

Are Principals of Russian Schools Ready for Transformational Leadership?

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Abstract. Based on results of TALIS-2013, of which Russia was a participant for the first time, we analyze the demographic characteristics, years of work experience and workload of school principals, their competencies and opportunities for professional development, as well as their working conditions, responsibilities and priorities. We also discuss how principals participate in teacher performance assessments and delegate their school management powers, which resources they need, and how they assess the performance of their schools. Research was conducted in 14 regions of

Russia and revealed different levels of leadership potential in educational institutions. The recent changes to the education system (the new Federal Law “On Education” and the new Federal State Educational Standards) require principals to work in a transformational leadership style, but only few of the respondents appear to succeed in this. Principals prefer “operating manually” and interacting with individual teachers, not staff groups. Authoritarianism and unwillingness to delegate power are the major handicaps to the transformational leadership of schools principals. There has been no established system for school principal training in Russia so far. Only a few of the regions are reported to have trained over 20 percent of candidates prior to employment; meanwhile, there are some regions with no principal training at all. It is imperative that school principal training programs teach teambuilding, delegation of power and distributed leadership skills.

Keywords: school principals, transformational leadership, administrative tasks, school management, induction, self-assessment, instructional leadership, governing board, distributed leadership.

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TALIS in Russia

In this paper we use TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) data to analyze the characteristics of Russian school principals, paying specific attention to the differences in their qualities and competencies across different regions covered by the survey.

TALIS is conducted by the OECD every five years to describe, study and compare information on school teachers and principals in different countries. The first round of TALIS was held in 2008. However, Russia primarily participated unofficially and only became a full-fledged TALIS participant in 2013. The main phase of the project in Russia took place in 2014.

TALIS-2013 provides extensive information on such key issues as:

- Distribution of the teaching force;
- School management and administration;
- Training and professional development of teachers;
- Teacher performance appraisal;
- Teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices;
- Teachers' job satisfaction and confidence in their professional skills;
- Assessment of the overall school environment and student body.

TALIS involves surveys of school teachers and principals. The 2014 online questionnaires were translated into Russian and came with the relevant glossaries.

The TALIS principal questionnaire consisted of 39 questions covering the following areas:

- Sociodemographic information (gender, age, level and forms of education, years of working experience);
- School background information (location, number of students and staff);
- School leadership (activities of the school management team and the governing board, distribution of duties and responsibilities);
- Opportunities for professional development;
- Formal teacher appraisal;
- School climate;
- Teacher induction and mentoring;
- Job satisfaction.

Sampling and Data Analysis Organization

In order to provide comparability of survey results from different countries, a representative sample of regions was surveyed in Russia. Fourteen regions were selected from the list of federal subjects of the Russian Federation. The sample was designed to include schools from each federal district. Each region supplied a number of schools reflecting the share of regional schools in the total number of schools in Russia, with due regard to the size of the teaching force. The resulting sample included the following subjects of the Russian Federation:

- 1) Moscow (30 schools);
- 2) Moscow Oblast (28 schools);

- 3) Republic of Tatarstan (20 schools);
- 4) Saint Petersburg (18 schools);
- 5) Altai Krai (14 schools);
- 6) Chelyabinsk Oblast (15 schools);
- 7) Volgograd Oblast (14 schools);
- 8) Nizhny Novgorod Oblast (20 schools);
- 9) Tambov Oblast (8 schools);
- 10) Belgorod Oblast (10 schools);
- 11) Ryazan Oblast (8 schools);
- 12) Komi Republic (5 schools);
- 13) Republic of Ingushetia (4 schools);
- 14) Pskov Oblast (4 schools).

All in all, the TALIS questionnaire was completed by 198 principals.

The questionnaire answers were analyzed using IDB Analyzer software¹. We provide descriptive statistics of the principals' answers (in percentages and arithmetic means for items measured on an interval scale). While analyzing the data, we used weighting factors that allowed us to extend the sample results to the statistical population and to the country as a whole.

Transformational Leadership

Many researchers have focused on the problems of leadership in education over the last few decades. In this article, we rely upon the transformational leadership theory, which defines leadership as the ability to promote changes in both personal beliefs and social systems. One of the key distinctive features of this leadership style is the ambition of the leader to not only have followers but also to make independent leaders out of them who would be able to pick up the work and encourage new changes [Bass, 1998]. According to Bernard M. Bass and Ruth Bass, there are several fundamental competencies of a transformational leader:

- Ability to pay close attention to the needs of one's followers, providing empathy and support to them. The leader should maintain communication with their team, motivate their followers and approve the achievements of each member of the team;
- Ability to challenge the established ideas, run risks and promote the ideas of one's followers. The leader appreciates independent thinkers and sees opportunities for development in unforeseen situations;
- Ability to make one's beliefs appealing to followers. The leader should have optimistic outlooks and try to achieve their goals without compromising quality;

¹ <http://www.iea.nl/data.html>

- Ability to be a role model and to make oneself respected by others [Bass, Bass 2008].

Michael Fullan, one of the greatest supporters of transformational leadership in education, emphasizes that a successful leader learns constantly to enhance the performance of their organization and obtains followers through such enhancement [Fullan, 2011]. The major obstacles on the way to transformational leadership include:

- Punitive accountability, where the leader doesn't perceive the organization's goals as their own but rather as imposed from above;
- Working with individuals, not groups of people, which inhibits changes in the organizational culture and formation of leaders in certain growth areas;
- Imposed teaching technology or policy decisions without thorough understanding of them; such technology and decisions are often rejected [Ibid.].

To provide continuity in improving school performance, the leader should be constantly engaged in the professional development of their colleagues, head teachers in the first place.

Andy Hargreaves, another important advocate of the transformational leadership approach, argued that one of the main functions of the school principal as a leader is to help subordinate employees, i. e. the school staff, to manage uncertainty. Referring to the Finnish case, he says that school performance improvement is provided by distributed leadership, where the whole school staff acts as an expert community [Hargreaves, Shirley, 2009].

In this paper, we are going to see to what extent Russian school principals conform to the abovementioned criteria of transformational leaders and how this conformance differs across regions.

Demographic Characteristics, Years of Work Experience and Workload of School Principals

Women hold three of four school principal positions in nearly all of the regions of Russia (Fig. 1). As we mentioned in our earlier publications [Lenskaya, Brun, 2015], the high proportion of female principals shows that women have more social mobility opportunities in Russia than in any other TALIS participant country, where the average proportions of female teachers and female principals are 68% and 49% respectively. There are some regions with female school principals only: Belgorod Oblast and Pskov Oblast. However, there are also regions where male principals prevail, even though the proportion of men in the teaching workforce is low, such as the Komi Republic and Tambov Oblast where the percentage of female principals is lower than the mean TALIS value.

The oldest principals were found in schools in Ingushetia, Ryazan Oblast, Volgograd Oblast and Moscow, while the average age of the

Figure 1. **Proportions of female school principals across regions**

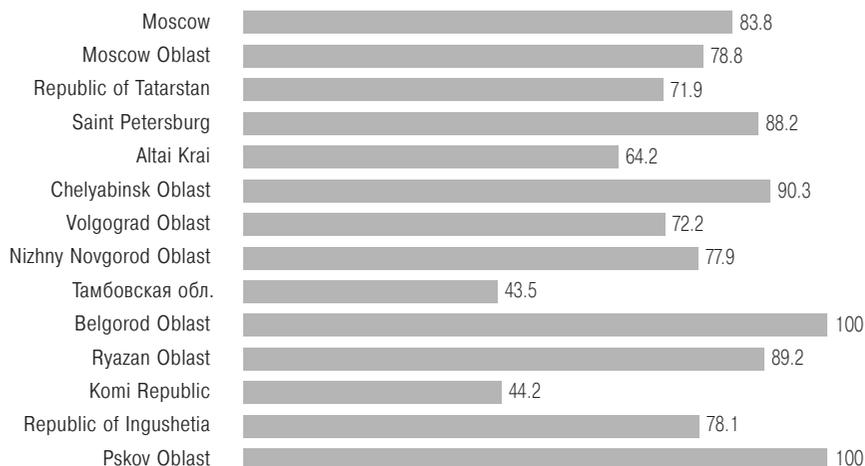
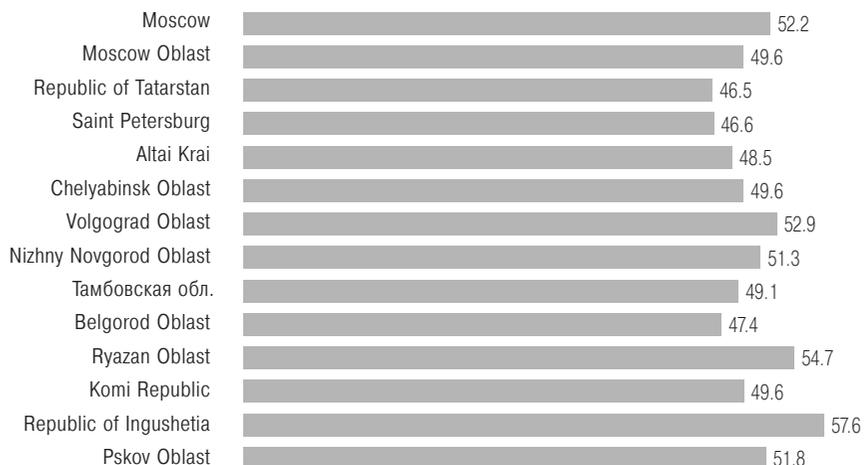
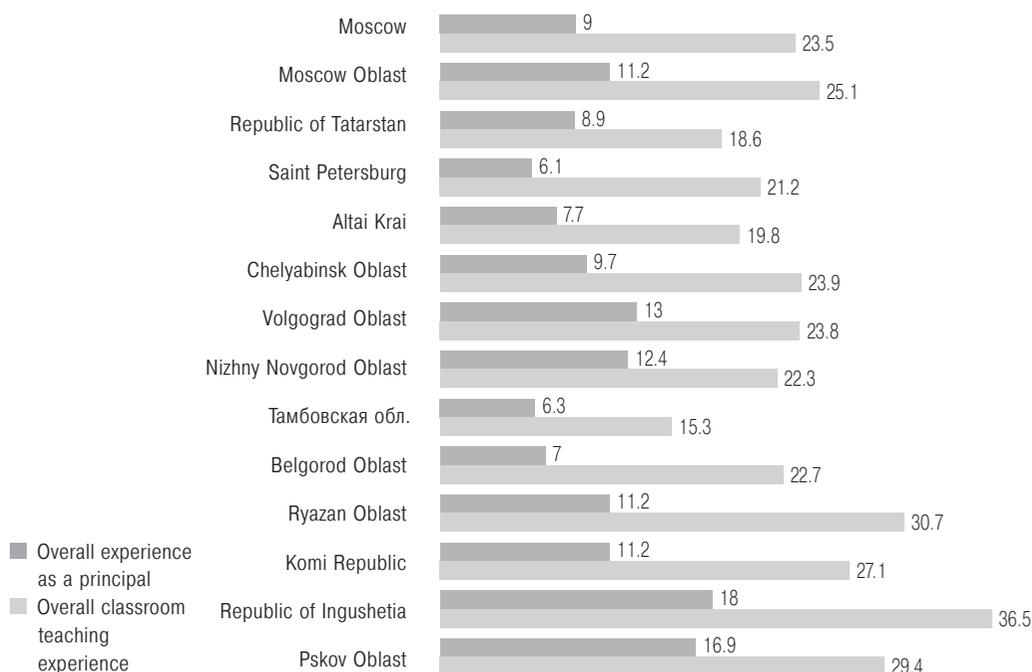


