

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALS' HUMAN AND PHYSICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND STUDENTS' SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NAROK NORTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA.

¹Isaac Seret, ²Dr. Dorothy Soi ³Kipkirui Rono

^{1,2,3} University of Kabianga, Kenya

¹Isere69@gmail.com , ²Dsoi@kabianga.ac.ke, ³Ronokipkirui@yahoo.com

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Abstract

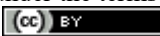
Human and physical resource management is a critical responsibility of school principals and plays an important role in creating a conducive learning environment that enhances students' satisfaction and educational outcomes. This study investigated the influence of principals' management of human and physical resources on students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County, Kenya. The study was guided by Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Pritchett's Educational Production Function Theory and adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised 9,677 respondents, from which a sample of 670 participants, including principals, teachers, and students, was selected. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that principals generally demonstrated effective management of human and physical resources. Principals and teachers reported positive practices in staff development. However, students expressed concerns regarding the adequacy and maintenance of physical facilities. The findings also revealed differences in perceptions among principals, teachers, and students, particularly concerning physical resource management. Inferential analysis established that management of human resources ($p = .125$) and physical resources ($p = .798$) had no statistically significant influence on students' satisfaction at the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the two null hypotheses were retained. The study concluded that although effective resource management supports efficient school operations and educational service delivery, it does not independently determine students' satisfaction. Students' satisfaction is influenced by multiple factors, including instructional quality, teacher-student relationships, learner support services, school climate, and participation in school governance.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Physical Resource Management, Student Satisfaction, School Leadership.

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1. Introduction

Human resource management in schools refers to the effective management of teachers, support staff, and other personnel to achieve educational goals while promoting student satisfaction. Human resources constitute the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies of individuals working within an institution, making them one of the most valuable assets in determining school performance (Gerhart et al., 2017; Robison et al., 2016). In the school context, principals play a critical role in managing human resources by creating a supportive work environment that enhances teacher motivation, professional growth, and commitment. Effective human resource management contributes to quality teaching, improved curriculum delivery, and increased student satisfaction. According to Lu et al. (2016), the primary objective of human resource management in schools is to develop personnel, promote healthy working relationships among principals, teachers, and support staff, and ultimately improve students' educational experiences.

Research consistently demonstrates that teacher quality is among the strongest determinants of students' academic achievement and satisfaction. Studies conducted in the United States established that teacher effectiveness significantly influences students' learning outcomes and school experiences (Adnot et al., 2017). Similarly, Ampofo et al. (2015) found that teachers were regarded as the most important human resource in Ghanaian schools because of their direct contribution to students' academic success. In Kenya, the Republic of Kenya (2017) emphasized that incentive strategies for teachers positively influence students' motivation and satisfaction. Likewise, Siming (2015) and Njuguna (2017) observed that motivated teachers who recognize and reward students' efforts create positive learning environments that encourage improved performance and greater student satisfaction.

Principals' leadership practices also significantly affect students' satisfaction. Democratic leadership, characterized by participation, consultation, and shared decision-making, promotes positive relationships between school management and students. Sarah (2015) reported that democratic leadership inspires students by making them feel valued and respected. Shepherd-Jones et al. (2018) further argued that involving students in school governance through activities such as electing student leaders, conducting regular meetings, and encouraging open communication strengthens students' sense of belonging and responsibility. Aung (2017) similarly found that democratic engagement enhances students' motivation and satisfaction by fostering an inclusive school climate.

The interpersonal relationships between principals, teachers, and students are equally important in promoting student satisfaction. Students are more likely to remain motivated when teachers and principals treat them with respect, fairness, and dignity. Sarah (2015) emphasized that educators should avoid judging students based on previous mistakes, while Palmieri et al. (2017) cautioned that neglecting students may lead to discouragement and school dropout. Locke (2016) argued that although students should be held accountable for their actions, disciplinary measures should be constructive and aimed at correcting behavior

rather than humiliating learners. Ferreira (2018) further noted that when principals empower teachers to build positive relationships with students, learners develop stronger attachment to the school, thereby improving satisfaction and retention. Similarly, the Republic of Kenya (2017) recommended that school leaders uphold students' dignity and ensure equal treatment for all learners.

