
Personnel Policy Leadership

In New Zealand, professional standards for principals are part of the regulatory framework for education. The standards were developed by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with principals' professional associations and with other education sector input. They reflect the government's interest in ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn from high quality teachers in schools led by quality professionals.[12]

Lessons Learned and Best Practices for Armenia

The previously discussed examples of reforms in the external and internal management of education in Armenia suggest that it is possible to de-centralize educational governance to the school level and involve the use of school boards, but a number of best practices would improve the ability of boards and local education authorities to function. As in the case of Georgia, Spain and Egypt, community members need better awareness of the purposes and function of school boards. The use of awareness raising campaigns and a broad invitation to the public to attend

[12] Pont, Beatriz, Nuche, Deborah and Moorman, Hunter. (2008). Improving school leadership: Vol 1: Policy and Practice. OECD. Retrieved from www.oecd.org/publishin/corrienda

school board meetings is one way to raise the importance of school boards and community involvement in schools in general. Training in the functions and responsibilities of school board membership is also necessary to ensure that members understand the importance of their involvement and to "level the playing field" between educated and well-informed board members and those who have less education and limited understanding of how schools and school systems operate.

In the case of school principals and directors, the United States, Spain and Finland demonstrate the importance of training, degree programs and certification for school principals. The recent decisions on the part of Spain and Finland to develop a real career path for both principals and regional level administrators is an attempt to provide education administrators with background in policy and leadership skills that they could not obtain through years of service alone. Without training in collaborative leadership skills, principals and local education authorities will continue to employ a traditional, hierarchical approach to education administration.

The example of the United States demonstrates the significance of at large elections to school boards in that such elections provide every citizen with decision making authority—voting by secret ballot--regarding the effectiveness of the board. In addition, the openness of school board meetings in the U.S. and the invitation to the public to attend can help raise public awareness of the significance of school boards, and involve the community in education decision making in a significant way.

Co-Principals and Distributed Leadership in Schools

Co-principalship is a relatively new and under-researched organizational model for school leadership. However, some examples do exist in places like the United States, China, New Zealand and Australia. In general, co-principalships have been established in the spirit of democratic or "distributed" leadership, or out of necessity. Frequently co-principals are hired when a school becomes too large and complex (over 2,000 students), when several smaller schools in a single district are merged, or when there are not enough qualified candidates for a position. Some research makes the point that the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and principals have become so demanding in recent years, that in larger schools in particular it is no longer feasible for one individual to manage the school single-handedly. School principals are currently responsible for a wide range of issues, from testing and accountability to community relations and meeting the needs of students with disabilities. With growing responsibility, some schools have begun to explore alternative leadership models.

Co-Principal Models

There are several different co-principal models that have emerged over the last 20 or 30 years. In the "**dual" or "split task**" principalship both principals are full-time and split their responsibilities relatively evenly. In Eckman's study of 48 co-principals in the United States, 92% of co-principals followed this model (2006). In other "dual" models one principal takes on more administrative duties and the other oversees instruction. In a third model, one principal is responsible for instruction and one for student services, and responsibility for budgeting, staffing, community relations and supervision are shared by both principals (Hewitt, 2012). In the split model, both principals are at the school full-time, and each has a separate office. Each is paid a full salary that is the equivalent of what principals in traditional schools (schools with one principal) are paid.

In the "**job-shared**" co-principalship, two or three principals work part-time and share the job's responsibilities, and also share days of the week they are present at the school. Only one principal is in charge on any given day. Each co-principal receives a partial salary and may also have to share an office and phone.

Finally, in the "**supported dual leadership**" model, co-principals share responsibilities with others in the school. There is mutual division of some responsibilities and delegation of the others to school-based committees made up of teachers and other principals.

In a study of teachers' perceptions of alternative leadership, the co-principal model was the most popular. Because responsibilities are shared, this model reduces the stress and burdens on principals and makes the job more appealing to teachers who might want to become principals in the future (Hewitt, 2012).

In the United States, co-principalships have been implemented in a district in Massachusetts by one superintendent after a number of failed principal searches, and in seven large schools in California as well as schools in Oregon, Hawaii and North Carolina. No national studies of co-principalships have been done, but Eckman's study identified 106 individuals who worked as co-principals throughout the U.S. (although only 48 of them responded to the study). The co-principal arrangement seems to work best in middle and high schools with multiple grade levels, particularly in high schools with over 2,000 students. In most cases, principals primarily determined their own job functions based on their strengths and preferences.

The Unique Yew Chung Model

In China, the Yew Chung model of co-principalship is unique because it is based on dual cultures and languages (Chinese and western) in a set of 5 International Schools in China that serve both Chinese and international students. In this model school co-principals operate in a five-person team, with a director and two co-directors. A district superintendent acts as a link between the school and a "Local Regional Office." The two co-principals share seven areas of responsibility: School management, staff development, educational programming, school ethos, community relations, school enrolment and school identity (Bunnell, 2008). One co-principal is native Chinese, conducts business in Mandarin and is responsible for relations with the local government agencies and officials, plus media contacts. The second co-principal is western and is responsible for communicating with international business representatives and diplomats. The model is supposed to provide a partnership where the best of western and eastern cultures can be represented and integrated throughout the school, the ultimate goal being to develop global citizenship in the school's students. Because of the dual nature of the Yew Chung schools, this model has proved to be relatively successful.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Co-Principalship Model

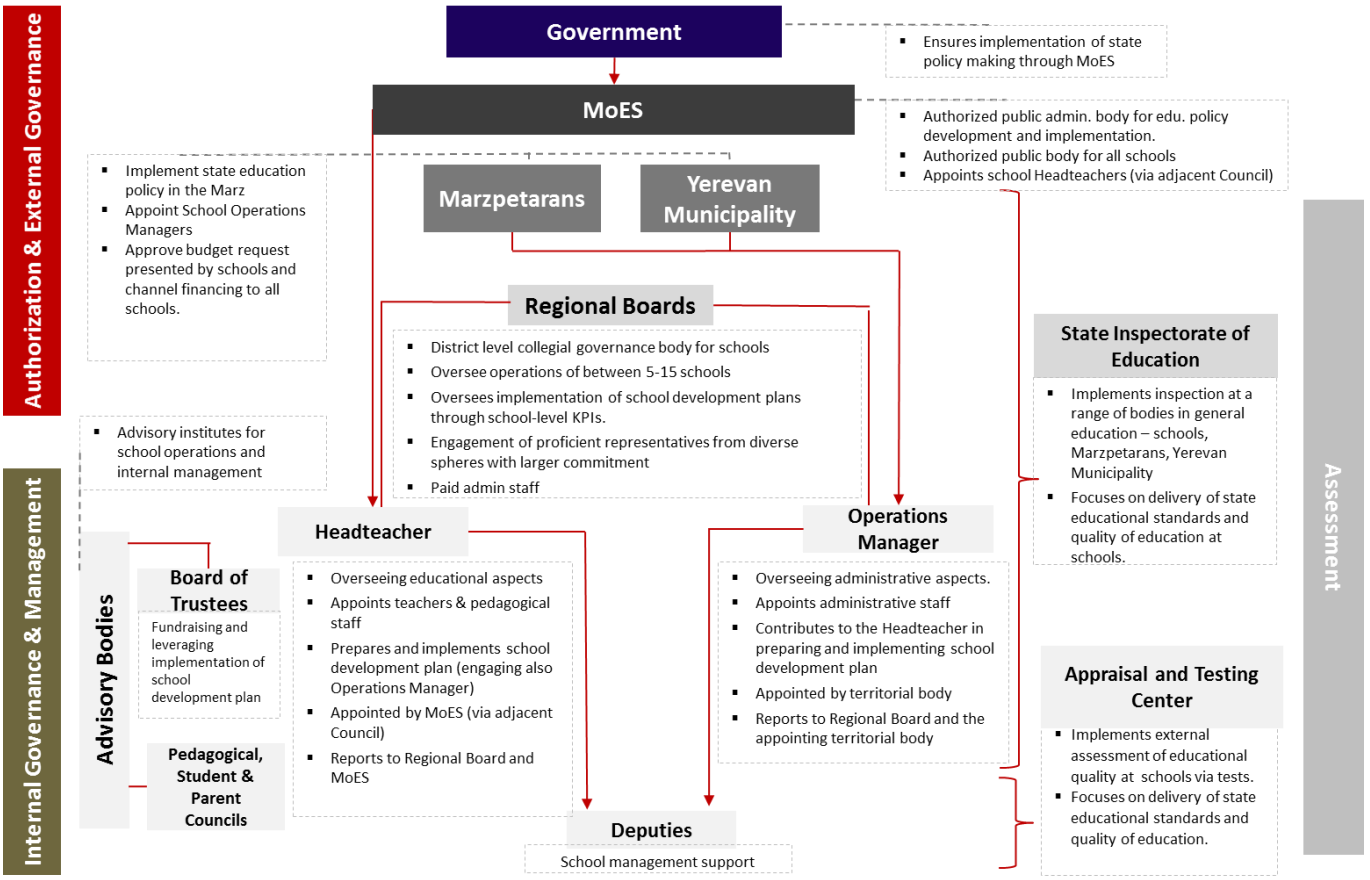
The strength of the co-principalship model is that decision-making is shared, easing the burden of accountability and stress. Co-principals equal in status share the decision making, problem solving and general workload. Students, parents and teachers have increased access to the principal, and at least one principal is always present at the school at all times, while another principal can be available to attend school assemblies, sports activities, plays and meetings. The co-principal structure also provides more opportunities for women and greater gender balance. This is helpful in countries like the United States, where most high school principals are men, or in countries where more principals tend to be women. The lack of stress and

increased time available for other roles and responsibilities (parent/spouse) leads to greater job satisfaction on the part of co-principals. Finally, according to Bredeson (2002) the concept of dividing principalships into two roles has the advantage of reducing incidences of principals bullying or intimidating teachers.