Figure 2. **Average age of school principals across regions**



school principals in Tatarstan, St. Petersburg and Belgorod Oblast is almost 5 (10 as compared to Ingushetia) years lower (Fig. 2). At the time of the survey, the school restructuring process was under way in Moscow, but it did not bring younger people into principal positions.

The principals in Ingushetia, Pskov Oblast and Volgograd have worked in their positions longer than their colleagues in other regions (Fig. 3). Meanwhile, the overall work experience (school administration plus previous classroom experience) sometimes exceeds 32 years for the principals in Moscow, Moscow Oblast, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Pskov Oblast, the Komi Republic, and Ingushetia. It is clear that school

Figure 3. **Principals' years of working experience**


principals have not become considerably younger. Contrastingly, the respondents from Tambov Oblast report that their schools give principal positions to people whose overall teaching and school administration experience does not exceed 16 years.

Moscow schools show the highest percentage of principals who do not combine administration with teaching: 55%, as compared to roughly 20% in most other regions covered by the survey. Naturally, the restructuring is reflected here: not only principals of educational parks but also administrators of in-park structures just do not have enough time for teaching due to the high load of administrative tasks associated with the transition to the new status. The Moscow case approaches the statistical mean across the countries participating in the TALIS survey. In the meantime, principal research in the UK and Canada has revealed that principals who also teach are the most successful school leaders. Academic performance in their schools on average is higher than in schools of their administrating-only counterparts.

Can we expect that the principals in the regions with considerably refreshed staff will be more prepared to become transformational leaders? We will try to answer this question in the chapters that follow.

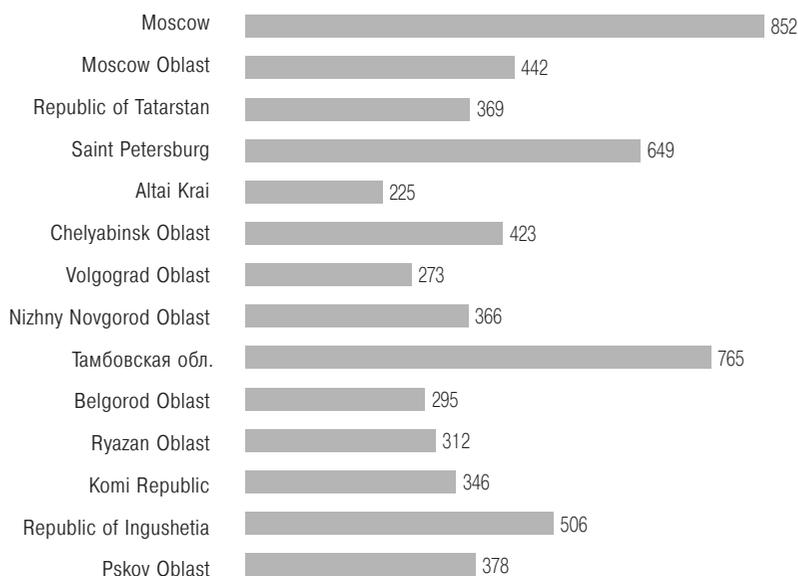
Table 1. **Hindrances to professional development** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

	I do not have the pre-requisites (e. g. qualifications, experience, seniority)	Professional development is too expensive/unaffordable	There is a lack of employer support	Professional development conflicts with my work schedule	I do not have time because of family responsibilities	There is no relevant professional development offered	There are no incentives for participating in such activities
Moscow	4.0		11.0	4.3	11.8	1.1	
Moscow Oblast	8.8	27.1	25.2	49.5	5.6	22.8	10.9
Republic of Tatarstan	2.4	29.7	26.9	48.3	33.6	17.1	18.2
St. Petersburg			4.8	21.5	16.2		2.5
Altai Krai	11.1	30.0	27.0	12.1	15.7	14.3	15.9
Chelyabinsk Oblast	3.3	27.4	14.9	15.9	6.0	3.3	
Volgograd Oblast	12.6	12.6	18.5	19.7	25.2	3.5	30.8
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast			10.2	29.2	20.4	11.8	32.2
Tambov Oblast		20.4		19.1			23.9
Belgorod Oblast		18.1		28.4	28.4	5.2	
Ryazan Oblast		27.9		8.9		5.8	36.8
Komi Republic			14.8	93.5		14.8	28.6
Republic of Ingushetia		74.4	32.7	85.2		10.8	21.9
Pskov Oblast							

School Principal Training and Professional Development Opportunities

Most Russian regions show a very low proportion of principals who pass school administration classes before taking up their positions. Only Moscow, St. Petersburg and Ryazan Oblast demonstrate a proportion of 20%, which is zero in such regions as Altai Krai, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Tambov Oblast. Over 80% of the principals in Volgograd Oblast and Ingushetia learned school management when they were already in office. There is no region with a percentage of pre-trained principals approaching that of countries like Singapore, where two-thirds of school principals complete specifically designed training prior to getting into office.

Opportunities for professional development differ strikingly across the regions (Table 1). Seventy-five percent of the principals in Ingushetian schools complain about the cost of advanced training being too high, while the proportion of principals seeing the high price as the major hindrance for professional development does not exceed 30% in the other regions, remaining at zero in Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod Oblast. Altai Krai, Moscow Oblast, Tatarstan and Ingushetia show the highest proportion of school principals unhappy with the support for their efforts from above. Principals in Moscow and Tatarstan are especially cumbered by the busy work schedule, which is also a prob-

Figure 4. **Mean number of students per school**

lem for nearly all principals in Ingushetia and Komi. Family circumstances distract school principals from professional development in the Republic of Tatarstan and Ryazan Oblast, whereas in some of the regions this is not considered at all to be an inhibiting factor. Principals in Moscow Oblast wish the range of courses offered were broader. Between 10% and 26% of principals in every region except St. Petersburg are dissatisfied with not being offered incentives for professional development. No school principal in Pskov Oblast agreed that any of the abovementioned factors was really a hindrance to their professional development.

Therefore, school principals in the small republics of Komi and Ingushetia have the least amount of opportunities for professional development. Enhancing one's professional skills in Tatarstan is also quite challenging, despite all the efforts undertaken by the government. The rest of the surveyed regions demonstrate indicators close to the statistical means across the TALIS participating countries, while the situation in Moscow is even much better.

Working Conditions of School Principals

Russian schools are mostly small, the average number of students rarely exceeding 650 even in St. Petersburg. The largest schools are located in Moscow and Tambov Oblast with their abundance of rural schools; the number of students in these two regions is approximately twice as high as in Altai Krai, Belgorod Oblast or Volgograd Oblast (Fig. 4).

Principals' answers to the question "To what extent do the following limit your effectiveness as a principal in this school?" give us a

Table 2. Limitations to the effectiveness of school principals (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

	Extent	Moscow	Moscow Oblast	Republic of Tatarstan	St. Petersburg	Altai Krai	Chelyabinsk Oblast	Volgograd Oblast	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Tambov Oblast	Belgorod Oblast	Ryazan Oblast	Komi Republic	Republic of Ingushetia	Pskov Oblast
Inadequate school budget and resources	Not at all	38.6	10.8		14.7	10			2.9	22.7	18.1	20.2	6.5		
	To some extent	56.9	58.5	71.6	67	36.8	24.2	55	59.6	63.5	45.8	24.6	0	67.3	86.3
	A lot	4.5	30.6	28.4	18.2	53.2	75.8	45	37.5	13.8	36.1	55.2	93.5	32.7	13.7
Teachers' absences	Not at all	66.9	36.5	32	27.8	44.3	30.2	36.3	24.9	36.5	23.7	51.3	6.5	47.5	19.5
	To some extent	28.2	47.7	60	62.8	45.7	64.3	57.7	55.6	63.5	40.2	42.9	93.5	52.5	80.5
	A lot	4.9	15.8	8	9.4	10	5.5	5.9	19.5		36.1	5.8			
Lack of parent or guardian involvement and support	Not at all	38.2	11.8	10.5	32.9	30	15.4	17.2	3.3	20.6	5	20.2	6.5	47.5	
	To some extent	48.7	86.3	84.8	67.1	44.3	63.2	67.2	96.7	79.4	76.9	79.8	55.9	52.5	100
	A lot	13.1	1.9	4.8		25.7	21.4	15.6			18.1		37.6		
Teachers' career-based wage system	Not at all	51	27.5	33.2	32.5	29	33.3	21	27.8	42.5	36.6	46.2	6.5		40.7
	To some extent	45.7	65.7	63.7	54	61	66.7	66.4	57.9	45.1	63.4	53.8	78.7	100	45.6
	A lot	3.3	6.8	3.1	13.5	10		12.6	14.2	12.4			14.8		13.7
Lack of opportunities and support for my own professional development	Not at all	58.5	44.4	43.5	58.6	34.2	44.7	40.7	22.5	87.6	13.4	70.8	62.4	14.8	54.4
	To some extent	41.5	52.1	56.5	41.4	61.6	55.3	59.4	77.5	12.4	68.6	29.2	37.7	85.2	45.6
	A lot		3.6			4.3					18.1				
Lack of opportunities and support for teachers' professional development	Not at all	57.2	42.8	54.3	45.4	38.9	28.4	28.1	40.7	100	23.7	54.3	62.4		54.4
	To some extent	33.7	55.8	45.6	42.9	61.1	54.5	69	56.8	0	58.3	45.8	37.6	89.2	45.6
	A lot	9.1	1.5		11.7		17.1	2.9	2.4		18.1			10.8	
High workload and level of responsibilities in my job	Not at all	37.9	23.2	3.5	10.6	34.7	15.6	8.4	2.9	24.3		26	6.5	14.8	
	To some extent	58.8	45	72.2	81.2	27.5	68.3	88.7	73.2	75.7	35.5	74	78.7	85.2	54.4
	A lot	3.3	31.8	24.3	8.1	37.8	16.1	2.9	23.8		64.5		14.8		45.6
Lack of shared leadership with other school staff members	Not at all	53.3	52.6	54.7	44.6	38.9	51.9	68.3	25.7	100	49.5	32.2	62.4	14.8	54.4
	To some extent	43.3	47.4	45.3	55.3	61.2	48.1	19.1	64.2	0	32.4	60.2	37.7	85.2	45.6
	A lot	3.4						12.6	10.2		18.1	7.6			

