
WHAT IS SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT?



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Preface

School-based management (SBM) has become a very popular movement over the past decade. Our SBM work program emerged out of a need to define the concept more clearly, review the evidence, support impact assessments in various countries, and provide some initial feedback to teams preparing education projects. During first phase of the SBM work program, the team undertook a detailed stocktaking of the existing literature on SBM. At the same time we identified several examples of SBM reforms that we are now supporting through ongoing impact assessments. An online toolkit providing some general principles that can broadly be applied to the implementation of SBM reforms has been developed and can be accessed on <http://www.worldbank.org/education/economicssd>.

See companion piece: *What Do We Know About School-Based Management?*

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Introduction

Despite the clear commitment of governments and international agencies to the education sector, efficient and equitable access to education is still proving to be elusive for many people around the world. Girls, indigenous peoples, and other poor and marginalized groups often have only limited access to education. These access issues are being addressed with great commitment in international initiatives, such as Education for All, in which resources are being channeled to low-income countries to help them to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for education. However, even where children do have access to educational facilities, the quality of education that is provided is often very poor. This has become increasingly apparent in international learning tests such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in which most of the students from developing countries fail to excel. There is evidence that merely increasing resource allocations will not increase the equity or improve the quality of education in the absence of institutional reforms (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007).

Governments around the world are introducing a range of strategies aimed at improving the financing and delivery of education services, with a more recent emphasis on improving quality as well as increasing quantity (enrollments) in education. One such strategy is to decentralize education decision-making by increasing parental and community involvement in schools—which is popularly known as school-based management (SBM). The argument in favor of

SBM is that decentralizing decision-making authority to parents and communities fosters demand and ensures that schools provide the social and economic benefits that best reflect the priorities and values of those local communities (Lewis, 2006; and Leithwood and Menzies, 1998). Education reforms in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries tend to share some common characteristics of this kind, including increased school autonomy, greater responsiveness to local needs, and the overall objective of improving students' academic performance (OECD, 2004). Most countries whose students perform well in international student achievement tests give local authorities and schools substantial autonomy to decide the content of their curriculum and the allocation and management of their resources.

An increasing number of developing countries are introducing SBM reforms aimed at empowering principals and teachers or at strengthening their professional motivation, thereby enhancing their sense of ownership of the school. Many of these reforms have also strengthened parental involvement in the schools, sometimes by means of school councils. Almost 11 percent of all projects in the World Bank's education portfolio for fiscal years 2000–06 supported school-based management, a total of 17 among about 157 projects (see Table 1). This represents \$1.74 billion or 23 percent of the Bank's total education financing.

The majority of SBM projects in the Bank's current portfolio are in Latin American and South Asian countries, including Argentina, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Mexico, and Sri Lanka. In addition, a number of current and upcoming projects in the Africa region have a component focused on

Table 1 School-Based Management in World Bank–Financed Education Projects (Fiscal years 2000–2006)

	Total	SBM	%
Education projects (number)	157	17	10.8
Education lending (\$billion)	7.6	1.7	22.9

strengthening school-level committees and SBM. There are also two Bank-supported SBM projects in Europe and Central Asia (in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Serbia and Montenegro) and one each in East Asia and the Pacific (the Philippines), and in the Middle East and North Africa (Lebanon).

The few well-documented cases of SBM implementation that have been subject to rigorous impact evaluations have already been reviewed elsewhere (World Bank, 2007a). In this paper, we focus on the concept of SBM and its different forms and dimensions and present a conceptual framework for understanding it. We define SBM broadly to include community-based management and parental participation schemes but do not explicitly include stand-alone, or one-off, school grants programs that are not meant to be permanent alterations in school management.

SBM programs lie along a continuum in terms of the degree to which decision-making is devolved to the local level. Some devolve only a single area of autonomy, whereas others go further and devolve the power to hire and fire teachers and authority over substantial resources, while at the far end of the spectrum there are those that encourage the private and community management of schools as well as allow parents to create schools. Thus, there are both strong and weak versions of SBM based on how much decision-making power has been transferred to the school.

The World Bank's World Development Report 2004 (WDR 2004) presented a conceptual framework for SBM (World Bank, 2003a). The WDR argues that school autonomy and accountability can help to solve some fundamental problems in education. While increasing resource flows and support to the education sector is one aspect

of increasing the access of the poor to better quality education, it is by no means sufficient. The SBM approach aims to improve service delivery to the poor by increasing their choice and participation in service delivery, by giving citizens a voice in school management by making information widely available, and by strengthening the incentives for schools to deliver effective services to the poor and by penalizing those who fail to deliver.

School-Based Management Defined

SBM is the decentralization of authority from the central government to the school level (Caldwell, 2005). In the words of Malen et al. (1990), "School-based management can be viewed conceptually as a formal alteration of governance structures, as a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvement might be stimulated and sustained."

Thus, in SBM, responsibility for, and decision-making authority over, school operations is transferred to principals, teachers, and parents, and sometimes to students and other school community members. However, these school-level actors have to conform to or operate within a set of policies determined by the central government. SBM programs exist in many different forms, both in terms of who has the power to make decisions and in terms of the degree of decision-making that is devolved to the school level. While some programs transfer authority only to principals or teachers, others encourage or mandate parental and community participation, often as members of school committees (or school councils or school management committees). In general, SBM programs transfer authority over one or more of the following activities: budget allocation, the hiring and firing of teachers and other school staff, curriculum development, the procurement of textbooks and other educational material, infrastructure improvements, and the monitoring and evaluation of teacher performance and student learning outcomes (see Table 2).

Table 2 Various Functions for which Responsibility Is Devolved in Select Countries

Council Functions	EDUCO, El Salvador	PRONADE, Guatemala	PROHECO, Honduras	ASP, Nicaragua	PEC, Mexico	AGES, Mexico	Brazil	Chicago	Florida (Monroe County)	New York (Rochester)	Australia	New Zealand	Mozambique	DSSP, Mozambique	COGES, Niger	FPESP, Kenya
Personnel Management																
Paying staff salaries	*	*	*	*	*						*	*				
Establishing incentives for teaching staff				*	*					*	*	*				
Hiring/firing teaching staff	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*			*	(some)
Hiring/firing administrative staff				*	*						*	*			*	(some)
Supervising and evaluating teachers	*	*	*	*	*						*	*			*	
Funding teacher training					*							*				
Pedagogy																
Setting classroom hours by subject				*	*							*				
Selecting some textbooks/curriculum				*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*				*
Method of instruction					*		*	*	*	*	*	*				
School calendar				*	*											
Maintenance and Infrastructure																
Building/maintaining school	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*
Buying school material	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Budget																
Budget oversight	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Budget allocation				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Establishing school fee				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Monitoring and Evaluation																
Administrative activities					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pedagogical decisions					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Note: Adapted from di Gropello (2006).
Source: Authors' compilation from relevant literature.

