SYSTEM REFORM: AN EXPLORATION OF POLICY INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION THROUGH THE ENACTED ROLE OF REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

Within an educational context, the aim of policy translation is to achieve policy coherence enabling whole system reform. This is realised when key components within an organisation are structurally and strategically aligned. In an educational system this alignment usually spans three levels, that is, the schools, the district or region and the state educational system. Current research suggests that policy coherence can be achieved through the development of shared values articulated as a vision, shared practices, accountabilities and co-ordinated policy support at the middle organisational level. Whilst acknowledging the importance of this conceptualisation, the current literature perspective appears to lack a dimension that identifies policy coherence as the product of how individuals individually and collectively interpret and translate policy into actions. Based on a review of authoritative literature and with a focus on how roles influence policy translation, the aims of this study were twofold. First, to broaden the research base of how policy coherence is developed within the regional middle system level, through an exploration of the enacted role of regional education officers. The second aim explored the interconnection and impacts of middle level leaders' role enactment on policy coherence for system reform.

Utilising an interpretivist approach to exploratory case study methodology, the study's research question was "What emerge as significant policy implementation factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy as they enact their role?" The research design had three phases of data collection with data collected through a variety of methods which included document

analysis, qualitative survey and semi-structured interviews with regional education officers from a large Australian state government education system. The collection, analysis and interpretation of data occurred in three distinct phases which resulted in the development of the theoretical Policy Role Enactment Framework.

The Policy Role Enactment Framework comprises of three critical aspects: coherent policy implementation, policy role and policy alignment. The framework details the interconnection between policy implementation and policy role factors in the attainment of structural, strategic and cognitive policy alignment.

The insights gained from the attainment of policy coherence were explored to enhance current understandings of the cognitive alignment of policy messages. To this end, the notion of collective cognitive cognisance was constructed. This notion highlights the impact that cognitive cognisance has on policy interpretation and translation practices, as policy messages move through a system. The study highlights the importance of utilising practices that promote collective cognition across a system, is a vital component of developing policy coherence. Further, through the development of a detailed account of how role perceptions and expectations influenced policy translation and role enactment, the significance of this research is twofold. First, the role enactment dimension to the concept of policy coherence. Second of the importance of this dimension in developing collective cognitive coherence of policy messages.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

This Thesis is entirely the work of Tania Helen Leach except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Principal Supervisor: Professor Dorothy Andrews

Associate Supervisor: Professor Lindy Abawi

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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ACRONYMS

ARD	Assistant Regional Director
DET	Department of Education and Training
DETE	Department of Education Training and Employment
DoE	Department of Education (Previously known as: DETE and DET)
NAPLAN	National Assessment Plan, Literacy and Numeracy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
RD	Regional Director
SIH	School Improvement Hierarchy
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH FOCUS

For over 30 years, education systems across the globe have experienced the implementation of system reforms, which have been largely influenced by large-scale international student assessment data and subsequent global system rankings (Harris et al., 2015). The influence of global reforms has also been reflected in Australian and State governments' policy responses, which have utilised international comparative studies (such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS], the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and national comparative assessments such as the National Assessment Plan Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN]) to develop education policies, aimed at improving national student standards.

Australia's commitment to ensuring its education system continues to build the knowledge and skills required for the 21st century through a world class curriculum was reflected in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (Education Council, 2019). This declaration continued to support the Government's commitment to ensuring Australia is ranked in the top five countries globally for reading, science, writing and mathematics by 2025 (Australian Government, 2012). These national reforms reflect the influence of global comparisons on the Australian Government's reform agenda.

Globally, education reforms have typically targeted either the education system or the school as the unit of change and, while there is disparity of thinking within the body of research about this, there is consensus that the foci for education reform should be on improving quality teaching and learning through empowered school leadership (Australian Government, 2012; Wenglinsky, 2002). Studies have noted that a focus on evidence-based pedagogical practices offers enormous potential to positively improve student achievement (Dinham et al., 2011; Fullan, 2009). This suggests that schools, through quality teachers' classroom practices, can make a difference (Hattie, 2009) in achieving school and potentially system reform goals.

Recent studies on system reform, however, have also noted that a policy focus on schools alone is insufficient to achieving whole of system reform (Fullan, 2009; Volante et al., 2017). Elmore (2004, as cited in McLeskey et al., 2014) outlined that the notion that "good ideas would travel their volition" into schools and classrooms (p. 12) has only produced examples of how educational practice can be contextualised and look different. There are "very few, if any, examples of large numbers of teachers engaging in these practices in large-scale institutions" (Elmore, 1995, p. 11).

As a result of these findings and the continued focus on global rankings, systems have explored how to achieve effective large-scale change. With varying degrees of success (as measured by international data sets), systems have developed reform models centred around building teaching capability through a continued focus on collaborative practices that focus on student learning and achievement (Fullan, 2009). Another significant aspect of the policy response to this global reform has been constituted by a move toward implementing a more centralised standards-based schooling reform (Savage & Lingard, 2018; Yates & Young, 2010), through curriculum policy changes (Germeten, 2011; Yates & Young, 2010).

Mourshed et al.'s (2010) analysis of 20 education systems identified that, when systems reflect upon and alter their structures, resources and processes – with a focus on improving the implementation of teaching practices for student learning – system reform can be achieved. The role of policy documents within these systems is to provide parameters and guidelines to facilitate improvements in three areas: teachers' instructional capabilities, the quality of student assessment and data systems; and the leadership skills of principals (Mourshed et al., 2010). Implementing these policies effectively requires coherent processes that enable the system to tailor the strategies to their contexts (Mourshed et al., 2010) by managing the tensions between empowering key stakeholders and mandating actions at a system level (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Fullan, 2009; Hess, 2011). Coherence then, is an important consideration in education reform.

Within the literature, the concept of coherence has been referred to various definitions of system reform. These definitions either consider how to achieve structural and strategic alignment or explore coherence as an organic process that is influenced by actors as they interact with reform strategies. Honig and Hatch (2004)

distinguish these as "coherence as objective alignment and coherence as a craft" (p. 17).

With coherence appearing to be "an established concept" (Lindvall, & Ryve, 2019, p.141) within the literature, the failure of past reform models to achieve large scale system improvements stimulates questions as to whether or not structures, processes and resources existing within systems might enhance or inhibit the success of these reform policies. Another question is whether the processes of interpreting and translating policy at the systems level are sufficient (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) to achieve policy coherence.

These questions provide a foundation for thinking about education system reform and lead into the current study. In this chapter, the research interest and brief background to the study is outlined, followed by a discussion of the educational setting, which provides a picture of the research context, along with the significance of the study. Lastly, an overview of the organisation of the thesis and a summary of the chapters are provided.

1.1.   Research Interest

My interest in policy coherence for system reform developed during my practitioner career as an educator for seventeen 17 years during which I experienced many system reforms in my various roles as teacher, head of school, head of department and regional education officer. This growing interest in the process underpinning policy coherence for system reform was reinforced when I was in a regional middle system leader's role as a regional education officer for the Queensland Department of Education (DoE). During this time, I observed significant diversity in the way other curriculum project officers enacted their roles and translated policy into practice. I observed that policy messages were communicated collectively to groups of regional education officers; however, both the resulting individual rhetoric and practice varied as these system middle leaders enacted their roles.

This experience shaped my insight into the diversity of policy translation at a local level through the implementation and role enactment approaches, which provided the foundation for the research on which this research study is based. This practitioner-based insight was deepened during subsequent postgraduate studies in education and curriculum policy implementation as part of my work role. Together

these experiences stimulated the following reflective questions, as part of my process to create research questions:

- How does the theory of role enactment connect with the concept of policy coherence?
- Does policy pre-empt role enactment decisions and, if so, how?
- How are strategic, structural, and cognitive organisational alignment aspects reflected in conceptualising the construct of policy coherence?
- Of what significance is the concept of policy enactment in achieving system reform?

These queries focused on thinking about and understanding the implications related to the relationship between regional education officers and policy. Of interest to me was the role played by regional education officers' understandings of actions and behaviours and how these were employed in working with schools to interpret and translate policy, and ultimately what this means for the development of policy coherence. These questions, with the support of a literature review, also provided a focus for illuminating linkages between policy intent, the role of the regional education officers and their impact on policy coherence and system reform.

1.2.   Background of the Study

Exploring efforts to achieve policy coherence across a system resonates with the priorities of educational systems around the world. The complexity of education policy implementation has been well documented (Viennet & Pont, 2017) and has again moved into the spotlight as education systems reflect and refine their reform processes to improve their international rankings (Lynch et al., 2019).

A recent report released by the Australian Council for Educational Research ([ACER], 2019) on the PISA, which measures 15-year-old students' performance in science, reading and mathematics skills, identified that over the past seven cycles of PISA, Australia's performance relative to other countries has continued to decline, with our mean performance of students decreasing. In the first cycle, four countries (Canada, Hong Kong (China), Ireland and Korea) that performed at the same level and three countries (Estonia, Macao (China) and Poland) that performed below Australia are now performing at a higher level than Australia (ACER, 2019, p. 15).

Worldwide education systems have become increasingly cognisant of the need to clarify how policy can be implemented as a "purposeful and multi-directional

change process … [aimed at putting] a specific policy into practice" (Viennet & Pont, 2017, p. 6). Following an analysis of policy implementation definitions and frameworks, Viennet and Pont (2017) identified that policy implementation needs to be:

- purposeful to the extent that the process is intended to achieve policy objectives.
- multidirectional because it can be "influenced by actors at various points of the education system" (p. 6); and,
- contextualised, in that system characteristics influence the ways in which a policy is shaped and translated through the system layers.

As outlined by Fullan (2015), United States of America (USA) policy implementation processes have failed to achieve the desired results for achieving system wide improvements in student achievement. Fullan posits that energy needs to be expended on standardising mechanisms for developing shared notions of quality teaching. Fullan and Quinn's (2016) subsequent research supported this notion and extended the specificity of the required mechanisms to include processes that coordinated policies to "build the capacity of the teachers with a focus on results, collaboration, pedagogy and systemness" (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p 5).

Australia has also moved towards a more national, standardised education position. In 2008 Australian Federal and State/Territory Governments agreed to develop Australian's first national curriculum, with the view that implementing a consistent approach to curriculum, assessment, and reporting would enhance learning for all Australian students (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2010). Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2007) and Viennet and Pont (2017) highlight that the challenge for coherent policy implementation is in the development of approaches that ensure successful policy adoption.

While different perspectives on policy coherence have emphasised the need to develop organisational approaches through various forms of organisational alignment (Savage & O'Connor, 2019), the predominant understanding in educational literature has emphasised strategic and structural aspects of alignment as the key indicators of policy coherence. The research acknowledged that policy coherence was influenced by multiple "actors"; however, it might be concluded that there is a lack of understanding in the literature regarding the influence of system

leaders' (regional education officers') role and policy enactment on achieving policy coherence.

This lack of literature further stimulated my research interest to explore the impact of role enactment on policy coherence, as well as to consider the impact, if any, on system reform processes. With a continued focus on system reform in education and limited Australian research on policy coherence for system reform, this research project is considered timely and necessary to properly ascertain the factors that impact on policy as it moves through the middle system layer of a large organisation like the Queensland DoE. With a focus on the systems regional education officers (as regional system middle leaders) in the DoE, the research aimed to reveal the factors that impact on regional leaders' enacted roles, as described through the collective voices of current leaders' lived experience across five of the seven Queensland Department of Education regions responsible for supporting policy implementation through regional strategies.

1.3.   Research Context

The research case study is situated within the Department of Education Queensland (DoE), Australia. The DoE employees approximately 95 000 teachers within 1254 Queensland state funded schools. With nearly 63% of the schools located in regional and rural areas, the DoE is distributed across the entire Queensland state and is organised within seven state schooling regions, which are depicted in Figure 1.1. The research study is focussed on exploring the enacted role of regional education officers (who are located within the regional officers), to gain insights into how curriculum policy is implemented.

Figure 1.1

Queensland State School and Regional Distribution

Note. Source: Teach Queensland > Teach in Queensland State Schools (2021, n.d.).
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https://teach.qld.gov.au/teach-in-queensland-state-schools/our-schools

1.4. Research Paradigm and Methodology

The research study is situated within an interpretivist research paradigm due
to the social nature of the research interest and resulting research questions (Cohen et
al., 2007). The interpretivist paradigm was deemed appropriate to support the
research as the ontological, epistemological and methodological values (axiology)
that underpin this paradigm were considered complementary to the purpose of the
research, which was to explore policy interpretation and translation through the
exacted role of regional system middle leaders (specifically regional education
officers).

In addition, the literature review revealed that, after an extensive search, no previous in-depth consideration of the interplay of policy coherence processes and role enactment processes within a regional middle leadership level had been completed. As such, a qualitative exploratory approach that afforded insight into subjective experiences was deemed the most appropriate research method and one that would be most effectively achieved within an interpretivist paradigm.

A core belief of interpretivism is that reality is socially constructed (Than & Than, 2015), which supports an important ontological assumption that people experience reality in different ways and that their experiences are influenced by their beliefs, values, reasons, understandings, and their interactions within their social system (Creswell, 2014). The methodological implication is that the research must be inductive in nature in order to take into consideration the social context of people in an endeavour to understand the phenomena of interest (Than & Than, 2015).

As a result, an interpretivist, qualitative approach to exploratory case study was chosen as the method of inquiry (Creswell, 2014). This method supported the research focus on exploring the experiences and perceptions of individuals, to illuminate the way in which they interpretated and translated policy into action.

Case study methodology first appeared in the early 1900s and evolved into a widely accepted social science as the methodology became more explicit and inclusive (Adelman, 2015). Historically, research methodology appropriateness aligned to each paradigm; however, as social science research moved to validate case study methodology through the explicit identification of methods, researchers challenged the paradigms of inquiry to advocate for a paradigm of choices (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 313).

With the research paradigm identified as interpretivist, Stake's (2006) work becomes important, as he outlines a case study approach aligned to this orientation. Underpinned by the desire to discover meaning and understand experiences in context, Stake argues that researchers' interpretive role in producing knowledge critical as they move to interact with the study. He posits that knowledge is created from the research process which is relative to the time and context of the study and researchers must be cognisant of their role in examining and interpreting the reality of the case.

The selection of data collection methods and analytical techniques must provide descriptions to convey findings, positioning interviews and observations as

Stake's (2006) preferred methods. Within the paradigm case study continuum, there are two key additional perspectives discussed by Yin (2014) and Merriam (2009). Yin case study design reflects a postpositivist approach (which is in direct contrast to Stake) where the researcher's aim is predominantly to test hypotheses or develop findings with potential for replication. Researchers utilise quantitative and qualitative data methods within a structured process focused on managing bias and acknowledging limitations to ensure validity. Merriam, on the other hand is positioned between Yin and Stake's design and reflects a pragmatic constructivist approach to case study. Merriam posits that knowledge is constructed socially, through meanings and understandings. She highlights the importance of implementing processes to assist the researcher to sort and manage the collected qualitative and/or quantitative information and is a strong advocate of rigorous planning to select procedures to frame the research process. Procedures such as thematic analysis, content analysis and triangulation are significant for ensuring the trustworthiness and quality of the study.

Drawing from these multiple perspectives, the case study methodology was identified as the most appropriate for this study as it:

- was concerned with a qualitative exploration of a complex issue in context that contained multiple variables;
- required multiple data collection methods, to be employed to comprehensively understand the cases studied that included document analysis, a participant survey and semi structured interviews;
- assured that data was triangulated to identify conceptual links and concepts of organisational alignment through the various methods, as a key aspect of the study.

Hence, the study adopted an interpretivist perspective of exploratory case study methodology to explore the processes of policy interpretation and translation within the regional education officers' role enactment within a variety of contexts in the DoE system.

1.5. The Research Purpose

The Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) (Sahlberg, 2012) has given momentum to a range of common government policies across the world, all aimed at improving global ranking through a curriculum focus on improved student

learning and national large-scale assessments. Within this complex space, education systems continue to grapple with achieving sustained system wide improvement (Fullan, 2007), as reform success is commonly limited to isolated cases of school improvement.

Some researchers (e.g., Otto, 2009; Rust & Freidus, 2001; Stoll et al., 2003) suggest that this is due to reform policy focus, because it often targes the school-based change agents rather than the system intervention models espoused by Fullan (2005), Kronley and Handley (2003), and Wikely et al. (2005).

Drawing from system reform literature, the notions of policy coherence and alignment are consistently positioned as key aspects of successful reform implementation and, while there are theoretical frameworks (Fullan, 2016; Viennet & Pont, 2017) for achieving policy coherence, there is no consistent understanding of the factors that contribute to policy coherence as it is translated and interpreted through the system. This is of specific relevance to this study, which focuses on the implementation of curriculum reform policy by the system's regional education officers in the Queensland DoE, Australia. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to illuminate the factors that impact the implementation of policy through the exploration of system middle leaders enacted role with a focus on how policy is interpreted and translated.

1.6.   The Research Question

The proposed research study was guided by the following overarching research question:

> What emerge as significant policy implementation factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy as they enact their role?

This will be answered with the following sub-questions in mind:

1. How do policy documents coherently reflect implementation expectations?
2. How do system middle leaders perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system?
3. How do system middle leaders enact their roles?
4. What factors support or inhibit their role enactment in relation to policy implementation?
5. What implications for policy coherence emerge from these findings?

1.7.   Research Significance

With the introduction of NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum in Australia, the state governments have developed curriculum reform policies targeted at improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Drummond, 2012; Linn, 2008). With the aim of achieving system reform through policy coherence, the Queensland DoE regions provide a pivotal role in supporting schools to implement identified reform policies. My experience as a regional education officer provided the impetus for my study, in that I have sought to illuminate factors that contribute to the relationship between policy translation, interpretation and practice. Through the perspective of regional system middle leaders (specifically regional education officers, as policy actors), this thesis aims to offer a practical understanding of the factors influencing the policy implementation process.

It is from this understanding that the study will deepen current understandings of how policy coherence is built. In addition, conceptualisations of the role of regional education officers within system reform have predominately been informed by research outside Australia. The current concept will be researched within the State of Queensland, Australia, where the adoption and contextualisation of national and international perspectives are being embraced.