good idea of the factors that complicate the work of schools, particularly in a certain regions (Table 2). Ninety-three percent of the school principals in Komi complain about inadequate school budgets and resources. Their answers depict the situation in the republic as disastrous. More than half of the principals in Altai and Ryazan Oblast also suffer from a dire shortage of resources. Meanwhile, Moscow schools, as well as those in Tambov Oblast and Pskov Oblast, are quite well-off in this aspect with only 4.5% of their principals claiming similarly lacking resources... According to the respondents, the restructuring of the school network helps to optimize the distribution of resources.

The principals in Belgorod Oblast suffer more than others from the absence or lack of teachers: 36% of the respondents claim that staffing shortfalls are a serious problem for them. It is also a major issue for Novgorod Oblast (19.5%). However, the lack of teachers is barely identifiable in the other regions. Only 5–10% of the principals have “a lot” of concern about it in most regions, yet the answer “to some extent” was given by over 50% of the principals in Chelyabinsk Oblast and Ingushetia as well as by 40% in Tatarstan. The Komi Republic suffers almost no staff shortage despite its budget deficit, and neither does Pskov Oblast nor, even more so, Moscow, where 67% of the school principals are satisfied with the staffing support.

The lack of parent or guardian involvement and support is especially unsettling for the school leaders in the Komi Republic. On the whole, nearly half of all their principals complain about the lack of support, with the exception of Pskov Oblast, which is virtually unfamiliar with the problem. Generally, this means that the principals have not yet learned to interact with parents or guardians in a way to encourage their support for the school. The reasons for a situation like this become clear, for instance, when we analyze how parents participate in the governing boards: although most principals believe that they provide enough parent engagement in school management, parents actually take no part in any decision making.

The career-based wage system is quite a new experience for Russian teachers, so it is no wonder that it is a challenge for over half of the principals. The situation is best in Moscow, where only about one-third of principals expressed their concern over the use of the system, and worst in Belgorod Oblast and Pskov Oblast, where the principals obviously need some specific training.

The lack of opportunities for personal professional development is a major concern for the principals in Belgorod Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Altai Krai, the situation being more favorable in the rest of the regions. However, there has been no pre-employment training for school principals not only in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast but also in Pskov Oblast and Tambov Oblast. This is why, perhaps, we should not draw any conclusions on the available resources for professional development from the principals' assessments.

The lack of opportunities for teachers' professional development is felt more by the principals than the problem of their own enhancement. The survey shows that there are very few opportunities for professional teacher development in Belgorod Oblast, Altai and Ingushetia; meanwhile, these are the regions where schools struggle to attract highly qualified teachers. It appears that a complex of staffing measures should be elaborated for those regions.

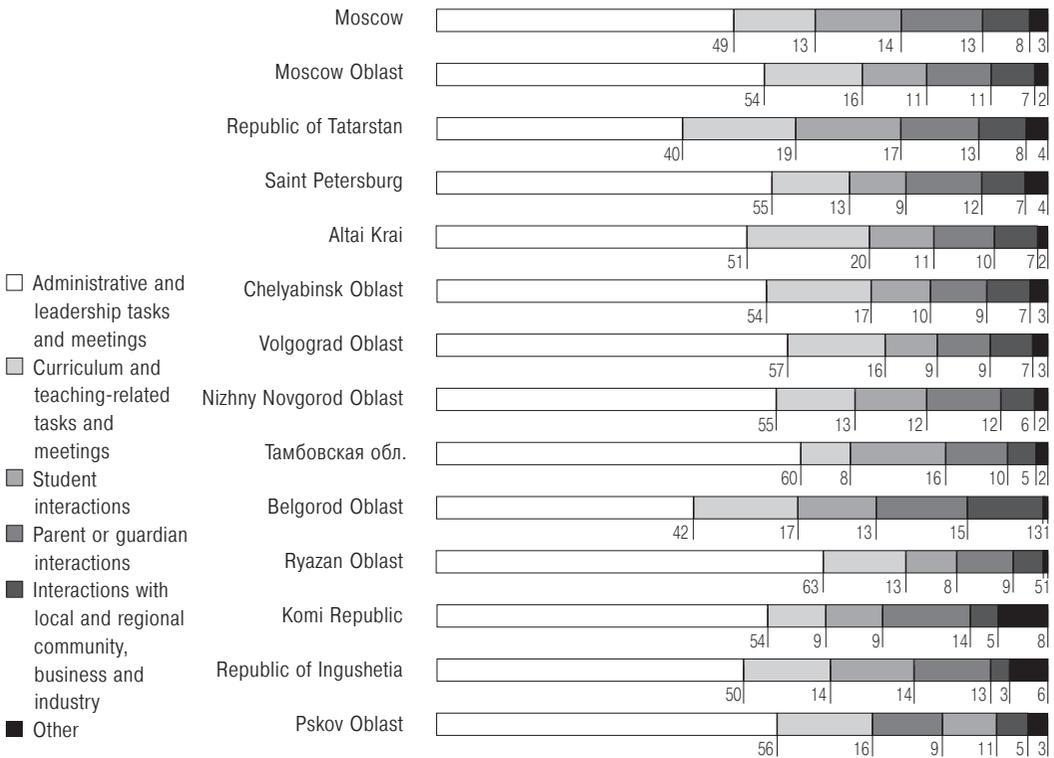
The school principals seem to be most concerned about the workload and the level of responsibilities in their job: so too are over 50% of the respondents in the majority of the regions and over 75% in Tatarstan, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, and the Komi Republic. An excessive workload is felt least by the principals of Moscow and Tambov Oblast schools, while it would seem that the restructuring should have vested principals with much more responsibilities, putting them in charge of whole educational parks. It may be just that a transformational attitude helps to accept the associated workload as explicit and natural.

The lack of shared leadership with other school staff members is a minor concern for most respondents. It is no surprise, as management teams and governing boards are available in almost every school. However, half of the principals in Belgorod Oblast suffer from undistributed powers despite reporting that their schools have both governing boards and management teams. Obviously, the principals are unable to or do not want to delegate their duties, and become overloaded as a result. Many of the principals in Pskov Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Altai Krai would perform much better if they learned some distributed leadership techniques, which are little taught in Russia, unfortunately. Failure to delegate powers is a great hindrance for transformational leadership and the nurturing of followers.

Responsibilities and Priorities of a School Principal

Distribution of principals' working time does not differ significantly across the regions, yet there are some differences (Fig. 5). Russian principals on average spend more than half of their time (56%) on administrative and leadership tasks, including meetings, reports, and responding to requests. This percentage is higher than the TALIS statistical mean, which is 41% only. However, there are regions approaching the indicators shown by the majority of the European countries: for example, administrative tasks account for about 40% of a principal's working time in Belgorod Oblast and the Republic of Tatarstan. The highest administrative load was found in Tambov Oblast (60%), probably due to the recent restructuring, and in Ryazan Oblast (63%). In Russian schools, principals spend much less time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks and meetings than their colleagues in most leading countries, even though the majority of Russian principals continue teaching and thus include their teaching hours in the teaching workload. Tatarstan and Altai principals spend more time on teach-

Figure 5. **Distribution of principal's time, %**



ing-related tasks than their counterparts from the other regions; however, nearly the same amount of time is spent on student interaction in Tatarstan, while the percentage in Altai Krai is almost twice as low. As for the “Interactions with local and regional community, business and industry” item, Belgorod Oblast stands out here, performing almost twice as well as the other regions, which is a clear indicator of good partnership relations between educational institutions and businesses.

The survey reveals that many principals spend their working time ineffectively by assuming irrelevant functions (Table 3). For instance, all Ingushetian principals reported to have collaborated with teachers “very often” to solve classroom discipline problems. The principals of Komi and Belgorod Oblast admitted doing it “often”, while no St. Petersburg school leaders selected the “very often” answer. At the same time, the principals of Ingushetian schools assess the school environment as quite favorable: there is no violence among students, virtually no vandalism and theft, and even cheating is a concern for only 21% of the principals. Then a natural question is raised: is this favorable situation the fruit of principals struggling tirelessly to maintain discipline in the classroom, or do the principals see flawless discipline as a key outcome of their work?

