



**Principals' Changing Work in a Time of Education Reform:
Challenges and Opportunities**

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This paper examines the changing nature of principals' work in the context of the global movement of education reform. This changing nature is not uncommon in different education systems across various societies. Case study was approach to unpack Hong Kong principals' struggles with the challenges posed by the changes in education policy and increasing student diversity in a Chinese context. Three research questions are addressed: (1) What challenges did the principals face at the time of the education reforms? (2) What was the major shift in the principals' work in addressing the challenges? (3) How did the principals' changing scope of work inspire new opportunities for their schools? Multiple qualitative data were collected including semi-structured interviews and documentary evidence such as school reports and school development plans. There was extensive change to the principals' work due to the gap between the policy and practice of the education reforms in the past decade. Despite this change, they could identify new opportunities from the challenges that saved the schools from the threat of closure. The principals were also inspired to set out on new directions for their schools. The implications of the principals' changing work for school improvement are also discussed.