



## Chapter 2

### The Policy Regarding Principal Management

#### 2.1 Introduction

As we examined in Chapter 1, the principal plays so important role in school leadership under the Principal Responsibility System that they are inevitably viewed by China's educational policymakers as key to success in school development and improvement. In this context, the Chinese government have promulgated a range of policies regarding the management of principals in which the rules and mandatory requirements encompassing the qualification, preparation, selection, development and appraisal of principals are included. Yet, these policies may not be well understood by outsiders if the underlying assumptions concerning principal held by Chinese stakeholders of school education are ignored. In other words, these widely accepted assumptions have enduring influence on the development of the policy regarding management of principals. The first underlying assumption is that "a good principal makes a good school". In 1991, Liu Bin, the Vice Director of State Education Commission (renamed Ministry of Education in 1998) who was the chief executive in charge of whole nation's primary and secondary education at the time made an inscription for the National Training Center for Secondary School Principals. The Liu's inscription said, "We should recognize, understand and keep in mind the saying that a good principal makes a good school" (Zhang, 2014). It is particularly noteworthy that this assumption is not only the conviction of the Chinese government but also the conviction of all other Chinese stakeholders of school education. In a sense, the expectation of the Chinese stakeholders to school principals could be higher than the expectation of the Western stakeholders to their principals because the Chinese stakeholders always bear the assumption of *a good principal makes a good school* in their minds. The second underlying assumption concerning principal is that "a good principal, first of all, should be a good teacher". Originally, this assumption derived from Soviet knowledge of school management and built up during the "learning-Soviet-movement" in 1950s. In his book *Pedagogy* which was most widely circulated and highly influential in 1950s in China, I.A. Kairov argued that the post of principal should be held by a qualified, experienced, and well-informed teacher since the core mission of school education is mainly realized by means of classroom teaching (Kairov,1957. p. 461). Not surprisingly, Kairov's view was easily accepted by

the Chinese educational community because it just coincided with the traditional Chinese view that maintaining and improving classroom teaching should be the foremost priority of school leadership and management. Over time, Kairov's view has gradually evolved into an assumption shared by almost all Chinese stakeholders of school education. This assumption implies two points of view. One is that a principal should be selected from the cohort of talented and excellent teachers. And the other is that a successful principal should have sufficient expertise in teaching and learning in order that he/she is able to guide and supervise classroom teaching to assure teaching quality and learning quality in his/her school. In the survey of *CSSLM2017-principals*, 96.4 percent of respondents agree with the item of "a good principal, first of all, should be a good teacher" (76.5 percent of STRONGLY AGREED and 19.9 percent of AGREED). In the survey of *CSTWCE2017-teachers*, 95.5 percent of respondents agree with the same item (80.8 percent of STRONGLY AGREED and 15.1 percent of AGREED) (see Appendix A). The results suggest that most teachers and principals in China really hold the assumption at the moment (the results of the surveys also inform us that the Soviet school management knowledge still influence China's educational community though over 50 years have passed since the "learning-Soviet-movement" ended in 1960). Moreover, the above-mentioned assumptions seem also to convince China's education policy makers. As a result, China's policy on principal management tends to be with high professional expectations for the role of school principals (Organization Department of CCCPC and MOE, 2017; MOE, 2013; MOE, 2015).

In this chapter, nine key terms associated with the policies regarding school principal qualification, preparation, selection, development and appraisal will be selected to discuss and explore respectively based on literature review, policy documents, field observation, questionnaire, and interviews. These nine terms include *Red-Head-Document* [HONG-TOU-WEN-JIAN], *Reserve Principal* [HOU-BEI-XIAO-ZHANG], *Serving a Temporary Position* [GUA-ZHI-DUAN-LIAN], *Principal Career-ladder System* [XIAO-ZHANG-ZHI-JI-ZHI ], *Term-Accountability by Objectives* [REN-QI-MU-BIAO-ZE-REN-ZHI], *Leadership Team Appraisal* [LING-DAO-BAN-ZI-KAO-HE], *Reporting Performance and Integrity* [SHU-ZHI-SHU-LIAN], *Democratic Reviewing* [MIN-ZHU-PING-YI], and *Comprehensive Evaluation*[ ZONG-HE-PING-JIA].

2.2 Key Terms

2.2.1 Red-Head-Documents [HONG-TOU-WEN-JIAN]

HONG-TOU-WEN-JIAN as a term in Chinese context means an official document with a red-head and usually abbreviated as Red-Head-Documents. It was originally from one of traditional rules of text format in writing official documents, which established in the Chinese Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589A.D.). According to the rule, the documents from imperial court to local authorities should be written in red ink while any proposals and reports presented from local authorities to imperial court should be written in black ink (Zhao, 2011). Nowadays, the term Red-Head-Documents (hereafter called RHD) usually refers in general to official policy documents and sometimes implies the mandatory requirements with substantive policy basis from government. In this chapter, the term of RHD specially refers to official documents concerning management of principals issued by CCCPC, the State Council, the MOE or jointly issued by the MOE and other departments of central government (The typical format of a RHD of the MOE is shown in Figure2.1).



