

Professional Standard of a School Principal: Russian and International Experience

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Abstract: The article presents an analysis of the Russian and international practice of implementing personnel standards for management activities of the head of a general education organization, the architectonics of the professional standard of various educational systems. The problem of developing the principles of structured professional standards and the system of integration of personnel standards in the system of professional development of the school principal has been reviewed. Categories of requirements for the post of school principal, including the number and content of professional competencies are highlighted.

1. Introduction

Management of a general education organization is one of the most complicated types of professional activity. Unlike the management of a commercial organization, as an institutionally united, economically active team, school management is the management of a different age community with different goals and interests, with a large number of stakeholders. In addition, the professional activity of the director of the XXI century has undergone significant changes and requires new skills - the speed of knowledge obsolescence exceeds the update rate. Occupational standards are one of the elements of the workforce quality assurance system. To achieve the goals of the national project "Education" (ensuring global competitiveness and the entry of Russian general education into the top ten world systems and, in accordance with Deming's postulates, creating a system focused on continuous quality improvement), it is necessary to put the management of educational systems at the appropriate level, introduce a constantly updated system of standard requirements for the professional competence of directors.

2. Materials and Methods

Research methods include theoretical analysis and synthesis of open and specialized data in the information and regulatory databases of relevant government agencies, analysis of professional standards and scientific and methodological literature.

3. Results

In Russia, the status and requirements for the school principal are described in article 51 "Legal status of the head of an educational organization" of Federal Law No. 273-FZ "On Education in the Russian Federation" and the Unified Qualification Reference Book of Managers, Specialists and Employees, Section "Qualification Characteristics of Educational Positions". It contains requirements for the qualifications of managers of pre-school, educational, and vocational educational organizations, as well as the head of the organization of additional education [1]. It is not possible to constantly update the Unified Qualification Reference Book. Its provisions will constantly lag behind the needs of a developing educational society. In accordance with domestic and international practice, the professional standard is the most effective, updated management tool for the development of personnel standards, as it is based on a functional analysis of work

activities and establishes the requirements for the set of competencies necessary for the performance of labor functions. In Russia, professional standards are mainly “mandatory” and approved by the state and developed according to officially approved procedures. Although there are standards that are recommendatory in nature, they are developed within the industry and approved by industry associations of employers.

The development of professional standards for heads of educational organizations in Russia has been going on for quite a long time, but for various reasons they have not been implemented. The structure of the developed projects is a set of generalized labor functions, such as: management of educational activities; management of the development of the educational organization; resource management in the educational organization; representation of an educational organization in relations with state authorities, local governments, public and other organizations; management of research, expert-analytical, experimental design, innovation and educational activities of the educational organization [2]. The last labor function is not relevant for heads of educational institutions.

In accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 23 of the Federal Law dated December 29, 2012 No. 273-FZ “On Education in the Russian Federation”, educational organizations are divided into types in accordance with educational programs, the implementation of which is the main goal of their activities. And an educational organization belongs to the system of general education if it carries out educational activities on educational programs of primary general, basic general and / or secondary general education as the main goal of its activity, i.e. being only school. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Article 10, pre-school education is also included in the general education system since 2012. And the trend (which will continue to be mainstream) is the functioning of an integrated model of a general educational organization with the inclusion of kindergartens and sports infrastructure facilities as units, integrated educational programs of secondary vocational education, adapted programs, compensating programs, additional developmental and training programs, etc. The professional standard of the head of a general education organization should be a certain minimum of requirements for a candidate with additional competencies, which will be registered by a specific founder for managing complex multi-level organizations.

If we structure the qualification requirements for the school principal in different countries, then we can present a different set of requirements for a applicant considering the position of director: the established teaching experience; pedagogical experience, supplemented by advanced training in organization management; the above requirements and training in a specialized center, with a certificate giving the opportunity to occupy the position of director of a school principal (Fig. 1).

In accordance with the presented set of requirements, two types of professional standards of directors can be distinguished: (a) internal, acting as a guideline in the professional development system of directors, and (b) external standards, developed and set by authorities reflecting the needs of the state and the education system for effective school management. Depending on this, professional standards are either advisory or mandatory [3].



Fig.1. A set of requirements for candidates for the position of school principal in different countries.

Standards serve as a guideline for the development of advanced training or retraining courses that teachers must pass in order to become school principals. The development of professional standards is based on the actual functionality of the head, established ideas about effective leadership at the regional, local and school levels, as well as on the experience of other educational systems.

When considering the problems of developing and applying professional standards in different educational systems, the UK experience is of particular interest. The UK is the world leader in standardization in many areas. In England, the government agency (National College of School Leaders, NCSL) develops professional standards. It provides training for education leaders and issued certificates. Standards are aligned with national qualifications frameworks and include five stages of managerial career, from a beginner to the counseling leadership [4].

