

1. SUMMARY

Rambøll Management Consulting hereby presents a brief summary of the final report in the project "Study of the practice of SFS 2201 regarding working hours for pedagogical personnel and use of management resources". The project has been carried out on behalf of a joint committee consisting of The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), Union of Education Norway (Utdanningsforbundet), Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (Fagforbundet), and Delta.

Quality development can in many ways be understood as the main objective for today's kindergarten and school policies, as well as the objective for the joint committee. Rambøll therefore understands that the aim of this project is to investigate whether today's working hours agreement contributes to strengthening the quality in kindergartens and after school activity schemes (SFO). Emphasis has been placed on gathering input on the agreement itself, as well as circumstances that relate to the practice of the agreement. Simultaneously, it is clear that SFS 2201 affects kindergartens and after school activity schemes in different ways, which has led to slightly different focus areas in the studies of the two institutions. Regarding kindergartens, the practice of the minimum four hours available to the pedagogical personnel, and trials regarding this, have been of particular interest. For after school activity schemes, it has been of importance to highlight questions regarding management and resources available for management.

In the following, the main findings from the study of the practice of SFS 2201 in kindergartens and after school activity schemes are presented.

1.1 Practice of SFS 2201 in kindergartens

Head teachers and pedagogical leaders agree that personnel work, leadership of meetings with personnel, economic tasks, and other administrative tasks are central tasks for kindergarten head teachers. The main tasks for pedagogical leaders, according to head teachers and pedagogical leaders alike, include contact with parents, direct work with the children, practical organization of activities for the children (preparation and follow-up work), and academic/pedagogical work.

The study reveals that a large majority of head teachers has estimated a use of 31-37,5 hours per week for management tasks. However, 34 percent of the head teachers state they in fact use more than 37,5 hours per week on management tasks. This is the case both before and after the change in the agreement 1.8.2012. To a large degree, the pedagogical leaders also use more time than estimated on administrative tasks.

Head teachers are more positive than pedagogical leaders when it comes to their valuations of whether the organization of management resources in their kindergarten is advantageous, that there is a clear division of tasks between the employees when it comes to management responsibilities, and that the kindergarten takes advantage of its management resources in a good way. This is the case both before and after the change in the agreement.

1.1.1 Use of the minimum four hours

According to head teachers and pedagogical leaders, it is mainly decided that the minimum four hours are to be used for academic/pedagogical work and preparations, academic updating, practical facilitation of activities with the children, reporting and documentation, and meetings and planning. The share that state it is not predefined what the minimum four hours are to be used for has decreased considerably since the change in the agreement, from 19 to 6 percent among head teachers and from 22 to 7 percent among pedagogical leaders.

The study shows that the biggest change in the use of the minimum four hours after 1.8.2012 is that the contents of the minimum four hours has been put in writing and, as a consequence, that the personnel is more aware of what the hours are to be used for, rather than that the actual contents of the hours are changed. Thus, the pedagogical personnel have become more conscious about keeping with the number of hours available to them. Documentation and a

better overview of the use of the minimum four hours contribute to pedagogical personnel using more than four hours to a lesser degree than prior to the changes to the agreement.

Moreover, half of the pedagogical leaders and a third of the head teachers that have been interviewed state that the hours are used for cooperation with other pedagogical personnel to a larger degree than before.

More of the minimum four hours is used in the kindergartens after 1.8.2012. The share of head teachers and pedagogical leaders who state that the minimum four hours always or mostly are used in the kindergarten has increased, while there has been a decline in the share who report that these hours always or mostly are used outside of the kindergarten. This shows that the changes in the agreement from 1.8.2012 have had a direct impact on the practical level in kindergartens.

Head teachers mainly see it as beneficial to use all or some of the minimum four hours in the kindergarten, and highlights cooperation between the pedagogical personnel, better management and monitoring capabilities, and increased visibility for the rest of the staff with regard to what pedagogical work entails, as central benefits. The pedagogical leaders also highlight cooperation with other staff members and the availability of the head teacher if they have questions or are in need of clarifications as benefits of spending the hours in the kindergarten. At the same time, there are several pedagogical leaders who wish to spend the hours at home/outside the kindergarten, and who state that a lack of quiet and a possibility of being disturbed by the remaining staff are central disadvantages of using the hours in the kindergarten. The lack of physical facilities in terms of office space/work rooms are also highlighted as a challenge by head teachers and pedagogical leaders alike.