Figure 2.1 The typical format of a RHD issued by the MOE

As listed in Table 2.1, nine key RHDs regarding principal management have been issued since *The Decision of the CCCPC on the Reform of the Educational System*<sup>14</sup> was published in 1985 (see Table 2.1). The first three RHDs issued around the beginning of 1990s set out a

<sup>14</sup> This *Decision* is viewed as a landmark of China’s education entering into a new era of reform and opening-up.

professional framework of principal qualification and the requirements of principal training. It was the first time that the government had clearly claimed real professional entry requirements and the requirements of development for school principals since the founding of P.R. China in 1949. The fourth RHD was jointly issued by Organization Department of CCCPC and the State Education Commission (SEC) in 1992 to establish a relatively complete policy framework for management of principals which covered the issues of principals' preparation and selecting, appointment and dismissal, training, appraisal, reward and punishment, and career path and treatment. The fifth RHD issued in 1999, *Provisions of the MOE on principal training* was actually an education decree of the MOE which reiterated that the training was a mandatory requirement for every principal and establish three-level training programs for the principals who were in different career stages. The sixth RHD issued in 2013, titled *Opinions of MOE on further strengthening the training work for principals of primary and secondary schools* was also a policy document regarding principal training. Compared to the policies regarding principal training in previous RHDs, this RHD was more concerned with the reality of unbalanced professional development of principals in different parts of China than the unified training requirements for all principals across the country. While continuing to demand the training of all principals of the country, the training project for principals in rural areas, ethnic minority areas, and poverty-stricken areas are emphasized. Secondly, this RHD set out to develop and implement the "fostering renowned principal program" for selected principals to meet the needs of the best performing principals in the most developed parts of China. Finally, the RHD emphasized on enriching and improving training approaches to meet the diversified needs of school leadership practice. The seventh RHD in 2013 and the eighth RHD in 2015 published the professional standards for primary and secondary school principals. These two RHDs symbolized that the standardized professional requirements for principals were established from then on. The ninth RHD jointly issued by Organization Department of CCCPC and the MOE in 2017 can be seen as an updated version of the fourth RHD in 1992 which established the first policy framework for principal management. However, the target population of the policy framework in this new RHD was extended from principals to all leaders at school level. By reviewing the RHDs listed in Table 2.1, one can get a preliminary understanding of the course of policy development regarding principals management in China over past 30 years, which began with the general entry requirements and unified training

programs for all principals across the country and changed to a complete policy framework and enriching and diversified training programs later on.

**Table 2.1 list of nine RHDs regarding principal management**

No.	Title and Year	Key initiatives	Promulgator
1	Opinions of SEC on strengthening the training work for principals of primary and secondary schools nationwide (1989).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Training all principals in three to five years so as to meet the needs of educational reform and development.</li> <li>•Building the linkage between training and appointment of principals.</li> </ul>	SEC(renamed MOE in 1998)
2	Circular of SEC on publishing “Opinions on implementing the induction training for principals of primary and secondary schools” (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Local training programs should be developed in the light of the training syllabus published by SEC.</li> <li>•Training programs should be implemented by accredited training institutions.</li> <li>•Trainees will get the certificate of principal position qualification after they pass final assessment in training.</li> </ul>	SEC
3	Circular of SEC on issuing the “Prerequisites and job requirements of the principals of primary and secondary schools nationwide (for trial implementation) (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The prerequisites in personal morality, education attainment, and health condition for principals.</li> <li>• The responsibilities of principals.</li> <li>• The job requirements of principals (political literacy, leadership knowledge, and competence).</li> </ul>	SEC
4	Circular of Organization Department of CCCPC and SEC on publishing the “Opinions on the construction of principal force of primary and secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Rules and procedures for principals’ preparation and selecting, appointment and dismissal, training, appraisal, reward and punishment, and career path and treatment.</li> <li>•The beginning principals should pass induction training and obtain the certificate of school</li> </ul>	Organization Department of CCCPC and SEC

	nationwide [for trial principal position qualification before they implementation] (1992)	assume the post.	
5	Provisions of MOE on school principal training(1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing three-level training programs for principals: 300-hour qualification training program for newly appointed or principal candidates, 240-hour continuing training program for serving principals, and the advanced study program for key principals</li> <li>• newly appointed principals must be on the post with qualification certificate; serving principals must obtain/renew the certificate of continuing training or advanced study every five years.</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education (MOE)
6	Opinions of MOE on further strengthening the training work for principals of primary and secondary schools (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizing on improving training approach to meet principals’ practical needs.</li> <li>• Emphasizing the training of principals in rural areas, ethnic minority areas, and poverty-stricken areas are.</li> <li>• Setting out the “fostering renowned principal program” for selected high-performing principals.</li> </ul>	MOE
7	Circular of the MOE on the “Professional standards for principals of compulsory education schools” (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting standardized professional requirements for principals at the compulsory education stage</li> </ul>	MOE
8	Circular of MOE on the “Professional standards for principals of senior high schools”, and “Professional standard for principals of secondary vocational schools”,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting standardized professional requirements respectively for principals of senior high schools, principals of secondary vocational schools, and kindergartens heads.</li> </ul>	MOE

and “Professional standard for kindergarten heads” (2015)

- 9 Circular of Organization Department of CCCPC and MOE on publishing of Provisional measures for the management of leaders of primary and secondary schools (2017)
  - Setting out the entry requirements and professional qualification for school leaders.
  - Setting the rules and procedures of for leaders’ selecting, appointment, service term setting, accountability, and appraisal.
  - Establishing the career path and motivation system, supervision and restraint mechanism, and termination or dismissal mechanism for school leaders.

**2.2.2 Reserve Principal [HOU-BEI-XIAO-ZHANG]**

*Reserve Principal* [HOU-BEI-XIAO-ZHANG] refers to a status of prospective candidate for principal or vice principal authorized by local education bureau. The establishment of the pool of *Reserve Principal* is one of China’s major strategies for principal selection and preparation after Cultural Revolution. *Reserve principal*, is originally derived from “reserve cadre”. It is customary in China to call leaders and managers from all walks of life and at all levels as cadres and school principals are spontaneously seen as the cadres in education sector.

