

Developments in School-Based Management:

The Specific Case of Queensland, Australia

Bob Lingard, The University of Queensland, Debra Hayes, UTS, Martin Mills, The University of Queensland

Introduction

The Queensland government school system like those in other states of Australia was highly centralised and bureaucratic until the 1980s. Since that time some State governments, usually but not exclusively conservative, have attempted to devolve forms of decision making to schools. This has been most noticeable in Victoria whereas, under Labor, the NSW government education bureaucracy has been expanded through the amalgamation of the school and TAFE systems, even though an earlier Conservative government made a concerted attempt to introduce school-based management. State education bureaucracies in Australia were creations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflecting in part, historic, geographic and demographic aspects of Australia's creation and development as a modern nation. During this time it was considered that dispersed, and in some cases isolated, communities could be best served by a centralised, bureaucratic and paternalistic system of educational provision. According to Connell (1993), education was parsimoniously funded thus tending to be managed rather than planned. Elements of this former time continue to be reflected in funding mechanisms that take into account vast distances and social inequities but the need to respond to local concerns, through shared decision making, is increasingly recognised.

The pursuit of reconstruction after the second world war stimulated attempts to decentralise administrative structures with the creation of a number of regions in each of the states. These gestures towards educational reconstruction basically duplicated the structure and practices of the head office which were run and controlled by an admixture of bureaucratic professionalism. Career preferment within the education system was only available to those with educational backgrounds. As a result education had a *sui generis*, or unique, character within the public sector. Schools where the actual purposes of education departments were carried out remained almost fortress institutions, run by principals and teachers with little negotiation with, and input from, school communities, including parents. Thus until the 1970s or thereabouts, the Australian states had probably the most centralised systems of education in the western world, with the possible exception of France. These educational systems were classical bureaucracies with authority structures stretching downwards from the Minister through Director-General, deputies, regional directors, principals and teachers, with both of the latter groups regularly surveilled and evaluated by inspectors.

This paper provides a critical history of moves from the 1980s onwards in Queensland education towards school-based management. School-based management as a concept is considered here to be synonymous with the concept of devolution. Utilising Rizvi (1974), the paper argues that school-based management has no stipulative meaning but rather that it is concept that is rearticulated over time in changing political contexts, while also being contested at any time. As with most policies then, school-based management statements involve a suturing together of multiple and competing discourses (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry, 1997). The paper begins by analysing three competing discourses of school-based management, notably social democratic, corporate managerialist and market, before looking at specific developments in Queensland. One of the competing rationales for the introduction of school-based management has been that it will lead to improved student outcomes. There

is little research to support that observation, apart from the work of Newmann and Associates in the USA (1996). Newmann's work has been influential in Queensland school-based management moves. However, given the mixed motivations for moves towards school-based management, it is hardly surprising that there is little evidence of improved student outcomes.

Social Democratic Devolution

The state bureaucracies began to change in the 1960s and 1970s in various states. For example, some Victorian schools, and to a lesser extent some in South Australia, began to experiment with more open and participatory relationships with parents and school communities, with the creation in some instances of school councils. There was also some talk of more autonomy for school principals in running their schools. The Karmel Report (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973) which framed the educational policy and funding initiatives of the Whitlam federal government, and which reconstituted federal/State relations in respect of schooling (White, 1987, Lingard, forthcoming), also gave support to what has been called a 'social democratic' version of devolution (Rizvi 1994). The Report highlighted the need for devolution and participation, arguing that improved educational outcomes for all students, but particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, required recognition of the need for more teacher and school level professional autonomy, combined with greater input from parents and community. Reflecting the values of the time, the Karmel Report was sceptical of top-down approaches and critical of the centralised state bureaucracies, encouraging instead the flowering of difference with considerable support for bottom-up innovation and changes. Specifically, the Report itself argued that 'responsibility should be devolved as far as possible upon the people involved in the actual task of schooling, in consultation with the parents of pupils they teach and, at a senior level, with students themselves' (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, p.11).

The Karmel Report also challenged the hegemony of the definition of equality of opportunity as demanding sameness of provision in curricular, staffing and funding arrangements. Despite this rhetoric of equality of educational opportunity a broad range of research literature demonstrated that schooling tended to reproduce inequalities rather than ameliorate them (for example, Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett, 1982). The Karmel Report (1973), articulated the problem as the need to shift from a "policy of provision on roughly equal bases for all children in schools to which all had access" (p. 16) to providing "more equal opportunity for all children to participate more fully in the society as valued and respected members of it" (p. 23). Although the long held goal of equal opportunity had been interpreted as "equal access to schools of roughly equal standards" (p. 16), there were "gross inequalities, not only in the provision of resources but also in the opportunities that they offer[ed] to boys and girls from varied backgrounds" (p. 139). The Report acknowledged that "more intensive and varied efforts will be required in some schools and for some children" (p. 23). It argued for a definition of educational opportunity based upon the need for differential treatment - positive discrimination - for disadvantaged groups so as to achieve equality of educational opportunity. This policy direction recognised that central bureaucracy was important for redistributive funding geared towards achieving equality of educational opportunity for all. There was also recognition that federal funding was necessary to the achievement of equality of educational opportunity, given the federal government's greater revenue raising capacity compared with the states (see Whitlam, 1985).