Table 3. **Activities of school principals (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)**

		I collaborated with teachers to solve classroom discipline problems	I observed instruction in the classroom	I took actions to support co-operation among teachers to develop new teaching practices	I provided parents or guardians with information on the school and student performance	I checked for mistakes and errors in school administrative procedures and reports.	I collaborated with principals from other schools
Moscow	Never or rarely	20		3.2	4.1	6.5	
	Very often		2.7	5.2	13.8	18.3	31.1
Moscow Oblast	Never or rarely	18.2		6.2	1.8	6	
	Very often	1.1	16.1	13.6	11.1	21.1	28.8
Republic of Tatarstan	Never or rarely	11.3		11.3		8.8	
	Very often	6.4	10.9	5.1	23.5	15.6	40.9
Saint Petersburg	Never or rarely	40.1		6			
	Very often			7.7	31	10.5	17.5
Altai Krai	Never or rarely	10		14.3			
	Very often				15.7	12.1	32.1
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Never or rarely	9		3.3		3.3	
	Very often			5.9	19.7	4.7	15.9
Volgograd Oblast	Never or rarely	12.6				3.5	
	Very often		12.6	5.9	25.2	15.6	50.5
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Never or rarely	5.2		8.7	8.2	25.7	
	Very often	10.2	10.2		14.7	7.4	35.3
Tambov Oblast	Never or rarely	11.3				7.9	
	Very often				9.1	9.1	33.4
Belgorod Oblast	Never or rarely						
	Very often					23.2	40.2
Ryazan Oblast	Never or rarely	19.8			8.9	5.8	
	Very often				10.8	7.6	46.6
Komi Republic	Never or rarely	42					
	Very often				42		
Republic of Ingushetia	Never or rarely				10.8		
	Very often		36.7		21.9	21.9	36.7
Pskov Oblast	Never or rarely	65.1			21.1	13.7	
	Very often		100	21.1			21.1

All of the principals in Pskov Oblast report having observed instruction in the classroom very often. "Often" was selected by most principals in Tatarstan, Altai and Komi, by almost all of the principals in Belgorod Oblast, and by 65% of Moscow school leaders. Yet, the same principals claim that the percentage of time they spend on teaching, classroom observations and mentoring teachers does not exceed 20%. Another natural question is: where do they find time to attend lessons so often? The viability of assuming this function by principals is highly disputable in a situation where they have a management team, which usually consists of head teachers. Ninety-six percent of the school principals confirmed that they had such management teams. According to Fullan, face-to-face interaction with teachers is a false driver of reforms which should give way to working with teams or groups of teachers.

However, taking action to support co-operation among teachers is an immediate task of a transformational principal leader. Between 21% and 74%, depending on the region, reported having often engaged in such actions, the highest proportions shown in Altai and Ryazan Oblast.

Over 50% of the principals have provided parents or guardians with information on student performance on a regular basis. Yet, it is disturbing that a certain proportion of principals (up to 21%) in some regions have not bothered to keep parents informed about the school at all.

Quite a lot of principals find time to check for mistakes and errors in school reports. In most regions, between a third and a half of the respondents claim to engage in this activity. Eighty-five percent of the principals in the Komi Republic, for instance, consider report checking their indispensable duty. This way, reporting often becomes more important to principals than teaching. Reports are assessed with praise or punishment, so principals prefer reserving this task for themselves. Fullan refers to such close attention to bureaucratic procedures as "punitive accountability" and believes it rather has a negative impact on reforms.

No one had difficulty with the item on collaborating with principals from other schools: the overwhelming majority of the respondents interact with their counterparts, either often or very often. However, almost one-third of the principals in St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod Oblast do it much less frequently than anywhere else, although the collaboration between school leaders in large cities must be mutually effective, allowing them to analyze the diverse experiences under similar conditions.

Participation of Principals in Teacher Formal Appraisal

Methods and forms of formal teacher appraisal greatly affect teachers' demands concerning their professional development. By analyzing this aspect of a school principal's work, we can see how appraisal triggers professional development and to which extent it includes assessment for learning, i. e. assessment for the purpose of boosting professional growth.

Over 50% of Russian teachers report that feedback is most often provided to them by the principal or the head teacher. On the one hand, this means that Russian principals pay attention to instructional leadership; on the other hand, the limited role of assigned mentors is hard to believe. Russia is falling behind the average TALIS values in terms of feedback provided by mentors. Meanwhile, the number of mentors per teacher in Russia is higher than the average number across the TALIS-covered countries, exceeding even the number of teachers who need mentorship. The institution of mentorship exists in almost 100% of schools. The only region where it is less widespread is Belgorod Oblast, but even there 79% of schools have mentors. Most principals are convinced that mentorship is a must-have, but some regions find the concept rather dubious. In Volgograd Oblast and Ingushetia, only one in every two principals consider it very important.

Russian teachers also receive feedback from student surveys which are most often conducted by head teachers or principals. This type of feedback is much more popular in Russia than in any other TALIS country, where principals and head teachers are on average twice less likely to initiate student surveys. The efficiency of such surveys is hardly assessable: it is considered unethical to ask students about the performance of specific teachers in some countries. Yet, in a number of countries students rate their teachers, the results of such ratings being available to the relevant teacher and the principal only.

As a rule, Russian school principals take rather mild measures following a teacher appraisal (Table 4). In most cases, they discuss the feedback with teachers and prepare individual development plans, sometimes appointing mentors but rarely applying punitive measures like dismissal, salary cuts, or non-payment of financial bonuses. Nevertheless, the proportion of principals reported to apply punitive measures is slightly higher in Russia than the average TALIS percentage. The answer “Sometimes” to the question whether low appraisal leads to teacher dismissal was most often given in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Belgorod Oblast, and Ingushetia. As for the Republic of Tatarstan, 9% of their principals say they always dismiss poor performers. Thus, school principals in half of the regions consider punishment to be the most effective way of increasing the quality of teaching. Meanwhile, 100% of the principals in Komi claim they never resort to dismissals.

Although most principals gave a high appraisal of mentors' work, many regions only use this resource sporadically to help underperforming teachers. Nearly 50% of the respondents in Moscow and Tatarstan report that they engage mentors from time to time or even not at all, and similar answers were given by over 70% of the school leaders in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, and Altai Krai. In Ryazan Oblast, one-fourth of the principals have never assigned a mentor in their career. It follows that either principals do not use even the resources at hand or these are ghost resources, existing on paper only.

Table 4. **Measures taken by Russian school principals following a teacher appraisal** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

		Measures to remedy any weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher	A development or training plan is developed for each teacher	If a teacher is found to be a poor performer, material sanctions such as reduced annual increases in pay are imposed on the teacher	A mentor is appointed to help the teacher improve his/her teaching	A change in a teacher's work responsibilities (e. g. increase or decrease in his/her teaching load or administrative/managerial responsibilities)	A change in a teacher's salary or a payment of a financial bonus	A change in the likelihood of a teacher's career advancement	Dismissal or non-renewal of contract
Moscow	Never			10.2	6.0	6.9	31.3	61.5	38.2
	Sometimes	13.9	13.9	58.0	43.7	59.6	52.5	34.8	61.8
	Most of the time	27.8	43.5	21.9	29.9	22.4	16.2	3.7	
	Always	58.3	42.6	9.9	20.4	11.1			
Moscow Oblast	Never			4.0	6.2	19.1	30.6	28.1	53.0
	Sometimes		10.2	60.4	16.2	55.6	39.4	54.3	41.5
	Most of the time	35.7	66.7	24.2	43.4	19.2	20.7	17.5	5.6
	Always	64.3	23.1	11.3	34.2	6.1	9.3		
Republic of Tatarstan	Never			25.3		16.5	34.8	49.3	30.4
	Sometimes	6.6	28.7	44.3	50.6	67.1	56.4	31.8	56.7
	Most of the time	22.3	9.6	21.5	30.4	16.3	8.8	18.9	4.0
	Always	71.1	61.7	8.8	19.0				8.8
St. Petersburg	Never			12.8		2.8	43.7	21.6	44.0
	Sometimes	3.7	37.3	43.6	45.4	68.8	40.0	58.6	48.4
	Most of the time	33.0	38.9	33.4	48.8	21.7	9.0	17.4	7.7
	Always	63.3	23.8	10.2	5.8	6.7	7.3	2.5	
Altai Krai	Never			54.7	10.0	34.7	38.3	59.0	76.8
	Sometimes	28.3	23.7	11.1	50.0	35.3	59.6	18.9	23.2
	Most of the time	10.0	41.1	32.1	20.0	30.0	2.1	22.1	
	Always	61.7	35.3	2.1	20.0				
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Never			34.1		33.1	54.0	36.2	71.8
	Sometimes	7.7	8.8	38.8	20.9	62.1	34.1	60.3	28.2
	Most of the time	9.9	45.2		65.9	4.8	12.0	3.4	
	Always	82.4	46.0	27.1	13.2				
Volgograd Oblast	Never			42.0	45.3	35.4	38.5	54.9	86.2
	Sometimes	11.2	48.9	58.0	31.0	64.6	61.5	33.9	13.8
	Most of the time	77.7	25.3		23.6			11.2	
	Always	11.1	25.8						
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Never			46.9	13.2	24.8	42.8	47.0	47.9
	Sometimes	5.9	25.7	34.4	59.6	51.3	43.7	38.7	52.1
	Most of the time	57.2	44.7	18.7	21.7	23.8	3.3	14.3	
	Always	36.9	29.6		5.5		10.2		