In 1983, the Organization Department of CCCPC issued a RHD titled *Opinions of Organization Department of CCCPC on Establishing the system of Provincial and Ministerial Reserve Cadres*. It was the first time that “reserve cadre” was used as an official term in a national policy document. In this RHD, the Organization Department of CCCPC set out a policy framework for reserve cadres including the provisions for prerequisites to the candidates, the procedure of selection, the approach of training, and the content and method of appraisal and management. Although this policy framework was to establish a candidate pool for the posts of provincial governors and ministers of central government, the provisions in it has been the basis for selection and training of reserve cadres at all levels since then. For example, the rule of “from now on, the leading cadres should be selected from the list of reserve cadres except for very special circumstances” (Organization Department of CCCPC,1983) has been one of the constant

principles in cadres, including school principals, selection and promotion over last 36 years. In accordance with this principle, the fourth RHD regarding principal management issued in 1992 specified that “we should select the reserve cadres of primary and secondary school principals. We should be good at finding outstanding teachers and administrative cadres with a firm political position, both political integrity and professional ability, outstanding work achievements, and list them as focal candidates. Principals should be normally selected from the reserve cadres” (Organization Department of CCCPC & SEC, 1992). In this RHD, the “reserve cadres” is used synonymously with “reserve principal”.

To have an in-depth understanding the meaning of the term *Reserve Principal* in Chinese context, it is essential to examine existing policy details on following focal points (Organization Department of CCCPC, 1983;2000;2014; Organization Department of CCCPC & SEC, 1992; Organization Department of CCCPC & MOE,2017):

#### 2.2.2.1. Prerequisite

In a practical context, a *Reserve Principal* may refer either to the prospective candidate for the post of principal or the prospective candidate for the post of vice-principal. To be a prospective candidate for the post of principal, the *Reserve Principal* should be an on-the-job vice-principal whereas a prospective candidate for the post of vice-principal, the *Reserve Principal* should be an on-the-job middle manager at the moment.

#### 2.2.2.2. Quota and Proportion

There is a quota for *Reserve Principal* selection based on existing number of school leadership posts in a certain school. The number of existing principal posts to the number of *Reserve Principal* ratio is 1 to 2 whereas the number of existing vice-principal posts to the number of *Reserve Principal* ratio is 1 to 1. For example, one principal post and two vice-principal posts are usually set for a medium-sized school in China. In the light of the quota, the school can recommend four *Reserve Principal* candidates, two of whom are recommended as the candidates for prospective principal while the other two as the candidates for prospective vice-principals. On the other hand, the proportion of male to female, the Han nationality (the China’s main nationality) to minorities, and CPC members to non-CPC members should be considered in selecting reserve principals. However, this proportion is considered within the scope of the whole district rather than within the scope of individual schools.



### 2.2.2.3 Procedure of Selection

The procedure of selecting *reserve principals* consists of five stages. The first stage is nomination in the light of the quota for the candidates of *Reserve Principal* by schools based on extensively staff opinions. At the second stage, the organization/personnel office of local education bureau examines the current performance and professional potential of individual candidates who are recommended by local schools. The examining is not merely to consult the candidates' professional files and records, but also to visit the candidates' work place and to interview with their colleagues. At the third stage, the organization/personnel office reports examining outcomes and presents a proposed list of qualified *Reserve Principals* to the leadership meeting of local education bureau to discuss and make decision. The proposed list of *Reserve Principals* has to be shown publicly at least for five working days at the web side of the education bureau and to collect possible feedback on individual candidates. The organization/personnel office must make a further investigation if there is negative feedback with substantial evidence towards a candidate though it rarely happens. As the last stage, the leadership meeting of the education bureau makes a final decision on the list of *Reserve Principals* and submits the list to superior authority for the record.

### 2.2.2.4 Pre-Service Training

After selection of *reserve principals*, the organization/personnel office of local education bureau is responsible to develop pre-service training programs for *Reserve Principals*. The training programs may be different from district to district depending on local specific expectations for principals. However, university-based training + work place learning (e.g. school leadership shadowing, one on one mentoring, etc.) is the popular approach at the moment.

### 2.2.2.5 Supervision

*Reserve principal*, as noted above, is a status of prospective candidate for principal or vice principal, rather than a substantive leadership post. A *Reserve Principal* is still working at his/her existing post (e.g. middle manager) while participating in the part-time training program for *Reserve Principals*. Both of his/her on job performance and performance in training are supervised by education bureau. The name list of reserve principals could be reshuffled after annual appraisal of *Reserve Principals*.

### 2.2.2.6 Appointment

The length of duration from a “reserve” to “formal” principal is not fixed. It depends not only on individual *reserve principals*’ performance but depends on various opportunities, such as the vacancies in principal/vice-principals posts in the district. No matter how long it takes before a *Reserve Principal* has an opportunity to get the post of principal or vice-principal, the official appointment won’t be made until the *Reserve Principal* passes, again, the procedure of qualification reviewing, nominating, examining, discussion and preliminary decision making, publicity, and final decision.

