

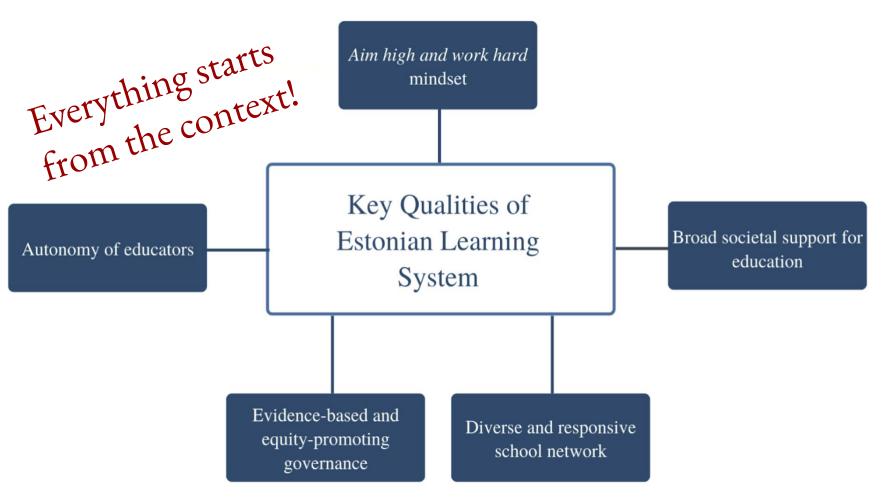
collaborative school culture

Eve Eisenschmidt, professor of educational leadership 27 September 2023

## Themes

- 1. theoretical background
- 2. practical side of the program
- 3. aims and cornerstones
- of the programme
- 1. results so far



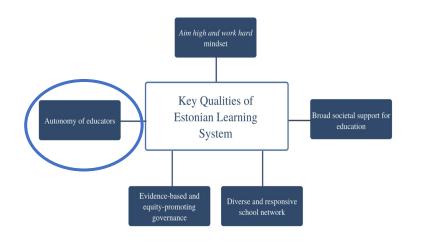


Eisenschmidt, Heidmets, Kitsing, Kasesalk, Vanari. 2021. Case Study: Estonian Learning System. NCEE

## Autonomy of educators

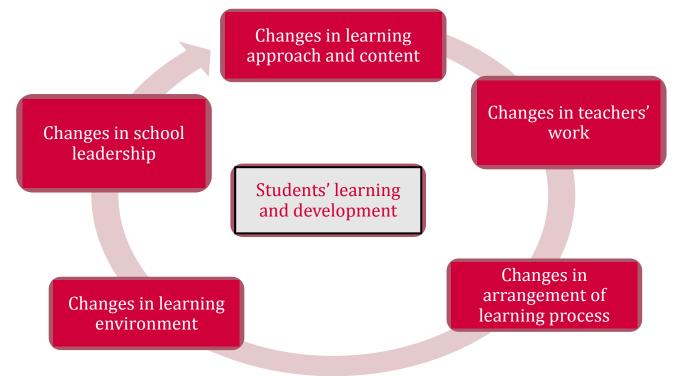
Decisions must be taken where they will ultimately be implemented:

- → School principals
- → Teachers





# School culture is the key factor (Eisenschmidt 2018)





## School Culture

# **Invisible but** aware elements Traditions, ideals, goals, values, aspiration behaviour,

Visible artefacts

Documentations, templates, materials, communication messages

Invisible and unaware elements

underlying assumptions, , taken-for-granted beliefs and values determining perception, thought, and feelings.

Schein 2010

### Characteristics of effective (teacher) professional development (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021)

- cyclical sessions during longer period
- communities of practice
- voluntary
- specific
- outside expertise
- involves implementation of new competences



## Whole-school approach

- to support whole-school innovation and improvement of teaching practices by enhancing the teaching and learning culture through school-university co-creation of new methodologies and implementation of evidence-driven innovation.