		Measures to remedy any weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher	A development or training plan is developed for each teacher	If a teacher is found to be a poor performer, material sanctions such as reduced annual increases in pay are imposed on the teacher	A mentor is appointed to help the teacher improve his/her teaching	A change in a teacher's work responsibilities (e. g. increase or decrease in his/her teaching load or administrative/managerial responsibilities)	A change in a teacher's salary or a payment of a financial bonus	A change in the likelihood of a teacher's career advancement	Dismissal or non-renewal of contract
Tambov Oblast	Never			22.1	11.3	8.6		55.0	84.4
	Sometimes		7.9	29.7	59.1	91.4	88.7	45.0	15.6
	Most of the time	33.4	25.5	48.2	9.1		11.3		
	Always	66.6	66.6		20.6				
Belgorod Oblast	Never			5.2	18.1	39.3	80.6	54.2	28.3
	Sometimes			57.4	22.7	19.5	4.0	45.8	61.4
	Most of the time	63.4	49.5	27.1	54.2	41.2	5.0		10.3
	Always	36.6	50.5	10.3	5.0		10.3		
Ryazan Oblast	Never			7.6	26.4	32.2	34.0	52.4	26.4
	Sometimes		40.4	75.8	13.4	36.8	55.2	47.6	66.0
	Most of the time	26.4	22.3	16.6	49.4	31.0	10.8		7.6
	Always	73.6	37.2		10.8				
Republic of Komi	Never		13.9	20.4	13.9	6.5	20.4	71.4	100.0
	Sometimes		37.6	79.6	6.5	51.5	79.6	28.6	
	Most of the time	79.6			79.6	42.0			
	Always	20.4	48.5						
Republic of Ingushetia	Never					21.9	21.9	74.4	21.9
	Sometimes	63.3	78.1	47.5	14.8	78.1			67.3
	Most of the time	36.7	21.9	52.5	85.2		78.1	25.6	10.8
	Always								
Pskov Oblast	Never			45.6			45.6	45.6	78.9
	Sometimes		13.7	40.7	33.2	100.0	54.4	54.4	21.1
	Most of the time	59.3	21.1	13.7	21.1				
	Always	40.7	65.1		45.6				

Delegation of Powers

Unwillingness, inability or failure to delegate powers is perhaps the largest bottleneck for sustainable transformational leadership. Large-scale transformations are impossible to execute whilst being in charge of every task and every activity by oneself [Apple, 2014; Frost, 2014; Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves, Shirley, 2009]. The principals of all regions are unanimous that their staff members are allowed to participate actively in making school-related decisions (Table 5). All of the principals in seven of the regions and the great majority of the principals in the other seven regions maintain that their schools also provide parents or guardians with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions. The only exception is Ryazan Oblast where 20% of the principals do not agree with this statement. Opinions are divided on whether such opportunities are provided to students. In Tambov Oblast, Bel-

Table 5. **Delegation of school management powers by principals** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

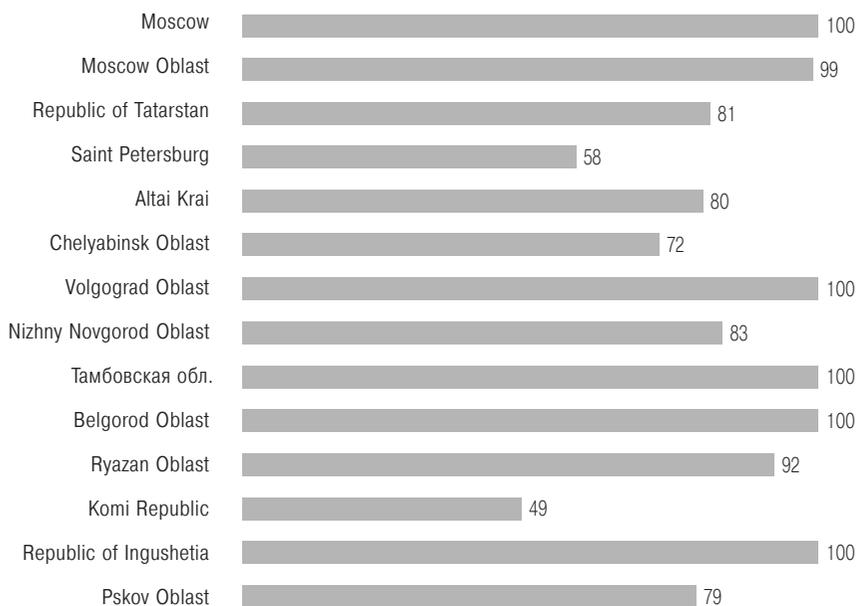
	This school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions		This school provides parents or guardians with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions		This school provides students with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions		I make the important decisions on my own		There is a collaborative school culture which is characterized by mutual support	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Moscow		100.0	4.0	96.0	8.9	91.1	69.5	30.5	3.0	97.0
Moscow Oblast		100.0	8.3	91.7	13.8	86.2	56.5	43.5	5.0	95.0
Republic of Tatarstan		100.0		100.0	4.0	96.0	35.5	64.5		100.0
St. Petersburg		100.0	6.7	93.3	34.5	65.5	69.3	30.7		100.0
Altai Krai		100.0		100.0	2.1	97.9	66.8	33.2		100.0
Chelyabinsk Oblast		100.0	11.6	88.4	21.8	78.2	74.5	25.5		100.0
Volgograd Oblast		100.0		100.0	5.5	94.5	23.2	76.8		100.0
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast		100.0	7.3	92.7	15.0	85.0	18.1	81.9	10.2	89.8
Tambov Oblast		100.0		100.0		100.0	21.0	79.0		100.0
Belgorod Oblast		100.0		100.0		100.0	90.8	9.2		100.0
Ryazan Oblast		100.0	20.2	79.8	20.2	79.8	83.4	16.6		100.0
Komi Republic		100.0	13.9	86.1	37.6	62.4	79.6	20.4	22.9	77.1
Republic of Ingushetia		100.0		100.0		100.0	100.0			100.0
Pskov Oblast		100.0		100.0		100.0	86.3	13.7		100.0

gorod Oblast, Pskov Oblast and Ingushetia 100% of the principals assert that their students are allowed to actively participate in school decisions, while one-third of the school leaders in St. Petersburg and Komi disagree with this item.

However, while it may seem that such answers should be indicators of a high level of democracy in school management, we have to throw them into question, as at the same time a large proportion of the principals report to make the important decisions on their own. Their agreement with the relevant statement allows us to define the school leadership style as authoritarian. Authoritarian principals are most often found in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Tambov Oblast and Volgograd Oblast, whereas Belgorod Oblast and Pskov Oblast have the most democratic school leaders with authoritarian principals accounting for only 10–15%. No principal in Ingushetia agrees with the statement.

We received mostly positive answers to the question “Do you have a school governing board?” Governing boards are available in all of the schools in six of the regions and in 70–90% of schools in the other re-

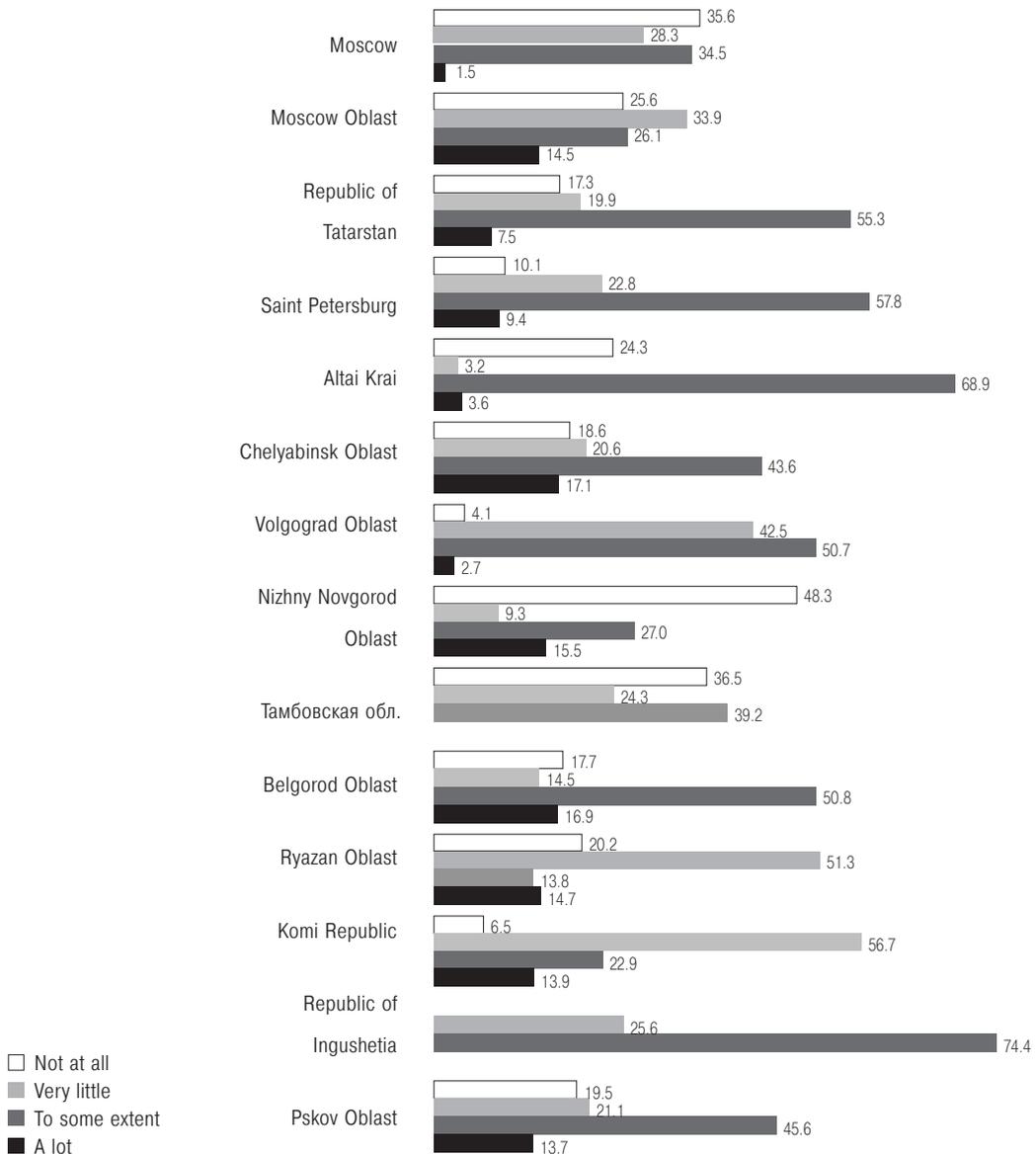
Figure 6. **Availability of school governing boards**



gions, except for St. Petersburg and Komi, where the number is much lower (Fig. 6). However, the availability of a governing board alone is not enough to call a school's leadership democratic: there are regions where each school has a governing board, but many principals do not delegate their decision-making powers. For example, 100% of the schools in Volgograd Oblast have governing boards, but nearly 77% of the principals make all of the important decisions on their own. This is also true for Tambov Oblast: only 21% of the principals entrust decision making to governing boards, which are available in every school. This implies that governing boards in these and some other regions only exist on paper and do not perform their functions, thus depreciating the very idea of collaborative state and public administration. This TALIS data is also confirmed by other studies. In particular, in her Master's thesis [2015], Yuliya Galyamina analyzes the role that governing boards played in the merger of Moscow schools and kindergartens into educational parks. Forty-seven percent of the surveyed parents report that neither before nor after the reform did they know about the introduction of governing boards. About the same proportion of the respondents were not aware of the decisions the governing boards made on the merger. Moscow schools also each have a governing board, but it turns out that those who these boards are designed to represent know nothing about their activities or even existence.