The weakness of the model is that it may allow parents and teachers to take sides with one principal over the other. Thus, if the co-principals don't present a united front, parents, families and teachers may take the side of the more lenient or generous principal and avoid the principal who is perceived to be "strict." Principals also mentioned the need for "non-ego centered individuals" to act as co-principals, since not every personality likes to share being in charge, and often one individual will try to dominate another. Finding candidates who have enough ego to want to be a principal and yet willing to share responsibilities and decision making may be a challenge. Co-principals who had to share office space, phones and computers felt more like assistant principals than co-principals. Finally, the presence to two principals means that the amount of time involved in making decisions is increased, as is the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, due to differences in personalities.

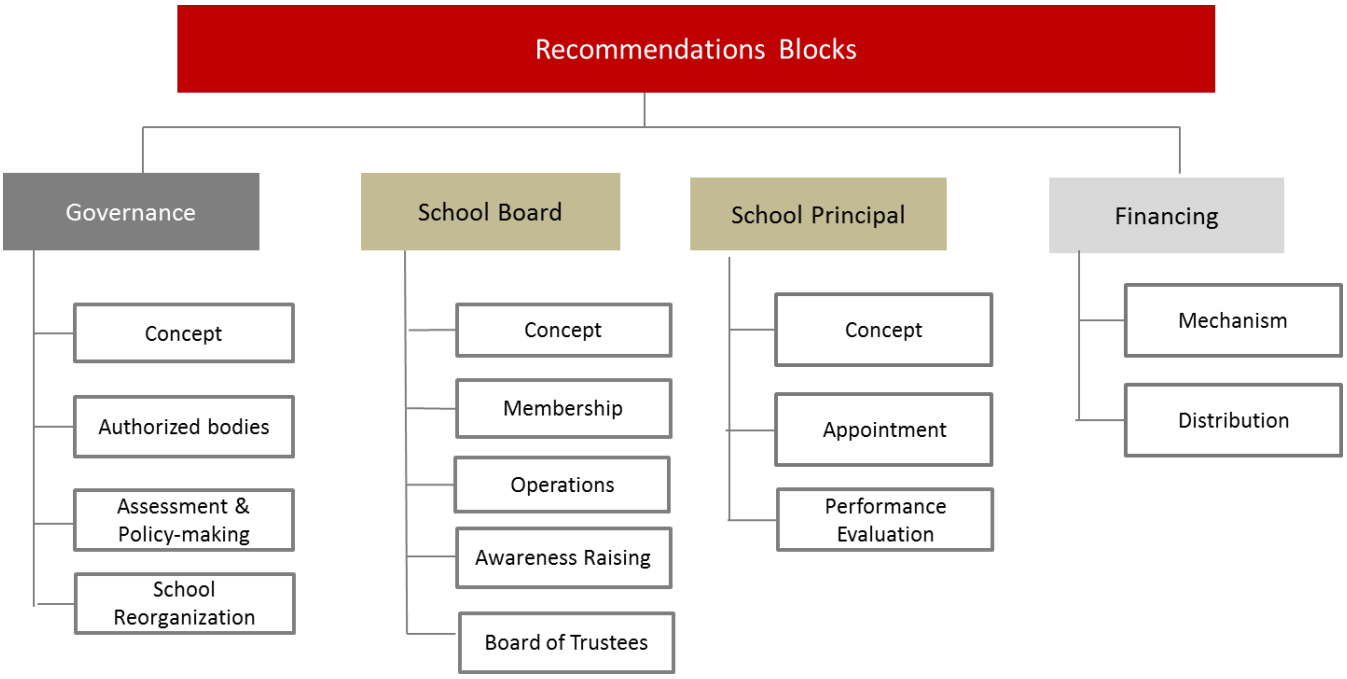
5. Recommendations

School Governance & Management in Armenia: Suggested Ecosystem



Overview

Recommendations aim at enhancing school governance and management in Armenia, addressing current gaps and taking into account lessons learnt from international best practice.



Governance

Recommendations: Overview

- Schools shall diminish undue control by the territorial authorities through moving under the authority of the MoES and the new model of school governance, created on district level.
- Improved school funding mechanism through introducing a hybrid formula and effective channeling of the finances.
- Dedicated delegation and enhanced level of responsibility for effective school governance and management, leading to improved education quality.
- Enhanced monitoring of educational quality delivered by the schools via better mechanisms of assessment and evaluation. This will form the base for comprehensive and effective policy-making by the MoES.

Governance: Concept

Current Setting	Recommendations
▪ Functions of state governance and public management of organizations (delegated authority by the Founder) are not distinctly separated. ▪ Due both to current legislation, perception and individual interests of the participant institutes, lack of capacities and scarce resources at the respective institutions (MoES, regional authorities, assessment bodies).	▪ Principles and functions of state governance and management of organizations shall be effectively distinguished, both functionally and structurally. Refers to Government, MoES and territorial bodies (Marzpetarans, Yerevan Municipality). ▪ Need for build-up of institutional capacities of MoES and structural and separated subdivisions. Aimed at effective governance of a decentralized school education system. ▪ Dedicated capacity enhancement program in state governance and management in education can be developed targeting key implementing institutions and stakeholders. ▪ Necessary legal amendments regarding governance and management shall be made along with instituting a sector-wise united and consistent database and information management system.

Governance: Authorized Bodies

MoES

Current Setting	Recommendations
▪ Authorized public admin. body for educational policy development and implementation. ▪ Shortcomings in exercising full effective oversight over the implementation of state policy in the field of general education. *Separate high schools* ▪ Authorized public body. ▪ The schools report to MoES. ▪ MoES channels budget financing to the schools. ▪ MoES signs employment contract with School Principals elected by School Boards.	▪ Authorized public admin. body for educational policy development and implementation. ▪ Authorized public body for all schools. ▪ Appoints School Headteachers through Council adjacent to MoES. ▪ The Council shall be established engaging representatives of MoES, adjacent units (e.g. National Institute of Education) and education experts. ▪ Appoints and signs employment contract with the Headteachers.

Territorial Bodies

Current Setting	Recommendations
▪ Marzpetarans and Yerevan Municipality are the authorized bodies for basic and 12-year schools. ▪ These schools report to the territorial bodies. ▪ The latter sign employment contract with Principals elected by the School Boards. ▪ Territorial bodies are responsible for channeling financing from state budget to schools under authority. ▪ Current legislation allows local authorities to redistribute financing between schools. ▪ Overall, malpractices, favoritism and undue control by local territorial authorities with regard to schools.	▪ Diminished control over the schools through the MoES taking over certain functions and responsibilities from the territorial bodies (as discussed earlier). ▪ Territorial bodies appoint School Operations Managers. ▪ Channel financing to all schools.

Assessment Bodies & Policy-making

Current Setting

- MoES oversees quality control through State Inspectorate of Education and Assessment and Testing Centre which implement external assessment.
- Inspectorate implements inspection at a range of bodies in general education - schools, Marzpetarans, Yerevan Municipality.
- Inspection areas cover the application of state educational standards, realization of state development programs of education and organization of general education in Armenia.
- ATC implements external assessment of education quality at schools via tests.
- Both the Inspectorate and ATC develop reports on results of assessment, publish them and provide to the stakeholders.

Key Issues

State Inspectorate of Education

- Punitive inclination of inspections.
- Focus on administrative issues.