This rearticulation of equality of educational opportunity demanded centrally driven redistributive policies and centrally framed equity policies that were, seemingly, at odds with Karmel's other vision of a social democratic version of devolution which challenged such bureaucratic centralisation. Nevertheless, it was the state systems themselves which had to

change because schooling still remained the constitutional responsibility of the states and the states continued to provide most of the funding for government schooling. This remains the case despite subsequent attempts to move towards national curriculum frameworks under Labor and the introduction of national literacy testing under the Coalition (Lingard and Porter, 1997). The Karmel Report's support for more teacher autonomy and closer relationships between schools and their communities was a challenge to the state bureaucracies and to federal/State relations in schooling. This challenge was sponsored by increased Commonwealth funding for government schools and a funding/compliance trade-off as an implementation strategy. It should also be noted that the federal government's stance on devolution, following the Karmel recommendations, was never about dismantling the state systems of schooling.

However, it needs to be stressed that the Karmel Report came at the high point of the Keynesian social policies in Australia; the Report witnessed a huge increase in Commonwealth funding for schools linked to a view that greater expenditure, including positive discrimination, was central to the achievement of greater equality (Whitlam 1985). This situation was to change dramatically from the mid-seventies following the OPEC oil crisis and broad political acceptance of post-Keynesian policy approaches in the context of globalisation, the end of the Cold war and the apparent global dominance of neo-liberal market ideology. The Karmel Report thus marked the high point in Australian education of the view that progressive and effective educational change required more funding - the emphasis was upon inputs - and the need for more school autonomy. The second Commonwealth Karmel Report (Quality of Education Review Committee, 1985) signified a new emphasis upon outputs and outcomes, depending on temporal frame. Since the mid-seventies all governments, at State and federal levels, have stressed efficiency and effectiveness, doing more with less and stressing outcomes rather than inputs. Subsequent developments in devolution and school-based management occurred against this post-Keynesian ethos and were thus rearticulated in more managerialist and market ways (Rizvi 1994; Taylor et al 1997). In subsequent discussions and politics surrounding further moves towards devolution and school-based management within the State systems of schooling, the contextual framing of this earlier social democratic version is often forgotten.

Corporate Managerialist Devolution

A number of factors, including the globalisation of the economy, an emphasis on smaller government, tight expenditure and better outcomes, along with more diverse communities, has witnessed a managerialist transformation of the Australian public sector since the early 1980s (Considine 1988; Yeatman 1990, 1998). This has variously been referred to as corporate managerialism in Australia and the new public management in the UK and has been a change implemented across the OECD countries (OECD, 1995). The structure and practices of all public service departments, including education, have been substantially affected by this managerialist transformation. Basically, private sector management practices have been incorporated into the public sector. The structures have also been changed with new relationships established between a policy and strategy producing centre and those sites which actually deliver the service. The centre now concentrates on policy, strategy and desired outcomes with the local sites on service provision (schools) responsible for the achievement of these desired outcomes, and given more autonomy as to how they might go about achieving them. This new arrangement has been described as 'steering at a distance' (Kickert 1991). The structures have been flattened to some extent, now resembling more a coathanger than a pyramid, and there is a new emphasis upon outcomes rather than procedural precision - the hallmark of older style bureaucracies.

There has been a move towards generic managers rather than leadership of departments being necessarily linked to professional expertise in the department's domain.

Accompanying this arrangement has been a new set of relationships between senior bureaucrats/managers and their ministers which has been referred to as the ministerialisation of policy making (Knight and Lingard 1997). Ministers have surrounded themselves with political and policy advisers and have sought a tighter control over a narrower policy agenda with the emphasis upon the achievement of goals. Senior managers are now often employed on a contract basis with performance dividends. Central agencies (for example, Premiers' Departments and Treasury) within government have also sought tighter policy and funding control over the line departments. Education departments have been seriously affected by this managerialist transformation; as a consequence they have now lost their *sui generis* character within the public sector.

Corporate managerialist versions of devolution were evident in education reports such as *Better Schools* (Pierce, 1987) in Western Australia and *Focus on Schools* (Department of Education, 1990) in Queensland. Lingard, Knight and Porter (1995, p.83) have encapsulated the characteristics of these corporate managerialist educational systems in the following way:

- The central office is now more focussed on defining policy and formulating strategic plans than in the day-to-day administration of schools.
- Schools will be 'audited' by the central administration for both financial and educational purposes. That is, they are held accountable for how they use their money and for their educational 'outcomes'.
- There is a mandatory development plan in each school. That is, schools have to create their own objectives, but within the framework provided by the overall goals of the Department.
- Schools must work from 'single line' budgets. That is, where previously they were given funds earmarked for particular purposes, they are now provided with a lump sum on which they have to operate for the year. They must do their own financial planning and decide how and on what they will use the funds.
- There are formally constituted school decision-making groups consisting of staff, students, parents and community representatives which endorse and in some cases help to formulate development plans and authorise budgets.
- Rather than being centrally organised and provided, support services for schools (often called school support centres) are decentralised, being based either in schools or regions or alternatively are partially privatised through 'outsourcing'.

There are tensions between this managerialist version of devolution and the older social democratic one articulated by the Karmel Report with both teacher unions, teachers and parent bodies holding onto the earlier version.

