Bellbridge Primary School
Individual Paths, United Journey

Meadow Fair North Primary School

Learning Together to Build a Bright Future

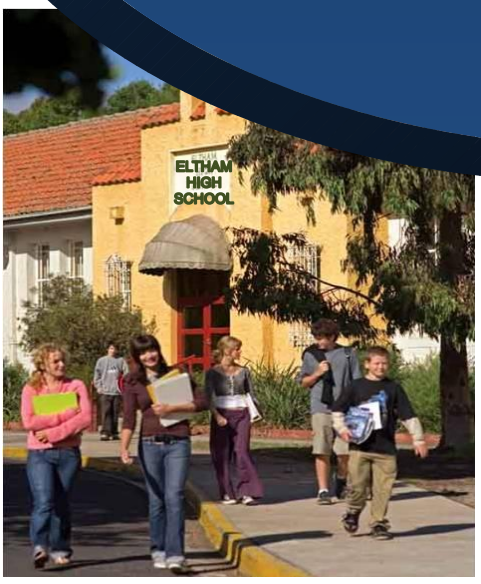
A Research Report on the Implementation of the IDEAS Project in Victoria, 2004-8

by

Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews

and the USQ-LRI Research Team

September, 2009



Vision: Be Brave, Lead, Succeed

IDEAS

USQ
PER STUDIA MENS NOVA
AUSTRALIA

LEADERSHIP
RESEARCH

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Executive Summary

The research that provides the basis for this report derives from the implementation in Victorian schools of the IDEAS Project, a school revitalisation initiative that was developed initially by the Leadership Research Institute (LRI), University of Southern Queensland, and Education Queensland across the period 1997-2004. The IDEAS Project has subsequently been implemented in five Australian education systems, including the Victorian State system, and refined with each new iteration.

The research problem that guided the research was as follows:

> ***What key lessons for enhanced educational achievement can be learned from the implementation of the IDEAS Project in a selection of Victorian schools, 2004-8?***

The research was concerned with the implementation of the IDEAS Project in 22 schools in three Victorian regions in 2004-8. Nineteen of the 22 schools completed the formal requirements of the Project, encompassing the period 2004-6, and agreed to participate in the research. Seventeen of the schools had been identified prior to the commencement of IDEAS as 'targeted' or 'underperforming' in matters of organisational health and/or school performance, thus necessitating an emphasis that had not previously been required of the IDEAS Project team.

The official implementation of the first Victorian IDEAS Project cohort extended from November 2004 to December 2006. Unofficially, the implementation process continued into 2007 and 2008, and, indeed, continues in a number of schools today. The implementation process involved participating schools in a wide range of professional learning and school development activities, encompassing the five ***ideas*** phases of **I**nitiating, **D**iscovering, **E**nvisioning, **A**ctioning and **S**ustaining. Central to implementation were the four core IDEAS Project constructs of organisational alignment, parallel leadership, 3-dimensional pedagogy and the ***ideas*** process itself. In these regards, IDEAS is thought to differ substantially from other school improvement initiatives in place throughout the world.

The research approach was both 'mutualistic' and 'evolutionary' in nature, encompassing the five stages of: Agreement to participate; Development of co-researcher functions; Preliminary conceptual development; Field study and data analysis; and Refinement of conceptual frameworks. Major databases were constituted of two forms:

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development quantitative data relating to teacher opinions of their schools (SOS data) and student attitudes toward their schools (SAS data) during the years of the implementation of IDEAS;
- Five case studies. Data collection in the case study schools encompassed both quantitative and qualitative data forms.

The research team was constituted of 12 active researchers, led by Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews, as well as a research validation authority (Professor Bill Mulford) and a research mentor and synthesiser (Emeritus Professor Frank Crowther). Professor Crowther was involved in all aspects of the research, from initial design to data collection and analysis to preparation of the research report.

The findings of the research are believed to have international significance, given the longitudinal nature of the research in combination with the availability of authoritative statistical data relating to important aspects of school operations. Six conclusions are particularly pertinent in the light of current global research into sustained school improvement. These are as follows.

1. Based on validated statements of 2004-8 school outcomes, located in the context of systemic improvements in Victorian teachers' professional perceptions regarding their schools' operations, the following definition of 'school success' is proposed:

   'School success' is defined as enhanced school achievements in agreed high priority goal areas, based on documented evidence of those achievements and teachers' expressed confidence in their school's capacity to sustain and extend those achievements into the future.

2. Six particular factors appear integral to the successes enjoyed by the 2004-8 IDEAS schools. The six factors are:

The *Readiness* factor - The availability of a highly credible process of school revitalisation (The IDEAS Project) at a point in time and in a structured form that suits the circumstances of a cluster of like-minded school professionals.

The *Longitudinal* factor – Access to a structured process of revitalisation (***ideas***) that enables schools to undertake highly complex developmental processes with relative ease over an extended period of time.

***The Coherence* factor** – The availability of an explanatory framework for effective school organisation (the RBF) that provides school leaders and teaching professionals with a sense that they work in organisations that are in important ways intelligible and manageable.

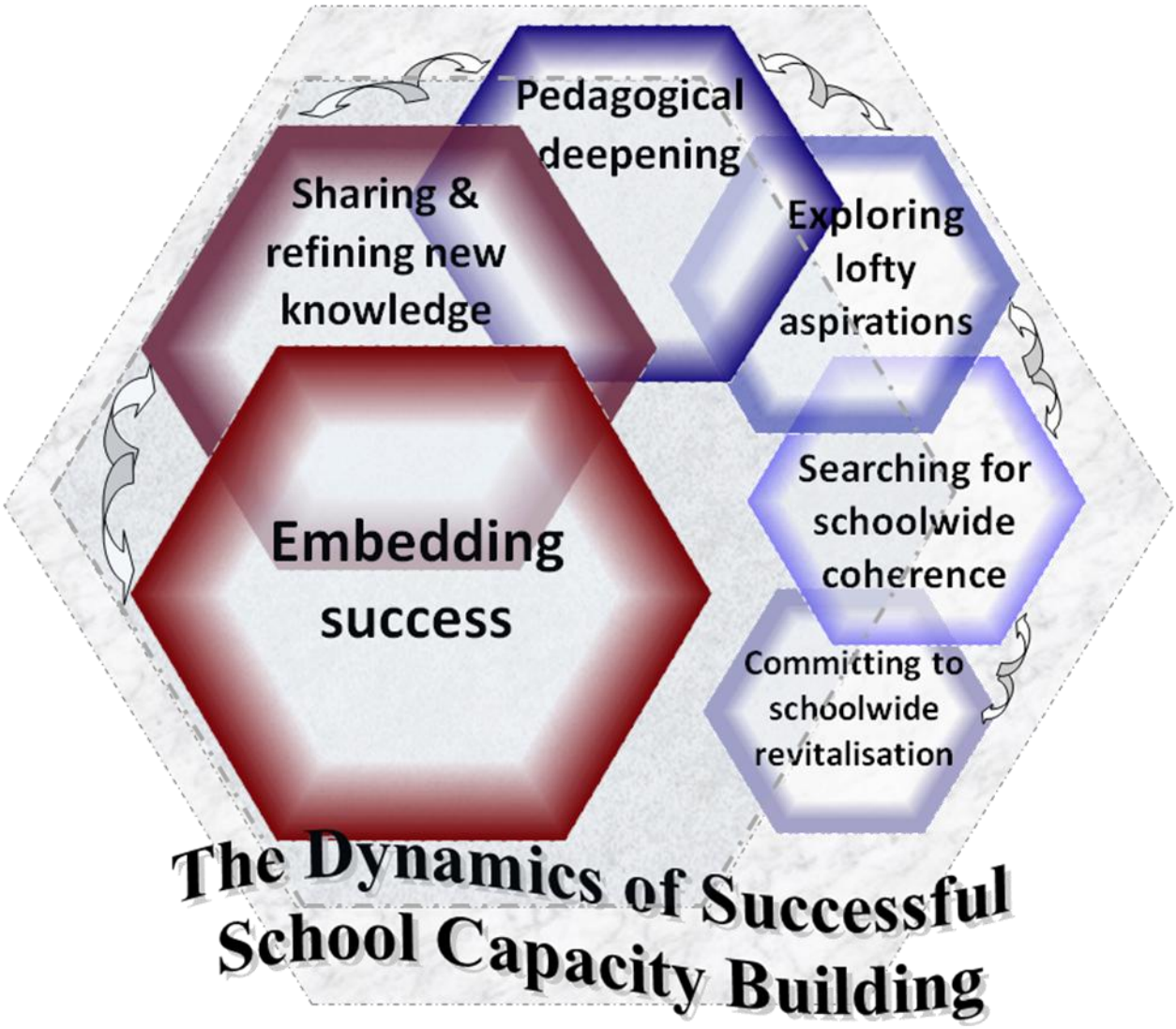
The *Leadership* factor – Emphasis on leadership forms (parallelism and its derivatives) that recognise teachers' professionalism and principals' futuristic strategic functions.

The *Mature Engagement* factor – Systematic use of principles of interaction (The IDEAS *Principles of Practice)* that encourage mutual respect and dignity in professional relationships and creative problem-solving.

The *Supportive Systems* factor – Ready availability of reliable information, quality materials and expert personnel to facilitate futuristic school development and to link within-school goals to systemic priorities and resources.

3. A framework for successful school capacity-building, comprising six basic 'dynamics', emerged from the IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-8, research. The framework is contained in Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1: THE DYNAMICS OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL CAPACITY BUILDING



Based on this framework for successful school capacity-building, the following definition is proposed as an outcome of the IDEAS-Victoria research:

> ***Capacity-building in schools is a generative, professionally-led process that inspires the creation of vibrant workplace culture, relationships and identity and results in sustained levels of enhanced school achievement in areas of school priority.***

> **In IDEAS schools, capacity-building is set in motion through the overt actions of school leaders and is nurtured and firmly established when the**

professional community of the school commits itself to enhancing the well-being of students, current and future.

School leaders direct processes of organisational diagnosis, alignment and image-building – principals emphasise and facilitate the growth of lofty educational aspirations and professional trust while teacher leaders emphasise and facilitate the growth of schoolwide pedagogical principles and enriched learning environments for students.

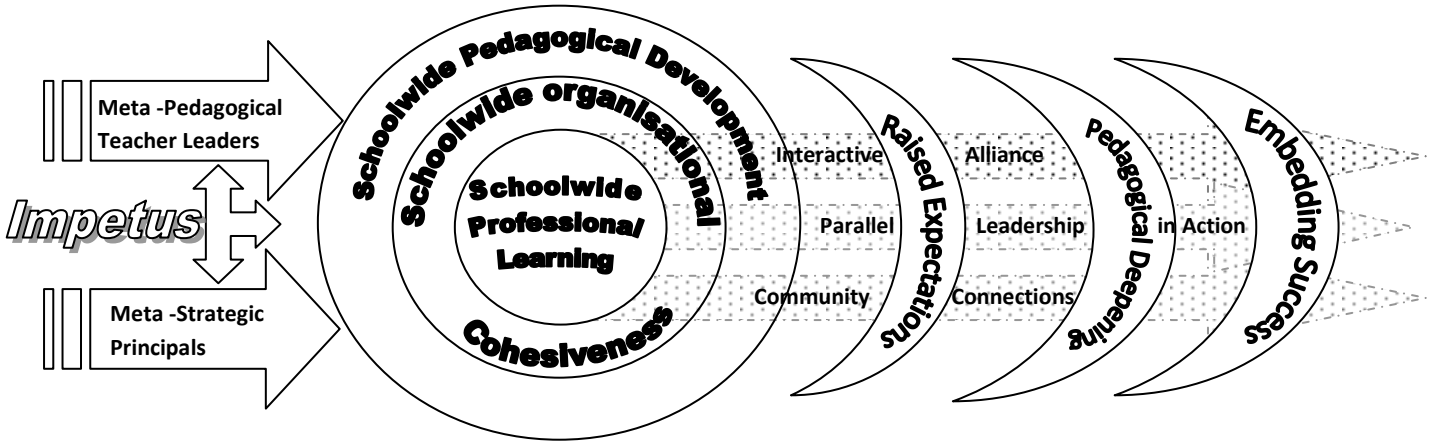
The new forms of heightened teacher professionalism and student engagement that are forthcoming are shared willingly with school authorities and communities and are enriched through feedback mechanisms. They are sustained through the embedding of schoolwide leadership strategies, a schoolwide management structure and school-directed professional learning processes.

4. The successful school capacity-building framework that emerged from the research was found to have important qualitative differences when applied to the case of 'targeted' schools.

5. The IDEAS Project constructs of teacher leadership, metastrategic principalship and parallel leadership are strongly substantiated by the outcomes of the research. But each of the three constructs is revealed by the research to have new and clarified meaning. Each construct would benefit from serious reconsideration to take into account particular insights that emerge from the research.

6. Based on the outcomes of the IDEAS-Victoria research, the IDEAS Framework for Successful School Revitalisation has been modified. The updated framework is contained in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: CREATING AND SUSTAINING SCHOOL SUCCESS THROUGH PARALLEL LEADERSHIP



Creating and Sustaining School Success through Parallel Leadership

Chapter 1

Background to the Research

1.1 Overview

The research project that provides the basis for this report derives from the implementation in Victorian schools of the IDEAS Project, a school revitalisation initiative that was developed initially by the Leadership Research Institute (LRI), University of Southern Queensland, and Education Queensland across the period 1997-2004. The IDEAS Project has subsequently been implemented in six Australian education systems, including the Victorian State system, and refined with each new iteration. The initiative is for the most part referred to throughout this report as 'IDEAS'. The Victorian version of the IDEAS Project is referred to for the most part as 'IDEAS-Victoria'.

The research problem that guided the research was as follows:

> ***What key lessons for enhanced educational achievement can be learned from the implementation of the IDEAS Project in a selection of Victorian schools, 2004-8?***

In this chapter of the report, the key features of IDEAS are described. In chapter two the delivery mechanisms for the implementation of the IDEAS Project in Victoria are described. In chapter three the research problem, design and methodology are outlined. In chapter four the research data are presented and discussed.

In chapter five, responses are developed to the six research questions that derive from the research problem. The research questions are as follows:

> Research question one: *What definition of 'success' emerges from the experiences of a cohort of schools where enhanced improvement is perceived by stakeholders in conjunction with implementation of IDEAS in Victoria, 2004-8?*

Research question two*: What key processes appear to have contributed to the successes enjoyed by the Victorian IDEAS schools?*

Research question three: *What forms of leadership appear to engender and support the key processes in question?*

Research question four*: What model for school-based capacity-building emerges from the research?*

Research question five: *What implications, if any, emerge from the research for schooling in disadvantaged contexts?*

Research question six: *What adjustments, if any, emerge as necessary to the LRI explanatory models for sustained school improvement?*

Chapter five concludes with presentation of key implications of the research for the IDEAS Project, for the Victorian Department of Education and Early Education Development, and for further educational research.

1.2 Initiation of the IDEAS Project in Victoria

In 2003, at the initiative of Mr Kim Bannikoff, Director of the Office of School Education, the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DE&T) undertook to investigate the potential of implementing the IDEAS Project in Victorian Government schools. Mr Bannikoff had previous experience of IDEAS from his time with Education Queensland and believed that the program had potential to enhance the range of school improvement strategies being employed at that time in Victoria. Mr Bannikoff had also been approached by Victorian AEU official Mr Ross Dean, who had engaged the services of Professor Frank Crowther to work with the Victorian Australian Education Union in school leadership development, using IDEAS Project concepts.

Officers from within the Victorian School System Development Division travelled to Queensland late in 2003 and again in March and June 2004 to assess the quality of the IDEAS program and to determine its applicability to the context of Victorian government schools. The officers attended three IDEAS Forums and visited several IDEAS schools.

By mid 2004 the Department had decided that the research base underpinning IDEAS was sufficiently robust and that there was sufficient capability within the University of Southern Queensland's Leadership Research Institute to deliver the program successfully in the Victorian context.

The focus on continuous school improvement, central to the Victorian *Blueprint for Government Schools* (Department of Education and Training, State of Victoria, 2003) was strongly evident in IDEAS. IDEAS was seen to complement particular initiatives within *Blueprint*, most notably *Flagship Strategy 6: School Improvement*, with its focus on 'enhancing teaching and learning and professional leadership, establishing a shared vision and high expectations, and creating stimulating learning environments to improve school effectiveness'.

NOTE: The IDEAS cohort of 22 schools comprised 17 schools that were part of the Victorian 'Targeted Schools Improvement' initiative – 16 of the IDEAS schools were in Stage 2 of the TSI and one school (Kealba Secondary College) was in Stage 3 of the TSI. The total TSI cohort for the period in question was 72 schools (of a total of about 1600 schools in Victoria).

Major performance criteria for TSI identification were:

- student achievement
- student attendance
- organisational health
- community perceptions
- retention
- declining enrolments.

1.3 Contractual developments

In May 2004, Mr Darrell Fraser, Deputy Secretary, Office of School Education wrote to Mr Ken Smith, Director General, Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland, and to Professor Frank Crowther, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, seeking endorsement of the commencement of discussions about piloting the IDEAS Project in Victorian government schools.

After protracted discussions, the Victorian Department signed a contract in May, 2005 with the IDEAS alliance partners — the Department of Education and the Arts, Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland — for (i) the delivery of IDEAS in 22 Victorian government schools; (ii) a licence for use of IDEAS materials until June 2013; and (iii) the possible delivery of IDEAS to cohorts of Victorian schools in subsequent years.

Through discussion between officials of the Victorian central and regional offices it was determined that implementation of the IDEAS Project would be centred in Northern Metropolitan Region and Western Metropolitan Region. An invitational briefing on the IDEAS Project was held in September 2004 to provide schools with the basis for making an informed decision about participation in the program. Twenty-two schools subsequently committed to the program — 13 from Northern Metropolitan Region, eight from Western Metropolitan Region and one from Barwon South Western Region (See Table 1.1).

1.4 Program funding

Participating schools were responsible for covering program delivery costs, which were set at $10,000 per annum for the two year program. Funding for program governance costs, and the licence for IDEAS intellectual property, was sourced from the Victorian School System Development Division budget.

TABLE 1.1: PARTICIPATING IDEAS-VICTORIA SCHOOLS, 2004-6, AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

North Metropolitan Cluster (NMC)		West Metropolitan Cluster (WMC)		Broadmeadows Valley Cluster (BVC)	
School	**Size**	**School**	**Size**	**School**	**Size**
Eltham HS	1273	Albanvale PS	349	Bethal PS	342
Greenwood PS	237	Altona SC	434	Jacana PS	39
Lalor North SC	836	Bellbridge PS	663	Broadmeadows SDS	55
La Trobe SC	228	Glen Orden PS	271	Broadmeadows West PS	156
Whittlesea SC	1075	Kealba SC	279	Erinbank SC	370
Melton SC	949	Maribyrnong SC	303	Hillcrest SC	405
		Point Cook PS	187	Meadow Fair North PS	232
		Colac C	479	Westmeadows Heights PS	62
NMC Coordinators	**USQ Team Support**	**WMC Coordinators**	**USQ Team Support**	**BVC Coordinators**	**USQ Team Support**
Gabrielle England Keith Woodward Doug Jeanes	Mark Dawson Dorothy Andrews	John Goodman Sue Wettenhall Doug Jeanes	Allan Morgan Dorothy Andrews	John Fry Camilla Bianco Doug Jeanes	Marian Lewis Dorothy Andrews

Schools accessed a range of external funding sources to cover their program implementation costs:

- Seventeen schools received funding through the Targeted School Improvement Initiative;
- Three schools were funded by the Broadmeadows Valley Innovation and Excellence cluster;
- Two schools sourced funds from within their own budgets.

The Targeted School Improvement Initiative was a component of *Blueprint for Government Schools*, *Flagship Strategy 6: School Improvement*. The purpose of the initiative was to implement systemic intervention strategies in schools that were identified as performing below expectations. Over the three year life of the initiative the Department identified 92 schools as performing at levels sufficiently below expectations and as requiring intervention.

NOTE: The fact that 17 of the 22 Victorian schools participating in the IDEAS program were able to access funding through the Targeted School Improvement Initiative indicates that

the vast majority of Victorian IDEAS Project schools were facing extremely challenging circumstances at the time of the commencement of the IDEAS Project in Victoria and were seen by the Victorian Department as under-performing in comparison with like schools. This fact is of significance in any consideration of the outcomes of the research into the efficacy of IDEAS in Victoria, as outlined in this report.

1.5 Program management

The School System Development Division, within the Victorian Office of School Education, was responsible for management of the implementation of IDEAS. Major responsibilities included:

- liaising with Education Queensland and the University of Southern Queensland in relation to program governance and the IDEAS contract; and
- liaising with the cluster coordinators and Regional Offices in relation to conduct of cluster activities, school visits and IDEAS workshops.

IDEAS clusters were managed by cluster coordinators, based in the Northern Metropolitan Office and Western Metropolitan Office. Responsibilities included:

- coordinating the activities of participating schools; and
- liaising with the University of Southern Queensland in relation to delivery of IDEAS services within the cluster.

1.6 Initiation of the research

An application to conduct research into the impacts of the IDEAS Project in Victorian schools was lodged by Associate Professor Dorothy Andrews with the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in January, 2008. The application was approved as 'non-commissioned research'. The application focused on the educational experiences of the first cohort of IDEAS schools in Victoria, 2004-6, taking into account that activities associated with implementation of IDEAS in the schools in question extended

beyond the formal implementation period (2004-6) and, in fact, were still ongoing at the time of the application to conduct research (2008). It is also important to note that, while additional cohorts of schools in three Victorian regions implemented IDEAS commencing in 2006 and 2007, this report is concerned only with the implementation of IDEAS in cohort one (i.e. 2004-6) schools.

1.7 Chapter summary

The research project on which this report is based was concerned with the formal implementation of the IDEAS Project in 22 schools in three Victorian regions in 2004-6, and informal implementation in 2007-8. IDEAS had been identified in 2003 by Victorian education officials as suitable for implementation in Victorian schools because of its explicit focus on continuous school improvement, which was central to the Victorian *Blueprint for Government Schools.*

Seventeen of the 22 schools were identified prior to the commencement of IDEAS as 'targeted' or 'underperforming', thus necessitating an emphasis that had not previously been required of the IDEAS Project team from the University of Southern Queensland.

The research project upon which this report is based was designated 'non-commissioned' by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The research problem that guided the research was:

What key lessons for enhanced educational achievement can be learned from the implementation of the IDEAS Project in a selection of Victorian schools, 2004-8?

Chapter 2

Delivery of the IDEAS Project in Victoria, November 2004-2008

2.1 Key components of the IDEAS Project.

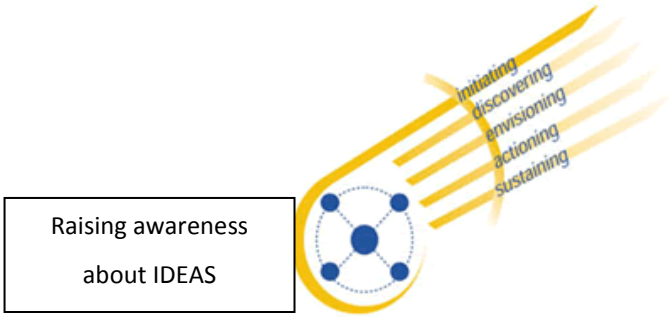
The IDEAS Project is distinguished by four key components. Each component is grounded in authoritative research literature as well as authoritative research completed under the auspices of the USQ Leadership Research Institute and a range of other international research agencies. The four components are as follows.

Component one**: The *ideas* process**

The ***ideas*** process is a five-phase school-based implementation strategy that has drawn on sources such as metastrategy (Limerick et al., 1998); appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1996); action learning (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Kolb, 1984; Zuber-Skerrit, 1990) and organisational capacity building (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2001). The five phases, *Initiating, Discovering, Envisioning, Actioning* and *Sustaining*, centre on the professional work of teachers, pedagogically, in terms of leadership functions and responsibilities and through the IDEAS *Principles of Practice.*

A diagrammatic representation of the ***ideas*** process is contained in Diagram 2.1.

DIAGRAM 2.1: THE *ideas* PROCESS



The ***ideas*** process

- ***initiating***: How will we manage the process?
  Who will facilitate the process?
  Who will record our history of the journey?

- ***discovering:*** What are we doing that is most successful?
  What is not working as well as we would like it to?

- ***envisioning:*** What do we hope our school will look like in the future?
  What is our conceptualisation of schoolwide pedagogy?

- ***actioning:*** How will we create a tripartite action plan?
  How will we work towards the alignment of key school elements and processes?

- ***sustaining:*** What progress have we made towards schoolwide pedagogy?
  What school practices are succeeding?

Component two**: Organisational alignment: The Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes (RBF)**

The RBF is grounded in authoritative theory relating to organisational alignment (Drucker, 1946; Heath & Staudenmayer, 2000; Hitt & Ireland, 2002; Schneider et al., 2003) complemented by research into whole-school improvement conducted under the auspices of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center on Organisation and Restructuring of Schools (King & Newmann, 2000; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Based on the various authoritative contributions that have been considered, the IDEAS Project offers the following definition of alignment:

Alignment in educational organisations occurs when distinct and interdependent organisational elements are mutually re-inforcing, thereby providing increased opportunities for capacity-building.

The five fundamental variables that contribute to alignment in educational organisations are:

- *The organisation's leadership and strategic management capability;*
- *Internal and external stakeholder support;*
- *The organisation's infrastructural designs (including curricula, spatial arrangements, technologies, marketing, quality assurance strategies);*
- *The organisation's pedagogical practices (teaching, learning and assessment);*
- *The organisation's professional learning mechanisms.*

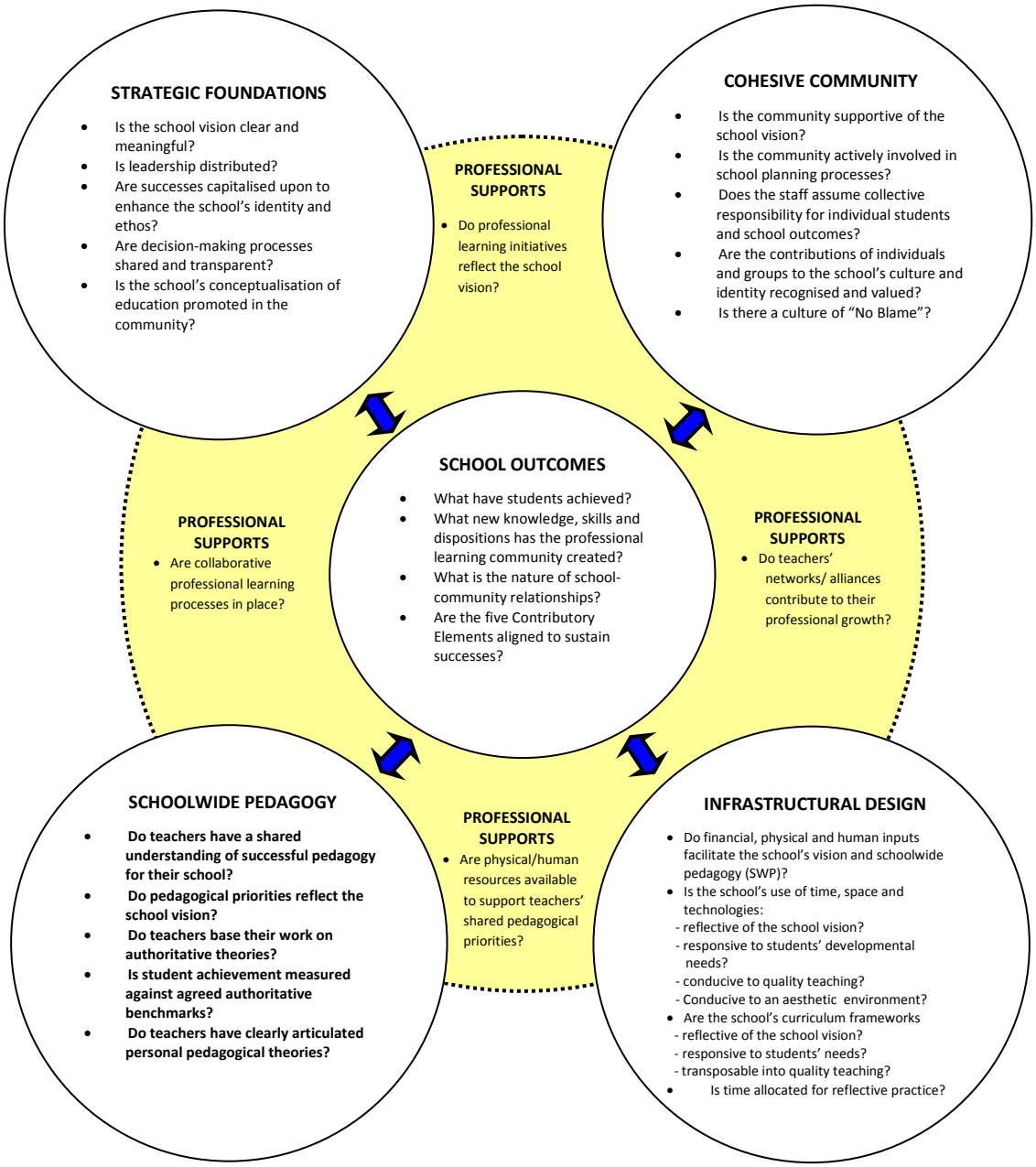
Where these five sets of variables are developed and in alignment with each other, a school's potential to enhance its outcomes are maximised.

A diagrammatic representation of the RBF is contained in Diagram 2.2. Participating IDEAS Project schools use the RBF at a number of junctures during their IDEAS Project journeys, commencing with a systematic approach to organisational diagnosis using the IDEAS Diagnostic Inventory at the *Discovery* phase of the process.

DIAGRAM 2.2: THE RESEARCH-BASED FRAMEWORK

The Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes

(LRI IDEAS Team April 2002)

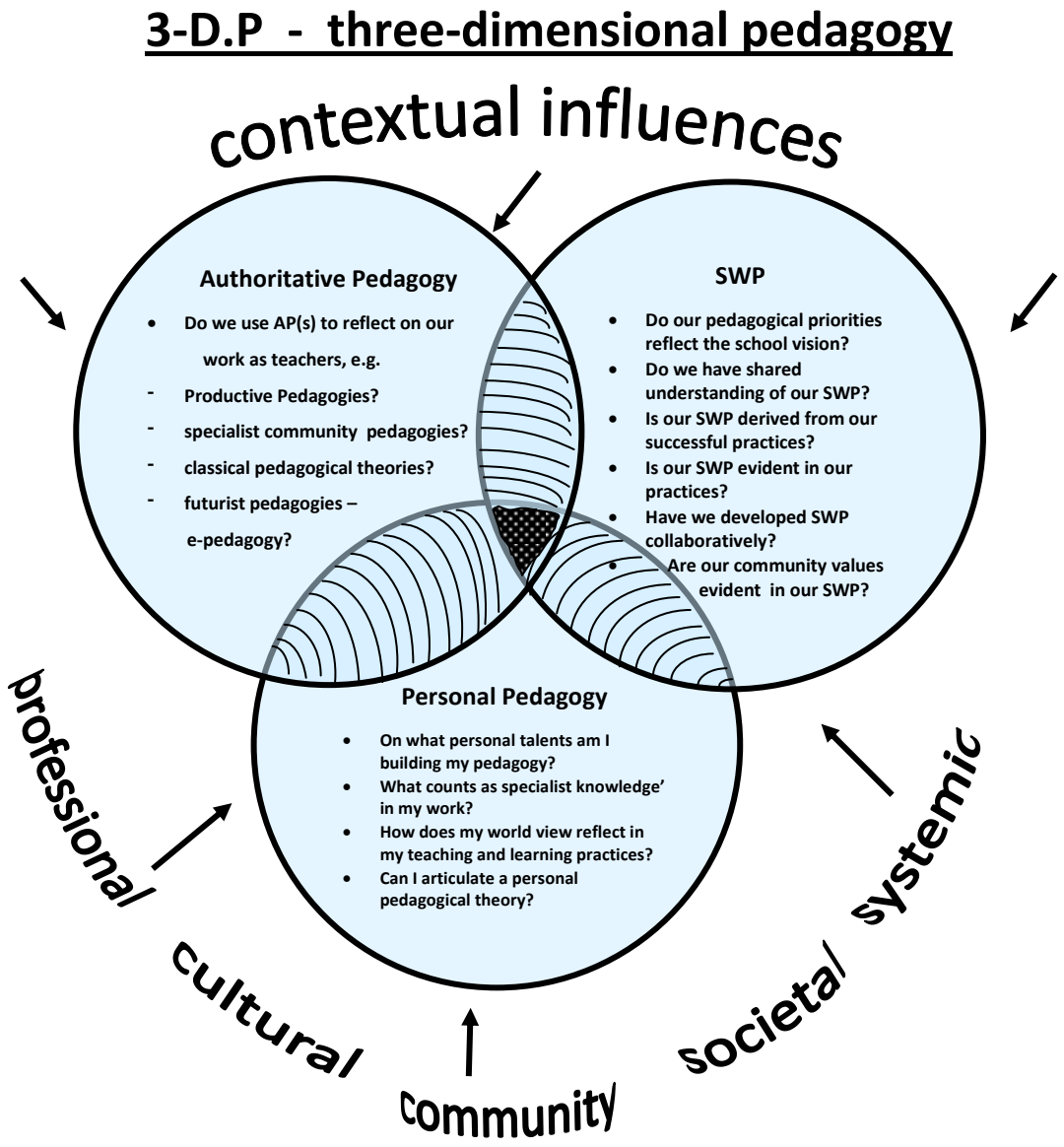


This framework has been developed through a five-year strategic alliance between the University of Southern Queensland's Leadership Research Institute and Education Queensland. The University of Wisconsin-Madison's longitudinal studies of successful restructuring in American schools (e.g. Newmann and

Component three**: 3-dimensional pedagogy**

IDEAS conceptualises the work of the 21st century teaching professional as three dimensional pedagogy (3-DP). 3-DP represents the integration of personal pedagogy (PP), schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) and authoritative pedagogy (AP) in the work of teachers. A diagrammatic representation of 3-DP is contained in Diagram 2.3.