Compassionate leadership also contributes significantly to student satisfaction. Dutta (2016) argued that principals who demonstrate care and concern positively influence students' educational experiences, particularly those facing challenges that may lead to dropping out. According to Lebedeva (2016), principals who actively listen to students, understand their concerns, and build trusting relationships establish school environments where learners feel safe and valued. Additionally, Rivera (2017) emphasized that schools should not tolerate bullying, harassment, or discrimination because such behaviors negatively affect students' satisfaction and willingness to remain in school.

Addressing students' concerns promptly and maintaining open communication further strengthens student satisfaction. Sebastian et al. (2017) observed that principals and teachers should actively listen to students and respond appropriately to their academic and personal challenges. Adamec (2014) suggested that regular communication forums, such as school bazaars and student meetings, enhance interaction between students and school staff, promoting a stronger sense of belonging. Mulford (2013) also noted that principals gain students' respect by consistently addressing their concerns fairly and transparently. Morin (2017) reinforced the importance of handling students' issues impartially and without discrimination.

Beyond interpersonal relationships, educational activities such as field trips play a significant role in enhancing student satisfaction. Franklin (2014) explained that field trips connect classroom learning with real-life experiences, thereby increasing students' motivation, curiosity, and understanding. Wanjiku (2016) further observed that educational trips expose students to new environments, making learning more practical and enjoyable while creating memorable experiences that improve satisfaction with school. Such experiential learning opportunities enhance students' engagement and strengthen their connection to the learning process.

Student reinforcement is another important human resource management strategy that influences satisfaction. Hoque (2013) found that reinforcing positive behaviors and rewarding correct responses enhances learning and encourages continued participation. Similarly, Mulford (2013) demonstrated that consistent reinforcement by teachers and principals improves students' achievement, satisfaction, and retention. Therefore, principals should encourage teachers to recognize students' efforts regularly in order to maintain positive classroom environments that foster learning and satisfaction.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that principals' effective management of human resources contributes substantially to students' satisfaction through quality teacher

management, democratic leadership, supportive relationships, effective communication, experiential learning, and positive reinforcement. However, despite extensive international evidence, there remains limited empirical research examining the relationship between principals' human resource management and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County, Kenya. This knowledge gap justifies the need for further research to inform educational leadership practices and improve students' educational experiences.

The management of physical resources by school principals is a critical factor influencing students' satisfaction and the overall quality of education. Learning is affected by both physical and emotional conditions, making the availability and proper management of school facilities essential for effective teaching and learning. School infrastructure, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other learning facilities, significantly influences students' satisfaction with their educational experiences. Principals are responsible for ensuring that these facilities are well maintained because poor physical conditions can hinder learning, reduce student motivation, and negatively affect academic achievement (Lydiaiah, 2012; Ihuoma, 2012). Studies have also shown that ineffective utilization of school funds contributes to inadequate maintenance of physical facilities, emphasizing the need for principals to regularly inspect school infrastructure and ensure compliance with government safety standards (Republic of Kenya, 2018). Furthermore, quality teaching facilities, adequate textbooks, and functional library services have been positively associated with higher levels of student satisfaction (Kara et al., 2016).

Effective management of school physical resources creates a conducive learning environment that promotes students' participation, engagement, and academic satisfaction (Kaplan, 2014). Improving school buildings, classrooms, and instructional facilities while providing adequate teaching resources enhances the quality of education and students' learning experiences (Al-Haddad et al., 2018). Proper management of physical resources also contributes to increased student motivation, improved discipline, reduced dropout rates, and greater student satisfaction (Ihuoma, 2012). Essential facilities such as libraries, dormitories, dining halls, and food storage areas require effective management to ensure students' health and well-being. Proper food storage practices are particularly important because poor storage increases the risk of contamination, which may negatively affect students' satisfaction and school retention (Wandolo, 2016; Holo, 2015).