### **2.2.3 *Serving a Temporary Position* [GUA-ZHI-DUAN-LIAN]**

The complete meaning of the term *Serving a Temporary Position* [GUA-ZHI-DUAN-LIAN] is to forge (train) leaders by having them serve a temporary position. It refers, in Chinese educational context, to have promising in-service middle managers or school-level leaders play leadership roles at a temporary (usually from one semester to one school year) leadership position to broaden their vision, enrich their leadership experience, and strengthen their leadership capacity. The level of the temporary positions for the trainees is usually higher than their current position in their home school. The *Serving a Temporary Position* in most cases means the trainees from the schools in under development areas of inland China are sent to the schools in developed coastal cities of the country, or the trainees from ordinary-performing schools or under-performing schools are sent to high-performing schools in the same district, where they will be trained by serving a temporary leadership position at the receiving schools and mentored by leadership team of the receiving schools. The performance of the trainees in the process of *Serving a Temporary Position* is supervised both by the education bureau of the sending district and the receiving schools. A final appraisal will be conducted upon the completion of *Serving a Temporary Position*. Based on the performance of individual trainees at their temporary positions, some excellent trainees will be promoted to higher-level positions overall arranged by the sending education bureau while others will return to their original positions at their home schools after completion of *Serving a Temporary Position* to wait for promotion chance in the future.

As a kind of field-based training, the emphasis of training content in *Serving a Temporary Position*, according to related policy, is not fixed but depends on whatever trainees’ lack of (Organization Department of CCCPC, 1994, 2000). However, the heavy emphasis is always placed on practical leadership knowledge and management skills. The specific requirements for

trainees in *Serving a Temporary Position* set out either by the education bureau of sending district or by the result of discussion between sending district and receiving schools. In an established case of *Serving a Temporary Position* in Hubei Province, for example, the sending district firstly stipulated a list of individual trainees' daily work at receiving schools in which the classroom observation, school policy documents study, interaction with teachers and students, seeking advice from their mentors, and self-reflection were included. Secondly, the trainees were required to plan and organize a school-wide event at their receiving schools to demonstrate their leadership capacity and management skills during the *Serving a Temporary Position*. Finally, they were required to submit a comprehensive work report to review and summarize the leadership knowledge and management skills acquired during the *Serving a Temporary Position*, and to plan some possible and feasible change in their future work after their *Serving a Temporary Position* (Qin, 2007). In addition to the requirements mentioned in the case of *Serving a Temporary Position* in Hubei Province, school data collection (e.g. school strategic plan, school yearbooks, school rules and regulations, working plans of subject teams, syllabuses of school developed curricular, school developed instructional materials, etc.), themed interview with staff, and personal journal during the *Serving a Temporary Position* are also the requirements for trainees in other cases of *Serving a Temporary Position* (Zhang, 2001; Tu, 2010; Zhao, 2013).

#### **2.2.4 Principal Career-ladder System [XIAO-ZHANG-ZHI-JI-ZHI]**

*Principal Career-ladder System [XIAO-ZHANG-ZHI-JI-ZHI]* is a reformed rank system for principals emerged in mid 1990s in China. It is intended to establish a profession-oriented and performance-related career-ladder to promote the professionalization of principals.

In China, the role of principal is conventionally seen as a type of officials rather than professionals. In the conventional hierarchy for principals, the rank of principals is bound up with level and size of their schools. Under this hierarchy, the principals of key senior high schools were awarded the Division-Head rank while the principals of ordinary senior high schools, junior high schools as well as district central primary schools, and ordinary primary schools were respectively awarded the Deputy-Division-Head rank, Section-Head rank, and Deputy-Section-Head rank. When Chinese government decided to promote the professionalization of school leadership in 1990s, the conventional hierarchy for school principals obviously had become an obstacle. The major

maladies of the conventional hierarchy were identified as follows (Yuan, 1996; Yang,2006; Wang,2012; The Task Group of Shandong Institute of Administration, 2016; Wang, 2016):

- Reinforcing the consciousness that principals are officials rather than professionals. As a result, principals usually lack intrinsic motivation for professional development.

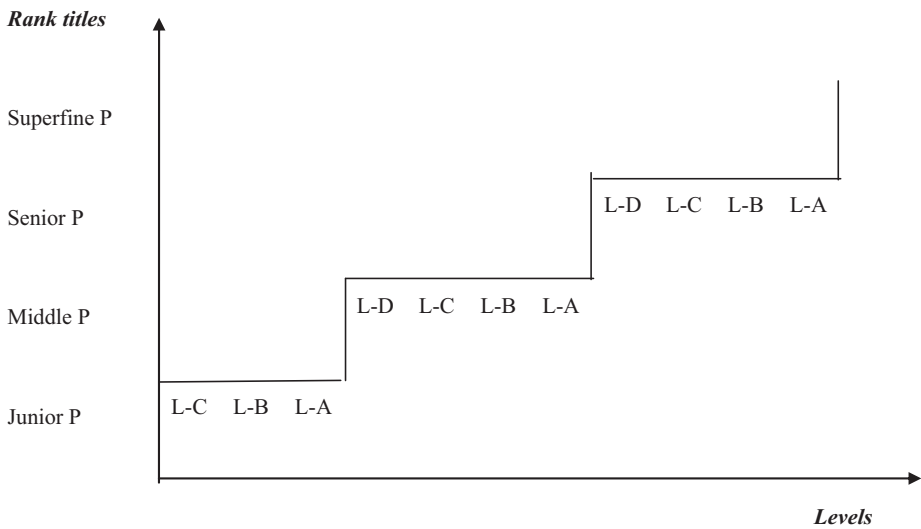
- Principals mobility or rotation is difficult or even hindered because talented principals are only willing to move to higher ranks (being bound up with key senior high and district central primary schools) rather than to lower ranks (being bound up with ordinary and even disadvantage schools). Hence, it is difficult to send a talented principal to disadvantage and low-performing schools.

- It is not fair to those principals who have been working hard in disadvantage schools and making substantial contribution to their schools improvement though their school are still low-performing schools.