As can be seen above, it is still too early to say that staff refreshment encourages distribution of transformational leadership strategies in terms of power delegation.

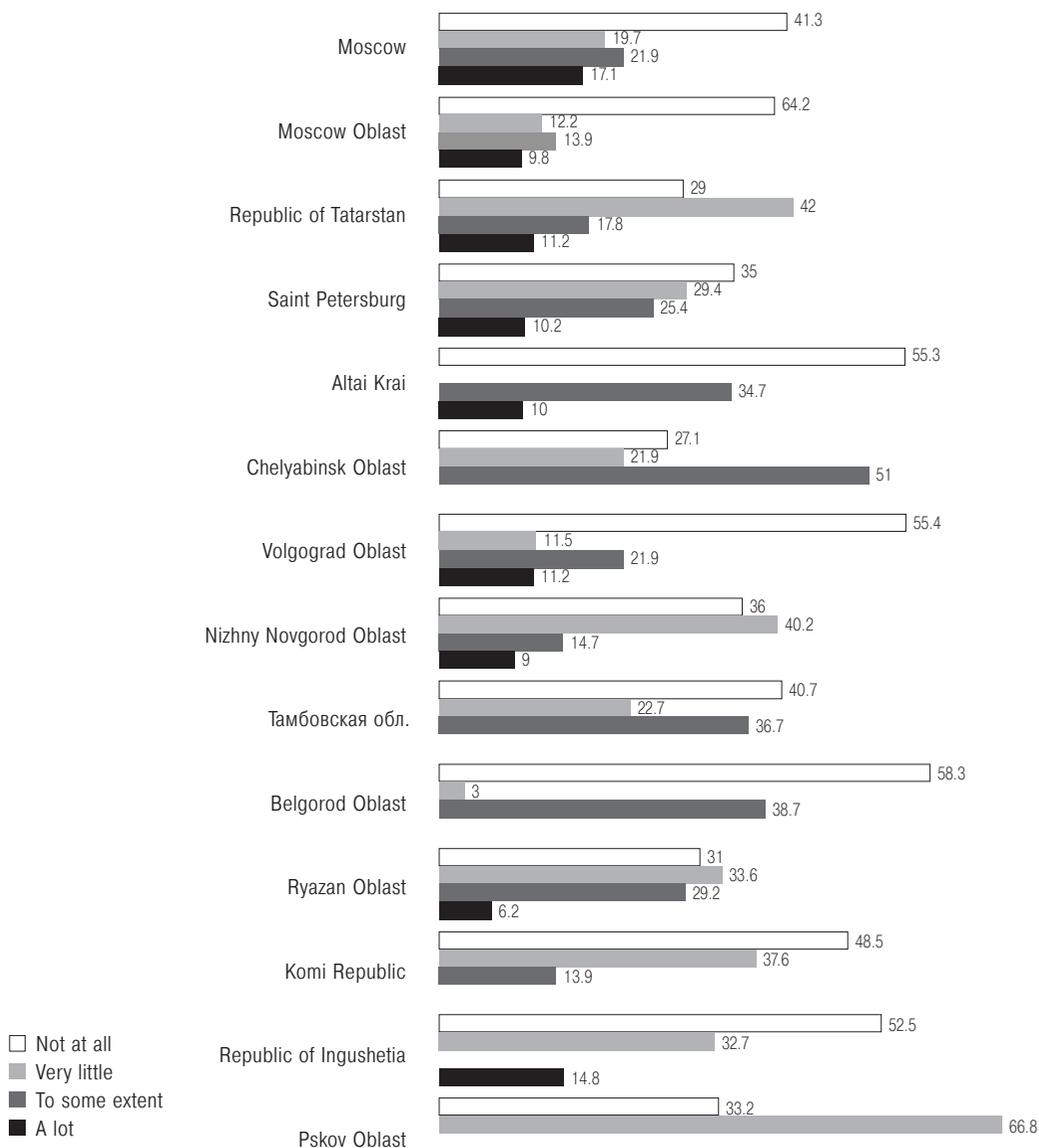
Figure 7. **Shortage of qualified teachers**



Resources that Principals Need Most of All

Despite the measures undertaken by schools to improve academic performance and teaching quality, Russian principals report the shortage of a number of vital resources. Forty-four percent of the principals believe that their schools lack qualified teachers, and 10% find the shortage severe. The principals in Tatarstan, St. Petersburg, Pskov Oblast, Altai and Ingushetia seem to be the most concerned about the lack of qualified teachers. In the latter two regions, the issue is a major concern for almost 70% of the school leaders (Fig. 7). Meanwhile, the

Figure 8. Shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs



majority of principals in Moscow, Moscow Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, and the Komi Republic are satisfied with the quality of teaching.

Only 30% of all school principals report a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs, and only 6% see it as a great hindrance (Fig. 8). In Pskov Oblast and Belgorod Oblast, no one chose the “A lot” answer, and 60–80% of principals in most of the regions have no concerns about the issue. The most severe shortage of staff members with competence in dealing with stu-

dents with special needs is observed in Moscow and Altai Krai. It is highly probable that inclusion is indeed on the policy agenda of these regions.

Russian principals observe insufficient Internet access and a shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials, computers, computer software and even library materials more often than their foreign colleagues. Little more than 20% of Australian, French, English and Canadian principals report the shortage of these resources, and some isolated cases can be found in Singapore.

Material support differs a lot between schools in different regions (Table 6). Only 10% of the principals in Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod Oblast feel a shortage of some resources; the problem is irrelevant in Tambov but very acute in Chelyabinsk Oblast, with 82% of the school leaders complaining about the lack of instructional materials. The shortage or inadequacy of computers is a concern for every region to some extent, but the most critical shortages are reported by Belgorod Oblast, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Altai Krai, and even Moscow Oblast, while Tambov Oblast and Moscow appear to be the least affected. Ingushetia experiences a disastrous situation with Internet access, which bothers virtually all the principals. Komi and Altai also face rather grave Internet access problems. The principals in these regions find it difficult to provide an adequate learning environment because the need for the Internet is very high due to the distance from the center yet using the web is almost impossible. The shortage of computer software is least perceptible in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tatarstan and Tambov Oblast, and is suffered most by the schools in Ingushetia and Komi. The situation in Pskov Oblast is controversial: one half of the respondents do not feel the shortage of software at all, while the other half find it a major concern. We can only suggest an extremely uneven distribution of resources in the region. The shortage of library materials is acute in the schools of Pskov Oblast only. Yet, 5–10% of respondents in every region are unhappy with their library stock. In large cities, however, this is hard to explain unless the principal is unable to provide necessary resources for the school themselves.

The shortage of support personnel is a much smaller concern for Russian school principals than for their foreign counterparts, though Russian schools are poorly staffed as compared to Western European schools with their teaching assistants. What is more, foreign schools work to expand this staff category. The attitude of principals to support personnel comes from the education policy. In Moscow and Tambov Oblast, which are undergoing a restructure, the principals have to get rid of support personnel and thus cannot feel any shortage of it. Conversely, the principals of St. Petersburg and Pskov Oblast schools face an acute shortage, as reported by over 50% of the school leaders.

Table 6. **Factors hindering school's capacity to provide quality instruction** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

Region	Extent	Shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials (e. g. textbooks)	Shortage or inadequacy of computers for instruction	Insufficient Internet access	Shortage or inadequacy of computer software for instruction	Shortage or inadequacy of library materials	Shortage of support personnel
Moscow	Not at all	71.1	48.7	70.7	43.5	55.2	63.7
	A lot	11.8	3.6	3.6	11.8	9.7	8.1
Moscow Oblast	Not at all	67.7	21.8	26	19.3	48.9	32.6
	A lot		13.8	9.8	7.3	3.6	13.1
Republic of Tatarstan	Not at all	46.2	52.7	57	37.7	25.6	14.9
	A lot	4.2	1.8	15.4	6.6	6.6	27.7
St. Petersburg	Not at all	52.1	20.8	45.6	13.9	44.8	25.4
	A lot	3.7	9.4	7.2		3.7	5.6
Altai Krai	Not at all	25.3	20	10	10	10	20
	A lot	3.6	5.7	10	22.1	13.6	5.7
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Not at all	3.9	24.5	34.5	24.5	20.3	30.1
	A lot	39.2	21.4	28.8	28.8	5.5	17.1
Volgograd Oblast	Not at all	11.2	25.8	23	27.6	4.1	49.2
	A lot	13.8	28.7	25	28.7	11.2	25.3
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Not at all	56.8	34.4	50.8	32.4	48.3	50.5
	A lot		12.7				13.1
Tambov Oblast	Not at all	86.2	43.7	39.7	31.3	31.3	72
	A lot						
Belgorod Oblast	Not at all	9.2	22.2	39.1	34.3	12.6	68.6
	A lot		16.9	33.9		16.9	
Ryazan Oblast	Not at all	22.8	22.8	52.4	22.8	5.8	31
	A lot	8.9	8.9		8.9	8.9	15.1
Komi Republic	Not at all	63.3	48.5				71.4
	A lot		28.6	77.1	35.2		
Republic of Ingushetia	Not at all						
	A lot	14.8	21.9	36.7	36.7	14.8	14.8
Pskov Oblast	Not at all	40.7	54.4	54.4	54.4	33.2	
	A lot		45.6		45.6	45.6	45.6

Assessment of School Climate by School Principals

In most regions, the principals gave honest answers about students arriving late at school (Fig. 9). The distribution of the answers is similar to that in other countries. Yet, some of the regions demonstrate purely positive statistics: students are never late in Belgorod Oblast and rarely arrive late in Tambov Oblast.