Professional standards for directors have 6 key areas: management of the organization, training and teaching, projects for the future, self-development and interaction with colleagues, accountability, and strengthening the community. Each component includes a set of skills, performance assessment, goal setting, and responsibility for self-development. All components are interrelated and form the basic requirements for the school leader.

In Australia, standards for teachers and leaders have been developed for over 15 years with the participation of the professional community. The Australian Center for Principals (APC), the Australian Council of Educational Leadership (ACEL), the Australian Institute for Education and School Leadership (AITSL) were among the organizations involved in the development of standards [5].

The current standards are an integrated model that defines three basic requirements for leadership: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills. These requirements are developed for five key professional skills: learning management, self-development and development of others, management of improvements, innovations and changes, school management, cooperation with society. In Australia, a certificate of compliance with the profession of a school principal is needed, it is issued by centers for the preparation of school leaders.

In the USA, three types of professional standards exist: a code of professional ethics containing ethical guidelines; a code of qualification standards containing instructions on the experience and level of education required for work; a code of professional standards containing specific instructions for performing a job. The professional standard is fundamental for all levels of leadership in the field of education – heads of educational organizations, their deputies, heads of education management at the state level. Requirements for the recruitment and content of professional competencies are presented in all areas of activity of the director: mission and core values; ethics and professional standards; ensuring equal rights to education (access to education) and cultural competence; educational planning, training, and evaluation of educational results; building an educational community that provides comprehensive support for the development of students; developing the professional potential of the organization's employees; development of the professional community of the organization's employees; effective involvement of the parent community and other representatives of the local educational community; management activities; organization development [6].

In New Zealand, requirements for heads of educational organizations are presented as separate "standards". The set of such "standards" is an aggregate leadership model, which includes a set of professional and personal qualities, knowledge and skills required to ensure effective leadership of an educational organization: culture; value system; pedagogy: knowledge in the field of education and training; consistency: how to ensure the quality of work; interaction and partnership: creating effective relationships to ensure the sustainability of the educational process [7]. Directors must have four qualities that will allow them to effectively manage the organization:

1. Govern according to your own moral values;
2. Have faith in your own strength;
3. Have the ability to self-development;
4. Be able not only to show leadership skills, but also to support their colleagues.

In Japan, the development of a professional standard has been conducted since 2004, the “Special Committee for the Development of an Educational Program for School Principals” was established, with the purpose to form approximate educational programs for the training of school leaders. Since 2006, “Professional Standards for School Principals” have been in place and constantly updated [8; 9]. In the description of the seven standard points (director's areas of activity), the interpretation of labor functions and competencies was added. The basic principle of the director's standard is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of education at the level of each student, to take the initiative in organizing teaching and learning in order to accomplish the objectives set. Among the main activities of the director are the following: the creation and implementation of the general concept of the school; creating conditions for improving the quality of education; creation of conditions for the professional development of teachers. Among the main activities of the director are the following: effective use of various resources and risk management; effective interaction with representatives of the educational community; ethical behavior and leadership; understanding the socio-cultural context of the school.

Thus, in some countries, at the state level, only general guidelines exist for directors of educational organizations, and they are responsible for developing standards at the local level, or the state defines the general framework of standards that should be detailed at the local level. In other countries, single qualification requirements are valid throughout the country.

4. Discussion

For the effective implementation of state policy and the preservation of a single educational space in Russia, the development and application of a single professional standard of the head of a general education organization is assumed. This approach will meet the need to ensure the standard minimum requirements within the national education system. The principles for structuring the draft standard are different in countries and are the product of the professional and cultural environment of each educational system. In order to identify the optimal structure and actual functionality of a school manager when designing a standard, conducting a large-scale sociological research among existing heads of general education organizations of various types is necessary.

The professional standard of the head of a general education organization should be some minimum requirements for the candidate, with additional competencies that will be required to manage an integrated organization. Each of the generalized functions of the standard will determine the content of the manager's professional development, specifying areas of vocational training and a set of competencies that can be formed in the process of formal, non-formal or informal education [10].

5. Conclusion

Each national professional standard reflects certain specifics in the development of the educational system at the present stage and the set state objectives. In all countries, the main idea of applying professional standards is to ensure uniform recognized requirements for professional activity, which would allow maintaining its quality, as well as developing educational programs for training, retraining and advanced training in this area. One can identify a general trend – the transformation of professional standards into a tool that guarantees the necessary level of quality results of the functioning of educational systems. This demonstrates high expectations regarding the achievement of certain results by educational organizations and their transfer to the directors of a greater amount of authority in the management of organizations. Different elements of national systems of professional development can be adapted to the existing Russian regulatory and legal field and be used in the development of the professional standard “Head of a General Education Organization”. The ultimate goal of this professional standard is the appointment of effective managers who create conditions in which employees of the organization concentrate on the educational process as much as possible, and students achieve high results while meeting their social needs.

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