1.8.   Thesis Outline

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. A synopsis of each chapter follows. **Chapter 1** presents an overview of the research study. The overview comprises a brief review of understandings ascertained from analyses of literature relating to the concepts of education system reform and policy coherence from an international and Queensland perspective. The research interest and paradigm of inquiry are then detailed. The methodological approach and underpinning paradigm are outlined to justify the selection of an exploratory case study methodology which is followed by the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter 1 concludes with a chapter-by-chapter synopsis to provide an overview of the organisation of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature on the concepts of policy within system reform, policy coherence, the role of regional education officers and the concepts of role theory all of which helped inform the construction of the study's research interest.

Chapter 3 outlines the philosophical orientation, method of inquiry and research that underpins the research study. The study's philosophical orientation is

utilised to provide a rationale for adopting a case study approach as the most appropriate methodological approach.

Chapter 4 details the data collection, analysis and interpretation processes undertaken in Phase One of the study and the document analysis which seeks to identify the curriculum policy implementation expectations with the Queensland DoE and addresses research sub-question 1: How do policy documents coherently reflect implementation expectations?

Chapter 5 details the data collection, analysis and interpretation processes undertaken in Phase Two of the study in the form of a survey which begins to address research sub-question 2: How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translation policy within a system?

Chapter 6 details the data collection, analysis and interpretation process undertaken in Phase Three Part A and Part B of the study in the form of the participant semi-structured interviews. It refines the answer to research sub-question 2 from Chapter 5 and continues to address research sub-question 2: How do system middle leaders (regional education officers) perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within the system? and sub-question 3: How do system middle leaders enact their role?

Chapter 7 pulls together the study's data analysis and findings through the development of the policy role enactment framework. A high-level summary of the study's responses to the research questions is also provided as a segue into the final chapter.

Chapter 8 addresses the main research question by providing a detailed account of the impact of role enactment on policy interpretation and translation, with insights gained helping illuminate the factors that enhance system reform policy coherence. The theoretical implications are then detailed through the Policy Role Enactment Framework which is constructed from the data analysis, and theoretical notion of the importance of collective cognitive cognisance in attaining policy coherence.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to map the complex landscape of curriculum policy implementation in which Queensland's curriculum reform strategy was being implemented during my research. While there are historical Australian curriculum reform policy studies focussed on policy design (Kennedy, 2021) and school implementation (Hardy, 2015), it was important for me, as the researcher, to understand the different intersecting aspects of contemporary curriculum reform, policy and organisational context, policy implementation and role enactment, so I could be aware of and reflect upon the way in which policy was interpreted and translated through regional education officers' roles. To undertake this task, I drew from international and national research literature across the following key topics:

1. Education system reform: Queensland policy context;
2. Policy coherence;
3. System roles;
4. Regional roles;
5. Concepts of role;
6. Policy implementation.

Following the review of literature, it became evident that there was an absence of research about regions/regional areas. The literature review within this aspect therefore drew from parallel international research positioned within the district system in the USA.This chapter concludes with a summary of the literature and a visual mapping of key concepts to illuminate the gaps and relevance of this study within the context of existing research.

2.2. System Reform: Queensland Policy Context

Within Australia, the Australian Constitution (Commonwealth Government Australia, 2010, p. vi), provides State and Territory governments with the authority for school education. With the increased global focus on education systems, the Australian federal government has increased its influence over these jurisdictions (Savage & O'Connor, 2019), through the implementation of multiple national education reform agendas (Cranston et al., 2010, p. 184) reflected in national policy. These reforms were also reflected in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education*

Declaration and its "education goals for young Australians" that espoused the notions that (1) Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; and (2) all young Australians become successful lifelong learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed members of the community (Education Council, 2019). In 2008, there was a focus on preparing students for a global world and the provision of excellence, which saw the development of the national curriculum reform and National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). These reform actions directly reflected the Australian Government's response to the increasing pressure of global education rankings (Lingard & Sellar, 2013).

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum varied between the eight Australian States and Territory jurisdictions, as they moved to develop differentiated policy settlements with the Australian Government (Gerrard & Farrell, 2014) and maintain influence over the national reform agenda. Within these complex exchanges between each jurisdiction any modifications to the curriculum were approved by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the intergovernmental council in education with representatives from all states and territories. The strong response from all jurisdictions regarding the need to maintain their voice and differentiate their approach reflects the ongoing scholarly debate regarding the importance of contextual policy implementation (McInerney et al., 2011) and fore-fronted the notion of policy implementation autonomy.

Parallel to the national curriculum reform was the implementation of national standardised testing. In 2008, the first NAPLAN test was administered nationally, with Queensland students performing lower when compared with other states and territories. In response to this, what is known as the Masters' Report (2009) was commissioned by the Queensland Government and identified contextual accountabilities designed to improve students' performance in the NAPLAN tests. The focus of the Masters' approach was to direct these accountabilities to the principal. Principals were required to develop "benchmarks for improvement and design an explicit strategic improvement agenda to achieve their intended targets" (Department of Education and Training [DET], 2011, p. 3). The regions' executive leaders (Regional Directors [RDs] and Assistant Regional Directors [ARDs]) were directly responsible for holding schools accountable for their performance and providing support to build schools' instructional capability, through the provision of an array of support functions for schools (Supovitz, 2008).

In 2012, Drummond et al. (2012) published the results of a survey they conducted to determine principals' perceptions on how worthwhile the Australian Curriculum was, how much consultation and resourcing had been provided, and how much knowledge teachers had about the impact of the Australian Curriculum. Findings suggested that there was a negative connotation to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, largely due to the lack of consultation and resourcing and the notion that principals suggested that teachers did not know enough to teach the Australian Curriculum.

Managing the diverse needs of schools is a complex task; however, as suggested by Marzano and Waters (2009), when regional "leaders are carrying out their leadership responsibilities effectively, student achievement across the district [region] is positively affected" (p. 5). Their meta-analysis of effective regional leadership in the USA identified six key responsibilities and actions for system reform, which included co-constructing regional goals and aligning the provision of support to achieve these goals. This notion has been supported by the executive system leadership research of Leithwood et al. (2009) who also highlight that successful regional leaders must be able to respond uniquely to each school context. So, while Australian system leadership research (Bloxham et al., 2010) agrees that executive system leadership has the potential to have a positive impact on the implementation of system reform strategies, there is little research on the role and impact of the subsequent layer of regional leadership or its relationship to building policy coherence.

In response to the Masters Report (2009), low NAPLAN results and the need to implement the Australian Curriculum, the Queensland DoE spent three years (2009–2011) developing streamlined curriculum policy documents and associated guidelines and resources, including the P–12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (DoE, 2021b) and *Curriculum into the Classroom* resources (DoE, 2020). Both of these policy documents provided school leaders and teachers with guidelines for teaching and learning within Queensland schools, with a focus on teacher pedagogy and assessment.

Recent studies on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum as the key strategy in the national curriculum reform in Queensland schools has largely focused on teacher perceptions and school implementation approaches, with no research conducted on policy implementation through the system layers or how multifaceted

policy implementation is influenced by the multiple actors across a system. Barton et al. (2014) highlighted that while the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in schools is positively and negatively influenced by the individual opinions of teachers and the expectations of administrators, it also provides an opportunity for systems and schools to explore interventions that support the development of professional knowledge of official curriculum guidelines and associated documents (Gerrard & Farrell, 2014).

In 2010, the Grattan Institute (Jensen, 2010) identified "that investing in improved teacher quality … is the most effective method of improving student learning and creating top performing education systems" (p. 10). The national focus on improving Australia's international ranking continued to dominate education policy, with the 2013 National School Reform Agreement policies streamlined to ensure "Australian schooling provide[d] a high quality and equitable education for all students" (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2013, p. 7). With national standardised student test results (NAPLAN) identified as the measure of success, each State and Territory continued to develop contextualised reform policies that focused on the following outcomes:

- Academic achievement improves for all students, including priority equity cohorts;
- All students are engaged in their schooling; and
- Students gain the skills they need to transition to further study and/or work and life success. (COAG, 2013, p. 7)

One of the key foci of this National School Reform Agreement (COAG, 2013) was the continued implementation and enhancement of the Australian Curriculum, as well as assisting teachers to utilise data to monitor student learning and inform progression (Council of Australian Governments, 2013). As outlined by Lingard and McGregor (2014), the implementation of the Australian Curriculum is a "work in progress" (p. 103), with the curriculum now up to Version 8.4 for the P–10 Curriculum (ACARA, 2021).

2.3. Policy Coherence

Education systems engaging in reform operate in complex environments that require the coherent implementation of education policies (Michel, 2016). Researchers focused on effective system reform (Dufour & Fullan, 2013; Fullan,

2001; Hargreaves et al., 2009) highlight the importance of implementing a systemic reform approach that emphasises the importance of structural and strategic alignment (Barki & Pinsonneault, 2005; Leppitt, 2006). This, they argue, is a precursor to the implementation of processes that promote the flow of transparent policy information through a system (Fullan, 2009; Levin & Fullan, 2009; Scott, 2013). According to Sharratt and Fullan (2011), organisations that support dispersed leadership, strong communication practices, a sharp focus on initiative and the articulation of shared beliefs about student learning are positioned to support strong policy translation through the building of system coherence (an aspect of which is policy coherence) (Peurach et al., 2019) and measurable student improvement. This literature highlights the broad dimensions for achieving system reform through coherence, but is limited in terms of articulating how policy coherence is achieved.

The concept of policy coherence in education emerged in the early 21st century when systems began to explore why certain policies were failing to achieve their intended outcomes (Polikoff, 2017) and built on the policy alignment research of the late 20th century. In the USA, the consortium for policy research (Fuhrman, 1993) identified that the failure of policy efforts was attributable to a lack of vision and an over emphasis on the implementation of targeted programs to address identified problems of practice. This often resulted in the simultaneous implementation of policy and projects that may have been in direct conflict with one another. This lack of policy coordination was a key driver in shifting policy development practices to focus on policy alignment, where multiple policies were targeted in the same direction, tied together by strong visioning (Supovitz & Spillane, 2015). The notion that placing a focus on policy alignment was also reflected within Australian policy development processes that aimed to mitigate misalignment between federal and state education authorities (Savage & O'Connor, 2019).

Within policy implementation research, the concept of coherence, where policy relevant knowledge required a translation process in order to be understood across multiple contexts, was positioned as a policy solution (Coleman et al., 2021). Coherence was found to be directly influenced by a system's ability to utilise shared leadership (Levin & Fullan, 2009; Lewis & Andrews, 2004; Michel, 2016) to communicate transparent expectations and provide relevant professional learning focused on pedagogical issues and teaching practices (Michel, 2016; Scott, 2013).

Policy coherence was also viewed as the collective alignment of multiple factors within a system (Crowther & Associates, 2011; Fullan, 2016; Senge, 2006).

Central to this notion of coherence was an understanding that education policy implementation was underpinned by learning processes that enabled policy actors to translate policy into contextualised responses to meet school needs (Coburn et al., 2016). Various theoretical frameworks (including cognitive and sociocultural learning theories and organisational theories) have been utilised within the literature to illuminate how the processes of co-construction, interpretation and sense-making have assisted policy actors to translate policy into action at the individual school level (Ganon-Shilon & Chen, 2019; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009)

Highlighted within the policy implementation literature is the impact that varied policy interpretations have had on resulting teacher practice, which according to Coburn et al. (2016) contributed to "piecemeal and superficial changes in instructional practice" (p. 245). These findings again support the notion that implementation processes that place a focus on policy coherence through the alignment of policy responses would support the achievement of policy goals (Polikoff & Porter, 2014). It is important to note that the literature supporting the notion of policy alignment and coherence acknowledges the associated complexities and challenges connected to large scale implementations (Fullan, 2016). The literature posits that coherence needs to be considered through various perspectives, including vertically (across different levels of a system), horizontally (within any one level of a system) and within the context of other policy reforms (Hoing, 2013).

What was interesting about Michel's (2016) study was that coherent policy implementation was limited to the alignment of governance and communication structures to orientate and co-ordinate translation processes to achieve policy priorities. Michel's research was unclear in how these processes were enacted, highlighting the need to explore the interactions between role enactment and coherent policy implementation (Honig, 2006).

2.4. System Roles

System responses to achieving policy coherence have also resulted in an exploration of various system levels and the roles within each level. In the USA, external system leadership roles were predominately located within districts, with research indicating that district leaders were either inconsequential or an impediment to school improvement (McLaughlin, 1991), as they tended to function as regulators

and monitors of compliance (Leithwood et al., 2004) who lacked the skills for supporting school improvements focussed on enhancing student outcomes (Hoing, 2013).

Within international and national literature, central offices and regions were historically established to provide administrative support to schools through regulations (Hoing, 2013; Watterson et al., 2011). With the introduction of standards-based reform legislation, the role of the districts began to change (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), as districts were tasked with implementing academic standards tied to standardised assessments for all students, and holding schools accountable for student achievement (Linn, 2008). With this change of focus, from school reform to system reform, the responsibility of improving student achievement formally extended beyond the schools to the districts (Leithwood et al., 2009). Within this body of literature, the attainment of system reform alignment and the role of regions were also considered.

Watterson et al. (2011) acknowledged that, within decentralised education systems (such as Australia), consideration needs to be given to how structures and processes within various system layers enhance the vertical and horizontal alignment of knowledge and practices. This notion of policy implementation through system layers supports Viennett and Pont's (2017) concept that policy implementation is multi-faceted as it is influenced by multiple actors and points through a system.

Subsequent research in the early 21st century began to explore and determine what districts do to achieve system reform. For example, McLaughlin and Talbert's (2006) exploration of 15 school districts suggested that the district could enhance or inhibit school progress. One of the key findings of this research was that districts that utilised instructional leadership practices, to build principal and teacher capability in using data to improve student achievement, evidenced improvement. They also noted that, while districts focused on developing learning partnerships with schools and principals, there was no common district approach to supporting schools (Honig, 2012). In addition, research in this area was largely based on district effectiveness, which utilised over simplified measures of effectiveness and weak claims of district impact (Leithwood et al., 2010).

Rorrer et al.'s (2008) and Rorrer et al.'s (2018) research explored what roles districts had served in reform and utilised their findings to develop a theory of districts as institutional actors in system reform. In their view, district leaders

assumed four roles: providing instructional leadership, reorientating the organisation, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus.

Watterson and Caldwell (2011) explored practices within regions that supported the autonomous decision-making of principals. While the role of regions was not formally acknowledged within this research, the notion of school networks was highlighted as a "model of collaboration" that could be utilised to provide "targeted system support" (p. 644)

Botelho et al., (2016) utilised Rorrer et al.'s (2008) district theory to explore how superintendents within a district made decisions to establish policy coherence. While the study highlighted that district (regional) leaders were attempting to establish policy coherence, this role was enacted inconsistently, and most leaders did not seem to consider coherence in a proactive and deliberate manner. These findings highlighted that "a consistent understanding of the role of establishing policy coherence" did not exist (Botelho et al., 2016, p. 74). Consequently, the link between policy coherence research and the role of districts, as the role of district personnel in policy implementation, remains a problematic aspect of system reform.

2.5.   Regional Roles

With a global focus on education reform, Marzano and Waters' (2009) research identified that schools could not sustain improvement without external support. It was identified that without the use of knowledgeable others (Sharratt & Fullan, 2009) the ability to reflect and incorporate emerging evidence-based practices is limited and growth plateaus. This notion is supported by Fullan's (2016) organisational coherence work. His study found that system reform requires clarity and alignment, which is created within the three levels of an organisation – system, region (referred to as the regional middle level within this research) and school – through the use of deliberate structures that promote moving policy into clear actions and practices (Louis et al., 2010).

Honig's (2006, 2013) explorations of the complexity of policy implementation highlighted the need to consider how policies are implemented and their success measured as a part of the design process. Honig's (2013) findings outlined that policy implementation may be successful in some contexts and not in others, thus highlighting the need to investigate the conditions that support successful implementation. Furthermore, these studies identified that regional participation in collaborative educational policy implementation is an important contributing factor,

while Lezotte's (2011) study found that the school, rather than the system's middle level, should be the focus of system reform.

Louis et al. (2010) also affirmed that district leaders play a critical role in a system's approach to reform policy implementation. However, to achieve policy outcomes, relevant professional development and infrastructure needed to be provided (Fullan, 2001; Massell, 2000). This provision of resources supports the facilitation of professional dialogue that promotes shared understandings for improvement (Honig, 2013; Johnson & Chrispeels, 2010).

Further, McLaughlin and Talbert's (2006) study identified that policy implementation is enhanced when a districts function as learning organisations. The modelling of collaborative behaviours and the provision of relevant professional development enables all stakeholders (district and school) to work together to achieve a common goal. What is interesting about McLaughlin and Talbert's research is that the characteristics of coherence at a district level were identified; however, the concept of how coherence is achieved was limited to the interactions between the district leaders and principals, and the district leaders and individual schools. It appears that there is a dimension within the concept that needs further development and focus. The reason for this is that it is unclear how policy coherence is influenced by how system middle leaders individually interpret and translate policy before and during their interactions with principals and school personnel. Therefore, the following sub-sections explore how various system roles are positioned to achieve system improvements.

2.6. Concepts of Role Theory

Role theory developed from deeper inquiries into how various roles were reflected in organisational improvement (Scott, 2002). Traditionally defined as a particular set of agreed norms that are organised around a function (Bates & Harvey, 1975), organisational role theory has been used to explore how systems distribute roles to achieve established goals.

Biddle (1986) identified that when role descriptions are formalised it is often assumed that role consensus (an agreed set of role behavioural expectations) is achieved and reflected in action. In practice, as Walker and Shore (2015) have established, an individual's norms, beliefs and attitudes influence how they understand their roles, and these can either strengthen or weaken role consensus. Therefore, effective role enactment assumes that members share similar

interpretations of role expectations and behaviours. If there is too much diversity (limited role consensus), then role conflict occurs (Rai, 2016). Rai's research explored factors to reduce potential conflict and found that, when formalised roles are paired with organisational commitment, role conflict is minimised. While this research addressed the gap in how organisations can maximise role consensus, the research was limited to describing the impact of the organisational environment rather than the factors that influence role enactment.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy into human needs was utilised by Singh and Behera (2016) to explore contributing factors that influenced role expectations. The first finding was that individuals have different needs and require different incentives to achieve the organisational goals, and secondly that these needs change over time (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Loh et al., 2000; Owens, 2004; Senge, 2006). The work of Limerick et al. (2002) also highlighted the need for organisations to acknowledge and identify how the changing expectations of the individual employee is impacting on interrelationships within an organisation where the individual views self as a collaborative individual. Further, the work of Chalosky (2010) and others (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Taylor, 2017), related to meaningful work, has evidenced the changing expectations of employees in achieving job quality. An empirical literature review conducted by Bailey et al. (2018) revealed that a focus on community building, fostering a sense of belonging and targeting support needs to the individual, assists in creating unity within teams of employees.