To improve the professionalism of principals, it was necessary to establish a profession-oriented and performance-related rank system for principals to replace the conventional hierarchy. In 1994, Education Bureau of Jingan District, Shanghai issued a local policy document titled *Provisional Regulations of Jingan District on Principal Career-ladder System* to replace the conventional hierarchy for school principals in the district (Yuan, 1996). It is known as the term *Principal Career-ladder System* (PCLS) was first officially used and also the first policy initiatives set out by a local education authority to develop and implement a district-wide profession-oriented and performance-related rank system for principals (Wang, 2012; Wang, 2016; Wang, 2017; Yuan, et. al., 2017). The establishment of PCLS as one of local policy initiatives was endorsed by Chinese central government in 1999. In the document *The Decision of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Deepening Education Reform and Promoting Quality-Oriented Education in An All-Round Way*, CCCPC and the State Council called for local governments to try out the PCLS, gradually improve the selecting and promotion system for principals, and encourage outstanding principals to serve in disadvantage and challenging schools (CCCPC and the State Council, 1999). Since then, encouraging, promoting, and implementing the PCLS has been reiterated by Chinese central government (State Council,2001; Office of the National Medium and Long Term Education Working Group,2010; Organization Department of CCCPC and MOE,2017; CCCPC and the State Council,2018). By 2018, the PCLS has been implemented in most provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the central

government. However, there is no unified the PCLS across the country because the PCLS is actually a type of performance-related pay system. It is impossible for central government to establish a unified PCLS for principals all over the country since the principal salary system which set in terms of local consumption level is different from province to province, and even different from district to district.

To further explain the PCLS in detail, we take the PCLS of Shanghai as an example. Under the PCLS of Shanghai, the school principals are classified into a hierarchical rank system with five rank titles and eleven levels (see Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.2 The rank titles and levels of *Principal Career-ladder System of Shanghai***

Initial principals start from the rank title of Junior Principal at Level C. They will promote to Level B and Level A if they pass the annual appraisals in the first year and the second year. The junior principals at level A are eligible to apply for the rank title of Middle Principal. The candidates for Middle Principal will be evaluated and get the rank title of Middle Principal if they pass the evaluation. Principals who get the title of Middle Principal start from Level D and then promote to next level (e.g. from Level D to Level C, from Level C to Level B, etc.) biennially if they pass the annual appraisal for two consecutive years. However, the middle principals will be eligible to apply for the rank of Senior Principal after three years working as Middle Principal. Namely, they can apply for the rank of Senior Principal in second year of Middle Principal at

Level C if they think that their performance is good enough. As candidates for Senior Principal, they will be evaluated and get the rank title of Senior Principal if they pass the evaluation. The rule of promotion from Level D to Level A of Senior Principal is almost same as promotion rule for Middle Principal. Although Senior Principals will be eligible to apply for the rank of Superfine Principal after two years working as Senior Principals, it is difficult for most of candidates to pass the strict evaluation because the quota of Superfine Principals is generally less than five percent of the total number of serving principals (SMEC, 2015a). Evaluations for the candidates of Middle Principal, Senior Principal, and Superfine Principal in Shanghai are conducted according to *The evaluation and accreditation criteria for primary and secondary school principal career-ladder of Shanghai (Revised edition)* developed and published by Shanghai Municipal Education Commission. The framework of the criteria consists of three indicators and eight sub-indicators (see Table 2.2). The

**Table 2.2 The framework of evaluation criteria for Principal Career-ladder System of Shanghai**

Indicators	Sub-indicators
Personal character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Values and beliefs</li> <li>•Moral characters</li> </ul>
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Leadership philosophy and notions</li> <li>•Management knowledge and skills</li> <li>•Curriculum and instructional leadership</li> <li>•Team building and staff development</li> </ul>
School outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School performance</li> <li>•Social reputation</li> </ul>

Source from: Shanghai Municipal Education Commission,2015b.

evaluation indicators and sub-indicators for Middle, Senior, and Superfine Principals are same but the detailed contents under the sub-indicators to evaluate the candidates of different rank titles are different. Besides the criteria, the prerequisites for applicants who apply for any rank titles are also set. It is noteworthy that one of prerequisites for applicants is to have lessons in their schools and no less than two periods each week (SMEC, 2015a). It suggests that principals should never

separate themselves from classroom practice though principals' core mission is school leadership.

### 2.2.5 *Term-Accountability by Objectives* [REN-QI-MU-BIAO-ZE-REN-ZHI]

*Term-Accountability by Objectives* [REN-QI-MU-BIAO-ZE-REN-ZHI] refers to the system to ensure a principal, in his/her leadership term, to take responsibility in setting appropriate objectives for his/her school development and leading school members to achieve the objectives, and the principal will be finally evaluated in the light of the extent of objectives achievement. In fact, the *Term-Accountability by Objectives* (TABO) is a system closely related to the PCLS in practice and is usually employed as one of supporting systems for PCLS.