Market Devolution

There has been a further rearticulation of devolution and school-based management in some jurisdictions which has been referred to as the 'market' view (Rizvi 1994). This has been most obvious in developments in the UK following the 1988 Education Reform Act and during the years of Conservative government and in Victoria following the Kennett government's *Schools of the Future* (Directorate of School Education, Victoria, 1993) developments. This version of school-based management suggests that improved student outcomes will be achieved when schools are put in competition with each other for 'clients' and when the consumers of education (parents and community) have a greater say, particularly over choice of schools. This has been a world-wide phenomena (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998). In the UK context the need for such deregulation was based upon the view that all educational services were subject to supposed 'provider capture' (schools run

by teachers in their own interests) and that the breaking of such 'capture' was central to the improvement of educational outcomes.

A dimension of this notion of 'capture' in Australia relates to the moderating role of teachers' unions in educational reform. Here, negotiations over teachers' salaries and conditions frequently take place within the context of proposed educational reform. Whilst in the UK more autonomy for schools and principals was accompanied by the establishment of "league tables" of student academic and other performance outcomes for schools, which supposedly provided the 'consumers' (parents) with evidence on which to choose schools for their student children, in Australia such tables have been vehemently opposed by unions. Additionally, with the Victorian version of market based devolution there was an accompanying cut in funding and a huge reduction in teacher numbers. This latter case has made teacher unions even more wary of devolutionary moves in Australian education, with the association in the minds of many teachers of school-based management with funding cuts and teacher redundancies, as well as less likelihood of achieving equality of educational opportunity for all students.

The 'market' view of school-based management has also changed the role of principals, pushing them very much in the direction of marketing their schools to ensure their continued viability, placing some dents in collegiality amongst principals across schools. As such, something of a tension has been created between these principals and their teaching staff (Ball 1994; Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995), with principals of necessity becoming 'bi-lingual' needing to speak both managerial/marketing, as well as professional/educational discourses. Further strain was placed on these relationships by the changed role of Principals which distanced them further from the concerns and practices of classroom teachers. This market manifestation of school-based management appears to work well for schools serving advantaged communities, but seems to disadvantage further schools located in disadvantaged communities (Gewirtz et al, 1995; Whitty et al 1998, Thrupp, 1999, Hughes and Lauder, 1999). It can also place schools located in low socio-economic areas in competition with each other with negative outcomes for some of these schools - the apparently less successful in attracting students, creating what in England have been referred to as 'sink schools' for the excluded. Thrupp (1999) has also shown how marketisation leads to more homogeneous student intakes in differentiated schools, thus exacerbating inequalities in educational outcomes between students from different social class based backgrounds. Questions are also raised in this context of the basis of parental choice of schools, with Gewirtz et al (1995) demonstrating the class factors involved in patterns and processes of school choice.

These rearticulated managerialist and market versions of school based management are thus linked to new state structures and new ideologies in a globalised, post-bureaucratic, post-Keynesian political and policy context. In Australia at the national level, there have been additional attempts since the 1980s to incorporate educational policy as one element of economic policy, as a necessary policy lever to internationalise the Australian economy and to ensure a high skill/high wage workforce. In this way, educational policy, including that specifically focused upon schooling, has also lost some of its *sui generis* character with interests other than those of educators being involved in educational policy production. This has been an element of a world-wide emergence of a new educational policy consensus which sees education in human capital terms as the basis of ensuring the competitive advantage of nations in a globalised economy (Brown, Halsey, Lauder and Stuart Wells, 1997). As the *Focus on Schools* report in Queensland (Department of Education, 1990) put it: '

Education was once clearly part of broad social policy, especially as a means of achieving a more equitable society. Now it is increasingly a subsector of

economic policy as well. It is argued that a better educated labour force is likely to be more technologically adaptive, more flexible and more creative in making decisions and deploying resources. (Department of Education, 1990, pp. 36-37)

This construction of educational policy has reconstituted the working of federalism in schooling, with moves towards national policies and curriculum frameworks in the eighties and nineties (Lingard and Porter 1997) and more recently the introduction of accountability testing, particularly in relation to literacy by the Commonwealth (Luke, Lingard, Green and Comber, 1999) and a weakening of Commonwealth support for equity programs (Luke 1997; Lingard 1998).

Another contextual frame of the newer versions of school-based management is the broader diversity of identities within the society and the demand by groups that schools respect and indeed encourage the expression of such differences. The concept of equality of educational opportunity has thus been complicated further through attempts to simultaneously achieve equality and difference, through what Nancy Fraser (1995) has called a pulling together of a politics of redistribution with a politics of recognition. It appears that devolved systems might be able to better respond to difference, but that in contexts of either constant or reducing expenditure, and limited commitment to central equity programs, these very same reforms might very well exacerbate inequalities in and through schooling (Whitty et al, 1998).

Improving Student Outcomes

One public justification for the moves to school-based management was always the goal of improving student outcomes, both academic and social. (The social democratic version was also about democratic processes and more democratic school/community relationships.) This was the case across the social-democratic, managerialist and market articulations of devolution. In a recent review of the links between self-managing schools and improved student outcomes, Brian Caldwell (1998), an important intellectual architect of the self-managing school in the Australian context, particularly in respect of Schools of the Future in Victoria, has observed:

There is no doubt that, while factors underpinning the movement to self-managing schools are many and varied, there has always been an expectation that they will make a contribution to improved outcomes for students. There is also no doubt that evidence of a direct cause-and-effect relationship between self-management and improved outcomes is minimal. This is understandable given that few initiatives in self-management have been linked in a systematic way to what occurs in classrooms in manner that is likely to impact on learning. (Caldwell 1998, p. 38)

It is in that context that the research in the US by Newmann and Associates (1996), which demonstrated a link between restructuring which was classroom and pedagogy focused, and improved academic outcomes for all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, came to the attention of policy makers in education, as well as educational researchers. It is also the case that as thinking about school-based management has 'matured', amongst educators at least, the concern has shifted to changing classroom practices and the ways in which a teacher professional learning community within the school, along with external systemic supports, can encourage 'authentic pedagogy' which achieves improved student outcomes (Newmann and Associates 1996).