Over 90 percent of both head teachers and pedagogical leaders state that the use of the minimum four hours is discussed with the personnel. The majority states that the use of the hours is only discussed with the pedagogical staff (more head teachers than pedagogical leaders state this), while the remainder say that it is discussed with the entire personnel (more pedagogical leaders than head teachers state this). After the changes in SFS 2201 were introduced, the share of head teachers and pedagogical leaders who state that the use of the minimum four hours is discussed with the personnel has increased. Simultaneously, there has been a significant decline in the share who says this type of discussion does not occur (from 20 to 3 percent among head teachers and from 23 to 7 percent among pedagogical leaders). The increased scope of discussions with staff is in line with the changes to the agreement, and a sign that this element of the agreement has been implemented in kindergartens.

The occurrence of written plans for use of the minimum four hours has also increased since the changes to the agreement was introduced on 1.8.2012. There is an increase in weekly, quarterly, biannual and annual plans. Correspondingly, the share who states that the use of the minimum four hours is not stated in written plans has decreased significantly (from 77 to 22 percent among head teachers and from 71 to 20 percent among the pedagogical leaders). This shows that the development in kindergartens, also on this subject, largely is in line with the changes introduced on 1.8.2012.

After the changes to the agreement, head teachers have become more satisfied with the use of the minimum four hours and to a larger degree think this way of organizing working hours helps to enhance the quality in kindergartens. The pedagogical leaders, however, have become less positive about this. Both head teachers and pedagogical leaders are more positive towards claims that employees influence which tasks that should be prioritized within the minimum four hours, and that the entire personnel group in the kindergarten knows what the pedagogical personnel uses the minimum four hours for, after 1.8.2012.

1.1.2 About trials and deviations from the agreement

After the changes to the agreement, 21 percent of the head teachers state that trials that deviates from the agreement is either being planned or carried out. The corresponding share prior to the changes was 34 percent. A large part of head teachers state that the trial has been initiated by the municipality. The information given about the contents of trials may, however, signal that

there is certain confusion regarding what in fact constitutes a deviation from SFS 2201. A number of the answers provided about the contents of the trials entail one or two of the minimum four hours being attached to the kindergarten, which is entirely in line with the current agreement.

1.1.3 Head teachers' and pedagogical leaders' assessments of the agreement

The majority of head teachers and pedagogical leaders state that there have been significant changes in practice since the amendment came into force 1.8.2012. The changes most highlighted by both groups are that more time is allocated for cooperation and joint planning and that the pedagogical leaders are more in the kindergarten and work less at home than before. Head teachers also point out that they have a better overview and a better foundation for management of the kindergarten. Pedagogical leaders, on the other hand, state that they have less time to complete their tasks, that they see clearer and are more aware of regarding what the time is meant to be used for, and that there is less time to spend with the children.

The study shows that both head teachers and pedagogical leaders have better knowledge of the contents of the SFS 2201 after 1.8.2012, and to a larger degree perceive that the agreement is actively used as a management tool and allows for local solutions. There are also several head teachers and pedagogical leaders who state that their kindergarten has sufficient knowledge and skill to exploit opportunities within SFS 2201, as well as access to the necessary expertise and support from the municipality. Head teachers, however, are more in agreement with these topics than the pedagogical leaders both before and after 1.8.2012.