The Theory behind School-Based Management

Good education is not only about physical inputs, such as classrooms, teachers, and textbooks, but also about incentives that lead to better instruction and learning. Education systems are extremely demanding of the managerial, technical, and financial capacity of governments, and, thus, as a service, education is too complex to be efficiently produced and distributed in a centralized fashion (King and Cordeiro-Guerra, 2005; and Montreal Economic Institute, 2007). Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) suggest that most of the incentives that affect learning outcomes are institutional in nature, and they identify three in particular: (i) choice and competition; (ii) school autonomy; and (iii) school accountability. The idea behind choice and competition is that parents who are interested in maximizing their children's learning outcomes are able to choose to send their children to the most productive (in terms of academic results) school that they can find. This demand-side pressure on schools will thus improve the performance of all schools if they want to compete for students. Similarly, local decision-making and fiscal decentralization can have positive effects on school outcomes such as test scores or graduation rates by holding the schools accountable for the "outputs" that they produce. The World Development Report 2004, *Making Services Work for Poor People*, presents a very similar framework, in that it suggests that good quality and timely service provision can be ensured if service providers can be held accountable to their *clients* (World Bank, 2003a). In the case of the education sector, this would mean students and their parents.

In the context of developed countries, the core idea behind SBM is that those who work in a school building should have greater control of the management of what goes on in the building. In developing countries, the idea behind SBM is less ambitious, in that it focuses mainly on involving community and parents in the school decision-making process rather than putting them entirely in control. However, in both cases,

the central government always plays some role in education, and the precise definition of this role affects how SBM activities are conceived and implemented.

SBM in almost all of its manifestations involves community members in school decision-making. Because these community members are usually parents of children enrolled in the school, they have an incentive to improve their children's education. As a result, SBM can be expected to improve student achievement and other outcomes as these local people demand closer monitoring of school personnel, better student evaluations, a closer match between the school's needs and its policies, and a more efficient use of resources. For instance, although the evidence is mixed, in a number of diverse countries, such as Papua New Guinea, India, and Nicaragua, parental participation in school management has reduced teacher absenteeism (for a detailed discussion see Patrinos and Kagia, 2007; and Karim et al., 2004).

SBM has several other benefits. Under these arrangements, schools are managed more transparently, thus reducing opportunities for corruption. Also, SBM often gives parents and stakeholders opportunities to increase their skills. In some cases, training in shared decision-making, interpersonal skills, and management skills is offered to school council members so that they can become more capable participants in the SBM process (Briggs and Wohlstetter, 1999) and at the same time benefit the community as a whole.

A Few Caveats

Notwithstanding the basic theory of SBM, no theorist disputes the interdependence of governments, school administration, teacher classroom behavior, and, in most cases, parental attitudes. So by definition, putting SBM into practice involves ensuring that all of these actors work together in a system of mutual dependence. However, devolving power to the school level means that some groups outside of the school, such as district or local education offices, are likely to lose some of their power, thus changing

the power dynamics within each school. For instance, this might mean that teachers have to surrender some control over how they run their classrooms or that local education offices lose control over funds and, hence, the power that comes with that. Thus, describing SBM in terms of the transfer of powers will inevitably make it difficult to implement because, while some stakeholders will gain, others will lose. This can be exacerbated by the fact that the powers that are most commonly devolved to the school level are those that matter most to schools, such as its administration (budgets and personnel), its pedagogy (curriculum and teaching practices), and its external relations (with governments and the local community). As more decision-making reverts to school staff, parents, and local community members, it is central and local government officials who are most likely to lose the authority that comes with making budgetary decisions and with hiring and firing personnel, and many are likely to resent the loss. For instance, in Chicago, decision-making authority over school management was transferred to local school councils consisting of the principals, teacher representatives, parents, and local community members (Cook et al., 2000; and Abu-Duhou, 1999). In some cases, local community members took over one or more school councils and then proceeded to use them for their own political ends (such as increasing community control over city resources and their say in non-educational matters) rather than for the education of children. As a result, the mayor ended the SBM experiment by reclaiming authority and budgets and thus essentially making the local school councils redundant (Cook, 2007).

Also, SBM often requires teachers to play greater roles in the governance and management of the schools where they teach. While this enlarges the scope of their job, it also requires more time and energy from them and can sometimes limit their traditional freedom to do whatever they want inside the classroom. Not all teachers appreciate having to take on additional managerial roles and responsibilities, even when these changes are marginal (Cook, 2007; Wylie, 1996; and Whitty et al., 1998).

By making the school the centerpiece of educational policy change, SBM does not assume that the roles played by either the government or by individual teachers will be negligible. Public schools will always exist in some larger policy and administrative context that affects their operations. The key is to identify exactly what the government's role in decision-making should be.

A Typology of School-Based Management

SBM has been introduced in countries as diverse as New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Hong Kong (SAR), Thailand, and Israel. However, these SBM reforms have been far from uniform and have encompassed a wide variety of different approaches. As the definition of SBM reflects, it is a form of decentralization that makes the school the centerpiece of educational improvement and relies on the redistribution of responsibilities as the primary way to bring about these improvements. This definition leaves plenty of room for interpretation, and the reality is that there are now many different kinds of SBM being implemented. SBM reforms are shaped by the reformers' objectives and by broader national policy and social contexts.

SBM approaches differ in two main ways: the "*who*," that is, to whom the "decision-making authority" is devolved, and the "*what*," that is, the degree of autonomy that is devolved. This is what we call the autonomy-participation nexus. The various combinations of these two dimensions make almost every SBM reform unique. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (<http://www.sedl.org>) in the United States has an inventory of more than 800 SBM models (Rowan et al., 2004), and about 29 of them have been evaluated at least once (Borman et al., 2003). Cook (2007) explains SBM as a construct of modest entitativity, in other words, a model that cannot have a unique form in all of the places in which it is implemented (see Box 1), which means that SBM reforms around the world are inevitably different from each other. In the discussion that follows,

BOX 1.*The Modest Entitivity of School-Based Management*

In 1999, the United States Congress passed a Comprehensive School Reform Act, which outlined the 11 components of an autonomous local school. However, nobody argues that all of these 11 components must be in place for a school to be considered as having adopted either comprehensive school reform (CSR) or school-based management (SBM). Nor has anyone specified a minimum or core number of attributes needed for a school to qualify for either label. However, it is obvious that as more of these components are included in an SBM plan, the more radical will be the organizational change being adopted. The reality in the U.S. is that, to varying degrees, schools can and do pick and choose among these components. Depending on the school, one component can either be central or peripheral to their school's strategic plan, and it may be put into practice as its inventor intended, or be adapted in ways that the inventor may not recognize or like. Given all of the possible combinations of these components, it is clear that there are thousands of different ways to put together an SBM plan, and how this is done can have important consequences for the school and for the reform as a whole.