These concerns have emerged at the same time as the political articulation of the need for a 'third way' through the market/bureaucracy binary in the desire to achieve equality and

respect for difference through schooling (cf Giddens 1994, 1998). In the UK and continental Europe this has seen a concern about the links between new forms of governance (including school based management and steering at a distance) in education and social inclusion and exclusion. At the same time as these developments, systems have introduced testing regimes as one arm of the steering at a distance strategy which potentially reduces the likelihood of the implementation of such pedagogical practices as found to be effective by the Newmann and Associates (1996) research. Pedagogy under the influence of testing regimes tends to assume a certain task oriented efficiency focused on exam performance and as such tends to 'thin out' pedagogy. In this context, some of the dimensions of 'authentic pedagogy', such as connectedness to the world beyond the classroom and substantive conversation, tend to be branded (mistakenly) as too time consuming, or requiring too much preparation.

The research of Newmann and Associates has certainly been influential in recent developments in school-based management within the Queensland Department of Education. A factor here is that one (inappropriate) reading of the Newmann research would have it as suggesting a universally effective pedagogy, that is, a single approach that achieves improved academic outcomes for all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. More recently, concerns about the relationship between school based management and student outcomes have also been linked to considerations of the position of teachers in educational restructuring. Much educational restructuring has been *done to*, rather than *with* teachers. A focus upon improved student outcomes has necessarily precipitated a debate about how teachers can be brought back in to educational restructuring and school based management to the end of improving students' academic and social outcomes and ensuring equality of educational opportunity (Hargreaves and Evans 1997). These concerns have also been expressed through teacher union wariness of, and at times, opposition to school based management.

School based management thus has no essential meaning, but is grounded in a particular politics at a particular time and is continually contested and rearticulated across time and political changes. At any time its usage probably represents a suturing together of competing aspects across the social democratic, managerialist and market perspectives. However, a post Cold War world dominated by market liberal ideology and the globalisation of the economy has seen the restructuring of the traditional bureaucracies of the public sector and the emergence of managerialist and market definitions of school based management to challenge the earlier social democratic manifestation. This structural change has also been accompanied by a renewed emphasis on achieving better outcomes from schooling, most or very often without increased funding. However, there also appears to be an emerging consensus across the political spectrum that the global dominance of neo-liberal market has witnessed a broadening of inequalities within societies and that something needs to be done about this to ensure continuing social harmony and social stability. There are questions raised here then about school based management and equality of educational opportunity which need to remain at the foreground of policy developments. It is in that context that we have seen the emergence of debates about a so-called 'third way' beyond a focus solely on either markets or the state, a debate evidenced in the UK in the work of Anthony Giddens (1998) and in Australia in the writings of two Labor federal politicians (Latham, 1997, Tanner, 1999). This concern has been manifest in a pragmatic political way in the educational policies of the Blair 'new' Labour government in the UK. In educational restructuring, such a position presumably would seek an approach between older style bureaucracies and newer style quasi-autonomous government schools, along with a concern for educational equity.

Specific Queensland developments: from Focus on Schools to Future Directions for School Based Management in Queensland State Schools

The developments mentioned to this point have worked their way out in the Queensland Department of Education. There was a regionalisation of the Department in the 1940s, while developments in respect of devolution in the 1960s and 1970s had some limited impact, with further moves in the 1980s to school based planning. More recently, developments in relation to school-based management have been associated with a number of central reports and documents, namely *Focus on Schools* (1990), *Leading Schools* (Education Queensland, 1997) and the recent, *Future Directions for School Based Management in Queensland State Schools* (Education Queensland, 1998). Each of these has signified a further stage in school based management in Queensland and has been associated with a particular government. Each has built upon and developed out of the previous report mediated by changes in government.

Focus on Schools

Focus on Schools (Department of Education, 1990) was the first fully blown managerialist approach to school based management introduced into the Queensland government school system. It formed part of the Goss Labor government's transformation of the Queensland public sector according to principles articulated by Peter Wilenski (1986), an important theorist in relation to Labor's version of the new managerialism. This perspective argued that public sector reform should be aimed at achieving more efficiency and more effectiveness, while at the same time seeking more representative and open bureaucracies, more democratic participation and more equitable outcomes. These principles were clear in *Focus on Schools'* articulation of organisational principles for the Queensland Education system (pp. 38ff). They included a commitment to equity, effectiveness, participation, responsiveness and public accountability (pp.38-39), along with a service orientation, encouragement of teacher professionalism, the valuing of people and a vision for the future. The report was also framed by new organisational theory which argued that flatter, more open organisational structures and practices were necessary to respond to a rapidly changing society. The report offered the following justification for the systematisation of this move to school based management in the Queensland Department of Education:

Theoretically, school-based decision making affords opportunities for schools to provide a better and more appropriate education for students. Such devolution of power has the potential to reduce alienation from schools, increase job satisfaction of employees, promote direct participation of all relevant groups, and raise community understanding. There is now a consensus view that, wherever possible, decisions should be made by those who have access to the best local information, who are responsible for implementing policies, and who have to bear the consequences of the decisions. (Department of Education, 1990, p. 41)