System-wise

- Lack of effective performance monitoring & evaluation.
- Gaps in data-driven decision-and policy-making.

Recommendations

- Institutional capacities of external assessment bodies shall be enhanced.
- MoES oversees quality control through State Inspectorate of Education and Assessment and Testing Centre which implement multi-layer, targeted and effective external assessment.
- State Inspectorate of Education should put larger focus on the education quality of the schools along with the administrative aspects currently practiced.
- The inspections need to be seconded with providing guidance and support in rectifying the revealed problems.
- The improved evaluation and reporting by the Inspectorate and ATC shall significantly contribute to evidence-based policy-making by MoES.
- Overall, the MoES shall focus more on long range strategic planning, data-driven policy-making and quality control.

School Reorganization

Current Setting

- The schools are categorized into basic (1-9 grades), separated high school (10-12 grades) and 12-year segments.
- All schools are self-governing entities and have the status of state non-commercial organization.
- Declining volume of students along with deteriorated physical infrastructure and challenging quality of education has led to significant fall of student number in certain schools.

Recommendations

1. Review the school distribution map

- Reviewing the map through combination of efficiency and accessibility factors.
- This should reflect landscape of existing VET institutes and specialized schools, taking into account introduction of 12-year compulsory education in Armenia since the current year.
- Consequently, recategorize certain schools to basic, separated high school and 12-year types as necessary.

2. School reorganization

- Leave legal status of state non-commercial organization only to schools meeting certain criteria:
  - Firstly, the number of students.
  - Secondly, the state of the infrastructure, teacher community, etc., recorded results in delivering state educational standards.
- Small schools (with less than 50-100 students) can be reorganized and become branches of neighboring larger schools.
- School optimization practice currently in process for small schools shall leverage the aforementioned reorganization.
- Main objective of reorganization shall be ensuring decent quality of education and effective delivery of state educational standards
- In addition, reorganization will lead to cost savings.

School Boards

Recommendations: Overview

- Novel model of School Boards as district level collegial governance body, each overseeing a number of regional schools.
- Boards augmented both in size and in assigned responsibilities.
- Overseeing development aspects of schools, results-based governance approach and dealing with school-level KPIs.
- Awareness-raising activities on School Boards and their importance along with trainings for Board members.

Concept

Current Setting

- Each school has a Board as a collegial governance body.
- Shortcomings in establishment of the current Boards along with inadequate guidance and low capacities were elevated by general gap in culture of collegial governance in Armenia.

Recommendations

Forming School Boards at the district level

- Current system of school-level boards will be abolished.
- Each new Regional Board shall oversee operations of between 5-15 schools (depending on the specifics of the region).
- Current enlargement of communities in process in Armenia can ease formation and effective running of larger regional boards.
- Can be launched with pilot project in Dilijan where enlargement of communities is now taking place.
- The new Boards would be especially appropriate for rural schools as they would be less susceptible to Principal's control and influence of local clans.

Membership

Current Setting

8 members:

- 2 representatives of Teacher Council
- 2 representatives of Parent Council
- 1 representative of the community - local self-governing body (community / municipality other than Yerevan)
- 1 or 2 representatives of MoES and the territorial body (Marzpetaran / Yerevan Municipality), depending on authorization body for the school.

Key Issues

- Local authorities often appoint Board members meeting specific narrow interests.
- The same person is a member of a number of boards, hindering the focus and commitment.

Recommendations

- Enhanced capacity of the new district level Boards through engagement of proficient representatives from diverse spheres with larger commitment and involvement in Board activities.
- Number of members to be proportional to number of the schools under the Board:
  - Schools - 1 rep per school
  - MoES representative – 1
  - Representative of territorial bodies (Marzpetaran / Yerevan) – 1
  - Representatives of community (e.g. NGO members) – 30% of the Board.

- The Board will be assisted by hired paid staff:
  - Board Secretary
  - Assistant
  - Accountant.
- Representatives of schools cannot include the Headmaster, Operations Manager or admin staff.
- Paid staff of the Boards will be appointed by territorial body.

Note: Board members **cannot** be representative of a school whose child/grand-child studies at the given school.

Operations

Current Setting	Recommendations
▪ Elects the School Principal. ▪ Reviews budget request prepared by the Principal to be sent to authorization body (Marzpetaran / Yerevan Municipality; MoES) for approval. ***Key issues*** ▪ While the School Board elects the Principal, it covers inadequate responsibility for Principal's performance. ▪ Often, the main involvement areas of the Board are election of Principal and review of Budget request. ▪ Overall, there is widespread low motivation, lack of initiations and insufficient engagement by Board members.	▪ Regional Boards shall oversee operations of schools, in general. ▪ Setting unified standards in certain fields for the regional schools. ▪ Information database and management toolset to be employed for effective monitoring and benchmarking of results and progress of peer schools within the region. ▪ Oversees the implementation of the budget. ▪ Focuses on strategic planning and policy in according with local needs. ▪ Oversees implementation of development plans of the schools (devised by Principals). In this context, the Board shall adopt strongly results-based governance approach and introduce school-level KPIs. ▪ Board meets at least once every quarter; more frequent meetings can be held upon necessity and specific agenda. ▪ Upon need, the Board expresses distrust on certain aspects of the schools' operation to MoES and territorial bodies. Requires 2/3 majority vote of the Board, based on which the following is expected to take place, respectively: ▪ The MoES shall replace School Headmaster ▪ The territorial body shall replace Operations Manager. ▪ The territorial body shall replace the staff.

Awareness Raising

Current Setting	Recommendations
▪ Introduction of the School Boards was not accompanied with adequate awareness raising among the main stakeholders and society, in general. ▪ Overall, members of the School Boards lack social status in the community.	▪ Awareness raising efforts will be aimed to help both Board members and the community understand the roles of Board members and importance of community participation. ▪ National School Board Association can be created to organize trainings for new board members (e.g. on school governance, performance monitoring, assessment & evaluation). ▪ Similar trainings can also be provided by National Institute of Education or other relevant organizations. ▪ Overall, these initiatives will build social status for the members of the School Boards in the community, enhancing attractiveness for the position.

Board of Trustees

Current Setting	Recommendations
▪ Board of Trustees is advisory body that schools can form upon own wish. ▪ Expected to assist the school in fundraising and improving infrastructure. ▪ Majority of the schools do not have such Boards. ▪ The latter wherever existent, are not marked with significant level of effectiveness and benefits for the school.	▪ The landscape of Board of Trustees shall be reshaped. ▪ Having a Board of Trustees will be voluntary for the schools. ▪ It will present development initiatives to the Regional Board and MoES for getting support and funding. ▪ Important principle for the latter will be the following: ▪ Effective composition of the Board, i.e. involvement of proficient members from diverse spheres. ▪ Level of willingness by members for engagement in school performance. ▪ Level of preparedness by the Board members to fundraise and personally contribute. ▪ Regional Boards, MoES and territorial bodies will view the schools with effective Board of Trustees as a partner. ▪ Board of Trustees can be formed both per school and per cluster of schools.

School Principal

Recommendations: Overview

- Replacement of current position of School Principal by two managing positions in the school – Headteacher and Operations Manager who will take over educational and administrative aspects of school operations, respectively.
- Both pre-service and post-service enhanced training and certification of management.
- School Development Plan shall become an important toolset for school management to enhance the school.
- A rigid performance-based approach of Regional Boards to assess progress of School Development Plan and evaluate school management thereupon.

Concept

Current Setting

- School Principal is head of the school responsible for internal management.
- Inactivity of the School Board often makes Principal the sole decision maker.

Recommendations

Headteacher

- Will take over educational aspects at the school and be responsible for educational quality delivered.
- Appoints teachers and other pedagogical staff.

Operations Manager

- Is responsible for administrative aspects of the school.
- Appoints administrative staff upon consent of Headteacher.

Appointment

Current Setting

- School Board elects Principal among the candidates.
- The authorized body (Marzpetaran / Yerevan Municipality; MoES) signs employment contract with the elected Principal.
- Thus, there is blurred responsibility both by the School Board and the MoES for Principal's activities, leading to inadequate performance assessment and evaluation.

Recommendations

Headteacher

- In 1st stage, candidates for Headteacher undergo training, take exam and get certificate.
- In 2nd stage, candidates having successfully passed the exam go through an interview by dedicated Council adjacent to MoES, for a specific vacant position of Headteacher at a school.
- The Council appoints Headteacher out of candidates on the interview.
- MoES signs employment contracts with appointed Headteachers.
- Headteacher reports to Regional Board and MoES.