A school may choose to make fundamental changes to all of its administrative, pedagogical, and external relations functions or to change just a few of them. The key decision-making authority may stay with the principal, or be shared with teachers, or shared with teachers, parents, and other community representatives. The new decision-makers might choose as their major goal to modify the curriculum, or to improve students' social behavior, or improve students' academic performance, or reduce teacher turnover, or all the above. Performance monitoring may be central, peripheral, or nonexistent; and if it exists, it may require quantitative data or just informal feedback. Parents may be asked to perform many school roles or be involved only tangentially, and many parents may be involved or just a few.

The point is not just that each of the 11 components can each be made operational in multiple ways but also that each component can be combined in literally thousands of ways across all of the variants of all of the other components. The net result is that, whatever the achieved theoretical consensus about SBM, it still has modest entitivity at the school level. It is not devoid of all entitivity since the core concept can always be indexed as the degree to which change occurs in the locus of decision-making favoring the whole-school level. However, the context in which SBM is put into practice is so variable that one school's SBM is unlikely to look like another's.

Source: Cook 2007.

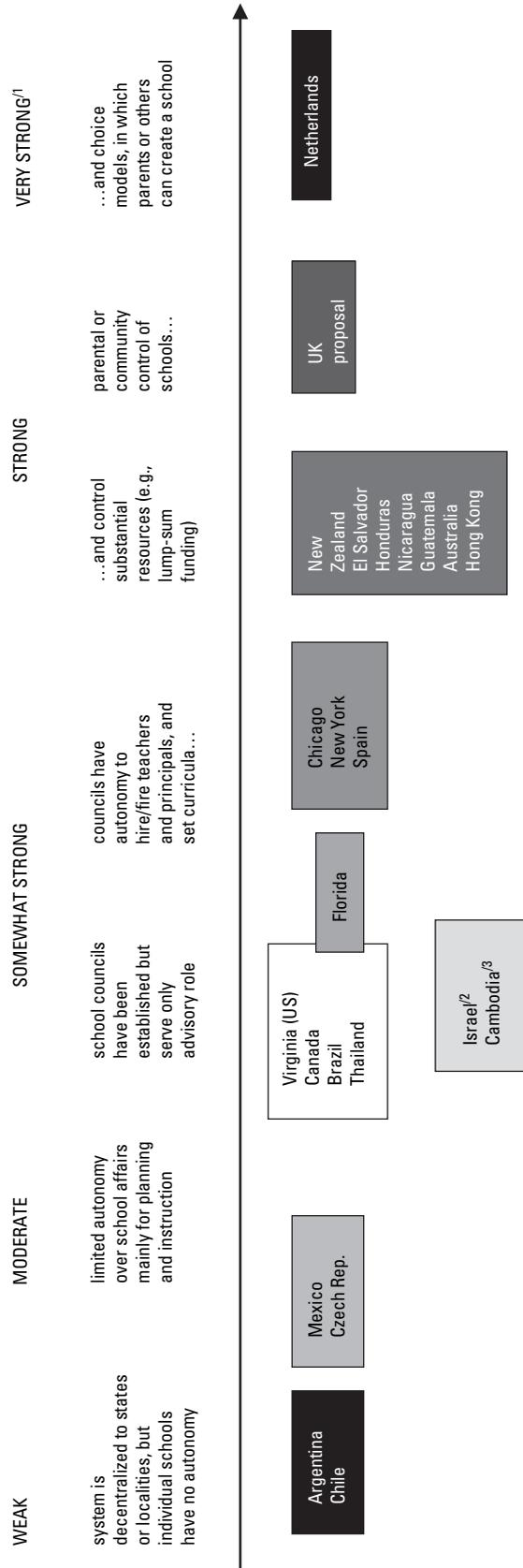
we explore the main forms taken by SBM, but this is by no means an exhaustive typology.

The Autonomy Continuum

The SBM programs lie along a continuum of the degree to which decision-making is devolved to the local level—from limited autonomy, to more ambitious programs that allow schools to hire and fire teachers, to programs that give schools control over substantial resources, to those that promote private and community management of schools and those that may eventually allow parents to create their own schools. Figure 1 depicts this continuum and presents some of the countries that have implemented SBM reforms across this continuum of “weak” to “strong” reforms. It should be noted, however, that we do not use the terms “weak” and “strong” to classify any SBM system as better as, or worse than, any other but simply to define the degree of autonomy awarded to the school level. For instance, we define “weak” SBM reforms as those in

which schools have only limited autonomy, usually over areas related to instructional methods or planning for school improvement, as in the quality schools program in Mexico (the *Programa Escuelas de Calidad* or PEC) (Skoufias and Shapiro, 2006; and Karim et al., 2004). When school councils start serving an advisory role, such as in Prince William County in Virginia (Drury and Levin, 1994) or in Edmonton, Canada (Wohlstetter and Mohrman, 1996; and Abu-Duhou, 1999), this can be classified as a “moderate” reform. As these councils become more autonomous—receiving funds directly from the central or other relevant level of government (for example, lump-sum funding or grants) and hiring and firing teachers and principals and setting curricula—this is a much stronger type of SBM reform. Schools like these can be found in El Salvador (di Gropello, 2006) and New Zealand (Wylie, 1996). At the end of the continuum are local public education systems in which parents have complete choice and control over all educational

Figure 1 Classification of School-Based Management Reforms Implemented in Various Countries



¹ These represent ratings in the continuum of autonomy and authority vested in schools by the various types of SBM reforms.

² Israeli schools have autonomy over their budgets. Locally controlled school budgets represent a small fraction of total public expenditures, because most expenditures are controlled and made by the central government. There are no school councils or parent associations with any decision-making authority.

³ Cambodian schools in the EQIP program receive cash grants and include parents and school staff in decision-making, but school councils have not been formally established.