Focus on Schools followed a consultation process during which teachers had expressed some concern that responsibility was being devolved to schools while they were being granted little opportunity to participate in decision-making processes (p.41). From 1988 schools had to participate in the development of school development plans. In response to these concerns, the report noted the need for reciprocal relations between schools and other departmental agencies; the need for schools to 'live with the tension of being both autonomous and accountable' (p.42). This is the tension between centralisation and decentralisation inherent in managerialist versions of devolution. Accountability mechanisms were also outlined in the report linked to school development planning. Regarding the overall structure of the department, it was recommended that the number of regions be reduced

with support arrangements being operated through school support centres. *Focus on Schools* noted that: 'As responsibility for curriculum, financial management and resources management becomes more school based, increased support will be needed closer to schools, so it will be both accessible and more capable of responding to their needs' (p.56). Further, in stressing the need for the Department to focus on schools and student learning - their core business, the report observed: 'Because these centres will exist solely to provide services for schools, their operations will ensure that Departmental activity focuses on the classroom and that support for students' learning needs is available from a source closer to schools than ever before' (p.41). Central office was also to be restructured - staffing numbers reduced by 50% by the end of 1992 (p.67), with an emphasis at all levels of the department on 'key result' areas or performance indicators. This managerial version of devolution was also accompanied by the development of a strong departmental commitment to social justice, articulated within the *Social Justice Strategy 1992-93* (Department of Education, 1992) and the later versions of this document (Department of Education, 1994a; 1994b; see Lingard and Garrick, 1997, for a discussion of these policy documents), while the report itself talked about the need for equal employment opportunity, particularly for women, given that women made up about 70 % of teachers and only 8.5 % of senior positions within the department.

The report as well as outlining a blueprint for future organisational structures for the Queensland Department of Education also outlined a transition strategy for its implementation, stressing that the goal of such restructuring was students and the focusing of 'human and physical resources' on their needs (p.138). Linked to award restructuring there was also some potential for more staffing flexibility at the school level. The *Leading Schools* program attempted to take these changes a step further.

Leading Schools

There was a change of government in Queensland in 1996, following a bi-election. The new conservative Coalition government distanced itself to some extent from the *Focus on Schools* reforms and weakened commitment to the social justice strategies (Department of Education, 1992; 1994a; 1994b), speaking instead of a need for fair and equitable practices. In February 1997 the new government introduced their *Leading Schools* version of school based management. The 1996 Commission of Audit following the change of government had recommended more rapid moves to implement school based management. This was accompanied by a renaming of the department as Education Queensland, echoing earlier moves in Victoria under the Kennett government to Education Victoria and the *Schools of the Future* changes.

While some of the managerialist features of the earlier reforms remained, there was more emphasis upon schools and student outcomes with principals as levers for change. The early documentation of the *Leading Schools* program noted that the change recommended under this program was 'a logical next step in the general direction taken in Queensland over many years'. In a letter to colleagues in Education Queensland of February, 1997, announcing the establishment of *Leading Schools*, the then Director-General of Education, Frank Peach, and a central architect of the earlier *Focus on Schools* report, noted that 'More resources into schools, more decision making by schools, more flexibility in school operations and more community involvement in schools' required a restructuring of central office and regional arrangements. A district structure focused more on schools and student outcomes was to replace the regional structure which had been in place since the 1940s.

The material accompanying Peach's letter argued that school-based management facilitates: 'an improvement in learning outcomes, greater local participation in education, including increased accountability of the school to its community, enhanced parental choice in the

type of education they want for their children, increased flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of educational services, and service structures that are closer to schools' (Education Queensland, 1997). Here were both the rationale and goals for the *Leading Schools* program.

The creation of districts to replace the regions and enhanced site based management were simply structural elements of what Peach (1998) has described as an organisational transformation of Education Queensland, justified in terms of the impact of external changes. Peach (1998) has encapsulated these external changes under four categories, the effects of globalisation and the related increase in international economic competitiveness, the need to enhance school outcomes in that context as well as to ensure that government schooling maintained its market share, and the reality of discontinuous and rapid change, demanding greater organisational flexibility both systemically and at school levels. The inappropriateness of Education Queensland's processes, systems and practices and its emphasis upon inputs rather than outcomes were also argued by Peach (1998) as reasons for the organisational transformation which *Leading Schools* was to effect. As he put it: 'It is for these reasons that the change needed in the Department of Education is transformational change not incremental change if the opportunities provided by the new external context and new world order are to be grasped, and the threats to quality public education are to be minimised' (Peach, 1998, p. 4).

The extent of that change involved amendments to the vision, structure, culture and practices of schooling with an increased emphasis upon improving student outcomes. Robin Sullivan, Deputy Director-General of Education, noted the extent of the changes and the focus on student outcomes in the following fashion: '...our implementation of school based management, through the *Leading Schools* program, is about a holistic transformation of the department. We are developing a new cultural identity, one which involves focusing all our energies, resources, knowledge and skills towards improving student learning outcomes' (1997, p.12). The Newmann and Associates (1996) research on the complementarity between pedagogical change, changes in school culture and leadership and particular kinds of systemic supports, necessary to achieve improved student outcomes, was one intellectual justification for the nature of the transformation envisaged by *Leading Schools*, at least at the discursive level. Another important factor was that this program was taken up after similar developments elsewhere in Australia and in other parts of the world, thus allowing Queensland to resist the stress on structural change alone and focus the change instead on enhanced student learning.