Head teachers are also to a greater extent than pedagogical leaders in agreement with the notion that SFS 2201 provides a foundation for development and improvement of quality in the kindergarten. 41 percent of head teachers consider that the agreement provides a basis for quality to a large or very large degree, while only 16 percent of pedagogical leaders are of the same opinion. As is apparent from the surveys conducted, the changes to the agreement have had little or no impact on head teachers' and pedagogical leaders' assessments of this. At the same time, the qualitative interviews carried out show that there are elements in the agreement amendments which contribute to quality improvement. Head teachers state that the current agreement contributes to improvement of quality as it facilitates more cooperation and better use and sharing of expertise among the pedagogical staff, quality assurance of the contents of the minimum four hours as this is discussed and documented, and a better opportunity for head teachers to monitor the pedagogical staffs' use of working hours. Pedagogical leaders first and foremost emphasize the possibilities for collaboration with other pedagogical staff as the biggest advantage of the current agreement. However, the actors also identify challenges within the current agreement. In qualitative interviews, it is pointed out by both head teachers and pedagogical leaders that lack of physical facilities that allow the minimum four hours to be spent in the kindergarten, and the benefits this brings, is an obstacle for the agreement to fulfill its purpose. It is also highlighted that absence due to sick leave can be a challenge, as this can cause difficulties in the implementation of the minimum four hours as planned in the kindergarten.

1.1.4 Head teachers' and pedagogical leaders' proposed amendments to the agreement

There are slightly more pedagogical leaders than head teachers who see a need to make changes to the current agreement. 23 percent of head teachers and 27 percent of pedagogical leaders see a need for change. Moreover, there are significantly more head teachers than pedagogical leaders who believe that there is no such need, 28 and 8 percent respectively. The share of pedagogical leaders who see a need for change has increased after 1.8.2012 (from 17 to 27 percent), as has the share of head teachers who do not see a need for change (from 23 to 28 percent).

As shown in the table below, an increase in the amount of hours constitutes the change that is in greatest demand. The survey carried out shows that 91 percent of the pedagogical leaders state that they to "some", "large" or "very large" degree use more than the minimum of four hours per week to complete the tasks they are assigned, while 84 percent of head teachers consider that it is necessary for the pedagogical staff to spend more than the minimum of four hours for their tasks to be performed. Below, an overview of the most common changes called for by head teachers and pedagogical leaders is provided:

| Head teachers | Pedagogical leaders |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of hours must be increased, need for more time for planning, preparation and follow-up work, and collaboration (61 out of 166) The agreement must be more specific, particularly regarding whether the hours for planning should be used in or outside the kindergarten and what the hours should be used (15 out of 166) Room to allocate more hours as needed, more flexibility, more control of one's own time, ability to accumulate hours and take time off later etc. (13 out of 166) Need for increased resources, more staff, funding for facilities and equipment (10 out of 166) More hours should be attached to the kindergarten (10 out of 166) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of hours must be increased, need for more time for planning, preparation and follow-up work, and collaboration (98 out of 259) More flexibility, pedagogical staff should have more control and be able to use the time as one self wants (44 out of 259) Stronger constraints, it must be clearer who decides the use of the working hours and how they should be used (33 out of 259) Need for (better) office space / work rooms in the kindergarten in order to do the work that is supposed to be done (19 out of 259) |

1.2 Practice of SFS 2201 in after school activity schemes

It appears to be a fairly clear division of roles and responsibilities between principals and managers. Principals generally have overall responsibility, associated with personnel (81 percent), administration (71 percent), and reporting and documentation (62 percent). Managers, on the other hand, have greater responsibilities for the daily operation of day-care facilities, and therefore have a wider range of management tasks. A large majority of managers report that they are responsible for all management tasks, including internal meetings and planning (98 percent), contact with parents/guardians (98 percent), the practical organization of activities (93 percent), academic responsibilities, (89 percent), administrative tasks (88 percent), reporting and documentation (81 percent) and personnel (80 percent).

Moreover, it appears that other actors have management responsibilities in about one-third of the after school activity schemes represented in the survey. These include inspectors and others in the school administration, base and team leaders, proxies for managers, assistants and after-school coordinators and coordinating environmental workers. These claim to be delegated different tasks, depending on local conditions and needs.