Instructional materials are equally important physical resources that enhance active learning and student engagement. The effective use of relevant teaching and learning materials improves students' understanding, motivation, and satisfaction by making learning more interactive and practical (Lynn, 2014). Students perform better when instructional resources enable them to visualize concepts, while inadequate learning materials contribute to poor academic performance, low teacher motivation, and increased dropout rates (Chingos et al., 2012; Lydiaiah, 2012). As educational choices continue to expand, students increasingly prefer schools that provide quality learning environments and memorable educational

experiences (Asaduzzaman et al., 2014). Consequently, principals should ensure the availability of sufficient reference materials to supplement government-provided textbooks and support quality education (Rotich, 2015; Martin, 2013). Research further indicates that the quality of school buildings influences student behaviour, attendance, discipline, satisfaction, and retention (Ihuoma, 2012). Despite these findings, limited research has examined the relationship between principals' management of physical resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County, highlighting the need for further investigation.

2. Statement of the Problem

One of the principal's key responsibilities is overseeing the school's human and physical resources. Embracing this duty enhances their authority and boosts their accountability. According to the GoK (2015), “a public officer shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that property entrusted to his care is adequately protected and not misused or misappropriated”. This implies that the principals and the rest of the teaching staff are mandated to take care of all resources under their charge. It further states that “a public officer shall not use his office to enrich oneself or others improperly”. This implies that the school resources should be used for the intended use of the school and not for personal benefit.

However, this seems not to be the case in Narok North sub-county as some principals have been accused of misappropriating school funds and mismanaging human and physical resources, leading to a high turnover of students as students opt for well-managed schools elsewhere (Citizen Digital, 2024; The Star, 2024)). This has seen the students' dropout rates rise as the enrolment rates drop steadily, and some parents shy away from taking their children to poorly managed schools. This is true even when their children have been admitted to national or extra county schools, preferring instead to take them to well-managed county or sub-county schools (Education News Kenya, 2025). This mismanagement can also be evident through numerous strikes, dropout rates and student protests in some schools within Narok North Sub-County. This is occasioned by the dissatisfaction of learners due to poor performance and a lack or shortage of teaching staff and the mismanagement of physical resources which is the focus of this study.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the principal's management of human and physical resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County, Kenya.

4. Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives: to; -

1. Determine the relationship between the principal's management of human resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.
2. Establish the relationship between the principal's management of physical resources and Students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.

5. Research Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses served as a guide for the investigation: -

1. Ho1: There is no statistically significant relationship between the principal's management of human resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.
2. Ho3: There is no statistically significant relationship between the principal's management of physical resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.

6. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the relationship between principals' management of human and physical resources and student satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County. A descriptive research design enables the collection and analysis of data as it naturally occurs without manipulating variables, making it suitable for examining existing conditions and relationships (Orodho, 2004; Ngechu, 2004). Since the researcher has no control over the management of educational resources, the study focuses on assessing current management practices and comparing them with levels of student satisfaction. The independent variable is principals' management of human and physical resources, while the dependent variable is student satisfaction. The design also allows the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys involving principals, teachers, and students, providing an accurate representation of the prevailing situation (Kerlinger, 1986).

The study was conducted in Narok North Sub-County, located in Narok County, Kenya, which borders Tanzania, Bomet, Kajiado, and Nakuru counties. The area is characterized by plains, the Mau Forest, and the Maasai Mara ecosystem, with livestock farming serving as the primary economic activity. Narok County comprises six educational sub-counties: Narok North, Narok East, Narok South, Narok West, Transmara West, and Transmara East. The study area was selected due to persistent challenges in public secondary schools, including high student dropout rates, low enrolment, student unrest, and human and physical resources

mismanagement, as well as the limited research conducted on human and physical resource management in the region (Narok County Education Office, 2018).