Thus school-based management under *Leading Schools* was just one element of an attempted organisational transformation and it was probably the width of the envisioned changes, the suggestion of the need for more staffing flexibility, and its implementation strategy which precipitated opposition to it, particularly from the Queensland Teachers' Union. Furthermore, after a decade of continual restructuring teachers were suffering from 'reform fatigue'. However, there is also a way in which the *Leading Schools* changes could be seen to build incrementally on earlier devolutionary moves.

With *Leading Schools* the regional structure was replaced by a district structure whose main functions were not bureaucratic duplication of central office activities, but rather assisting schools in improving student outcomes. These new structures and functions indicated the extent of the culture change required. Technology was to be utilised to facilitate communications and management across the system. The *Leading Schools* program was to be introduced over three phases, beginning first with the larger schools (band 11 to band 8). School staff and communities were to be involved in the decision by schools to enter the program. New accountability arrangements for both resources and student outcomes were to be established. More resources were to be located at the school site with greater capacity

for schools to make decisions about resource usage appropriate to their local contexts. Central office was to become more focused, basically around four focus areas, namely, strategic planning and policy, education services, resource services, and quality and accountability issues, the latter being indicative of the steering at a distance approach. As Education Queensland's documentation noted, 'The amalgamation of current regional offices and school support services into one layer in the organisation and the use of more advanced information technology systems will release resources to increase the allocation of funds made directly to *Leading Schools*' (Education Queensland, 1997, p.3). To facilitate these changes a Transition Management Unit was established on a temporary basis in central office.

The *Leading Schools* documentation stressed partnerships, between schools, districts and central office, but also between schools and their communities, recommending the establishment of School Councils. Queensland had been much slower than other states (especially Victoria and South Australia) to support the idea of School Councils and while the parent body in Queensland was most often supportive of such moves, the Teachers' Union was a little more cautious, especially in respect of their functions.

Given the structural arrangements of Queensland education, where senior curriculum and assessment are responsibilities of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (Years 11 and 12) and where P-10 curricula are the responsibility of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, the obvious levers for Education Queensland in implementing the *Leading Schools* program were school principals, rather than curriculum. (There are also important questions here about the need for greater policy alignment in what is currently a somewhat disjointed policy context.) Given this implementation strategy, there was from the outset potential for conflict between administrators and teachers in schools, pending Teacher Union attitudes to the changes. A focus on principals as levers of change could also emphasise management changes rather than pedagogical ones, which were at the core of achieving improved student outcomes. Teaching focused leadership would appear to be a necessary element in the utilisation of school-based management for improving student outcomes. Indeed, Newmann (1993) has observed that new organisational arrangements might be a necessary condition for achieving improved student outcomes, but they are certainly not a sufficient condition. As he also notes, the relationship between new organisational structures and improved student outcomes is usually implied rather than theorised (Newmann, 1993, p.4).

While the principals' associations (particularly the secondary one) and the Queensland Council of Parents' and Citizens' Association welcomed the *Leading Schools* reforms, the Queensland Teachers' Union opposed the implementation of the *Leading Schools* program after initially being cautiously supportive. The Union was concerned about employment security and working conditions for teachers and the possibility that, as with Victoria, school based management would result in reduced funding for government schools. The Union demanded 'staffing guarantees' given the desire by Education Queensland to ensure some flexibility of staffing at school level as one element of enhanced school based management. There was also some concern about the role of School Councils, another structural element of the *Leading Schools* program. The Union wanted funding for staff basically to remain centrally determined by the Department. On March 4 1997 a directive from the Union to schools encouraged then not to volunteer for the first phase of the implementation of the program given their failure to get a commitment to 'staffing guarantees' from Education Queensland. On March 21 a further directive was issued by the Union banning *Leading Schools* pending a membership ballot; subsequently the Union held a 24 hour stoppage on March 25 following a membership ballot which endorsed Union opposition to *Leading Schools*. Rolling stoppages continued through until May. This was not a propitious beginning to *Leading Schools*, given its stress on the centrality of teachers and pedagogy to achieving

improved student outcomes, *a la* the Newmann et al research (1996) and given that votes were taken in schools as the first step to applying to join the program. The industrial conflict between the Union and Education Queensland ended in an uneasy truce after arbitration, resulting in the Union achieving some of its required guarantees regarding staffing and the role of School Councils. Additionally, Local Consultative Committees, consisting of administrators and union representatives, were to be established in all Leading Schools to oversee the management of change and in particular the implementation of staffing flexibility within schools.

The Labor Party's opposition to *Leading Schools* was basically about its implementation strategy and was also reflective of a closer relationship between the Labor Party and the Teachers' Union than that between the latter and the Coalition. This is clear in a debate in the state parliament on 18 November, 1998 after Labor had formed government earlier that year. In that debate the ALP member for Chermside, Mr Terry Sullivan outlined his opposition to *Leading Schools* because of its 'inequitable and elitist system of resource redistribution' (1998, p.3325). This was basically opposition to the three phase approach to implementing the *Leading Schools* program, which in turn was an attempt to avoid a 'big-bang' style of organisational change (R. Sullivan, 1997). Terry Sullivan (1998) criticised the financial incentives granted to the first phase schools (104 in total): 'Phase 1 Leading Schools received a one-off incentive to join the program of \$30,000 plus \$11 per student. Phase 1 Leading Schools received an increased school grant consisting of \$30,000 per annum plus \$11 per student to a maximum of \$50,000. That double whammy alone has put the select few schools well ahead of all other schools to the extent that it is doubtful that the other schools will ever catch up' (1998, p.3326). Sullivan was also critical of the privileging of *Leading Schools* in terms of funding for computing networks, for minor works, for professional development for administrators and teachers, and for the 5 % pay increase granted to the principals of *Leading Schools* (1998, p.3326).