Thomas (2009) identified the role characteristics of intrinsically motivated team members who consistently demonstrate and achieve role expectations. These include committing to a purpose, seeking opportunities for improvement and self-reflection. This research articulated that today educators need to see their value and contribution to the overall purpose. In educational research, this notion has been evidenced when sustained education improvement strategies continue when funding and structural supports are reduced because they are valued intrinsically by the workforce and become part of the culture. This supports Rai's (2016) research on how systems may support organisational commitment.

A. Morgan (2008), through his exploration of educational leadership decision making, highlighted that a person's world view and perceptions of power and authority directly influence role decisions, raising the profile of this factor in influencing role expectation and enactment. Earlier, this notion was explored by G.

Morgan (2006) through the identification of images (metaphors) of a system, held by individuals, and these images influenced perceptions and actions which in turn could enhance or limit role efficiency.

Morgan (2006) highlighted that improving outcomes within organisations requires commitment that can be achieved by understanding the impact of power, role perception and individual motivation. Whilst recognising the importance of role consensus in achieving system (organisational) goals, there are assumptions that roles are aligned to reform policies (Rai, 2016).

2.7.   Policy Implementation

The definition of policy has been widely contested within the literature, with definitions ranging from the articulation of future goals and actions to a "purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concerns" (Anderson, 2014, p. 20). I, as the researcher within this study, connect to Anderson's definition as it acknowledges that policy implementation is a complex, organic process involving human interactions by policy actors.

The attainment of coherent policy implementation has also been explored by many researchers from various perspectives (Khan, 2016). While definitions of policy implementation vary, they all concede that implementation describes the gap between policy intent and policy outcomes (Anderson, 2014). The literature highlights that policy implementation is directly influenced by the environment, culture, values of the individuals and the variability in which policies are interpreted and implemented by policy actors (Poskitt, 2016), supporting Anderson's (2014) definition of policy. Further, this supports Viennet and Pont's (2017) research that indicates policy implementation processes "can result in failure if not well targeted" (p. 6). Therefore, policy implementation processes need to reflect and respond to their broader context.

In light of this literature, the definition of policy implementation as "a purposeful and multi-directional change process aiming to put a specific policy into practice" (Viennet & Pont, 2017, p. 6) has been adopted in this research study. Viennet and Pont's (2017) OECD study synthesised policy implementation frameworks to illuminate the key determinants of education policy implementation as outlined in Figure 2.1. This framework was produced by Viennet and Pont in 2017, summarising the key characteristics that are theoretically visible with a coherent policy implementation strategy.

Figure 2.1

Education Policy Implementation: A visual framework
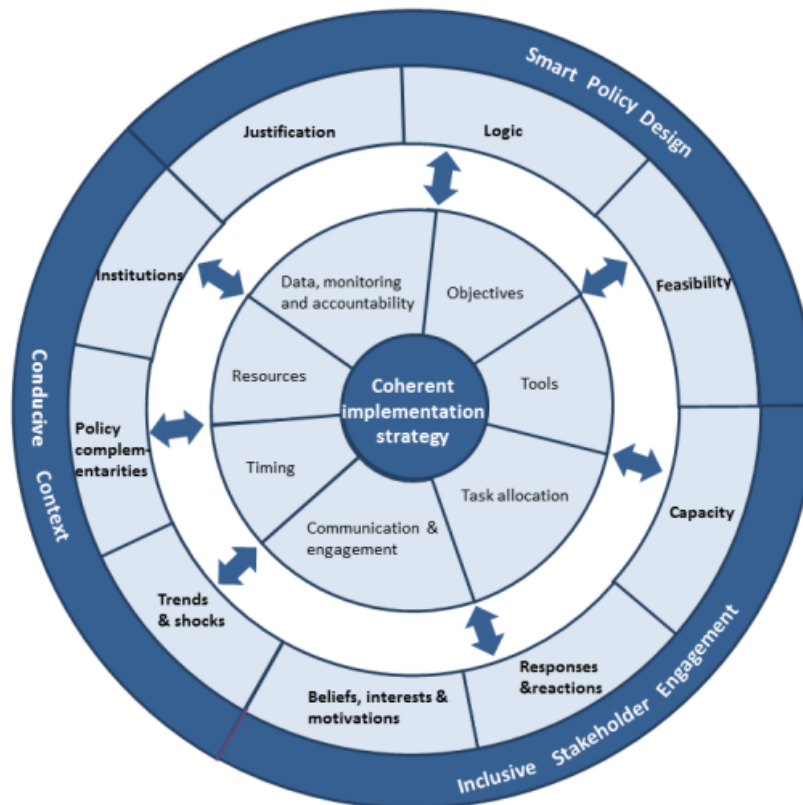
Note. From *Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework* (p. 7), by R. Viennet & B. Pont, 2017, OECD. Copyright 2017 by OECD.

The synthesis of literature identified that coherent policy implementation (Figure 2.2) requires organisations to consider the development of a communication and engagement strategy that promotes the development of shared understandings of policy objectives, provides support resources and tools and how the policy objectives are monitored, and the associated timelines, task allocations and accountabilities. As the policy is implemented, Viennet and Pont (2017) acknowledge that there are influencing organisational factors, such as organisational capacity, beliefs, interests, and motivations (as examples), that influence how policy is implemented.

Acknowledging that policy implementation occurs within a context and involves human interactions, organisational culture as a factor of coherent policy implementation has been highlighted by multiple researchers (Azhar, 2003; Jarratt & O'Neill, 2002; Schein, 2011). My researcher's perspective resonates with the concept that an organisation's culture is the outcome of how individuals collectively align to the organisation's values, norms, beliefs and customs to achieve goals. It is

through the lens of an organisation's culture that an understanding of the multiple organisational aspects can be highlighted.

Schein's (2011) levels of culture model provided researchers and leaders with a framework to analyse organisational culture at three levels, which "range from the very tangible overt manifestations that one can see and feel to the deeply embedded, unconscious, basic assumptions" with "various espoused beliefs, value, norms and rules of behaviour" in between (p. 135). While the literature identifies key aspects that can be utilised to identify characteristics of an organisation's culture, such as structure, leadership characteristics, communication, roles and behaviours (Owens, 2004), consideration needs to be given to the role that human interaction has on the development of an organisation's culture (Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 2011). As outlined by Weimer and Zemrani (2017), "an organisation is a collection of two or more people, and an organizational culture is developed by the actions and behaviours of that collective group" (p. 278).

2.8.   Policy Interpretation and Translation

Systems implementing policy are responsible for influencing or changing current practice. Within education systems, the system's structures and practices are continually being shaped by the "actions of individuals and their interactions with others" (Dwiartama & Rosin, 2014, p. 1). Central to this notion is that within any system actors work individually and collectively to shape and operationalise policy, resulting in policy actors being "both receivers and agents of policy" (Ball et al., 2011, p. 625).

Michel's (2016) examination of effective policy implementation highlighted the importance of considering the role of policy actors and the impact of human interactions on the attainment of policy goals. Within policy implementation literature, it is acknowledged that policy meaning is important, but "understanding those meanings …requires deliberate efforts of interpretation … to ask not only what a policy means, but also how a policy means" (Yanow, 1995, p. 111). Therefore, policy actors are implementers who make meaning, explain the policy and make decisions on how it looks in practice (Michel, 2016; Ball et al., 2011).

Hooge (2016) identified closely with Michel (2016) where the concept of policy translation, defined within this research study as interpreting policy for the purpose of creating new policy forms (e.g., developing regional professional learning, developing school improvement plans) involved the use of connecting

devices across systems to directly impact on daily practice. The translation of consistent policy messages is complex; however, through the use of connection devices that develop a common understanding of policy implementation work, the attainment of coherence is increased (Viennet & Pont, 2017). The conclusion drawn by Hooge was that policy alignment had been achieved through the implementation of governance structures and policy instruments, as communication tools that supported consistent policy understandings.

Jeyaraj's (2011) research built on the notion of in-school system alignment and identified the importance of developing collective understandings of, and commitment to, an organisation's constructs as a means of implementing strategies. Through the development of collaboratively developed cognitive connections, organisational cognisance was evidenced. Jeyaraj argues that it is through the use of frameworks that provide explanations of analysis, individual and collective meta-cognitive processes are made explicit, allowing for a deeper understanding of how individuals engage with, and are connected to, the improvement journey. This cognitive alignment aspect (referred to in this study as organisational cognisance) added value to how system alignment within schools could be achieved beyond observable behaviours and communicated perceptions. When considering this in light of system policy implementation, it raises the question of how system policy actors make sense collectively of policy messages.

Mohammed and Ringseis's (2001) research on cognitive consensus explored how shared cognition is achieved within a group decision-making context. The research identified that, when effective teams achieve cognitive consensus, they develop shared assumptions regarding interpretations of issues and how they are operationalised. This outcome was found to positively impact on how decisions were implemented. Liang (2004) also explored the notion of collective intelligence, where interacting minds develop collective thoughts, which he refers to as "Orgmind" (p. 53). While this research is imperative to understanding how individuals make sense of school improvement strategies, the incorporation of these notions and the impact they have on policy interpretation and translation is yet to be understood.

Hooge (2016) also raised the notion that the variance of meaning attached to policy would have no impact on daily practice if policy instruments were used as intended. However, as Viennet and Pont (2017) state, policy is implemented within complex education systems that require policy actors at various levels of the system

to engage and interact with policy to develop localised responses. While the research articulates factors that impact on the effective implementation of policy, the impact of policy interpretation and translation practices on the attainment of policy coherence remains unclear. To explore how policy actors are positioned to support policy implementation, the following section unpacks the concepts of role theory connected to organisational improvement.

2.9. Literature Summary and Implications

Review of the literature has theoretically informed the identified research interest, which was to explore the role of regional education officers in interpreting and translating system reform policy. The review of the literature revealed that, whilst there is an acknowledgement of the critical role that a regional education office's leaders play in system reform, the current understanding of how middle leaders enacted roles reflect the interpretation and translation of policy into practice is limited.

Drawing from the above literature, the connections between the various research bodies (reflected grey lines) and gaps (reflected in red lines) is highlighted within Figure 2.2. This figure illuminates the limited literature connecting:

- policy coherence research to policy interpretation research;
- policy translation research to cognitive consensus research;
- role perception research to policy interpretation research;
- role theory to policy coherence research.

Figure 2.2

Connections and Gaps Identified within the Literature
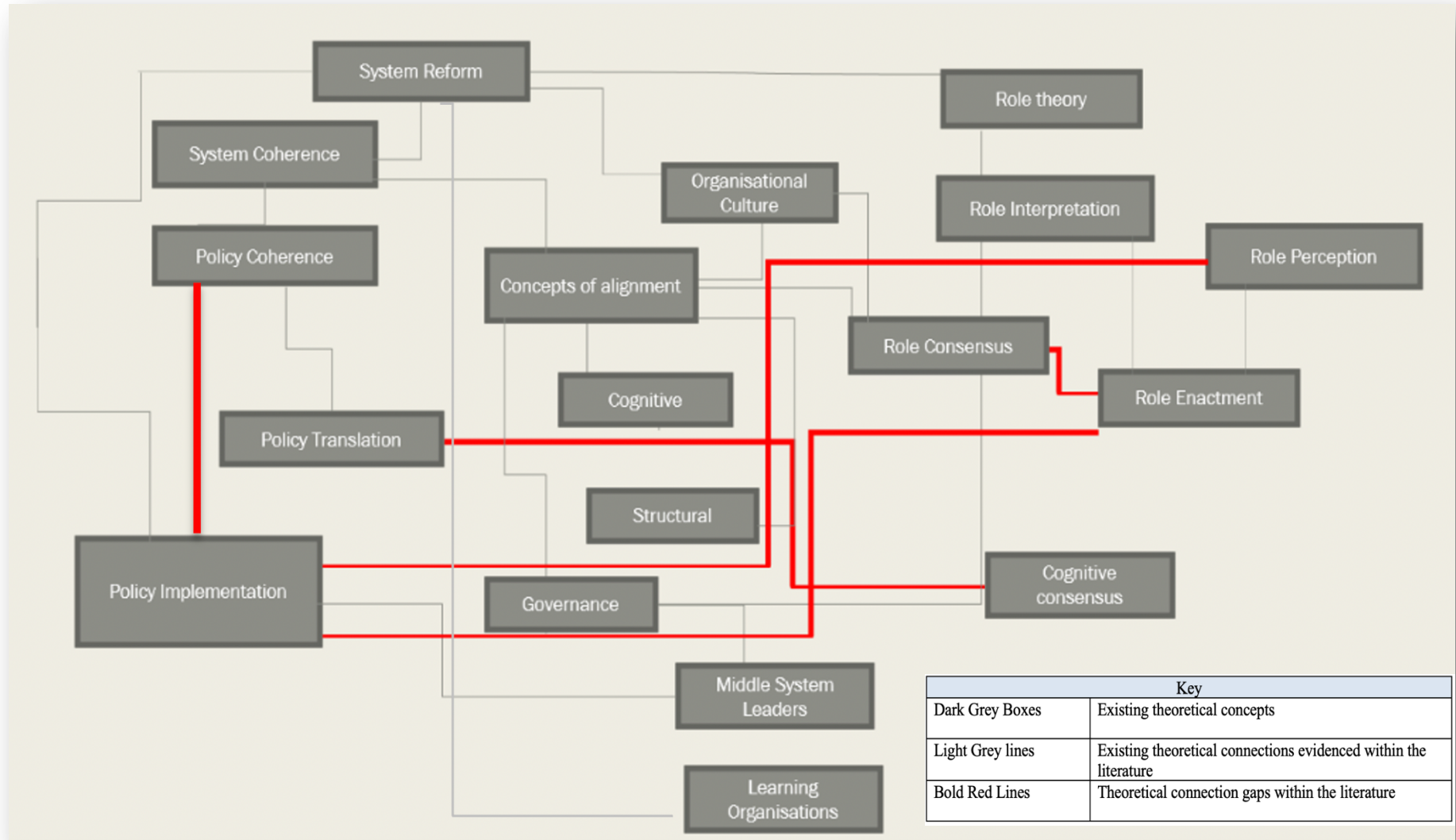
The research also helped to illuminate the following:

- The concept of policy coherence has predominantly been explored at the international, national and state government level, where the strategic and structural alignment between policy stakeholder groups or policies themselves has been highlighted. There has been limited focus on the exploration of the factors impacting on the attainment of system reform policy coherence within an individual system.

- In conjunction with concepts of coherence within the system reform literature, the alignment of strategic and structural elements of organisations is evidenced. There is insufficient recent research conducted from a policy coherence perspective on the cognitive aspect of system policy implementation.

- Policy implementation literature continues to acknowledge the role of policy actors in interpreting and translating policy; however, there is insufficient Australian research exploring system middle leaders' roles on the attainment of policy coherence.

- Role enactment theory highlights that individual role enactment can either strengthen or weaken organisational role consensus; however, how role enactment impacts on policy coherence is unknown.

Based on the above review and the researcher's interest in the role of system middle leaders (regional education officers) in system reform policy implementation, this research will explore how policy is implemented through an organisation's middle layer. Through the exploration of regional education officers' role enactment, the study aims to illuminate how policy is interpreted and translated.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1.   Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore how current policy translation and interpretation processes and practices are reflected in the enacted role of regional education officers. Situated within an interpretivist paradigm, an exploratory case study was selected for this research.

This chapter describes the methodology and research design. Methodology outlines the philosophical approach or paradigm orientation adopted for this study and the research strategy that guides the research design and implementation of the research plan. The first section of the chapter restates the aim of the research and explores the methodological details of the philosophical paradigm and the method of inquiry for the study. A justification of the selection of the qualitative research approach within the worldview of interpretivism is presented, followed by the rationale for the study, and the selection of a case study approach. The final section discusses the ethical issues of the research.

The second section outlines the overall research design, design components and use of photo-elicitation and graphic elicitation, as well as discussing in detail the preparations for and the implementation of the data collection. This discussion involves outlining the participant selection, the study context in more detail and the practical ethical and reliability considerations. This is followed by an exploration of the methods of analysis utilised within the study. This section includes processes implemented to establish the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research.

3.2.   Methodology Description

This section restates the aim of the study, the key research question and development of the sub-questions.

3.2.1. *Revisiting the Research Problem and Research Questions*

Through the exploration of regional education officers' (middle system leaders') role enactment, the aim of this qualitative study was to investigate and understand the factors that influence their policy interpretation and translation, in the

specific context of the DoE in Queensland, Australia. Based on the overall aim and purpose identified for the study, the following key research question was developed:

What emerge as significant factors influencing how regional education officers interpret and translate policy coherently to enact their role?

Using a case study methodology, I considered how regional education officers described their role enactment within the system, examined their use of policy and considered the implications for policy coherence as a key aspect of system reform.

According to Maxwell (2005) and Patton (2002), the credibility of researchers within qualitative inquiry rests on their ability to interpret the specifics of a place and the people within that space at any given time; that is, to understand the why and how of human interactions. Creswell (2007) noted that qualitative research questions need to capture the participants' perspectives for understanding the resulting interactions and processes within a social context. Therefore, the development of the research questions for this study involved a cycle of reflection framed by Richards' (2005) information about developing research questions: "What are you asking? How are you asking it? What data will you need to provide a good answer?" (p. 15). The knowledge and experience I had in the role of a regional education officer enabled me to deeply understand the context and the role from my own perspective; however, my knowledge and experience also had the potential to influence the responses from participants as a result of reduced objectivity (Breen, 2007; Ross, 2017). To address this potential impact, I used open-ended questions (see Table 3.1) which were targeted at exploring participants' perceptions and the contextual factors from a distance, to inform the findings and implications for policy coherence and policy reform research.