Source: Authors' compilation from relevant literature.

decisions, where schools are stand-alone units, and where all decisions concerning schools' operational, financial, and educational management are made by the school councils or school administrators. In these cases, parents or any other community members can even establish fully autonomous publicly funded private schools, as in Denmark and the Netherlands, and, in a few cases, fully autonomous public (charter) schools, as in some U.S. states (Abu-Duhou, 1999) and in the United Kingdom. It is interesting to note that, to some extent, parents have a similar degree of autonomy and choice in both private schools and in publicly funded, fully autonomous schools.

The Autonomy-Participation Nexus

The other dimension is who gets the decision-making power when it is devolved to the school level. In a simple world, the following four models would be sufficient to define who is invested with decision-making power in any SBM reform (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998): administrative control; professional control; community control; and balanced control.

Administrative Control SBM devolves authority to the school principal. This model aims to make each school more accountable to the central district or board office. The benefits of this kind of SBM include increasing the efficiency of expenditures on personnel and curriculum and making one person at each school more accountable to the central authority.

Professional Control SBM devolves the main decision-making authority to teachers. This model aims to make better use of teachers' knowledge of what the school needs at the classroom level. Full participation in the decision-making process can also motivate teachers to perform better and can lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in teaching.

Community Control SBM devolves the main decision-making authority to parents or the community. Under this model, teachers and principals are assumed to become more responsive to parents' needs. Another benefit is that the curriculum can reflect local needs and preferences.

Balanced Control SBM balances decision-making authority between parents and teachers, who are the two main stakeholders in any school. Its aims are to take advantage of teachers' detailed knowledge of the school to improve school management and to make schools more accountable to parents.

The administrative control model can never exist in its pure form since principals can never operate on their own in practice. Principals need other people to work for them and to help them to make decisions for the school. Existing models of SBM around the world are generally a blend of the four models described above. In most cases, power is devolved to a formal legal entity in the form of a school council or school management committee, which consists of teachers as well as the principal. In nearly all versions of SBM, community representatives also serve on the committee or group. As a result, school personnel can get to know the local people to whom they are ultimately accountable, and are thus more likely to take local needs and wishes into account when making decisions in the knowledge that local residents can monitor what the school professionals are doing to bring about change. Although community involvement can improve program planning and implementation in these ways, occasionally school personnel involve community members only superficially in a way that does not complicate the lives of principals and teachers (World Bank, 2007b; and Cook, 2007). Parents and community members have roles to play in SBM, but these roles are not universally clear and not always central. However, in some cases, the legal entity that has the main authority to implement SBM is a parents' council, though they cannot operate successfully without the support of teachers and the principal.

The autonomy-participation nexus defines the essence of an SBM reform. Figure 2 uses a few of the more popular SBM reforms around the world to illustrate this nexus.

The AGES program in Mexico gives minimal autonomy to school councils, which are run mainly by parents (Gertler et al., 2006). Thus, in Figure 2, it lies close to the X axis, that is, with little autonomy given to

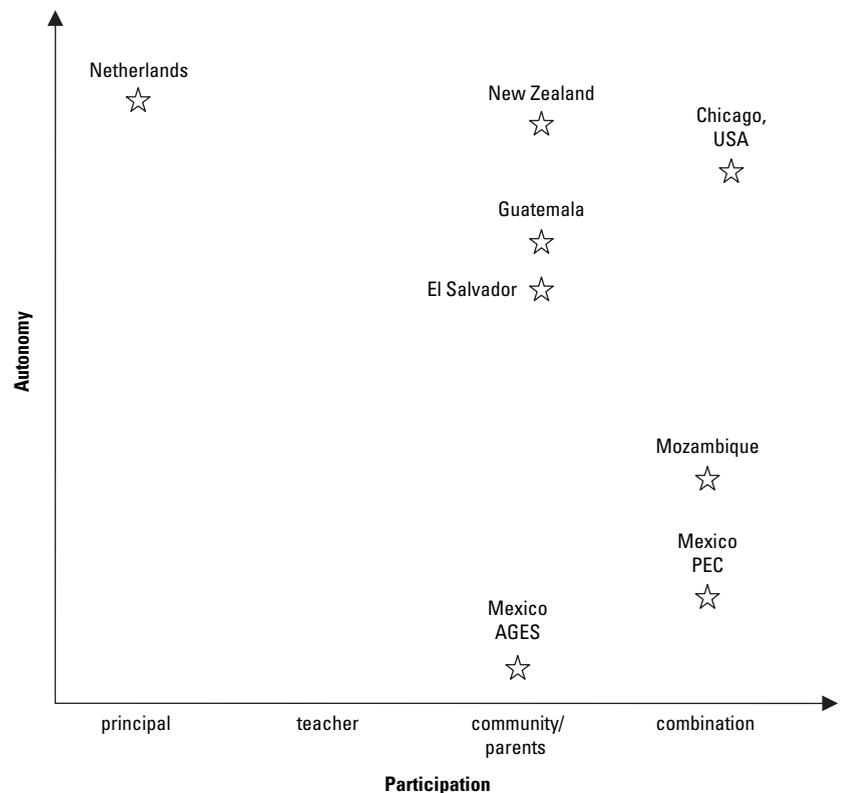
parents. On the other hand, New Zealand can be seen as being highly autonomous, with most of the decision-making power lying with parents (Wylie, 1996). Another extreme is the Netherlands, which in 1985 devolved decision-making power to school principals to make schools more efficient. At the same time, parents in the Netherlands can mandate the creation of a new school to meet their own specific cultural and religious needs. The city of Chicago in the United States is a good example of a school system in which combinations of community members, teachers, and principals have been given a high level of autonomy (Cook et al., 2000).

The Autonomy-Participation-Accountability Nexus

There is another link to the autonomy-participation chain—accountability. In a number of countries, one of the main objectives of introducing SBM is to make schools more accountable and their management more transparent. Anderson (2005) has suggested that there are three types of accountability in SBM. Those who run schools must be: (i) accountable for adhering to rules and accountable to the education authorities; (ii) accountable for adhering to standards and accountable to their peers; and (iii) accountable for student learning and accountable to the general public. SBM programs both strengthen and simplify these types of accountability by empowering those at the school level to make decisions collectively, thus increasing the transparency of the process. Consequently, students' learning achievement and other outcomes are expected to improve as stakeholders at the school level can monitor school personnel, improve student evaluations, ensure a closer match between school needs and policies, and use resources more efficiently.