Operations Manager

- In 1st stage, the candidates for Operations Manager undergo training, take exam and get certificate.
- In 2nd stage, the candidates having successfully passed the exam go through interview by respective territorial body, for a specific vacant position of Operations Manager at a regional school.
- Territorial body appoints Operations Manager out of candidates on interview and signs employment contracts with the latter.
- Operations Manager reports to Regional Board and the territorial body.

Performance Evaluation

Current Setting

- Candidates for principal's vacant place develop and submit school development plan during candidacy phase.
- The development plans predominantly are formal in nature and replicated from each other, without properly featuring school specific needs.
- Furthermore, the development plans largely are not duly monitored, with no comprehensive evaluation and respective implications for the School Principal.

Recommendations

- Candidates for vacant principal's job are not required to submit school development plan in candidacy stage.
- Appointed Headteacher along with the appointed Operations Manager presents school development plan to Regional Board, within 1st three months of operations for approval.
- School Development Plan shall have the following sections:
- vision;
- SWOT analysis of the school;
- budget and financing;
- action plan on enhancement of education quality
- Development plan of the school shall follow strongly results-based approach and include school-level KPIs.
- There shall be re-appointment of Headteacher and Operations Manager to their positions based on progress of school development plan and KPIs.

Capacity Build-up

Current Setting

- Candidates for Principals receive about 3 weeks of training and certification through trainer organizations in areas like school management, education legislation, IT and pedagogy.
- There is lack of national framework for standards for the training and performance of the Principals.
- Furthermore, the duration and landscape of the training for Principal certification is perceived to be inadequate.

Recommendations

- Both for the Headteacher and Operations Manager, develop a national framework for standards and use them as a basis for both training and hiring. National Institute of Education can develop the framework.
- Lengthen the training of candidates for Headteachers to 6-8 weeks.
- Increasing competitive advantage among candidates for Headteacher's position in terms of holding a degree in MA Education Management.
- In long-run, introduction of requirement for Headteacher to hold graduate degree in education management.
- Continuous and enhanced trainings and capacity building for the serving Headteachers and Operations Managers (e.g. delivered by National Institute of Education).

Financing

Recommendations: Overview

- Modified school funding system – introduction of hybrid financing formula.
- Regional Boards in a position to approve school budgets.
- Introduction of regional-level financing aimed at dedicated initiatives and development plans

Formula & Channeling: Mechanism

Current Setting

- Student-number based financing and gaps in financing development initiatives for the schools.
- Current legislation allows local authorities to redistribute financing between schools.
- Overall, malpractices, favoritism and undue control by local territorial authorities.

Recommendations

Financing formula

- Following through with the current plan to modify school funding mechanism - introduction of class-based component in financing formula.

Channeling

- Regional Boards approve budget request presented by schools.
- Financing is channeled to all schools through the local authorities (Marzpetaran/Yerevan Municipality).
- No reallocation of funds between schools.

Financing Regional Boards

- Operations of the Regional Boards and remuneration of paid admin staff shall be covered from a portion of state financing channeled to schools in the region.
- This will be offset by cost savings that the schools achieve due to operations of Regional Board (e.g. absence of need for accountant at schools) and enhanced efficiency.

Distribution Regional-Level Financing

Current Setting

- Student-number based financing and gaps in financing development initiatives for the schools.
- Current legislation allows local authorities to redistribute financing between schools.
- Overall, malpractices, favoritism and undue control by local territorial authorities.

Recommendations

Introduction of regional level financing

- Regional Boards within a Marz can come together and establish a Council of regional Boards on the Marz level.
- The Council of regional Boards on the Marz level will have a budget for education development in the Marz (portion of standard state financing to schools, leveraged by additional dedicated financing).
- The Council will be in a position to distribute the available financing to the regional schools based on the development plans and initiatives presented by the schools. The decision on granting funding to a school will be based on a tier of factors such as:
- School development plan, performance of the school and achievement of set KPIs
- Program, stakeholders, participants and partners, expected benefits, transparent manner, publicity of the presented initiative.
- Existence of Board of Trustees at the school, potential to fundraise and personally contribute.

Conclusions

Since 2000s decentralization of education in Armenia has been important component of overall democratization process, but has resulted in consolidation of too much authority at regional level. For variety of reasons including traditions and civil society under-development, school boards in Armenia have turned out to be more of rubber stamps entities.

The recommended model of introducing managing positions of Headteacher and Operations Manager at the school is expected to contribute to effectiveness of school management and create synergy.

The suggested model of regional-level boards along with increased role of MoES is aimed to eliminate local level malpractices, instill greater accountability and enhance decentralization in school system. It is aimed to secure effective balance between decentralization and recentralization, benefiting from larger regional capacities for governance.

Overall, responsibility for school governance and results on different levels of governance shall be institutionalized, adopting strongly performance-based governance model and evidence-based policy-making.

It is noteworthy that education is country-specific and wholesale borrowing of reforms in education from other countries is not always most effective solution.

On the other hand, Armenia should benefit from lessons learned and best practices of peer countries that would best fit Armenia's educational heritage and traditions, current development phase and challenges, available resources, limitations and overall envisaged development trajectory.

Phased introduction of new reforms is recommended through careful piloting, learning lessons and then mainstreaming. There is need for firm political will to institutionalize reforms reflected through central and regional government support.

Finally, society resistance to reforms in education in general, and past lessons learned shall be acknowledged, thus implementing the reforms with caution and employing awareness-raising effective measures among main stakeholder circles.

Appendices

2. Legislative Framework and Institutional Setting

2.2 Internal Governance and Management

2.2.a. School Board

Board membership

The member of the School Board is obliged to perform the assignments and decisions of the Board and those of the authorized body that derive from the statutory objectives of the school. The powers of a member of the School Board is terminated by the authorized body in case of:

- submitting a personal request thereon
- a justified recall by the body having authorized the member
- a justified recommendation, upon the decision of the Board
- failing to attend at least three meetings of the Board within one year
- being declared, through judicial procedure, as having no active legal capacity or as missing or having limited active legal capacity
- liquidation or reorganization of an educational institution
- having been included in the Board by procedure violations

The powers of a member of the Board may not be terminated on the grounds referred to in the points 1-4, if the competition for a vacant position of the Principal is to be held within the next three months.

The chairman of the Board is elected during a closed election based on the majority of votes.

The chairman of the Board:

- manages Board activities
- presides at Board meetings
- organizes the recording process of Board sessions and validates them

In the case of Board chairman absence, his/her responsibilities are taken by a member of the Board, upon the Board approval.

Board meetings

The first session of the Board takes place upon the request of the territorial administration body, within 7 days after the approval of the Board nomenclature and is administered by the most senior member of the Board.

The Board meetings are held at least once in a quarter upon the request of the Chairman, as well as upon the claim of the authorized state body, Principal or one third of the Board members. The board session takes place if over half of the Board members participate. For the election of a School Principal the presence of at least 6 members is required.

The Board makes decisions based on the majority of votes. During the election, each member has the right of 1 vote and cannot transfer it to another member. The Board meetings are recorded, while the session of Principal election may also be audio recorded.

The powers of Board member are terminated in the case of participating in the competition called for the vacant position of Principal.

The Board member cannot be acting School Principal.

The School Principal is elected during a closed election based on the majority of the votes.

2.2.b. School Principal

Appointment procedure

In case of the position of Principal is vacant:

1. The Ministry of Education and Science, the Marzpet, the Mayor of Yerevan, according to the subordination, appoint an acting Principal, which cannot be a member of the Board.
2. The Board makes a decision on the official announcement of competition for the vacant position within 3 working days.
3. The Board organizes and implements the competition for the vacant position for a maximum period of 3 months from the date the position is vacant.
4. Vacancy announcement is published in mass media (national and local radio, television, press) at least twice in five-day intervals.

1. Training and certification procedure

The Ministry publishes on its official website the list of people who have been granted with the certificate and whose certificate have been terminated. Examination and certification are organized according to the schedule approved by the Ministry.

Note: The acting School Principals having been granted the certificate once, just need to participate to the training course once every 5 years without taking the subsequent exam.

2. Election procedure

After the interview with each candidate, the Principal is elected by secret ballot and by the majority vote of the Board members. Voting results are summarized by the Board Chairman in the presence of the candidates. The results could be considered invalid by the decision of the court or the state authorized body based on the decision of the corresponding commission (established by the order of the Minister after receiving appeals by the representatives of authorized body, Board members or candidates)

The Board Chairman, within three days, presents the elected candidate to the state authorized body by submitting records of the election process, the application package and the report of the representative of the MoES.