The establishment of the research approach then followed and was guided by Crotty's (1998) elements of methodology, as depicted in Figure 3.1, and his four questions: "What epistemology informs the theoretical perspective of the inquiry?", "What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?", "What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?" and "What methods do we propose to use?" (p. 4). These elements are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Table 3.1

The Research Problem and Research Question

Overarching Research Question: What emerge as significant policy implementation factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy as they enact their role?

Research Sub-Questions	Final Research questions: after reflective cycles with outsider perspectives
Role perception	a) How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within the system?
The Context	b) How do regional education officers enact their roles? c) What factors support or inhibit their role enactment?
The Implications	d) What implications for Policy Coherence and System Reform emerge from these findings?

Figure 3.1

Elements of the Methodological Framework
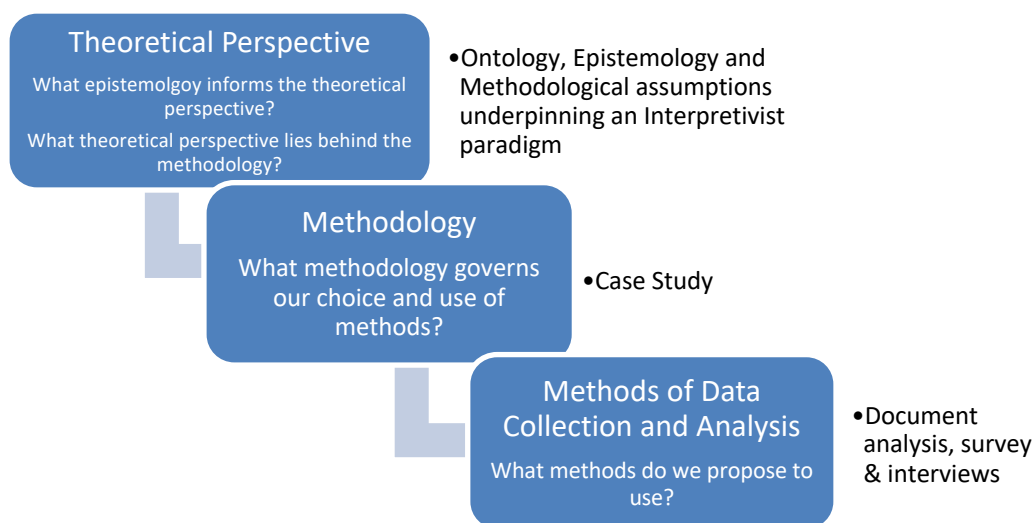
Note. Adapted from *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*, by M. Crotty, 1998, SAGE. Copyright 1998 by Michael Crotty.

3.2.2. *The Theoretical Orientation to the Research Paradigm*

Morgan (2014) states that "paradigms are … social worlds where research communities exert a powerful influence over the beliefs we consider to be meaningful and the actions we accept as appropriate" (p. 1049). The identification of a researcher's paradigm is an essential aspect of quality research, as it provides a

conceptual lens that reflects how a researcher's beliefs and principles shape how they see and interpret the world around them (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). That is, they define a researcher's philosophical orientation and influence the choice of methodologies, methods, literature, and research design, including how meaning is constructed in a social world (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

In reviewing the literature, it is evident that paradigms have been discussed in a variety of ways (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), with the qualitative interpretivism and positivism paradigms most commonly fore-fronted in social science research (Cohen et al., 2007). Hovorka and Lee (2010) posit that interpretivist research is focused on the construction of subjective understanding, primarily through the use of qualitative methods that observe how human individuals understand their lived experience, and create and share within a specific interpretivist context. In contrast to this, positivism focuses on explaining a researcher's "formal propositions" (Lee, 1994, p. 147), where the researcher first creates an understanding that is tested and explained through the research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify that, to distinguish between paradigms, various taxonomies are used and these share three fundamental elements: epistemological assumptions, ontological assumptions and methodological assumptions. These are brief explanations of these terms:

> *Ontology* is the philosophy of reality and nature and form of reality that constitutes legitimate research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).
> *Epistemology* is the philosophy of human nature and knowledge and how we come to know something and identify what counts as knowledge within the world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).
> *Methodological assumptions* refer to the research design, methods and approaches used in an inquiry that is well planned to find something out (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The differences between these three fundamental elements within a positivist and interpretivist paradigm are summarized in Table 3.2. The comparison in the table outlines the different orientation of each research paradigm. Using these questions as a guide, the research paradigm selected for this project is a qualitative study using an interpretivist lens that places the research problem at the centre. Through this paradigm, reality is viewed as socially embedded as an understanding existing within

the individual's mindset (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This reality is fluid and changing, and knowledge is subjective, constructed and based on shared cultural understandings. This approach supports the knowledge of reality being gained through social constructions such as language, shared meanings, tools, and documents (Walsham, 1993). This supports the research project intent and notion that there are multiple realties of any given phenomena.

Table 3.2

Philosophical Assumptions about the Characteristics of the Positivist and Interpretivist Research Paradigms

Assumptions	Questions	Paradigm	Characteristics	Implications for practice
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Interpretivist	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by the participants of the study.	Researcher uses quotes and themes in the words of participants and provides evidence of different perspectives.
		Positivist	Reality is single, tangible and fragmentable. Social facts have an objective reality.	Researcher uses numerical indices and abstract language to objectively portray their view.
Epistemological	What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?	Interpretivist	Researcher attempts to distance himself /herself from that being researched.	Researcher collaborates, spends time in field with participants and becomes an insider.
		Positivist	Researcher and what is being researched are independent, a dualism. The researcher is detached and impartial.	Researcher uses formal and structured instruments.
Methodological	What is the process of research?	Interpretivist	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within context, and uses an emerging design	Researcher works with details before generalisations, describes in detail the context of the study and continually revises questions from experiences in the field. Is typically qualitative.
		Positivist	Researcher uses deductive reasoning with the study being objective and value free.	Research works with hypothesis and often reduces data to numerical indices. Is typically quantitative.

Note. Adapted from *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd ed.), by J. W. Creswell, 2007, SAGE. Copyright 2007 by Sage Publications, Inc.

3.2.3. An Interpretivist Research Paradigm

My decision to employ the interpretivist lens was influenced by the need to construct meaning between the multiple perspectives captured and the context in which the problem sat (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This socially constructed meaning required a methodology that was flexible and able to capture meaning through human interactions (Carson et al., 2001) and was dependent upon the research question that the study was trying to address (Yin, 2009). The research problem required contextualised research to examine, interpret and understand how policy was interpreted and translated through enacted regional leadership roles. As a result, I selected an exploratory case study (Baskarada, 2014) as the research approach. The approach also lent itself to identifying emerging patterns and synthesising key concepts across differing participants within a single case (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988).

3.2.4. Theoretical Perspective: An Exploratory Case Study

Merriam (1998) outlines "that the single most defining characteristic of the case study lies in the delimitating the object of the study, the case" (p. 27). While researchers agree that there is a need for clarity of case within research design, there are differences into how this is developed. Yin (2014) posits that the case should be defined by the researcher and could be "some event or entity that is less well defined than a single individual" and it could relate to "decisions, programs, the implementation of processes and organizational change" (p. 23). Stake (2008), on the other hand, defines "case" as a functioning specific and is the primary focus of the study. While each of these case and case study definitions were used to inform this research, Yin's (2014) focus on the descriptive inquiry of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context has been used, as it connected with the research aim. The phenomenon of curriculum policy interpretation and translation as it occurs with the role of regional middle system leaders is explored through perceptions of key participants employed within the role. The interpretation of the role is explored within its context as the focus of the research. The context for this study is the analysis and interpretation of curriculum policy use within multiple regions in the Queensland DoE. Therefore, the study is bounded by a specific policy and the role of participants within this context.

The study is aimed at "optimising understanding of the case" (Stake, 2005, p. 443) and utilises one case explored across multiple participants, who are located with five of the seven DoE regions, in order to investigate and understand the case within

the context of the DoE system. The decision to explore this case with participants located in various regions was also to reduce the impact of my position as an experienced educator within one of the selected regions.

The selection of an exploratory case study over an explanatory or comparative case study was directly linked to the design of the research problem. As the literature on the research problem was identified as limited, the use of an explanatory or comparative method that required the study of known factors or a common intervention (Cunningham et al., 2013) would have been ineffective for achieving the intent of the proposed research. The research aimed to illuminate factors that contributed to how policy coherence was built. An exploratory case study that utilised multiple data methods was designed to explore literature concepts and evidence to identify any emerging factors (Yin, 2009).

3.2.5. *The Ontological Approaches to Exploratory Case Study*

In revealing ontology, the exploratory case study methodology explores human relationships, perceptions, and opinions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) through qualitative data methods. These methods rely on the beliefs, attitudes, relationships and individual identities of each participant and directly align to the knowledge of their reality being gained through social constructions, such as language, shared meanings, tools and documents (Walsham, 1993). Therefore, the complexities of studying human interactions require processes that allow a balance of voices to be reflected within the findings (Jarzabkowski, 2004). These processes are typically qualitative in nature rather than quantitative (Creswell, 2014), as they seek to establish meaning of the experiences from the perspectives of the participants involved (Harrison et al., 2017).

3.2.6. *Characteristics of an Exploratory Case Study Methodology*

The case study methodology has been deliberately selected so that the researcher can develop deep intimate knowledge of the relationships between the context and constructs of the role with limited "cover stories" being shared (Cunningham et al., 2013). Yin (2003) developed a case study method that aligns to the interpretivist paradigm. This methodology enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon within a specific context with multiple data sources (Yin, 2009), to ensure that the phenomena is explored through a variety of lenses so that multiple contextualised factors can be revealed.

A common view of case study methodology is that it is largely qualitative in nature (Merriam, 2009; Schwartz & Gates, 2017; Yin, 2014). Qualitative case study literature reveals that that the essential elements or key characteristics most commonly presented are naturalism, with an emphasis on process and inductive data analysis and the use of descriptive data. Each of these is discussed below.

3.2.6.1. Naturalism Orientation. Qualitative research reflects a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist as it is concerned with how the world is experienced and how actions are understood (Hughes, 2003; Travers, 2001). The researcher often becomes immersed in the context and is therefore able to understand the multiple realities of participants so that understanding is co-created (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014).

According to Heck (2004), policy activity is a socially constructed enterprise. Therefore, he argues, "policy actions both shape and are shaped by the assumptions, values, beliefs, and goals of those who develop, implement, and are affected by them" (p. 215). As this research explores the interpretation and translation of policy through the system's middle leaders' roles, it is essential to understand the perspectives of participants as they interact with policy to inform action.

As a qualitative researcher seeks to understand and represent these perspectives, the use of a naturalist orientation within this research is posited within the literature as a way of enabling me to examine how middle leaders behave within their work context while enacting their role (Given, 2008). Through these interactions, the researcher is able to facilitate an opening up and revealing of everyday accounts rather than cover stories, that are not often communicated to someone kept at a distance.

3.2.6.2. Focus on Data Collection Processes. According to the research, quality case studies utilise a range of data tools to increase validity (Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009). Furthermore, policy research outlines that understanding the context in which a policy is implemented and enacted is essential (Heck, 2004). The need to employ a flexible yet reliable data collection process is therefore preferred over rigid predetermined formats (Bryman, 2001).

The collection of this evidence can be a complex process (Meyer, 2001); therefore, Yin (2009) suggests the use of three principles (using multiple sources, creating a database of materials, and maintaining a chain of evidence) to address reliability and quality control. Through the implementation of these principals, the

researcher aims to triangulate the collected evidence to minimise research bias and reveal a variety of factors.

3.2.6.3. Features Underpinning the Analysis of Data. While the case study methodology does not dictate a particular data analysis method, there are specific characteristics (examining theoretical propositions, creating a description, and using a mixture of data sources) outlined by Yin (2009). These ensure that the collected evidence is utilised to inform a detailed contextual analysis. The purpose of the data analysis is to organise and explore the evidence, using a variety of approaches to reveal converging lines of inquiry so that patterns can be revealed (Petty et al., 2012). This approach is commonly referred to as inductive (Merriam, 1998) as it avoids the development of a hypothesis to be tested, but rather, it continues with inductive analysis that informs the building of abstractions, concepts, and theories. It is important to note, however, that not all qualitative case study research necessarily results in theory (Bryman, 2001). Therefore, commencing the research "without any preconceived theories or hypothesis" (Weirsma, 2000, p. 201) and with a focus on identifying emerging patterns and interrelationships is fundamental (Bokdan & Biklen, 2003) and supports Yin's (2014) notion that establishing clear data collection processes and opportunities for reflection is necessary to ensure the research aim is achieved.

3.2.6.4. The Use of Descriptive Data. Case study research has been widely associated with the description (Yin, 2009) of the data collected and an aim to describe socially constructed understandings and actions, within contexts that are not fixed (Merriam, 2014). The intent of the research and the selection of methodology lend themselves to the use of data methods that include, but are not limited to, interviews, open-ended qualitative surveys, and document analysis. These methods can in turn produce large amounts of data. Yin (2014) identified that this could potentially limit the scope and boundaries of such research and highlighted the need to employ rigorous and well-planned data analysis techniques. Effectively employed triangulation of multiple data sets can enhance the holistic understanding and strengthens the validity and reliability of the research (Merriam, 2014). Within this study, the use of an open-ended qualitative survey, semi-structured interviews and document analysis provided opportunities to triangulate the data and address validity and reliability concerns.

It is important at this stage to reiterate the importance of the relationship between the researcher and participants to ensure that the collected data reflects the socially constructed nature of case study research (Heck, 2004). It is also a timely reminder to observe the insider-outsider dichotomy discussed earlier and the need to identify the researcher's own bias and articulation of a worldview for the study (Janesick, 2004). According to Janesick, there is no value-free or bias-free qualitative research (p. 56), so this supports the need to employ a reflective approach that minimises the insertion of assumptions that can influence the interpretation of the voice of the participants (Berg & Lune, 2007). Within this study, my reflections are captured and explicitly communicated through **wonderings** within the data chapters. The role of the researcher will now be discussed.

3.2.7. *The Role of the Researcher*

The proposed study was motivated by my background as a regional middle system leader (regional education officer), my interest in system improvement and what I saw as emerging patterns from role enactment observations. The research is positioned within the context of the Queensland DoE, where I was previously employed. During the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, the Queensland policy response resulted in the development of the P–12 Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework ([P–12 CARF], Queensland Government, 2020a) and the National School Improvement Tool (ACER, 2020), referred to as the School Improvement Hierarchy (SIH) with the DoE State Schooling Strategy (Queensland Government, 2020a). My role, at the time, was responsible for supporting schools within a region to utilise this policy to inform school improvement strategies. I worked within a regional team to contribute to the review of this policy and to the development of subsequent regional support strategies for school leadership teams.

The regional strategies were focused on utilising the DoE "Inquiry Cycle" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1) and reflective practices to engage school leadership teams in implementing the Queensland policy response to the Australian Curriculum through research and evidence-based models. The key components included developing shared understandings of policy and exploring capability building processes for schools, with a focus on measuring the impact on teaching quality and student learning.

An aspect of my role was to attend Queensland curriculum project officer conferences. During these conferences, it became evident that each regional team adopted a variety of approaches for supporting schools in implementing policy. I also observed the high turnover of team members and the growth of additional regional middle system leader teams to support the implementation of additional system initiatives and priorities that included Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and Inclusive Education policies.

A key aspect of my role was to work directly with school leadership teams. During these interactions, I observed a wide variety of policy interpretations and use within and across schools. All of these observations initiated my desire to identify why: Why was policy interpreted differently? And how did the system's middle leaders' role contribute to policy interpretation and translation?

Having had the opportunity to experience how regional education officers enacted and contextualised policy implementation within one region, has been valuable to my present study, as I had developed deep knowledge of the research context from a regional and system perspective. I had also established professional relationships with regional education officers across the state, based on trust and mutual respect through formal and informal exchanges, inter-regional projects and state conferences. Through these established relationships I had direct access to a large participant group whose selection was based on who could contribute to the identification of factors that influence policy translation at a middle leader's level.

I openly acknowledge that, while my previous position allowed me to bring external and internal perspectives, an awareness of my biases and their impact needed to be addressed. My new role as a researcher could have impacted on the credibility of the research findings, the selected data collection, analysis processes and reflective practices. The strategies I employed to address how I consciously reduced my bias and the impact of my worldview (Nightingale & Cromby, 2002) on the findings will be outlined in the sections that follow.

3.2.8. Ethical Considerations

As a University of Southern Queensland employee, researching within the DoE, I was bound by the ethical standards of human research in compliance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (2007) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Ethical clearance for the proposed study was obtained from the University of Southern Queensland (approval no. H18REA009P1:

see Appendix A). Prior to conducting research with the Queensland DoE, permission was sought to conduct research across multiple regions (see Appendix B). Upon approval of this request (see Appendix C), the system's central office was contacted to advertise the opportunity to participate in the research through the regional middle system leaders' email distribution lists. Within the email, the research intent and process for consent was outlined, reinforcing that participation in the research study would be on a voluntary basis.

In alignment with university guidelines, I addressed the following ethical considerations. First the participants were provided with an anonymous survey. They were also given an option of being contacted for subsequent interviews. Once participants indicated an interest in participating, an information email was sent with the research project overview, outlining the objectives and methodology. Each participant had the opportunity to engage in a phone conversation to clarify any questions before confirming their involvement in the research. Third, a letter of informed consent outlining the ethical considerations of the study was given to each participant to sign, if they had decided to participate in the study (see Appendix E).

The fourth ethical consideration was that, throughout the research study, participants were given opportunities to raise any concerns, question or withdraw from participation. Opportunities were also provided for participants to remove collected data and clarify the use of the anonymous data in future publications. The fifth consideration was to ensure that all regions and regional education officers were protected and that the data were coded to prevent source identification. Finally, I ensured that the collected data were safely retained and would be kept for a period of five years, in alignment with ethics applications and approvals.