By increasing transparency, SBM can also reduce corruption. For instance, the limited autonomy form of SBM in the PEC program in Mexico is credited with increasing accountability and transparency as well as with preventing and limiting corrupt practices in the management of educational funds (Karim et al., 2004). This is so because

Figure 2 The Autonomy-Participation Nexus



Source: Authors' compilation from relevant literature.

the school councils are accountable both to their central education authorities (vertical accountability) and to the school community and donors (horizontal accountability). If expanded, this program has the potential to reduce petty corruption, as documented in Transparency International (2005) and Patrinos and Kagia (2007). As can be seen in Table 3, a number of countries introduced SBM with the explicit goal of increasing accountability and increasing community and parental participation in the decision-making process. The accountability aspect of SBM reforms has also been highlighted in the WDR 2004 (World Bank, 2003a) as a way to strengthen accountability relationships between the clients (parents and students) and the service providers (teachers, principals, and the government).

Thus, by its very nature, SBM has the potential to hold school-level decision-makers accountable for their actions. However, in many places, it may be necessary to build the capacity of community members,

teachers, and principals to create or augment a culture of accountability.

School-Based Management Reforms around the World

As can be seen in Table 3, a wide range of countries have experimented with or introduced SBM reforms. The impetus behind most of these reforms has been political, financial, or a reaction to a natural disaster or civil conflict rather than educational. However, in all cases, the aim has also been to address difficult management issues. The

list in Table 3 is not an exhaustive one since a large number of countries are experimenting with SBM at a project level, often with the World Bank's support. In addition to those mentioned in the table, there are SBM projects in Lesotho, Pakistan, Kenya, Paraguay, Serbia and Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The companion publication *What Do We Know About School-Based Management* (World Bank 2007a) focuses on a subset of countries in Table 3 that have conducted some type of impact evaluation and discussed the findings of these evaluations about the impact

Table 3 Selective List of Countries with School-Based Management Reforms

Country	Date First Implemented	Objectives/Motivation of Reform	Type of SBM*
Australia	1970s	Increase efficiency through almost complete autonomy.	Strong
Canada	1970s (Edmonton) 1996 (Ontario)	Increase parental and community participation in education and grant schools more autonomy.	Moderate
United States (Chicago, Florida, Virginia, New York, and others)	1970s and 1980s	Most reforms sought to increase efficiency, empower teachers, and involve the community in schools. Some reforms (such as Chicago) made improving student achievement an explicit objective.	Moderate to somewhat strong
Brazil	1982	Increase efficiency in school management, more democratic and meritocratic process for electing school personnel, increase community and parent participation.	Moderate
Spain	1985	Democratize education.	Somewhat strong
United Kingdom	1988	Give schools financial autonomy, increase school effectiveness.	Strong
New Zealand	1990	Increase community autonomy and efficiency.	Strong
El Salvador	1991	Increase access in rural areas, encourage community participation, and improve quality of schooling.	Strong
Nicaragua	1991	Increase community participation, obtain financial resources beyond government funding, and increase efficiency.	Strong
Hong Kong	1991	Increase accountability, participatory decision-making, and school effectiveness.	Strong
Netherlands	1992	Empower school principals in order to increase efficiency.	Very strong
Czech Republic	1993	Make system more open, flexible, and democratic.	Moderate
Guatemala	1996	Increase access, decentralize educational decision-making, increase community participation, and maintain linguistic diversity.	Strong
Mexico (AGES)	1996	Increase parental participation in rural schools.	Moderate
Thailand	1997	Improve quality of education and increase the country's competitiveness.	Somewhat strong
Mozambique	1997	Increase access to higher quality education through decentralized management and budget allocations.	Moderate
Israel	1997	Improve public school system, school management, monitoring, and assessment.	Somewhat strong
Cambodia	1998	Improve education.	Somewhat strong
Honduras	1999	Increase access in rural areas and encourage community participation.	Strong
Mexico (PEC)	2001	Improve educational quality by granting more autonomy to schools.	Moderate

*The classification of types of SBM is as follows: **Very Strong** – Full or almost full control of schools by councils, parents, or school administrators; full choice via possibility of creating new public schools (i.e., charters). **Strong** – High degree of autonomy given to school councils over budget, staffing, etc. and control over budgets (i.e., schools receive lump sum funding or grants). **Somewhat strong** – Councils have authority to hire and fire teachers and/or principals and set curricula but have more limited autonomy regarding finances and control of resources. **Moderate** – School councils have been established but serve mainly an advisory role or have limited autonomy for planning and strategic purposes. **Weak** – Public school system is decentralized to the municipal or regional level, but schools have virtually no autonomy to make any administrative or curricular decisions.

Source: Authors' compilation from relevant literature.

of SBM on school outcomes and the challenges that analysts face given the limited evidence base.

A particular pattern can be seen in the level of development in those countries where SBM reforms have been introduced. SBM reforms of the strongest type have been introduced and, to some extent, been successful (or rather sustainable) in achieving their goals in developed countries, such as New Zealand, Australia, and Spain, or in countries emerging from conflict situations, such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, or a natural disaster, such as Honduras. Meanwhile, developing countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Pakistan are experimenting with the weaker forms of SBM. Does this pattern mean that certain community or social structures need to be in place to support strong SBM? Only rigorous impact evaluations of SBM reforms in a wide range of countries will be able to confirm or reject this claim, but these do not yet exist.

The United States Model(s) of School-Based Management

Cook (2007) suggests that, in the United States, the idea of SBM has been discussed since the 1960s (for a review, see Comer, 1988). However, the idea really took off in the U.S. in the 1990s, prompted by the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) movement and the legislation to which it led. CSR makes three ideas central to the reform: (i) school change should be radical rather than marginal, thus meriting the label “reform” rather than “change”; (ii) to merit the label “comprehensive,” the reform should encompass the administrative, pedagogic, and external relations aspects of school life; and (iii) the reforms should be at the school level rather than at the district level or the classroom level. CSR has become more common than SBM in educational theory in the U.S., though the two are closely related. The main difference is that SBM can be construed narrowly to concern only specific aspects of governance or administration. This is less possible with CSR, which strongly implies broad and fundamental change. However, the narrower definition of SBM is not wide-

spread in terms of how it is implemented in practice, and both SBM and CSR focus on devolving strategic planning to the school level, involving multiple groups in setting the school’s goals, changing teachers’ pedagogic practices, and building stronger relations between the school and parents and the surrounding community. So CSR and SBM are close to being synonymous, especially in practice.