tallinn university School of Educational Sciences



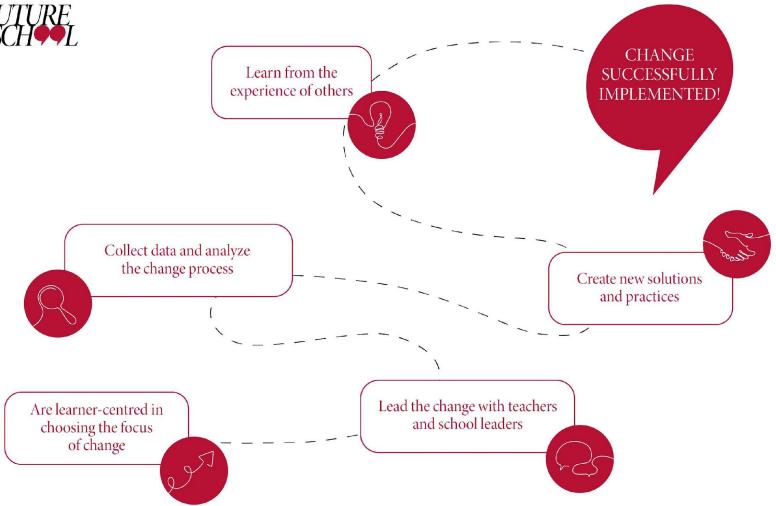
## School improvement program

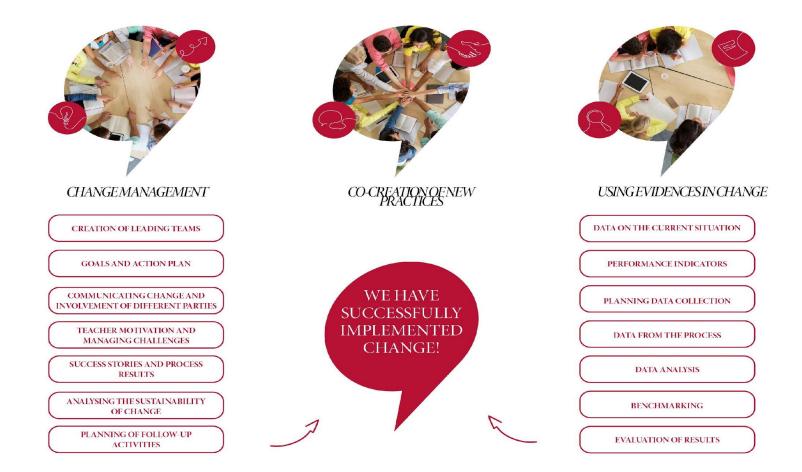


- One academic year (9 months), 7 rounds of schoo
- 5 school teams (with 6-7 members including principal) working on their own 'change' focusing on students' learning, in total 27
- Monthly meetings for all teams at the university focusing on change processes and how to work with evidences
- Every school has an consultant from the university









## Practical aspects of the programme

- School team is leaded by the teacher and the principal is member of the team
- The university consultant:
  - is coaching the principal to give responsibilities to the team leader
  - is recommending research literature and instruments as an input for the learning communities of teachers
  - is mentoring the team leader to overcome the problems in the change process
- In the seminars practical tools (white board sessions, engaging stakeholders, visualzing the goal etc) are introduced and the team can test and reflect it





Starting point for the school improvement (programme):

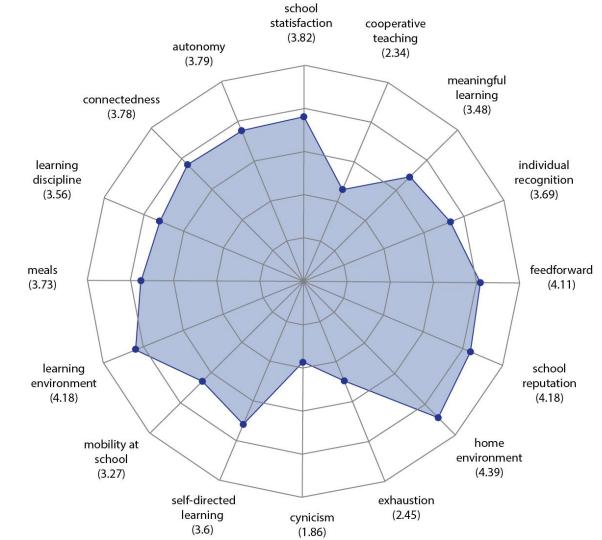
What are problems in student learning you want to solve based on your data?

What is the goal your teams wants to achieve for the vision of learning?

What is your vision of learning?



National well-being survey, grade 4 student factors, national view 2020









Successful change management relies on vision for learning

Principles in change:

- Dialogue: Has it been discussed and agreed?
- Meaningfulness: Is it understandable for the teachers?
- Ownership: Have they contributed in the co-creation of it?