DIAGRAM 2.3: 3-D.P - THREE-DIMENSIONAL PEDAGOGY



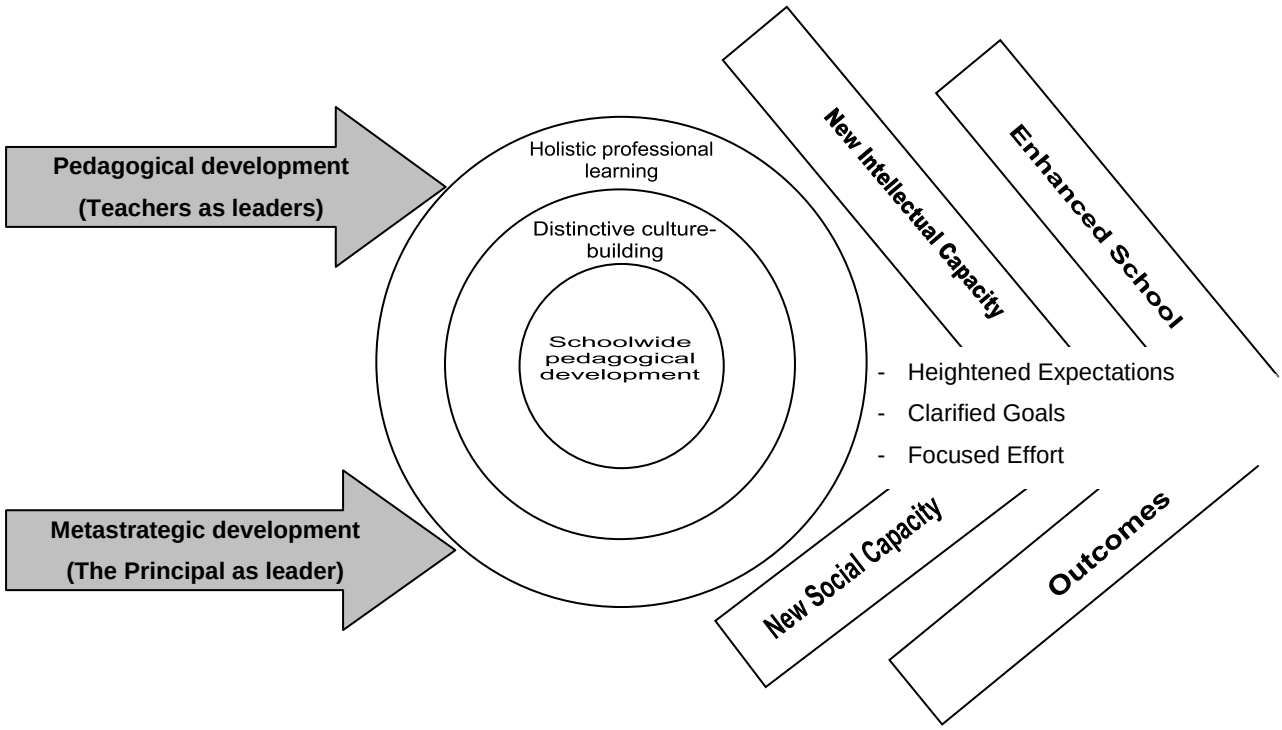
Source: Andrews & Crowther, 2002 – based on contributions from facilitators and school communities of IDEAS 2000-2002 at Woree SHS, Lawnton SS, Minimbah SS, Pine Rivers SHS and Indooroopilly SHS.

Component four**: Parallel leadership**

Parallel leadership is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action for purposes of schoolwide development and revitalisation to enhance the school's 'capacity' (Crowther et al., 2000, 2009). The three essential characteristics of parallel leadership are defined as: mutualism, a sense of shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression. Teacher leaders' functions reflect all major leadership theories but emphasise pedagogical enhancement, particularly schoolwide pedagogical enhancement (Crowther et al., 2002, 2009). Principals' leadership functions are conceptualised as 'metastrategic' (Crowther et al., 2002, 2009).

A diagrammatic representation of the relationship of parallel leadership to enhanced school capacity-building, as it is articulated in the IDEAS Project, is contained in Diagram 2.4.

DIAGRAM 2.4: LINKING PARALLEL LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY-BUILDING



2.2 The international research context of the IDEAS Project

The four key constructs that distinguish IDEAS are to varying degrees reflected in authoritative current international research into successful school improvement. This conclusion is evident from the following analysis of a range of major contemporary international school improvement initiatives and associated research.

2.2.1 Definitions

School improvement is generally defined as 'a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions with the ultimate aim of accomplishing goals more effectively' (van Velzen, Miles, Ekholm, Hameyer, & Robin, 1985, p. 48). In today's world, the goals for school improvement relate to the need to be able to respond to multiple change forces. These forces require schools to create conditions which are capable of managing complexity. Further, both Brian Caldwell and Hedley Beare have argued that it is time to create *the future school* (Beare, 2001), a challenge which will require a 'new educational imagery' (Caldwell, 2006, p. 7). These claims are supported in a recent OECD report (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008) that suggests schools 'must lay the foundations for lifelong learning while at the same time dealing with new challenges such as changing demographic patterns, increasing immigration, changing labour markets, new technologies and rapidly developing fields of knowledge' (p. 20). The OECD report states that as countries

> move rapidly towards becoming knowledge societies with new demands for learning and new expectations of citizenship, strategic choices must be made not just to reform but to reinvent education systems so the youth of today can meet the challenges of tomorrow (p. 21).

The role of school leadership has been asserted as to ensure that both students and teachers can continuously learn, develop and adapt to changing environments (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). Thus, challenges for school improvement frequently refer to the 'internal capacity' of schools to respond to changing needs of the students in their care. The internal capacities include 'teaching and learning, organisational norms, professional learning

systems, knowledge transfer processes, leadership arrangements and its receptiveness to external learning' (Harris et al., 2003, p. 86).

The notion of organisational capacity was defined by Corcoran and Goetz (1995, p. 27) as the 'optimum amount of production that can be obtained from a given set of resources' – hence the focus on enhancement of processes (efficiency) and outcomes (effectiveness) that dominates in much recent organisational improvement literature. The question, then, for education is how to enhance the organisational product (the outcomes of quality teaching and learning) within the context of a given resource base and how to design organisational arrangements to generate associated synergies, interdependence and efficiencies (Harris et al., 2003).

Other authoritative definitions of school capacity focus on the components of 'capacity' that need to be built, developed or enhanced. A sample of such definitions includes:

- Newmann and Wehlage (1995), King and Newmann (2001), who define capacity as the collective competency of the school to bring about whole-school change. This definition depends on four core components, namely: individual staff members' knowledge, skills and dispositions; the professional learning community's capacity to work collaboratively to improve student learning; program coherence; and the quality of technical resources.

- David Hargreaves (2001), who proposes a 'capital resource' model for schools, where the organisational resource, capital, needs to be enhanced in order to improve outcomes. Enhancement of outcomes is achieved through 'leverages', namely, intellectual capital (what teachers know and do) and social capital (the school's capacity to generate trust and sustain both internal and external networks).

- Michael Fullan (2000), whose definition focuses on human capital (the knowledge skills and dispositions of professional staff) and two key organisational features, namely professional learning communities (social capital – relationships) and

program coherence (integration, alignment and coordination of innovations into their programs).

- Mitchell and Sackney (2001), whose definition includes three approaches to develop professional learning communities. These are: personal capacity (an amalgam of teachers' practical knowledge, professional networks and available sources of new knowledge); interpersonal capacity (collegial relations, collective practice); and organisational capacity (flexible systems open to new ideas; investment in professional learning; change structures that isolate professionals).

- Mulford (2007) defines capacity as including the components of culture (trust, collaboration, support, risk taking and learning), structure (shared decision making, distributive leadership, professional learning) and social capital (social relationships on which people can draw to achieve goals). Further, Mulford (2008) asserts that in successful processes of capacity building three types of social capital are created, namely, bonding (which occurs among colleagues); bridging (which occurs between schools) and linking (which occurs between the school and its community).

- Hopkins and Jackson (2003), whose concept of capacity is based on a five-elements model. Each element has synergies, interconnections and emotional and spiritual glue that develop and complement each other. These elements are: foundational conditions (safe environment, clear sense of purpose); personal attributes (knowledge and skills); interpersonal qualities (shared purposes, taking collective responsibility); organisational considerations (building, developing and redesigning structures that create and maintain sustainable organisational processes); and external opportunities (school working in creative and resourceful ways with external agencies and initiatives). Within these elements there are two key integrative concepts – professional learning communities and leadership.

Summary

Most definitions of capacity building that appear in the authoritative literature focus on the building of organisational structures, personal capabilities and interpersonal relationships. The IDEAS program has not historically focused explicitly on capacity-building, but each of the definitions noted above demonstrates a degree of consonance with core IDEAS concepts and processes. It might be concluded that a distinctive process of capacity-building can be derived from analysis of success in IDEAS schools.

2.2.2 A selection of school improvement models

The selection of large-scale school improvement models that is reported in this cursory review have been developed and implemented with a focus on capacity-building for the specific purpose of improvement in student achievement. All have reported successful outcomes in that regard.

- *U.K. Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)* (Hopkins, 1999) – combines school development/improvement planning processes with capacity-building that involves stakeholders in visioning and organisational change.

- *Manitoba (Canada) School Improvement Project (MSIP)* (Earl, Torrance, Sutherland, Fullan, & Ali, 2003) – as with the IQEA model, combines school development/ improvement planning processes with capacity-building that involved stakeholders in visioning and organisational change.

- *Capacity Building for Leadership and School Improvement* (National College for School Leadership (NCSL) (Hadfield, Chapman, Curryer & Barrett, 2001) - aims at building personal, interpersonal and organisational capital.

- *The Australian Performance Management (PM) process* (Zbar, Marshall & Power, 2007) – builds on three key elements – *Design* (core processes; clear roles/job descriptions; school development plans); *Perception* (PM as core process – communication, motivation, collegiality); and *Capacity* (teacher effectiveness, classroom climate and lesson observation).

- *Raising the Stakes: from improvement to transformation in the reform of schools* (Caldwell, & Spinks, 2008) – asserts that a successful school is one that is aligned i.e. where the 'Four domains are included [Intellectual Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital and Spiritual Capital] and there must be alignment with one another. Above all there must be alignment with the interests of students and the goal of transformation . . . [and] securing alignment . . .' (p. 32).

Summary

School improvement models tend to encompass one or more of three broad categories: rallying and mobilising people (motivating people, building morale, and communicating openly); growing people (empowering people, building teams, and developing people) and creating a productive culture (Hopkins in Harris et al., 2003; Murphy & Meyers, 2009). The other factor that many models recognise is that change is developmental:

> [S]ignificant change in the form of implementing specific innovations can be expected to take a minimum of 2 to 3 years; bringing about institutional reforms can take 5 or 10 years. At the same time, work on changing the infrastructure (policies, incentives, and capacity of agencies at all levels) so that valued gains can be sustained and built upon (Fullan, 2001, p. 109).

IDEAS incorporates all three core categories in its core processes and concepts.

2.2.3 Leadership for school improvement

The importance of 'distributed leadership' in school improvement is now universally recognised, as illustrated in the recent work of global authorities such as Sergiovanni (2000), Leithwood & Riehl (2005), Fullan (2005), Murphy (2005), Hargreaves and Fink (2006) , MacBeath (2005) and Mulford (2007). Pont, in a recent OECD Report, summed the situation up as follows:

> effective school leadership may not reside exclusively in formal positions but may instead be distributed across a number of individuals in the school [and needs to be distributed, encouraged and supported] (Pont et al., 2008, p. 17)

The IDEAS conception of leadership is based specifically on the work of Crowther et al. (2002, 2009) who have described effective school-based leadership as contributing to enhanced student outcomes as follows:

> as processes of holistic professional learning, distinctive culture-building and schoolwide pedagogical development take shape, merge and evolve, a school increases its capacity to nurture a distinctive sense of identity and belonging, to engender coherence in its multifaceted operations, to concentrate effort on particularly meaningful pedagogical practices, and to reinforce student learning across classrooms, subjects, and year levels (2008, p. 65).

Crowther et al. (2009) have conceptualised effective school-based leadership as 'parallel leadership':

> [a] process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies three distinct qualities – mutual trust, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression (p. 53) . . . teacher leaders focus and influence pedagogical development, while principals focus on metastrategy that is, envisioning desired futures aligning key institutional elements, enabling teacher leadership, building synergistic alliances and culture building and identity generation (p. 71).

An essential function of distributive approaches to school leadership is to foster 'organisational learning' (Crowther et al., 2009; Dinham, 2008; Elsmore, 2008; Lambert, 2007; Mulford, 2003). Organisational learning builds the capacity of a school to achieve continuous improvement through the development of staff, creating the climate and conditions for collective learning, and thoughtful use of data to improve curriculum and instruction (OECD 2008 Report). The research of Stoll, Fink and Earl (2003) indicates that if teachers are empowered rather than 'controlled' they are more effective and improve their

pedagogical delivery more rapidly than do teachers who are not empowered. This important conclusion concurs with earlier research by Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow and Easton (1998), who reported that:

> as teachers develop a broader say in school decision making, they may also begin to experiment with new roles, including working collaboratively. This restructuring of teachers' work signifies a broadening professional community where teachers feel more comfortable in exchanging ideas, and where collective sense of responsibility for student development is likely to occur (p. 128).

As schools as organisations are reconceptualised (Morgan, 2006) roles, relationships and responsibilities become less hierarchical and more flexible. Schools are reconceptualised as communities and professional workplaces, a new metaphor for school design emerges, one that requires a reconceptualisation of leadership - that is, principals cultivate teacher leadership and often transform themselves (Murphy, 2005; Smylie & Hart, 1999). This reconceptualisation of schooling is increasingly being asserted to require the involvement of students in true partnership with adults so that they are enabled to influence what happens to them at school, and become meaningfully involved in their own learning and in school improvement (Manefield, Collins, Moore, Mahar & Warne, 2007).

Summary

IDEAS embraces rethinking and reconceptualising 'school' and explicitly endorses an understanding of school-based leadership as a professional relationship between principals and teacher leaders who engage in collective action to build school capacity for improvement. This conception of leadership is captured in IDEAS in the notion of 'parallel leadership', which embodies qualities of mutualism, a clear sense of shared purpose and an allowance for individual expression (Crowther et al., 2009).

2.2.4 Schools improvement in disadvantaged contexts

A review of the research evidence on improving schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, completed by Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, and Russ (2004) found

that there were no 'quick fixes' in such situations, but that key characteristics of success could be identified. These characteristics can be grouped into three areas, namely:

- Teachers and their work –a focus on whole-school, contextually relevant and consistent teaching and learning approaches; the use of school-based data and student voice to inform teaching approaches; creation of a positive school culture that is blame free; having high expectations; having program and assessment coherence; teachers within their learning community being open to change and experimentation.

- Leadership - distributed and democratic forms of leadership, involving 'teachers in leading their schools … [and] … in developing or choosing a school improvement strategy has been found to be a crucial factor in sustaining improvement in a number of studies' (pp. 156-7).

- Other factors – including some or all of the following: professional development linked to school as well as individual goals; parent involvement and community outreach programs; development of broader school communities, incorporating parents and local businesses; parent involvement; community outreach programs; external support in the form of school networks that provide social and technical support; disseminating good practice; providing different perspectives; and increased resources.

An Australian study (Mulford, 2008) found that successful school leadership in high-poverty communities demonstrated qualities that included: setting the tone for improved teacher quality; conveying an expectation of academic success; investing in relationship building and collaboration; providing high levels of support for staff; strengthening community involvement and interest; enhancing the physical environment and acquiring grants and resources. Teachers in such contexts also worked long hours, received district/system support, spent less time out of their schools and more time working with students, wanted to be seen to be fair, and communicated results to colleagues.

Summary

The implementation of IDEAS in the Victorian schools, 2004-8, was essentially undertaken in schools that were described as disadvantaged (low performing by a multiple of measures) and were 'targeted' by the school system as in need of serious improvement. Findings from this research report should enrich literature such as that described.

2.2.5 Measurement of effective school improvement

Historically, debate has raged over the validity of measures of school effectiveness (outcomes) or improvement (processes). However, in the last decade research models have adopted a new paradigm of mixed methodologies, using both qualitative and quantitative data:

> …the new paradigm uses whatever methods seem to best fit the problem(s) under study; [consideration and focus on] the learning level, instructional behaviours of teachers and classrooms] … with measures moving away from what is a 'good school' to what makes a school 'good' [and]… there is interest in both processes of schools and the outcomes they generate; and that school's development needs to be charted over the medium to long term (Gray et al., 1999, p. 34).

Hargreaves (2001) argues that to measure effectiveness and school improvement it is necessary to apply measures to four concepts, namely: cognitive and moral outcomes; leverage (the relation between teacher input and educational output, or changes in students' intellectual and moral state resulting from the teacher's effort); intellectual capital (the sum of the knowledge and experience of the school's stakeholders, its growth as new knowledge is created and transferred); and social capital (the level of trust and collaboration between people, and the existence of strong networks).

More recently, Griffin (2005) completed an *Environmental Scan of Tools and Strategies that Measure Progress in School Reform* which examined current methodologies and procedures used internally for measuring progress in school reform. He concluded that the following themes and issues are reported in the literature as concerns:

- Lack of alignment between the intended focus of school reform strategies and measures of outcomes;
- Problems of accountability and methods for tracking progress; and
- Linking specific reforms to outcomes.

Griffin also commented that the measuring of outcomes was questionable when 'there are many goals of school reform… that are not amenable to measurement in terms of student progress on a limited set of tests, or to short term measure of progress'(p. 39). Those methods that tracked progress indicated that there were problems with measuring 'value-addedness':

> doubts regarding the validity of tests; problems with what data to include; the fairness of models; lack of transparency; inability to distinguish between teaching for the test or true learning; inability to indicate specific practices or reforms to which improvements are attributable or to support casual interpretations(p. 40).

Griffin concluded from his detailed analysis that:

> evaluation of progress in school reforms requires the identification of appropriate indicators of successful implementation, including but not restricted to student academic outcomes, which can be used to comment and reflect upon relationships between styles of implementation and outcomes for students, for sub-groups of students, and from the multiple vantage points of students, parents and teaching professionals (p. 75).

Also very recently, major school improvement projects in the USA were examined by Kidron and Darwin (2007). The projects studied were those that reported outcomes and were acknowledged as 'whole school', but varied in focus. Models examined focused on either literacy development (for example, *Success for All, Breakthrough to Literacy*); or were process-orientated providing a process for change (*More Effective Schools; Coalition for Essential Schools*; *ATLAS Learning Communities*); or focused on professional development (*National Writing Project; Modern Red Schoolhouse*); scripted curriculum (direct instruction).

Kidron and Darwin's (2007) study found that the measures used to report improvements were: validated assessments of academic achievement (standardised test scores); academic persistence and performance (daily attendance, grade promotion and dropout rates); psychological well-being; appropriate behaviour; teacher satisfaction; and parent and community involvement. The research also noted that those projects in socio-disadvantaged communities (culturally and linguistically diverse students) reported on practices that produced good learning environments (attention to producing a positive school climate, initiatives that involve parents in productive ways; support systems that help student achieve success; specific efforts to achieve equity in learning opportunities and outcomes; multicultural education strategies).

Summary

In summary, current measures of school improvement (and effectiveness) tend to focus on sustainability and therefore report on the capacity of schools to sustain improvement (and effectiveness). Commonly used measures are both qualitative and quantitative and are charted over a period of time. They consider school outcomes (which are goal and context related) in their broadest sense, along with an understanding of the internal contextual processes that have contributed to the outcomes goal as a measure of 'success' or 'improvement'.

The research into the outcomes of the IDEAS Project in Victoria, 2004-8, used measures for school improvement and effectiveness such as those that are endorsed in the authoritative literature. Most notably, the research was longitudinal and contextual, used a mixed methodological approach to data collection, focused on a broad definition of 'success' and on processes that build capacity for sustainable improvement.

2.3 Implementation strategies and dynamics of IDEAS in Victoria, 2004-8

The official implementation of the first Victorian IDEAS Project cohort extended from November 2004 to December 2006. Unofficially, the implementation process continued into

2007 and 2008, and, indeed, continues in a number of schools today.

The IDEAS-Victoria Project commenced in November, 2004, with 22 schools divided into three geographical clusters, each with a cluster coordinator and supported by a USQ-LRI project officer. The overall project was directed and managed by the USQ-LRI, assisted by a Victorian State coordinator, reporting to an Advisory Board. One school withdrew at the end of 2005. The list of participating schools, and support personnel, is contained in Table 1.1.

School staffs were introduced to the features of IDEAS through presentations to schools, either individually or in clusters, by LRI representatives in mid and late 2004. To commence the project, schools agreed to the following terms:

- to provide a school 'IDEAS Facilitator' to work directly with the USQ-LRI team;
- to work through the five IDEAS phases, using IDEAS resources, and modifying the resources to suit individual school purposes;
- to participate in IDEAS Forums and cluster activities.

The IDEAS-Victoria program was delivered through a wide range of activities, encompassing the following:

- **IDEAS seminars** - *five days of workshops across the program*

  The seminar program included an Orientation Seminar and one cluster seminar per semester for two years for two school representatives from each school. Each seminar was delivered following consultation with the schools, the cluster coordinators and the IDEAS Project Team.

- **IDEAS team school visits –** *one per semester across the duration of the program*

  School visits were conducted each semester, immediately preceding or immediately following the IDEAS seminars. The purpose of the school visits was to assist in IDEAS planning and process support for each school. The IDEAS school visits usually involved the school principal, other administration and IDEAS School Management Team members (ISMT) and/or staff as determined by the school. Visits normally involved a two hour on-site time allocation.

- **IDEAS learning forums –** *held annually*

  Each participating IDEAS-Victoria school presented their developmental work to the full group (3 clusters) towards the end of each year of the formal program. The IDEAS Learning Forums offered opportunity for each school to participate and share their professional work from their engagement with IDEAS, as well as learn from each other.

- **National IDEAS learning forums –** *held second year*

  IDEAS schools from all Australian systems participated in a National IDEAS Learning Forum at USQ, Toowoomba 2006. Several of the IDEAS-Victoria schools were subsequently invited to participate in the 2008 National Learning Forum held at USQ, Toowoomba. They accepted and presented to an international audience of educators.

- **IDEAS-Victoria teleconferences –** *two per term*

  Two IDEAS cluster teleconferences per term were held for the 2004-6 IDEAS-Victoria cohort. Times and agendas were negotiated with the cluster coordinators.
  Additional telephone contacts with cluster and school representatives were ongoing.

- **IDEAS materials –** *website and print materials*

  Open IDEAS Website access was available to all cohort schools
  IDEAS print materials, encompassing the IDEAS Manual, journal articles and LRI workshop packages, were also provided.

- **Cluster planning and review meetings** – *one per term*

  Cluster meetings were held each term, coordinated by the Victorian cluster coordinator in consultation with USQ project team member attached to each cluster. Cluster meetings were chaired by Regional cluster coordinators.

  Regular meetings of cluster coordinators were held to jointly plan implementation of the program. These meetings were chaired by the State IDEAS Coordinator from the

School System Development Division. Some Central Office personnel also attended these meetings.

2.4 IDEAS-Victoria cohort one management

The implementation of the first IDEAS Project cohort in Victoria was managed by a representative governance group (the IDEAS-Victoria Advisory Committee - IVAC) comprising members of the USQ IDEAS Alliance (USQ and Queensland Department of Education) and representatives from Victoria (State project and cluster coordinators). The mandate of the IDEAS-Victoria Advisory Committee was to determine the strategic purposes of the IDEAS-Victoria pilot, 2004-2006; to oversee the progress of the implementation of IDEAS at schools and within clusters; and ensure the quality assurance and efficacy of the IDEAS implementation.

2.5 Chapter summary

The IDEAS Project is a comprehensive approach to school reform, based on four distinctive features: the ***ideas*** process; organisational alignment; 3-dimensional pedagogy; and parallel leadership. In these regards, the IDEAS Project differs from other major school reform initiatives in place across the world, including well-known approaches such as the Canadian *Manitoba School Improvement Project (MSIP)*; the U.K. *Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)* p; the U.K. *LEA Improvement Strategy*; *Building Capacity Developing Your School* (National College for School Leadership (NCSL); and *Better Schools, Better Teachers; Better Results* (Zabr, Marshall, & Power, 2007).

The IDEAS Project has been, and continues to be, implemented in a number of Victorian regions. This report focuses on the implementation of IDEAS by the first cohort of Victorian school, November 2004-November 2006.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

The research into the educational impacts of the implementation of the IDEAS Project in Victorian schools, 2004-6, was based in authoritative research concepts, modified to take into account particular contextual features of the IDEAS-Victoria Project. Most notably, the mutualistic nature of the USQ-LRI and Victorian IDEAS schools relationship was extended into the research, resulting in a distinctive form of 'co-researcher methodology'.

3.1 The research problem and research questions

The following research problem and research questions were agreed upon by the USQ-LRI and Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and formalised in a research contract, to provide the parameters of the research:

> **The research problem** – ***What key lessons for enhanced educational achievement can be learned from the implementation of the IDEAS Project in a selection of Victorian schools, 2004-8?***
>
> Research question one: *What definition of 'success' emerges from the experiences of a cohort of schools where enhanced improvement is perceived by stakeholders in conjunction with implementation of IDEAS in Victoria, 2004-8?*
>
> Research question two*: What key processes appear to have contributed to the successes enjoyed by the Victorian IDEAS schools?*
>
> Research question three: *What forms of leadership appear to engender and support the key processes in question?*

Research question four*: What model for school-based capacity-building emerges from the research?*

Research question five: *What implications, if any, emerge from the research for schooling in disadvantaged contexts?*

Research question six: *What adjustments, if any, emerge as necessary to the LRI explanatory models for sustained school improvement?*

The presentation of data for the research questions is contained in chapter four. The analysis of data, and associated findings, for the research questions is contained in chapter five.

3.2 The research sample

3.2.1 Characteristics of the 2004-6 IDEAS cohort

Twenty-two schools were involved in the first iteration of the IDEAS Project in Victoria, commencing in November 2004. The features of the sample are noted in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE SCHOOLS - LOCATIONS AND DESIGNATIONS

Region			School organisation			SES status	
NMR	WMR	BSW	Primary	Secondary	Special	Low	Regular
13	8	1	10	11	1	19	3

The progress of the research schools through the stages of the IDEAS Project is outlined in Table 3.2. As can be seen in Table 3.2, the vast majority of participating IDEAS-Victoria cohort one schools had completed school vision and schoolwide pedagogical development processes by the time the research commenced (June, 2008). Most had in fact completed

these processes by the time of the official completion of IDEAS (November, 2006) but continued to implement IDEAS in the ensuing period.

NOTE: Thus, the decision was made, following discussion between USQ-LRI researchers and IDEAS-Victoria representatives, to explore the research problem and research questions across a 2004-8 timeframe.

The data contained in Table 3.2 are based on schools' self-reports, validated by cluster coordinators and LRI visiting staff.

TABLE 3.2: PHASE OF THE *idea*s PROCESS REACHED BY NOVEMBER, 2006

Vision in Place	SWP in Place	'Actioning' phase Commenced	Abandoned IDEAS after Year 1
21	17	10	1

About half of the 22 commencing IDEAS-Victoria schools were affected by amalgamation processes in 2007-8. Nevertheless, all agreed to provide systemically-determined evaluation data to the USQ-LRI researchers.

NOTE: Of key importance in Table 3.2 is that, by the time of formal completion of the IDEAS Project, seventeen of the 22 participating schools had completed the development of a pedagogical framework in some form. Explanations for the non-progression of the remaining five schools are as follows:

- One school abandoned IDEAS after a year, based on the principal's decision;
- Two schools were subject to continuous changes of principalship, and were unable to sustain formal commitments to IDEAS activities;
- Two schools became so involved in systemic school amalgamation activities that they discontinued actual IDEAS activities, although they retained formal membership in the project.

This explanation regarding non-completion of core IDEAS activities is accorded further discussion in the Leadership analyses in section 4.5.

3.2.2 Characteristics of the case study schools

Five of the 17 schools that completed IDEAS to the Envisioning (SWP) phase were identified for detailed case study analysis, based on (i) the provision of evidence to indicate completion of IDEAS to the *Actioning* phase; (ii) agreement to participate in the research.

NOTE: In reviewing and interpreting the case studies it is important to note that, when Departmental Student Attitudes Survey (SAS) and Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) data for the periods 2006-8 and 2004-8 respectively are considered, the five schools that comprised the case study sample can be regarded as representing a random selection of the 17 IDEAS cohort that completed the *SWP* phase of the project (Table 3.2).

Some key characteristics of the five case study schools are outlined in Table 3.3. As can be seen, three of the case study schools had qualified at the outset of IDEAS as 'challenged' and had been designated 'targeted' schools.

TABLE 3.3: SOME KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

Designated 'targeted'	3
Mainstream	2
Total	5
Primary	2
Secondary	3
Total	5
No change to organisational status	2
Amalgamating	2
Amalgamated	1
Total	5

3.3 The database for the research

The database for the research comprised both 'macro' and 'micro' data sources. Macro data that were used in addressing the research questions were constituted of Victorian Department of Education and Early Education Development statistics relating to teacher and student opinions and attitudes. Micro data that were used in the data analysis were constituted of descriptive data relating to each of the five case study schools. A summary of the database for the research is contained in Table 3.4.

TABLE 3.4: A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH DATABASE

The systemic database

(i) *Staff Opinion Survey data (2004, 2005, 2006 2007,2008)*
- For all State primary and secondary schools
- For cohort one IDEAS-Victoria schools
- For the case study schools

(ii) *Student Attitudes to School Survey data (2006, 2007, 2008)*
- For all State primary and secondary schools
- For the case study schools

The case study database

(i) School presentations to the research team (school outcomes, achievements, circumstances and implementation processes)

(ii) School portfolios (Diagnostic Inventory results; ***ideas*** process descriptions; Facilitators' records; personal stories; student learning logs)

(iii) School records relating to standardised student achievement results during the period of IDEAS-Victoria implementation

(iv) Researchers' case study field study notes

(v) State SOS data (2004,2005, 2006,2007,2008) and SAS data (2006, 2008)

3.4 The evolutionary nature of the research approach

The research followed a five-stage evolutionary process, consistent with principles of 'conceptual' research design and methodology. The five stages are summarised as follows:

Stage One: Agreement to participate

Following formal approval of the proposal to conduct research by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the USQ-LRI Director approached the 21 schools that had engaged until the end of 2006, asking them to complete a questionnaire to indicate their interest, or otherwise, in being involved with the research study. It was found that six of 21 schools had amalgamated, five were in the process of preparation for amalgamation and ten remained organisationally unchanged. From the information provided by the schools, 19 were deemed suitable for inclusion in the IDEAS-Victoria cohort one research database. All agreed to participate, including two that had never undertaken formal IDEAS processes, but had participated in forums on an unofficial basis.

Six of the 17 schools that had completed the SWP phase of the IDEAS Project were selected for possible case study investigation - three secondary and three primary schools. One primary school subsequently withdrew interest in the case study research owing to the required time commitments.

Stage Two – Development of shared responsibility for the case study component of the research

Once the case study schools had been selected, meetings were held with their representatives by Mr Doug Jeanes, the IDEAS-Victoria Project coordinator, to explore ways in which the research could be conducted so as to minimise disruption in schools and maximise benefits of the research for schools.

It was agreed at this juncture that the database for the research would encompass the period of formal IDEAS participation (2004-6) and extended participation (2007-8). This decision was taken on grounds that (i) some schools had not completed the *Envisioning* phase of IDEAS by the time of formal conclusion of the project; (ii) some impacts of IDEAS had not become apparent until after the formal conclusion of the project; and (iii) school personnel would encounter difficulty in separating IDEAS-related events, challenges and achievements during the period 2004-6 from those that had transpired since 2006.

