

Abstract

School based management (SBM) reforms have been introduced around the world. Most SBM reforms include some form of devolvement of decision-making processes in the areas of budget, curriculum and staffing to the school level. However, empirical evidence for the effectiveness of this wide variety of reforms has been conflicted. Moreover, existing examinations of SBM reform effectiveness often overlook whether and to what extent SBM schools indeed implement the reform directives. Hence, focusing on the inner workings of schools operating under SBM reforms is required in order to differentiate between failures of the SBM model and failures of SBM implementation. This study, therefore, uses regression analyses between five sets of variables in order to examine the connections between the various “moving parts” of the Israeli SBM model: connections between schools’ background characteristics, their spending and income, organizational-culture attributes and the schools’ outcomes. Findings show a disconnect between financial and non-financial variables. On the other hand, school teamwork is strongly connected to school outcomes. However, there is no evidence that SBM has influenced teamwork. Parental involvement is also strongly connected to SBM school outcomes, but was also not found to be influenced by SBM. Furthermore, the type of parental involvement that is more strongly linked to outcomes is that of individual involvement based on a strong relationship between teachers and parents, rather than collective involvement of parents in the school management. Findings also show that contrary to what some believe, as can be seen from the choice of some Israeli school districts to refrain from doing so (in breach of the SBM Directorate’s guidelines), involving parents is not as contentious as expected and is actually positively linked to teacher satisfaction. There is some weak evidence to suggest that accumulative time in SBM may dull socioeconomic inequalities with regards to access to resources and school outcomes. There is also weak evidence indicating that alongside the organizational changes that take time to ripen, schools may go through a “learning curve” over a number of years, during which they learn how to run their own budgets. Investigating SBM as a chain of influences, this study allows a more nuanced unfold of SBM influences on school operation and outcomes.