Leadership Preparation and Development (LPD) Research Interest Group (RIG) Report for UK Academic Year 2025 - 2026

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What is BELMAS?
BELMAS is the Learned Society that owns both the journals Educational Management and Leadership (EMAL) and Management in Education (MiE). The revenue that comes to the society from our contract with SAGE funds the organisation for the benefit of the field of Educational Leadership. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) BELMAS is regulated by the Charities Commission for England and Wales, and needs to account for how the BELMAS Board of Trustees chooses to allocate funds. The MiE Editorial Board has therefore agreed to publish a range of the BELMAS RIG Reports, so that the research and dissemination work completed in the RIGs reaches both our members and others in the field.

BELMAS provides key benefits to members in the field of educational leadership and the allied areas of administration, management and policy. These benefits are wide-ranging, and ever-changing to keep up-to-date with our financial reserves policy, but alongside our annual international conference held in the UK, and our Awards Bursaries and Grants, our RIGs are the cornerstone of these benefits for members.

RIGs are funded every year currently at £500 each, and so form the largest part of our investment into our academic field. They are given administrative support and resource from the Membership and Events Coordinator - who responds to the events forms, sends out the zoom links, attends each RIG meeting and notes the attendance, and does the follow up work of collating and sending the feedback to the co-convenors. Whilst the Membership Engagement Manager liaises on all events for the website, newsletter, and social media, both before and after each event, organising for the recording to be put on the website, and signposted to, for maximum reach.

All RIGs are free to join and attend for all members, whilst newcomers can attend for a small fee (currently £5) which is refunded if the attendee joins BELMAS within one month. Each RIG needs to write a report each academic year to show their spending choices, and evidence the return that the field is getting from the investment. Over half our members are international and from around 75 countries. We are a social justice organisation, and as such are interested in research across the field in terms of the protected characteristic areas. Our full list of RIGs is here, and if you would like to join BELMAS to join these events, information on membership can be found here.

What Do the BELMAS RIGs Do?
The BELMAS Board stipulate that Research Interest Groups hold at least two meetings a year, either online, or in person. One meeting can also be held at BELMAS Conference for which the society pays for the rooming - this does not come out of RIG budgets. In recent years, as funding in Higher Education has declined in the UK, RIG convenors have been able to access their pot of RIG funding in order to attend annual conference or pay for travel or accommodation costs at conferences, in order to meet to engage in research or disseminate their research. This must be requested and approved by the office team.

Why Have an LPD RIG?
The Leadership Preparation and Development RIG was started back in 2015 and is open to all individuals who have an interest in researching Leadership Preparation and Development in its broadest sense. This includes educational leaders, practitioners, researchers and research students globally. This is a very active RIG, which meets multiple times a year. This includes an annual meeting at the BELMAS Conference. Since we were convened back in May 2015, we have successfully built a research and practice network capable of generating and facilitating exchange and partnership on a continuing basis across professional contexts and contemporary issues relating to leadership preparation and development internationally.

Topics and Subject Matters Covered by this RIG:
Our thematic scope encompasses leadership preparation, leadership development, novice and established principals, principals 'professional lives and wellbeing, amongst others.

Overview of Events Hosted:

Date	RIG		Total Registered	Total Attended
27-Nov-25	**Leadership Preparation & Development**	**Online (Zoom)**	**31**	34
26-May-26	**Leadership Preparation & Development**	**Online (Zoom)**	**37**	35
03-Jul-26	**Leadership Preparation & Development**	**In-Person**	**10**	**40**

Feedback on Events:

Thank you for this opportunity to share, and reflect upon, new knowledge, diverse perspectives, and also an opportunity for professional growth.

Having the chance to connect and collaborate with like-minded colleagues in this RIG is something I look forward to in the future!

This was a fantastic event, and it was wonderful to have the opportunity to hear from peers across the globe. The speakers were superb and the rich dialogue across participants was so appreciated. Thank you!

Very interesting research on emotional labour and it was great to have a headteacher's panel in the discussion to add experience in practice to the debate.

Excellent session - the mix of presentations and then panel discussion was rich and rewarding.

Meetings took place across the year, and covered a variety of different research topics:

First meeting - Thursday 27th November 2025 'Principals' Emotional Labour in Challenging Times'. In this event, we were joined by Swedish guest speakers, Lill Langelotz and Anette Forssten Seiser, who presented a pilot study and recently launched research project focusing on principals' emotional labour in challenging times. We were also joined by a panel of practitioners made up of Scottish Headteachers, Megan Gardner and Allan Lynn, and Australian Principals, Toni Meath and Campbell McKay.
Second meeting - Tuesday 26th May 2026 'Leadership Preparation and Development – Global Perspectives Part III'. This session featured three distinguished speakers who offered insights into leadership preparation and development within the context of Turkey with Dr Köksal Banoğlu, Malta with Professor Christopher Bezzina, and Japan with Dr Midori Ueda.
Third meeting - Cardiff Conference 2026 We heard from Dr Tegwen Ellis, Former Chief Executive of the National Academy for Educational Leadership, Wales, who discussed the changes to Leadership, Preparation and Development of Welsh school leaders. Then we heard from Dr Paul Armstrong, Editor-In-Chief of BELMAS Journal, Management in Education, about developing a special edition.