In the United States, the popularity of the concept of CSR eventually led to Congress passing a Comprehensive School Reform Act in 1999. The Act outlined the 11 components of a locally autonomous school (Borman et al., 2003; and Cook, 2007):

1. *Each school must adopt a model of SBM that is known to be successful or has the promise of being so.* This implies that a number of empirically tested models of SBM already exist and that the major task for a school is to select one from this list, but this is not the case in most countries other than the U.S.
2. *Proven methods of teaching, learning, and management should be used in the schools, whether as part of the adopted CSR model or grafted onto it.* It is not clear what “proven” means here, but the reference is nonetheless important because the law implies that management change is not sufficient for comprehensive school reform but that changes in teaching and learning are also needed.
3. *The methods for teaching, learning, and management should be integrated into a coherent package.*
4. *There should be continual professional development for staff.* This component acknowledges that changing the ethos of a school is difficult. Principals and teachers need to be trained to do new things or to do old things in different ways.
5. *Staff should support the SBM initiative.* One rationale for SBM is that if staff (or their representatives) have a say in deciding on school changes, this will make them more supportive of those changes.

6. *Formal and informal responsibilities should be distributed widely within each school.* School principals have very difficult and stressful jobs and are called upon to make decisions throughout their working days. One purpose of SBM is to share decision-making within the school as well as to shift decision-making to the school.
7. *Parents and the local community should be involved in the school.* The assumptions here are that this will make teachers put the children's welfare before their own; that human, financial, and material resources will flow into the school by virtue of the parental support; and that more children will learn, both at home and in the community, that attending and doing well in school are highly valued.
8. *There will be external technical support for whatever changes the school is making.*
9. *Measurable benchmarks should be used.* Central to most kinds of managerial reform is developing interim goals and determining ways to measure them so that, if necessary, mid-course corrections can be made.
10. *Annual evaluations are needed of how SBM is being implemented and of any changes in student performance.* These evaluations will measure how much progress is being made toward organizational goals (as SBM is about organizational change).
11. *Mechanisms are needed for finding additional human and financial resources from external sources.*

While most school income is expected to come from government and fees, changes to a school's management goals and structures will often require additional human and financial resources that governments and parents may not be willing or able to provide. In the United States, these extra school resources are raised by: (i) parents who volunteer time or donate money to the school; (ii) soliciting local businesses for cash and in-kind services; (iii) trying to raise funds from other civic organizations; and (iv) lobbying the government. The assumption behind SBM in the

United States is that not all reforms can be fully funded from the public purse.

Nobody argues that all of these 11 components must be in place for a school to be considered as having adopted CSR or SBM. Nor has anyone specified a minimum or core number of attributes needed to qualify for either label. Nevertheless, it is obvious that as more of these components are included in an SBM plan, the more radical the organizational change it will make. However, looking at the impressive list of components in the U.S. model, it is likely to be difficult to replicate in developing countries. For instance, no developing country has a database of 29 kinds of SBM, all of which have been evaluated within their own political and cultural circumstances (Borman et al., 2003). Also, low-income countries may not be able to afford to train staff to use SBM effectively. For instance, in a recent program in the Punjab province of Pakistan, the School Committees component of the program did not materialize as quickly or widely as anticipated. One of the major reasons for this delay was the lack of civil society or non-governmental organizations with the ability to help the school councils to build their capacity (World Bank, 2007b). These could be a few of the reasons why developing countries prefer to introduce weaker forms of SBM rather than stronger ones.

Toward a Conceptual Framework for Analyzing School-Based Management

A conceptual framework for SBM can be presented in the terms of the messages in the WDR 2004 (World Bank, 2003a). The WDR 2004 presented evidence that increasing school autonomy and accountability can help to solve some of the most fundamental problems in education. According to this evidence, while increasing resource flows and other support to the education sector is necessary to give the poor greater access to quality education, it is by no means sufficient. It is also necessary to translate these resources into basic services that can reach the poor. Schools should be given some autonomy in using their inputs and be held accountable to the users for

using these inputs efficiently. The literature that promotes the use of SBM recommends four tenets for improving service delivery to the poor: (i) increasing their choice and participation, (ii) giving citizens a stronger voice, (iii) making information widely available, and (iv) strengthening the rewards for delivering effective services to the poor and penalizing those who fail to deliver (Barnett, 1996).

The WDR 2004 framework for analyzing the provision of education services defines four aspects of accountability:

1. *Voice* – how well citizens can hold politicians and policymakers accountable for their performance in discharging their responsibility for providing education.
2. *Compact* – how well and how clearly the responsibilities and objectives of public education policy are communicated.
3. *Management* – the actions that create effective frontline providers within organizations.
4. *Client power* – how well citizens, as clients, can increase the accountability of schools and school systems.

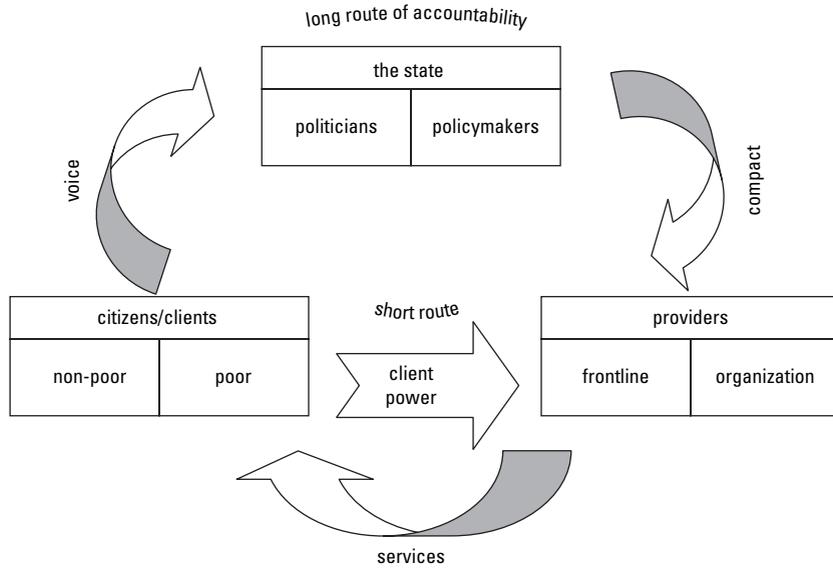
In the words of the WDR 2004 (World Bank, 2003a), effective solutions are likely to involve a mixture of voice, choice, direct participation, and organizational command and control. The report goes on to suggest that what successful education systems share is a meaningful accountability system. The WDR 2004 framework is presented as a three-cornered relationship between citizens, politicians, and service providers (depicted in Figure 3A). The service provision and accountability relationships between these actors is complex, as even within each group of actors there are usually heterogeneous sub-groups, and the incentives and accountability relationships that work for one group may be different from those that work for other groups. When accountability fails, the failure can be tracked either to the long route or to the short route. Sometimes improving the long route is a long-term process and, in some situations, may not be doable. In these cases, the WDR 2004 suggests strengthening the

short route in which the service providers are held directly accountable to the citizens or clients. The clients can improve service delivery by: (i) using their voice to ensure that services are tailored to meet their needs and (ii) by monitoring the providers. In cases where short route improvements are already being tested and/or where society is amenable to long route improvements, these should be adopted.