The target population consisted of all respondents from the 23 public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County. According to Ngechu (2004), a target population should be clearly defined and possess characteristics relevant to the study. The research targeted 8,442 students, 1,212 teachers, and 23 principals, resulting in a total target population of 9,677 respondents. This population was considered appropriate for examining the influence of principals' management of educational resources on student satisfaction in public secondary schools within the study area (Narok North Sub-County Education Office, 2019).

7. Principals and teachers -Human Resource Management Practices

The findings revealed that principals and teachers generally agreed that human resource management practices such as professional development, teamwork, instructional supervision, and teacher monitoring were implemented in schools. Students also acknowledged that teachers taught regularly and were generally present in school. However, many students expressed concerns regarding teacher availability. The finding supports Dutta (2016), who argued that caring relationships between educators and students significantly improve student satisfaction. It also agrees with Lebedeva (2016), who observed that students who feel valued and supported develop stronger attachment to school. Furthermore, the Republic of Kenya (2017) emphasized that treating learners with dignity and respect promotes student satisfaction and retention.

These findings were corroborated by the Sub-County Director of Education, who noted that principals generally strive to manage human resources effectively despite staffing challenges. The Sub-County Director stated:

SCDE02:

Most principals in this sub-county support teachers through instructional supervision, departmental meetings, and continuous professional development programmes. Although schools may have teachers physically present, students sometimes perceive them as unavailable because teachers are often engaged in administrative duties, examination preparation, co-curricular activities, or handling large class sizes. Teacher shortages in some subjects further contribute to limited accessibility. Nevertheless, instructional supervision remains one of the most effective tools for improving teaching quality and student satisfaction. (Interview, June 2025).

8. Hypothesis Testing of Principals' Resource Management and Students' Satisfaction

The study sought to determine whether principals' management of school resources had a statistically significant relationship with students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at $\alpha = 0.05$.

9. Influence of Principals' Management of Human Resources on Students' Satisfaction

The first hypothesis stated:

H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between the principal's management of human resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.

To determine the relationship between principals' management of human resources and students' satisfaction, ANOVA analysis was conducted. The findings are presented in Table 4.5

Table 2: ANOVA of Principals' Management of Human Resources and Students' Satisfaction

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.887	3	0.629	1.926	0.125
Within Groups	118.549	363	0.327		
Total	120.436	366			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Management of Human Resources

The results indicated that students who disagreed that principals effectively managed human resources recorded a mean satisfaction score of 3.20, while those who agreed recorded a mean score of 3.34. However, the observed differences were not statistically significant.

The ANOVA results showed that $F(3,363) = 1.926$, $p = .125 > .05$. This implies that principals' management of human resources did not have a statistically significant relationship with students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County. Although the descriptive findings showed that principals generally practiced effective human resource management through professional development, supervision, teamwork promotion, and teacher monitoring, these practices did not significantly influence students' satisfaction. This finding contrasts with Xiao and Wilkins (2015), who reported a positive relationship between human resource management practices and student satisfaction. The difference may be explained by contextual challenges identified in the present study, including teacher shortages, heavy workloads, and limited teacher accessibility. Consequently, factors beyond human resource management alone may account for variations in student satisfaction within public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.

The measures of association further revealed a weak positive relationship ($R = .095$, $R^2 = .009$), indicating that only 0.9% of the variation in students' satisfaction was associated with principals' management of human resources.

Since $p = .125 > .05$, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there was no statistically significant relationship between principals' management of human resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.