Thus, it is hardly surprising that on achieving government one of the new Labor government's first actions in education was to abolish *Leading Schools* and to work out a strategy for distributing the monies originally earmarked for Phase 2 and 3 schools to all schools in the system. The new Director-General, Terry Moran, also established a consultation process to provide advice to the new Minister, Dean Wells, for determining the new government's stance on school-based management. This stance was outlined in *Future Directions for School Based Management in Queensland State Schools* (Education Queensland, 1998) released in October, 1998 and distributed to all stakeholders in Queensland education for discussion. Subsequently, in very early 1999 the booklet *School-based Management in Queensland State Schools*, which outlined options for school based management, was distributed to all school communities. To assist schools and their communities in making their decisions about which model to take up, in March, 1999 Education Queensland distributed the document, *Implementation of School-based Management in Queensland State Schools* to all Queensland schools. Schools, together with their communities, were to decide on which model they would adopt by the end of semester one, 1999. These documents indicate continuing support for school-based management, a stance also confirmed in a speech by the Director General in late 1998 (Moran, 1998).

Future Directions for School Based Management in Queensland State Schools, School-based Management in Queensland State Schools and Implementation of School-based Management in Queensland State Schools

The Future Directions discussion paper had four main purposes, notably, to document the consultation process and outcomes, describe the three school-based management options for schools, provide an opportunity for comment, and inform schools of the allocation of

additional funds (Education Queensland, 1998, p.1). The recommendations made by the discussion paper accepted that there had to be a focus on student outcomes, along with equitable distribution of funds for all schools, irrespective of which model they opted for, as well as flexibility and genuine choice for schools. The differences between the three options offered to schools turned on the extent of flexibility regarding the use of resources at the school site, as well as the degree of involvement and oversight practised by the relevant district director. Some areas were not negotiable, specifically, the issue of staffing flexibility which was to be framed by system enterprise bargaining agreements.

Option 1 would grant limited flexibility to schools with district directors having a considerable supervisory role in school planning and accountability, with minimal flexibility in resource usage, that is, limited capacity for schools to move resources between elements within categories. Current levels of flexibility would apply to the School Grant funding. This Option was to be accompanied by a high degree of systemic support. Option 2 provided for more community involvement in some aspects of school decision making (p.22); parents and school staff were to be involved in school planning. Performance management of the principal and the school would be conducted by the district director with some possibility for external review by the Assistant Director-General (Operations). Option 3 would involve less systemic support, but ongoing monitoring by the district director. Option 3 schools would have School Councils. As noted in the discussion paper, 'Under the Education Act the School Council has the power to approve, monitor and provide advice in respect of the school Partnership Agreement, Annual Operational Plan and School Annual Report. These documents will have a minimal system-mandated content and structure, but they must set and report on performance targets' (Education Queensland, 1998, p. 23). A three year cycle of external reviews was also proposed for this Option. Further, Option 3 schools would have more resource flexibility with the opportunity to move resources between categories.

Thus the three Options for schools stretched from limited flexibility, through current arrangements to a model which fairly closely approximated *Leading Schools*. On the latter, the major change was the recognition that staffing flexibility was to be managed by the system as part of enterprise bargaining and that all Options for school-based management were to be located within the broader strategic directions of Education Queensland. This appeared to be a recognition that within a government school system there were limits to the autonomy which could be taken by individual schools. However, the whole rationale for school-based management remained, as it was for *Leading Schools*, the achievement of improved student outcomes.

Subsequently, the documents, *School-based Management in Queensland State Schools* (Education Queensland, 1999a) and *Implementation of School-based Management* (Education Queensland, 1999b) were produced and distributed to all schools early in 1999, following consultation in respect of the *Future Directions* discussion paper. These documents were to assist schools and their communities in making a decision about which Option they would take regarding school-based management. This decision had to be with the relevant district director by the end of semester 1, 1999.

Once again these documents stress that school-based management must sit within 'broader government policy and public sector accountability frameworks'. This is specifically so for the Planning and Accountability element for all three Options. There are also very specific guidelines in respect of staffing flexibility at the school site. Funds allocated for staffing must be used for the employment of staff and any change to staffing mix in schools can only occur after certain system required procedures have been followed, including endorsement by the Local Consultative Committee and a majority of staff.

The three Options for schools were now referred to as, Standard Flexibility Option (SO), Enhanced Flexibility Option 1 (EO 1), and Enhanced Flexibility Option 2 (EO 2). It is important to note that the need for pedagogical reform remains firmly on the agenda within the school-based management frame. It should also be noted that Options EO 1 and 2 also provide for School Councils, obligatory within EO 2 and optional for EO 1.

In comparison with the earlier *Leading Schools* program, upon which these more recent changes have built incrementally, the current situation appears to more clearly stipulate central office and school responsibilities and the nature of the relationship between them, with a strong articulation that all government schools must work within Education Queensland's strategic planning and Annual Statement of Expectations frameworks.