Before 1980s, the position of principal in China was a de facto tenured position. At the time, once a person was appointed to the post of principal, there was no definite time limit for his position whether he did more or less and did well or badly. Namely, once a principal was appointed, he/she wouldn't be terminated until he/she retired or unless he/she was under extraordinary circumstances, such as committing a crime or coming down with severe illness. Thus, the de facto tenured system for principals was increasingly inconsistent with the societal expectations for principals in the education reform launched in the mid-1980s in China. During the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, some education bureaus at district level in large cities took the lead in abolishing the de facto tenured system for principals by establishing a new system so-called TABO as an alternative to the old system (Ni, 1984; Liu, 1999). To some extent, the idea of the TABO actually drew on some basic ideas of *Management by Objectives* (MBO) presented in Peter Drucker's book *The Practice of Management* since 1980s is the time when MOB was introduced into China and became popular soon. Those leaders at education bureaus of districts in large cities who had accepted some basic ideas of MBO put the ideas into the local context and coined the term TABO in early 1980s. TABO as a term was acknowledged and officially used by Chinese government in 2001 in *The decision of State Council's on the reform and development of basic education* (State Council, 2001). TABO was reiterated and advocated by the Ministry of Personnel (MOP) and the MOE when these two departments jointly stated in their RHD that "the principals of primary and secondary schools should be given a fixed-term appointment. The ordinary term of office for principals is three to five years, and they can be reappointed. It is necessary to make clear principals responsibilities associated with the objectives of their term of office." (MOP and MOE, 2003). The RHD of the MOP and the MOE in 2003 really gave the

momentum to promote TABO being more widely prevalent in China in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (Wang, 2004; Cao, 2006; Jia, 2009; Zhang, 2010). In 2017, the Organization Department of CCCPC and the MOE clearly stated in a RHD titled *Circular of Organization Department of CCCPC and the MOE on publishing of Provisional measures for the management of leaders of primary and secondary schools* that the TABO should be generally implemented in managing school leadership team and team members (Organization Department of CCCPC and MOE, 2017). Therefore, the TABO has become a policy requirement that must be implemented since 2017.

In the implementation of TABO, local education authorities usually make some corresponding provisions and detailed requirements. In Tanggu District of Tianjin, for example, the Education Bureau of Tanggu District emphasized that the objectives setting for TABO was not exclusively a principal's personal job. Rather, the school staff should involve in the process of objectives setting. Moreover, the principal should report the extent of objectives achievement to school staff at the end of his/her term and the feedback of staff could be a part of basis to determine if he/she can get his/her another leadership term (Jia, 2009). In Daoli District of Haerbin, the education bureau of the district set five-step procedure to exercise TABO. The first step was that the education bureau signed the contract with individual principals to clearly define and describe the performance requirements for the principals on achieving the objectives of their school effectiveness and improvement within their leadership term. Secondly, the education bureau made efforts to enhance their leadership capacity and management skills to address possible challenge by providing principals with various leadership workshops, seminars, and forums. Thirdly, the officials of education bureau worked with professional and consultancy staff of district-level supporting institutions (e.g. teacher training institute, teaching-study office, etc. ) in monitoring individual principals' on-going performance of leadership for school effectiveness and improvement and providing principals with timely, professional and targeted support. Fourthly, the professionals of the support units at the district made an effort to identify the cases of best leadership practices by school visits, field observations, and interaction with school leaders and teachers. Then they spread the successful leadership experience over the district. Finally, the directorates of education bureau and professional support units of the district assisted individual principals to find out existing defects in their leadership practice and identified their school's potential challenge by providing the information collected from school documents examining and



survey of stakeholders (Liu, 1999). The most important part of the TABO is perhaps the final comprehensive appraisal of the principals' performance at the end of their leadership term. The final appraisal will determine whether they can get reappointment for next term or have to leave the position of principal, and whether they can promote to higher rank or stay at their original rank.

### **2.2.6 Leadership Team Appraisal** [LING-DAO-BAN-ZI-KAO-HE]

As we illustrated in Chapter 1, a school leadership team in China refers to all leaders at school level, which is composed of a principal, a Party secretary, vice-principals, and a chairperson of School Trade Union. *Leadership Team Appraisal* [LING-DAO-BAN-ZI-KAO-HE] is the process to appraise the performance of the team as a whole as well as individual performance of each team member. However, the principal is always the focal person in *Leadership Team Appraisal* (hereafter called LTA) since the principal is the chief leader in the team according to the *Education Law of PRC* and the *Principal Responsibility System*. The policy basis for LTA is relevant RHDs jointly issued by the Organization Department of CCCPC and the MOE. LTA can be conducted either at the end of a year (if it is an annual LTA) or at the end of a leadership term (if it is a leadership term LTA). In the most recent published RHD involving the policy of LTA, the Organization Department of CCCPC and the MOE once again emphasized the importance of LTA and stated that the results of the LTA should be respectively fed back to the leadership team and every team member in a proper way, as well as to be recorded and would affect team members' career development in the future (Organization Department of CCCPC and MOE, 2017). To fully understand the LTA, it is necessary to explore another three terms, *Reporting Performance and Integrity* [SHU-ZHI-SHU-LIAN], *democratic reviewing* [MIN-ZHU-PING-YI] and *Comprehensive Evaluation* [ZHONG-HE-PING-JIA].

### **2.2.7 Reporting Performance and Integrity** [SHU-ZHI-SHU-LIAN]

In the term *Reporting Performance and Integrity* [SHU-ZHI-SHU-LIAN], the "performance" refers to the "leadership performance" whereas the "integrity" refers to the "a leader's personal integrity". *Reporting Performance and Integrity* is one of phases in the procedure of LTA, in which the school leadership team members respectively report their leadership performance and personal integrity to the LTA task group organized by local education bureau (usually composed of officials from education bureau and the professionals from district-level supporting institutions),

and all school staff and the representatives of other stakeholders. A normal *Reporting Performance and Integrity* begins with the task group's introduction of the purposes of this LTA, the ways of information collection, and the procedure to the LTA. Following the introduction, the principal as the chief leader of leadership team represents the team to report the school's progress and achievements in achieving desired goals and objectives. After the principal's report, other members of the leadership team, one by one, report respectively how they fulfilled their leadership responsibilities, how they contributed to achieving desired goals and objectives of the school, and how they kept their personal integrity and didn't abuse their authority in their leadership practice. Commonly, the principal's report of leadership team's performance should focus on how accomplishment of the objectives regarding student outcomes, teacher development and team building, building of staff ethics and code of conduct, campus construction and environment creating, campus safety, and school policy and regulations development while the focal issues of leaders' personal integrity is concerned with the appropriateness of school funding allocation, reception costs, school vehicles using, major equipment purchasing, and infrastructure maintenance and renovation (Fu & Li, 2004; Shen, 2005; GY County Education Bureau, 2017).