The situation with unjustified absences is more favorable in Russia than in most TALIS-participating countries. Belgorod Oblast and Tambov Oblast look spotless here again with either no or rare cases of absenteeism (Fig. 10).

According to the survey results, vandalism and theft are uncommon in Russian schools, with only some principals in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Altai reporting weekly cases (Fig. 11).

The same two regions provided a more unbiased picture of student conflicts and physical injuries (Fig. 12). The principals of most regions claim that children in their schools never have fights or injuries, but this information is hardly credible. Such ignorance may be a result of the inefficiency of children's rights institutions or non-reporting by students.

Nearly all of the principals deny that students in their schools consume alcohol or drugs — allegedly it never happens in 8 out of the 14 regions (Fig. 13). It is probable that the principals prefer to evade this “hot” issue. Chelyabinsk Oblast is the only one where the principals admit the problem.

TALIS-2013 data differs strikingly from the results obtained in 2008. In TALIS-2008, 57% of the principals admitted numerous cases of student misconduct, 35% reported a decline in academic performance, and 27% confirmed that drug abuse and theft were common in their schools. It is unlikely that the use of drugs could have virtually ceased in five years.

Cheating is the only type of misconduct admitted by school principals in every region (Fig. 14). In many of the regions (Moscow Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Republics of Tatarstan, Komi and Ingushetia), between 20% and 30% of the principals report that students cheat daily, and only a few schools in Moscow and Moscow Oblast can boast zero cheating, according to their principals. The transparency on this item is probably explained by the fact that cheating is almost impossible to conceal during final examinations, and 2013 saw an unprecedented number of cases, which the principals perceived as a direct threat to their performance evaluation.

On the whole, the survey results show that Russian school principals are not used to focusing on the problems they face: school performance monitoring and inspections exist rather for punitive purposes than to support school development.

When development is a priority, principal self-assessment is an important component of the overall principal performance measurement. If a principal can see her or his setbacks and report about them explicitly, an inspection will serve to help the principal find ways to