1.2.1 Prioritization of management tasks

The actors' stated prioritization of management tasks shows that there are somewhat differing priorities among principals and managers. The tasks that are prioritized highest by principals include personnel responsibilities (89 percent), contact with parents/guardians (73 percent), administrative tasks (72 percent), and academic responsibilities (71 percent). Thus, the tasks that are prioritized least by the principals are reporting and documentation, practical organization of activities, and internal meetings and planning. The tasks that are prioritized the highest by managers include contact with parents/guardians (91 percent), personnel responsibilities (85 percent), internal meetings and planning (84 percent), academic responsibilities and administrative tasks (82 percent). The tasks that are prioritized least by managers are practical organization, and reporting and documentation. This supports an impression of the division of roles between principals and managers in which managers generally prioritize tasks related to after school activity schemes higher than principals, and principals clearly prioritize overall personnel responsibilities above other tasks.

The survey shows that the vast majority of both principals and managers are positive with regard to how management is organized and practiced in after school activity schemes. The majority of both principals and managers are positive about the organization of management resources, and are of the opinion that this contributes to quality improvement. They also state that there is good cooperation between principals and managers, that the division of labor is clear, and that resources for leadership in the after school activity schemes are utilized in a good way.

1.2.2 Principal's and managers' use of time on management

The survey shows that principals spend most time on personnel management, administrative tasks and meetings and planning. These tasks are the ones that mostly take more than 1 hour

per week to complete. Reporting and documentation, academic responsibility and contact with parents/guardians are the tasks that principals generally spend the least time on, measured in tasks where the use of time is less than 1 hour. The time for management among managers are more scattered on different tasks than among principals. The tasks that managers spend most time on (more than 4 hours) are stated to be administrative tasks, personnel responsibilities, and meetings and planning. The tasks where it is most widely reported a use of less than 4 hours include contact with parents/guardians, reporting and documentation, and practical organization of activities. Academic responsibility is in an intermediate position between the tasks on which most and least time are spent.

The largest share of both principals and managers state that there are no tasks that there are used too much time on. To the extent that principals and managers do think too much time is spent on any tasks, these are to the largest degree administrative tasks and reporting and documentation. On the other hand, academic responsibility is the task that most respondents, both principals and managers, think too little time is spent on. About half of both principals and managers report this. A third of the respondents state that internal meetings and planning, practical organization, and personnel responsibilities are tasks on which too little time is spent. Overall, the survey shows that respondents do not think that too much time is spent on management in general, or that the time spent on management has a negative impact on the children's need for adult contact.

1.2.3 Principals' and managers' assessments of the agreement

In general, the study shows that the actors involved with after school activity schemes have very differing opinions about the current working hours agreement. It also reveals that the respondents have fairly little knowledge about the agreement. Opinion is divided among both principals and managers regarding claims about whether their respective after school activity schemes have access to support and expertise from the municipality, whether they have sufficient expertise in their own institution, whether the agreement leaves room to find local solutions, and whether the agreement is used as an active management tool in the after school activity scheme. Thus, neither principals nor general managers give a clear and unambiguous message when it comes to these issues. The qualitative interviews carried out also suggest that there are few who have strong opinions about how the deal works in after school activity schemes, and that, overall, the agreement functions to their satisfaction.

1.2.4 Principals' and managers' proposed amendments to the agreement

The findings presented above are also reflected in the actors' response to the question of whether there is a need for changes in the agreement. Only 10 percent of principals and 11 percent of managers state that there is a need to amend the agreement. 27 and 18 percent of principals and managers, respectively, state that this is not necessary, while a majority of 63 and 71 percent say they do not know whether changes are needed. The changes that are requested by the actors are shown in the table below:

| Principals | Managers |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility to customize arrangements at small and large after school activity schemes/schools/local conditions/more flexibility (15 out of 59) • Clarification of responsibilities and tasks for the manager position (9 out of 59) • Less administrative time / time allocated for management (6 out of 59) • More time for administrative tasks (4 out of 59) • Management resources should be tied to the workplace (3 out of 59) • Increased staffing / resources (3 out of 59) • It should be added time for collaboration between school and after school activity scheme (2 out of 59) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of time for administration and time spent with the children should be specified, general need for specifications (10 of 23) • It should be specified that the manager must be a full time manager when more than 60 children (3 of 23) • Requirements for certificate /education for assistants/employees (2 of 23) |