### **2.2.8 Democratic Reviewing [MIN-ZHU-PING-YI]**

*Democratic Reviewing* [MIN-ZHU-PING-YI] means to appraise the performance and personal integrity of leadership team members by democratic ways. In practice of LTA, the typical way of *Democratic Reviewing* is to rate leadership team by a performance checklist. It is conducted just following the *Reporting Performance and Integrity*. The LTA task group will hand out a performance checklist with the names of leadership team members to every school staff member and representative of other stakeholders at the venue of *Reporting Performance and Integrity* and asked them to tick respectively on the leadership performance and personal integrity of each member of the leadership team in the light of the rating scale ranging from very much satisfied to unsatisfied. Another way of *Democratic Reviewing* which is also conducted by LTA task group is the individual staff interview. Commonly, they pick up interviewees from the middle managers and teachers of the school randomly and interview with them individually to collect the information about the leadership performance and personal integrity of the leadership team members. Finally, the LTA task group will write a summary of the *Democratic Reviewing* based on the result of performance checklist and the information from the staff interview (Liu & Liu,

2006; GY County Education Bureau, 2017).

### **2.2.9 Comprehensive Evaluation [ZONG-HE-PING-JIA]**

The LTA is defined in China's educational context as a type of *Comprehensive Evaluation* [ZONG-HE-PING-JIA]. The final result of LTA depends on not only the result of *Democratic Reviewing*, but also results or conclusions from some other appraisal means of LTA. In the case of LTA conducted in one of districts of Shanghai, the complete work of the LTA consisted of *Democratic Reviewing* (with 40% weight), mutual evaluation between school leaders within the district (10% weight), the report of school inspection conducted by the district inspection office (20% weight), and the comment of the director/vice-director of the district education bureau (30% weight)(Chen,1999). Finally, the task group will submit a comprehensive LTA report with overall conclusion and detailed comments on school performance, as well as every leadership team member to education bureau. This LTA report will serve as a key reference for school leaders' retaining their leadership position or getting reappointment and getting promotion or demotion.

### **2.3 Summary and Discussion**

In this chapter, nine key terms have been explored and interpreted, by which one can understand the outline and features of China's policy regarding management of principals. In exploring the term *Red-Head-Document* [HONG-TOU-WEN-JIAN], the author reviewed nine important RHDs concerning management of principals promulgated by Chinese central government, and generally reflected the course of the policy evolution in past 36 years in China. Moreover, one can also see one of Chinese characteristics in supervising leadership which different from those in Western countries, that is, "cadres(leaders) should be supervised by the Party" [DANG-GUAN-GAN-BU] (Organization Department of CCCPC and MOE,2017). It is the CPC's tradition and one of the CPC's principles in leadership, too. Anyway, the principal's status is still a type of cadres in China's political or administrative context though Chinese government has recently tended to view principals as professionals rather than officials. It is the reason why most important RHDs regarding principal management were developed and issued jointly by the Organization Department of CCCPC and the MOE (see No. 4 and No.9 RHDs in Table 2.1). Next term concerned by this chapter is *Reserve Principal* [HOU-BEI-XIAO-ZHANG]. The *Reserve Principal*, as one of preparation stages for principals/vice principals, has been highlighted in school leader's preparation since the Organization Department of CCCPC proclaimed in 1992 that school

principals should be normally selected from the reserve cadres (principals) (Organization Department of CCCPC & SEC,1992). The author of this book conducted two interviews respectively with school principals and Education Bureau Officials in 2018. In the interview with education bureau officials at district /county level (hereafter called *Intrview2018-EBO*), all interviewees thought that it was necessary for prospective principals/vice principals to have experience of reserve principal before they were appointed as principal/vice principal. Eleven out of fifteen interviewees confirmed that reserve principal was a no-skip-stage in school leadership preparation of their district/county education system (See Appendix B). In the interview with principals (hereafter called *Intrview2018- Principal*), 14 out of 17 interviewees said that they had had the experience of reserve principal before they got the position of principal/vice-principal (See Appendix B). It seems that the policy about *reserve principal* is positive and effective in China's leadership preparation after we examine the prerequisite, quota and proportion, procedure of selection, pre-service training, and so on. Nevertheless, there are also some defects in the policy. One of salient defects could be the regulation on the restriction for candidate's age. Although there is no uniform regulation on the upper age limit for *reserve principal* candidates, they are generally, in practice of leadership preparation, limited to no older than 45years old. The restriction for candidate's age is beneficial to the early development and fast growth of young talents, but, on the other hand, the staff is definitely excluded from the candidate list of *reserve principal* if they aren't middle managers or don't display their leadership talent until middle age. "This is exactly the opposite of a famous Chinese saying, '[a] great talent takes time to mature [DA-QI-WAN-CHENG]'", one of interviewees of *Intrview2018- Principal* said. For those middle managers who are nearly 40 years old, whether or not they can enter the candidate list of reserve principal is crucial because it means, for them, now or never. The third term *Serving a Temporary Position* [GUA-ZHI-DUAN-LIAN] is about a kind of field-based training approach for school leadership which has been widely accepted and employed in China since 1990s. The purpose, format, and content of this field-based leadership training were examined in this chapter by related literature review. Interestingly, we found that the approach of *servicing a temporary position* is somewhat similar to the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach though the former was created by the Chinese leadership practitioners and the latter was developed by the American scholars. In their book *Problem Based Learning in Leadership Development*, Edwin M. Bridges and Philip