Planning Meetings:

Berni, Susanne, and Deb are active Co-Convenors and have a specific WhatsApp group for the 3 of us and regularly share ideas on this platform and use it to coordinate our events.

Annual Conference:

We are an active RIG who always hold an in-person event at Annual Conference, and our RIG next July in Newcastle will hear about LPD in Northumbria from Andrew Garrad, a member of the North East Combined Regional Authority working in school improvement.

Other BELMAS Sessions (such as lunchtime sessions or ECR month):

Jill Perry presented on CPED in December, and Deb also chaired an evening session in October for ECR month, where the focus was on the EdD/PhD journey 'slog '(a request that came out of last year's ECR October EdD evening) where the focus was on the LPD from professional doctorates.

Blogs/Podcasts:

We have made the decision that we don't do these as we are a small team of three, with limited capacity, and this is currently going into the 2027 special edition of MiE.

MiE Contributions:

Several LPD papers have gone into MiE from the BELMAS AERA 2025 Symposium.

Myers Educational Press Book Series Engagement:

We are engaging with MEP and have a book in process.

Aims and Objectives for Next Year (September 2026 – August 2027):

To continue with our Special Edition of MiE for 2027.

To continue our series on Global Perspectives in LPD, the next one is currently in planning for Spring 2027.

To hold an ECR month event on LPD for March 2027.

2025-2026 Publications:

2026:

Ärlestig, H., & **Sahlin, S.** (2026). Shaping Future Principals: National Programme Leaders on Governance and Practice in Sweden's National Principal Training Programme. *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership,* 11(2), 290-326. https://doi.org/10.30828/real.1680227

Gurr, D., Hudson, C., McFarlane, K., Reed, C. J., Drysdale, L., Goode, H., & Moreno, B. (2026). Context, leadership and school success: Australian suburban, rural and remote cases from the ISSPP. *Journal of Educational Administration, 64*(3). https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-11-2024-0378

Ståhlkrantz, K., Kronqvist Håård, M., Eilard, H., Baltzer, C., **Sahlin, S**. & Foss, L. (2026). A Critical Policy Analysis of the Principal Track in Sweden's National Professional Programme, *The Education Inquiry*.

Styf, M., Bush, T., Glover, D., Thelin, K., Lund, S. & & **Sahlin, S**. (2026). Understanding Principal Turnover: An International Literature Review. *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership,* 11(2), 376-417. https://doi.org/10.30828/real.1818328

Styf, M., Glover, D., **Sahlin, S.** & Bush, T. (2026). The Use of Portfolios for Leadership Preparation for Aspiring Principals: A Swedish Case Study. Journal of Research on Leadership in Education.

2025:

Gurr, D., Moreno, B., Drysdale, L., & Goode, H. (2025). A Future-Focused Approach for the Preparation and Development of Teacher and Middle Leaders. In D. Gurr & P. Liu (Eds.), *Educational Leadership Preparation and Development: An international and future focused perspective* (pp. 13–32). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-92064-6_2

Jones, M., Lund, S. & **Sahlin, S.** (2025). Sami perspectives in school leadership? Conspicuous by their absence!. Education in the North, vol. 32: 1, ss. 154-166.

Pizarro Fuentes, E., & Moreno, B. (2025). School leadership preparation and development policies and programmes: comparative perspectives from Australia and Spain. *School Leadership & Management, 46(2), 195-217*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2025.2597274

Sahlin, S. (2025). Professional development of school principals : how do experienced school leaders make sense of their professional learning?. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, vol. 53: 2, ss. 380-397.

Sahlin, S., Styf, M., & Bush, T. (2025). Professional Socialization for Swedish Aspiring School Principals: Leadership Expectations, Experiences and Policy Intentions. International Journal of Leadership in Education.

Sahlin, S. , Ince, A. & Bush, T. (2025). Exploring novice principals ’professional confidence : insights from a Swedish perspective. School Leadership and Management.

Sahlin, S., Styf, M. & Håkansson Lindqvist, M. (2025). Peer mentoring for professional socialisation : shaping novice principals ’leadership identity?. Journal of Educational Administration, vol. 63: 5, ss. 442-455.

Sahlin, S., Sjöstrand, M. , Styf, M. & Lund, S. (2025). Swedish principals' adaptive leadership in unprecedented times : Learnings from the pandemic experiences. Educational Management Administration & Leadership.