3.3.   Research Design

The research design is commonly associated with ensuring that meaningful and reliable data are collected to increase the validity of research findings (Flick, 2004/2000). This is achieved by carefully considering process, to avoid bias and effectively derive observable implications. This study has embraced a well-structured design plan as supported by Stake (1995), aimed at addressing specific inquiry questions rather than a loosely scheduled plan as advocated by Bogdan and Biklen (2003). This ensured the purposeful collection and analysis of data through the use of Yin's (2003) case study design, as outlined in Figure 3.2. This plan outlines an operational procedure utilised to collect and analyse the data, together with an

explanation of the relationship between these procedures. The figure represents the three phases (definition and planning, preparation, collection, analysis and analysis and conclusions) of the exploratory case study research design.

Figure 3.2

Case Study Research Design
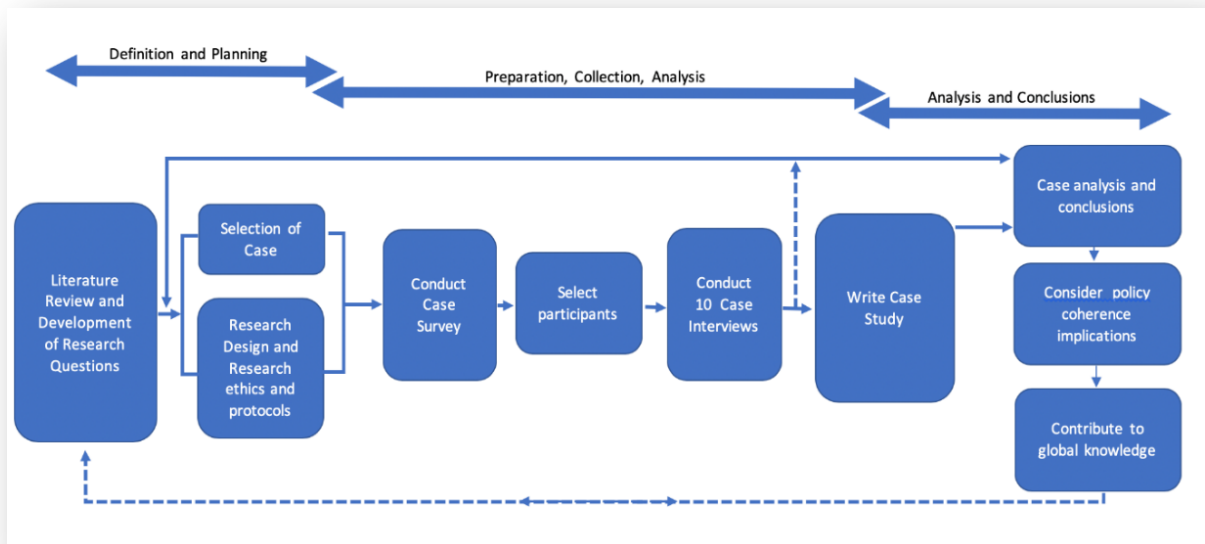
Note. Adapted from *Applications of case study research* (2nd ed.), by R. K. Yin, 2003, SAGE. Copyright 2003 by Sage Publications, Inc.

The three steps taken to develop the exploratory case study design, as shown in Figure 3.2, were:

1. The identification of the research focus through a literature review, which was outlined in Chapter 2.

2. The development of subsequent research questions as discussed earlier in this chapter. These research questions were developed utilising external reflective practice to reveal and address my insider assumptions and collect relevant data. Figure 3.3 outlines the conceptual connections between the research questions, the outlined case study process, and the phases of data collection.

3. The selection of the case or unit of analysis. The concept of case or unit of analysis can at times be ambiguous (Merriam, 2001). Creswell (2013) outlined that the purpose of a case study is that it "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems

(cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information ... and reports a case description and case themes" (p. 97). Stake (1995) outlined that case study is "a choice of what is to be studied," that the method does not define the case, and that we must "concentrate on the case" (p. 443). Case studies can be specific or complex; however, it is only when the case is a bounded system, a single entity in and of itself, that the study is considered a case study (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2008; Stake, 2006). The selection of the case was based on the understanding that the study was to contribute to the global understandings of the phenomenon of policy coherence as a key characteristic of system reform. Acknowledging the complexity of the phenomenon being studied and the motivation for the study, the familiar context of the Queensland DoE was selected as the study's context, with the system's group of regional education officers' use of the P–12 Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework action policy selected as the case.

Figure 3.3

Conceptual Links Between the Research Questions and Case Study Design

Research Problem

What emerges as significant factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy coherently to enact their roles?

What implications for Policy Coherence emerge from these findings

(Research Question 5)

Conceptual Framework

Viennet & Pont's (2017) Policy Implementation Framework and Limani's (2015) organisational alignment theory were utilised to identify if and how policy was coherently interpreted and translated through system middle leaders'roles.

Phase 1

Document Analysis to establish:

1. The policy implementation expectations of the Queensland Department of Education

2. How system policy documents coherently reflected implementation expectations. (Research Question 1)

Response to Research Question 1

Phase 2

Regional Education Officer **Survey** to establish

1. How did system middle leaders percieve their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system? (Research Question 2)

2. Purpose Sampling: Select participants who are positioned to explore emerging themes in relation to policy interpretation and translation

Response to Research Question 2

Phase 3

Regional Education Officer Semi Structured Interview

Phase 3 PART A	Phase 3 PART B
Utilising photographic elicitation	Semi Structured Interivew

- How did system middle leaders percieve their role positon within the system?
- 2. How do system middle leaders enact their roles?
- 3. What factors support or inhibit their role enactment?
- (Research Questions 2, 3 & 4)

Response to Research Questions 2, 3 & 4

The study can be considered a single case study as it is aimed at studying how a group of people interpret and translate the same policy within the same education system. While participants are located within various regions within the system, the bounded aspect of the study is the education system and policy. This facilitates the ability to utilise these participant experiences as a lens for exploring the case and enables me as the researcher to explore participant experiences that are located within the larger case (Yin, 2014). As one of the research sub-questions is focused on identifying factors that support or inhibit the use of policy in role enactment, this approach is directly aligned to the research intent.

3.3.1. *The Context*

The Queensland DoE is a government funded state education system. This system is divided into seven large geographical regions of schools, each under the leadership of a Regional Director (RD) and team of Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs). A key aspect of supporting these schools is the provision of targeted resources directly to regions to "maintain alignment, tailor support and scale up success" (Queensland Government, 2019, p. 2). Regional education officers are one group of support personnel allocated directly to regions to support schools.

An aspect of the DoE's improvement strategy was the development and implementation of policies, guidelines and resources. These policies and guidelines have been designed to "provide step by step processes to follow, presenting ways to deal with mandatory and legal obligations, and explains to staff duties and responsibilities" (Queensland Government, 2019, Policy, guidelines and resources, procedures and initiatives section, para. 1).

In 2013, during the phased in. implementation of the Australian Curriculum, the *P–12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework* action policy was developed to outline the requirements for Queensland state schools in implementing the required Australian Curriculum and remaining Queensland Curriculum, for Prep– Year 12 students (Department of Education, 2019). The role of regional education officers (given the name, Principal Education Advisors Australian Curriculum) was created to support schools in implementing the Australian Curriculum and, at a state level, aligning school improvement strategies to this action policy.

As this policy and the group of support personal had established places within the DoE, and I had previous experience in the role as well as familiarity with the

system, they were deemed suitable as the context and case for the study. This situation was suitable for deepening understanding (Merriam, 2005) of the phenomenon of policy coherence.

3.3.2. Selecting Participants

Gaining access into a field for research is an initial research activity and it can affect the planning, design, and implementation of the research (Wellington, 2000). Access to the DoE personnel was assumed to not be a problem, as I was on unpaid leave from the system. However, now as a researcher, I needed to identify the correct protocols and processes to invite participants (aligned to the ethics and research approvals) to engage in the study.

As the research involved regional education officers from multiple regions, I contacted the Department's state curriculum manager who responded in a timely manner, outlining that the invitation could be distributed through the state's curriculum regional education officers' email distribution list which enabled direct access to all potential participants.

Purposive sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was selected as the most appropriate sampling technique aligned to the naturalist and interpretivist orientation of the research. The aim of this technique is not to randomly select participants, but to create a sample with the intention of being able to consider the whole cohort from the sample. This is also known as critical case purposive sampling, as the criteria for selection emerges from characteristics of the larger group (Patton, 2002). The process for this purposive critical case sampling will be discussed within the next section.

3.3.3. Data Collection

A qualitative case study utilises data methods that inquire into the beliefs, attitudes, relationships, and individual identities of each participant. Through the case study, knowledge as a reality was gained through social constructions such as language and documents (Walsham, 1993). The complexities with studying human interactions require processes that allow a balance of voices to be reflected within the findings (Jarzabkowski, 2004).

In addition to these processes (outlined within the data collection phases), there were additional ethical considerations when the researcher was a previously employed within the selected participant group, including emotional dimensions that risk the validity of data communication. One of the responsibilities that I needed to

consider is how I would carefully describe each experience accurately while systematically looking for patterns. To attempt to uphold this intent, structural corroboration was used, as it required me to look for recurring behaviours or actions and to consider disconfirming evidence (Eisner, 1991). The study opted to utilise photo and graphic elicitation and visual metaphor as interview stimulus as well as recording participant voice through multiple modes (qualitative survey and recorded interviews). These strategies were used to minimise insider bias and the influence of preconceived assumptions about the enacted role of regional education officers, as well as contextual research factors that may inhibit participants' interactions or voice.

3.3.4. *Data Collection Phases*

Using one organisation for the purpose of this research has been supported by a range of researchers (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007; Yin, 2014). As outlined by Stake (2009), a single organisation case provides an opportunity for documenting and analysing one type of organisation, as the same point of reference is maintained for data analysis, creating a strong base for data triangulation. In order to capture the required data for the purposive sampling and subsequent descriptive case study data, the data collection occurred within three phases.

Phase One utilised the method of document analysis (Yin, 2014) to review and examine the Department of Education public organisational documents, to gain an understanding of the historical and current curriculum policy context. The documents would also illuminate how their implementation in schools has been supported, as well as identifying what data still needed to be collected. This method required searching and locating relevant system documents and communication relevant to the research problem.

3.3.4.1. Qualitative Document Analysis Method. Document analysis is a research method that assisted the researcher to gather insights into context specific documentary realities and provided a way of understanding social practices (Wood et al., 2020) within the Department of Education. While multiple qualitative document analysis frameworks are emerging, the current research selected a combination of Wood et al. (2020) discuss that the approach of "tracking discourse" (p. 458) provides a process for following specific issues, words and themes across different media. Gorichanaz and Latham's (2006) "document experience" (p. 1118) forefronted the notion that meaning is generated by bringing together and processing

interwoven information from a person and an object. This is important for this research phase because thematic analysis is being utilised to code documents that required the researcher to interpret phrases within document groups.

      3.3.4.2. Development of the Corpus. The first step was to establish the corpus, or the elected body of documents for analysis with which to work (Flick, 2009). The implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Queensland was the subject of many government public reports, Queensland union agreements and education system documentation, identified through simple web and catalogue searches. A basic search for Queensland Australian Curriculum implementation, paired with a narrow focus on identifying documents within the Queensland Department of Education, informed the first stage of the document analysis. Skimming of headlines informed a preliminary content analysis where three obvious document categories emerged (policy, strategy and implementation advice), with all items being included for consideration in the corpus. The next step was to analyse the content of each document to identify additional references to policy, strategy or implementation supporting documents for inclusion in the corpus. The document tracking process (Figure 3.4) continued through each new document until no new references emerged.

Figure 3.4

Document Tracking of Corpus Document
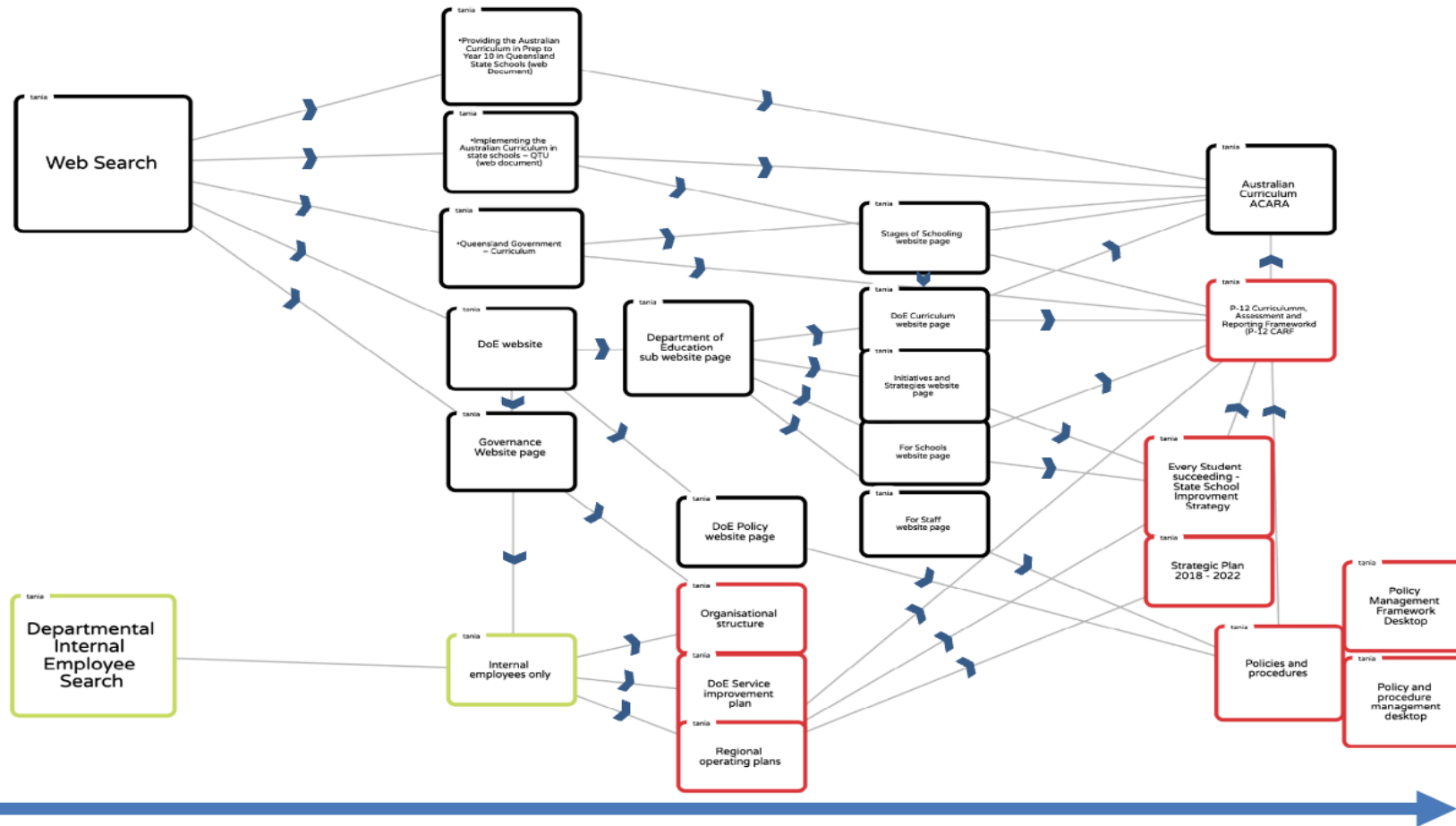
Note: Document Tracking began from the left with a web search and departmental document search. The red boxes indicate where the tracking ended.

This process resulted in the documents outlined in red within Figure 3.4, forming the corpus (Table 3.3). Collectively, these documents informed the content analysis and NVivo word tracing (Altheide & Gaddefors, 2008) conducted within Phase One.

Table 3.3

Document Corpus Overview

Title	Type	Version History	Purpose	Audience	Authorship and Approvals
Externally available **Policy procedure documents sourced through the DoE website**					
Policy and procedure development and improvement cycle	PDF online	18/5/2018	Outlines DoE's approach to developing effective policies	Department Wide	Queensland Government
Policy and procedure management	PDF Online	18/5/2018	Supports the approach to developing effective policies	Department Wide	Queensland Government
Policy management framework	PDF Online	No version	Resource schematic of DoE's policy management	Department Wide	Queensland Government
Internally available **Policy procedure documents**					
Policy instruments framework	PDF Online	Version 3 2015 Accessed 2/10/2019	Defines various types of Queensland Government policy and where they are located	Internal government employees.	Queensland Government
Externally Available **Policy in Action Documents as defined by the Policy Instrument Framework**					
State school strategic plan 2018 – 2022	Online PDF	2018- 2022	To outline DoE's priorities and alignment to Advancing Queensland Policy	External and department wide	DoE
State school strategy 2020-2024	Online PDF	2020 - 2024	To outline DoE priorities, measures and targets in a simplified schematic	Departmental	DoE
P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	Policy in action PDF Online	Original Date 2014 Revised January 2020	Specifies the curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements for all Queensland state schools' principals and staff delivering the curriculum from Prep to Year 12.	Department Wide. Focus on School Principals and Staff	Queensland Government
Externally available operational documents					
DoE Organisational structure	Resource PDF Online	Dec 2019	Identify structure and roles within the organisation		
Internally available operational documents (accessed while employed at DoE)					

Title	Type	Version History	Purpose	Audience	Authorship and Approvals
Regional operational framework	PDF online	2014	Identifies function of regions	Departmental staff	DETE
Regional operational plans 1. Darling Downs Southwest Region 2. Southeast Region 3. North Coast Region 4. Metropolitan Region 5. North Queensland Region 6. Far North Queensland Region 7. Central Queensland Region	PDF Online	2019	Identifies functions, priorities and support structures provided by regions to support DoE strategic direction	Regional Staff	DoE Regional Directors

3.3.4.3. Deductive Analysis Criteria. All policy contexts are governed by organisational arrangements that are specific to the demands of a particular time, place, and people (Ostrom et al., 1994). Therefore, the second phase of the document analysis method specifically focused on identifying the criteria for assessing the content within the policy and implementation documents. Through the lens of each criterion, a better understanding of the scope and nature of curriculum policy implementation processes (procedures) and implementation practices within the Department of Education emerged. This exploration resulted in the identification and description of contextual determinants of the environment in which departmental regional education officers interpret and translate policy.