Hallinger wrote, "PBL proponents assume that learning involves both *knowing* and *doing*. Knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge are of equal important. Program designers also assume that students bring knowledge to each learning experience. Moreover, PBL adherents assume that students are more likely to learn new knowledge when the following conditions are met: (1) their prior knowledge is activated and they are encouraged to incorporate new knowledge into their preexisting knowledge; (2) they are given numerous opportunities to apply it; and (3) they encode the new knowledge in a context that resembles the context in which it subsequently will be used." (Bridges & Hallinger, 1995, p.5) If this is the underlying assumption of PBL, then it is largely similar to the assumption of *Serving a Temporary Position*. The fourth term *Principal Career-ladder System* [XIAO-ZHANG-ZHI-JI-ZHI] is a management system regarding principals' current income and their career development in the long run. It has had strongly influence and will continue to have a profound influence on the school leadership selection, preparation, development, and appraisal because it means that the conventional hierarchy for principals has been replaced by a profession-oriented and performance-related rank system. In exploring the term, the author reviewed the conventional hierarchy for principals and identified its major maladies. The author illustrated the policy from central government which encouraged and promoted local education authorities to adopt *Principal Career-ladder System* (PCLS) and examined the progress of PCLS in practice, in particular, the case of PCLS in Shanghai. It is noted that one of prerequisites for applicants who apply for any rank titles is to have at least two lessons per week. This prerequisite once again demonstrates how the assumption of "a good principal, first of all, should be a good teacher" is embedded in China's policy regarding principal management. It is found out that the feedback on PCLS was positive in general by reviewing several related surveys and interviews conducted by Chinese researchers in recent years. (Yang, 2006; Guo, 2007; Wang, 2012). Yet, some challenges in implementation of PCLS remain to be addressed though most of principals and local education authority officials agree with the PCLS (Lin, 2016). Ten years after the implementation of PCLS in Shanghai, for example, a survey of Shanghai principals revealed that only a bit change of principals' enthusiasm for work, sense of responsibility, average income, and social status has happened since the implementation of PCLS (Yang, 2006). Perhaps, one of the big challenges is that the real performance of principals is technically difficult to be fairly evaluated given the antecedent variables of leadership are different from school to school,

which is difficult for evaluators to make an in-depth comparison and analysis in a limited period of time. The fifth term explored in this chapter is *Term-Accountability by Objectives* [REN-QI-MU-BIAO-ZE-REN-ZHI]. It emerged in 1980s when leaders of some local education authorities in large cities would like to change the stale and rigid convention of de facto tenured appointment for principals and to create a new system to replace the old one. The *Term-Accountability by Objectives* (TABO) turned up as the local initiative of school leadership accountability, but it was advocated by Chinese central government later on and has become a clear and mandatory requirement since 2017. Thus, the TABO has been widely adopted by local education authorities in China since then. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the pioneering TABO proponents actually drew on some basic ideas of Drucker's *Management of Objectives*. However, the ideas and notions in implementing TABO in some districts was borrowed from another Western created theory, the Total Quality Management although this Western theory had been modified in China's leadership context. Perhaps, it is just a case in point that how Western leadership knowledge, as one of knowledge sources of China's school leadership, contributes to contemporary China's school leadership practice. The last four terms of this chapter are related to leadership appraisal. In exploring the term *Leadership Team Appraisal* [LING-DAO-BAN-ZI-KAO-HE]. The author reviewed the most recent policy regarding *Leadership Team Appraisal* (LTA), and interpreted the terms *Reporting Performance and Integrity* [SHU-ZHI-SHU-LIAN], *Democratic Reviewing* [MIN-ZHU-PING-YI] and *Comprehensive Evaluation* [ZONG-HE-PING-JIA] which are revolved around the LTA. Among these three terms, the first one, *Reporting Performance and Integrity* may contain the most distinctive Chinese cultural characteristics given the personal integrity of the principal and other members of the leadership team is set as an independent part that is equally important to leadership performance in LTA. In the view of the majority of Chinese teachers, principal's personal integrity is paramount. They admitted in a questionnaire survey that "personally, I put a higher value on my principal's upright character or moral modeling than his/her knowledge and skills in management" (see *CSTWCE2017-teachers* in Appendix A). Almost similarly, one Chinese researcher found out, based on a broad interview with primary school teachers in a district, that teachers generally believed that the most important quality of principals is the moral integrity, followed by their skills and capacity in leadership and management (Wang, 2012). Yet, does it

suggest that there is a potential conflict, in China's LTA, between the requirements for principal professionalization (modern leadership knowledge and skills) and traditional Chinese view for the principal's role? It remains to be concerned with. As a component of the whole principal management system, the LTA established in the early 1990s has, in general, made the remarkable contribution to promoting the professionalization of Chinese principals. However, in the opinion of some Chinese researchers in the field of school leadership, it is necessary for some aspects of the LTA to be improved. For example, focusing on both the performance of the team as a whole and on individual performance of team members in the LTA can leads, in LTA practice, to confusion between school performance and personal performance (Wang & Yang, 2016). One of the frequent misunderstandings in LTA is that every member of leadership team at a prestigious school must be excellent, and every member of leadership team at a high performing school must perform very well, or vice versa.

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