With this additional complexity in mind, a range of 'mutualistic' methodological strategies between LRI researchers and school-based professionals was agreed to, as follows:

USQ-LRI research functions:

- Determination of research design
- Management of macro (systemic) and micro (school-based) data analyses
- Development of responses to the research questions
- Validation of research procedures and outcomes
- Report preparation and submission.

Case study schools' research functions:

- Preparation of individual school case study reports
- Interrogation of, and feedback to, USQ-LRI preliminary research findings
- Co-shaping, with USQ-LRI team, of emergent conceptual and explanatory models.

Stage Three – Preliminary conceptual development

Upon presentation of the five case study reports to the USQ-LRI team, the team met to interrogate the reports individually and collectively and to generate a preliminary conceptualisation of the key dependent variable, namely 'Educational success in IDEAS - Victoria schools'. Based on the outcomes of this analysis, the following themes were identified for focus in the case study research:

- The subtleties of the ***ideas*** process and journey
- Alignment and the RBF

- Professional learning processes
- The IDEAS Rules of Engagement
- Teacher professionalism, 3-DP and 'new professionalism'
- SWP
- Capacity-building
- Leadership
- Student achievement
- Unexpected situational factors and features.

It was agreed also at this stage that research data relating to the dependent variable (i.e. school 'success') to be collected in the case study schools would encompass three forms:

- *Perceptual data* – What Staff Opinion (SOS) and Student Attitudes (SAS) evidence is available? What are the underlying constructs?
- *Achievement data* – What verifiable Student Achievement evidence is available? What are the underlying constructs?
- *Experiential data* – What researcher-based descriptive evidence is available? What are the underlying constructs?

<u>Stage Four – Data analysis and field study</u>

- *Systemic quantitative data analysis*

  In keeping with current knowledge and cautionary discussions of the application of quantitative data analysis for the tracking of progress of school improvement (Griffin, Woods & Cue, 2005; Hattie & Brown 2004; Paton, 2001) the approach adopted for this research was very carefully considered by the researchers in consultation with Victorian advisory reference group members. Rather than exclude or solely focus on the available quantitative analyses of statewide survey data (School Opinion Survey, SOS and Student Attitude to School Survey, SAS) the approach adopted was to maximise opportunities for schools to present their own evidence of improvement in a variety of ways meaningful to them and demonstrable for the purpose of the research. The evaluation therefore depended greatly on both

existing quantitative and qualitative data that was readily available in schools. Account needed to be taken of the fact that some schools in the study experienced disruption to the IDEAS process through substantial change. This included amalgamation with other schools (e.g. one case study school closed at the end of 2007; two IDEAS non-case study schools joined together in 2008 and another school experienced a series of different principals). From a data analysis perspective two small non-case study schools had less than ten staff responses in the SOS. Therefore, there was a need to be aware of these aspects in the consideration of all the data analysis and interpretation. The researchers also had the opportunity to gather new data during the life of this project but were very conscious of the need to ensure that this would not compromise the work and goodwill of staff to participate. Thus, systemic quantitative data analysis was viewed as one of a variety of measures of school improvement that when explored in context and with other qualitative data analyses (Earl et al., 2003) could contribute to the exploration of the success or otherwise of the improvement in the IDEAS schools in focus.

Systemic databases relating to Departmental Staff Opinion of School Surveys and Student Attitude to School Surveys were analysed to ascertain statistical significance as they related to the IDEAS Project phase one schools and the case study schools. Associate Professor Shirley O'Neill assumed major responsibility for the statistical analyses.

The main statistical analyses involved a range of comparisons based on data collected from the annual statewide administration of the Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) between 2004 and 2008 and the Student Attitude to School Survey (SAS) between 2006 and 2008. These data were readily available and offered the opportunity to investigate whether staff and students' opinions/attitudes in IDEAS schools showed any statistically significant change over the years of their involvement with IDEAS. The State databases also allowed analyses to be undertaken to investigate how the IDEAS schools' results on these measures compared with the relevant State sector results, bearing in mind the above considerations and that the vast majority of IDEAS

schools were, at the start of their involvement in IDEAS, identified as 'targeted' schools.

The statistical analyses employed non-parametric rather than parametric tests because it could not be assured that the assumptions underpinning the use of parametric statistics for these data could be met. Since they involved the calculation of means of means and some conversion (see note two below), the more conservative (i.e. non-parametric) approach was taken.

For tracking individual schools' change over time on the SOS and the SAS, the Wilcoxon signed-ranks, matched pairs, non-parametric statistical test for dependent samples was applied. This test was selected because, in comparison with other non-parametric tests for comparing related/dependent samples, such as the sign test, the Wilcoxon considers the relative magnitude of the differences within the pairs of scores in addition to the direction of the difference, therefore providing a more powerful test (Siegal & Castellan, 1988). When comparisons were made between schools' performance on the surveys, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was applied (test for independent samples). The Mann-Whitney *U* test assumes that the variable under consideration is measured on at least an ordinal (rank order) scale. The interpretation of the test is essentially identical to the interpretation of the result of the parametric *t*-test for independent samples, except that the *U* test is computed based on rank sums rather than means. The *U* test is the most powerful (or sensitive) non-parametric alternative to the *t*-test for independent samples (Statistica, Glossary, 1998).

Note One

The consideration of SAS trends was limited to 2006 to 2008 since the questionnaire changed significantly between 2005 and 2006.

Note Two

Of the 11 categories covered on the Likert type rating scale of the SAS survey the items contributing to *Student morale* and *Student distress* involved a seven point scale compared

with a five point scale for the nine other categories such that it was necessary to convert the Likert scale mean scores to percentage values to allow comparisons to be made.

- *Case study data gathering and analysis*

  The field study component of the research involved four-member teams visiting each site for a period of two days each. Each team consisted of a USQ-LRI researcher who had also been involved in the delivery of IDEAS, a USQ-LRI researcher who had not been involved in the delivery of IDEAS and a person with experience as an in-school IDEAS Facilitator.

  Individual and focus group meetings were conducted at each site with IDEAS Project Facilitators, principals and other administrators, ISMT members, other staff and, in some cases, students.

  Each site research team had two points of foci:

  (i) Generic implementation dynamics and verified evidence of outcomes;

  (ii) One or two IDEAS-related themes, as outlined in Stage Three, above.

- *Validation strategies*

  Validation strategies relating to the research were both generic and case-study specific.

  Generic validation strategies were as follows:

  (i) Professor Bill Mulford was engaged to participate in both the conceptual design of the research and the analysis of the research data;

  (ii) Two systemic representatives, Mr Doug Jeanes and Ms Judy Boyle, participated in all aspects of the design and conduct of the research;

(iii) Professor Frank Crowther reviewed all statistical analyses before the results were subject to interpretation;

(iv) Associate Professor Shirley O'Neill completed all statistical analyses.

Case study data validation strategies were as follows:

(i) Associate Professor Shirley O'Neill was engaged to verify the SOS, SAS and student achievement data provided by each of the five case study schools;

(ii) Professor Frank Crowther visited each case study site and conducted meetings with school representatives to interpret, clarify and substantiate their data bases;

(iii) Public presentation (to the USQ research team) of case study reports were made by representative school teams, followed by interrogation and rewriting as necessary.

Stage Five – Generation of refined IDEAS frameworks

The development of refined IDEAS frameworks out of the data analyses comprised the following activities:

- Preparation of a revised IDEAS explanatory model and capacity-building model by Professor Frank Crowther, the research mentor/synthesist, and consideration of it by the USQ-LRI research team and research sample representatives;

- Detailed further interrogation of the proposed models by the USQ-LRI research team;

- Generation of a finalised model by the USQ-LRI research team;

- Testing of the finalised models with the research sample and research validator (Professor Mulford).

Following validation of the refined conceptual framework, the report to the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development was prepared.

3.5 Timeframe for the research

Details of the timeframe for the conduct of the research are as follows:

- Application to conduct research — January 2008
- Departmental approval of USQ-LRI request to conduct the research — April, 2008
- LRI survey of Phase One IDEAS-Victoria Project schools (N=22) to determine their IDEAS status and interest in participation in the research — June, 2008
- Finalisation of case study research sample (N=5) — July, 2008
- LRI development of backward-mapping criteria for use in case study school presentations on IDEAS-related achievements and outcomes, 2004-8 — August, 2008
- School-based case study presentations to LRI research team — September, 2008
- LRI identification of research themes for school-based follow-up — September, 2008
- LRI creation of proformas for thematic portfolios for use by school research — October, 2008
- Field study visitations to individual case study schools by research teams — November, 2008
- Tentative identification of research outcomes by LRI research team, validation expert and school reps — January, 2009

- School-based feedback to refined IDEAS model — January, 2009
- Preparation of case study research reports by LRI teams — March, 2009
- Analysis of State and cohort quantitative research data — March- May, 2009
- Preparation of thematic descriptions — April, 2009
- Validation of research conclusions with school representatives and validation expert — June, 2009
- Finalisation of research report — August, 2009
- Presentation of research report to Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development — September, 2009
- Publication of research report — September, 2009

3.6 Chapter summary

Of the 22 Victorian cohort one schools that commenced formal implementation of IDEAS in November, 2004, seventeen completed the ***ideas*** phases of Initiating, Discovering and Envisioning and were involved in Actioning activities at the time of the commencement of the research (January, 2008). Representatives of all 17 schools agreed to participate in the research, although about half of the schools had been amalgamated, or were in processes of amalgamation, at the time of the approval to conduct the research.

The research approach was both 'mutualistic' and 'evolutionary' in nature, encompassing the five stages of: Agreement to participate; Development of co-researcher functions; Preliminary conceptual development; Field study and data analysis; and Refinement of conceptual frameworks.

Chapter 4

The Research Data Base and Research Findings

In this chapter, data relevant to the six research questions are presented. These are constituted of empirical data provided by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Education Development and descriptions prepared by the research team in conjunction with school-based personnel of five case study schools.

4.1 The empirical database

The empirical database for the research included State-determined data relative to teachers' opinions of their schools' operations (SOS surveys) and students' attitudes towards school (SAS surveys). Databases were interrogated to enable comparisons of teacher and student data for the research cohort to be made with State means. Before exploring these data, a summary of the implementation dynamics for the IDEAS-Victoria Project is presented.

4.1.1 Implementation dynamics in the 2004-6 cohort schools

The cohort of schools that was the focus of the research implemented the IDEAS Project formally across a timeframe encompassing 2004-6, and then informally into 2008 and continuing. A summary of the implementation of the IDEAS program undertaken by the 2004-8 cohort is contained in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF IDEAS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE RESEARCH COHORT, 2004-8

Year	IDEAS Team Delivery
November-December 2004-May 2005	November/December - **Orientation** workshop February/March – **D.I**. workshop & school visits
June 2005-May 2006	Cluster meetings & telephone conferences August – **Envisioning** workshop Cluster meetings & telephone conference November - Forum – Leadership, Pedagogy themes February/March – **SWP** workshop
June 2006-May 2007	Cluster meetings & telephone conference August W – **SWP and Actioning workshop** Cluster Meetings &telephone conference November - Forum – **Actioning workshop** and planning February - IST training
2008	Cluster meetings Research

Table 4.1 indicates the range of IDEAS-related activities undertaken by the USQ IDEAS Project team in the research cohort clusters both during the period of formal implementation (2004-6) and subsequent to the period of formal implementation (2007-8 and continuing). Of significance is that fewer than half of the 22 schools had completed the Envisioning phase of IDEAS at the time of formal conclusion of the contractual agreement (November, 2006). An understanding was reached to enable participating schools to continue their IDEAS-related work at minimal cost to the schools in question. In all cases, participating schools accepted this invitation. Departmental decisions regarding school amalgamations also began to take effect during the 2007-8 time period, complicating implementation strategies considerably.

4.1.2 Teachers' perceptions of their schools' operations

4.1.2.1 Analyses of State SOS data

Staff Opinion of School questionnaires are administered in Victorian State schools in May of each year. School results are analysed through Departmental data analysis arrangements, and reports provided to each school. State norms are provided on the 20 categories, and seven broad themes, that comprise the 20-item questionnaire. The 20 categories are contained in Table 4.2. The seven generic themes are:

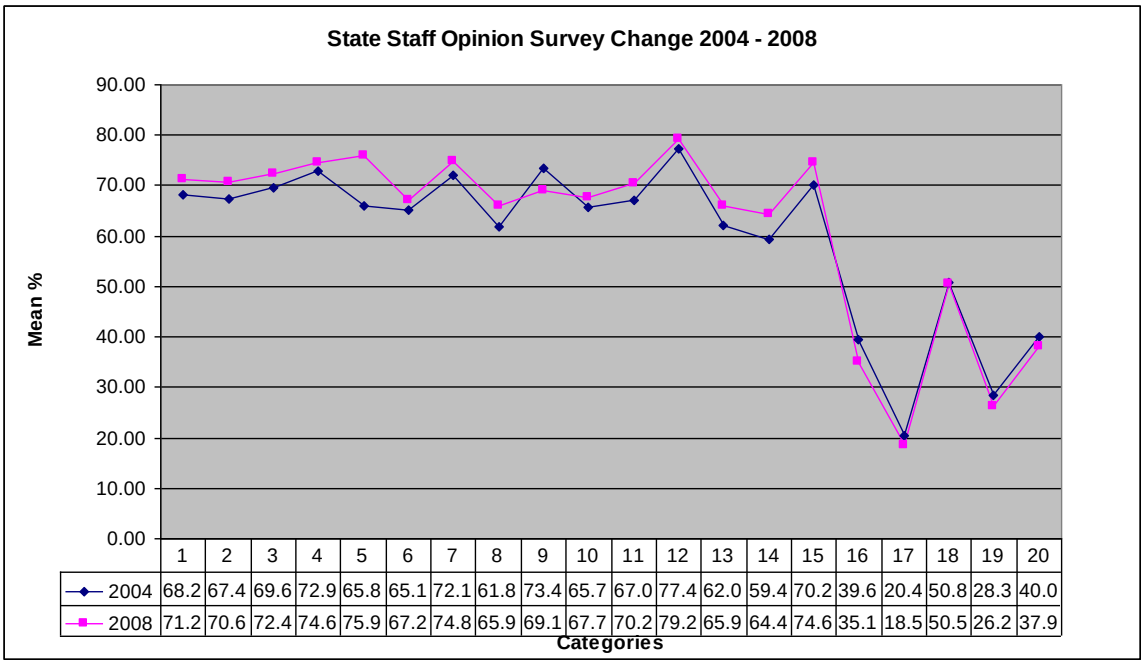
- Motivation (categories 1 and 2)
- Empathy (category 3)
- Clarity (category 4)
- Engagement (categories 5, 6 and 7)
- Learning (categories 8 and 9)
- Outcomes (categories 10-18)
- Motivation (categories 19 and 20)

The following figures and tables show the changes in *Staff Opinion of School* data between 2004 and 2008 for all Victorian State schools (Figure 4.1, Table 4.2), for State primary schools (Figure 4.1a) and State secondary schools (Figure 4.1b).

It is concluded from the statistical analysis of Table 4.2 that there were overall statistically significant improvements in Victorian teachers' perceptions of their school operations during the period 2004-2008. The State primary school performance on SOS improved from 2004 to 2008 at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.010001$, $p < 0.05$). The State secondary school performance on SOS significantly improved from 2004 to 2008 at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.006428$, $p < 0.01$).

Note: This Statewide improvement in SOS data is a particularly important consideration in the exploration of 'capacity-building' dynamics within the IDEAS research cohort that is undertaken in the analysis of Research Question 4 in Chapter 5.

FIGURE 4.1: A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF STAFF OPINION SURVEY DATA FOR ALL VICTORIAN SCHOOLS, 2004-2008



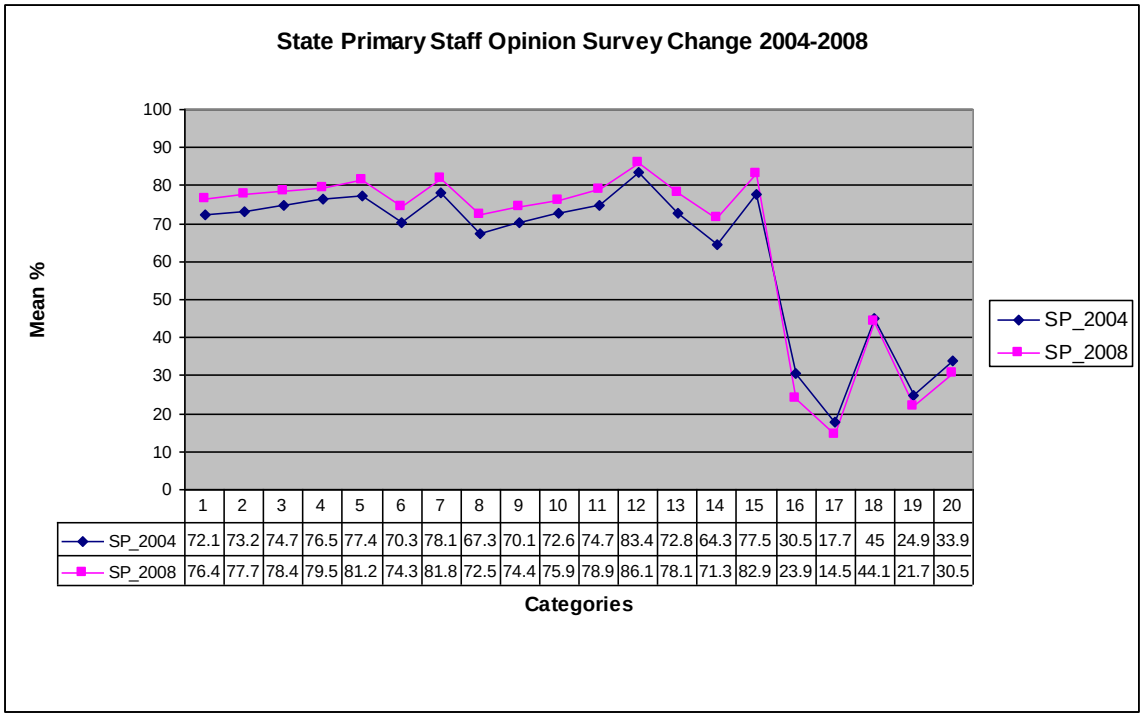
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2004	68.2	67.4	69.6	72.9	65.8	65.1	72.1	61.8	73.4	65.7	67.0	77.4	62.0	59.4	70.2	39.6	20.4	50.8	28.3	40.0
2008	71.2	70.6	72.4	74.6	75.9	67.2	74.8	65.9	69.1	67.7	70.2	79.2	65.9	64.4	74.6	35.1	18.5	50.5	26.2	37.9

TABLE 4.2: SOS CATEGORIES AND PERCENTAGE CHANGES FOR ALL VICTORIAN SCHOOLS, 2004-8

Aim	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Increase percent-age responses	Individual Morale	School morale	Support-ive leader-ship	Role Clarity	Profess. Interact-ion	Profess. decision making	Goal Congru-Ence	Appraisal & Recognit-ion	Profess. growth	Curric. Coordin-ation	Effective discipline policy	Student Orientat-ion	Student Motiv-ation	Student Decision making	Learning Environ-ment
% Change	2.94	3.19	2.82	1.71	10.08	2.12	2.70	4.06	-4.34	1.97	3.20	1.86	3.89	4.98	4.36

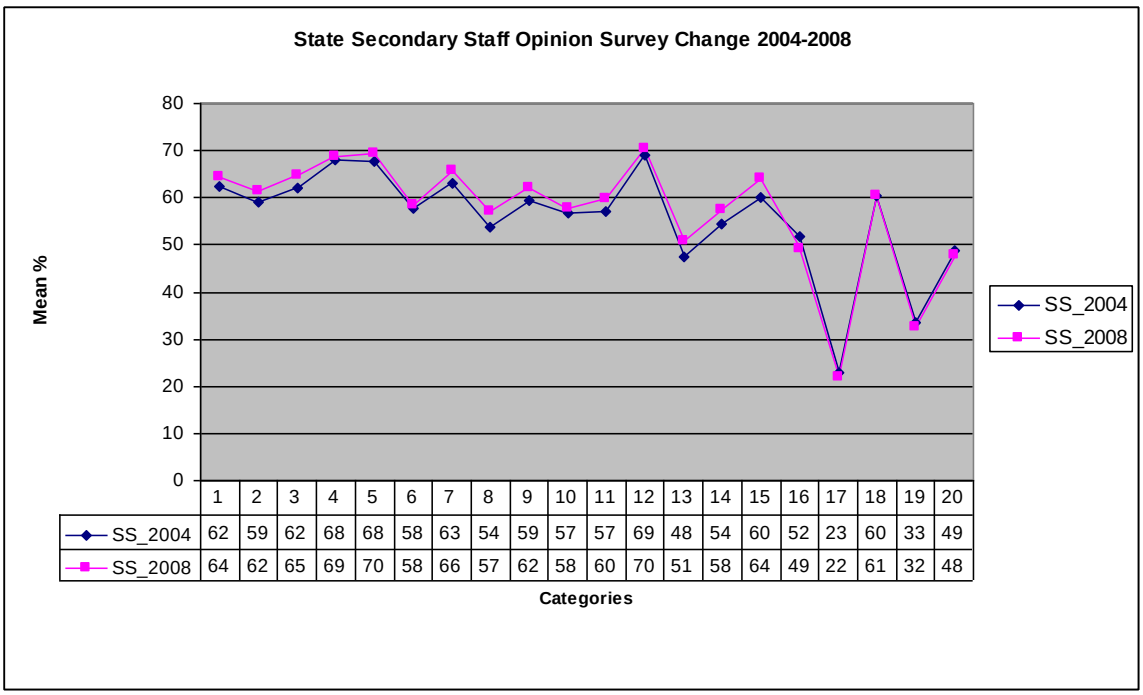
	16	17	18	19	20
Decrease Percentage response	Student misbehav-iour	Classroom Misbehav-iour	Excessive Work demands	Individual distress	School distress
%Change	-4.51	-1.96	-0.33	-2.04	-2.01

FIGURE 4.2A: A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF STAFF OPINION SURVEY DATA FOR ALL VICTORIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2004-2008



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
SP_2004	72.1	73.2	74.7	76.5	77.4	70.3	78.1	67.3	70.1	72.6	74.7	83.4	72.8	64.3	77.5	30.5	17.7	45	24.9	33.9
SP_2008	76.4	77.7	78.4	79.5	81.2	74.3	81.8	72.5	74.4	75.9	78.9	86.1	78.1	71.3	82.9	23.9	14.5	44.1	21.7	30.5

FIGURE 4.2B: A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF STAFF OPINION SURVEY DATA FOR ALL VICTORIAN SECONDAY SCHOOLS, 2004-2008



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
SS_2004	62	59	62	68	68	58	63	54	59	57	57	69	48	54	60	52	23	60	33	49
SS_2008	64	62	65	69	70	58	66	57	62	58	60	70	51	58	64	49	22	61	32	48

4.1.2.2 Staff Opinion Survey data for the IDEAS cohort schools, 2004-2008 (N=19)

Table 4.3 contains a summary of Staff Opinion Survey data for schools in the IDEAS-Victoria cohort (N=19) for the period, 2004-8. Statistical analysis of the data contained in Tables 4.3 indicates the following findings:

- There was overall statistically significant improvement in the IDEAS-Victoria cohort teachers' perceptions of their school operations during the period in question. This improvement is consistent with statewide improvements during the period 2004-2008.

- Overall, in numerical terms, the improvements in SOS data for the 2004-8 IDEAS cohort for the most part exceeded State improvements by seemingly substantial amounts during the timeframe for IDEAS Project implementation.

Specifically, primary schools statewide improved on positive SOS items by an average of 4.28 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 3.46 points. Cohort primary schools that completed the Visioning/SWP phases of IDEAS improved on positive SOS items by an average of 10 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 9 points.

Secondary schools improved statewide on positive SOS items by an average of 2.31 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 1.16 points. Cohort secondary schools that completed the Visioning/SWP phases of IDEAS improved on positive SOS items by an average of 7.6 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 4.6 points.

Three schools in the IDEAS-Victoria cohort registered negative improvements on SOS outcomes during the 2004-8 timeframe. It is of relevance that none of the three schools completed the Visioning/Actioning phases of IDEAS, and none considered itself a 'continuing IDEAS school' as of November, 2006 (see Section 3.2.1 for further details).

NOTE: No data are available to enable comparisons of the SOS data for 'targeted' schools that completed IDEAS and 'like' schools. But given that 17 of the 19 schools in the cohort

had been identified as 'targeted', the fact that SOS improvements exceeded State improvements by seemingly large numerical proportions during the period 2004-8 is regarded as educationally noteworthy.

TABLE 4.3: COMPARISON OF STAFF OPINION SURVEY RESULTS FOR IDEAS COHORT SCHOOLS AND STATE RESULTS, 2004-7-8

School		2004	2007	2008	Change
Sc1 Meadowfair North PS	**Overall Result**	57.58	65.31	65.96	+8.38
	Positive Categories Result	62.35	78.43	79.11	+17.12
	Negative Categories Result	44.36	25.96	26.50	-17.86
Sc2 Bellbridge PS	**Overall Result**	60.51	64.36	70.65	+10.14
	Positive Categories Result	70.82	71.97	87.80	+16.98
	Negative Categories Result	29.55	41.54	19.20	-10.35
Sc3 Eltham HS	**Overall Result**	56.43	59.23	63.75	+7.32
	Positive Categories Result	61.64	66.30	73.61	+11.97
	Negative Categories Result	40.81	38.00	34.16	-6.65
Sc4 La Trobe SC	**Overall Result**	54.77	62.53	NA	+7.76
	Positive Categories Result	56.92	68.28	NA	+11.36
	Negative Categories Result	48.30	45.26	NA	-3.04
Sc5 Kealba SC	**Overall Result**	58.65	60.89	64.27	+5.62
	Positive Categories Result	66.30	68.47	76.18	+12.17
	Negative Categories Result	35.68	38.14	28.54	-6.46
Sc6 Point Cook PS	**Overall Result**	53.19		62.26	+9.07
	Positive Categories Result	61.01		78.41	+17.4
	Negative Categories Result	29.71		13.84	-15.87
Sc7 Jacana PS	**Overall Result**	68.04		62.31	-5.37
	Positive Categories Result	75.31		76.47	+1.16
	Negative Categories Result	46.24		19.80	-26.44
Sc8 Bundoora PS	**Overall Result**	58.06		69.1	+11.04
(Originally Greenwood PS)	**Positive Categories Result**	67.28		86.42	+19.14
	Negative Categories Result	30.4		17.14	-13.26
Sc9 Broadmeadows West PS	**Overall Result**	59.85		68.75	+9.0
	Positive Categories Result	62.47		75.81	+8.9
	Negative Categories Result	52.0		47.56	-4.44

Sc10 Westmeadows Heights PS	**Overall Result**	52.62		55.17	+2.55
	Positive Categories Result	46.31		64.74	+18.43
	Negative Categories Result	71.55		26.45	-45.1
Sc11 Albanvale PS	**Overall Result**	60.58		53.0	-7.58
	Positive Categories Result	68.1		58.22	-9.88
	Negative Categories Result	38.01		37.35	-0.66
Sc12 Bethal PS	**Overall Result**	56.6		59.25	+2.65
	Positive Categories Result	59.72		66.8	+7.08
	Negative Categories Result	47.23		36.59	-10.64
Sc13 Glen Orden PS	**Overall Result**	59.22		65.15	+5.93
	Positive Categories Result	60.9		74.15	+13.25
	Negative Categories Result	54.17		38.15	-16.02
Sc14 Hillcrest SC	**Overall Result**	52.13	54.17	Hume C	07/+2.04
				53.58	08/+1.45
	Positive Categories Result	54.37	55.64	53.27	07/+1.27
					08/-1.1
	Negative Categories Result	45.39	49.74	54.5	07/+4.35
					08/+9.11
Sc15 Colac SC	**Overall Result**	47.84		52.52	+4.68
	Positive Categories Result	46.49		55.64	+9.15
	Negative Categories Result	51.9		43.14	-8.76
Sc16 Whittlesea SC	**Overall Result**	56.3		59.54	+3.24
	Positive Categories Result	58.94		65.76	+6.82
	Negative Categories Result	48.36		40.89	-7.47
Sc17 Lalor North SC	**Overall Result**	52.26		59.69	+7.43
	Positive Categories Result	51.96		65.7	+13.74
	Negative Categories Result	53.16		41.67	-11.49
Sc18 Melton SC	**Overall Result**	54.02		50.6	-3.42
	Positive Categories Result	56.59		48.91	-7.68
	Negative Categories Result	46.32		55.66	+9.34
Sc19 Erinbank SC	**Overall Result**	55.98	52.22	Hume C	07/-3.76
				53.58	08/-2.4
	Positive Categories Result	52.5	49.17	53.27	07/-3.33
					08/+0.77
	Negative Categories Result	66.42	61.36	54.5	07/-5.06
					08/-11.92

Hume Central (14 + 19)		NA		53.58	
Amalgamation of 14 and 19 + a non IDEAS school	**Positive Categories Result**	NA		53.27	
	Negative Categories Result	NA		54.5	
State Primary	**Overall Result**	62.85		65.12	+2.27
	Positive Categories Result	73.67		77.95	+4.28
	Negative Categories Result	30.4		26.94	-3.46
State Secondary	**Overall Result**	55.79		57.24	+1.45
	Positive Categories Result	59.9		62.21	+2.31
	Negative Categories Result	43.48		42.32	-1.16
State Overall	**Overall Result**	59.90		61.64	+1.74
	Positive Categories Result	67.99		70.95	+2.96
	Negative Categories Result	35.85		33.68	-2.17

4.1.2.3 Staff Opinion Survey data for the IDEAS-Victoria case study schools

Table 4.4 contains a summary of Staff Opinion Survey data for the research case study schools (N=5) for the period, 2004-7-8. Statistical analysis of the data relevant to Table 4.4 indicates overall statistically significant improvement in case study teachers' perceptions of their school operations during the period in question 2004-8 (except for La Trobe, where the timeframe is 2004-7, owing to the school's closure in late 2007).

Further analysis of the database for Table 4.4 reveals the following finding:

- In numerical terms, overall, the improvements in SOS data for the case study schools exceeded State improvements, indicating that they benefited from State initiatives during the period in question but gained additional value, possibly in conjunction with their implementation of IDEAS.

TABLE 4.4: COMPARISON OF STAFF OPINION SURVEY (SOS) RESULTS FOR CASE STUDY IDEAS SCHOOLS, 2004-8

School		2004	2007	2008	Change	Significance of change
Sc1 Meadowfair North PS	**Overall Result**	57.58	65.31	65.96	+8.38	p <0.05
	Positive Categories Result	62.35	78.43	79.11	+17.12	p <0.001
	Negative Categories Result	44.36	25.96	26.50	-17.86	p <0.05
Sc2 Bellbridge PS	**Overall Result**	60.51	64.36	70.65	+10.14	p <0.01
	Positive Categories Result	70.82	71.97	87.80	+16.98	p <0.001
	Negative Categories Result	29.55	41.54	19.20	-10.35	p <0.05
Sc3 Eltham HS	**Overall Result**	56.43	59.23	63.75	+7.32	p <0.05
	Positive Categories Result	61.64	66.30	73.61	+11.97	p <0.001
	Negative Categories Result	40.81	38.00	34.16	-6.65	p <0.01
Sc4 La Trobe SC	**Overall Result**	54.77	62.53	NA	+7.76	p <0.01
	Positive Categories Result	56.92	68.28	NA	+11.36	p <0.001
	Negative Categories Result	48.30	45.26	NA	-3.04	p <0.05
Sc5 Kealba SC	**Overall Result**	58.65	60.89	64.27	+5.62	p <0.05
	Positive Categories Result	66.30	68.47	76.18	+12.17	p <0.001
	Negative Categories Result	35.68	38.14	28.54	-6.46	p <0.05
	Negative Categories Result	NA		54.5		
State Primary	**Overall Result**	62.85		65.12	+2.27	
	Positive Categories Result	73.67		77.95	+4.28	
	Negative Categories Result	30.4		26.94	-3.46	
State Secondary	**Overall Result**	55.79		57.24	+1.45	
	Positive Categories Result	59.9		62.21	+2.31	
	Negative Categories Result	43.48		42.32	-1.16	
State Overall	**Overall Result**	59.90		61.64	+1.74	
	Positive Categories Result	67.99		70.95	+2.96	
	Negative Categories Result	35.85		33.68	-2.17	

4.1.3 Students' perceptions of their schools' operations

Student Attitudes to School (SAS) questionnaires are administered in Victorian State schools in May of each year. School results are analysed through Departmental data analysis arrangements, and reports provided to each school. State norms are provided on the 11 categories that comprise the student questionnaire. The 11 categories are: Student morale; Student distress; Teacher effectiveness; Teacher empathy; Stimulating learning; School connectedness; Student motivation; Learning confidence; Connectedness to peers; Classroom behaviour; student safety.