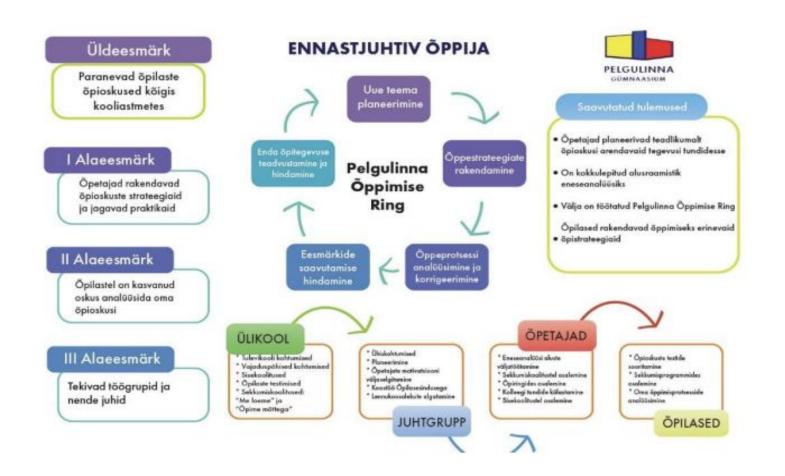




Sustainable changes require owership

Teachers create new practices together









How do you know or are you just guessing?

University consultants form the habit to think on evidence.



# Evidence-based school improvement

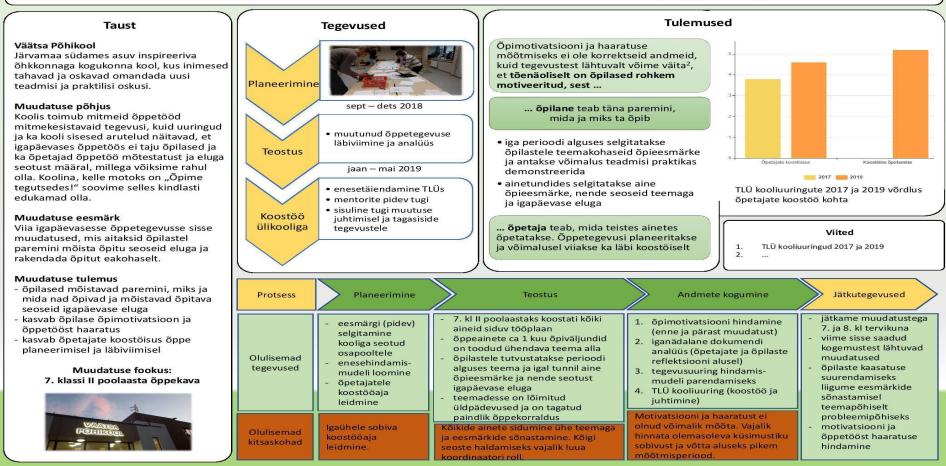
**Evidence** is a kind of information, which points to the truth or validity of a claim. There are 2 ways how truth or validity is achieved:

- **1.** Research-based evidence
- **2.** Data-informed evidence



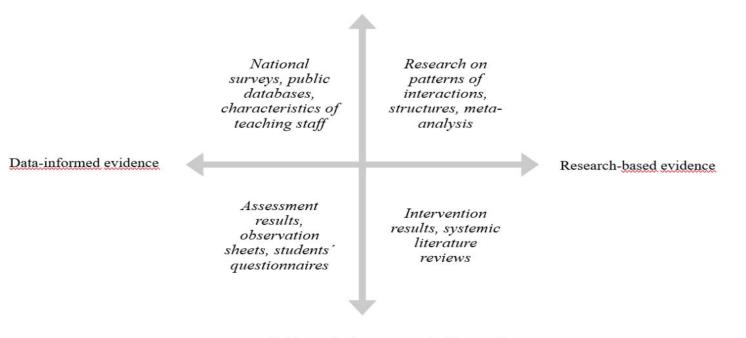
#### Paremini mõtestatud õppimine

Väätsa Põhikool koostöös Tallinna Ülikooli Tulevikooli programmiga



### Evidence-based school improvement (Vanari, Eisenschmidt, Tammets 2019)

Evidence for school development



Evidence for improvement of instruction

# Our evidence- driven approach





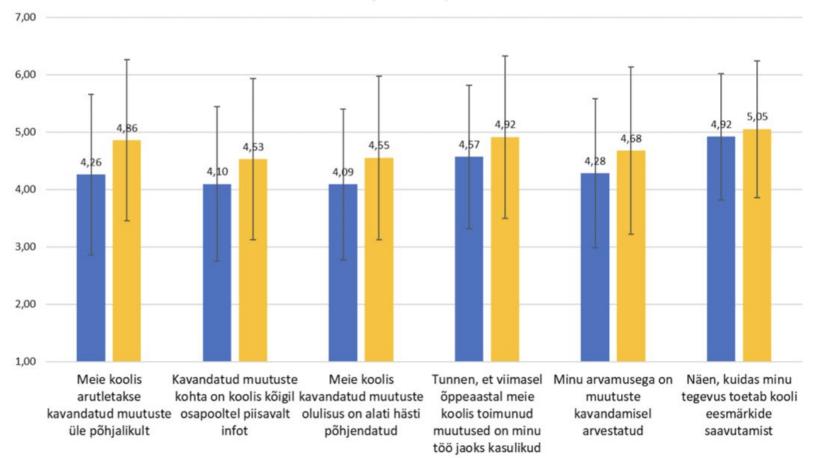
In the beginning and end of the school year (October - May) survey is carried out in participating schools:

- Distributed and learning leadership
- (Hallinger & Heck, 2010)
- Teachers' readiness for leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004)
- Data use in school improvement (Schildkamp et al., 2014)

School improvement supportive school culture

Every school gets comparative report about their results.