The document analysis would use deductive content analysis to code and reduce textual data into smaller meaningful codes that were organised in a structured theoretical way (Miles et al., 2013) into emerging themes. The framework for analysis design drew upon the principles contained within Viennet and Pont's (2017) theoretical policy implementation framework (policy design, stakeholders, implementation and context) and organisational alignment theory (Limani, 2015). Viennet and Pont's framework delineates a systems approach to policy implementation and is comprised of six policy design determinants that underpin,

influence and shape organisations policy implementation processes. The framework acknowledged the need to consider the contextual factors and multi-directional nature of policy implementation to gain insights into the embedded structures, policy stakeholders (also referred to as actors within Viennet and Pont's research) and points of influence across a system to identify and analyse policy implementation factors. These six policy design determinants would also be carried through into Chapters 5, 6 and 7, to reflect upon each chapter's findings from an alignment perspective.

Organisational alignment theory, as depicted by Limani (2015), can be separated into formal and non-formal functioning units. Organisational structure, strategy and policies fall into the formal side of organisational functioning and, as such, this aspect of organisational alignment theory was utilised for the document analysis. This formal aspect of alignment establishes the goals, objectives, processes and employee tasks within an organisation and is characterised by aligned policies, procedures, roles, associated tasks and measures.

Importantly for this phase of the study, there was considerable cohesion in the policy design and implementation key elements expressed in these two informing theories (i.e., Limani, 2015; Viennet & Pont, 2017). Whilst it was not possible to include all possible relevant policy implementation and organisational alignment frameworks, the use of these two provided ample scope for the deductive assessment of the Department of Education policy and policy implementation documentation.

Drawing from this policy implementation and organisational alignment research, three main criteria relevant to coherent policy design and implementation were identified (policy design, policy implementation and alignment of policy design elements) with seven specific sub-criteria drawn from Viennet and Pont's (2017) policy implementation framework: communication and engagement; timing; tools; task allocation; objectives; data, monitoring and accountability; resources (including human resources). Table 3.4 provides a detailed description of each criterion.

Table 3.4

Description of Deductive Document Analysis Criteria

Criteria	Descriptions
Objective/s	Identified result/s or aim/s that underpin/s the policy document.
Implementation strategy	Articulated plans explaining how to enact policy. May provide a vision and be open and flexible to accommodate changes.
Communication and engagement	Consultation and stakeholder engagement to gather support and understanding of policy language. Communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy.
Timing	Clear timelines and pace for implementation often outlined in the scope of implementation and potential outcomes.
Tools	Also referred to as instruments. These may include but are not limited to: top down mechanisms of command and control (e.g., mandate); capability building or partnerships. The purpose of each tool is to support policy implementation. Tool identification is linked to the system's approach to policy implementation.
Task allocation	Distribution or allocation of tasks to specific organisational units or individuals. May form part of role responsibilities.
Task allocation: Regional role	As the focus of the research was to explore regional roles, this additional criterion was developed to identify specific reference to regional roles.
Data, monitoring and accountability	Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision-making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision-making. These may include: 1. Student data; 2. Research findings; 3. Implementation process data: engagement, timelines and task achievement.
Resources	Inputs necessary for policy implementation. Typically fall into three categories: 1. Funding: financial and human resources; 2. Technology and knowledge: supporting guidelines and online documents; 3. Capability building.

Note. Adapted from *Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework*, by R. Viennet & B. Pont, 2017, OECD. Copyright 2017 by OECD.

Phase Two utilised the method of participant qualitative surveys (Laird, 2004), which incorporated a combination of open-ended and closed questions. The sample target population of 35 was drawn from members of the State Regional

Education Officers' Team, with the intent of identifying a smaller sample group of 10 participants who would form the participants in Phase Three of the study (see Figure 3.3). The survey in Phase Two was designed to ensure the selected sample population reflected the key characteristics of the larger group, as well as a variety of voices (Jarzabkowski, 2004) to ensure a balance of perspectives is represented in the findings. This variety was identified in the closed questions section that identified key participant characteristics, which included role history, educational background and number of years in the current role. In addition to this, the ability to identify policy enactment as a key role descriptor was a necessary characteristic to ensure the sample population could contribute to the focus of the study. This was drawn from the open-ended section where participants had an opportunity to provide answers in their own words, enabling the researcher to collect diverse responses (Jackson & Trochim, 2002) and illuminate initial factors that influenced policy translation through role enactment, such as the identification of role responsibilities (see Appendix A).

3.3.4.4. Survey. The short 12 item self-administered qualitative survey comprised of closed and open questions was developed specifically for the purpose of identifying the characteristics of DoE regional education officers, as there was no existing data source available to meet the requirements of the research (De Leeuw, 2012) (see Appendix A). As presented in Table 3.5, the first section of the qualitative survey, items 1 to 4, focused on identifying demographic information, teaching qualifications, experience and how regional education officers distributed their time. The second section, items 5 to 12, focused on gathering participants' perceptions of their experiences as regional education officers. An additional question at the end, was utilised to profile Phase Three participants.

Demographic items were used to determine the key characteristics of the target group. According to Wojatzki et al. (2018), "one's beliefs and opinions [are] often shaped by their demographic attributes" (p. 1408). In order to develop a collective picture of who the regional education officers were, the survey asked the participants to provide demographic information: gender, teaching qualifications, teaching experience and role experience.

Items (9-12) were unstructured (open) survey items , used to describe the characteristics of the regional officers and their understanding of their role (Kashner et al., 2020). These items were used to ask them to report on their role enactment.

The development of perception items (questions) required clarity of the phenomenon and the variables (based on the research questions) used to describe the phenomenon (Table 3.5). Together these increased the validity of responses and avoided specification errors (De Leeuw, 2009). Variables that were not observable, such as policy interpretation, were referred to as latent items and were designed to be illuminated by asking representative participants a series of questions about their experiences within the phenomenon of interest.

Latent items within the qualitative survey (Appendix A) were organised under the identified variables drawn from the research questions (Table 3.5) and were constructed using open-ended questions with written text.

Table 3.5

Identified Variables, Research Questions, and the Resulting Qualitative Survey Items

Variable name	Research Question	Item on Survey
Independent Variable: Demographic and Employment Information	What are the key employment characteristics of regional education officers?	Questions 1 – 4
Role Perception	How do education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system	Question 5 - 6
Role Enactment	Descriptive Research Question: How do system middle leaders (regional education officers) enact their role	Questions 9, 11
	What factors support role enactment?	Questions 7, 8, 10, 12
Phase Three Participation	Indicate if you wish to engage in a follow up interview.	Question 13

The decision to employ open-ended (unstructured) questions regarding how regional education officers enacted their role, was drawn from Phase One's methodology where there were no preconceived categories that could be used to develop closed questions. Therefore, the use of open-ended questions was deemed suitable, as they enabled the collection of participants' descriptions that reflected the complexity of the phenomenon (policy interpretation and translation). Open-ended

questions also provided participants with an opportunity to express their own views or perceptions fully (Descombe, 2014) without leading them to respond in a particular way. For example, within the survey items there were no references made to the use of interpretations or translation, as the aim of the qualitative survey was to determine if and to what extent policy was interpreted and translated within the regional education officers' enacted role.

The omission of the term policy within the questions also supported the construct validity of the qualitative survey, as Crano and Brewer (2002) identified that voluntary participants and "their positive attitudes may prove dangerous to validity" (p. 211) as they may attempt to respond to questions utilising the language within the questionnaire that may otherwise not be reflected with responses. This in turn could be deemed as leading the participants to reflect pre-conceived research notions.

In addition to this omission, the qualitative survey was piloted to ensure each item was able to be understood and answered by participants. The pilot participants were three previous colleagues of mine, who had identified that they did not wish to participate in the formal research. Each pilot participant completed the online qualitative survey and individually engaged in a reflective conversation with me (as the researcher) to respond to the following questions, drawn from Opie's (2019) qualitative survey considerations (p. 165):

1. Were the instructions clear?
2. Were any of the questions unclear or ambiguous? If so which ones and why?
3. Did you have any objection to answering any of these questions?
4. Any other comments?

The pilot process resulted in no changes to the questions; however, there were modifications to the qualitative survey introduction through the reformatting of the online platform. The introduction was altered to outline the purpose of the research and utilised language to personalise the need for regional education officers' participation. According to Saleh and Bista (2017), the personalisation of qualitative surveys through targeting selected or specialised groups, paired with asking for help from responders, significantly increases qualitative survey response rates.

Phase Three, Parts A and B, utilised 40-minute semi-structured individual interviews**,** conducted with members of the sample group identified in Phase Two.

These interviews were the main method for gathering quality data to support the identification of contributing factors, and the language used to describe perceptions of their role and how they interpreted and translated policy to enact their role. Within Part A of this interview, participants were asked to select a photographic image that represented how they saw themselves within the system. This image provided a base description from which the interview was conducted and was a form of photo elicitation.

     3.3.4.5. Photographic Elicitation. Photographic-elicitation's origin stems from anthropologist Collier in the 1950s and is commonly defined as the use of a single or set of photos as a stimulus within a research interview (Harper, 2002). The use of visual stimulus has been identified as an effective way to that trigger participant responses that reveal their attitudes, views and beliefs, through rich dialogue when compared to oral interviews (Harper, 2002; Hurworth, 2003). Another asserted advantage of this technique is that the use of "open images, that are not explicitly reflective of the research context can provide a common space between the researcher and research subjects" (Meo, 2010). These notions aligned to the need for me to insert processes within the research design that minimised my bias and insider assumptions (Merriam et al., 2001) so that the participants were not directed through my paraphrasing and questioning to reflect my worldview in their responses. In addition, through the use of the photo image, the need to use specific oral questioning within the interview was reduced.

     Participants responded to the image to describe where they saw their role within the system, making connections and opening up the ways in which they saw their own social worlds (Willis, 1980, as cited in Meo, 2010). The capturing of these data therefore added valuable insights into the participants' perspectives as they expressed their emotions and tacit knowledge (Pain, 2012). The implementation of this approach also had the potential to empower participants to collaborate (Glaw et al., 2017) and this in turn enhances the development of shared understandings, a key aspect of case study methodology (Merriam, 2009).

     The selection of the photo elicitation method is traditionally understood to be an auto-driven interview technique where the participant takes the photos and brings them to the interview (Torre & Murphy, 2015). As the focus of the study is not easily visible and the taking of photos can be time intensive for participants (Chappell et al., 2011), I decided to employ the use of a series of black and white images, selected

and interpreted as a metaphor for where the participants saw themselves within the system.

Research on the impact of colour on people's information processing highlights that an individual is more likely to recall irrelevant information when presented with colour images (Kratzman & Nyenhuis, 1972, as cited in Lee, 2016). The research also indicates that there is a direct correlation between the use of colour images and the participants' construal, as colour has been shown to positively and negatively influence mood and attitude (Singh, 2006). The use of colour images could therefore influence the selection of particular visual images over others. As a result, the influencing factor of colour was removed through the selection of black and white images.

3.3.4.6. Graphic Elicitation. In Part B of the semi-structured interview, participants were asked to discuss their role using a placemat of images (Figure 3.4), designed to reflect the intent of the research sub-questions (see Figure 3.3). This approach was a form of graphic elicitation.

The majority of literature on visual elicitation focusses on the use of photography, as previously outlined. However, the use of diagrams as an interview stimulus was also beneficial in keeping the interview focused on the aim of the study, as participants were encouraged to connect their own experiences to those reflected within the visual diagram (Torronen, 2002). While photos could have limited participants' connections, graphic representations were constructed to represent the broad aspects of the study, to act as a stimulus for thought and communication (Crilly et al., 2006). The selection of this method for the second half of the interview was to minimise the insertion of my insider assumptions.

Hogan et al. (2015) identify that the interview technique employed within a graphic elicitation method requires the interviewer to be non-inductive. That is, the research does not suggest or contribute any content but asks clarifying often open-ended questions as the participants explore and describe their connections with the graphic. When designing the graphic, images were selected to reflect the intent of the research questions that focused on role perception and context.

To test the validity of this instrument, a pilot participant was utilised for the purpose of engaging with the graphic, providing feedback, and refining the instrument. The responses from this pilot participant were analysed against the

research questions to ensure the required information was revealed through the designed graphic (Figure 3.5). This technique met the needs of the study and increase the reliability of the collected data.

Figure 3.5k

Interview Graphic Questioning Placemat
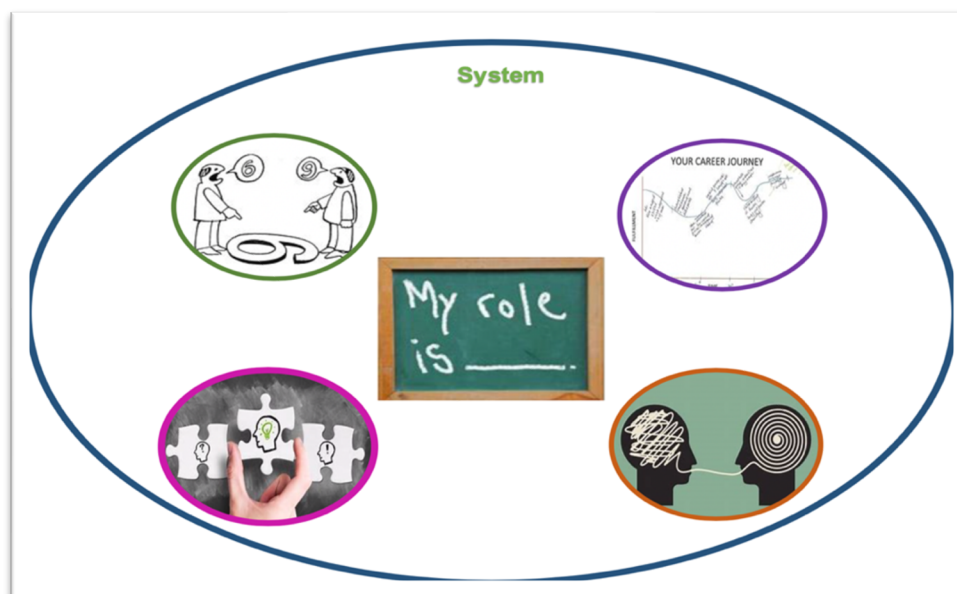
Figure 3.5 reflects the research questions in the following ways:

- Green and pink images were designed to illicit response to research question 2: How do regional education officers perceive their role within the system?
- Brown, pink, purple and orange images were designed to illicit responses to research question 3: How do regional education officers enact their role?

3.3.5. *Data Analysis*

Data analysis incorporated correlation processes (Grix, 2010), where the relationship between one or more factors (i.e., policy documentation, policy perceptions and enactment descriptions) required "organizing the data for in-depth study and comparison" that in turn leads to a description and potential understanding of the case (Patton, 2002, p. 447). To achieve this depth of analysis, the research was guided by Yin's (2009) three core principles: using multiple sources of evidence, maintaining a case study data base, and maintaining a chain of evidence.

A triangulation by method approach (Bellamy, 2011), including the use of document analysis, survey and interviews, was adopted to provide and validate qualitative data for the research. The concept of triangulation refers to a process in which a researcher wants to increase the study's credibility by showing that its

independent measures complement each other (Hussein, 2015). Triangulation was also utilised within this study to compare the various sources of evidence, so that the accuracy of information could be defended, and different perspectives generated to develop a rich, descriptive interpretation (Torrance, 2012) of policy implementation. Santos et al. 2020) identify that this approach helps to determine internal validity and can reduce the risk of assumption-based associations as well as biases, resulting in reliable explanations and case descriptions.

The specific analysis methods that were used for the open-ended survey questions and recorded interviews included thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) that used open coding and data reduction to identify emerging themes, patterns, and relationships relevant to the confidence and perceived capability of each participant (Silverman, 2006). Subsequent concept mapping, through the use of coding descriptions captured within the thematic analysis of interviews, was utilised as a method for examining emerging themes and the connection these have with each participant (Jackson & Trochim, 2002). This form of data reduction provided a mode for mapping frequent or infrequent mentions of factors that may be different in importance to each participant (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). This was applied to inform the subsequent recommendations for policy coherence.

However, as Mertens (2005) states, "transformative scholars assume that knowledge is not neutral, but is influenced by human interests" (p. 4); therefore, measures were put in place to ensure the intended message within each participant's voice was accurately represented. One measure was to use consensual validation and trustworthiness. This was an agreement among participants that the description, interpretation, and evaluation of the educational situation were correct (Eisner, 1991). This occurred during the interviews, at the change of focus, and if necessary, at the end of the interviews. The second was internal consistency, where the observable characteristics being measured were deemed consistent across cases. These measures paralleled the continual informed consent processes and highlighted the need to explicitly consider and ensure shared understandings of trustworthiness and validity from obtaining informed consent (Walker-Gibbs, 2004).

In the final stages of analysis, where required, an opportunity existed to re-examine the data to clarify and ensure all core characteristics were sufficiently described to inform the formulation of a framework of conditions and characteristics for policy coherence.

CHAPTER 4: PHASE ONE
QUALITATIVE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS:
DATA AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter details the processes underpinning the treatment of data and the interpretation of the findings that emerged in the first research phase, which focused on qualitative document analysis to address the research sub-question: How did system documents reflect implementation expectations? The resulting findings outlined in this chapter provide an explanation of the bounded context in which regional education officers enacted their roles and responsibilities.

4.2. Qualitative Document Analysis

As discussed in previous chapters, the focus of the study was to explore how policy is interpreted and translated through the enacted role of regional education officers. In education contexts, policies are often perceived as the rules of the social spaces (Lingard et al., 2005) and, according to Peters (2007), "every written policy document deploys a particular discourse as both tactic and theory situated within a web of power relations" (p. 100). Therefore, documents have the potential to shed light on the context within which the current research operates, as they reflect the ways in which education systems want schools and employees to relate to each other within their social spaces for the purpose of implementing policy. As such, the qualitative document analysis method and identified documents outlined in Chapter 3 were used to explore the Department of Education policy related to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and departmental policy implementation support structures .

4.2.1. Document Analysis Findings

Within the qualitative content analysis, three document groups were identified. The deductive coding frequencies within each document were generated using NVivo (represented in Table 4.1). To capture the richness and contextual description within and across each document, the focus on presenting the data moved

from describing individual documents to collections of documents within three groups. The three groups with their respective colour-coding (see Table 4.1) are:

1. Policy development documents (green)
2. Department of Education policy documents (with a focus on curriculum) (Blue);
3. Department of Education governance documents and operational plans (orange).