A person may not be nominated for the position of School Principal, who:

- has not been granted a certificate
- has been declared, through judicial procedure, as having no or limited active legal capacity
- has been deprived, through judicial procedure, of the right to engage in pedagogical or administrative activities
- suffers from a disease that may impede the implementation of pedagogical or administrative activities

- has been convicted of a crime, and the conviction has not been cancelled or expired in a prescribed manner, with the exception of cases when convicted of committing an unintentional crime.

The School Principal having won the competition and having concluded an employment contract, holds the position until the expiry of his/her powers, irrespective of the expiry of the certificate on the right of managing a school.

General requirements

The Principal should be aware of provisions of the following legal acts related to education.

• Law of RA on Education • Law of RA on General Education • Law of RA on Language • Law of RA on Children's Rights • Law of RA on State Non-Commercial Organizations • Law of RA on Education of People with Special Needs • Law of RA on Preschool Education • Law of RA on Pre-vocational and Vocational Education • Law of RA on Licensing • Law of RA on State Inspection of Education • Law of RA on Territorial Administration • Law of RA on the Organization and Implementation of Inspection in RA • Law of RA on the Basis of Administration and Administrative Proceeding • Law of RA on Purchase • Law of RA on Legal Acts	• The Constitution of Armenia • Labor Code of RA • Civil Code of RA • Code on Administrative Offenses • Tax legislation regulating the field of education • Model Statute of general educational institution state non-profit organization • State general education standards • Legal acts and other documents of the state authorized body of education (the Ministry of Education and Science of RA)

The Principal, should have knowledge also on:

- Basics of pedagogy, psychology, physiology and hygiene
- Current achievements of science and practice
- Organization of financial and economic activities of school
- Safety norms and rules of labor protection, safety equipment and anti-fire security system.

In addition, the Principal should be able to**:**

- plan, direct and coordinate the strategic and tactical development plans developed by the Founder, state authorized body of education and other management bodies of the school
- apply the provisions of legal and regulatory acts of the field of education
- provide students with quality education in accordance with the requirements of state educational standards
- organize and control operations of its various departments and staff activities, analyze the results
- manage financial activities of the school
- ensure continuing professional development of the pedagogical staff
- ensure educational, social and health rights and interests of students.

General requirements for the position of Principal

- Citizenship of the RA
- University degree within the last ten years
- Right of managing an educational institution (certificate)
- At least seven years of work experience in pedagogical, scientific and educational fields or in education management as well as appropriate certification.

Other responsibilities

The Principal acts on behalf of the school without authorization, represents its interests, signs contracts, opens bank accounts, licenses someone to act on behalf of the school (including the re-authorization). He/she represents the school in public administration, territorial administration bodies and in other organizations.

The Principal ensures the implementation of assignments of the Ministry or territorial administration body and is responsible for any violation or inadequate performance of decisions, legal acts, contracts and regulations ordered by the founder, the state authorized body or the Board. He/she ensures the effective cooperation with the governing bodies of public education.

The School Principal manages the Pedagogical Council, assists the Board, Parent Council and other advisory bodies in their activities.

Authority termination

The powers of the School Principal terminate according to the legislation and as stated in the Statute. In case of vacancy of the position of Principal, Acting Principal is appointed by the state authorized body.

In the case of Principal's absence, according to the written decision of the appointing authority, his/her powers are exercised by the Deputy Principal, if possible, or another staff member who is not a regular member of the Board.

2.2.c. Deputy Directors

Their main competences and responsibilities of Deputy Directors are presented below.

The Deputy Principal of educational work:

- is responsible for the educational process in the school, implementation of curricula, teaching quality and their accordance to educational standards, abilities and skills to ensure at least a minimum level of requirements
- oversees the educational process, performance and behavior of students, regulation of their workload
- together with the Principal, carries out methodical management of the school
- ensures the implementation of recommendations assigned by the Ministry and the territorial administration body, not contradicting the legislation of the Republic of Armenia
- draws up the curriculum and prepares educational reports
- is responsible for coordination of the work of methodology units, generalization and dissemination of best practice in teaching, promotion of the latest advances in science and pedagogy among teachers
- implements control over trainings and makes recommendations for the improvement of the educational process
- oversees the requirements set out in internal regulations and in the Charter

The Deputy Principal of specialized education support:

- organizes and monitors educational, upbringing, extracurricular activities of students and headmasters
- ensures close ties and cooperation between the school and family
- organizes the students' leisure time, takes measures to provide assistance to needy children
- provides practical assistance to heads of school departments, methodology units and pedagogues in the organization of educational activities
- generalizes and takes measures to promote effective, guaranteed pedagogical practices
- controls students' behavioral culture, norms and rules of conduct, provides support for school autonomy and social control
- oversees the education process, the students' academic performance and behavior
- organizes events for the preservation and development of national cultural heritage, ensures the right of the language and culture of ethnic minorities
- participates in the realization of the right of education of children with special needs.

The Deputy Principal of economic activity:

- is responsible for the school building and property maintenance, logistics, training process, improved sanitary and safety conditions
- takes measures to enrich and strengthen the base of educational materials.

2.2.d. Advisory Bodies

Pedagogical Council

Sessions of the Council

The Pedagogical Council is headed by the Principal (Acting Principal) who is the Chairman of the Council.

The sessions are recorded by the permanent secretary who is elected from the Council members. The secretary is responsible for the conscientious preparation of session records within three days, which then is signed and ratified by the Chairman of the Council.

The meetings of Pedagogical Council takes place at least once every two months. If necessary, special sessions are held, upon the request of:

- Principal
- 1/3 of the members of the Pedagogical Council
- Ministry or territorial administration body (Marzpet or Mayor of Yerevan)

The sessions are open to all teachers of the school with a voting right.

If necessary, parents, Student Council members and other people are invited to take part in the Pedagogical Council sessions with a consultative voting right. The School Principal informs about the time and agenda of the meeting to the teaching staff of the school at least three days prior to the meeting. Changes can be made at the meeting agenda by the decision of the Council.

The Council session is valid if it is attended by more than half of the members and by at least 2/3 for the election of Council members. Decisions are made by the majority of votes. Each member of the Council has one voting right. Voice transmission is prohibited.

In the case of equal number of votes, the proposal of the Principal is accepted. If the Principal does not agree with the decision of the Pedagogical Council, the final decision is made by territorial administration body (Marzpet or Mayor of Yerevan), within a week.

The implementation of the decisions made is ensured by the School Principal and reports regularly to the Council about the results.

Parent Council

Sessions of Parent Council

At least three days before the session of the Parent Council, the Chairman of the Council informs the members about the meeting location, time and agenda. The agenda may be amended upon the Council decision.

The sessions of school Parent Council and class Parent Councils are valid if attended by more than half of council members. The decisions are taken by the majority of votes. Each member of the Parent Council has one voting right. Voice transmission is prohibited.

Headmasters take part in class Parent Councils meetings, while the School Principal – in the case of the school Parent Council. According to the educational plan, class Parent Council meetings are held no less than four times, while school Parent Council meetings - twice in an academic year.

Special meeting may be held upon the request of the School Principal, Parent councils and headmasters. Sessions are recorded by the secretary of the Council.

Student Council

Responsibilities of Student Council

The Student Council submits proposals to the directorate of the School on:

- internal disciplinary rules of the school
- leisure activities of the students
- strengthening the ties between the school and family
- content of the teaching and its quality, improving students' behavior and discipline.

The Student Council jointly with the School Board and advisory bodies:

- participates in the organization of extracurricular and out-of-school educational activities of students
- participates in the registration of orphans and children in need for providing them with material and other assistance
- protects the child's rights in the school
- contributes to the maintenance of sanitary and hygienic conditions in the school
- collaborates with headmasters for implementing the activities envisaged in the curriculum.

General Assembly of students

The autonomous body of students at the school is the General Assembly of 6-12th grade students (6-9th grade for basic school, 10-12th grade for high school students). In cases stipulated by the Student Council Statute, the 5th grade students may also participate in the General Assembly with a voting right.

The first General Assembly of students is convened by the School Principal during the first week of September.

The first General Assembly makes a decision on:

- formation of a Student Council as an autonomous executive body
- confirmation of the Statute and formation procedure of the Council
- approval of the number of Student Council members
- composition of the working group coordinating the formation of the Student Council.

The General Assembly of the school:

- approves the Statute of the autonomous body of students and makes changes in it

- takes note of the message of the Principal on the annual program of school activities
- considers the annual reports of the Student Council and its President and provides an appropriate evaluation (insufficient, satisfactory, good) through open voting
- considers the message of Deputy Principal for specialized educational support or the organizer of educational activities on the organization of extracurricular and out-of-school activities
- considers other issues within the scope of its authority and adopts relevant decisions, which are mandatory for the Student Council.