Muutuse juhtimise printsiibid



- Data was used for setting goals, implementing and monitoring change, but not for identifying the problem as a starting point
- There was attention to rules about data use, but the rules for collaboration in school teams needed agreement





Vanari, K. (2020). School and university partnership for evidence-driven school development from the system theoretical perspective [Master thesis] Tartu: University of Tartu.

- The main focus of the consultants was on bringing in theoretical frameworks, fostering a culture of evidence use and understanding the cycle of inquiry.
- Schools mostly used the data they gathered by themselves and the use of data gathered by or for the national or municipality level was used rarely.





Vanari, K., Tammets, K., Eisenschmidt, E. (2020). School-university partnership for evidence-driven school development. K. Tirri, A. Toom (Eds.). Pedagogy and Pedagogical Challenges (1–10). Helsinki: IntechOpen.





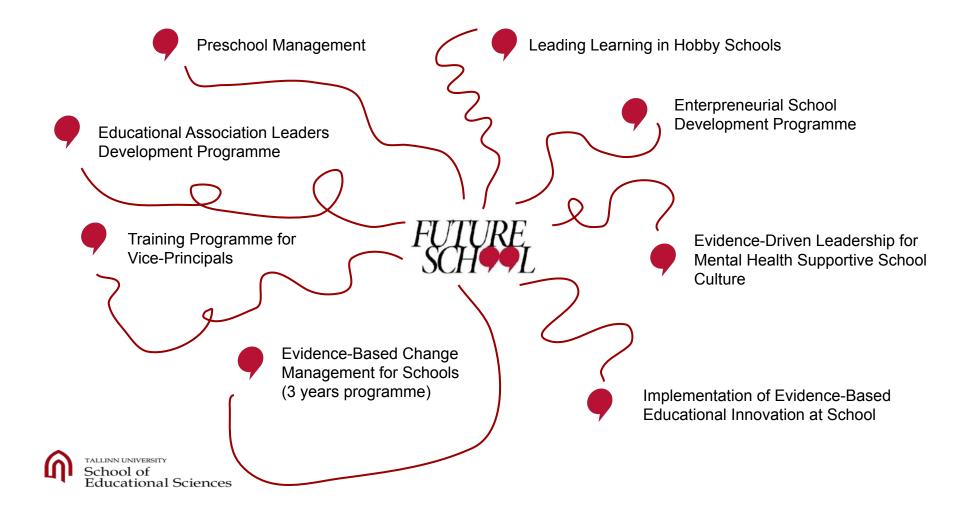
- Evidence-based development is based on good collaboration at school.
  - Teachers do not see the link between the data collected and used in the classroom and the data used in school development.
- Teachers perceive their own skills in data collection and analysis as low.

Rääk, et.al. (2021). Exploring the Perceptions of Estonian Teachers' Data Use in School Development. Education Sciences, 11(6)

# Future directions

- longer period: 1 year + 2 years
- common knowledge ground about learning science
- impact evaluation and monitoring students satisfaction surveys (trends in basic psychological needs)
- how school owners (local municipality) could empower schools and for a network





### Is it enough? Read more:

Oppi, P.; Eisenschmidt, E.; Jõgi, A-L. (2022). Teacher's readiness for leadership – a strategy for school development. School Leadership and Management. DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2021.2016685.

Rääk, K.; Eisenschmidt, E.; Tammets, K. (2021). <u>Exploring the Perceptions of Estonian</u> <u>Teachers' Data Use in School Development.</u> Education Sciences, 11 (6), 26.05.2021. DOI: 10.3390/educsci11060262

Vanari, K., Tammets, K., Eisenschmidt, E. (2020). <u>School-university partnership for</u> <u>evidence-driven school development.</u> K. Tirri, A. Toom (Eds.). Pedagogy and Pedagogical Challenges (1–10). Helsinki: IntechOpen.

Oppi, P.; Eisenschmidt, E.; Stingu, M. (2020). Seeking sustainable ways for school development: teachers' and principals' views regarding teacher leadership. International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1–23. DOI: 10.1080/13603124.2020.1849809.



### Our team

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### Question, comments?!

## Thank you!