The SAS data for the five case study schools, 2006-8, indicating the statistical significance of improvements, are presented in Table 4.5.

TABLE 4.5: CASE STUDY SCHOOLS' IMPROVEMENTS IN SAS DATA FROM 2006 TO 2008

School	2006	2007	2008	Change	Significance
Sc1Meadowfair North PS	78.36		87.87	+9.51	*p* <0.01
Sc2 Bellbridge PS	78.95		80.83	+1.88	*p* <0.05
Sc3 Eltham HS	69.61		72.27	+2.66	*p* <0.01
Sc4 La Trobe SC	66.35	70.89		+4.54	*p* <0.01
Sc5 Kealba SC	67.09		71.41	+4.32	*p* <0.01
State Primary	79.52		82.11	+2.59	
State Secondary	69.02		70.95	+1.93	

The analysis takes into account the following statewide conclusions:

- The State primary school SAS data improved significantly from 2006 to 2008 ($p = 0.003348$, $p < 0.01$)

- The State secondary school SAS data showed a statistically significant improvement from 2006 to 2008 ($p = 0.005065$, $p < 0.01$)

Data for the non-case study schools are presented in Table 4.6.

In essence, it is apparent from Tables 4.5 and 4.6 that there occurred a statistically significant improvement in students' attitudes to school in all case study schools and in 3 of 8 non-case study primary schools and 5 of 6 non-case study secondary schools during the period 2006-8. It is relevant in considering this finding to note that two secondary schools, 14 and 19, amalgamated in 2008 and the comparison for them is calculated on the amalgamated SAS response from Hume Central SC.

NOTE: No data are available to enable comparisons of the SAS data for 'targeted' schools that completed IDEAS and 'like' schools. But given that 17 of the 19 schools in the research cohort had been identified as 'targeted', the fact that SAS improvements met or exceeded State improvements by seemingly large numerical proportions in 13 of the 19 schools during the period 2004-8 is regarded as educationally noteworthy.

TABLE 4.6: NON-CASE STUDY SCHOOLS' SAS PERFORMANCE, 2006 TO 2008

School	2006	2008	Change	Significance of change
Sc6 Point Cook PS	76.92	86.68	+9.76	*p* <0.01
Sc7 Jacana PS	88.83	91.08	+2.25	*p* >0.05
Sc8 Bundoora PS	79.71	79.93	+2.2	*p* >0.05
Sc9 Broadmeadows West PS	77.31	73.53	-3.78	*p* <0.01
Sc10 Westmeadows Heights PS	76.20	78.76	+2.56	*p* >0.05
Sc11 Albanvale PS	78.73	77.96	-0.77	*p* >0.05
Sc12 Bethal PS	79.52	84.82	+5.3	*p* <0.01
Sc13 Glen Orden PS	78.26	78.44	+0.18	*p* >0.05
Sc14 Hillcrest SC	70.16	71.89	+1.73	*p* <0.01
Sc15 Colac SC	67.06	71.23	+4.17	*p* <0.01
Sc16 Whittlesea SC	70.08	68.97	-1.11	*p* >0.05
Sc17 Lalor North SC	68.75	71.33	+2.58	*p* <0.01
Sc18 Melton SC	65.78	67.30	+1.52	*p* <0.05
Sc19 Erinbank SC	62.16	71.89	+9.73	*p* <0.01
SC20 Hume Central SC **SCs 14 + 19**	NA	71.89		

4.2 The descriptive database

Summary descriptions of the five case studies are included in case studies one-five. Each case study contains the following components:

- School context
- Timeline for IDEAS implementation activities and SOS outcomes
- Documented evidence of enhanced school outcomes
- Perceived key processes that contributed to the enhanced achievements
- Summary.

Case study one synopsis – Bellbridge Primary School

(Prepared by Allan Morgan, Jan D'Arcy, Judy Boyle, and Doug Jeanes)

1. School context

Bellbridge is a large primary school located on the outer western fringe of Melbourne with an enrolment of approximately 650 students. The school's enrolment has declined in recent years, with a loss of 100 students during 2007. There has been a marked shift in recent years towards student enrolments of lower socio-economic status including fewer students who have attended kindergarten. Many students have very limited oral language on arrival. The number of students from single parent families and ethnic backgrounds is increasing.

The staff of about 40 has been relatively stable over past years. Most classes are now multi-age and team-taught in a double room where two teachers are allocated a single class list of 44-50 students. Class groupings are predominantly Prep/1/2, year 3/4, and year 5/6. Other groupings include a straight Prep class for students who have not attended kindergarten and one straight Middle School class for students whose learning style is better suited to a smaller group. New class grouping initiatives, established on the basis of catering for individual includes an all-boys' Grade 5/6 and one all-girls' Grade 5/6 class. Organisationally, each 'home room' group is regularly divided into a variety of working groups depending on the context, for example, boys/girls, strong readers/poor readers, and quiet/vocal contributors.

The school is very well resourced. School buildings and facilities are inviting and well maintained. Strategic decisions that take into account the school's preferred pedagogy have been made about the design of new classrooms and professional spaces for teachers, the latter recently provided to encourage and support professional interaction.

Why Bellbridge engaged with IDEAS

In 2004 the entire leadership team (Principal, one Assistant Principal and one Leading Teacher) exited the school. This left a leadership vacuum. All positions were filled by internal applicants. The new leadership team was keen to establish a new shared direction for the school and decided to participate in IDEAS as a means of achieving this. Their new direction for learning has been captured in the vision *Individual Paths, United Journey* (Exhibit 1).

EXHIBIT 1: BELLBRIDGE'S VISION AND SWP

Also, given the loss of experience and knowledge, the new Principal was keen to develop broader leadership capacity. IDEAS was chosen as a vehicle for the development of shared leadership and development of professional interaction and pedagogy. In addition, the school was viewed by the Department as performing below expectations in literacy and IDEAS was suggested as a way that the school might address this and other curriculum challenges.

2. Timeline of IDEAS Project implementation activities and SOS outcomes

Year	IDEAS Team Delivery	School IDEAS Implementation	SOS Trend
November-December 04- May 05	November/ December Orientation February/ March – Workshop & school visits – DI	Orientation Workshop School ISMT formed followed by a USQ visit that clarified the ISMT role and enhanced general understanding of IDEAS concepts.	Some improvement in professional interaction & professional decision making. No change overall.

		Other factor: A number of members of the ISMT were initially in receipt of a number of professional development leave days which they used to plan IDEAS implementation activities. Whole staff curriculum day: ▪ Explanation of RBF and introduction to the IDEAS principles of practice. ▪ Discussion and analysis of DI and writing of the school report card. Other factor: Participation in Western Region IDEAS Cluster Meeting Telephone Conference with USQ	
June 2005- May 2006	Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – Envisioning and school visits Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Leadership, Pedagogy Work February/ March –	School visioning – series of whole staff workshops designed to gather and synthesise information about the desired school direction – series of statements developed and Vision established by the end 2005 ISMT reps tour of Qld IDEAS schools A series of professional conversations on pertinent topics using skilful conversation protocols. ISMT planning day following USQ workshop National IDEAS Learning Forum –Toowoomba School ISMT representatives attend and present at the National Forum Other factor: Participation in Western Region IDEAS Cluster Meeting Teleconference with USQ	No change

	Workshop on SWP and school visits	Whole staff curriculum day: ▪ exploring and applying the RBF ▪ exploring schoolwide pedagogy	
June 2006-May 2007	Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – SWP and Actioning and school visits Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Actioning and Planning February – IST Training	Work on defining key pedagogical principles continues Participation in Western Region IDEAS Cluster Meeting Other factor: A member of the ISMT participated in extended training offered by USQ and assisted new schools to implement IDEAS and gave fresh insights to his own. School logo to capture the vision and pedagogical principles was produced and celebrated	Dip in SOS data during initial SWP implementation
June 2007-2008		Each of the 'planks' of the SWP were teased out as classroom strategies then the Literacy Strategy was developed by all staff - linked to the SWP - used the RBF as the organising construct. Literacy Strategy finalised and implemented and other strategies for ICT, Personal development, and numeracy are developed.	Significant positive change in most items
Overall 2004-2008			Overall positive movement

3. Documented evidence of enhanced school outcomes, 2006-8

Generic statement: The improvements in particular school outcomes that are reported in specific detail below should be interpreted in the context of the following Bellbridge comparisons with State means:

Improvements in *Student Attitudes to School*, 2006-8

State (Primary) means			Bellbridge means		
2006	2008	Improvement	2006	2008	Improvement
79.25	82.11	2.59	78.95	80.83	1.88

NOTE: The Statewide improvement (2.59) was statistically significant at 0.01. Bellbridge's improvement was very similar to the State improvement, in numerical terms and was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Improvements in *Staff Opinions of School*, 2004-8

State (Primary) means			Bellbridge means		
2004	2008	Improvement	2004	2008	Improvement
62.85	65.12	2.27	60.51	70.65	10.14

NOTE: The Statewide improvement (2.27) was significant at 0.05. Bellbridge's improvement was almost five times the State improvement, in numerical terms (10.14) and showed a statistically significant improvement between 2004 and 2008, at 0.01.

Specific statements:

Descriptions of specific improvements in Bellbridge outcomes

Students	Outcome 1:	Over the period 2006 to 2008, SAS student measures of *Student Morale/Student Distress* and *Teacher Effectiveness* remained stable, though *Connectedness to Peers* and *Learning Confidence* declined in 2008. However, an improvement trend has been established in the remaining 6 of the 11 *Student Attitudes to School* Measures i.e. *Teacher Empathy, Stimulating Learning Environment, School Connectedness, Student Motivation, Classroom Behaviour* and *Student Safety*. *Classroom Behaviour* and *Stimulating Learning Environ*ment eclipsed state means in 2008. Equivalence with state means is yet to be attained on other measures
	Source	*Student Attitudes to School Survey (SAS)*

	Outcome 2:	Mid years literacy data is beginning to show improvement. Over 2006 – 2008, the Bellbridge 2006 year 3 Cohort outpaced the state growth average for the same period for each of Reading, Writing and Spelling. Spelling had risen to be equivalent to the state mean.
	Source:	Bellbridge *AIM* and *NAPLAN* Data
Staff	Outcome 3:	Staff opinion measures have risen remarkably from below the state median in 2006 in each of the four areas of *empathy* (supportive leadership), *role clarity*, *engagement*, and *learning* to all being above in 2008. In 2006 all measures were in the 2nd or 3rd quartile and subsequently rose to all being in the 4th quartile in 2008 relative to all schools.
	Source:	*Staff Opinion Survey (SOS)*
	Outcome 4:	There has been a significant change in the level of *individual staff morale* as well as in the perception of *school morale*. In 2008, relative to all schools, the *individual and school morale* measures were located around the 80th percentile as opposed to the 45th percentile in 2006.
	Source:	*Staff Opinion Survey (SOS)*

	Outcome 5:	Staff perceptions of *professional development* and *the presence of a performance and development culture* have risen sharply since 2006. Notably, each of the measures for *goal congruence, professional interaction, appraisal & recognition, professional growth*, and *participative decision making* – between 45th and 60th percentiles in 2006 – have risen to around the 90th percentile relative to all schools in 2008.
	Source:	*Staff Opinion Survey (SOS)*
	Outcome 6:	A heightened and complimentary staff view of students has grown commensurate with the development of the school's professional culture. The *classroom misbehaviour* measure has moved positively from about the 40th percentile in 2006 to above the 75th in 2008 and *student decision making* from around the 50th percentile in 2006 to approximately the 80th percentile in 2008.
	Source:	*Staff Opinion Survey (SOS)*
	Outcome 7:	Staff perceptions of *individual and school distress* together with *perceptions of excessive work demands* have improved dramatically. The lower *individual distress* measures saw the school increase from the 25th percentile in 2006 to around the 90th percentile in 2008 while similarly, the lower *excessive work demands* measure improved the school's relative position from the 30th percentile in 2006 to the 70th percentile in 2008.
	Source:	*Staff Opinion Survey (SOS)*

4. **Perceived key processes that contributed to the enhanced outcomes.**

initiating **phase**

Teachers' views

The newly established leadership team was keen to establish a new shared direction for the school and broader leadership capacity and decided to participate in IDEAS as a means of achieving this.

Researchers' views

Intentional deconstruction and application of the values and characteristics of parallel leadership accompanied the implementation of IDEAS. This was first evidenced in the construction of the ISMT when the pre-eminent role of teachers as leaders in the ***ideas*** process was made clear by the principal. The composition of the ISMT drew from a broad teacher base at the school and responsibilities associated with facilitation of the ***ideas*** process were shared widely amongst members.

discovering **phase**

Teachers' views

One teacher noted the significant prominence given to the Diagnostic Inventory and the Research Based Framework. '[The RBF] makes us think about specific issues such as infrastructure design. It focuses thinking on what needs to happen and how'.

One experienced teacher noted: '. . . the skilful conversation, the rules, hearing other voices. It made us take a step back . . . we have a common language, a common focus. Disagree or agree, a least we are talking about the same thing.'

Researchers' views

The RBF was intentionally used repeatedly during the implementation of the ***ideas*** process as a discussion organiser, a tool for testing emerging ideas, and addressing resourcing and design issues.

Intentional deconstruction and application of the values and characteristics of parallel leadership accompanied the implementation of IDEAS.

Early in the implementation of the ***ideas*** process six staff members of the ISMT were beneficiaries of funding from the Teacher Professional Leave Initiative that provided a significant amount of time release enabling them to undertake leadership development activities directly related to their leadership of the implementation of IDEAS.

The ***ideas*** process involved the active participation of the principal and deputy principal from the beginning, – albeit often a delicate balance between speaking, listening, and stepping back.

The systematic use of skilful discussion gave a chance for quieter staff members to have a say and, with explicit application of the IDEAS 'principles of practice', became an influential tool for encouraging and supporting individuals to voice personal ideas and develop personal initiatives.

envisioning **phase**

Teachers' views

A teacher commented that parallel leadership had been a learning process as formal leaders learned with others and people changed behaviour over time. Teacher leadership was fostered as administrators and teachers shared the same challenges and learned jointly to overcome them and in the process building mutual trust.

The assistant principal observed: 'The cluster meetings were pivotal. They provided an opportunity to discuss hurdles we were encountering as well as share successes. It gave like-minded people the opportunity to bounce ideas off each other and to immerse oneself in the IDEAS concepts.'

Researchers' views

Leadership roles were spread across members of the ISMT. Leadership opportunities were also extended to teachers who were not necessarily members of the ISMT but whose expertise suited the unfolding needs of the process at different times.

actioning **phase**

Teachers' views

Teachers say that 'the vision and the 4 planks (SWP) make things very clear; they help as an organiser - for staff and students.' Teachers use the language of the SWP in formal and informal conversations, as a framework for developing classroom goals and values with students and, in conjunction with the RBF, the SWP was utilised to develop the school's Literacy Plan.

Teachers pointed out that during this phase that opportunity for teacher leadership was enhanced. A teacher noted that 'Now there are more opportunities for people to be involved, people feel more comfortable taking on roles, more things come up for consultation, our opinions are listened to more, people feel supported.' Others said that 'we have a sense of equivalence, not top down.'

The teacher who had initial responsibility for leading the Literacy initiative described a deliberate and well planned strategy that was accompanied by adequate resourcing of leadership needs including release time, training, and ongoing implementation support which included the assistance of specialist knowledge.

Researchers' views

School organisation was based on a strategic intent to deliberately establish teams that were comprised of members with complementary skills. This was evident in the composition of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), in the makeup of the current Team Leaders (of Junior School, Middle School & Upper School) and in the Literacy Implementation Team. Teachers' strengths and skills were identified and the school provided the time and other resources that allowed them to share their expertise with other staff.

sustaining **phase**

Teachers' views

An Upper School Team Leader said: 'Before IDEAS, team leading was very administrative, now the role is much broader - a big change for teacher leaders because it [has] moved to a focus on pedagogical leadership.'

In the words of the principal, '[parallel leadership] takes more time but it is worth it'. His view is that the depth of leadership that now resides in the school has resulted in proactive, collaborative responses to problems and challenges. 'Questions come up earlier**.** There are more heads around the problem. Problems raised by staff come with solutions. There is greater shared responsibility. More people put their hand up.'

As a result of whole staff explorations of the RBF which began during the discovering phase teachers articulate a school-based view on the concept of 'alignment'. 'It gives new teachers somewhere to start in understanding the school'. Another teacher indicated that 'This is the first year I've felt the two junior teams are aligned…Team leaders meet together more. This helps align the school, shared expectations, discussion about what we're doing, and a sense of team'.

Researchers' views

The concept of teachers as leaders has been normalised. There is now broad-based acceptance that individual teachers and groups of teachers can and should influence schoolwide direction and decision making. Leadership is practised as a facilitative and serviced-based concept by those in 'promotional' and informal positions alike.

Visioning and SWP development processes have contributed to the successful and cohesive implementation of various Departmental initiatives such as Performance and Development Culture, PoLT, VELS, and new Reporting requirements. In addition, the agreed vision and SWP enabled the school to respond effectively when the Regional Office appointed a literacy coach. Rather than risk the strategy being viewed by staff as an external 'add-on', the school was able to successfully argue for an approach in sympathy with the school's newly developed pedagogical understanding. Overall, there now appears to be significant teacher confidence to integrate new Government initiatives into their programs without feeling that it is a new 'burden'.

5. Summary

The Bellbridge experience was conceived in metastrategic leadership processes. Bellbridge, through the school administration, chose to engage with IDEAS with a view to reconfiguring the concept of school leadership, school organisation and pedagogy. The outcome has been the creation of a dynamic education environment characterised by trust and shared responsibility amongst the professional staff and where the concept of teachers as leaders has been normalised.

Student perceptions of 'school' are on the rise and among other important improvements in staff perceptions, professional development and the presence of a performance and development culture – relatively low in 2006 – have risen in 2008 to around the 90th percentile relative to all Victorian schools. A Schoolwide Literacy Strategy, explicitly linked to the Bellbridge Schoolwide Pedagogy, began implementation in 2008 and early signs of literacy improvement in the middle years – that is expected to increase and extend schoolwide - are emerging.

Case study two synopsis – Meadow Fair North Primary School (MFN)

(Prepared by Dorothy Andrews, Lindy Abawi and Shirley O'Neill)

1. School context

Meadow Fair North Primary School is located in one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities in Australian urban areas (ABS Census Statistics, 2006) and in 2004 catered for 232 students from Prep to Year 6. The school serves a very multicultural community which has a large number of highly transient families. Families range from recently arrived immigrants and refugees with little to no English to students from families who have experienced generational unemployment. 80% of the families in the school are recipients of educational maintenance allowance. Staff turnover has been low with the majority of the 17 staff being in the school for some time. By 2004 enrolments at Meadow Fair North were on the decline due to changing demographics, uncertainty about the school's future and the closer proximity of other primary schools to the major secondary colleges in the area. Safety issues were a major concern for both staff and parents and a general air of negativity pervaded school operations. The new principal came to Meadow Fair North with a strong social justice focus and saw the IDEAS Project as a way to move the school forward which resonated with her own strong beliefs. In November 2004, MFN commenced IDEAS using funding from a Targeted School Improvement Program as well as an Innovations and Excellence Grant.

Soon after commencing the IDEAS project the school community learnt that Meadow Fair North would cease to exist as an independent campus in the 2009-2010 period. The school would be combined in 2009 with one other school and then in 2010 with two other schools on a new site. These four schools are within close proximity of each other and the amalgamation is part of the *Broadmeadows School Regeneration Project*. In order for this transition to occur opportunities have been provided for staff, school council members, school community members and students across the four schools to work and plan for their future together on an ongoing basis. The Cluster Educator (Years 5-6), Literacy Specialist (Years 3-4), and School Improvement Officer (Years P-2) who visit Meadow Fair regularly, work across all four schools as coaches facilitating and supporting teacher learning.

The Meadow Fair school community became determined to 'Go out with a bang!' This positive and empowering attitude, along with their commitment to the IDEAS process, has resulted in significant improvement within the school over the four year period from 2004 to 2008. As visitors to Meadow Fair enter the school today, they are presented with large visual representations of the school's vision - *Learning Together To Build A Bright Future* - and schoolwide pedagogical principles (SWP) (Exhibit 2). These images have become a key talking point for families and visitors to the school. Visitors are embraced with an environment that exudes calmness and vitality. The student population has shown a significant increase in 2008. This positive, dynamic change within the school environment is supported by measureable evidence including improved staff morale, the strengthening of community connections, and the improvement in both social and academic student outcomes.

EXHIBIT 2: MEADOW FAIR NORTH'S VISION, VALUES AND SWP

SCHOOLWIDE PEDAGOGY

CELEBRATE

INCLUDE	•What do we know about these children? •How does this embrace our diversity?
COLLABORATE	•How are we collectively making use of our individual strengths, knowledge and ideas? •How does this experience enable us to learn from each other?
CONNECT	•How does this connect to real life? •How does this connect to the future?
BUILD	•How does this build on what the students already know? •What supports and strategies will be used to aid new learning? •How does this new learning encourage us to think in new ways?
REFLECT	•What opportunities have been provided for reflection? •What have I learnt? •How can I apply this learning? •Where to from here?

2. Timeline of IDEAS Project implementation activities and SOS outcomes

IDEAS Team Delivery	Year	IDEAS Implementation	SOS Trend
November/December Orientation February/March – Workshop & school visits – Diagnostic Inventory (DI)	2004-May 2005	Introduction of Staff to IDEAS presented by the Principal Diagnostic Inventory (DI) collected DI workshop Set up IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) Protocols establish to build relationships	Small positive change -in most items except student attitude, behaviour, motivation
Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – Envisioning Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Leadership, Pedagogy Work February/March – Workshop on SWP	June 2005-May 2006	Existing values reviewed and clarified using professional conversations Values clarification -- use of language and making sure all know what 'this means …' List shared with Students for discussion and feedback Completed a History Trail Began visioning – dreaming Other factor: Staff learn that they will definitely be amalgamated with three other schools on a new site.	Small positive change except significant improvement in student behaviour.
Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – SWP (Schoolwide Pedagogy) and Actioning Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Actioning and	June 2006 – May 2007	Vision launched at the end of 2006 – celebration and high level of community involvement Start developing SWP – Personal Pedagogical (PP) reflections Exploring SWP principles – confusion-clarification of a way forward by USQ Student involvement in 'good teaching' feedback SWP developed – continued to refine by	Significant positive Change

Planning February - IST Training		using in planning, action and sharing Restructuring – bringing down wall Other factor: Curriculum days with other schools in the amalgamation.	
	June 2007 - May 2008	Delegation from Western Australia and Singapore provide positive feedback SWP rewritten for students Ongoing development through application – literacy and planning strategies in 2008 for a 2009 focus on numeracy Other factor: IDEAS Facilitator attends IDEAS Support Team (IST) training in Victoria by USQ IDEAS Team. This resulted in new thinking around the implementation of the MFN SWP.	Stable
2004-2008			Overall upward trend

3. Documented evidence of enhanced school outcomes, 2004-8.

Generic statement: The improvements in particular school outcomes that are reported in specific detail below should be interpreted in the context of the following Meadow Fair North comparisons with State means:

Improvements in *Student Attitudes to School*, 2006-8

State (Primary) means			MFN means		
2006	2008	Improvement	2006	2008	Improvement
79.52	82.21	2.69	78.36	87.87	9.51

NOTE: The Statewide SAS improvement (2.69) was significant at p = < 0.01. MFN's SAS improvement was more than three times the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Improvements in *Staff Opinions of School*, 2004-8

State (Primary) means			MFN means		
2004	2008	Improvement	2004	2008	Improvement
62.85	65.12	2.27	57.58	65.96	8.38

NOTE: The Statewide SOS improvement (2.27) was significant at p < 0.05. MFN's SOS improvement was more than three times the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Specific statements:

Descriptions of specific improvements in MFN outcomes	
Students	Outcome 1: Improvements in literacy- Year 2 & Preparatory Year (Prep) Year 2 data for reading achievement reached the state mean in 2007 after being below in 2006. The 2007 Prep cohort achieved greater reading accuracy at Level 5 than did the 2006 cohort. Source: *The 2007 Assessment Of Reading DEECD Report.*

	Outcome 2: Improvements in literacy: Years 5& 3 Year 5: 2004 - 2007 trended upward in Reading, Spelling & Writing. In 2007: Spelling results were notably positioned above like and state schools. More than 3% of Year 5 students were reading at Level 5 and the mean CSF was comparable with the VELS Score for that year. This occurred at a time when the % of ESL student increased from 39% -53% Year 3 upward trend in all areas (some minor fluctuations) Year 3-5 progression: Reading Levels improved from Years 3 to 5. Source*: AIM Data* 2004-2007
	Outcome 3: *Student behaviour* Student suspension data from 2006 to 2008 improved significantly ▪ 2006 -10 incidents of full suspension for 1 or 2 days 87 after school detentions ▪ 2008 - 0 incidents of full suspension 12 after school detentions Source*: Annual School Report 2008*
	Outcome 4: *Student well-being* • Up from 1st quartile to 4th quartile, 2006-8 • *Teaching & Learning* - up from 1st Quartile to 4th • *Student relationships* – up from 2nd Quartile to 3rd bordering on 4th (These were comprehensively above state mean in 2007 & 2008 after being below state mean in 2006). • *Classroom behaviour* was still a concern in 2007 and was below the state mean. However in 2008 this figure rose to well above the state mean • *Student connectedness to peers* was low in 2007 but rose to the border line of 3rd and 4th quartile in 2008 Source: *Student Attitudes to School Survey (SAS) 2006-2008*

Staff	Outcome 5: Perceived improvement in *student engagement* • Positive contributors: 1. *Effective Discipline Policy; 2. Student Orientation; 3. Student Motivation; 4. Student Decision Making; 5. Learning Environment; 6. Student Misbehaviour; & 7. Classroom Misbehaviour* • Positive contributors 1-5 rose from below the state mean in 2005 to within or above the state mean in 2008 • Positive contributor 6 fell from significantly above the state mean in 2005 to within the state mean in 2008 • Positive contributor 7 fell from just under 40% which was significantly above the state mean to just below 20% which was close to the state mean but still above Source: *Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) 2005-2008*
	Outcome 6: Perceived *teacher engagement and professionalism:* <u>Positive contributors</u>: *1. Teacher Engagement; 2. Role Clarity; 3. Goal Congruence ; 4.Individual Motivation; 5. School morale; 6. Individual work demands; 7. Professional Growth; 8.Appraisal and Recognition; 9. Levels of Distress(SOS Data).* • Indicators 1- 5 & 7, 8 rose from well below state mean in 2005 to within or above state mean in 2007 and remained relatively stable with minor downward fluctuations only from 2007-2008 possibly due to uncertainty about the effects of the imminent merger. • Indicators 6 & 9 fell from above to below or within state means with the exception of a slight rise in concern about classroom behaviour in 2008 – possible due to implementation of more student directed, flexible learning arrangements. <u>Staff Absenteeism</u>: Improvement trend supported by sick leave data (*Annual School Report).* Source: *Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) 2005-2008 and Annual School Report 2008.*

	Outcome 7: Attendance data • Teacher (non certificated sick leave) attendance data fell from above state mean in 2005 to below state mean in 2008 • Non-teaching staff (non certificated sick leave) data fell from above state mean in 2005 to within the state mean in 2008 Source*: Annual School Report 2008*
Parents	Outcome 8: Parent satisfaction • Satisfaction moved from below to above state mean in the areas of student behaviour; stimulating learning; and school improvement from 2005 to 2008 Source *: Parent Opinion Survey (POS) 2005- 2008*

4. <u>Perceptions of key processes that contributed to enhanced achievements, in the context of *ideas* phases.</u>

***<u>i</u>nitiating* phase**

Teachers' views

'Meadow Fair was targeted as a low achieving school. Numbers were dropping and there was a general air of despondency in the place.'

Researchers' views

The principal 'selected' IDEAS as an opportunity for the school community to 'revitalise'. IDEAS, she believed, matched her personal beliefs about leading schools (in challenging communities) towards revitalisation. She 'tapped' others on the shoulder (selecting the right people) to work with her in the process.

***d*iscovering phase**

Teachers' views

'Safety issues at the school were a major concern in 2003 & 2004, particularly in the playground. For nearly two years I just did not want to walk in from the car park. I would be terrified to walk in here as I did not know what the students might do.'

'Absenteeism was a problem and students and the parents did not hold learning in high regard. Results were poor and yet we (the teachers) were trying so hard to improve them.'

'This was possibly our first BIG STEP along the journey. As a staff we made a commitment to go out with a BANG not a whimper and to give our students every opportunity for a bright future.' (Not long after the Diagnostic Inventory (DI) was completed it was announced that MFN was to be part of the Broadmeadows Schools Regeneration Project. MFN would merge with three other schools and our school would, in effect, cease to exist within 4 to 5 years).

Researchers' views

At the commencement of the IDEAS project Meadow Fair North staff believed themselves to be hardworking but discouraged by the fact that their input was not producing the outcomes for students that it should be. This sentiment was reflected in the staff views presented in the School DI Report, that is, 'The MFN staff indicated that the school lacked an inspirational vision, lack of community engagement and pride in the school and whilst they believed they were striving hard to meet the needs of all students through their teaching and learning programs, the effort was not reflected in the data'.

There was real fear connected with poor student behaviour and concern that strategies put in place to improve the situation were not working. Teachers felt lost and did not know where to turn for direction.

The student DI data provided considerable concern for the staff as it showed significant polarisation in the responses in most areas. Most students felt that they were not achieving as well as they should in literacy and numeracy and a group of students felt that they were not achieving in any of the Key Learning Areas. A number of students felt that none of their needs were being meet within the school environment.

External support was provided at a systems level through the School-systems Coordinator, the Broadmeadows Cluster coordinator and the USQ IDEAS project team members, in particular the project officer attached to this cluster. The School-systems Coordinator provided overall coordination across the three clusters, while the Broadmeadows cluster coordinator and USQ team member(s) provided on ground expertise and support. The School-systems coordinator was influential in the early stages of the IDEAS program working with the school-based facilitator in designing and implementing IDEAS activities that engaged the whole staff.

envisioning **phase**

Teachers' views

'There was 100% support in our community for our new Values and Vision. Our Vision (*Learning Together To Build A Bright Future*) Launch was held on a special family day where we celebrated 100 Days of Learning. It was a huge success and it provided an opportunity to build concrete bridges with the MFN parent community' (MFN Facilitator's notes).

'Through providing opportunities for parents to participate in learning themselves, through English and Parenting classes, a positive learning climate has been built at Meadow Fair North and the value placed on school and education by the adults has set a positive an empowering example for students contributing to greater student participation and less absenteeism.'

'Our Vision takes our kids beyond the local community. Not that there is anything wrong with them staying in Broadmeadows but now they know they have the

choice. Their families also believe there are other opportunities and by learning themselves set a good example for the kids. The kids get a buzz out of seeing parents at school learning – the only thing is they don't understand why the adults keep the doors shut.'

The process of development commenced with teachers sharing stories about their personal pedagogy. The school facilitator described this as the 'buy in for us – we began to realise that our personal pedagogy was recognised, valued and encouraged (which allowed) us to reflect in a non-threatening way'.

'The big thing is collective responsibility for kids. We can see where the learning is going. There is a conscious effort to work together and working from where the students are at means we're always changing.'

Researchers' views

The adoption of a 'no blame policy' and 'collective responsibility' has resulted in the dismantling of both physical and attitudinal barriers. No blame has become embedded in dialogue and communication in the school. Teachers have become more confident, mutually share and constructively critique their practice in relation to the agreed upon pedagogical principles that underpin the school wide pedagogy. As a consequence there was no need to close doors and 'construct' walls to hide personal pedagogy. 'Collective responsibility' for all children's learning in the school defined by one teacher as 'It became evident that we all had a concern about all the students in the school, their welfare and academic achievement, not just those in our own class.'

Alignment of school practice and purpose based on the Vision and SWP created an image of the future for the school community based on a philosophy of social mobility and the richness of diversity. It was felt that parental involvement in the many parent focused programs on offer gave them a social presence that enabled them to feel more at ease with talking to teachers and their children about the importance of learning which has raised the profile of learning within the community

as a whole. Students could see their parent's willingness and enjoyment in learning and became more involved in school activities. A number of classes saw a significant drop in absenteeism rates.

***a**ctioning* **phase**

Teachers' views

'The staff are building individualised learning paths for students and the SWP enables us to reflect on what we are building and why we are building it.'

'If they (the kids) are not engaged it's about me – it's the curriculum I'm offering. What do I need to do? Is it the way I am introducing the concept or is there too big a step up – how will I change?'