Table 4.1

Frequency of Document Analysis Deductive Criterion

Coding Criteria	Objectives	Implementation Strategy	Communication and Engagement	Timing	Tools	Task Allocation	Data, Monitoring and Accountability	Resources	Regional Role
A: Policy and Procedure Development and Improvement Cycle	9	3	1	2	3	6	3	1	0
B: Policy and Procedure Management Policy	4	1	2	1	3	2	2	3	0
C: Policy Management Framework	2	4	4	2	3	4	2	2	0
D: Policy Definition Quick Guide v3 2015	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E: Advancing Education Action Plan	6	0	1	0	2	0	3	40	0
F: DoE Strategic Plan 2020–2024	4	5	2	0	2	4	6	3	3
G: State-Schools-Strategy 2020	3	2	0	0	4	1	4	4	0
H: P12 - CAR Framework	5	1	1	1	8	6	4	9	0
I: Internal Operational Plan State Schools	3	2	1	0	0	1	2	4	0
J Internal DoE Organisational Chart	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	1	0
K: DETE Renewal Regional Operating Framework	1	3	0	0	0	18	7	5	20
L: Region 1 Operational Plan	1	1	0	3	0	4	3	1	4
M: Region 2 Operational Plan	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
N: Region 3 Operational Plan	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	3

Coding Criteria	Objectives	Implementation Strategy	Communication and Engagement	Timing	Tools	Task Allocation	Data, Monitoring and Accountability	Resources	Regional Role
O: Region 4 Operational Plan	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	4
P: Regional 5 Operational Plan	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0
Q: Region 6 Operational Plan	1	4	0	1	0	1	1	1	7
R: Region 7 Operational Plan	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	2	7

The coding criteria, drawn from Viennett and Pont's (2017) framework, were identified across the top of Table 4.1. The left-hand column identified the grouping of the corpus documents, using the colour codes previously outlined. The frequencies of the coding criteria within each document were recorded, and this showed the absence of some criteria. Reading down and across the policy document groups, the frequencies of the codes (and the absence of some codes) provided indicators of how the policy messages (within each coding criteria) were evident in individual documents and in the three policy document groups.

The next step was to utilise the frequency of codes to link codes to emerging themes in the data. Each group was explored through a visual representation with illustrative examples and a written description of each criterion (see Appendix B). As each document group was analysed, my wonderings and tensions (that linked the findings to the research intent) were highlighted. Following each document group data analysis and description, the analysis through and across each document group (exploring concepts of alignment) was explored and described.

4.3. Policy Development Document Group (Green)

This sub-section discusses the system's policy development model and the implication for policy implementation, including the identification of roles associated with policy implementation, reflected within the documents coded green in Table 4.1

and summarised in Table B1 (see Appendix B) under the two major themes of policy development and policy implementation.

The DoE uses a cyclic policy approach (Figure 4.1), which shows the interconnected nature of policy development and implementation.

Figure 4.1

Overview of the Department of Education Processes for Policy Development of Improvement Cycle

Note. From *Policy procedure development and improvement cycle* (p. 1) by the Department of Education, 2018a, Queensland Government. Copyright 2018 by the Queensland Government.

Reflective of a traditional policy process perspective (Viennet & Pont, 2017), the cyclic approach within Figure 4.1 outlined that DoE policy decisions simultaneously considered implementation processes aimed at communicating policy for the purpose of achieving strategic objectives or goals.

To understand the impact of policy decisions on the implementation processes and the subsequent role enactment of those responsible for supporting policy implementation, it was necessary describe the key characteristics of DoE policies. A summary of the data reduction process that led to the development of the two themes – policy development and policy implementation – is located within Appendix B (Table A1.). A description of the findings within each criterion is presented in the next sections.

4.3.1. Objectives

Delivering the priorities and strategic objectives of DoE was central to the role of the policy branch within the DoE. As such, the key purpose of this group of documents was to articulate the key systemic requirements associated with policy development to …, and most were targeted towards the development and review of system policy instruments in response to government legislation, as outlined in the Policy Management Framework's guiding principles (Queensland Government, 2018c). The relevant PMF principles stated that DoE policies:

1. provide the point of truth and are published in one place;
2. support the achievement of strategic objectives that may reflect government direction and/or legislation;
3. clearly define roles and responsibilities in relation to the development, approval and review of policies and procedures;
4. align with other policy instruments such as: legislation, directives, guidelines and supporting documentation. (p. 2)

As outlined in Figure 4.2, the Policy Management Framework was complemented by two additional policy documents and one internal policy register. While related policy documents (such as the Enterprise Risk Management Framework) were identified within each of these documents, they were peripheral to the focus of this study and were therefore not identified or discussed within this subsection.

Figure 4.2

DoE Policy Development Policies and Supporting Instruments
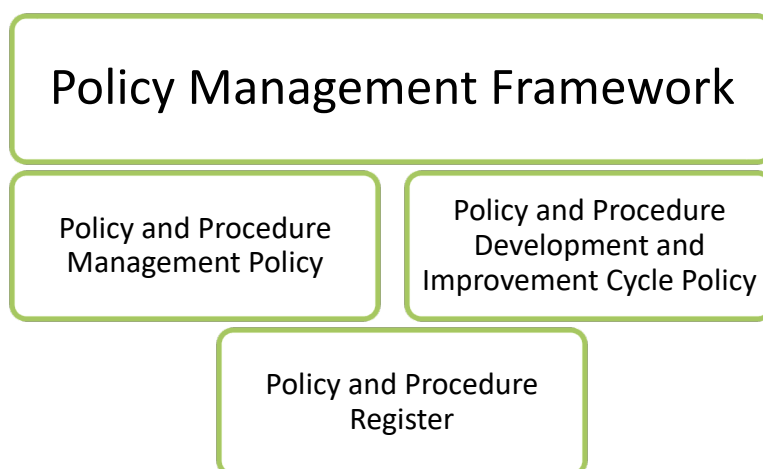
4.3.2. Implementation

The implementation strategy was embedded within the policy design framework reflecting the interconnected relationship between the two processes of design and implementation. The implementation process outlined within this group of documents was limited to implementing the policy design process; however, within the document group, it was identified that those resulting policies "articulate its functions, responsibilities and purpose, while also managing operational issues and risks" (Queensland Government, 2018a, p. 1). The document analysis also identified that the key implementation characteristics of the resulting policy instruments were to detail "what the department and its officers would do, how they would do it, and the overarching intent, imperative or direction informing those activities" (Queensland Government, 2018a, p. 1).

4.3.3. Communication and Engagement

The policy development process was underpinned by quality assurance processes, including the need to gain stakeholder engagement and feedback by "consult[ing] with all relevant stakeholders to ensure policies and procedures consider[ed] the needs of all stakeholders … throughout and procedure development and improvement cycle" (Queensland Government, 2018a, p. 3). While the inclusion of stakeholders' needs was explicitly and repeatedly articulated as integral to the policy review cycle, the policies did not provide specificity regarding the definition of stakeholders, nor did they provide details of expected consultation practices beyond stating that the policy author or contact person was accountable for ensuring stakeholder consultation occurred.

Wondering #1. Are these stakeholders considered to be the people responsible for meeting policy requirements and how does the policy process consider the impact of the interactions between various policy stakeholders as the policy is implemented?

4.3.4. Tools and Timing

This document group analysis identified that policies must reflect current reliable and trusted information (PMF Principle 1) that specifically identified mandatory requirements that were easy to access through DoE's central policy and procedure register with identified review cycles of at least three years and no more than five years.

4.3.5. Task Allocation

Clear lines of accountabilities through policy task allocation were also evident within each document and across the document group, with the identified roles and responsibilities limited to the department's policy branch officers and the Deputy Director General who, as the policy/procedure owner, was solely responsible for ensuring policies conveyed government intent (PMF Principle 2). In relation to the implementation of policies, the DDG was also responsible for ensuring "procedures clearly outline[d] the processes and responsibilities required to support policy implementation" (Queensland Government, 2018a, p. 1).

4.3.6. Data Monitoring and Accountability

While policy development roles and responsibilities were clearly articulated (Queensland Government, 2018c), there was no explicit link between achieving the objectives of the policy and the policy cycle. The monitoring and review processes focused on critically examining policy content to ensure "accuracy, relevance, clarity and reliability" (Queensland Government, 2018a, p. 3), with no reference to explicit measures of achieving the policy intent beyond identifying who was responsible for meeting policy requirements; for example, "research and draft policies and/or procedures … ensure the policy or procedure clearly identifies the minimum mandatory requirements and who [was] responsible or accountable for meeting those requirements" (Queensland Government, 2020, p. 3).

Wondering #2. Where are policy objectives measured and are these considered within the role descriptions of the people who are responsible for meeting policy requirements? Are those responsible for meeting policy requirements also responsible for implementing the policy?

4.3.7. Resources

The concept of content alignment through policy instruments was another repeated key characteristic of the policy process that articulated how DoE planned to communicate and support the implementation of policy instruments (Queensland Government, 2018a). While each policy instrument performed separate functions, they were designed to be relationally networked together. It was therefore important to understand the interconnected nature of policy instruments and, just as Figure 4.2 was a static representation of formal policy as depicted by DoE's policy branch, Figure 4.3 identified the range of policy instruments and their relationship to each other and government legislation.

Wondering #3. Was the intended relationship between formal policy instruments understood and utilised as policy was implemented? Did the content within each instrument aid or inhibit how policy was interpreted and translated?

Figure 4.3

DoE Policy Instruments
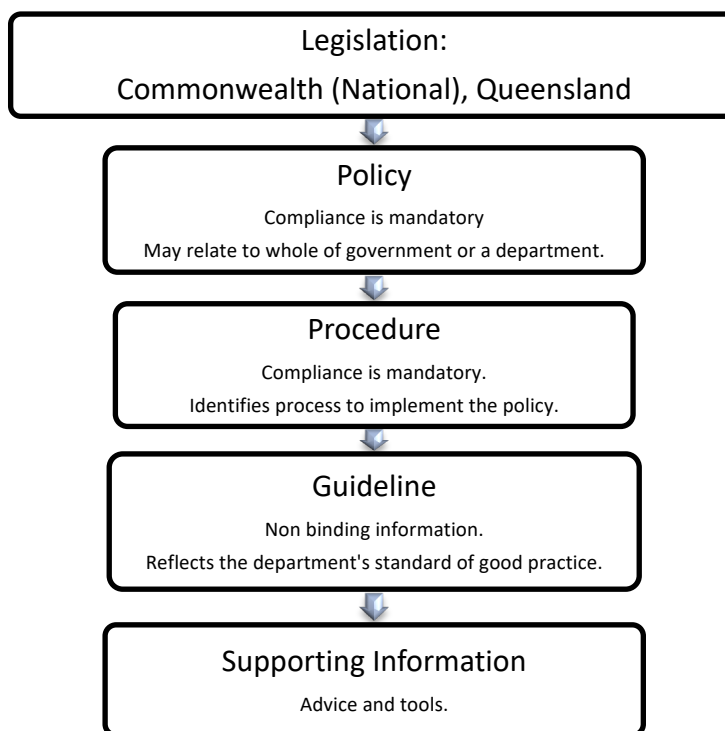
Note. Adapted from *DoE Policy Management Framework* (p. 1) by the Department of Education, 2018c, Queensland Government. Copyright 2018 by the Queensland Government.

Figure 4.3 shows that the supporting policy documents (guidelines and supporting information) were not mandatory, but rather they provided examples of good practice and advice, whereas the policy and procedures provided the mandatory requirements, including implementation processes.

Within DoE's policy definition, it was important to note that other key terms such as *action plans, frameworks, strategic plans, strategies, and initiatives* were all included as examples of policy through government action that included identified mandatory requirements that must be applied across the Department of Education (DET, 2015 p. 2).

Wondering #4. Do those responsible for implementing policy (including regional education officers) identify that these various terms are

policy through government action and what impact does this have on how they interpret and translate policy?

4.4. DoE Curriculum Policy Document Group (Blue)

This sub-section discusses the DoE's curriculum policies and the implications for policy implementation reflected within the documents previously described in Chapter 3, previously coded blue in Table 4.1 summarised in Table B2 (see Appendix B).

The national focus on driving the implementation of a "world-class curriculum and assessment" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 10) was enacted nationally through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act (2008). Within this Act, each of the "state curriculum and school authorities [were identified as] being responsible for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in their schools, in line with jurisdictional policies and requirements" (ACARA, 2021). Within this context and in alignment with Queensland's Education (General Provisions) Act (2006), four documents (see Figure 4.4) were selected as being the most significant policy texts relating to DoE's policy response.

Figure 4.4

DoE Australian Curriculum Policy Documents
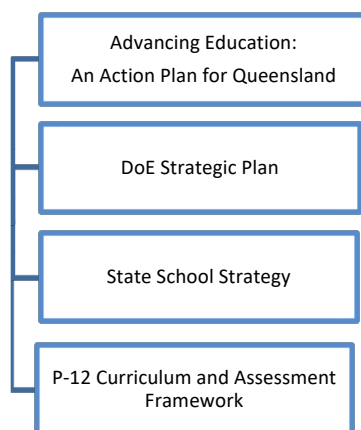
Figure 4.4 identifies the suite and interconnected nature of DoE's curriculum reform policy documents. The arrow indicates the direction of policy interpretation and translation that occurs from the Advancing Education state policy to the Department of Education P-12 Curriculum and Assessment Framework. Together the document group provided an overview of the system's policy response and articulation of their improvement and accountability agenda that identified the key

system wide elements aimed at lifting the performance of every state student, teacher and principal. Together with the P–12 Curriculum and Assessment Framework ([P–12 CARF], Queensland Government, 2020a), they depicted a policy focus on the provision of high-quality teaching (using the Australian Curriculum) for student improvement.

4.4.1. *Objectives*

Supporting government directives and legislation, as identified in the policy document analysis, was the key objective of policy development. This was evident in the use of key phrases that stated it was the DoE's responsibility to implement "contemporary policy and legislative frameworks" (Queensland Government, 2019b, p. 12). The Advancing Education: An Action Plan for Queensland (DET, 2015) posited that "education changes lives for the better" and that through this plan Queensland will advance "through a world-class education system" (p. 2). In a similar vein, government priorities aligned to the research intent were identified within the Department of Education Strategic Plan (2019c): "Give all our children a great start" and "students engaged and creating their future and capable and confident people delivering responsive services" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 4).

As well as supporting the government directive to implement the Australian Curriculum and the associated national legislation, the DoE's curriculum reform policies also identified a departmental push for the provision of high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for every student. Schools were provided with documentation to deliver a "world-class education and improve the progress and academic achievement of every student" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1)

The focus on quality teaching and learning was forefronted in the DoE's Strategic Plan (Queensland Government, 2019c), with the coding showing multiple places that stated the need for students to have access to, and opportunities to engage in, quality education. An example is echoed in the wording: "Making sure all students have access to high quality learning opportunities is the key to success for each student and Queensland" (p. 8). This statement reflected the notion that improving learning and teaching was a teacher-centred improvement.

The continued discourse of quality teaching and learning could be observed within the Strategic Plan (Queensland Government, 2019c) and the P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) through phrases such as "building a positive

learning culture which optimises student learning," "working together to maximise student learning" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1) and "quality … learning experiences [that] provide the building blocks for a lifetime of success" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 7). These statements highlighted the DoE's acknowledgement that it was the process of utilising curricula within continuous teaching and learning cycles that was directly related to achieving improved student outcomes, rather than the Australian Curriculum itself.

Considering the breadth of the DoE's responsibilities, multiple curricula were utilised for the provision of a quality education spanning early childhood and schooling sectors. As a result, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum within the P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) was stated as a policy requirement for the schooling sector rather than an overarching policy objective: "A requirement of the Australian Government is to provide the Australian Curriculum or equivalent in Prep to Year 10" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 2).

4.4.2. *Implementation*

The DoE's curriculum reform implementation strategy (the how) was embedded within the policy instruments rather than being a standalone document. With a focus on exploring how the goals and objectives were translated into actions or practical strategies, as echoed in the statement "we will … [achieve] high quality outcomes through [the] effective implementation of contemporary policy and legislative frameworks" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 12), a clear connection between building teacher capability to deliver high quality teaching and learning opportunities emerged. The State Schooling Strategy vision statement, "Every student succeeding" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1), reflected the DoE's priority outcome and outlined that it would be achieved through the State School Strategy (Queensland Government, 2020a) principles:

- Alignment – … our shared understanding of the … Australian curriculum … and the policies that govern [their] work;
- Precision – how we use evidence to identify the "right work" and do the "work right" by planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing; and
- Intentional collaboration – as the deliberate actions we take to work, learn and improve together. (p. 1)

These statements, together with the focus on building teacher capability to provide quality teaching and learning opportunities, established the central strategy for curriculum reform policy implementation. This focus was reflected in the statement: "Investing in teacher effectiveness is the most potent reform to boost Australia's economic growth" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 14).

The notion of capability building was echoed in phrases such as "building a skilled and capable workforce to help children thrive" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 7) and building "the capability of teachers and school leaders to lead school improvement" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 8).

It was also posited that the provision of capability building strategies would be achieved through a focus on utilising continuous improvement cycles to maximise, improve or optimise teaching and student learning as articulated in the P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) through the statement: "Our priorities [are] continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment of … the Australian Curriculum" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1).

Within these cycles of improvement, there was a particular focus on developing individual school's explicit improvement agendas, that were contextualised through the use of the School Improvement Hierarchy (SIH). The SIH model utilised the nine domains of the National School Improvement Tool (ACER, 2020). Each domain was used as a lens for schools to identify their current position in their improvement journey to inform their next improvement steps. The nine domains were:

1. Analysis and discussion of data;
2. A culture that promotes learning;
3. An explicit improvement agenda;
4. Systematic curriculum delivery;
5. Effective pedagogical practices;
6. Expert teaching teams;
7. Differentiated teaching and learning;
8. Targeted use of school resources;
9. School community partnerships.

(Queensland Government, 2019a, p. 1)

Using these nine domains, it was espoused that schools provided "the curriculum in a way that supports continuous improvement in student achievement"

(Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 3) as they "focused on lifting educational outcomes through evidence-based practice and by monitoring the progress of students" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 8).