Theoretically, SBM models encompass all of the four relationships of accountability as envisaged in the WDR 2004. *Compact* refers to the long route of accountability, whereby the central government delegates responsibility to the line ministries, who in turn delegate it to schools to perform various tasks. In this sense, in certain models of SBM, the accountability of school principals is upwards, to the ministry who holds them responsible for providing the services to the clients who in turn have put the policymakers in power and thus have the *voice* to hold the policymakers and politicians accountable for their performance. In most cases of SBM, the *management mechanisms* change under SBM reforms—the clients themselves become part of the management along with the frontline providers. Thus the short route of accountability becomes even shorter as representatives of the clients—either parents or community members—get the authority to make certain decisions for them and have a voice in decisions that directly affect the students who attend the school. The framework is presented in Figure 3B, where the school managers, whether they are the principal alone or a committee of parents and teachers, act as the accountable entity.

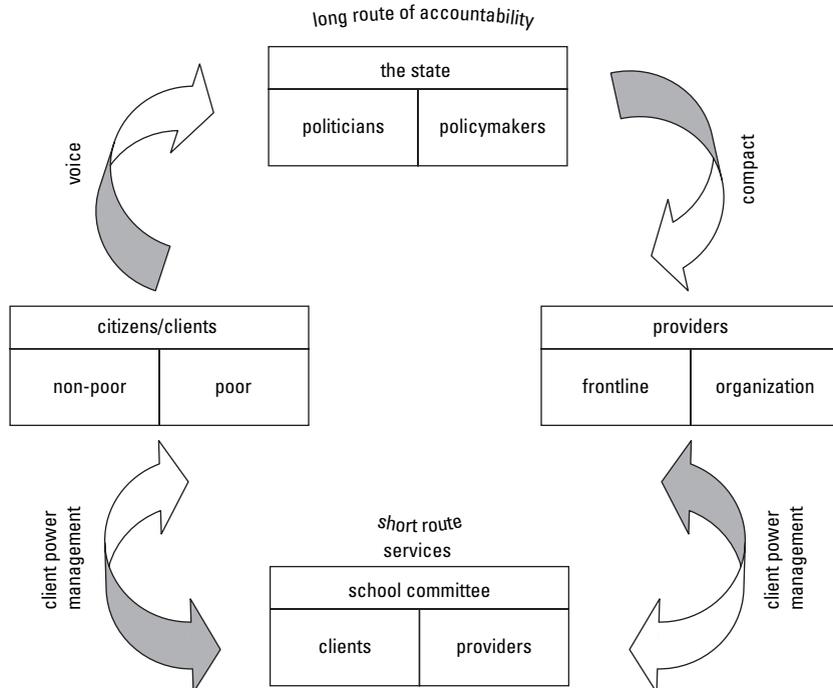
Thus, SBM can be a way of ensuring accountability and autonomy as envisaged in the WDR 2004 but with an added group of agents, the school managers (in other words, the group to whom the autonomy is devolved). This group usually consists of a partnership of the various agents who can hold each other accountable to be able to provide the services according to the needs of the particular school. The success of this additional group of agents as the repository of devolved authority for running schools has yet to be established.

Figure 3A The Accountability Framework in the World Development Report 2004



Source: World Bank, 2003a.

Figure 3B The Accountability Framework in School-Based Management



Source: Authors.

How School-Based Management Can Increase Participation and Improve School Outcomes

Unlike in developed countries where SBM is introduced explicitly to improve students' academic performance, how school decentralization will eventually affect student performance in developing countries is less clear. This section tries to define the ways in which SBM can increase participation and transparency and improve school outcomes.

First, the SBM model must define exactly which powers are vested in which individuals or committees and how these powers are to be coordinated to make the plan workable within both the school culture and the available resources. However, the structure of authority needs to remain flexible enough to enable school managers to deal with any unexpected events, which always seem to emerge during implementation.

Second, the success of SBM requires the support of the various school-level stakeholders, particularly of teachers (Cook, 2007). Also vital to the success of SBM is for school principals to support the decentralization reform (De Grauwe, 2005). This is not a foregone conclusion, as principals will remain personally accountable for the performance of their school but will no longer have complete control over its management. In effect, they are being asked to give up some authority without a corresponding decrease in personal accountability. Once SBM is in place, principals can no longer blame the policies of the school district when things go wrong.

The support of both local and national governments is also required. SBM by definition requires these governments to surrender some power and authority to the school level, but they retain the right and ability to reverse their earlier decision in favor of SBM if they feel their power is being usurped.

The final and most important source of necessary support is from parents and other community members. It is important, however, to distinguish between parents and other community members. While parents are always part of the community that surrounds a school, school councils do not have to include parents as members. For

instance, in the United States, many schools are locally controlled in the sense that a school board of local residents officially sets policy, but there may be no parental participation in these schools. In some cases, wealthy individuals in a community may be members of a school council simply because they financially support the school.

Particularly in developed countries, parental participation as members of school councils or of the group that is implementing SBM is distinct from community participation. However, in developing countries, in particular in isolated small or rural communities, parental participation tends to be synonymous with community participation, since in these small communities almost everybody has a family member in school.

The expectation underlying SBM is that greater parental involvement will mean that schools will be more responsive to local demands (for example, for better teaching methods or more inputs) and that decisions will be taken in the interests of children rather than adults. A further hope is that involved parents will become unpaid or minimally paid auxiliary staff who will help teachers in classrooms and with other minor activities (as happens, for instance, in the AGES program in Mexico). Furthermore, even if parents are too busy working to help in the classroom, they can still encourage their children to do their homework and to show them, in this and other ways, that their family really values schooling and academic achievement. Since parents are networked in various ways with community leaders, the further hope is that parental support for SBM will encourage local community leaders to put schools higher on their political agendas and thus provide the schools with more material resources.

Once the nexus of autonomy-participation and accountability has been defined and a realistic management plan has been drawn up that has the support of all stakeholders, then it becomes possible to expect better school outcomes. Thereafter, the hope is that the school climate will change as the stakeholders work together in a collegial way to manage the school. However, there is little evidence that this really happens in practice. Also, the possibility exists that

teachers and principals will come to resent being constantly monitored by parents and school council members, which will cause relations within the school to deteriorate.

