

Abstract

The existing literature in the field of school principal training emphasizes the necessity of school principal training, before and after the appointment. There is great importance in proper training before entering the management position. Professional development and practical experience, together with appropriate accompaniment, are necessary at the beginning of the tenure in the position and later. There are differences between preappointment training programs and post-appointment professional development programs, each with its own unique training.

The purpose of the present study is to examine principals' perceptions of training and professional development processes before and during their work. As a by-product, among the perceptions, the principals' positions were examined, which compared between the theoretical content studied and the practice acquired within the training and the actual educational work. We also examined the similarities and differences between a preappointment school principal training program and post-appointment professional development programs.

The research findings were analyzed using a qualitative research method (Corbin & Strauss, 1998), in which I interviewed a number of interviewees using a semi-structured questionnaire. Twenty school principals in Israel participated in the study, in the middle school and high school education phase from regular education and special education.

The sample represents school principals from the Jewish, state, religious and ultraOrthodox sectors. The school principals who participated in the study serve in various districts and cities in Israel, in order to create a sample that allows for the presentation of different and varied perceptions among principals about the training processes before the position and professional development during the position.

Within the analysis of the research findings, two categories were found on: preappointment training and post-appointment professional development. In each of the super categories, three core categories were found: personal, critical and professional level, with each core category there are two sub-categories: pre-appointment training - personal level: the principals' positive / negative position on the training process, training as a source of security towards accepting the position. Critical level: common training and desirable training, theory versus practice. Professional level: professional contents in

school principal training and comparison between school principal training and other programs. Professional development after the appointment - personal level: the principals' position on professional development courses, the principals' position on the mentor. Critical level: common professional development versus desirable, theory versus practice. Professional level: professional contents in professional development and comparison between professional development and school principal training.

The findings of the study constitute feedback to the decision makers, regarding the training processes carried out in Israel in recent years within the Avnei Rosh Institute.

During the interviews, the principals got a closer look at what is desirable and what is common, as they are reflected in the training process they went through before their appointments to the position. The interviewees presented the points that they think need improvement, strengthening or change, within the training process. In addition, the findings of this study will serve the outlines of the educational policy, entrusted with the development and prosperity of the education system in Israel to improve as much as possible the common professional development process of principals after the appointment, in order to nurture school principals appropriate to the educational challenges in the new reality, in the 21st century era.