The General Assembly of students is convened at least twice a year by the Student Council. An additional meeting may be convened upon the request of one third of the members of the Council or upon the initiative of the School Principal.

Election Commission

In order to organize students' autonomous body elections, an electoral commission is formed engaging one student per class not included in the Class board. The election commission elects its president at its first session with the majority of votes. The voting procedure is decided by the commission. The election commission cooperates with the School Board, Pedagogical and Parent councils and the directorate in exercising its authority.

Election Commission:

- organizes the election of the class councils and approves their members
- approves the composition of the Student Council upon the results of the election of class councils
- organizes the elections of the Student Council President.

Student bodies on the class level

The initial structural stage of the autonomy of students in the school is the Class General Assembly that forms a Class Council. The Council is composed of three to five students selected from that class, with one year of discretion.

A member of the Class Council, with the majority of votes in the Class General Assembly, becomes the Chairman of the Class council. In case a few Council members have received the highest number of votes, the Chairman of the Council is determined by drawing lots.

The Class General Assembly is convened if necessary, but no less than every two months by the initiative of the headmaster, the Class Council, the Chairman of the Class council and 1/3 of students of that class. The Class General Assembly approves the annual report of the Class Council and its Chairman.

The competences of the Class Council Chairman may be terminated early in the case of moving to another class or school or in case of no-confidence by a 2/3 decision of the Class Council members.

Formation of the Student Council

The Student Council is formed by Class General Assemblies of 6th - 12th grades (6-9th grades in basic schools, and 10-12th grade in high schools), by up to two representatives elected by the secret ballot, within 10 days but no later than 20th of September of the given academic year. Headmasters may participate in the Student Council meetings by the right of consultative voting.

The Chairman of the Student Council is elected by students, during closed, secret ballot by a simple majority of the votes, but not less than half of the total number of students.

Student Council candidates are nominated only by members of the Student Council from September 20 to 25 of the current academic year. Candidates, according to the timetable approved by the electoral committee, present their programs of the Student Council's activities.

The election results are summarized and announced by the electoral committee immediately after the voting. The Chairman of the Student Council is elected for one academic year (the same person may be re-elected but not more than twice).

Sessions of Student Council

The Student Council sessions are convened at least once a month. Additional sessions are convened by the initiative of the Chairman of Student Council, the School Principal, Deputy Principal for professional educational assistance and / or upon the request of 1/3 of the Student Council members and by the decision of the General Assembly of students.

The voting procedure (open or closed) is determined by the Student Council. Decisions are made by a simple majority of votes. In the case of an equal number of votes, the decision is made by the Chairman of the Student Council. The sessions of the Student Council are recorded and published in accordance with the decision of the Student Council.

In order to organize the activities of the Student Council, specialized committees are formed, which elect their Committee Coordinators. Specialized committees are formed by spheres of activity (educational, military, health, social, cultural, disciplinary, legal, informational, etc.).

The responsibilities and powers of the specialized committees are defined by the Student Council. Upon the suggestion of the Student Council, teachers, parents and specialists in relevant fields can be included in the committees.

Head of the Student Council

The Head of the Student Council manages the activities of the Council for the period between the sessions. As the representative of students in their relations with other bodies of the school, he/she performs the following functions:

- participates in the work of the School Board, Pedagogical and Parent Councils, directorate of the school with the right of consultative vote
- submits an annual report to the General Assembly of students, on the work done by him/her and the Council
- coordinates the activities of the Class councils and specialized committees, ensures collaboration between them
- exercises other powers in accordance with the Charter.

Students may express their non-confidence to the Head of Student Council. The initiative to express non-confidence may be considered if it is initiated by 1/3 of the eligible students. The issue of non-confidence of the Student Council Head is discussed at the General Assembly of students. The non-confidence of the Student Council Head is confirmed in the case of exceeding the powers or for non-performance of the obligations in an unjustified manner. The decision to express non-confidence is taken if two thirds of the eligible students have voted for it.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees:

- contributes to the implementation of additional and other school programs
- supports the implementation of social programs and the organization of students' summer holidays
- participates in the discussion of school development programs
- elects a representative member in the Pedagogical Council
- assist in establishing international relations and cooperation with other schools.

The members of the Board of Trustees may attend the Board meetings with a voting right, if their proposed budget or targeted program is discussed.

2.3 Financial management

The schools may also, on a competitive basis, receive additional financing from the state budget for other purposes, upon the proposal of the authorized public administration body for education.

The children in need of special conditions for education avail themselves of the additional state support. The scale of the increased amount of financing prescribed for children in need as of the degree of gravity of the need are defined by the Government.

Additional salary is set for pedagogical staff members of schools in borderline, highland and mountainous settlements of the Republic of Armenia, pursuant to the law on the state budget of the given year, but not less than the amount provided for by the state budget of the current year.

The procedure for financing schools from the state budget is established by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

Additional sources of financing are as follows:

- investments made by legal entities and individuals from the Republic of Armenia and foreign countries
- own funds deriving from fee-paid instruction and other forms of activities not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia
- other sources, without prejudice to the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

Involvement of additional sources of financing does not cause reduction in the amounts of financing from the State Budget.

A school may be engaged in entrepreneurial activities only in the cases and in respect of the types of activities directly provided for by law or stipulated by the decision of the founder.

Use of profit

The procedure for using the profit of the school is established by the Government of RA, according to which, the Board, by 1st of May of the following year, sets out the directions and dimensions of the distribution of profit of the current year.

Profit of the school for the current year is distributed in the following directions and proportions:

1) reserve fund - up to 15% of profit for the current year (risks and uncertainties, unfavorable contracts)

2) accumulation fund - up to 35% of the profit for the current year (for acquisition and/or repair of noncurrent assets)

3) consumption fund - up to 50% of the profit for the current year, which includes:

a. Fund of material incentives for employees (for professional and honest work)

b. Cash aid fund (long-term illness, death, death of relatives of employees, as well as marriage and other occasions)

c. Charity fund (assistance to students from socially vulnerable families)

d. Other

Schools, with up to 3,000,000 AMD net profit, in accordance with the decision of the Board, may use it in one or more directions defined by the procedure.

I. Budget planning, drafting and approval

Procedure of annual budget planning

For the purpose of developing, approving and submitting budget performance reports, the Principal forms a budget calendar of the school where indicates the following:

- drafting of the preliminary draft budget
- organization and elaboration of the public discussion of the draft budget
- draft budget for submitting to the School Board and state authorized body
- timeframes for the publication of the semester and annual reports on execution of the budget

The Principal may give orders and appoint responsible people for their execution.

At the preparatory stage of the draft budget, the Principal, in order to direct the budgetary process and to increase the efficiency of final reporting, ensures:

- organization of a public discussion on the preliminary draft version of the school budget for comments and recommendations

- discussion on the preliminary draft version of the school budget with the Pedagogical Council, Parent and Student Councils, School Board, citizens and other stakeholders to get suggestions and clarifications
- elaboration of the final version of the school budget draft, on the basis of comments and suggestions received.

The Board invites citizens, who have submitted a proposal on the draft budget, to take part in the budget planning session in order to discuss and clarify their proposals.

II. Budget execution and control

Prior to approval of the budget by the state authorized body, the expenditures are made in the proportions of the previous year, taking into account the new significant circumstances which may affected the budget of the current year.

During the execution of the budget, the School Principal may make changes in the budget for the year in which the budget is approved.

The School Board implements control over the planning, review and approval of the budget.

III. Preparation and approval of the annual budget execution report

The School Principal submits the annual budget execution report to the School Board following the end of the budget year until March 15 of the year following the reporting year.

The semester report is submitted at the regular meeting of the School Board or upon the request of the Board within the defined terms.

Budget Publicity

For the purpose of ensuring transparency of the school budget, informing and involving community members and all interested organizations in the planning, reviewing, implementing and monitoring of the budget, the School Principal performs the following:

- 20 days prior to submitting the draft budget to the Board, publishes on the official website of the school, or in the local press to receive opinions and suggestions from citizens and interested organizations, within 15 days
- after each quarter of the fiscal year, within 15 days, publishes on the official website of the school or in local press information on the quarterly allocations of the school budget
- within five days after the approval of the Board, publishes the annual report of budget allocations on the official website of the school or in local press.

2.4 Assessment of School Performance

The purpose of the internal and external assessment of the school activities are:

- ensuring uniformity of state policy in general education
- promotion of efficiency, improvement of general education quality
- formation of competition between schools for improving the quality and effectiveness of educational process
- raising awareness among beneficiaries (students and their parents), pedagogical staff, MoES, territorial administration and local self-governing bodies, Yerevan Municipality)
- enhancing effectiveness of accountability mechanisms of schools, and promoting transparency.