10. Students' Responses on Physical Resource Management

On the availability of textbooks and learning materials, the majority, 206 (56.1%), remained neutral. This suggests uncertainty regarding adequacy of instructional resources. Such uncertainty may indicate variations in the availability and accessibility of learning materials across schools. Tanui & Kalai 2016 observed that although government funding had improved, many schools still faced challenges in ensuring adequate instructional resources for all learners.

Compared with principals and teachers, students expressed more dissatisfaction regarding physical resources, indicating that resource challenges are more directly experienced by learners. This disparity may be explained by the argument of Asaduzzaman, Hossain, and Rahman (2014), who noted that students evaluate schools largely based on the quality of facilities and learning experiences available to them. Consequently, learners are often more sensitive to deficiencies in physical resources than school administrators.

The findings revealed substantial differences between students and school administrators concerning physical resources. While principals generally perceived physical resources as adequately managed, students reported shortages of classrooms, desks, learning spaces, and concerns regarding cleanliness and safety of facilities. The Sub-County Director confirmed the existence of these challenges:

SCDE06:

Physical infrastructure remains one of the greatest challenges facing public secondary schools. Enrolment has increased significantly over the years, but expansion of facilities has not always matched this growth. Many schools struggle with inadequate classrooms, overcrowding, insufficient furniture, and limited laboratory space. Although principals make efforts to distribute available resources fairly, financial limitations often delay infrastructure development and maintenance. (Interview, June 2025).

The views of the Sub-County Director are supported by Bernard (2018), who reported that rising enrolment rates often outpace infrastructure development, thereby straining available educational resources. Additionally, it was found that limited funding frequently hampers maintenance and expansion of school facilities.

11. Influence of Principals' Management of Physical Resources on Students' Satisfaction

The third hypothesis stated:

H03: There is no statistically significant relationship between the principal's management of physical resources and students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County.

To establish the relationship between principals' management of physical resources and students' satisfaction, ANOVA analysis was performed. The results are presented in Table 4.X.

Table 3: ANOVA of Principals' Management of Physical Resources and Students' Satisfaction

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.335	3	0.112	0.337	0.798
Within Groups	120.101	363	0.331		
Total	120.436	366			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Management of Physical Resources

The findings indicated that students who strongly agreed that principals effectively managed physical resources reported the highest mean satisfaction score ($M = 3.43$), while those who disagreed reported a mean score of 3.22. Nevertheless, these differences were not statistically significant.

The ANOVA results showed that $F(3,363) = 0.337$, $p = .798 > .05$. This implies that principals' management of physical resources did not have a statistically significant relationship with students' satisfaction. Although physical resources are generally considered important for effective learning, the current findings suggest that improvements in physical resources alone may not automatically translate into higher student satisfaction. This contrasts with the findings of Kara, Tanui, and Kalai (2016), who reported a positive relationship between the quality of teaching facilities and student satisfaction. Similarly, Kaplan (2014) argued that well-managed facilities contribute to student engagement and satisfaction.

The absence of a significant relationship may indicate that student satisfaction is influenced by a combination of factors beyond physical resources, including instructional quality, administrative support, and interpersonal relationships within the school environment. This interpretation is consistent with Lyons (2014), who observed that learning outcomes and student satisfaction are shaped by multiple interacting factors, including teaching practices, motivation, curriculum implementation, and resource availability.

The measures of association revealed a weak positive relationship ($R = .044$, $R^2 = .002$), indicating that only 0.2% of the variation in students' satisfaction was explained by principals' management of physical resources.

The weak association suggests that while physical resources contribute to the learning environment, their independent effect on student satisfaction is limited. Similar observations were made by Weerasinghe et al. (2017), who noted that student satisfaction is multidimensional and influenced by numerous institutional and personal factors rather than a single resource category.