'Once if I was out of my comfort zone it was "No way!" – through IDEAS we're more open to new ideas coming through and seek knowledge about what we don't know . . . we as a group have conversations about planning, conversations about curriculum and I/we as a person am in a better place to have these conversations. I'm more confident about what I know and don't know. I am aware of what we want the end product to be what students need skilling up in.'

'There has been a total rethink of the way we do everything – what we do and how and why we do it, what our outcomes are and how will they be measured – all equating to improving our students, our philosophy, and our performance – this has been confronting for all staff but over time everyone seems to be able to put their personal feelings out of the whole picture and feel comfortable with the process.'

'Once issues of pedagogy were shunned during staff lunch breaks or in before or after school chats, such conversations and debates are now often heard in the staffroom. There is lots of professional dialogue and chatter between teachers – stuff that visitors to our school often comment on – and all done in a constructive, no blame way. We have staff constantly looking at the "bigger picture" – the best

ways for students and the school, teams working and thinking together, new ideas embraced and accepted and everyone taking pride in all school achievements.'

'Our data academically is driving us too because we want to improve. All the data is shared through to us at staff meetings. We sit here and the PowerPoint goes up. Previously we were not shown data warts and all. Now we dissect it and take responsibility for it. Our kids' data is our responsibility!'

Researchers' views

'Every child is every teacher's responsibility' has become a common phase that is enacted by all staff. Therefore there is a whole-school approach and the development of a professional meta-language evidencing words and phrases related to newly acquired forms of knowledge.

One powerful way that the Meadow Fair school community appears to make connections to meaning is through the use of metaphor. Four forms of metaphor are at work to complement and strengthen action and direction within the school: verbal, visual, actional and structural.

The SWP is tightly linked to the school vision, values and good practice, which is modelled and supported throughout the school. The staff moved to working collaboratively as a team and have developed a greater professional pride and commitment to improving students' learning, trying new approaches, dialoguing about pedagogy, seeking parents' views, and wanting to work together to create a learning community.

Teachers have become more confident, mutually share and constructively critique their practice in relation to the agreed upon pedagogical principles that underpin the school wide pedagogy. As a consequence there was no need to close doors and 'construct' walls to hide personal pedagogy. 'Collective responsibility' for all children's learning in the school defined by one teacher as 'It became evident that we all had a concern about all the students in the school, their welfare and academic achievement, not just those in our own class.'

Consideration of the ongoing need for school wide leadership means that teacher leadership is encouraged and supported. Parallel leadership provides links between administration and staff and between staff and classrooms. One teacher is specifically involved in a leadership training program. Teachers perceive that professional capacity has been enhanced and will continue to be enhanced through the quality of the professional conversations that now occur on a daily basis within the school. These quality conversations have also been implemented and practiced between the staff of the Broadmeadows amalgamating schools - an initiative of the MFN group.

***s**ustaining* **phase**

Teachers' views

'There has been a total rethink of the way we do everything – what we do and how and why we do it, what our outcomes are and how will they be measured – all equating to improving our students, our philosophy, and our performance – this has been confronting for all staff but over time everyone seems to be able to put their personal feelings out of the whole picture and feel comfortable with the process.'

'Students have become self-reflective at all times. So if I have taught multiplication for three days and the student does not get it they have the responsibility to come and ask for help – they sign up for the *Help Group* in that area. The door to our room opens at 8 o'clock – there is an "Open for Business" sign on the door – students come in and work on projects or join a *Help Group*. Students know that they are in the room to go about the "business" of learning. Kids support each other in their learning successes by nominating one another for the *Throne of Commitment* - which is how we celebrate each others learning successes as they occur.'

'New families can upset the equilibrium for a while, but our students know how to respond and teach new kids what to do. They want our school to be a great place to come to. I now love doing playground duty in the 5/6 area – in fact sometimes it can be boring and you feel pleased when a ball goes over the fence just so you have something to do. Last week a teacher was away and the replacement did not realise

she had duty. I went out to relieve her and found no one there. I questioned the kids – only to be told 'We're looking after ourselves. We're fine you don't need to be here!' The kids know our safety protocols whether for an injury or a fight (we haven't had to use the fight protocols for a long time) because it is modelled at school from Prep up.'

'With the amalgamation we are in a kind of limbo space in a way. However we need to make sure that what we have developed permeates the school. People are encouraged to keep reflecting, thinking and developing, especially around our schoolwide pedagogy – that's the key to changing things for our kids. I need to model for younger teachers – that's sustainability - developing capacity in others. Through our PLTs we are sharing conversations about teaching, learning and assessment. Hopefully all the putting thinking into practice is happening in all the schools (that are merging).'

'That's something we're really working on now - having assessment of learning, for learning … the assessment process as part of the process of the teaching, learning, reflecting, planning (and) teaching cycle.'

'We have working party teams… I lead the communications and culture team. The plan when we become one is to collate a giant size book with sections/chapters for each school to celebrate the significance of their past and what they see as their greatest achievements and then a section for the new stories which will unfold together.'

Researchers' views

The positive changes within the MFN school community have been dramatic. Clearly evident from both teacher comments and systemic data are the levels of improvements made in teacher morale, student academic achievement and well-being, student behaviour, community involvement, teacher professionalism and staff leadership capabilities. Students and their families are now actively involved in the learning process and see the importance of connecting learning to future and global

contexts. This school is now seen by all members of the school community as a safe place to be.

Teachers perceive that professional capacity has been enhanced and will continue to be enhanced through the quality of the professional conversations that now occur on a daily basis within the school. These quality conversations have also been implemented and practiced between the staff of the Broadmeadows amalgamating schools - an initiative of the MFN group.

Teachers believe in their knowledge of how to connect their teaching to student learning needs and display a level of discernment and confidence that will not be lost. The focus on student achievement as the central point of planning and decision making has created a sense of collective responsibility and alignment of practice that has seen the delivery of many outstanding improvements over the last 4 years.

The impending closure of the school has inspired the staff to embed success so that they can celebrate their achievements before the school closes. Teachers are committed to clarifying their strong pedagogical understandings and to embedding these into their practice. They are keen to use both the growth in their own teaching practice (intellectual capital) as well as the capacity to work together (social capital) to ensure successful amalgamation and a continued bright future for their students. Although there is a touch of sadness that they are losing their unique identity as Meadow Fair North their positive attitude to the future is an inspiration.

5. Summary

The positive changes within the MFN school community during 2004-8 were dramatic. In 2004, the MFN community was considered to be 'fractured', a state compounded by poor relationships within the school and between the school and its community. Low staff morale, instances of violent student behaviour and disengagement with learning, resulting in poor academic results, had placed the school within the lowest rank of the education system's 'targeted' underachieving school group.

By 2008 MFN, in partnership with both parents and students, had become a 'dynamic' educationally-focused community. They had in place what they regarded as an inspirational vision and collectively embraced SWP which was being actioned in classrooms and evident in schoolwide processes, planning and professional learning provision. Clearly evident from both teachers' comments and systemic data are the levels of improvements achieved in teacher morale, student academic achievement and well-being, student behaviour, community involvement, teacher professionalism and staff leadership capabilities. By 2008, students and their families were actively involved in the learning process and saw the importance of connecting learning to future and global contexts.

The impending closure of the school inspired the staff to embed their successes so that they could celebrate their achievements before the school closed in 2009-10. Teachers indicated commitment to clarifying their strong pedagogical understandings and to embedding these into their practice. They were keen to use both the growth in their own teaching practice (intellectual capital) as well as the capacity to work together (social capital) to ensure successful amalgamation and a continued 'bright future' for their students.

Case study three synopsis – Eltham High School

(Prepared by Joan Conway and Shauna Petersen)

1. School context

Founded in 1926, Eltham High School is located 17 km north-east of Melbourne in the leafy environs of Eltham and surrounding suburbs. Sitting in the semi-rural fringes of Melbourne this area was once home to many creative and artistic people who sought an alternative lifestyle. While the population today is more diverse and greater in number, the community values of creativity and individuality are still evident, as reflected in the school's strong sense of diversity and social justice.

Eltham High School is a single campus school with a teaching staff of 82 fulltime and 20 part-time, catering for students from years 7-12 with an enrolment in 2008 of 1340 students, mostly from English speaking backgrounds. It is a high performing school with consistently high levels of student achievement across a range of academic, cultural and sporting areas. While there was widespread agreement that Eltham High was a quality school, the principal in 2004 asserted that there was room for improvement, that the school had become 'stale' and was in danger of losing its distinctive educational ethos - hence the decision to adopt the IDEAS project.

In undertaking IDEAS, the following priorities emerged for the school's leadership:

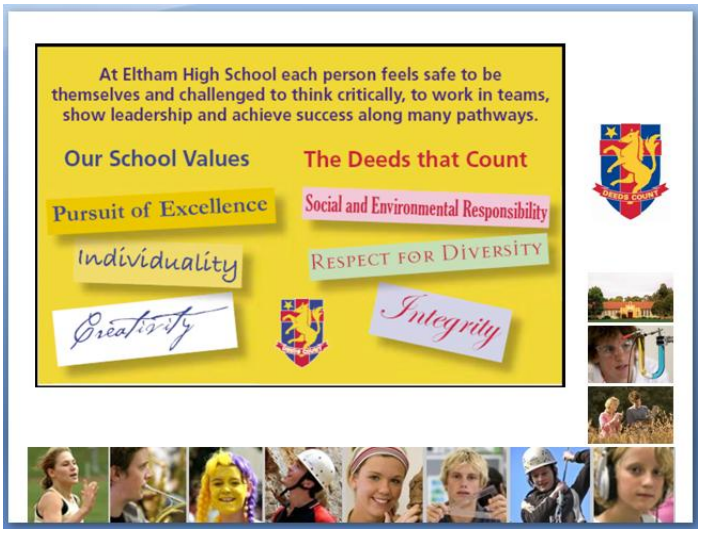
- The school recognised that there were many initiatives, mostly systemic requirements, occurring simultaneously and that these initiatives were beginning to take a toll. Teachers were tired and didn't always recognise the connections between the initiatives.
- There was much expertise on staff, however many teachers worked in isolation and, as many were about to retire, there was a danger that much of this expertise could be lost.
- There was a special culture at this school, no doubt shaped in part by the many experienced and long serving staff - those about to retire. However while the culture

was special, no one could really articulate what it was. The culture that was highly valued and made this school unique was in danger of disappearing.

- The constructive and systematic use of student performance data was rare. There was a need to develop a culture that valued data collection and the use of data in decision making processes.
- There was a desire to increase leadership density, to create an environment where teacher leadership was valued and encouraged.

It was in this context that the IDEAS Project was undertaken at Eltham. The Statement of Purpose (Exhibit 3) captures this link between the past and the present.

EXHIBIT 3: ELTHAM'S PURPOSE STATEMENTS



2. Timeline of IDEAS Project implementation activities and SOS outcomes

Year	IDEAS Team Delivery	School Implementation	SOS Trend
2004-May 2005	November/December Orientation February/March – Workshop & school visits – DI	• Staff Meeting Briefing – used a conceptual map to assist staff buy in • School Charter developed • ISMT formed • DI completed and analysed • History Trail Other factor: Principal attended AEU workshop run by Frank Crowther in 2003	Small positive change in most items
June 2005-May 2006	Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – Envisioning Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Leadership, Pedagogy Work February/March – Workshop on SWP	• Visioning – stuck and USQ suggested a way forward • Decided on a Purpose statement • Student Forum – visioning • Purpose statement completed Other Factor: New Principal appointed	Positive change in most items
June 2006-May 2007	Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – SWP and Actioning Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Actioning and Planning	• Purpose statement launched & SWP Development • Used DATA – SOS, AIM, Student comments on Teaching and Learning; • Explored AP & SWP Developed Other factors: Attended IDEAS forum in Toowoomba; Systemic	Small negative change in most items

	February - IST Training	implementation of VELS; New systemic assessment and reporting frameworks; Development of new P&D process	
June 2007-May 2008		• Embedding SWP -Unit Planning using SWP • Groups worked together and sharing plans and outcomes • School presented work to a number of groups – recognition of work • SWP written into leadership positions • Student panel set up to select new Assistant Principal • Completion of second DI	Positive change in all items – especially related to students.
June 2008-present		• Building futures fund grants – SWP used to assess space utilisation • Resource allocation – SWP framework require stronger access to some resources (e.g. ICT) • Performance and Development Groups established • Assemblies take focus on Creativity (Purpose Statement) • Information evenings • New programs • New Leadership structure	
2004-2008			Overall positive trend in all items

3. Documented evidence of enhanced school outcomes, 2004-8

Generic statement: The improvements in particular school outcomes that are reported below should be interpreted in the context of the following Eltham comparisons with State means:

Improvements in *Student Attitudes to School*, 2006-8

State (Secondary) means			Eltham means		
2006	2008	Improvement	2006	2008	Improvement
69.02	70.95	1.93	69.60	72.27	2.67

NOTE: The Statewide SAS improvement (1.93) was significant at 0.01. Eltham's SAS improvement exceeded the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Improvements in *Staff Opinions of School*, 2004-8

State (Secondary) means			Eltham means		
2004	2008	Improvement	2004	2008	Improvement
55.79	57.24	1.45	56.43	63.75	7.32

NOTE: The Statewide SOS improvement (1.45) was significant at 0.05. Eltham's SOS improvement was approximately five times the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Specific statements:

Descriptions of specific improvements in Eltham outcomes		
Students	Outcome 1	Student Attitude Survey data: Significant upward trend from 2006-7, with a slight overall decline in 2008. Most significant improvements were in 2006-7: *Wellbeing* – *Student morale* lower 3rd to lower 4th quartile; *Teaching & Learning* – *Teacher effectiveness* upward movement from mid 2nd to lower 3rd quartile; *Teacher empathy* upper 1st to upper 2nd; *Stimulating learning* upper 1st to mid 2nd; *School connectedness* upward within 4th quartile; *Student motivation* lower 2nd to lower 3rd; and *Learning confidence* lower 3rd to mid 4th quartile. *Student Relationships* – consistently high in mid 3rd to mid 4th quartiles across 2006-2008. While *School Connectedness* has been consistently high across the three years, the most significant upward trends have been in *Learning Confidence* and *Student Motivation.* Source: *Student Attitudes to School Survey (SAS)* 2006-2008
Staff	Outcome 2	**Staff Opinion Survey data:** Significant upward trend in school mean movement as compared with State secondary mean, but most significantly in: • *Supportive Leadership*- 71.3-75.1 (school), 65.0-65.8 (state) • *Participative Decision-Making* – 67.4-71.3 (school), 59.0-59.8 (state) • *Goal Congruence* – 73.0-78.4 (school), 64.7-66.4 (state) • *Appraisal & Recognition* – 59.9-68.8 (school), 55.6-57.9 (state) • *Professional Growth* – 72.7-77.3 (school), 61.2-62.7 (state)

		• *Curriculum Coordination* – 64.2-68.3 (school), 57.8-58.4 (state) • *Student Motivation* (mean movement from 57.9-61.8 (school), 48.9 to 49.0 (state) • *Student Decision Making* (mean movement from 63.1-74.8 (school), 57.2-57.8 (state) • *Learning Environment* – 71.0-76.5 (school), 62.6-63.8 (state). Source: *2008School Level Report (SLR) for Eltham High School: Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) trend collation 2006-2008*
	Outcome 3	Teaching staff retention rate consistently high at 92-94% from 2005-6 to 2007-8 compared with the State average for the same period, which dropped from 87-84%. Source: *2008 School Level Report (SLR) for Eltham High School*

4. <u>Perceived key processes that contributed to the enhanced achievements in the context of the *ideas* phases</u>.

***<u>i</u>nitiating* phase**

Teachers' views

'[to] improve teaching and learning practice across the school, [provide] a wider use of best teaching practice in more classrooms [that would ultimately lead to] improved student learning outcomes.'

'There was always good things going on but there wasn't really a coherence about those things.'

'The success of this process has been because of the leadership of this process by a leader other than the principal. Her passion and her commitment to the process and

I think the staff were ready for some intellectual rigour and challenge. Although, there was some suspicion because she had come from a neighbouring school and there was the feeling amongst particularly long servicing teachers that they didn't want to change. However, they were confident that she was carrying the process with the detail that it needed, she was tireless, passionate and worked well with the team. It must have taken a lot of time and effort to engage the staff.'

Researchers' views

The IDEAS process was the initiative of the previous principal who believed there was the need for revitalisation of the school, a time to capture the many successes and the culture of the school which for some time had boasted an excellent reputation and results. It is believed that he was responding to changes that had occurred over time that might not eventually uphold the current reputation.

Once the IDEAS journey began in 2005 the deputy principal, who became the leader of the process, quickly established a strong and committed IDEAS School Management Team.

***d*iscovering phase**

Teachers' views

'IDEAS for us isn't a project, it's a process. It has provided a framework through which we look at other things. The Dept of Education three years ago said "every school has to develop a performance and development culture and in the end we'll accredit you". We decided that to engage with that process was not the right time because we had engaged with this process and we needed the time to explore what was going to be best, but to do it in a timeframe of when it was plausible for us to engage with that during the work that we were doing with IDEAS.'

Researchers' views

It was recognised that there were many initiatives, mostly systemic requirements occurring simultaneously and that these initiatives were beginning to take a toll. Teachers were tired and didn't always recognise the connections between the initiatives. There was much expertise on staff, however many teachers worked alone

and as many were about to retire there was a danger that much of this expertise could be lost.

Frequent reference to a special culture at this school was heard and thought to be no doubt shaped in part by the many experienced and long serving staff, many of whom were about to retire. However while the culture was special and almost palpable, no one could really articulate what it was. The culture that was highly valued and considered to make this school unique was in danger of disappearing.

envisioning **phase**

Teachers' views

'There is now no danger that the values that are so much a part of the school will disappear - they have been captured and articulated in the purpose statement. The purpose statement also retains the existing school motto 'deeds count', however now everyone at the school knows what deeds do count and what they mean. It is printed on all student diaries, appears on the walls in all rooms and underpins the whole school practice.'

'We wanted that diagram to capture what it is that are the special qualities of education in this school. Many of those things in the diagram are not data driven.'

'It's not just about the framework, it's about the way in which we engage in the conversations through the use of the framework. So, firstly it's about the relationships we build. We also want teachers to be aware of diversity, catering for the different learning styles, noting the different intellectual capital that kids come with to the classroom. We have students here who could not find a place in other schools, but they've found a place of learning here with a sense of social responsibility.'

'We're building a framework where kids are learning about how to learn and ultimately that is the thing that is going to build 'intellectual quality'.'

'At Eltham High School each person feels safe to be themselves and challenged to think critically, to work in teams, show leadership and achieve success along many pathways.'

'This is brilliant, it's sharing ideas, it's sharing materials and it's contagious … even for experienced staff … before I worked very long hours because I didn't have resources, materials … (now) I teach from different points of view … it caters for different learning groups that you hadn't thought about.'

Researchers' views

The IDEAS School Management Team reported that the Purpose Statement has: crystallised Eltham's unique culture for newer staff; (provided) framework for discussing behaviour with students; increasingly providing a framework to align school procedures and processes; (and) formed the basis of a different style of brochure that portrays Eltham's culture to the community.

In developing the purpose statement, the ISMT had engaged the staff and students in what they referred to as a 'broad and massive' process of consultation. There was a real sense of ownership and acceptance of the statement. What was once tacit is now explicit and more importantly, it means something to the students and staff.

Professional conversations, and in particular the rules of skilful discussion have enabled focus groups (in particular the Performance & Development groups) to contribute to shared discussion and decision making back to the larger staff group (whole staff meetings). Students also report that the rules of professional conversations are used in their contributions to the school's vision and school-wide approach to pedagogy.

actioning **phase**

Teachers' views

'The [SWP] framework is about our kids' learning and how they learn best.'

‘You can’t get students to produce to a high level unless you have built relationships with those students.’

‘Teachers respected us. They didn’t talk down to us.’

‘The quality of dialogue has improved . . . young staff comment that they are learning lots from teachers in their Focus Groups.’

‘I think the focus on the school values has been very important – it has encapsulated all that we’re about.’

‘It has also paved the way for other things like the use of school data, with people constantly asking the question ‘what is the evidence? . . . where is the evidence?’ Previously there was suspicion about data and the only form seemed to be that of the VCE data.’

‘Every KLA has a responsibility to improve the VCE results in Maths and Science. For example the Head of Arts has actually had a conversation with the teachers of art asking ‘what is it we can do to improve results in the Maths and Science area?’ Then the focus has to be on what is it we can do in the teaching of art that will build up an intellectual quality that these kids are walking out of here with certain expectations, certain skills and understandings which can be translated into their Maths and Science classes. So if we’re doing this across all subjects then our view is that there will be improvement in the Maths and Science areas as well as in areas that we haven’t actually aimed to improve in.’

‘I think that improvement is actually starting to be seen in the years 7 & 8. It is a pedagogical framework that has started giving us a focus on us changing methodologies. A lot of the teachers are very experienced, but have probably come from a different place and time, whereas this framework has given them a chance to be re-energised.’

'To improve the VCE it's about improving learning at the lower levels so that these kids can actually take their learning and the expectation of rigour into the other years. Our area of challenge is in the middle years – our goal is to improve learning at this level so that the benefits of improved VCE results will be realised.'

Researchers' views

The principal played a key role in the strategic alignment for enhanced staff capability through the establishment of the Performance & Development groups. This structure has focused on the capacity for leadership across the school and has contributed to an environment where teacher leadership is valued and encouraged.

As part of the design and re-design of the pedagogy informed by data sources, the staff is also currently working on refining the unit planning template. With the Purpose Statement (the Vision) and the Principles of Learning and Teaching framework (the SWP) in place there appears to be a way forward for the constructive and systemic use of data. There is now frequent reference to the valuing of a data collection and the use of data in decision making processes.

The external researchers reported that the school's pedagogical framework, and the associated planning template, appeared to be useful in helping some teachers, especially less experienced teachers, engage in pedagogical discussions about their teaching and learning as this common framework underpins everything they do. The school has a four year plan (School Strategic Plan, 2009-2012) for the embedding of this template as a schoolwide approach.

sustaining **phase**

Teachers' views

'The staff now has many more opportunities to be involved and to have real input into decision making. There is a stronger network structure for consultation. The staff is consulted on all major decisions in a range of forums. The Principal has devolved considerable authority to the various groups, especially the Leadership group and the Performance & Development groups.'

'[IDEAS] Provides opportunities for students to show leadership and work in teams' (in reference to students involved in IDEAS Student consultation forums.)

'IDEAS is a "process", not a "project", which asks people to re-think their art.'

'Another issue was about change being from the bottom up – like if I change my classroom then everything will coalesce and be better. Now it's "let's look at the big picture first". Before IDEAS we flirted with Quality in Schools program which concentrated on changing the classroom with tools, techniques to change the classroom to make it better, but there was no mechanism for ensuring that everyone understood why it might make us better. Whereas I think IDEAS has given us a change to the spiritual and psychological aspect of viewing change.'

'In the strategic plan the goals and targets are fully outlined, but the key improvement strategies to achieve our targets are "continue to improve excellence in teaching and learning by implementing the Eltham High School principles of teaching and learning through the use of the planning template".'

'By implementing the principles of teaching and learning in this pedagogical framework we are going to bring about a change in the way kids learn, how they learn and what they're learning – not so much the content, but the framework that is going to prepare them to be better learners once they hit the VCE.'

Researchers' views

The enhanced capacity of staff to lift expectations of themselves and their students, and to share openly with others, derives from the collective commitment and work ethic from the participants. Meanwhile, the principal appears to have a key role in leading a belief that all staff can reach an enhanced potential.

Perhaps the most significant area of potentially enhanced student achievement to date has been in the area of student leadership. The concept of parallel leadership

has incorporated the role of students by providing opportunities for students to show leadership and to work in teams.

Assurances now exist that new staff and students understand the culture and the values of Eltham High. An extensive orientation process for new staff was adopted as a consequence. The school is proud of its purpose and values and wants to ensure that new members are familiar with what makes this school special.

The Eltham Principles of Learning and Teaching, their SWP, has been deeply embedded in structures and processes throughout the school, such as performance and development processes, staff selection processes, accountability frameworks, planning, infrastructural design including future building planning, use of resources and leadership role descriptions.

5. Summary.

Eltham High School presented a different rationale to that usually noted by the research team, for undertaking the IDEAS Project. The school was already a high performing school with consistently high levels of student achievement across a range of academic, cultural and sporting areas. Eltham High School undertook the IDEAS Project because, in the view of the principal, it had become 'stale' and was in danger of losing its distinctive ethos, a derivative of a special 1970s community development. While there was much expertise on staff, many teachers worked in isolation and many were about to retire, so there was a danger that the expertise would be lost. To the principal, and other school leaders in 2004, Eltham High School needed a pedagogical boost and a way of pulling everything together to develop a shared way of working. IDEAS represented a way of achieving that reinvigoration and coherence.

The early stages of IDEAS were not accepted enthusiastically by the school staff. However, under the leadership of the Deputy Principal, outstanding pedagogical work was completed with significant impacts on staff morale, and also student leadership processes. By 2008, the school had developed a very strong sense of purpose based on shared values and a shared belief of what makes the school distinctive, special and successful.

There is some evidence to suggest an emerging sense of collective responsibility for pedagogical decision making, including the systematic use of data to inform that decision making. While there appears to be strong support from the leadership team and some teaching departmental staff for the use of the SWP as a mechanism for aligning processes, there is among some staff a level of ambivalence, suggesting the need for ongoing development and deepening of the schoolwide pedagogy in its application across all discipline departments of the school.

Overall, the message appears to be that 'IDEAS schools feel empowered to implement Department initiatives in their own way and in their own time' when it is acknowledged that each school has its own timeline for implementation. As emphatically stated by the principal: 'IDEAS is a "process", not a "project", which asks people to re-think their art'. In conclusion, it can be noted that there has been considerable enhancement of quality leadership, inclusive of teachers and students, in the Eltham High School community.

Case study four synopsis – Kealba Secondary College

(Prepared by Allan Morgan, Jan D'Arcy, Judy Boyle and Doug Jeanes)

1. School context

Kealba Secondary College, established in 1971, is located in the middle arc of Melbourne's western suburbs. The school now sits in a 'mature' suburb from which second and third generations have moved to newer developments further out, where growth is stimulating the rapid expansion of education facilities. This has resulted in a decline in the College's population from an enrolment of 872 in 1993 to 250 in 2008.

The majority of the student enrolment is drawn from a low socio-economic demographic. About 47% of student families are in receipt of welfare support (educational maintenance or youth allowance). There are 33 different languages represented in the school and in the past three years there has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolling from Africa, mainly Sudan. A number of these students are newly-arrived refugees with little or no schooling.

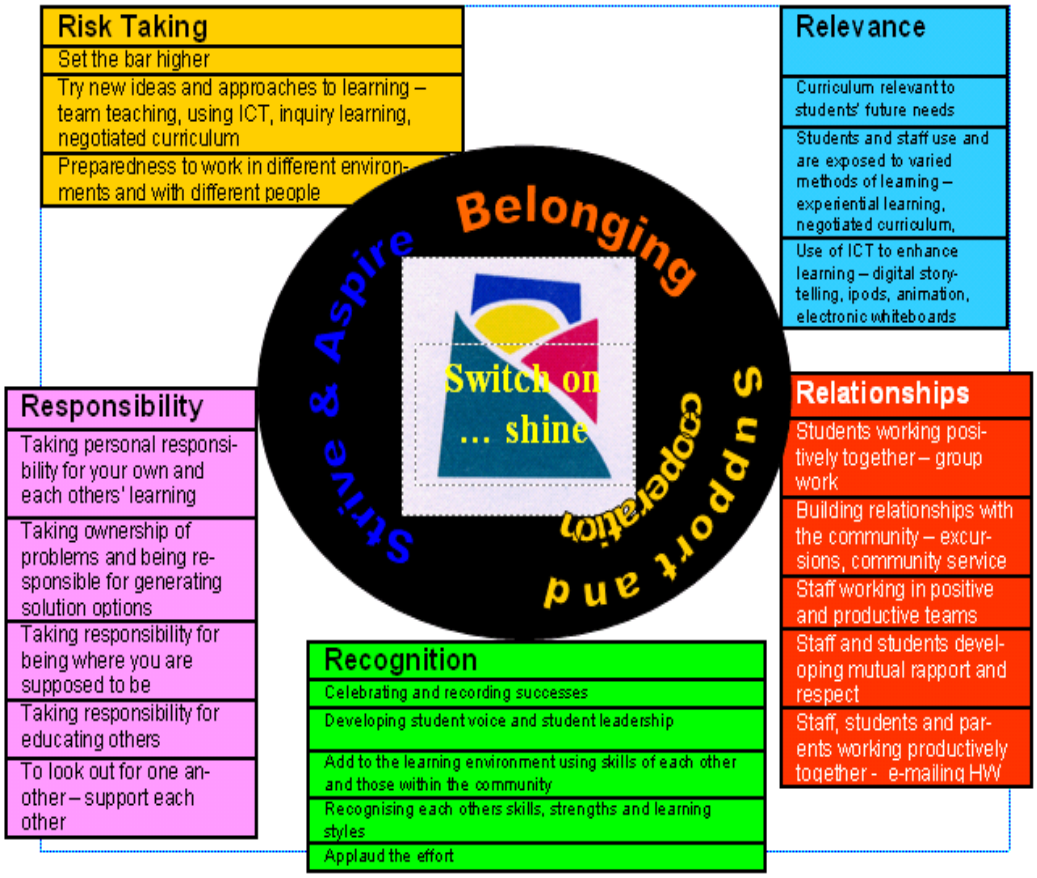
The school underwent a Department of Education *External Diagnostic Review* in 2004. The Diagnostic review highlighted, in particular, the need for the school to re-examine its vision and mission statements, and to develop a common understanding about, and a whole school approach to, teaching and learning. The teaching community of the College interpreted the review report as evidence that they were a 'failing school'. The report strongly recommended that the school become involved in the IDEAS Project to develop common goals and a shared approach to, and responsibility for, teaching. Staff responded they would be interested in any process that would move the school forward and that would assist them to work together more cohesively.

A follow up External Review in 2007 commended the College for a number of 'remarkable improvements' and observed that a new vision for the school - *Switch on, Shine* **-** underpinned by a schoolwide pedagogy (SWP) called the 5 R's (Exhibit 4), made very clear to the school community the values, pedagogy and expectations that the whole school agreed

would stimulate the social, academic and emotional development of Kealba's students into the future.

Close working relationships between teachers and students are now in place, strongly focused on student well-being and social learning outcomes. However, the combination of declining enrolments, poorly maintained buildings and involvement in merger talks with other local schools continues to make the school's future uncertain.

EXHIBIT 4: KEALBA'S VISION, VALUES AND SWP



2. Timeline of IDEAS Project implementation activities and SOS outcomes

Year	IDEAS Team Delivery	School IDEAS Implementation	SOS Trend
November-December 04 - May 05	November/ December Orientation February/ March – Workshop & school visits – DI	Attendance at USQ IDEAS Orientation Workshop Other factor: Recommendation of External School Review 2004: ". . . In short, this report recommended that the College develop its vision, mission and values. It also recommended a common understanding about, and a whole of school approach to, teaching and learning. Established ISMT School implemented Diagnostic Inventory Discussion and analysis of DI and writing of the school report card Other factor: Participation in Western Region IDEAS Cluster Meeting Telephone Conference with USQ	Most measures trending downwards
June 2005-May 2006	Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – Envisioning and school visits Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November	Visit to Eltham HS – another school participating in IDEAS Visioning activities – 'History Walk' and 'Photo Cards' activity Visioning workshop with selected group of students Y9 – 12 using skilful conversation protocols Other factor: Participation in Western Region IDEAS Cluster Meeting Telephone Conference with USQ IDEAS (Toowoomba) study tour and school visits	Settling to below state benchmarks overall

	Forum – Leadership, Pedagogy Work February/ March – Workshop on SWP and school visits	Other factor: IDEAS Toowoomba Study Tour described by teachers as "an injection of optimism". Visioning workshop with school council parents Input from staff, parents and students collated and distillation of values began Commenced SWP development -collected lot of material about pedagogy that 'works for our kids' Commenced SWP development -collected lot of material about pedagogy that 'works for our kids'	
June 2006 – May 2007	Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference August Workshop – SWP and Actioning and school visits Cluster Meetings & Telephone Conference November Forum – Actioning and Planning February - IST Training	Began process to define SWP Participation in Western Region IDEAS Cluster Meeting Cluster Meeting Draft SWP displayed in staffroom ISMT further refined SWP into our '5 R's' and the vision, 'Switch on...Shine', emerged Movie produced by students–'our 5R's in Action' Launch of Vision, Values and SWP with staff and school community. Two members of the ISMT participated in extended training/assisting other schools re: IDEAS Graphical representation of 5 R's (SWP)	Significant trend reversal over all items
June 2007 –		The SWP (5 R's) was used to explore school processes	Trend upwards continues rising to

2008		that included discipline and welfare, staff development and student leadership	a collective average above the state mean for 2008.
Overall 2004-2008			Downward trend reversed in a remarkable turnaround.