Internal and external assessments are carried out on the basis of guiding questionnaires set by the MoES.

The main objectives of internal and external assessment are:

- comparative assessment of the quality and effectiveness of educational services
- assessment of graduates' compliance with requirements of state educational standard
- evaluation of educational process arrangements and activities aimed at improvement
- assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of general education programs, teaching methods and the use of technology
- public awareness among the stakeholders on the quality of educational services and the effectiveness of educational process
- evaluation of school development trends, development and implementation of development programs
- public involvement in internal and external assessment process
- publication of external rating indicators of schools.

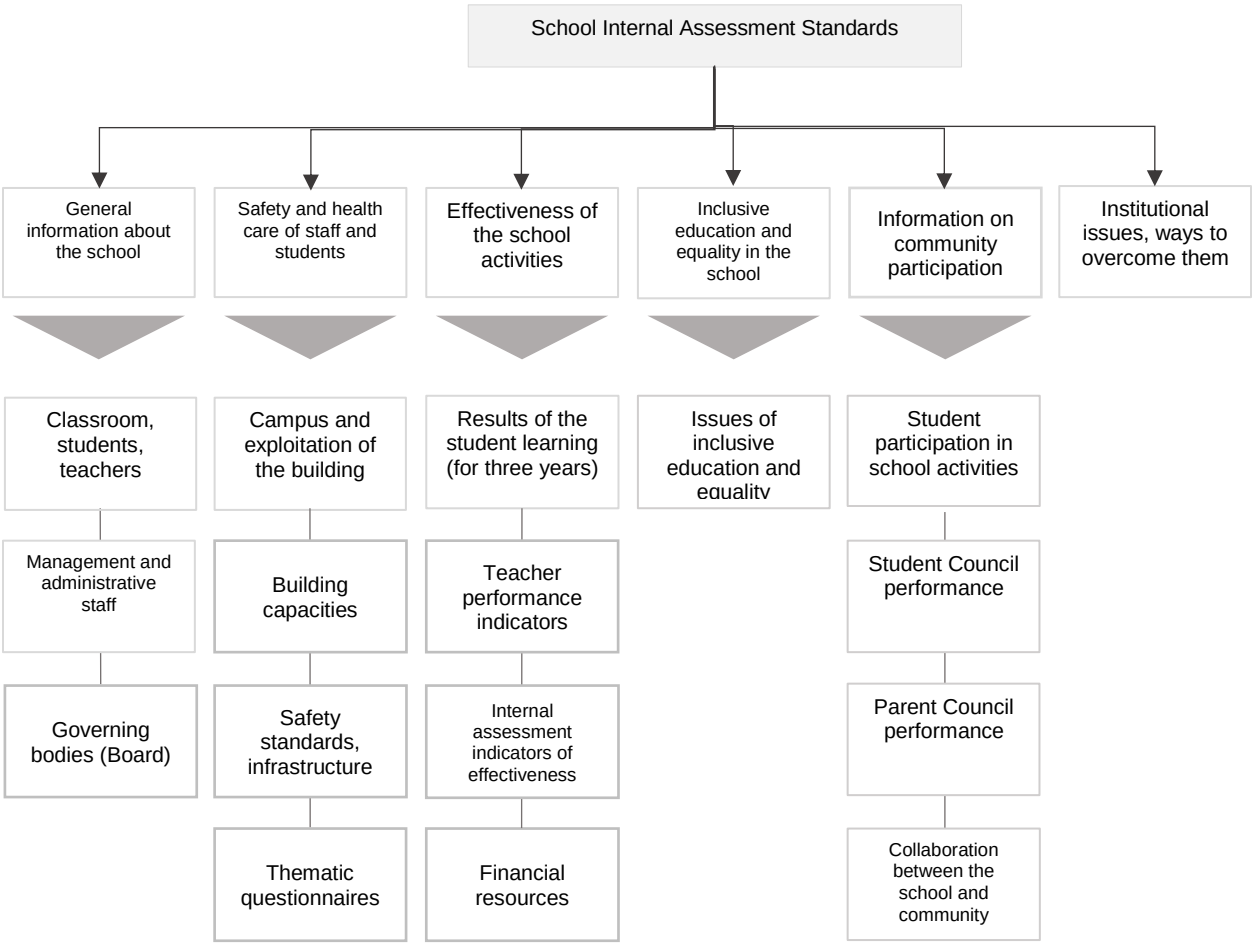
2.4.a Internal Assessment

Assessment standards

The standards of the internal assessment of school activities are:

- implementation of targeted educational programs aimed at building skills and abilities among students
- organization of educational programs and events aimed at physical, spiritual and social health of students
- ensuring the progress and high performance of students
- qualified teaching staff and modern teaching methods
- quality educational environment
- effective management of human, financial and material resources and ability to attract new resources
- collaboration between students and school management bodies, participation of students in the school's activities
- Student Council acting in accordance with the principles of democracy and autonomy
- close cooperation of Parent Council with the directorate and Student Council, its contribution to the educational activities

- inclusive education and equality in the school
- modernization of knowledge and skills of teaching staff in the field of inclusive education, along with adapting the curriculum and course plan
- availability of resources to support children with special educational needs
- children with special educational needs have equal access to all school and class activities, depending on their capacity
- equality between sexes and national minorities is ensured
- observance of safety rules in the building and surrounding areas
- observance of safety and sanitary conditions for the organization of educational process and appropriate working environment, availability of health service.



2.4.b External Assessment

Participants

The public administration bodies involved in the inspection process are the Government of the RA and the MoES.

Government of RA:

- defines the common control policy over the compliance of legislation and other legal acts in the field of education
- approves the charter and structure of the inspection body
- approves the development and presentation procedures of public reports and the assessment procedure of schools.

MoES:

- develops and implements common control policy in the field of education
- ensures the state control over observance of legislation in the field of education
- determines the priority directions of activity of the State Inspectorate of Education
- approves the work plans, analyzes, evaluates and makes recommendations to the Government, based on the assessment reports
- coordinates inspection activities
- ensures the development of legal acts regulating the control over schools.

State Inspectorate of Education

Areas of Inspection

The main areas of inspection cover the following:

- inspect and review educational programs and educational activities of schools:
  - organization of educational process in accordance with the state standards
  - knowledge, ability and skill testing, evaluation
  - compliance of knowledge testing, evaluation and final certification processes and examination procedures
  - student mobility accordance with the procedure
  - receipt, preservation and distribution, processing, reporting of final documentation
  - provision of appropriate educational, technical materials
  - realization of the orders, directives, instructions or assignments of the MoES and the head of the territorial administration body
  - recruitment of management and pedagogical staff
  - compliance of the education quality to the statutory requirements
  - implementation of powers of the school management bodies
  - evaluation and publication of the annual self-assessment of school's activities
  - control and monitor the compliance of the activities of educational departments of territorial administration bodies and local self-government bodies activities with the education legislation.

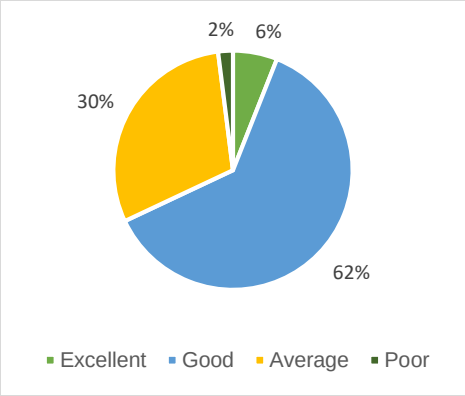
Overview of Inspection Results[13]

According to the inspection results by the State Inspectorate of Education, the management in public schools is considered to be mainly on satisfactory level. Management bodies generally

[13] In the area of school management and governance (2015-2016)

perform their duties in accordance with legal acts and state educational standards. Despite the overall positive picture, however, the level of law violations in certain directions remains steady over the years. Violations occur in all management levels; and specific kinds of violations are more frequent compared to others.

Evaluation of performance of Principals in Shirak Marz



The Principal, as the head of the operational management of the school, has an overall good level of performance. Nonetheless, there is continued record of certain law violations. Thus, in Shirak marz, violations were recorded in 44 schools out of the inspected 47. The most common law violations relate to recruitment of pedagogical staff. For instance, in 37 schools, 119 cases were identified on recruitment of teachers not qualified for the position, 29 cases – of teacher recruitment without examination or with violation of examination procedure. Overall, the picture is similar in other marzes of Armenia.