12. Human Resource Management and Students' Satisfaction

The study sought to establish the influence of principals' management of human resources on students' satisfaction in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County. The findings revealed that principals generally practiced effective human resource management. Principals reported supporting continuous professional development, promoting teamwork among teachers, monitoring teacher productivity, motivating staff, and ensuring effective instructional supervision. Teachers largely confirmed these practices and acknowledged the principals' efforts in enhancing professional growth and instructional effectiveness. Students similarly indicated that teachers regularly attended lessons, maintained positive relationships with learners, and provided instructional support.

Despite these positive perceptions, some students expressed concerns regarding teacher availability and adequacy of staffing within schools. The inferential analysis revealed that principals' management of human resources did not have a statistically significant influence on students' satisfaction. The findings therefore suggest that although effective human resource management contributes to improved school operations and instructional delivery, it does not independently determine students' satisfaction.

13. Physical Resource Management and Students' Satisfaction

The study further examined the influence of principals' management of physical resources on students' satisfaction. The findings revealed that principals generally perceived physical resources to be adequately managed. Most principals reported ensuring adequate provision of teaching and learning materials, proper management of classrooms and school facilities, prompt response to resource needs, and fair allocation of available resources among departments and classes. Teachers largely supported these perceptions, although many expressed uncertainties regarding the adequacy of facilities and responsiveness to resource requests.

In contrast, students reported significant concerns regarding physical resources. Many students indicated that there were insufficient classrooms, desks, chairs, and learning spaces. Students also expressed dissatisfaction with the cleanliness, maintenance, and safety of school facilities. These findings suggest that learners directly experience the limitations of physical resources and may therefore evaluate school facilities more critically than

administrators and teachers. Despite these concerns, the inferential analysis revealed that principals' management of physical resources did not significantly influence students' satisfaction. The findings therefore suggest that although physical resources contribute to the learning environment, they do not independently account for students' satisfaction.

14. Summary of Findings

Overall, the study established that principals generally demonstrated effective management of human and physical resources in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County. However, substantial differences existed between the perceptions of principals, teachers, and students, particularly regarding physical resources. Most importantly, the findings revealed that none of the two dimensions i.e human and physical resource management had a statistically significant influence on students' satisfaction. Consequently, the two null hypotheses were retained. The results suggest that students' satisfaction is a multidimensional concept influenced by a complex interaction of institutional, instructional, interpersonal, and contextual factors beyond principals' management of school resources.

15. Conclusions

1. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that principals in public secondary schools in Narok North Sub-County generally implement effective human and physical resource management practices. These management practices contribute to the smooth operation of schools and support the delivery of educational services.
2. The study further concludes that students perceive the effectiveness of resource management differently from principals and teachers. While school administrators generally reported positive management practices, students expressed concerns regarding teacher accessibility and adequacy of physical facilities. These differences in perception indicate that students evaluate their school experiences from a more direct and experiential perspective.
3. The findings also lead to the conclusion that effective management of human and physical resources alone is insufficient to significantly influence students' satisfaction. Although human and physical resource management remains an important administrative responsibility, students' satisfaction appears to be influenced by a broader range of factors including instructional quality, teacher-student relationships, learner support systems, school climate, participation in school affairs, and overall educational experiences.
4. The study therefore concludes that students' satisfaction is a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be explained solely by principals' management of school resources. Efforts aimed at improving students' satisfaction should consequently focus on enhancing the entire educational experience rather than concentrating exclusively on resource management practices.

16. Recommendation for School Principals

1. The study recommends that principals strengthen teacher-student interaction by improving teacher accessibility and learner support. The Ministry of Education should

address staffing shortages to ensure adequate instructional support. Teachers should foster positive relationships through effective communication, mentorship, guidance, and learner-centered teaching.

2. Principals should strengthen student participation in school governance by providing platforms for students to express their views and contribute to decisions affecting their welfare and learning. School administrators should also improve communication on resource allocation to enhance transparency and stakeholder confidence. Increased investment in classrooms, laboratories, furniture, and other learning facilities is essential to address resource challenges. Additionally, teachers should actively participate in school planning and resource management to promote transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to educational needs.

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