3. **Documented evidence of enhanced school outcomes, 2006-8.**

Generic statement: The improvements in particular school outcomes that are reported in specific detail below should be interpreted in the context of the following Kealba College comparisons with State means:

Improvements in *Student Attitudes to School,* 2006-8

State (Secondary) means			Kealba means		
2006	2008	Improvement	2006	2008	Improvement
69.02	70.95	1.93	67.09	71.40	4.31

NOTE: The Statewide SAS improvement (1.93) was significant at 0.01. Kealba's SAS improvement was more than twice the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Improvements in *Staff Opinions of School,* 2004-8

State (Secondary) means			Kealba means		
2004	2008	Improvement	2004	2008	Improvement
55.79	57.24	1.45	58.65	64.27	5.62

NOTE: The Statewide SOS improvement (1.45) was significant at 0.05. Kealba's SOS improvement was approximately four times the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Specific statements:

Descriptions of specific improvements in Kealba outcomes

Students	Outcome 1:	Over the period 2006 – 2008 students' perceptions of teaching and learning at Kealba College showed extraordinary improvement. By 2008, the school's means for each of these variables had moved from as low as the 25th percentile when ranked against government schools with Years 7 to 12 students in 2006 to all being well over the 75th percentile with *Learning Confidence, Student Motivation* and *Stimulating Learning* being around the 90th percentile. *Source: Student Attitudes to School Survey (SAS)*
	Outcome 2:	There was an overall schoolwide increase in student morale. Student positivism appears to increase as students' progress through year levels 7 to 12. Year 11 measures rose from around the 25th percentile in 2006 to around the 75th percentile in 2008 and notably the Year 12 measures at Kealba rose from the 50th percentile in 2006 to above the 90th percentile in 2008. *Source: Student Attitudes to School Survey (SAS)*
	Outcome 3:	Student destination data is very positive, indicating increasing success over the years 2004-2008. All students exiting during Year 12 and after completing Year 12 over recent years were working or in further education and training; none were unemployed or seeking work. Similar success patterns are evident also for students exiting Kealba from years 10 and 11. *Source: Kealba Secondary College School Level Report (SLR) 2007*
	Outcome 4:	Kealba Secondary College has experienced remarkable and constant improvement in the percentage of students satisfactorily completing VCAL credits. [2004 = 30%/2008 = 70%] *Source: Kealba Secondary College School Level Report (SLR) 2007*
	Outcome 5:	The 2008 year 9 reading result is significant given the cohort's poor year 7 reading result in 2006. Source: *AIM* and *NAPLAN* Data

Staff	Outcome 6:	Staff opinion measures showed outstanding improvement in each of the four areas of *role clarity, empathy, engagement* and *learning* from 2004 to 2008. All measures were below the 25th percentile compared to Victorian government schools in 2004 and rose to almost all being close to or above the 90th percentile in 2008 *Source: Staff Opinion Survey (SOS*)
	Outcome 7:	Staff opinion measures for *individual* and *school distress* showed remarkable improvement over the period 2006 – 2008. When plotted against Secondary school means they were amongst the highest in the state. *Source: Staff Opinion Survey (SOS)*

4. Perceived key processes that contributed to the enhanced outcomes.

initiating phase

Teachers' views

The school underwent a Department of Education external review in 2004. The *External Review Report (2004)* was perceived by staff of the school as very harsh and suggested to them that the school was a 'failing school'. However, staff at the time said that they were interested in anything that would move the school forward and that would assist them to work together more cohesively.

Researchers' views

The review highlighted, in particular, the need for the school to re-examine its vision and mission statements, and to develop a common understanding about, and a whole school approach to, teaching and learning. The report strongly recommended that the school become involved in IDEAS to help it to develop common goals and a shared approach to teaching.

discovering **phase**

Teachers' views

Teachers described a very inclusive, non-hierarchical view of leadership from the outset. The view expressed by one teacher was that 'Our principal stayed in the background, embraced parallel leadership and supported the process by clarifying the purpose of IDEAS from the principal's point of view . . . . She would offer her view - the big picture – always linking IDEAS with departmental mandates and school initiatives.'

Researchers' views

The experience of the Diagnostic Inventory and in-house teacher interpretation of the responses to DI items began to dispel teachers' fears that they would be involved in a process over which they had no control.

envisioning **phase**

Teachers' views

Teachers said that introductory IDEAS activities in late 2004 assisted them to overcome feelings that 'The school's demise was all our fault' and 'allowed us to find a point at which to pick up the ball'.

A teacher commented about the IDEAS visioning process: 'People were surprised at how alike our values were – a real eye opener. Before IDEAS, values were not really discussed. We learned to believe in ourselves, that we all wanted positives.'

Researchers' views

The process of developing the vision (*Switch on – Shine)*, values, and SWP (*5 R's* – Risk Taking, Relevance, Relationships, Recognition and Responsibility) united staff, created a sense of common purpose and in particular uncovered and reinforced a shared view about supporting students.

There has been an authentic engagement of students in the process of creating a school culture that is defined by mutual respect. During the process, students were engaged with teachers in processes of defining vision and pedagogy. This included gestures such as the invitation to 'tech-savvy' students to co-facilitate staff PD in the form of interactive whiteboard training sessions.

actioning **phase**

Teachers' views

One teacher said 'we now have great student led assemblies where we recognise students for the 5R's', while a student observed, 'They're [the 5Rs –SWP] not put in your face or anything but all students would have a view on it'. A third teacher remarked on the use of the 5Rs for Unit Planning while a fourth said there was 'more discussion about pedagogy. Before IDEAS we did not have a clear view of what good teaching was … [the 5R's] act as a prompt – [make us] more conscious of teaching.'

Researchers' views

The school vision and SWP have provided a common language for staff and students and alignment between staff and student expectations. Such alignment appears to be based on strong shared cultural beliefs characterised by having a go at new programs that have value for students' social learning; caring for and about students; working collaboratively in teams; and collegial relationships between staff and students.

There evolved an authentic engagement of students in creating a school culture which was defined by school respect. Students were involved in processes of visioning and pedagogy and specific students were invited to co-facilitate staff PD. 'The language of 5R's is used with kids'. The Seniors Leadership Group also used the SWP to think about and plan their leadership of the student body, in particular the care of younger students.

sustaining **phase**

Teachers' views

One teacher said 'We now have great student-led assemblies where we recognise students for the *5R's*'. A second teacher remarked on the use of the 5Rs for Unit Planning while a third said 'Before IDEAS we did not have a clear view of what good teaching was … [the *5R's*] [make us] more conscious of how we are teaching.'

'We try really hard. The school was open for students every day of the holidays. We do social wellbeing outcomes really well. We're the last chance for some students… We recognise when kids do something really special – lifting the bar higher is not just

academic… kids are often [the educational] pioneers [in their family]. We help them make connections between learning and the future. We are always wanting to help kids shine.'

One member of the ISMT highlighted his own growth as a leader. 'People involved in leading the process have developed their own skills enormously … It has meant staff have looked at others in a different light. For me, it's been a terrific opportunity to develop [personally and professionally] because the process is open-ended. We were not sure of the outcomes. It has given me more confidence to deal with whatever [emerges]. I can take more risks and deal with ambiguity.'

A senior student offered the following view about the high 2008 student opinion data. 'Teachers are the key. They encourage us as persons – as individuals … [adding] . . . we deal with strengths not weaknesses here. The school doesn't focus on the negatives. Even with a bad student, teachers will find a good thing to focus on.'

Researchers' views

The implementation of parallel leadership has developed a notion of leadership that is disassociated from formal leadership positions and has fostered collective responsibility for school and student progress.

The 2007 External Review Report stated: 'A range of parallel efforts, including drawing on the IDEAS project of the University of Southern Queensland, and a lot of hard work, commitment and intellectual capital, resulted in a vision for the school, *Switch on Shine*, which was extended by developing the *5 Rs – Risk Taking, Relevance, Relationships, Recognition and Responsibility*. Undergirded by the values of support and cooperation, belonging and aspiration, the vision and 5 Rs makes very clear to the school community the pedagogy and expectations that the whole school agrees will stimulate the social, academic and emotional development of Kealba's students and in doing so build their success options'.

5. Summary

An External Review of Kealba Secondary College in 2004 suggested drastic overall change and improvement was required. Despite significant infrastructure constraints and uncertainty related to possible school closure and amalgamation, Kealba Secondary College has experienced remarkable institutional and professional transformation. Staff morale and student perceptions of teaching learning - very low in 2004 - are now amongst the highest in the State for secondary schools.

Through a process of professional revitalisation the College responded to the challenge of developing a relevant, clear and shared vision and consistent schoolwide pedagogy pertinent to the needs of the College's student clientele. In so doing, teachers and administrators, irrespective of uncertainty about the College's long term future, are reaping deep professional rewards that accompany successes with student leadership and student post school destinations.

Case study five synopsis – La Trobe Senior College

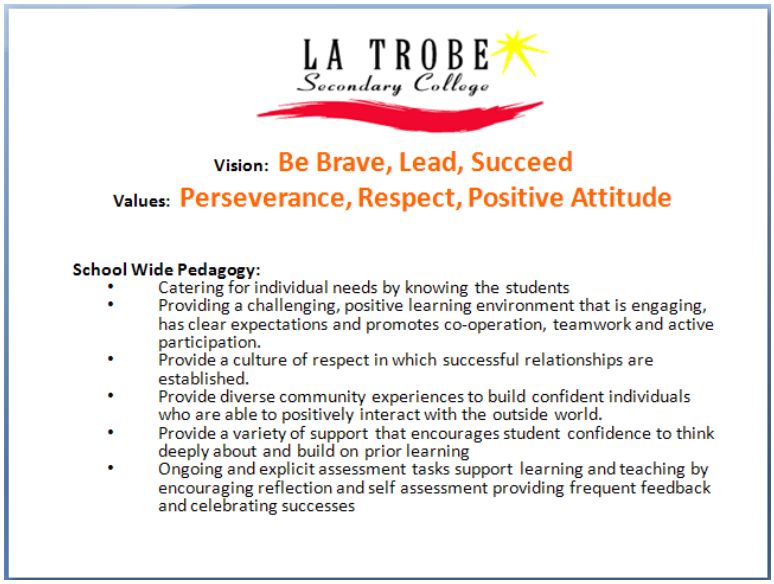
(Prepared by Marian Lewis and Mark Dawson)

1. School context

Located in the lower socio-economic area of West Heidelberg in Melbourne, once a large and successful technical college, by 2004 La Trobe Senior College had become a small secondary school catering for students from years 7-12. As a result of changing demographics and the establishment of a number of new government and private secondary schools in close proximity, enrolments had gradually fallen. As school numbers fell, so did teacher numbers and the range of subjects diminished, particularly in the senior school. When compared against schools from across the state on the basis of university entrance scores, La Trobe ranked towards the bottom end, and was located in the lowest percentiles on a number of important measures in the Department's systemic database. La Trobe was a school in very serious decline.

La Trobe commenced IDEAS in 2004. Through their analysis of the Diagnostic Inventory data, the La Trobe staff were presented with a depressing picture of a school that was poorly maintained and not conducive to learning. The data showed low levels of student achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy, poor teacher morale and a general lack of pride in the school. Then, towards the end of 2004, the school considered merging with another school as part of a longer term educational regeneration plan. Between 2004 and the closure of the school at the end of 2007, La Trobe developed an inspiring vision: *Be Brave, Lead, Succeed* underpinned by the values of *Perseverance, Respect and Positive Attitude* (Exhibit 5). They also created a schoolwide pedagogy to inform their practice. By 2007 there was demonstrated evidence of improvement in the various measures associated with students' perceptions of teaching and learning, as evidenced in the 2007 *Attitudes to School* Survey results.

EXHIBIT 5: LA TROBE'S VISION, VALUES AND SWP



By the end of 2007 La Trobe Secondary College no longer existed as a separate entity. It had moved to a new location and merged with a nearby secondary college.

2. Timeline of IDEAS Project implementation activities and SOS outcomes

Year	IDEAS Team Delivery	IDEAS Implementation	SOS Trend
2004-May 2005	Nov/Dec Orientation February/March – Workshop & school visits – DI	Principal promotes IDEAS to staff & School Council – general acceptance Set up ISMT; Principles of practice established DI completed Staff positive about involvement	Mostly negative data
June 2005-May 2006	Telephone Conferences August Workshop: Envisioning November Forum: Leadership, Pedagogy work	Report Card writing Professional Conversations protocol used Visioning process established – engaged students through forums; Vision in place	All positive – especially professional decision making and student

	February/March: Workshop on SWP	Other factors: Networking and sharing by school facilitators at cluster meetings	attitudes/ Behaviour
June 2006-May 2007	Telephone Conferences August Workshop: SWP and Actioning November Forum – Actioning and Planning February - IST Training	Developing SWP PD sessions for whole staff - focus on student needs ISMT active in developing SWP Cluster groups share ideas SWP established and restructuring of class groups, timetabling Other factor*:* District PD	Positive trend continues
June 2007-2008		Amalgamation decision made by all staff	
2004-2007			Positive trend

3. Documented evidence of enhanced school outcomes, 2004-7

Generic statement: The improvements in particular school outcomes that are reported below should be interpreted in the context of the following La Trobe comparisons with State means:

Improvements in *Student Attitudes to School*, 2006-8

State (Secondary) means			La Trobe means		
2006	2008	Improvement	2006	2007	Improvement
69.02	70.95	1.93	66.35	70.89	4.54

NOTE: The Statewide SAS improvement (1.93), 2006-8, was significant at 0.01. La Trobe's SAS improvement, 2006-7, was more than twice the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Improvements in *Staff Opinions of School*, 2004-8

State (Secondary) means			La Trobe means		
2004	2008	Improvement	2004	2007	Improvement
55.79	57.24	1.45	54.77	62.53	7.76

NOTE: The Statewide SOS improvement (1.45) was significant at 0.05. La Trobe's SOS improvement was approximately five times the State improvement, in numerical terms.

Specific statements:

Descriptions of specific improvements in La Trobe outcomes

Students	Outcome One	Across all the year levels there were consistent and marked changes in student perceptions of *Teacher Effectiveness, Teacher Empathy* and *Stimulating Learning Environment*. Similar changes can be seen in measures of *Student Well-being.* The changes in student relationships varied from year level to year level and while the whole school measures *Connectedness to Peers* and *Student safety* improved, this was not so for the measure of classroom behaviour. Source: *Students Attitudes to School Survey (SAS) 2007*

Staff	Outcome Two	From 2004-7, the staff perceived that the school had improved in all 20 measures. The greatest improvements related *to individual and school morale, supportive leadership, professional interaction and growth, role clarity, participative decision making, goal congruence, effective discipline policy and curriculum coordination.* There was a reduction in *individual and school distress* and some perceived improvement in *student behaviour.* *Source: Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) trend collation 2004-2007*

4. Perceived key processes that contributed to the enhanced achievements

initiating phase

Principal's views

Although I was well aware of the challenges facing Latrobe, I was surprised by the magnitude of the issues I found…enrolments had been falling rapidly during the past ten years…it became increasingly difficult to provide a wide range of subject offerings to the year 11 and 12 students and this impacted on the type of student who enrolled at the college. Student engagement and behaviour became a major problem.

Data were increasingly been used to gauge school success at a system level and the staff were constantly receiving negative messages. The result was a disjointed school where staff and students were in conflict with each other.

Teachers' views

The school began a myriad of worthwhile teaching and learning programs but never really completed any. How would IDEAS be any different? Staff voted with glazed eyes and the feeling of 'here we go again'!! Our IDEAS journey had begun!

Researchers' views

Located in the lower socio-economic area of West Heidelberg in the city of Melbourne, La Trobe Secondary College was a school with problems. Once a large and successful technical college, the school had become a small secondary school catering for students from years 7-12. As a result of changing demographics and the existence of a number of new government and private secondary schools in close proximity, enrolments had gradually fallen. As school numbers fell so did teacher numbers and the range of subjects diminished, particularly in the senior school. When compared against schools from across the state on the basis of university entrance scores, this school ranked towards the bottom end and was in the lowest percentiles in a number of important measures in the systemic data. This was a school in decline.

***d*iscovering phase**

Teachers' views

A watershed moment was the examination of the data from the Diagnostic Inventory to come up with our driving forces and preventing forces. When the student data came back mirroring that of the staff, the widely held belief that our problems were because the kids didn't want to learn and some of them can't be taught anyway' was clearly shaken.

The IDEAS Team concentrated on pushing the concept of NO BLAME and the acceptance of the data as our data was paramount if we wanted to move forward. This sat well with staff who had felt for some years that they had been blamed for the lack of performance.

Another watershed moment was when staff began examining all the data that we had on students and what made them unique: they came from a disadvantaged base, they lacked confidence in their own abilities and had no aspiration beyond school. They needed positive role modelling and support, to build meaningful relationships with others and to develop resilience.

Researchers' views

Commencing IDEAS in 2004, taking stock of La Trobe through their analysis of the Diagnostic Inventory data, the staff were presented with a depressing picture of a school that was poorly maintained and not conducive to learning. The data showed low levels of student achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy, poor teacher morale and a general lack of pride in the school

envisioning **phase**

Teachers' views

In our efforts to develop a SWP the IDEAS Team concentrated on workshops that got the staff realty thinking about curriculum development, the appropriateness of that curriculum and the best teaching strategies. The staff really needed to visualise what that meant in the classroom. This stage was supported by two compulsory whole school PD programs: Building positive student relationships and promoting student engagement.

We began to think deeply about the issues, the quality of our teaching and learning and develop a real focus on enabling our students to experience success and real-life learning.

We started to realise that the idea of developing student confidence was very important. We began to believe that students were able and capable.

Many months were spent throwing around thoughts as we tackled our visioning process. The original slogan of *Embracing Opportunities for Success* was eventually replaced by the vision: *Be Brave, Lead, Succeed* underpinned by the values of perseverance, respect and positive attitude. We discovered what makes us unique. We were able to create an environment where people would communicate.

We distinguished between what were professional and social relationships.

Researchers' views

Despite the considerable challenges they faced, the staff chose to engage in frank and open conversations. To do this they made extensive use of a protocol for

effective communication known as 'professional conversations' and adopted the 'no blame' principle. The nature of the conversations enabled the staff to recognise that, in the words of one of the teachers: 'we had lost the spirit of what the school was for'. Another stated that 'IDEAS enabled the school to get to know itself'.

Between 2004 and 2007, the way the staff viewed their work as teachers changed and relationships with each other and the students strengthened. The perception of students in 2004 was very negative, there was an assumption that students could not learn or be taught. By 2007 however the perception had changed; teachers viewed the students as 'able and capable'; they had begun interrogating their work with a focus on enhancing student confidence and success. This reframing of teachers views was beginning to have a real impact on the morale of teachers, their role clarity, engagement and motivation.

actioning **phase**

Teachers' views

Principal: *No blame, collective responsibility* and *parallel leadership* were crucial in developing a school culture where staff supported each other. Worked together to solve problems and identify ways in which they could improve educational outcomes for students, deal with change in a positive manner and create a school environment where everyone felt valued.

The impact of 'professional conversation' in bringing about this change cannot be overstated.

Researchers' views

The staff at this school recognised the need for change and embraced the positive messages that are essential components of the IDEAS program. The principal commented that the 'no blame' concept was very powerful and the IDEAS view that 'teacher are dedicated professionals and we can work together to improve educational opportunities for students' provided a great start to the process.

5. Summary

The La Trobe case study demonstrates the difference that can be achieved when an inspirational principal leader with a strong commitment to social justice and deep belief in teacher leadership is provided with a school revitalisation process that emphasis no blame and teacher professionalism. This combination resulted in a dramatic change in school culture. Teacher leadership and professional commitment flourished as the staff worked together to develop a strong philosophy of teaching based on improved relationships and deeper knowledge of their students. La Trobe Secondary College was able to provide limited quantitative evidence of improved academic outcomes for students. The school's closure in 2007 gave little time for the effects of the changes to flow through into systemic student achievement data.

4.3 Chapter summary

The systemic database and five case study descriptions reveal that important educational improvements occurred in the schools in question during the period of implementation of the IDEAS Project. These are explored in Research Questions 1-6.

At this time, it is appropriate to draw attention to the following generic observations relating to the database for the research:

- The database is comprised of a combination of systemic and case study data. The systemic data is perceptual in nature, for both teachers and students;

- Systemic improvements in SOS (staff opinions) and SAS (student attitudes) data during the 2004-8 timeframe provide an important contextual consideration for the analysis of data for the IDEAS Project schools;

- The fact that 17 of the IDEAS Project schools were identified as 'targeted' prior to the commencement of the IDEAS Project is also an important consideration in the data analysis and interpretation, although, unfortunately, data from 'like' schools could not be accessed for comparative purposes.

Chapter 5

Findings of the Research

In this chapter the findings of the research are presented in the context of the research problem and the six research questions that guided the study. The research problem was stated as follows:

> ***What key lessons for enhanced educational achievement can be learned from the implementation of the IDEAS Project in a selection of Victorian schools, 2004-8?***

The research questions are as follows:

> Research question one: *What definition of 'success' emerges from the experiences of a cohort of schools where enhanced improvement is perceived by stakeholders in conjunction with implementation of IDEAS in Victoria, 2004-8?*
>
> Research question two*: What key processes appear to have contributed to the successes enjoyed by the Victorian IDEAS schools?*
>
> Research question three: *What forms of leadership appear to engender and support the key processes in question?*
>
> Research question four*: What model for school-based capacity-building emerges from the research?*
>
> Research question five: *What implications, if any, emerge from the research for schooling in disadvantaged contexts?*
>
> Research question six: *What adjustments, if any, emerge as necessary to the LRI explanatory models for sustained school improvement?*

5.1 Research question one: *What definition of 'success' emerges from the experiences of a cohort of schools where enhanced improvement is perceived by stakeholders in conjunction with implementation of IDEAS in Victoria, 2004-8?*

Of the 22 schools that comprised the initial IDEAS-Victoria 2004-6 cohort, 17 progressed to the point where they created a schoolwide pedagogical framework. In so doing, they achieved a milestone that is rare in educational development. Based on the satisfactory progress of the seventeen schools in question through the developmental phases of IDEAS, in conjunction with the research-based documentation of school achievements that is contained in Tables 4.1-4.8, and Table 5.1, a definition of 'school success' can be proposed. This definition is grounded in the following rationale as derived from the research.

First, the cohort of IDEAS schools were part of a statewide education system that experienced perceptions of overall improvements in teacher opinion (SOS) data and student attitudes (SAS) data during the period 2004-8. Thus, whatever perceived improvements were experienced by the IDEAS cohort should be seen as reflective in part of a broad systemic trend.

Second, the IDEAS cohort achieved perceived improvements in school outcomes, as measured by SOS and SAS surveys, that were overall at least as great as perceived improvements for Victorian schools in general across the 2004-8 timeframe. This finding implies that the IDEAS Project may have contributed to the unusually high levels of perceived success of the 2004-6 cohort.

Explanation: Overall, as discussed in chapter 4, in numerical terms the improvements in SOS data for the 2004-8 IDEAS cohort for the most part exceeded State improvements by seemingly substantial amounts during the timeframe for IDEAS Project implementation.

Specifically, primary schools statewide improved on positive SOS items by an average of 4.28 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 3.46 points. *Cohort* primary schools

that completed the Visioning/SWP phases of IDEAS improved on positive SOS items by an average of 10 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 9 points.

Secondary schools improved statewide on positive SOS items by an average of 2.31 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 1.16 points. *Cohort* secondary schools that completed the Visioning/SWP phases of IDEAS improved on positive SOS items by an average of 7.6 points, and on negative SOS items by an average of 4.6 points

With respect to the SAS data, both the State primary school SAS data *improved significantly* from 2006 to 2008 ($p = 0.003348$, $p < 0.01$) and the State secondary school SAS data showed a *statistically significant improvement* from 2006 to 2008 ($p = 0.005065$, $p < 0.01$). In comparison, it is apparent from Tables 4.5 and 4.6 that there occurred a statistically significant improvement in students' attitudes to school in all case study schools, in 3 of 8 non-case study primary schools and 5 of 6 non-case study secondary schools during the period 2006-8.

Third, the five case study schools perceived achieved improvements in school outcomes, as measured by SOS and SAS surveys, that substantially exceeded perceived improvements for Victorian schools in general across the 2004-8 timeframe. This finding implies that educational insights that can be derived from the case study analyses may be particularly helpful in efforts to understand and conceptualise processes of successful school-based revitalisation. The finding is particularly important in that three of the five case study schools were designated 'targeted' at the commencement of the IDEAS Project in November, 2004.

Fourth, actual (as opposed to 'perceived') improvements in school outcomes were achieved within each of the case study schools in conjunction with implementation of the IDEAS Project. Specifically, Table 5.1 details the verifiable major educational improvements for the five case study schools.

Fifth, the four-year timeframe of the IDEAS-Victoria Project is an important additional consideration. The analyses that have been conducted of the empirical and descriptive databases for the research enable annual variations in patterns of implementation of IDEAS to be identified, and for relatively long-term (i.e. four year) school outcomes to be identified.

Sixth, over the 2004-2007 period case study schools overall showed a significant upward trend in all SOS items. In most cases it was not until the third year of involvement that across-the-board improvement occurred. In 2008 the four continuing schools sustained, or extended, the improvements in question.

Seventh, there exists no definitive pattern in the SOS data for the case study schools when IDEAS Project implementation activities are taken into account. However, it is clear that major, sustained changes in teacher opinions towards their workplaces occurred only when the IDEAS Project core processes of Visioning and schoolwide pedagogical development had been completed. This conclusion is explored in some detail in the discussion of Table 5.3.

Based on the above analysis, and the validated statements of 2004-8 school outcomes that are outlined below (Table 5.1 and preceding tables in chapter 4), located in the context of systemic improvements in Victorian teachers' professional perceptions regarding their schools' operations, the following definition of 'school success' is proposed:

> ***'School success' is defined as enhanced school outcomes in agreed high priority goal areas, based on documented evidence of those achievements and outcomes and teachers' expressed confidence in their school's capacity to extend and sustain student achievements into the future.***

TABLE 5.1: A SUMMARY OF IMPROVEMENTS IN SCHOOL OUTCOMES, 2004-8, IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

Bellbridge	
Student achievement:	Literacy levels showed improvements in 2008.
Teacher well-being	Significant improvements in all four SOS categories, and reduced variance between the categories, 2004-8. Movement from below State means (2004) to well above State means (2008).
Meadow Fair North	
Student achievement	Literacy and Numeracy (Years 1 & 2) show an improvement over the period of the research. A significant increase in interpersonal skills and an ability to manage own learning. This is enhanced by student goal setting, reflection and participation in student, parent, teacher conferences.
Student attitudes	Based on Student Attitudes to School data - significant increases reaching above state means in all categories in 2008. School-based data collected in 2008, prep to year 4, indicated similar responses in peer/teacher relationships, teaching and learning and student well-being. Student attendance data improved across the school.
Teacher well-being	IDEAS built strong professional relationships, leading to ongoing development of teacher capacity and parallel leadership. This improved staff cohesiveness and confidence a meant significant improvement in staff well-being. This is evidenced in Staff Opinion Survey.
Eltham	
Student attitudes	Significant upward trend from 2006-7, with a slight overall decline in 2008. While *School Connectedness* has been consistently high across the three years, the most significant upward trends have been in *Learning Confidence* and *Student Motivation.*
Teacher well-being	Significant upward trend in school mean movement as compared with State secondary mean, but most significantly in *Supportive Leadership, Participative Decision-Making, Goal Congruence, Appraisal & Recognition, Professional*

	Growth, Curriculum Coordination, Student Motivation, Student Decision Making and *Learning Environment.*
Teacher retention	Teaching staff retention rate consistently high compared with the State average for the same period.
Kealba	
Student achievement	Constant improvement in the percentage of students satisfactorily completing VCAL credits. [2004 = 30%/2008 = 70%]. In the past two years the school has helped about 80% of students completing Year 12 find pathways into further education and training. All students exiting during Year 12 and after completing Year 12 over recent years were working or in further education and training; none were unemployed or seeking work. NAPLAN result comparable to like schools.
Student attitudes	Better work ethic and confidence; students attitude to school survey shows remarkable improvement.
Teacher well-being	The improvement in Staff Opinion measures has been outstanding and show substantial improvement in all areas from 2006 to 2008. Most measures were below the 25th percentile compared to all Victorian government schools in 2006 and all rose to collective average above the state mean in 2008.
La Trobe	
Student achievement	No data are available, owing to the closure of La Trobe in late 2007
Student attitudes	Students' attitudes towards staff and school changed dramatically for the better.
Teacher well-being	Teachers' well-being soared; they felt they were part of the school. They demonstrated strong attachments to the students and to one another on a professional level.

5.2 Research question two: *What key processes appear to have contributed to the successes enjoyed by the Victorian IDEAS schools?*

Interrogation of the five case study reports, supplemented by consideration of the empirical data analyses, leads to important insights regarding the ways in which core IDEAS concepts and processes impacted positively upon school outcomes in the schools that comprised the research cohort. Six particular factors appear integral to the successes enjoyed by the 2004-6 IDEAS schools. Following identification by the research team, these six factors were critiqued and validated by representatives of the five schools and the research design validation expert. The six factors are contained in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2: SIX KEY IDEAS FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESSES OF THE VICTORIAN IDEAS SCHOOLS

The *Readiness* factor – The availability of a highly credible process of school revitalisation (The IDEAS Project) at a point in time and in a structured form that suits the circumstances of a cluster of like-minded school professionals.

The *Longitudinal* factor – Access to a structured process of revitalisation (***ideas***) that enables schools to undertake highly complex developmental processes with relative ease over an extended period of time.

***The Coherence* factor** – The availability of an explanatory framework for effective school organisation (the RBF) that provides school leaders and teaching professionals with a sense that they work in organisations that are in important ways intelligible and manageable.

The *Leadership* factor – Emphasis on leadership forms (parallelism and its derivatives) that recognise teachers' professionalism and principals' futuristic strategic functions.

The *Mature Engagement* factor – Systematic use of principles of interaction (The IDEAS *Principles of Practice)* that encourage mutual respect and dignity in professional relationships and creative problem-solving.

The *Supportive Systems* factor – Ready availability of reliable information, quality materials and expert personnel to facilitate futuristic school development and to link within-school goals to systemic priorities and resources.

Further details are outlined below.

1. **The *Readiness* factor**

    - The motivation to engage in IDEAS was external to the school in three case study instances, and internal in two instances. Principals and key teachers at all five case study schools regarded IDEAS as a credible response to a serious school challenge. In three of the case study schools, the school's basic capability had been challenged by system officials and school leaders, including teacher leaders, indicated a commitment to redressing this situation. In the other two schools, the principal regarded the school as 'tired' and in need of pedagogical and cultural regeneration.
    - IDEAS Awareness sessions conducted by IDEAS staff were critically important at this juncture, as was the work of Doug Jeanes and Ken Peak in building early understanding of the IDEAS Project processes and concepts.
    - All five schools 'bought into' IDEAS largely on the basis of core principles that emphasised bottom-up responsibility. Most notable were the IDEAS principles of 'collective responsibility', 'teachers are the key', 'no blame' and 'success breeds success'.

2. The *Longitudinal* factor

    - At the time of the research, all five schools had completed the ***ideas*** stages of Initiating, Discovery and Envisioning, and were involved in Actioning/Sustaining activities. All indicated that the formal two-year timeframe that they had entered into was very inadequate to a comprehensive process of school revitalisation that incorporates pedagogical development. All agreed that 'IDEAS never ends', meaning that once a school becomes involved in a process of successful pedagogical development, it should be viewed as ongoing;
    - Table 4.1 indicates that the five schools experienced similar patterns of implementation across the four years of the IDEAS Project. Nevertheless, the dynamics of implementation appear to have varied substantially between the

schools. Teachers' attitudes towards their schools, according to Departmental SOS surveys, varied greatly between the schools during the four years in question, possibly indicating different reactions to IDEAS-related activities as well as to other internal influences. Only after a period of four years did consistency in teachers' professional attitudes emerge.

3. **The *Coherence* factor**

- Peter Drucker's well-known tune metaphor, in which a successful school can be likened to a piece of music, captivated the imaginations of IDEAS participants and encouraged them to think of their schools as intelligible, manageable and interesting organisations in which to work. Thus, all five schools, but some more than others, used the RBF as a planning reference point throughout the phases of the ***ideas*** process. In some schools, the RBF also provided the vehicle for principals to conceptualise their roles as 'metastrategic' school leaders;
- All five schools employed the IDEAS Diagnostic Inventory, and the associated RBF, during the Discovery stage of the ***ideas*** process. All five schools prepared School Reports that addressed issues of organisational alignment emerging from their DI analysis. All five then proceeded to develop pedagogical practices that stemmed from their school-created visions. In one school, the DI was re-administered after a three year period of IDEAS implementation. The results of the re-administration were used by the principal and IDEAS SMT to provide positive evaluative advice to teaching staff and the school community;
- 'Alignment' in all five case study schools was first understood as a structural concept. But as the ***ideas*** process unfolded, participating staff became very conscious of 'alignment' in a new form – as a cognitive form, or as shared understanding about their school's key processes.