Proportion of schools with law violations

	Shirak Marz	Syuniq Marz	Gegharquniq Marz
Recruitment of teachers not-qualified for the position	79%	78%	58%
Violations in the teacher examination procedure	62%	65%	30%

The pattern of violations is larger in case of the School Boards. The most common law violations include the following*:

- Gaps in control over the implementation of school development program (18%)
- Lack of approval of the working discipline of the Board (19%)
- Lack of approval of the procedure of teacher recruitment (15%)
- Convening the sessions with violation of law requirements (13%)
- No discussion of the budget plan of the following year (15%)
- No approval of the school development program (3%)

* Inspection data of schools in the Marz of Shirak

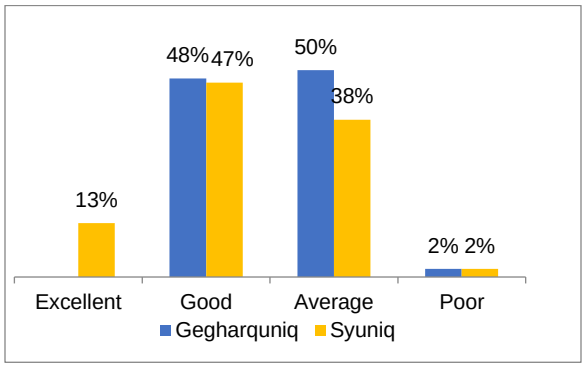
The Board executed its governance activities with law violations in almost half of the observed schools. While in the case of School Principal, the violations apply only to a small part of responsibilities, in the case of the Board the latter does not perform properly the majority of its main functions.

The Pedagogical Council in schools mostly operates without violations. Thus, according to the inspections results, in 26% of Shirak schools, the performance of the Pedagogical Council of its

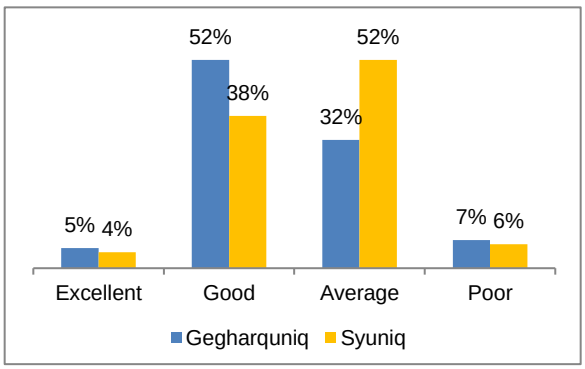
duties is excellent, in 55% - good and in 19% - satisfactory. The pattern is similar in the schools in the other inspected marzes.

The findings are radically different for the Parent and Student Councils – these structures are not effectively engaged in the managing activities of the school. Out of the 91 inspected schools in Gegharquniq and Syuniq marzes, only in 1 school the Parent Council performed its responsibilities appropriately, and in the case of the Student Council - in 4 schools.

Parent Council evaluation in schools, %



Student Council evaluation in schools, %



The observation of the inspection results of educational departments in territorial administration bodies shows practice of poor supervision. Inspection activities have been conducted in the Marzpetarans of Gegharquniq, Shirak, Ararat, Lori, Tavush, Aragatsotn, Vayots Dzor. The most common types of law violations include:

- Exceeding the number of students enrolled as approved by the MoES initially.
- Recruitment of teachers with background not corresponding to law requirements
- Recruitment of teachers with violations in the selection procedure
- Late approval of the list of the School Board members by Marzpet
- Recruitment of School Principal with law violations in selection procedure.

Violations by the Marzpetarans per Marz (number of schools / % in total)

Type of violation/Marz	Lori	Tavush	Aragatsotn	Gegharquniq
Exceeded number of students	28 (17%)	2 (3%)	15 (13%)	11 (9%)
Recruitment of teachers without appropriate background	-	20 (25%)	52 (43%)	34 (27%)
Violations in teacher recruitment procedure	101 (61%)	14 (17%)	22 (18%)	43 (34%)
Violations in recruitment procedure of the Principal	-	6 (7%)	6 (5%)	24 (20%)
Violations in implementation of educational programs	49 (30%)	40 (50%)	-	48 (38%)

Meeting List

Institution	Department	Position	Name
State Bodies			
Government of RA		Deputy Prime Minister	Vache Gabrielyan
Government of RA		Advisor to the Prime Minister on Education	Gevorg Muradyan
MOES		Minister	Levon Mkrtchyan
MOES		Deputy Minister	Davit Sahakyan
MOES		Deputy Minister	Manuk Mkrtchyan
MOES	Department of General Education	Head	Ashot Arshakyan
MOES	Unit of Pre-school and Secondary Education	Head	Susanna Makyan
MOES	Department of Finance and Accounting	Head	Gevorg Yeghinyan
MOES	Department of Development Programs and Monitoring	Head	Robert Stepanyan
Yerevan Municipality	Department of General Education	Head	Anna Stepanyan
Lori Marzpetaran	Department of Education, Culture and Sport	Head	Minas Sayadyan
Armavir Marzpetaran	Department of Education, Culture and Sport	Head	Gayane Sayadyan
CSI	Education Reforms	Team Leader	Mher Sahakyan
CSI	Education Reforms	Team Leader	Vigen Shirvanyan
NCET		Director	Artak Poghosyan
National Institute of Education		Director	Norayr Ghukasyan
State Inspectorate of Education		Head	Aram Karapetyan
Schools			
Yerevan			
#65 High School		Principal	Rafael Barseghyan
#91 School		Principal	Eleanora Ghalumyan
# 155 School		Principal	Lusine Danielyan

Vanadzor			
#5 High School		Principal	Lyova Baroyan
#20 Basic School		Principal	Karine Atoyan
Armavir			
#1 High School		Principal	Nune Dolinyan
Noravan Basic School		Principal	Hovhannes Stepanyan
#1 Metsamor High School		Principal	Nune Gevorgyan
International Organizations, NGOs, other			
World Bank		Education Consultant	Anush Shahverdyan
UNICEF		Education Specialist	Alvard Poghosyan
UNICEF		Program Officer	Tigran Tovmasyan
Children of Armenia Fund		Acting Executive Director	Inessa Grigoryan
Children of Armenia Fund		Programs Director	Esther Hakobyan
Open Society Institute		Deputy Director	David Amiryan
Union of School Centers		Representative	Artashes Torosyan (also Principal of Yerevan #198 High School)
Armenian State Pedagogical University	Faculty of Special Education	Associate Professor	Armenuhi Avagyan
Quantum College		Principal	Robert Vardanyan

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List of legal acts

Law on General Education, adopted by the National Assembly on July 10, 2009

Law on State Inspection of Education, adopted by the National Assembly on November 15, 2005

Law on Local Self-governance, adopted by the National Assembly on May 7, 2002

Law on Education, adopted by the National Assembly on April 14, 1999

Government Decree N 1391-N on educational institutions' teachers' certification, procedures of formation of regional and national committees of certification as well as bonus payment of qualified teachers through certification, position names and descriptions of pedagogical staff in general educational institutions, adopted on October 14, 2010

Government Decree N 1334-N on the confirmation of the criteria of internal and external assessment of activities in general educational institutions and their implementation procedure, adopted on September 3, 2010

Government Decree N-319 on the appointment procedure of the Principal of state educational institution, adopted on March 4, 2010

Government Decree N 19-N on the recognition of Ministry of Education and Science as the authorized body of high schools, adopted on January 14, 2010

Government Decree N1579 on the formation of public administration body "Staff of Ministry of Education and Science", confirmation of the Statute of the Ministry of Education and Science, the structure of the Ministry, provision of the property to the Ministry, adopted on September 12, 2002

Government Decree N 1392-N on the reorganization of state general educational institutions, confirmation of the model Charter of "State general educational institution of RA" state non-profit organization, recognition of the amendments in the Government Decision N-661, adopted in 28 October, 1998 and termination of the Government Decision N-150 adopted on July 25, 2002

Order of Minister N-205 on the confirmation of the procedure of annual budget planning and reporting on budget expenditures in general educational institutions, adopted on 30 March, 2015

Order of the Minister N-175 on the confirmation of the model statute of the Student Council of a "general educational institution" state non-profit organization, adopted on May 17, 2011

Order of the Minister N-1579 on the confirmation of the procedure of profit allocation of "General educational institution" state non-profit organization, adopted on December 2, 2010

Order of the Minister N-393 on the procedure for choosing the organization of training and the training procedure of people entitled to receive the right of management of a general education institution (certificate), adopted May 18, 2010

Order of the Minister N-395 on the confirmation of the procedure of organizing and processing the examination for the right of managing a general educational institution, adopted on May 18, 2010

Order of the Minister N-113 on the confirmation of the formation procedure of collegial management body in "general educational institution" state non-profit organization, adopted on March 18, 2010