At the same time, the teaching climate of a school is predicated on, among many other factors, how motivated teachers are to teach well, whether they know how to teach well, how good the various curricula are, how eager pupils are to learn, and how much parents actually support their children's learning in whatever ways are practical for them. Any school that wants to improve its academic record will have to work actively on some or all of these factors. Sometimes, the obstacles to improving the quality of instruction are motivational, sometimes they are cognitive in the sense of what teachers know, and sometimes they are social in the sense of petty personal matters that can prevent teachers from behaving professionally. Ideally, under SBM, because those who run the school are intimately acquainted with the individuals who work there, they will be able to identify the specific problems that need to be fixed and use their authority to find and implement solutions.

Some caveats must be mentioned about SBM. Decentralization or devolution does not necessarily give more power to the general public because it is susceptible to being captured by elites. As for the relationship between decentralization, pro-poor growth, and reduced corruption, the evidence is mixed (see, for instance, Alderman, 1998; Faguet, 2001; and Fisman and Gatti, 2002). Bardhan and Mookherjee (2000 and 2006) and Bardhan (2002) suggest that there may be numerous reasons why local control over resource allocation or decision-making may not yield the desired outcomes. First, local democracy and political accountability is often weak in developing countries and can lead to capture of governance—at the various levels—by elite groups. Second, in more traditional and rural areas with a history of feudalism, the poor or minorities may feel the need for a strong central authority to ensure that services are delivered to them and not just to the more powerful local citizens. Third, and related to this, is

the issue that there may be no culture of accountability within communities, meaning that no one would think to question any actions taken by the group running the school (De Grauwe, 2005). This can be a problem in places where the teacher is regarded as the ultimate authority by the virtue of being the only “highly” qualified individual in a community. Finally, those given the responsibility for managing the school may not have the capacity to do so, which points up the need to build the capacity of education stakeholders at the grassroots level to ensure that SBM reforms do not fail in their execution.

These caveats help to strengthen our understanding of the pattern of SBM in developing countries (as discussed above). In particular, the caveats strengthen the notion that the specific type of SBM introduced in any given country depends (or should ideally depend) on the political economy of the particular country. For instance, strong SBM reforms have been introduced, and have been quite successful, in those countries where communities have been forced by some calamity such as war or a natural disaster to come together as a group to find ways to deliver basic services, including education (as in the Central American countries).

Conclusions

While SBM is conceptually clear, there are many ways in which its components can be combined and implemented. Pragmatically, this makes SBM a concept of only modest entitativity, in other words, a concept that cannot have a unique form in all the places where it is implemented. There are numerous ways to combine different degrees of autonomy, participation, and accountability to create a particular reform. Each variation has to be appropriate for the particular culture and politics of the country in question. The difficulties of designing the ideal reform for a given set of circumstances have not deterred countries from adopting SBM. Most countries have adopted SBM to increase the participation of parents and communities in schools, or to empower principals and teachers, or to raise student achievement

levels, or, by devolution of authority, to create accountability mechanisms to make the decision-making process more transparent. In any case, the hope is that giving power to the people who are close to the core of the service will increase the efficiency and improve the quality of the service. This report has focused on the concept of SBM in its different forms and the conceptual framework for understanding it. The few rigorous empirical studies that have analyzed to what extent SBM can measure up to the claims of its proponents are reviewed in World Bank (2007a).

The costs of reform are likely to be smaller than the benefits, thus increasing the appeal of the reform. Many SBM reforms have multiple goals, which include participation as an outcome rather than a way to achieve a goal such as improving learning outcomes. Other SBM reforms have aimed to encourage parental interest in the school as a way to supplement its recurrent cost financing. It is important to keep the goals of the program clear, to ensure that adequate resources go into the program to fulfill its specific goals, and to build the necessary capacity at all levels. Complex reforms with multiple goals and limited resources in a constrained environment can be very difficult to implement.

Because of the dearth of widespread evidence on the impact and effectiveness of SBM in practice, we still have a number of questions that must go unanswered until more evidence is available. The increasing number of evaluations going on at present—in, among other places, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka—will teach us a lot about the effectiveness of SBM in various contexts. As the knowledge base grows, more attention needs to be given to the specific outcomes that are produced by different forms of SBM. For example, do administrative control SBMs work better than, say, professional control SBMs, and in what contexts? Does more autonomy need to be devolved to the school level to improve intermediate and long-term outcomes? What sort of accountability arrangements work best and under what conditions? What role do parents play in practice? Do they need to be active participants in

school management? What about the larger community? And is there a difference in impacts by countries' levels of development? Does it matter if the form of SBM is strong or weak? Does the number and type of functions devolved to school managers make a difference to the outcomes? Does it matter which group is given the decision-making authority and over what functions?

Also, more cost-benefit analysis is needed. As introduced in developing countries, SBM appears to be a relatively inexpensive initiative since it constitutes a change in the locus of decision-making and not necessarily in the amount of resources in the system. If the few positive impact evaluations are true, then SBM is a very cost-effective initiative. For example, in Mexico, the rural school-based management program is estimated to cost about \$6 per student, which, in unit cost terms, is only about 8 percent of primary education unit expenditures.

Another element that will need more analysis as the study of SBM reforms evolves over time are political economy issues, such as the roles played by teachers' unions and political elites, and issues of governance. SBM, like any other kind of reform, requires some level of political support, which may be more important than the technical merit of the planned reform in the success or failure of a strong SBM reform. The extent to which a shared vision is a key element of different types of SBM reforms is an important future research issue. However, teachers and their unions may want to resist any SBM reforms that give parents and community members more power. How they will react to the reform is a crucial factor in its eventual success or failure.

In general, there are a number of steps that national governments can take to increase the probability that SBM reforms will succeed. First, central governments can make local education authorities more accountable by requiring them to involve all school stakeholders in their discussions and to use their feedback to design policies and interventions that meet local needs. Meanwhile, national governments should design prospective impact evaluations of new programs before they are

implemented. Furthermore, they could subject more existing programs to rigorous impact evaluation, perhaps conducted by a group within the Ministry of Education devoted to analysis and research, while at the same time encouraging independent organizations to undertake their own impact evaluations of all programs. Finally, there is a need for governments—and perhaps international agencies—to spread the word about SBM innovations at the school level and to disseminate examples of best practices of SBM programs from around the world.

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