4. The *Leadership* factor

- 'Parallelism' and its key derivatives of teacher leadership and metastrategic principalship were internalised in all five case study schools and appear to be inextricably linked to improvements in SOS data and also to student leadership initiatives in some schools;
- The concept of 'leading profession', with teachers as creators of important new knowledge, and as inspirers of exciting workplaces, is apparent in all five case studies, thereby giving real-life substance to the construct of 'teachers as leaders'.
- In each of the five schools where IDEAS progress was limited and a schoolwide pedagogy was not created, the principalship was a dominant factor (see 3.2.1 for details). In contrast, in each of the five case study schools, the principalship was a dominant factor, thereby giving real-life substance to the construct of 'metastrategic principalship'.

5. The *Mature Engagement* factor

- The IDEAS Project *Principles of Practice* were used to very significant advantage in all five case study schools. No school sought to alter them in any way during the course of the project. All schools displayed the *Principles* in prominent locations, such as staff rooms;
- The IDEAS *Principles of Practice* appear to have served four important purposes:
    - to convince staff at the initial (Orientation) stage that IDEAS is grounded in a commitment to teacher professionalism, and regards teachers as the key to educational success;
    - to enable school staffs to engage in complex processes of new knowledge creation (Visions, Values, SWP, in particular). In some IDEAS schools, staffs commenced the process with a history of professional isolation, low morale, antagonism and interpersonal conflict. The Principles of Practice, applied in particular through Skilful Discussion and Professional Conversation tools, enabled teachers to

work collaboratively and in so doing to develop new trust in, and respect for, each other.

- to enable school administrators to build mutualistic relationships with teaching colleagues and maintain those relationships throughout the ***ideas*** process;
- to provide a credible rationale for the development of teacher leadership and parallel leadership constructs, both of which are regarded in IDEAS as essential to sustained school improvement.

5. The *Supportive Systems* factor

- All five schools viewed themselves as inextricably linked during the four years of the IDEAS Project to both the USQ IDEAS Project staff and to their regional and State systems of education. These respective agencies were valued by IDEAS Project school participants for the following reasons:
  - <u>USQ-LRI staff</u>
    - valuing of the teaching profession;
    - identification with, and apparent regard for, practising teachers;
    - personal enthusiasm and ingenuity in workshops;
    - outstanding competence in relation to highly complex educational processes, particularly SWP and Visioning;
    - creation of high quality, interesting and practical project materials;
    - ready availability and access;
    - the cost effectiveness of their services.

  - <u>Victorian Department of Education and Early Years Development</u>
    - its clear commitment to State schools, following two decades of perceived low priority for State education;
    - its generation of a wide range of cutting-edge educational initiatives;
    - its personalised and committed State educational leadership;
    - its credible school evaluation and improvement strategies.

- Regional Offices
  - strong demonstrated support for school-based initiative and leadership;
  - the provision of quality resources, including funding and outstanding project coordination staff;
  - ready support for cluster activities.

In summary, the six factors that have been identified from the research as contributing to the successes enjoyed by the IDEAS Project in Victorian schools, 2004-6, substantiate the integral processes that comprise IDEAS. As such, they should be very helpful in future iterations of the IDEAS Project throughout Australia and globally. But they also substantiate the focus of the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and thus should be helpful to the Department in futuristic planning. Finally, they would appear to have applicability in a wide range of educational innovation efforts and hence should be of interest to educators anywhere where school-based revitalisation and regeneration is a priority concern. In a subsequent section of this report (Research question four) the six factors constitute a key reference point in the development of an explanatory framework and associated definition for the process of school-based capacity-building.

5.3 Research question three: *What forms of leadership appear to engender and support the key processes in question?*

The constructions of school-based leadership that underpinned IDEAS-Victoria Project are contained in particular definitions of teacher leadership, metastrategic principalship and parallel leadership. The definitions of these constructs that underpinned the IDEAS-Victoria Project are as follows:

> ***Teacher leadership*** is essentially an ethical stance that is based on views of both a better world and the power of teachers to shape meaning systems. It manifests in new forms of understanding and practice that contribute to school success and to the quality of life of the community in the long term (Crowther et al., 2002, 2009).

This definition of teacher leadership is expanded into a six-element *Teachers as Leaders Framework* (Crowther et al., 2009, p. 3).

> ***Metastrategic principalship*** comprises five functions:
>
> - Envisioning inspiring futures
> - Aligning key institutional elements (i.e. vision, stakeholder expectations, school infrastructures, pedagogical processes, and professional learning)
> - Enabling teacher leadership
> - Building synergistic alliances
> - Culture-building and identity generation (Crowther et al., 2002, 2009).
>
> ***Parallel leadership*** is a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies three distinct qualities – mutual trust, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression (Crowther et al., 2002, 2009).

Significant insights regarding the IDEAS Project's distinctive approach to school-based leadership, particularly the constructs of metastrategic principalship, teachers as leaders and parallel leadership are apparent in the five case study descriptions. In essence, the integrity of each construct is affirmed by each of the case studies. Following are concrete examples of ways in which each construct provided the basis for enhanced school success at one particular case study school.

NOTE: The examples that are provided also illustrate the interdependence of the three key IDEAS Project constructs in school practice.

Bellbridge (Teacher leadership) – IDEAS leadership at Bellbridge was described by the deputy principal as 'involving an expectation of transformation'. The deputy principal commented that:

> ‘Teacher leadership at Bellbridge is “invitational”. The environment “invites”, peers “invite” and supervisors “invite” prospective teacher leaders . . . . This results in “normalisation” of teacher leadership.’

The ‘normalisation’ of teacher leadership at Bellbridge contributed what the deputy principal described as a culture of alignment that enabled a school-generated literacy strategy to be implemented with substantial success.

Eltham (Metastrategic principalship) – The principal’s use of strategic planning activities to enable school leadership teams to transpose the school’s vision and values into accountable T&L practices was fundamental to the school’s success with IDEAS. Key to the approach employed by the principal was the deputy principal’s coordination of a school-developed SWP template for use by each individual teacher. A senior staff member commented as follows:

> ‘This required assertive and supportive principalship plus cohesive team leadership where pedagogy was the focus and values development was also integral . . . . It allowed us to reflect on “Why do we like being here?” The Deputy’s role was reliable, tireless, passionate.’

Kealba (Parallel leadership) –The values underpinning parallel leadership in the IDEAS Project – mutual trust, respect and individual expression – were consciously focused upon at Kealba. To this end, personal leadership capability was deliberately encouraged:

> *People involved in leading this process (IDEAS) have developed their own skills enormously . . . . It has meant staff have looked at others in a different light . . . . I can take more risks and deal with ambiguity.*

As part of their personal leadership development, Kealba teacher leaders undertook to develop a student leadership program that explicitly addressed issues of student alienation and lack of confidence and self-concept. Major improvements in students’ attitudes toward school were attributed in part to this program by Kealba staff.

La Trobe (Metastrategic principalship) – La Trobe teacher leaders made apparent that they undertook IDEAS largely out of a sense of 'indignation' that they had been de-valued by the 'targeted as underperforming' designation of their school. In responding to the challenges created by this designation, they emphasised the values-based leadership of the principal:

> 'He is motivated to work in schools characterised by social disadvantage and has a strong belief in the professionalism of teachers . . . . The high expectations of the principal, tempered by high levels of trust, enabled a culture of teacher leadership to flourish . . . . Teachers were enabled to find new meaning in what they did.'

Following a three year period of engagement with IDEAS, La Trobe teacher leaders undertook to transpose their new skills and convictions into a regional regeneration project, thereby facilitating systemic plans for establishment of a new amalgamated school.

Meadow Fair North (Teacher leadership) – Schoolwide development of a meaningful definition of 'MFN Teacher Leadership' was undertaken by Meadow Fair North staff as the IDEAS Project evolved in their school. The MFN definition was as follows:

> *Teacher leadership focuses on alignment between individual classroom practice and whole school vision and purpose.*

Staff indicated that, through creation and articulation of this definition, they developed a sense of empowerment that successfully challenged the school's 'targeted' status and enabled them to partially overcome major issues of fragmentation resulting from student transience.

The insights that are delineated in Tables 5.3 to 5.7 were extracted from the case study reports by the USQ-LRI research team. They indicate particular understandings regarding school-based leadership practices that enrich the constructions of teacher leadership, metastrategic principalship and parallel leadership that have underpinned the IDEAS Project in the past.

TABLE 5.3: LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS APPARENT IN THE BELLBRIDGE CASE STUDY

- IDEAS began with an admin. decision to redefine the school's direction, encompassing leadership approach and pedagogy;
- Leadership encompassed a 'delicate balance of speaking, listening and stepping back', as well as self-critique and search for a changed personal mindset;
- Teacher leadership was found to be more 'fluid' than the TLF suggests;
- Teacher leadership was found to be best developed through shared challenges and increasing 'deepening' in schoolwide leadership;
- The 'equivalence' of principal leadership and teacher leadership was 'normalised';
- 'Parallel leadership takes more time but is worth it' (There are more heads around problems and questions come up earlier).

TABLE 5.4: LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS APPARENT IN THE MEADOW FAIR NORTH CASE STUDY

- The principal demonstrated a clear sense of self and strong views about what she hoped to achieve. Thus, she relied on others 'for balance';
- The IDEAS Facilitator placed concrete emphasis on 'making purposeful links' between school processes and priorities, on encouraging others to think of themselves as leaders, and breaking IDEAS up into 'do-able' stages;
- Teacher leadership was viewed as the creation of 'alignment between individual classroom practice and whole-school vision and purpose';
- The principal articulated parallel leadership as (i) the 'valuing of each other's strengths to add value to oneself'; (ii) 'collaborative action'; and (iii) 'encouraging abilities and aspirations'; and
- The cluster coordinator and USQ staff took high levels of risk in challenging teachers to confront their teaching practices.

TABLE 5.5: LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS APPARENT IN THE ELTHAM CASE STUDY

- The 'leadership group' (e.g. Performance and Development group) was the core leadership entity for IDEAS at Eltham;
- The principal defined his leadership role in terms of 'systematised capacity-building' – encompassing alignment, performance and development, and pedagogical focus;
- The DP was the initial 'driver' - trusted and universally respected;
- Teacher leadership was viewed as developed through ISMT activities, the P&D group, and democratic staff meeting activities;
- Student leadership was viewed as developed through IDEAS consultative processes, significant contributions to SWP and Visioning, 'the EVOLVE at TYPO station ©' program, and involvement in the selection of an AP;
- The analysis and interrogation of performance data was very important in leaders' work at Eltham; and
- Eltham staff had a school-generated definition of Leadership that encompassed qualities including *team, relationships, Sergiovanni, intellectual quality, voice, problem-solving* and *appraisal.*

TABLE 5.6: LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS APPARENT IN THE KEALBA CASE STUDY

- Endeavoured to use IDEAS to create an 'inclusive, non-hierarchical view of leadership';
- The IDEAS concept of 'emphasise the positives' was immensely important. It gave potential leaders the confidence to embrace open-ended inquiry;
- Placed high priority on parallel leadership as a means to linking school initiatives to systemic initiatives;
- 'Trust in the process, even though you don't know where it will end';
- 'Look for growth in your own personal leadership' – new skills, evidence of inclusivity;
- Student leadership was observed to be authentic engagement in a culture of respect, in visioning and SWP processes, in care for younger students; and
- External supports (most notably USQ Forums) were particularly important because of the initial 'failure' stigma.

TABLE 5.7: LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS APPARENT IN THE LA TROBE CASE STUDY

- The principal's strong convictions, and espoused commitment to social justice and disadvantaged schools, was very important in undertaking IDEAS;
- The principal also entered IDEAS with a strong belief in teachers' professionalism and in participatory decision-making, while constantly emphasising 'a strong bottom line';
- The IDEAS principle of 'No blame' had great appeal to staff from the outset;
- Teacher leadership was believed to emerge from 'people with like minds . . . finding new meaning in what they do';
- Parallel leadership was perceived as shared purpose, as articulation of 'what we stand for'; thereby enabling teachers to focus on 'what is really important', 'what teaching really means', to create a 'Can do' culture of optimism, of choices for a better future;
- The IDEAS Facilitator role was perceived as having a high degree of legitimacy;
- Emphasis was placed on using data constructively; and
- Over time, a 'self-determining' approach to professional development (p.d.) was created, mainly though the efforts of the facilitator.

Based on consideration of the insights contained in Tables 5.3 – 5.7, a number of significant implications are apparent for the IDEAS Project's leadership constructs. These are outlined in Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10.

TABLE 5.8: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR THE IDEAS CONSTRUCT OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

- Teacher leadership is a 'fluid' entity. It is tied to high quality pedagogy and professional image but emerges in accordance with particular needs, opportunities and support systems;
- Teacher leaders' self-concept is grounded in professional practice. However they may be fulltime teachers, teacher administrators or even fulltime administrators/project facilitators so long as their pedagogical competence is widely known and regarded;
- The concept of 'shared challenge' is fundamental to nurturing teacher leadership;
- Teacher leaders place concrete emphasis on 'making purposeful links' between school processes and priorities, on encouraging others to think of themselves as leaders, and breaking IDEAS up into 'do-able' stages;
- Teacher leadership facilitates the creation of 'alignment between individual classroom practice and whole-school vision and purpose';
- Teacher leadership is developed through ISMT activities, the P&D group, and democratic staff meeting activities;
- 'Look for growth in your own personal leadership' – new skills, evidence of inclusivity;
- Teacher leadership emerges from 'people with like minds . . . finding new meaning in what they do, often through clashes and differences of opinion'; and
- Over time, a 'self-determining' approach to professional development is created, mainly though the efforts of teacher leaders.

TABLE 5.9: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR THE IDEAS CONSTRUCT OF METASTRATEGIC PRINCIPALSHIP

- Metastrategic leaders are very receptive of outside stimulation and critique;
- Metastrategic principals demonstrate a clear sense of self and strong views about what they hope to achieve. Thus, they rely on others 'for balance';
- Metastrategic principals define their leadership role in terms of 'capacity-building' – encompassing alignment, performance and development, and pedagogical focus;
- IDEAS began with an admin. decision to redefine the school's direction, encompassing leadership approach and pedagogy;
- Metastrategic leadership encompasses a 'delicate balance of speaking, listening and stepping back', as well as self-critique and search for a changed personal mindset;
- Metastrategic principals hold strong convictions, and espouse commitment to equity e.g. disadvantaged schools, and follow through with schoolwide initiatives;
- Metastrategic principals demonstrate a strong belief in teachers' professionalism and in participatory decision-making; and
- A Deputy can be a very successful metastrategic leader.

TABLE 5.10: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR THE IDEAS CONSTRUCT OF PARALLEL LEADERSHIP

- The 'equivalence' of principal leadership and teacher leadership is 'normalised';
- 'Parallel leadership takes more time but is worth it' (There are more heads around problems and questions come up earlier);
- Metastrategic principals articulate parallel leadership as (i) the 'valuing of each other's strengths to add value to oneself'; (ii) 'collaborative action'; and (iii) 'encouraging abilities and aspirations';
- A 'leadership group' (e.g. Performance and Development group) can be the core leadership entity;
- The analysis and interrogation of performance data is very important in parallel leaders' work;
- A school staff can develop a school-generated definition of Leadership that encompassed qualities such as *team, relationships, Sergiovanni, intellectual quality, voice, problem-solving* and *appraisal;*
- Parallel leaders endeavour to create an 'inclusive, non-hierarchical view of leadership';
- The concept of 'emphasise the positives' is immensely important to parallel leaders;
- Parallel leadership is emphasised as a means to linking school initiatives to systemic initiatives;
- Parallel leaders 'Trust in the process, even though you don't know where it will end', thereby nurturing risk-taking;
- Student leadership as an extension of parallelism involves authentic engagement in a culture of respect, in visioning and SWP processes, in care for younger students;
- External supports are particularly important if there is an initial 'failure' stigma; and
- Parallel leadership involves shared purpose, the articulation of 'what we stand for'; thereby enabling teachers to focus on 'what is really important', 'what teaching really means', to create a 'Can do' culture of optimism, of choices for a better future.

In summary, the IDEAS Project constructs of teacher leadership, metastrategic principalship and parallel leadership are strongly substantiated by the outcomes of the research. It is apparent from the case studies in particular that leadership is fundamental to each phase of the ***ideas*** process, but the actual form of leadership may vary from phase to phase. Details are included in a paper entitled *Leadership forms and styles and successful school capacity-building*, by Frank Crowther. Preliminary consideration of the forms and styles of leadership that appear to have characterised successful progress through the ***ideas*** process and in successful capacity-building is undertaken in section 5.4, **Implications for leadership development and research.**

But each of the three core IDEAS Leadership constructs would benefit from serious reconsideration to take into account the insights that are contained in Tables 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10 respectively.

5.4 Research question four: *What model for school-based capacity-building emerges from the research?*

NOTE*:* The description that follows was first presented in a research paper entitled *Capacity Building in IDEAS Schools – An Interpretation,* by Frank Crowther. The paper in question derived from the IDEAS-Victoria 2004-6 research and was presented by Frank Crowther to the LRI research team on April 14, 2009. The paper was modified following a range of recommendations from the LRI research team.

Based on responses to research questions one, two and three, analysis of the Victorian *SOS* and *Student Attitudes to School* statistical data bases, and the five case study reports, it is possible to discern ways in which each of the schools enhanced the quality of its priority educational outcomes and embedded processes for sustaining those improvements. That is to say, it is possible as a result of the research to propose a definition of successful school capacity-building and to identify and conceptualise the factors that enable a school to enhance its 'capacity'.

The six factors that were outlined in Table 5.2 in response to the question of *What IDEAS-related factors contributed to the successes of the Victorian IDEAS schools?* are accorded particular importance in this discussion. The six factors are:

The *Readiness* factor – The availability of a highly credible process of school revitalisation (The IDEAS Project) at a point in time and in a structured form that suits the circumstances of a cluster of like-minded school professionals.

The *Longitudinal* factor – Access to a structured process of revitalisation (***ideas***) that enables schools to undertake highly complex developmental processes over an extended period of time.

***The Coherence* factor** – The availability of an explanatory framework for effective school organisation (the RBF) that provides school leaders and teaching professionals with a sense that they work in organisations that are in important ways intelligible and manageable.

The *Leadership* factor – Emphasis on leadership forms (parallelism and its derivatives) that recognise teachers' professionalism and principals' futuristic strategic functions.

The *Mature Engagement* factor – Systematic use of principles of interaction (The IDEAS *Principles of Practice)* that encourage mutual respect and dignity in professional relationships and creative problem-solving.

The *Supportive Systems* factor – Ready availability of reliable information, quality materials and expert personnel to facilitate futuristic school development and to link within-school goals to systemic priorities and resources.

The six basic dynamics of successful school capacity-building that have emerged from the IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-6, research are presented in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.11.

FIGURE 5.1: THE DYNAMICS OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL CAPACITY BUILDING

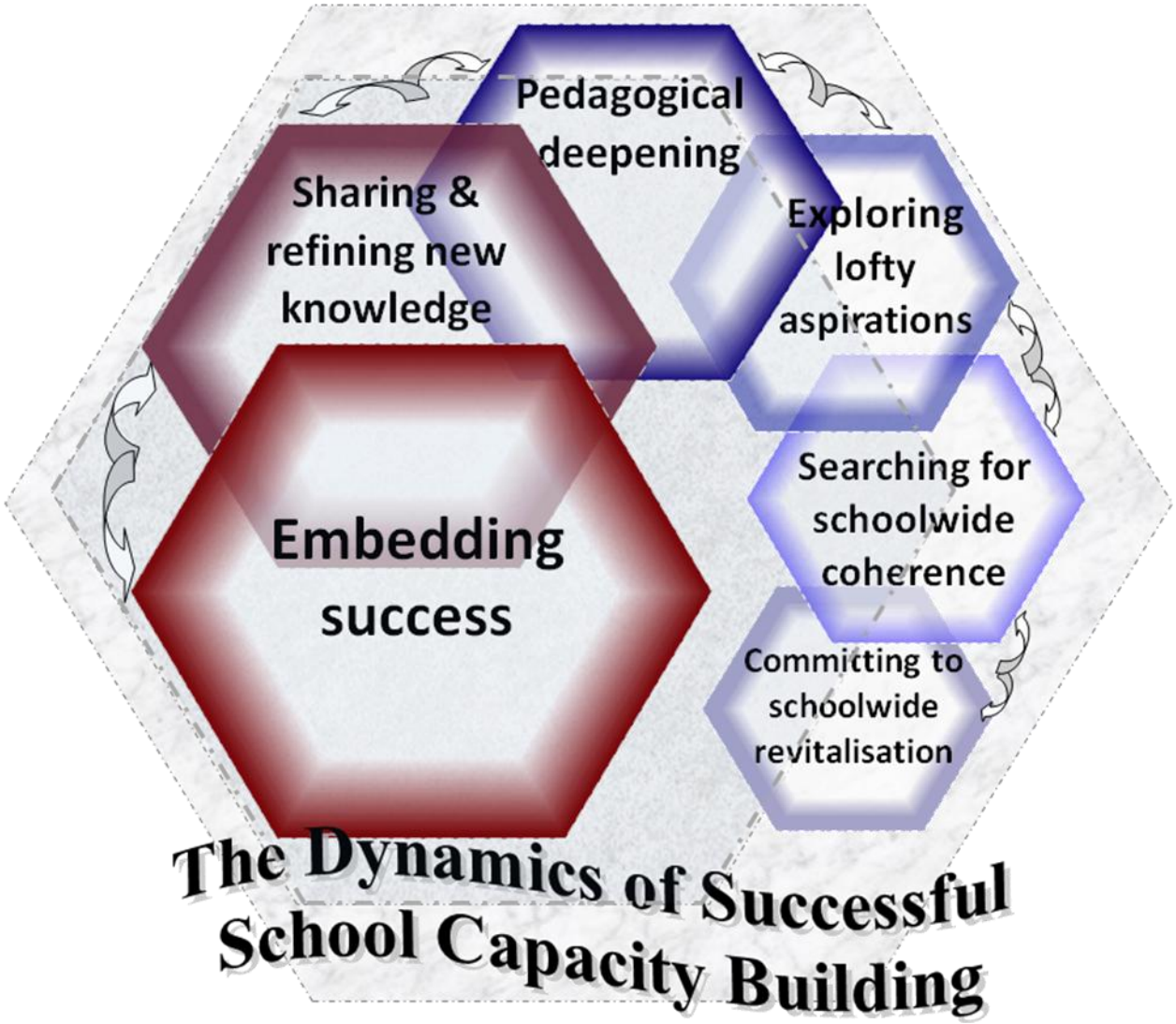


TABLE 5.11: THE SIX BASIC DYNAMICS OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL CAPACITY-BUILDING

Dynamic One –	**Committing to schoolwide revitalisation**
Dynamic Two –	**Searching for schoolwide coherence**
Dynamic Three –	**Exploring lofty aspirations**
Dynamic Four –	**Pedagogical deepening**
Dynamic Five –	**Sharing and refining new knowledge**
Dynamic Six –	**Embedding success**

Following is an expanded description of each dynamic.

***Dynamic One* – Committing to schoolwide revitalisation**

Key descriptors:

- Assertive leadership
- Commitment to schoolwide action
- Expressed confidence in a process of revitalisation

Illustrative quotes:

It was announced that Meadow Fair North was to be part of the Broadmeadows Schools Regeneration Project and would be merging with three other schools and that our school would, in effect, cease to exist within 4 to 5 years. This was possibly our first BIG STEP along the journey. As a staff we made a commitment to go out with a BANG not a whimper and to give our students every opportunity for a bright future. (MFN teacher leader)

It gave us a chance as a new leadership team to revitalise as a whole-of-school. We wanted something that would endure beyond personalities and IDEAS gave us that opportunity. (Bellbridge principal)

An external review was perceived by Kealba staff as very harsh and suggested to them that the school was a 'failing school'. Teachers said that introductory IDEAS activities assisted them to overcome feelings that 'the school demise was all our fault' and 'allowed us to find a point at which to pick up the ball'. (Kealba teacher leader)

The 'no blame' concept was very powerful and the IDEAS view that 'teacher are dedicated professionals and we can work together to improve educational opportunities for students' provided a great start to the process and set the scene for the next two years. (La Trobe principal)

All five schools made deliberate, conscious decisions, during the period August-November, 2004, to revitalise themselves. All five did so for either of one of two motivations – a sense of frustration (or 'righteous indignation') from assertions of inadequacy or a sense that they had 'fallen flat' and 'needed a serious re-charge'.

All five schools engaged with IDEAS primarily at the behest of one or more within-school leaders – most notably the principal, whose expressed concern was dominantly educational (as opposed to personal, political or organisational) and centred on the quality of school outcomes. Importantly, the IDEAS emphasis on development of schoolwide teaching and learning processes was accepted by all five schools as an important condition of their participation.

In each case, leaders at the school showed resourcefulness and adeptness in bringing IDEAS, as a major external initiative, into the school. In two schools, this initiative was entirely internal to the school but in the case of the three 'targeted' schools, IDEAS was entered into with a degree of external (systemic) provocation or suggestion. All five schools engaged because they were provided with a well-established and well-known process (IDEAS) that utilised highly credible consultants, emphasised teachers' integrity (e.g. 'teachers are the key', 'no blame' relationships) and assured teachers that their professionalism would be enhanced by the revitalisation process. In the 'targeted' schools this consideration was important because of teachers' reluctance to engage in a process that emphasised their presumed failure. In the two remaining schools, the decision to commit was in some ways more complex, with principals taking a strong stance that merely achieving adequate school outcomes was not sufficient.

Finally, the assurance of highly credible, ongoing external support and 2-way communication with the USQ-IDEAS team, and the knowledge that they would be participating in a cluster of schools with similar interests, challenges and aspirations, were very important considerations in the five schools making their initial commitments.

Important 'commitment' questions:

- EITHER How do we get past 'We're okay' and make our school an outstanding success?

  OR How can we overcome our sorry reputation and gain respectability?
- Do we have access to a proven process that emphasises 'teachers are the key' in successful school revitalisation?
- Can we make arrangements to form a 'we're all in it together' cluster as we undertake our own revitalisation process?

***Dynamic Two* – Searching for schoolwide coherence**

Key descriptors:

- Staff buy-in
- Shared understanding of school operations and outcomes
- Organisationwide leadership

Illustrative quotes:

The Research based Framework made us (Bellbridge) think about issues such as infrastructure design. It focuses thinking on what needs to happen and how. And it gives new teachers somewhere to start in understanding the school.

When we found out that the kids were just as disillusioned as we (teachers) were it challenged us to examine ourselves closely. (La Trobe teacher leader)

The big thing is collective responsibility for kids. We began to see where the learning was going. There began to develop a conscious effort to work together and working from where the students were at.

Our staff trusted the IDEAS D.I. data more than any other data they had. And writing our own report on ourselves was very powerful.

The IDEAS emphasis on positives meant that we could accept the negatives and move on – because the negatives were not the primary focus of our attention.

. . . the skilful conversation, the IDEAS principles, hearing other voices – made us take a step back. We began to develop a common language, a common focus. Disagree or agree, a least we were talking about the same thing.

The period February-June, 2005 was critical in the IDEAS journeys of the five schools. All five case study schools completed the IDEAS Diagnostic Inventory early in the ***ideas*** process (i.e. *Discovery* phase, February-June, 2005). As a result of staff analysis of the DI data, and associated report preparations, all five schools recognised the need to develop particular within-school elements, most notably their visions and schoolwide pedagogical processes, and to strive for clear within-school alignment between key organisational variables, as well as the perceptions of stakeholder groups. It might be said that the *Discovering* phase of the IDEAS Project gave most staff members, as opposed to school leaders, their first real chance to 'buy in' to the process. In that sense it represented a critical juncture in the generation of schoolwide understanding and shared commitment.

All five schools responded to their DI analyses by activating IDEAS School Management Teams (ISMTs) and preparing, sometimes in conjunction with the IDEAS consultancy team, diagnostic, 'warts 'n all' school reports. They then engaged in a range of IDEAS Project values clarification and visioning exercises.

The IDEAS strategy of emphasising 'positives' was critically important in all five schools at this time since it conveyed that the core IDEAS principle of 'success breeds success' contained substance, not hollow rhetoric. Relatedly, all five schools were introduced to the IDEAS *Principles of Practice* and *Professional Conversation* strategies at this time. In so doing, issues of staff conflict, antagonism and alienation were able to be addressed in substantially non-threatening environments. Invariably, the success of these strategies

reflected the 'stepping back' of principals and the development of new skills and confidence on the part of ISMT Facilitators. The seeds of teacher leadership were thus sown in some schools at this time, nurtured by the support and encouragement of principals.

The research data, particularly the 2005 SOS data, make clear that teachers' professional self-image did not change significantly at this stage. Many teachers were clearly still concerned at the amount of time and effort that IDEAS might require of them, and some thought the process remained vague and perhaps unable to address pervasive school challenges.

But Peter Drucker's concept of 'being in tune' had captivated the imaginations of most staff in all five schools and encouraged them to search for alignment as a constructive and creative process. For many teachers, this was their first opportunity to engage in 'big picture' school planning and critique. While glimpses of 'Is this what you want us to do?' thinking and dialogue continued to be observed by the USQ IDEAS team, a noticeable degree of confidence and assertiveness also became very apparent in teachers' demeanour, particularly within the ISMT. Alignment as a *structural* concept appears to have begun to evolve at this stage into alignment as a *social* and *intellectual* concept, as evidenced in heightened trust and coherence in teachers' understandings of schoolwide processes – 'We are all on the same page' – and the appearance of a degree of hope and a meaningful sense of collective responsibility.

<u>Important 'coherence' questions:</u>

- Is the evaluation database that we are using credible, fair and trustworthy?
- Are discussion protocols available to enable us to develop respectful professional relationships?
- Is there an explicit acceptance that teacher leadership and principal leadership are of equivalent importance in addressing schoolwide educational priorities?

***Dynamic Three* – Exploring lofty aspirations**

Key descriptors:

- Aspirational thinking
- Visioning
- Schoolwide pedagogical development

Illustrative quotes:

'What our kids will need in their future worlds' was our stimulus for thinking once we knew a bit about who we were. It's an 'aspirations' part of the process.

Our kids (at MFN) challenged us to be better. (The conversations) opened us up to new things and created opportunities to learn.

A student said*: Teachers are the key. They encourage us as persons – as individuals . . . [adding] . . . We deal with strengths not weaknesses here. The school doesn't focus on the negatives. Even with a 'bad' student our teachers will find a good thing to focus on.*

We recognised when kids do something really special – lifting the bar higher is not just academic . . . our kids are often [the educational] pioneers [in their family]. We helped them make connections between learning and the future. We are always wanting to help kids shine.

Through providing opportunities for parents to participate in learning themselves, through English and Parenting classes, a positive learning climate has been built at Meadow Fair North. The value placed on school and education by the adults has set a positive and empowering example for students contributing to greater student participation and less absenteeism.

The sense of collective achievement that came with enhanced schoolwide organisational understanding, achieved through analysis of the D.I. surveys and follow-up in the form of report preparation and consideration of concrete issues of 'alignment', made it relatively easy for leaders in each school to begin to engage staff, and in some instances students and parents, in 'aspirational thinking' activities. The high level of public debate of educational standards at the time, focusing on topics such as NAPLAN, League tables and incentives for outstanding teacher performance, probably contributed to this situation.

All five schools expended very substantial amounts of time in undertaking the core IDEAS process of visioning, with the average timeframe across the schools encompassing the period June, 2005-May, 2006. Principals and ISMT members, particularly facilitators, indicated that they were reluctant to be hurried with what they observed to be a highly complex, deep and challenging process and would not willingly have decisions about their school identity and core processes imposed upon them from outside. Specific IDEAS Project exercises that were undertaken at this (*Envisioning*) stage of the process, sometimes in substantially modified form, included: simulated visioning activities: 'What does good teaching and/or learning look like at our school?' activities (with both teachers and students): the use of the Sydney CEO Photolanguage Australia Series to explore both teachers' aspirations for their school and their own personal pedagogical gifts; futuristic Y Gen projections; and schoolwide Successful Pedagogical Practices analyses.

The vitality that emerged as the three core IDEAS *Envisioning* processes (i.e. visioning/values/SWP frameworks) unfolded enabled teachers to begin to take on a strong affective/emotional quality in addressing issues relating to their respective schools. While 'blockers' and sceptics continued to surface at most, if not all, schools, and a degree of impatience emerged at some, a sense of exuberance became apparent in all schools at this stage. The case study reports make clear that the processes in question had quite dramatic ups and downs, but in all five schools by the time the vision and SWP were completed the school had committed itself to relatively exalted

educational goals and had achieved a heightened sense of professional esteem. Thus, in all case study schools except Kealba (where the 'hangover effect' of the 'targeted school' status continued to frustrate and demoralise school leaders and staff generally) SOS data showed important improvements in May, 2006.