Figure 9. **Students' arriving late at school**

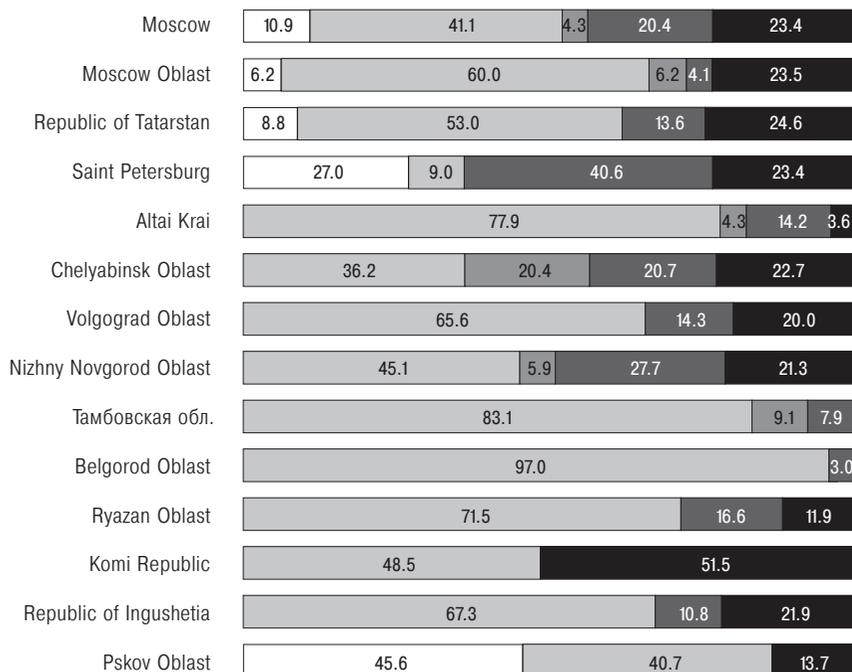


Figure 10. **Student absenteeism**

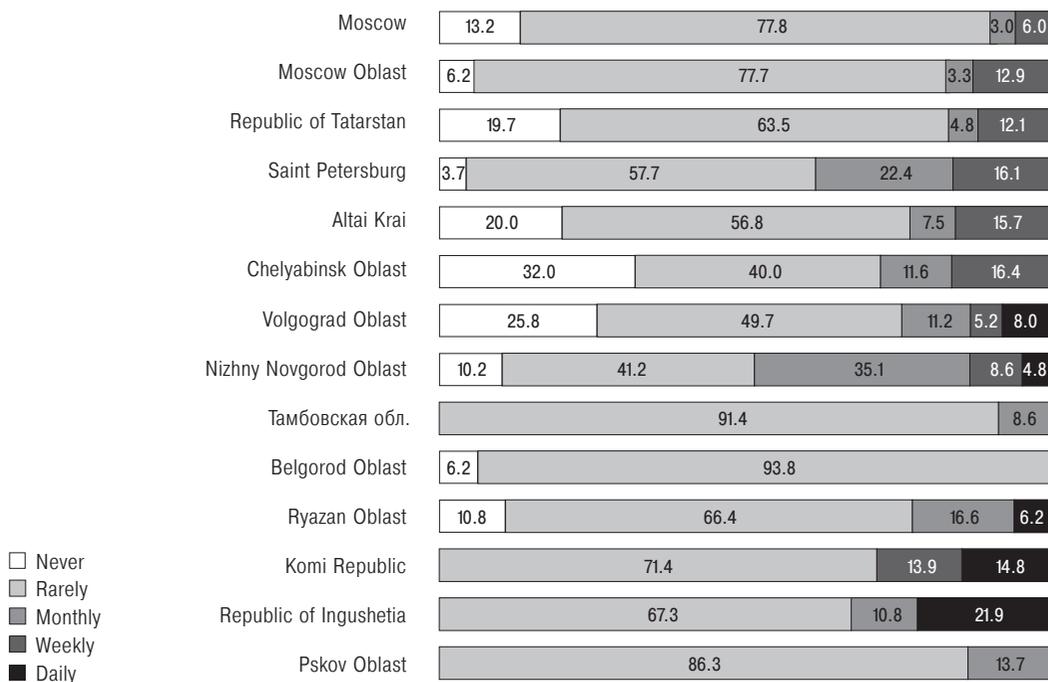


Figure 11. **Vandalism and theft**

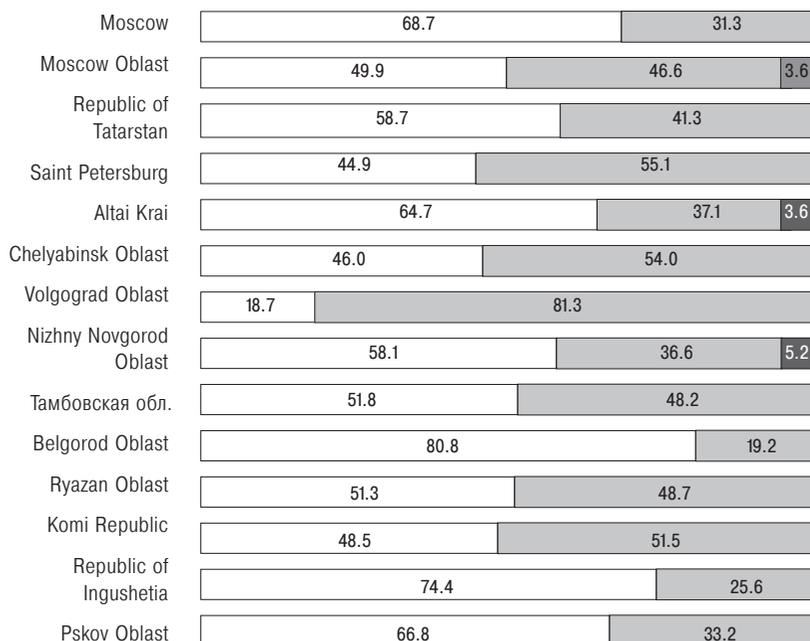


Figure 12. **Physical injury caused by violence among students**

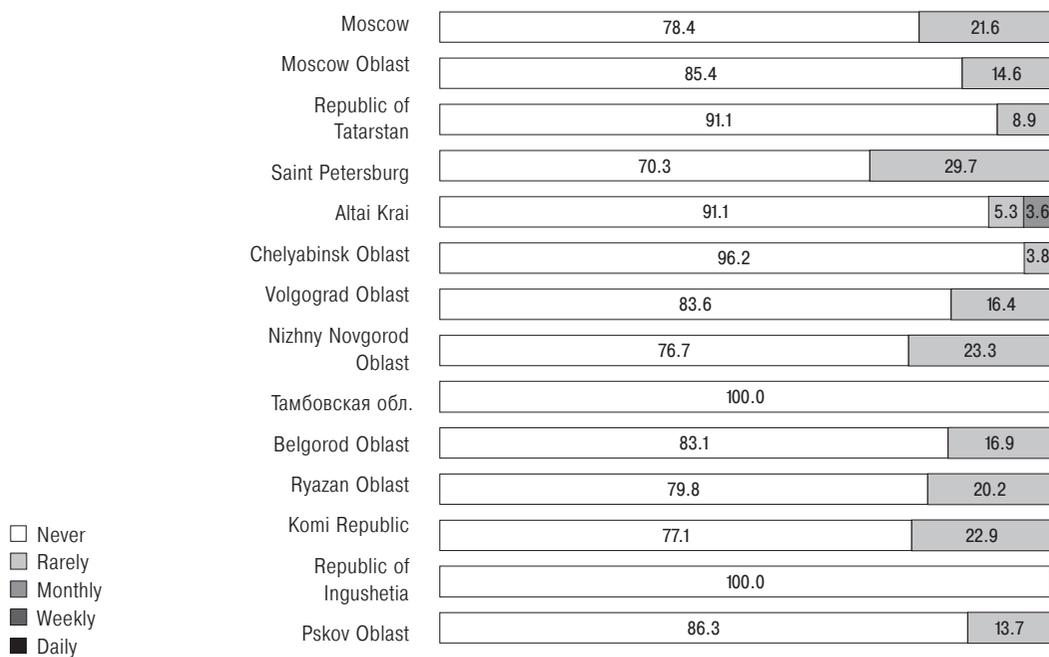


Figure 13. **Use/possession of drugs and/or alcohol**

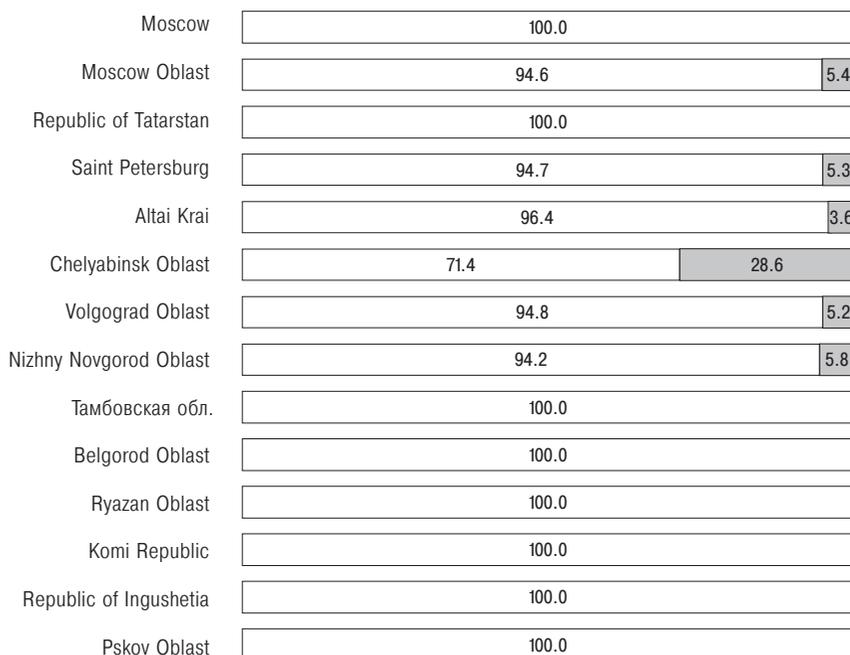


Figure 14. **Cheating**

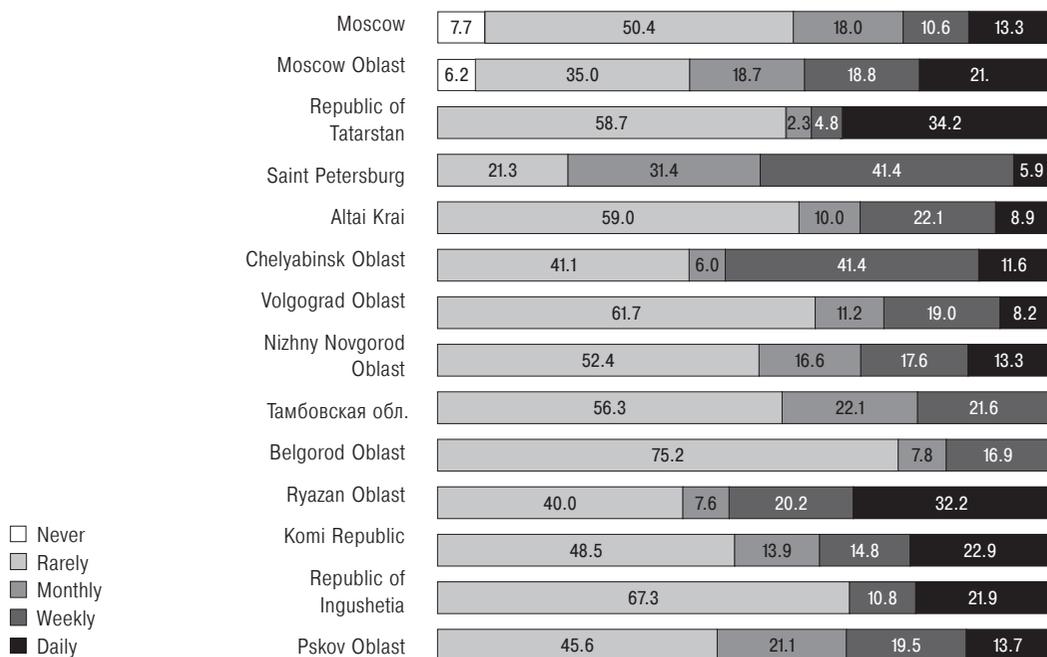


Table 7. **Job satisfaction of school principals** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

		The advantages of this profession clearly outweigh the disadvantages	If I could decide again, I would still choose this job/position	I would like to change to another school if that were possible	I think that the teaching profession is valued in society	I am satisfied with my performance in this school	All in all, I am satisfied with my job
Moscow	Disagree	14.4	5.0	93.9	16.2	5.3	4.0
	Agree	85.6	95.0	6.1	83.8	94.7	96.0
Moscow Oblast	Disagree	16.2	14.6	98.5	58.9	6.7	6.7
	Agree	83.8	85.4	1.5	41.1	93.3	93.3
Republic of Tatarstan	Disagree	20.1	18.8	100.0	41.9	18.8	11.3
	Agree	79.9	81.2		58.1	81.2	88.7
St. Petersburg	Disagree			100.0	13.4	17.8	
	Agree	100.0	100.0		86.6	82.2	100.0
Altai Krai	Disagree	17.9	4.3	86.4	46.4	23.7	
	Agree	82.1	95.7	13.6	53.6	76.3	100.0
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Disagree	17.1	28.6	100.0	34.5		
	Agree	82.9	71.4		65.5	100.0	100.0
Volgograd Oblast	Disagree	33.1	19.3	100.0	51.0	16.9	17.0
	Agree	66.9	80.7		49.0	83.1	83.0
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Disagree	10.5	10.5	100.0	23.9	4.9	
	Agree	89.5	89.5		76.1	95.1	100.0
Tambov Oblast	Disagree		11.3	100.0	29.5		
	Agree	100.0	88.7		70.5	100.0	100.0
Belgorod Oblast	Disagree	28.4	10.3	100.0	59.2	18.1	
	Agree	71.6	89.7		40.8	81.9	100.0
Ryazan Oblast	Disagree	7.6		91.1	69.0	34.9	14.7
	Agree	92.4	100.0	8.9	31.0	65.1	85.3
Komi Republic	Disagree	42.0	14.8	85.2	28.6	14.8	
	Agree	58.0	85.2	14.8	71.4	85.2	100.0
Republic of Ingushetia	Disagree	21.9	21.9	100.0	21.9	74.4	21.9
	Agree	78.1	78.1		78.1	25.6	78.1
Pskov Oblast	Disagree			100.0	100.0	59.3	
	Agree	100.0	100.0			40.7	100.0

handle those setbacks. However, if an inspection only aims to search for setbacks and punish the guilty, school leaders will try to hide the setbacks in every possible way, and such inspections are unlikely to promote any development.

Most principals rate their job highly and are not willing to change their profession or the school they work for (Table 7). At the same time, they evaluate the outcomes of their own work highly. Of the principals in Tambov Oblast and Chelyabinsk Oblast, 100% are completely satisfied with their own performance, while being unhappy with teacher performance and having cheaters and late arrivals in school. Some principals in other regions are not quite satisfied with their own performance, but they account for barely 20%. Only in Ryazan Oblast and Pskov Oblast are more than one-third of the principals not satisfied with the outcomes they have achieved.

Conclusions

1. The work of a principal in aiming to develop and transform their school begins with evaluating the situation as objectively as possible. If the principal is unable or unwilling to do so, they will rarely succeed in their efforts. Of course, participation in an international survey may motivate principals to make their school, their region and their country look as good as possible, but a critical attitude to one's own performance is still required. This is how principals treat their achievements in countries with the highest education outcomes, such as Singapore, Finland, etc.
2. As a result of the reforms and school network optimization, schools in a number of Russian regions are now led by young principals who are more optimistic about both their own potential and the opportunities at work. However, they are still unable to work in a team and delegate power.
3. To date, there has been no established system for school principal training in Russia. Only a few regions report to have trained over 20 percent of candidates prior to employment; meanwhile, there are regions with no principal training at all. The Governments of these regions as well as the school principals should pay special attention to staff training, since an unprepared principal cannot provide a high level of performance, and there is no time for learning on the job.
4. Many school leaders even complain about problems that they have the power to overcome. For instance, the lack of library materials is quite a solvable problem in large cities, but principals often adopt a parasitical behavior style, which makes successful transformational leadership impossible. However, there are objective problems too: schools in some of the regions have virtually no Internet access for students, experience an acute shortage of budget funds and suffer a lack of teachers. Solving those

issues is a mission, not so much for the principals, but for the local governments.

5. Nearly all principals actively appraise teachers but many of them assume irrelevant functions, substituting themselves for head teachers or mentors. Mentorship exists only on paper in a number of regions: all principals acknowledge its importance but do not trust mentors to remedy weaknesses in teaching. Consequently, school principals prefer “operating manually” and interacting with individual teachers, not staff groups.
6. Authoritarianism and an unwillingness to delegate power are the major handicaps to the transformational leadership of school principals in many regions. In some of the regions, school leaders continue making all of the important decisions on their own despite having governing boards and sometimes they even work for the governing board while at the same time complain about the lack of assistance. Principal training programs should thus teach team-building, power delegation and distributed leadership skills.
7. In many regions, principals report a shortage of qualified teachers. However, effective advanced training programs for teachers have been organized rather poorly, and the principals do not seem to feel responsible for providing this type of training. Instructional leadership is another aspect of principal training that deserves special focus.
8. Staff refreshment as such does not prepare school principals for transformational leadership: as we can see, even the youngest principals found in Moscow and Tambov Oblast are unlikely to delegate powers, are satisfied with their performance and are ignorant of difficult students, just as their more experienced colleagues are. We have to admit though that staff refreshment does not provide quick outcomes, so the next round (TALIS-2018) will give us a more detailed picture.
9. In a large number of the regions, the principals prefer to turn a blind eye to the faults in their schools, but there are also regions where honest self-assessment prevails. The ability to identify and admit one’s failures is an indispensable quality of every successful leader, and one which is critical for school performance.

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