Conclusion

There is clearly then no stipulative meaning to the concept of school-based management. Indeed, its meaning has been rearticulated since the sixties and seventies through social democratic, managerialist and quasi-market versions. Its take-up in different educational systems is also contingent to some extent upon the specific history, structure and culture of that system, including history of devolutionary moves. Any development in school-based management thus builds on changes that have gone before. Consequently, the concept remains a contested one. In the politics surrounding any specific programmatic moves towards newer forms of school-based management, different conceptions usually jostle with each other. Different interests in the educational policy community (e.g., parent body, unions, principals' bodies etc) often hold to differing conceptions. Further, at times the practices of some innovative schools, depending upon school leadership, are some distance ahead of the character of systemic support for school-based management. In this way systemic and programmatic moves towards school-based management simply confirm what is already being done in some schools.

Nonetheless, moves over the last decade towards a particular version of school-based management have been world-wide (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998) and reflect emergent forms of governance within state structures in the context of the globalisation of the economy (Lingard, 1999). Whitty and his colleagues (1999) have encapsulated the broad character of this more recent wave of reforms for school-based management in the following fashion:

The past decade has seen an increasing number of attempts in various parts of the world to restructure and deregulate state schooling. Central to these initiatives are moves to dismantle centralised educational bureaucracies and to create in their place devolved systems of education entailing significant degrees of institutional autonomy and a variety of forms of school-based management and administration. In many cases, these changes have been linked to enhanced parental choice or an increased emphasis on community involvement in schools. School policy initiatives often introduce a 'market' element into the provision of educational services even though they continue to be paid for largely out of taxation. (Whitty, Power and Halpin, 1998, p.3)

Developments in Queensland have been a specific manifestation of those general moves in governance within state educational systems. It should be noted, however, that there have also been centralising accountability developments which have accompanied the more devolutionary aspects of these changes, as well as enhancement of 'strategic capacity' by the central office (see *Towards a Strategic Centre*, October 1998).

Several discourses of support usually surround these developments. One concerns a more democratic approach with greater parental involvement and participation. However, it should be noted that such support articulates with schools and the educational systems in different ways, given changes in the broader framing of school-based management. Within a quasi-market version, for example, parents can be constructed as consumers of schooling, with this view sitting alongside and competing with a conception of parents as citizens who have certain democratic and participatory rights.

A second supporting discourse is usually about principal leadership. The evidence would suggest real tensions, however, between the managerialist and marketing elements of the new role for principals (Ball, 1994), and the educational, indeed, pedagogical focus required for the achievement of improved student outcomes. (See also Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999 here.) The emergent forms of governance in education are also geared to the delivery of improved student outcomes (effectiveness) at the most efficient cost. This is the meaner and leaner, more efficient and effective, restructured educational system which demands proof of outcomes as a form of accountability. The centralised demand for student outcomes accountability data is the other side of the decentralising thrust of the new steering at a distance approach within educational systems.

However, the evidence to date, apart from the research of Newmann and Associates (1996), and that research was dealing with exceptional and reasonably autonomous schools, is not very encouraging about this (hoped for) link between school-based management and improved student outcomes. Caldwell (1998b), who seems to be unaware of the research of Newmann and Associates, suggests to this point there is no evidence of a link between the two. Further, he utilises Wirt's (1991) research, which distinguishes between adult and children's games in restructuring and reform in education, to argue that recent reform has been more about the adult game than the children's one. The adult game in reform, Wirt notes, is a political game concerned with 'a struggle for power to decide dominant symbols, to secure resources, to employ facilitative structures, and to express historical influences' (Wirt, 1991, pp. 39-40). In contrast, the children's game is about children's learning and focuses on curriculum and pedagogy. Wirt summarises his stance by stating: 'The cold truth is that there is no convincing evidence that these US and UK reforms have played the children game successfully' (1991, p.40). Some of the frustration in schools about school-based management is probably about the disjunction between these two circuits of reform and the need to link them in some way

One central problematic within educational research, particularly within the sociology of education, has been the concern to explain how schooling systems tend to reproduce inequalities, rather than interrupt such reproduction. A further discourse which surrounds more recent moves to school-based management is that of equity and social justice, also widely contested concepts. The evidence in relation to this question is not positive. As Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998, p.126) observe, after reviewing school-based management reforms in five countries, including Australia: 'The evidence we have put forward suggests that recent education policies are doing little to alleviate existing inequalities in access and participation and, in many cases, may be exacerbating them'. This must remain a central concern of educational policy makers; indeed, it appears to be a growing concern in many nations as growing inequalities precipitate social disharmony. The question of how educational equality can be achieved within an educational system consisting of varying degrees of school-based management remains a most telling policy problem. Brown et al. (1997) have suggested that we need a new political arithmetic of education in new times, that is, an understanding of how inequalities now work in relation to reformed educational systems, how students from differing backgrounds perform in schooling at a time when educational credentials are more important than ever in determining life chances. A new pragmatic politics of education is required to ensure that new forms of governance in

schooling meet the changing definitions and requirements of schooling and social justice in these new times.

An emphasis upon pedagogy, rethought social justice policies and appropriate (adequate and targeted) funding arrangements are central to the achievement of such goals. The recent attempts in Queensland education to rearticulate a social democratic discourse of school-based management have taken these as their focus. However, the policy and funding strategies of the conservative federal government, which continues to adopt a market ideology, will limit and inhibit the opportunities for these more recent Queensland school-based management reforms.

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