All five schools, through a combination of their formal leadership and ISMT assertiveness, placed new and heightened expectations upon themselves once their visioning process was completed. This was evident in commitments made at IDEAS forums to seeing the IDEAS Project through to the point where student learning was impacted upon positively; in the expressed intent of ISMT members to design their own professional learning workshop materials and manage their implementation; in the use of language, particularly metaphor, to enliven vision statements; in the emergence of within-school professional pressure to think positively and ambitiously about what students could achieve; and in the exercise of serious professional scrutiny of student performance data bases. A mindset of 'We can think creatively', 'It is important that we do better'; 'Doing better is an exciting professional endeavour' began to permeate the activities of each school, driven largely by principals but supported by ISMTs and reinforced by the USQ team and cluster colleagues.

But in achieving their vision and, subsequently, their schoolwide pedagogical framework (SWP), and in considering their applications in classrooms, each school began to acquire a common pedagogical language that encouraged heightened levels of professional dialogue and that enabled individual teachers, and teams of teachers, to see themselves as creative practitioners. The research data suggest that the net effect was a new vitality in teachers' relationships and activities that reflected in their opinions of their workplaces and themselves as professionals. It might be said that the new forms of *social capital* that had emerged from the DI analyses enabled *intellectual capital*, in the form of vision statements in particular, and also SWP frameworks, to be generated, and as these evolved they provided impetus for the further enrichment of the school's *social capital*.

Finally, it is significant that creation of an SWP in each school proved to be a complex and difficult process, made more so by the absence of exemplars of this fundamentally new construct. The fact that, by this stage of the ***ideas*** process, some schools were showing major improvements in both SOS and SAS data relating to student engagement suggests that the effort expended was worthwhile.

Important 'aspirational' questions:

- In an ideal world, 10 years from now, what would we wish our school to be like?
- Have we communicated to our students and community that we have very high expectations of, and aspirations for, them?
- How might we use language and imagery to articulate our aspirations for our school to both ourselves and our communities?

Dynamic Four **– Pedagogical deepening**

Key descriptors:

- Pedagogical principle
- Teachers as leaders
- 3-DP (Three dimensional pedagogy)

Illustrative quotes:

> *Through the IDEAS journey we have been able to engage in deep conversations and professional development . . . . We have together been able to transform our pedagogical understanding to reflect what we now understand about student engagement, participation and the development of each student as a whole person.*
>
> *We no longer have to re-invent everything. We have our SWP as our umbrella.*
>
> *Pedagogy is not just in or for or about classrooms . . . it is up, down and across the school. It is teaching our kids our way.*

Our (MFN) data are driving us too because we want to improve. All the data are shared with us at staff meetings. Previously we were not shown data warts and all. Now we dissect it and take responsibility for it. Our kids' data is our responsibility!

We began to think deeply about the issues, the quality of our teaching and learning and develop a real focus on enabling our students to experience success and real-life learning.

With the amalgamation we are in a kind of limbo space in a way. However we need to make sure that what we have developed permeates the school. People are encouraged to keep reflecting, thinking and developing, especially around our schoolwide pedagogy – that's the key to changing things for our kids.

At 3.15 they (MFN) are no longer students here – they are part of a community. So we had to ask questions of ourselves. What is it that we are teaching them about participating in a community? What interest are we showing in their achievements or involvements outside of school? . . . we're better at this now! Kids share their excitements and we celebrate their successes no matter where they are achieved.

In all five schools, once teachers' aspirations became more ambitious, and they had developed school pedagogical frameworks, the focus of attention invariably shifted to pedagogical practices, particularly students' learning experiences. The schools devoted very extensive periods of time – well in excess of a year in all cases – to activities associated with this objective.

Current thinking about the characteristics, needs and learning styles of 21st century learners (often through consideration of 'Y Gen' research and literature) captivated attention in all schools. Major effort was expended to make learning environments more 'vibrant', to nurture student leadership and/or 'voice', to develop programs that were more responsive to student needs (e.g. literacy for underachieving boys) and to engage students in pedagogical analyses.

But in all five schools, the IDEAS emphasis on developing a schoolwide pedagogical framework, and then transposing that framework into classroom practices, was a relatively new and daunting professional challenge. It involved an explication of what 'pedagogy' means, a sharing of personal talents and expertise, a recognition of limited personal understanding of particular issues, and participation in collaborative intellectual analysis of routine teaching, learning and assessment practices, that some teachers found 'too personal'. The assertive leadership of ISMT facilitators at this juncture was essential to success. Where 'Country Club' staffroom mindsets had to be confronted, where confused SWP frameworks proved unable to be clarified and transposed into classroom practices, where the staff did not address directly the identification of 'our schoolwide professional priority', the task of the facilitators was particularly challenging.

Indeed, all schools encountered difficulties of one kind or another in 'breaking the SWP open' and in undertaking pedagogical 'deepening' processes. This was also no doubt partly due to a lack of completed conceptual development in the IDEAS Project itself (for example, in transposing SWP principles into subject area pedagogical strategies) but it also reflected a reluctance in some schools to commit to action plans that were interpreted as imposing particular pedagogical styles on individual teachers. In secondary schools in particular, the demands of external examinations also limited teachers' capacity and preparedness to engage in concerted 'deepening' of SWP principles. Furthermore, in at least two schools, a question at this stage from system supervisors along the lines of 'Your schoolwide pedagogical work is fine, but how will it result in higher literacy achievement levels?' had somewhat demoralising effects, since the school had not necessarily created its SWP with literacy in mind, nor yet had the time to transpose the SWP into comprehensive literacy applications. Questions such as this tend to reveal the very limited understanding in the broader professional community of the full complexity of sustained school improvement processes and also the extreme difficulty posed for school-based leaders in managing their own pedagogical improvement processes. While there was no suggestion in the five case study schools

that the school's formal leaders and IDEAS facilitators regarded intellectual capital (e.g. literacy achievement) as in any way less important than social capital (e.g. student well-being), there was a strong suggestion from within-school leaders that the apparent need that they perceived for creation of social capital, particularly shared trust and respect, to precede an emphasis on students' intellectual capital was poorly understood and appreciated by some supervisory staff.

In all five cases, the 2007 Departmental Student Attitudes (SAS) data indicate that students were conscious of their teachers' heightened pedagogical efforts to contextualise learning, to make learning environments more vibrant, and to make teaching more inspiring and learning more interactive and engaged. In some schools, attendance rates improved and behaviour problems diminished. In all five schools, students' attitudes towards their school experiences changed very positively as pedagogical deepening efforts got underway. But teachers' May, 2007 SOS data were mixed, reflecting the fact that 'deepening' activities were still in their preliminary stage of implementation. Certainly, serious data analysis was being undertaken in all schools at that time, mentoring activities were being established, school goals were being shared with parents, school-selected experts were being brought into schools to facilitate professional development, and the confidence to seek professional feedback regarding pedagogical practices was increasing, but none of these initiatives was entrenched.

The2007 Student Opinion Survey and SOS data, in combination, may attest to the validity of the concept of 'pedagogical deepening', in which IDEAS Project teachers engage during the *Actioning* phase in comprehensive development of individual pedagogical principles. They also engage in intensive scrutiny of their personal pedagogical practices, with a view to explicating them, linking them to the work of co-professionals and enhancing their effectiveness. But while a mindset of 'IDEAS is a never-ending process, it is not a product or even a project' began to emerge in school and cluster discussions at this juncture, the difficulties associated with comprehensive pedagogical change remained at least as overtly evident as did the achievements.

Important 'pedagogical deepening' questions:

- Do we have a clear picture of what we regard as 'success for our students'?
- Are the school's pedagogical deepening efforts being facilitated by highly credible teacher leaders?
- Does the school's Professional Development program encourage teachers to explore their personal talents and skills and develop a heightened sense of professional insight?

***Dynamic Five* – Sharing and refining new knowledge**

Key descriptors:

- New knowledge and insights
- Ethical public relations and promotion
- Double loop feedback

Illustrative quotes:

Where once issues of pedagogy were shunned during staff lunch breaks or in before or after school chats, such conversations and debates are now often heard in the staff room. There is lots of professional dialogue and chatter between teachers – stuff that visitors to our school often comment on – and all done in a constructive, no blame way.

We have staff constantly looking at the 'bigger picture' – the best ways for students and the school, teams working and thinking together, new ideas embraced and accepted and everyone taking pride in all school achievements.

Before IDEAS values were not really discussed. There are now lots of forums for teachers to express their opinions and lots of internal teacher led professional development.

Having the opportunity to disseminate our journey helped us to clarify our thinking. It was a renewal for us, and a cementing – a 'backwash effect'.

*We have learned to use metaphor to excite parents. The **Bright Futures** images in our communications get people thinking and contributing with real passion.*

As evidence accumulated of IDEAS-related success, in late 2007, all five schools proceeded to engage in comprehensive exercises to share their achievements with their immediate audiences – staff, students and community members, as well as cluster members, IDEAS schools further afield and visiting educators. The core school agency in this process was invariably the ISMT, and the key individuals the principal and IDEAS facilitator. In so doing, the individuals and agencies in question were provided with what they regarded as important clarification, linking to systemic priorities, reinforcement and renewal.

Activities that were undertaken tended to focus on the 2004-8 SOS and Student Attitudes data of the schools and the concrete outcomes of Visioning/Values/SWP developments, but also featured students' achievements and successes, particularly in relation to student leadership development and systemic programme priorities. Teacher leaders increasingly assumed leadership roles in cluster and district projects and in so doing made their school's newly created *social* capital (mostly in the form of professional relationships and leadership dynamics) and *intellectual* capital (in the form of visions, SWP and also processual insights) available to other schools, their region and their communities.

At this point, the IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-6, cluster began to develop a reputation as having achieved a degree of systemic regeneration. Of significance is that ISMT members from all five case study schools then proceeded to support other regional schools in their IDEAS journeys. In some cases they travelled interstate and hosted interstate and international visitors. Education authorities in other Australian States and Territories

began to inquire regarding the IDEAS-Victoria successes and in a number of instances subsequently undertook the IDEAS Project.

In essence, the sharing of insights towards the culmination of the long-term and very challenging process that the five schools had undertaken amounted to much more than a one-way dissemination of information. It incorporated a feedback ('backwash') mechanism that proved very helpful to the schools themselves, it served to cement gains that were perceived internally as significant but had not been tested externally, and it provided school staff, particularly principals and teacher leaders, with an important celebratory opportunity. While the school leaders in question consistently took the position that they felt a moral responsibility to share the benefits of their journey with other professionals, the point remains that they devoted considerable effort to the 'sharing' activities in question. Perhaps most particularly, they volunteered for the case study research that is basic to this report.

Important 'sharing insights' questions:

- What have we created at our school that is worth sharing?
- How will we get useful feedback and how will we use that feedback?
- How will we make use of creative communications strategies?

***Dynamic Six* – Embedding success**

Key descriptors:

- The ISMT as custodian of the school's distinctive achievements
- Embedded parallel leadership
- Revitalisation as an ongoing schoolwide process

Illustrative quotes:

Parallel leadership takes more time but it is worth it. Questions come up earlier. There are more heads around the problem. Problems raised by staff come with solutions. There is greater shared responsibility. More people put their hand up.

We have working party teams… I lead the communications and culture team. The plan when we become one is to collate a giant size book with sections/chapters for each school to celebrate the significance of their past and what they see as their greatest achievements and then a section for the new stories which will unfold together.

One teacher who had worked at the school for a number of years commented that, *if I don't feel that I have an answer to a particular issue, I know that I can work with others to develop an answer. Not long ago, that would have been impossible.*

Teachers pointed out that the agreed Vision and SWP enabled the school to respond effectively when the Regional Office appointed a literacy coach who came with a predetermined literacy strategy. However, rather than risk the strategy being viewed by staff as an external 'add-on', the school was able to successfully argue for an approach more in sympathy with the school's newly developed pedagogical understanding.

I need to model for younger teachers – that's sustainability – developing capacity in others.

All five schools towards the end of the 2008 school year recognised the vulnerability of what had been achieved through their engagement in the IDEAS Project and took deliberate steps to attempt to embed their core strategies for success. This tended to take three forms – structural, via an ongoing ISMT, conceptual, via parallel leadership processes and processual, via professional learning strategies. More specifically, by the end of 2008 there was evidence in each school of explicit recognition of parallel

leadership concepts and strategies; affirmation of the ISMT and its functions; ongoing refinement of SWP principles; creation of strategies for personal pedagogical development; the explicit induction of new staff to IDEAS concepts and processes and the re-design and regeneration of school environments. Some schools also undertook a re-administration of the IDEAS Diagnostic Inventory at this time, in so doing confirming the progress they had made in refining core school processes, particularly pedagogical processes, and infrastructural arrangements.

Two side effects of school-based 'embedding' activities were particularly apparent by the end of 2008, four years after the commencement of the IDEAS Project. First was the insistence of schools that 'We have changed forever. We will never be the same again. There is no going back' and, secondly, 'IDEAS is a process without an end. Concepts like parallel leadership, "no blame", schoolwide pedagogical focus and "teachers are the key", once experienced, stay with you forever. We will always be an IDEAS school'.

At the same time, key IDEAS personnel in some cases transferred to other schools, taking with them their newly-acquired professional expertise and appreciation. While the influence of these individuals has not been investigated formally, anecdotal evidence suggests that their new roles are impacted upon substantially by their formal IDEAS experiences.

<u>Important 'embedding' questions:</u>

- Is parallel leadership well-understood and valued by the school staff?
- Is a school management team mechanism able to be maintained permanently?
- Are induction strategies in place for new staff?

Based on this framework for successful school capacity-building, and the 'important questions' that have been identified for the six dynamics, the following definition is proposed:

> ***Capacity-building in schools is a generative, professionally-led process that inspires the creation of vibrant workplace culture, relationships and identity***

and results in sustained levels of enhanced school achievement in areas of school priority.

In IDEAS schools, capacity-building is set in motion through the overt actions of school leaders and is nurtured and firmly established when the professional community of the school commits itself to enhancing the well-being of students, current and future.

School leaders direct processes of organisational diagnosis, alignment and image-building – principals emphasise and facilitate the growth of lofty educational aspirations and professional trust while teacher leaders emphasise and facilitate the growth of schoolwide pedagogical principles and enriched learning environments for students.

The new forms of heightened teacher professionalism and student engagement that are forthcoming are shared willingly with school authorities and communities and are enriched through feedback mechanisms. They are sustained through the embedding of schoolwide leadership strategies, a schoolwide management structure and school-directed professional learning processes.

5.5 Research question five: *What implications, if any, emerge from the research for schooling in disadvantaged contexts*?

Schools that are designated 'targeted', 'failing' or 'unsatisfactory' will very often be confronted by challenges of low expectations, a culture of blame, high staff turnover and student transience, poor attendance rates, high levels of behaviour problems, limited parent involvement, vandalism, facilities abuse and inadequate or inappropriate pedagogical resources. Not unsurprisingly, teacher morale in such situations is frequently low, and teacher preparation for addressing the issues in question is often limited.

The 19 'targeted' schools that participated in the IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-6 research confronted most of these challenges. In conjunction with their involvement in the IDEAS Project, most found ways of addressing the challenges in question. This is reflected in the survey data that were reported in Table 4.3 and Tables 4.6a and 4.6.b. It is particularly apparent in the experiences of the three case study schools that had 'targeted' status at the commencement of IDEAS. After a four year period of engagement with IDEAS, and other systemic initiatives, it can be concluded that the culture of each of the three schools had changed for the better, that teacher morale and esteem had risen significantly and student attitudes had also improved significantly. Thus, the three case study descriptions manifest significant insights regarding school revitalisation in disadvantaged contexts.

In the descriptions that follow, each of the six basic dynamics of successful school capacity-building that derive from the research is re-oriented to the circumstances of disadvantaged schools. The insights that derive from the three case study analyses provide the basis for the brief description that follow.

School Capacity Building – Disadvantaged Schools

***Dynamic One* – Committing to schoolwide revitalisation**

Each case study school engaged in IDEAS in a concerted effort to overcome what was perceived as an image of unjust claims of inadequacy. Each had reached a juncture where teacher morale was rock-bottom. Within-school conflict in some instances was high, and 'blame games' dominated relationships. Each school had been identified by systemic authorities as unsatisfactory, and had been provided with a range of options for revitalisation, or regeneration, including enrolment in the IDEAS Project.

Principals and teacher leaders in the three schools indicated that IDEAS was a central, but not singular, instrument in enabling them to re-invent themselves over a three-four year period. Three principles emerged repeatedly in dialogue with the school leaders in question.

First, the core IDEAS principle of 'teachers are the key' enabled disaffected and disillusioned teachers to view the IDEAS Project as respectful of their professionalism and as providing them with an avenue for demonstrating their vocational commitment. The associated constructs of teacher leadership and three-dimensional pedagogy provided assurances to teachers that, if they committed to the IDEAS Project, they would be assured of treatment as dignified professionals.

Second, the IDEAS *Principle of Practice* of 'no blame' proved to be immensely important in all three case study schools from the very outset of the project. It took surprisingly little time for teachers to incorporate this principle into their professional interactions, beginning with the first IDEAS Orientation workshop. The immediate effects were evident in schoolwide analyses off the Diagnostic Inventory databases, and invariably became more important as the process evolved.

Third, the principal in all three case study schools was notable for his/her categorical commitment to working in disadvantaged school contexts. All three principals made their personal values both explicit and public and challenged teachers to do the same. Each saw the IDEAS Project as an instrument for transposing values of social justice and equity into educational constructs, starting with a visioning process that each indicated an eagerness to lead.

***Dynamic Two* – Searching for schoolwide coherence**

Each case study school completed the Diagnostic Inventory that is a derivative of the IDEAS *RBF* and in each case uncovered fundamental flaws in school organisation, culture, developmental processes and pedagogical approaches. At this juncture, a number of responses might have been forthcoming, ranging from abandonment of the project, to top-down behavioural prescriptions, to efforts to discredit the DI instrument, to calls for an external saviour. In reality, none of these scenarios unfolded.

What unfolded was a schoolwide decision, proposed by the IDEAS School Management Team, and ratified by the full staff, to work through the full range of identified gaps, inadequacies and flaws, commencing with values analysis and futuristic visioning, and then moving into pedagogical development and environmental design.

The IDEAS Project provided proven mechanisms and resources for these needs to be addressed in sequence, taking into full account key contextual variables that impacted upon the school. But other systemic programs were also accessed at this time and were used to advantage in all three case study schools. Ongoing reminders by LRI staff of how IDEAS-related activities were in fact contributing to the achievement of enhanced school 'coherence' (or 'alignment' or 'tunefulness') were also significant in contributing to this end. Also important were IDEAS forums in which representatives of the 'targeted' schools were enabled to share their challenges and successes with colleagues from mainstream schools, demonstrating that teacher-based ingenuity could enhance overall school well-being and that educational leaders are invariably characterised by 'big picture' thinking and understanding of issues.

By the completion of the first year of IDEAS implementation, all three case study schools had developed an understanding of particular within-school variables that were inadequately developed or that were in contradiction with other equally important variables. Significant differences in perceptions amongst teachers, students and parents of the school's operations had also been identified and critiqued.

The RBF, with its clear conceptualisation of what a 'coherent' school looks like, thereby provided the 'umbrella' that enabled the three 'targeted' schools to begin to visualise themselves as positive, healthy organisations. In that sense, the RBF enabled principals and teachers to foresee the day when their professional efforts would not only be more focused and purposeful but also more efficient and, indeed, more collegial. The incentive to continue their revitalisation initiatives, and in fact extend their effort, was thus provided.

***Dynamic Three* – Exploring lofty aspirations**

The issue of teachers' expectations in relation to students' achievement is comprehensively developed in educational research and theory. There is general acceptance in authoritative educational literature that student achievement is substantially, though certainly not totally, reflective of teachers' aspirations and expectations. But few school systems have been able to consistently address the issue, as is evident in current critiques of indigenous education in Australia and globally.

The three case study schools addressed this issue head-on, via the IDEAS Project and a range of associated systemic programs. They did so through two particular emphases.

First, principals took a definitive stance in leading visioning processes and in ensuring that vision and values statements that were developed reflected positive features of the school's socio-cultural context. In so doing, they laid important foundations for students to think of themselves in positive terms and also for teachers to look for positives rather than negatives. The term 'aspirational leadership' emerged from the researchers' observations of the work of the three principals in question.

Second, professional learning exercises that involved values and pedagogical development engaged teachers in futuristic thinking and problem-solving where the suitability of current practices to the needs of alienated and disengaged students was a focal point. By engaging collectively in these exercises, with the assistance of the IDEAS *Principles of Practice,* teachers were enabled to de-personalise their analyses of their personal practices, and to think aspirationally as a group. What frequently resulted were lists of 'Good teaching is . . .' or 'Students learn effectively when . . .' that provided ambitious but attainable statements of revitalised pedagogical practice.

***Dynamic Four* – Pedagogical deepening**

Fundamental to IDEAS is a differentiation between teaching and learning. While the IDEAS construct of SWP allows schools to develop pedagogical frameworks that emphasise either teaching or learning, each of the three 'targeted' case study schools used students as the reference point in their SWP developmental processes. In so doing, teachers' attention was directed to Y Gen characteristics, to futuristic learning processes and to the positive resolution of longstanding issues of literacy, behaviour management and so on. Highly qualified resource persons were brought into these initiatives and invariably complemented school-based IDEAS developments.

The research data suggest that, as teachers' attention and effort were directed to enhancing students' well-being, through modified pedagogical routines and practices, students responded directly and positively. With the creation of more vibrant learning environments and student-oriented teaching methods, student engagement increased. With the creation of student leadership initiatives, student responsibility and engagement increased further.

As the emphasis on students and their well-being became more explicit in 'targeted' schools, behavioural problems diminished significantly and students' attitudes towards their schools, and associated sense of identity and belonging, increased. Of importance is that, after four years of IDEAS implementation, academic achievement in the three case study schools had begun to improve noticeably, challenges of student transience notwithstanding.

***Dynamic Five* – Sharing and refining new knowledge**

'Targeted' schools are invariably located in 'targeted' communities – communities that invariably are characterised by socio-economic disadvantage and, frequently, marginalised, ethnic and cultural groups and a high percentage of non-English speaking citizens. Parents in such communities frequently have limited understanding of the

processes of schooling that engage their children and limited confidence or skills to engage with the school themselves.

Significant in the work of the three 'targeted' case study schools was a deliberate effort to share the products of IDEAS visioning, values and pedagogical processes with parents, and also to involve parents in those processes. In making their 'newly created knowledge' public, and accessible to parents, the principals and teacher leaders in question demonstrated that they understand parents' circumstances, have students' well-being at heart, that they themselves are real people and that schools can be vibrant, exciting and welcoming places.

The communication of 'Can do' messages to their communities resulted in feedback that teachers invariably found to be encouraging and frequently insightful. It is concluded that the impacts on school culture, particularly student culture, when school-based leaders in 'targeted' contexts share their visions, aspirations, achievements and creative products openly with their communities cannot be over-stated.

***Dynamic Six* – Embedding success**

Educational development research is replete with descriptions of schools in challenging circumstances that created admirable success for a time, then regressed into a state of underachievement and lack of clear purpose.

The 'targeted' case study schools were pointedly aware of this situation and, as they entered the *Actioning* phase of IDEAS, took concerted steps to attempt to address it. Most notably, they explicitly emphasised the concepts of teacher leadership and parallel leadership as ways of ensuring that the school-based leadership that they thought necessary to maintain the gains that they had made through IDEAS and other initiatives would in fact be maintained. Two of the three schools developed their own definitions of leadership, drawing on IDEAS resources in doing so. Relatedly, all three schools emphasised the importance of their IDEAS School Management Team as a

structure to provide continuity in the face of changing staff. All also indicated a preference for recruitment of teaching staff who could specifically contribute to their SWP and to ensuring that incoming principals understood and appreciated their SWP and would be prepared to enhance it, rather than abandon it.

In summary, the three 'targeted' case study schools differed from the 'mainstream' case study in the intensity of their application of particular IDEAS processes. In doing so, they demonstrated that capacity-building in disadvantaged schools is a somewhat different process to what it is in mainstream schools, and requires more concerted leadership, strategic thinking and community-building. The finding of the research that capacity-building in disadvantaged schools is both describable, possible and professionally rewarding is perhaps amongst the most important insights to emanate from this research project.

5.6 Research question six: *What adjustments, if any, emerge as necessary to the LRI explanatory models for sustained school improvement?*

Based on the outcomes of the 2008 Victorian IDEAS research, significant adjustments are proposed to the four core IDEAS Project components – the **RBF,** parallel leadership, 3-DP (particularly the second dimension, namely schoolwide pedagogy) and the ***ideas*** process.

The first of the two core components that has guided the IDEAS Project since its inception in 1997 is the *Research-based Framework for Enhancing School Outcomes (RBF).* The RBF has served an outstanding purpose over the past decade in enabling educators to depict their institutions around an 'outcomes' element and four 'contributory' elements, and to propose ways of enhancing their institutions through concerted leadership, focused effort and professional learning directed at the elements in question.

The IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-6 research affirms the essential integrity and validity of the RBF, but provides documented evidence to suggest a number of significant adjustments. Of

particular note are the following interpretations from the case studies and systemic database regarding the characteristics of the RBF:

- **The notion of 'capacity for ongoing sustainable development' should be included as a core function of the *School outcomes* element**.

  This recommendation derives from the observation in all five case study schools that, key to the achievements of each, was the embedding of a process (i.e. ***ideas***) that in itself constitutes a major achievement, but, additionally, extends the construct of 'outcomes' to incorporate a process dimension. A full research-based description of the process school-based capacity-building follows in the next section in this report.

- **The contributory element of *Strategic foundations* should be re-defined to focus on those aspects of a school's operations that pre-empt successful strategic development.**

  In the case study schools these aspects were found to include: effective leadership and management roles and functions; cultural artifacts such as an imaginative vision; adequate 'built environment' facilities and amenities; appropriate staffing; agreed protocols for professional development; and strong external support systems.

- **The contributory element of *Cohesive community* should be modified to incorporate a quality of dynamism.**

  The case study schools in all cases used the IDEAS Project to develop vibrant, dynamic school visions and pedagogical processes. The notion of 'Cultural vibrancy and cohesion' is thought to better reflect this outcome of the research.

- **The contributory element of *Schoolwide pedagogy* should be re-conceptualised to incorporate two schoolwide pedagogical processes, namely 'development' of SWP and 'deepening' of SWP.**

  This observation derives from the observation in all five case study schools that, to develop a schoolwide pedagogical framework is one thing, to apply it in teachers'

professional practice is quite another. The second pedagogical dimension ('deepening') has historically been accorded too little attention in the IDEAS Project.

- **The contributory element of *Infrastructural design* should be extended beyond that of 'infrastructures' to incorporate human resource development.**

  The notion of 'generative design' captures what this element was observed in the case study schools to manifest. It also reflects three levels of professional operation – the classroom, school and community – that were observed to be the focus of generative activity. Also of importance is that the 'generative design' contributory element should also be relocated in the RBF so that it follows the pedagogical element, thus capturing the sequential relationship between pedagogical development and generative design that was observed in the case study schools.

- **The IDEAS process of *Professional supports* should be re-cast so that it emphasises professional learning as a schoolwide process.**

  The IDEAS *Principles of Practice* were found to be fundamental to successful professional learning in the five case study schools, as were the IDEAS tools for professional conversation and skilful discussion. These features should be explicit in the re-cast IDEAS process of 'Holistic professional learning'.

- **The IDEAS Project process for school revitalisation (i.e. *ideas*) should be linked very closely to the RBF, for both conceptual and practical purposes.**

  The case study schools were found to value whatever linkages they could establish between the core IDEAS constructs, particularly the RBF and ***ideas*** process, but also the *Principles of Practice* and parallel leadership. Thus, the *revised IDEAS Framework for Successful Revitalisation* incorporates these constructs in one explanatory model.

5.7 Implications for school development research

Two aspects of the research are viewed as incomplete, and as requiring ongoing research effort. The first aspect involves the leadership constructs that underpin the IDEAS Project.

The second aspect involves the complex relationship between the constructs of human capital and organisational capacity-building. Each of these aspects is discussed briefly at this time.

5.7.1 Leadership research.

The constructs of parallel leadership, teacher leadership and metastrategic principalship have constituted a recurring theme throughout this research report. Early in the report, it was noted that the failure of five of the cohort schools to progress to the SWP stage of the ***ideas*** process was perceived by school staff and researchers as linked to leadership issues, particularly in relation to the principalship. It was also noted that, in all five case study schools, the three core IDEAS leadership constructs had definitive meaning at all phases of the ***ideas*** process.

It can also be deduced that this significant conclusion also applies to the six dynamics of the capacity-building framework that is outlined above. Details are contained in a paper entitled *Leadership forms and approaches in school capacity-building dynamics*, by Frank Crowther . A summary of dominant leadership and forms, as presented in that paper, is outlined in Table 5.12.

TABLE 5.12: DOMINANT LEADERSHIP FORMS AND APPROACHES IN SCHOOL CAPACITY-BUILDING DYNAMICS

Dynamic	Dominant leadership 'form'	Dominant leadership 'approach'
Committing to schoolwide revitalisation	Metastrategy	Educative
Searching for schoolwide coherence	Metastrategy	Strategic
Exploring lofty aspirations	Parallel	Transformational
Pedagogical deepening	Teachers as leaders	Organisationwide
Sharing and refining new Knowledge	Parallel	Strategic
Embedding success	Parallel	Organisationwide *successes*

The postulations that are contained in Table 5.12 have major implications for ongoing school leadership development and practice. They deserve priority research attention.

5.8 Implications for the Victorian Department of Education

Early in the process of implementing the IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-6 Project, it was agreed by Professor Frank Crowther, representing the University of Southern Queensland, and Mr Darrell Fraser, representing the Department of Education and Child Development, that an evaluation of the project would be undertaken in an effort to provide Departmental officials with conceptual resources to assist future school development initiatives in Victoria. This commitment was renewed during 2008 discussions of the *Proposal to Conduct Research in Victorian Schools.*

This report, and the observations and recommendations that follow, are intended to enable the University of Southern Queensland to fulfil that commitment.

Generic conclusion

The macro data and case studies, taken together, indicate that IDEAS-Victoria, 2004-8 constitutes an important recent success story in Victorian State schools as well as in the IDEAS Project. It is very apparent, however, that whatever successes may have been achieved with IDEAS should be seen as largely inseparable from a wide range of systemic and regional initiatives during this period of time.

Specific conclusions

1. Almost all IDEAS schools achieved successes that extended systemic successes during the period 2004-8, suggesting the validity of the construct of 'school-based capacity-building' as an integrated systemic, IDEAS cohort and individual school construct;

2. ‘IDEAS success’ was dependent upon commitment and resources from three levels – the school, the Department (system and region) and the external provider (USQ);

3. Capacity-building in ‘targeted’ schools is just as possible as within ‘mainstream’ schools, although the dynamics of the process are somewhat different in ‘targeted’ schools;

4. A timeframe of four years seems appropriate for the embedding of ‘deep’ changes in schools, with student academic achievement variables possibly requiring longer, especially in instances where significant changes in student populations are ongoing.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That Victorian schools be provided with access to this report.

Recommendation 2: That all Victorian schools be advised of the relative simplicity of establishing a process of ongoing ‘revitalisation’ or ‘improvement’. IDEAS is one possible exemplar.

Recommendation 3: The Department may wish to use the capacity-building framework that has emerged from the research, and is encouraged to explore its uses as joint intellectual property with the USQ IDEAS Project.

Recommendation 4: The refined IDEAS constructs that emerge from the research (***ideas,*** RBF, parallel leadership, in particular) are particularly reflective of the Victorian State context. The Department may wish to make use of them in its ongoing work, and is encouraged to do so.

5.9 Final word

It is the view of the University of Southern Queensland researchers who conducted this research that the outcomes of the research provide potentially globally-significant insights regarding processes of school revitalisation. The opportunity to conduct the research, and the support that was provided throughout the research process, is appreciated and acknowledged with thanks by the IDEAS Project team and the IDEAS-Victoria researchers.

Perhaps for the first time in educational research, the dynamics of an authoritative school improvement process have been explored in a way that has enabled the highly elusive construct of 'school capacity building' to be conceptualised and critiqued. The result is an affirmation of such concepts as organisational alignment, teachers as leaders, parallel leadership, *success breeds success* strategic thinking, *no blame* professional protocols, schoolwide pedagogy, 3-dimensional pedagogy, and ***ideas*** as a process for school revitalisation. But it is more than that – it is also a clear picture of the educational dynamics through which schools can generate distinctive meaning systems that empower their teachers, students and communities, and in so doing contribute to enhanced professionalism and enhanced student well-being.

For these reasons, it is fully expected that the research will contribute to major educational developments in Australia and internationally.

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