4.4.3. *Communication and Engagement*

Partnerships, where everyone works together, were positioned as a central strategy in achieving the DoE's objectives, with "stakeholders, industry, universities and communities, to deliver a better future for all Queenslanders" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 3). Collective terms such as government agencies, schools, communities, parents, workers, industry, partners and students were coded over 20 times, highlighting the document groups focus on connecting with groups of stakeholders rather than individuals.

The type and extent of stakeholder engagement within the DoE's curriculum policy developments fell into three broad categories:

1. The first level of engagement was to provide advice to inform government policies. This was evident in the DOE's Strategic Plan within statements such as "harnessing different perspectives to best represent and serve the community" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 5) and "be a responsive government" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 3). This showcased how the knowledge and available information of stakeholder groups was positioned to align policy strategies with each stakeholder group's needs and expectations to increase the quality and relevance of the policy.

2. The second level of engagement was consultation, where the DoE sought advice or information from a particular group through engaging with workers and industry to provide analysis and advice. They stated that this would be achieved through "harnessing different perspectives to best represent and serve the community" (Queensland Government 2020c, p. 5). An example of this was seeking the views of students to inform responses to student wellbeing. Consultation at this level supported the alignment of government departments to deliver connected services responsive to local contexts and needs.

3. The third level of engagement involved collaboration with stakeholders for the purpose of producing (rather than informing) government responses. As a government partner, the DoE worked with "partners to

develop strategic policy responses using research and evidence" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 15), to provide advice to government and to lead "collaboration across government to develop and implement an integrated plan in consultation with schools" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 7). The DoE also positioned how they collaborated with other "government agencies and communities to maximise young people's opportunities to learn" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 8). This form of engagement aimed to explicitly position stakeholders, with relevant evidence-based knowledge or experience, as advisors to policy decisions.

4.4.4. Tools and Timing

Policy implementation timelines were not explicitly stated; however, the DoE's Strategic Plan included a five-year policy timeframe with the dates 2020–2024 included in the title, while version footer notes were included on each subsequent policy instrument. The only explicit timing reference regarding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum was noted in the P–12 CARF that stated: "schools are required to implement (teach, assess and report on) the Australian Curriculum Version 8 by the end of 2020" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 2).

With a strong policy focus on growth and improvement, the phrases "continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment" and "continuous improvement in student achievement" were identified within the DoE's State Schooling Strategy (Queensland Government, 2019a) and P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) documents. These phrases suggested that there was no end date to this requirement and supported the DoE's school improvement model and use of continuous inquiry cycles to inform improvement strategies.

Teacher performance was identified as needing to be reviewed annually through the department's Annual Performance Review process (Queensland Government, 2019c). This process was not explicitly linked to the identified policy objectives.

4.4.5. Task Allocation

The DoE's policy design framework identified that policies required clear articulation of roles and responsibilities. When reflecting upon this within the curriculum policy documents, there were no specific headings or sections explicitly

related to role and task allocation; instead, the use of collective terms such as "requirements," "expectations" and "responsibilities" implied task allocation. This implicit task allocation focused on three collective groups: the department, schools, and teachers.

The department was tasked with being "a responsive government" that would "ensure [that] the next generation of Queenslander[s] are healthy resilient and ready to be productive members of society" (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 4). In relation to achieving the identified implementation strategies of continuous school improvement and building of teaching capability the DoE's State Schools Strategic Plan's guiding principles, outlined the departments tasks as:

1. Using data and evidence to inform their work;

2. Developing leadership at all levels of the organisation;

3. Clearly defining expectations;

4. Building individual and collective responsibility for outcomes;

5. Supporting our culture as a continual learning and growth organisation by investing in teachers;

6. Empowering people to challenge the status quo and be creative in the pursuit of innovation.

(Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 5)

The DoE then tasked schools with implementing the department's School Improvement Model (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 1). Utilising the nine domains of the SIH, the Inquiry Cycle and the Standards of Practice (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 1), schools were also implicitly tasked with demonstrating the described behaviours and processes within the National School Improvement Tool (ACER, 2020) which included implementing the requirements within the P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) and, therefore, the Australian Curriculum.

Teacher responsibilities were not explicitly stated and therefore the researcher assumed they were implicitly positioned under school responsibilities; however, within the Advancing Education Action plan, there was mention of "every state school having access to a specialist science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teacher" (Queensland Government 2020d, p. 6) and teachers meeting with parents/carers "twice yearly" to discuss student learning (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 4).

4.4.6. *Data, Monitoring and Accountability*

The effectiveness of policy is often attributed to the achievement of measures or explicit outcomes. When considering the two main policy objectives of building teacher capability and achieving student growth, as mentioned in the DoE's strategic plan, measures and monitoring processes that were identified within the document group were:

- Literacy and numeracy achievement;

- Student and parent engagement;

- Learning days lost;

- Retention;

- Year 12 certification;

- Engagement in further education, training and employment.
  (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 11).

While there were no associated targets identified with these measures, there was a constant narrative within these documents on the need to monitor student growth. When considering how student growth was to be achieved, the DoE's State Schooling Strategic Plan (2019c) identified that through "focussing on the learning needs of each student" and "supporting student learning through early identification and intervention focused on achieving growth in learning each year" teachers and schools would evidence growth (p. 2).

The *monitoring* of student growth occurred through the Independent School Review process which utilised the National School Improvement Tool (ACER, 2020). Within the analysis and discussion of data domain,

a high priority [was] given to the school-wide analysis and discussion of systematically collected data on student outcomes, including academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes, and student wellbeing. Data analyses consider[ed] overall school performance as well as the performances of students from identified priority groups; evidence of improvement/regression over time; performances in comparison with similar schools; and, in the case of data from standardised tests, measures of growth across the years of school. (ACER, n.d.)

Similarly, the same tool was used to monitor the effectiveness of teacher capability building processes. As outlined in the expert teaching domain,

strong procedures are in place to encourage a school-wide, shared responsibility for student learning and success, and to encourage the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes class-based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements. (ACER, n.d.)

While the implementation of the Australian Curriculum was positioned as one of many curriculum reform strategies, the evidence of implementation was clearly articulated within the P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) which outlined the requirements for all schools. This included the implementation of "the Australian Curriculum Version 8 by the end of 2020" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1). Once again, the monitoring of the implementation in schools occurred through the Independent School Review, systematic curriculum delivery domain that stated:

The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded, and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed with reference to the Australian Curriculum or other approved curriculum, and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and families. (ACER, n.d.).

The DoE's use of the Annual Independent School Review process as the primary monitoring tool highlighted the curriculum policy objectives, but no targets and accountabilities were communicated. This suggested that the accountabilities for schools were to contextually evidence the described practices and processes outlined for each domain (ACER, n.d.).

4.4.7. Resources

When considering how the DoE's curriculum reform strategies would be implemented, the available policy support instruments were identified (see Figure 4.5). These supporting documents were developed to assist understanding of or compliance with policy instruments (DET, 2015).

Within the Advancing Education Action Plan (DET, 2015), the provision of resources schools needed "to deliver an outstanding education" were positioned as

"critical to the future success of young Queenslanders" (p. 2). This notion of support was coded over 40 times within the document group and was attributed to a suite of capability building and school improvement resources that were aimed at "supporting principals, teachers and support staff to make the difference to the quality of learning in schools" (DET, 2015, p. 8).

Building the capability of individual teachers through the provision of "targeted scholarships" (DET, 2015, p. 20) was an identified financial strategy aimed at developing teachers' "practice and expertise" (DET, 2015, p. 20) across all stages of schooling and as a targeted Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workforce strategy. In a similar vein, the use of coaching and mentoring for leaders, teachers and support staff was coded seven times as another support resource aimed at "lifting" and "informing professional practice" (DET, 2015, p. 24). While not explicitly stated, the researcher has assumed (utilising previous role experience) that these resources would have been enacted within the workforce and therefore be associated with a human resource allocation.

The identification of the system-wide independent school reviews that "provide[d] feedback on improving strategies and sharing innovative practices across the system" (DET, 2015, p. 20) was an example of a process that supported school improvement through evidence-based reflection. The outcome of the school reviews informed the development of ongoing and future whole school improvement practices and examples of practice were housed on the "Queensland Evidence Hub to share best practice and research about school improvement" (DET, 2015, p. 20).

The review process utilised the nine domains within the SIH, which assisted "schools to determine where to begin their improvement journey" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1). Schools used these two resources to identify, plan, implement and monitor the impact of whole school improvement strategies. It was therefore assumed by me (as the researcher) that they would have been enacted by the workforce with an associated human resource allocation.

Along with school improvement processes, the "Every Student Succeeding" – State School Improvement Strategy (Queensland Government, 2019a) and P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) "support[ed] school improvement by focusing on systematic curriculum delivery" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p.1). They each explicitly identified a plethora of online guidelines and tools:

that provide[d] detail to enable Queensland state schools to: provide

students with the required curriculum; differentiate teaching so that

every student's learning needs are met in ways appropriate to their age,

the context in which they are learning and the nature of the curriculum;

assess and moderate using standards and report to parents/carers and

students about their learning and achievement. (Queensland

Government, 2020a, p. 1)

Supporting the Australian Curriculum implementation was a subset of these guidelines and included: "Determining implementation approaches for [the] provision of the whole Australian Curriculum in Prep to Year 10" and providing the Australian Curriculum in Prep–Year 10 for Queensland state schools from 2017 (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 2) which identified that schools were responsible for determining their approach to implementing the Australian Curriculum. This guideline also identified that "determining an approach relied on a deep understanding of the structure of the Australian Curriculum" (Queensland Government 2020e, p. 1) and that schools were supported to develop this knowledge by online platforms (Implement the Australian Curriculum Hub and Assessment and Moderation Hub) and the Curriculum into the Classroom materials (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1).

4.5.   Orange DoE Governance Document Group

This sub-section discusses the DoE's governance documents and the implication for policy implementation within the documents previously described in Chapter 3, previously coded orange in Table 4.1 summarised in Table B3 (see Appendix B).

Policy instruments are implemented through and across systems by people. When considering this within the context of the DoE's curriculum policies, it was necessary to describe the organisational structure and various roles attributed to the employees enacting these policies. The DoE Strategic Plan (2019a) states that the department's governance was used to "design and align the direction of [the DoE's] work, [to] deliver [their] purpose and improve [their] performance." Queensland Government, 2019a, p. 15).

Figure 4.5

The DoE Governance Documents
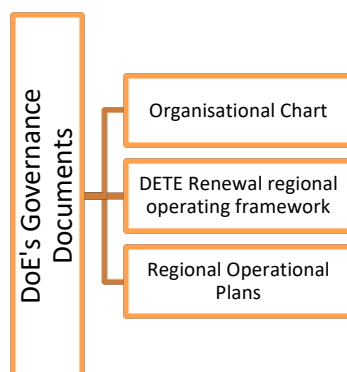
The DoE External and Internal organisational charts together with the DoE's previous *Review of Service Delivery* (DETE, 2013), as depicted in Figure 4.5 provided an overview of the system's governance structure and identified the use of a regional structure within the Office of the Director General as shown on the Organisational Structure of DoE (Department of Education, 2020) and in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6

Department of Education Organisational Structure
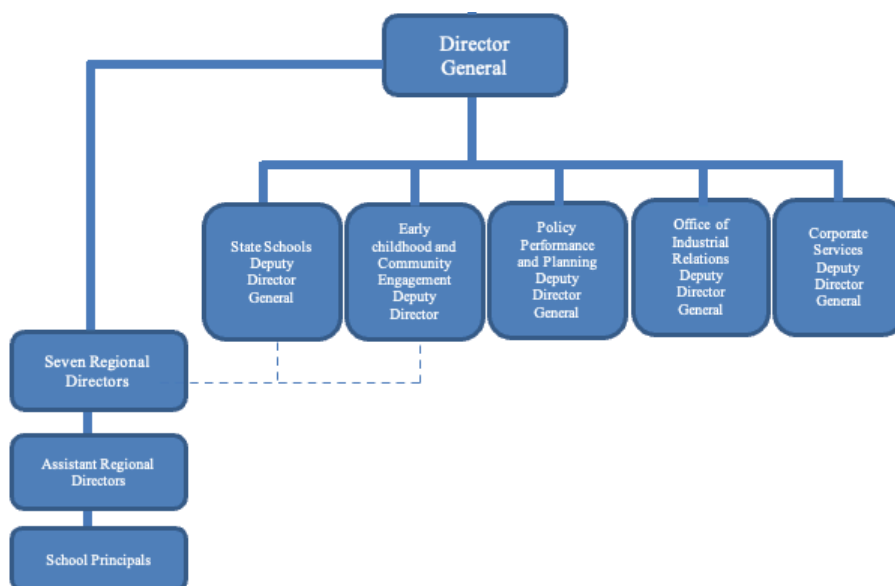
Note. Adapted from *DoE Organisational Structure* (p. 1) by the Department of Education, 2021a, Queensland Government. Copyright 2021 by the Queensland Government.

As Figure 4.6 shows, the Office of the Director General oversaw five separate divisions: State Schools; Early Childhood and Community Engagement; Policy, Performance and Planning; Office of Industrial Relations; and Corporate Services. In

addition to these five divisions, the Director General had direct line management of the seven Regional Directors.

The seven Regional Directors (RD) (appointed to the seven geographical regions of the system), as shown by a solid line within Figure 4.6, were hierarchically linked to Assistant Regional Directors (ARDs) who, in turn, were directly linked to school principals. The hierarchical position of the Regional Directors (RD), as indicated by solid lines within Figure 4.6, indicated that they were directly linked to the Director-General, with dotted lines reflecting regional directors direct reporting line to the Directors of State Schooling and Early Childhood and Community Engagement.

The Deputy Director-General of Policy Performance and Planning had a direct relationship with the Deputy Director of State Schools and the Director General; however, there was no direct link to RD, ARD's or schools.

Delivering the priorities and strategic objectives of the DoE was central to the role of regions, particularly in relation to improving student learning outcomes in Queensland as echoed within the Regional Operating Framework (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014) that states: "Regions are the critical link between central office, where state-wide policy and system performance measures are set, and the delivery of high-quality services by schools and other frontline providers" (p. 3). This document, together with each region's operational plans provided further clarity on how policy was implemented through the department's structure.

Utilising the document analysis deductive criteria (previously outlined in Chapter 3) and the resulting analysis (summarised in Table D1 in Appendix D), the documents within this group are discussed below in relation to two aspects aligned to the research intent. The first was describing the DoE *Regional Operational Model* and how curriculum policy is implemented and the second was how curriculum policy implementation was collectively reflected within the regions' operating plans.

4.5.1. *Objectives*

Each regional operational plan was completed using a template that identified overarching services with implementation actions that supported the building of capability in school leadership teams and teaching staff and the provision of education, teaching, curriculum, and student support services. Each region used a common planning template with the strategic alignment of regional plans forefronted

via each region's purpose statement. This purpose statement reflected the objectives of the DoE's policies. This was echoed in a variety of statements that positioned the tailoring of services to ensure the provision of quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students. Statements included: "to ensure successful educational and training opportunities for all children and young people" (p. 1); "building Queensland's future by giving all children a great start and engaging young people in learning" (Department of Education, 2019a, p. 1); and "advancing Queensland's priorities by giving all children a great start, engaging young people in learning, and creating safe and inclusive workplaces and communities" (Department of Education, 2019e, p. 1).

4.5.2. Implementation

Curriculum policy implementation development and planning, as previously established, sat within the system (commonly known as central office) level, with the regions focused on "working in partnership with schools … to plan for and deliver innovative services that meet the needs of students, children and families … and improve learning and training outcomes" (DETE, 2014, p. 5). In alignment with the implementation of curriculum policy reform, regions "focus[ed] resources and efforts on improving the performance of schools and student outcomes"; "provide[d] principals and schools with additional support and professional guidance," and "support[ed] capacity building in an increasingly autonomous environment" (DETE, 2014, p. 5).

The regional and school autonomous environment was reflected throughout the regions' renewal model with phrases such as: regions "tailor services to meet local needs" (DETE, 2014, p. 6); "developing engagement strategies to address local and regional issues" and "have the flexibility to choose the office structure that best suits the delivery of … functions" (DETE, 2014, p6). Each region had the flexibility to structure how they would best deliver regional services, with their governance structure reflecting the formal arrangements "that provide[d] information sharing, the timely and appropriate identification and addressing of school performance issues or other concerns, and consistency of service delivery across regions" (DETE, 2014, p. 6). These regional implementation decisions reflected the department's focus on "increasing school autonomy so schools, through greater local decision making and innovative practices, can better respond to the needs of students and the community, and improve student outcomes" (DETE, 2014, p. 11).

Within the autonomous environment discourse there was also a strong notion of alignment and support, with regions "play[ing] a critical role in supporting the performance of state schools" and "ensure[ing[consistency and alignment with departmental priorities" (DETE, 2014, pp. 7 & 6). With explicit references to the Advancing Education Action Plan, State Schooling Strategy, Every Student Succeeding and P–12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) at the beginning of every operational plan, these implementation actions point to how regions are supporting the implementation of these policies.

Five of the seven regions explicitly aligned Australian Curriculum actions to the State Schooling Strategy – Every Student Succeeding; three regions explicitly aligned actions to the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a); one region explicitly aligned actions to the Advancing Education: An Action Plan for Queensland and the DoE Strategic Plan, and one region made no explicit reference to any curriculum policy documents within their operational plan.

While there was consistency across the regions in actioning school support, the specificity of actions across the regions (summarised in Table 4.2) ranged from statements such as "full implementation of V8 Australian Curriculum" (Department of Education, 2019d, p. 5) to:

> deepen understanding of all principals and school leaders to confidently
> lead teachers to teach, assess and report on all eight of the Australian
> Curriculum's learning areas in Prep to Year 10 through shared focus on
> student learning progress and ongoing review of practices (Department
> of Education, 2019b, p. 8)

Table 4.2

Summary of Regional Operational Plan Curriculum Policy Actions

Region	Curriculum Actions	Curriculum Reform Policy References	Timeframe	Responsible Regional Team
Region 1	Build principals' and leaders' capability to evidence their own school's explicit improvement agenda through the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and P-12 CAR.F	SIH Advancing Education	Annual	ARD's Capability Team
	Deepen understanding of all principals and school leaders to confidently lead teachers to teach, assess and report on all eight of the Australian Curriculum	P-12 CARF	Semester	Curriculum Teaching and Learning Team
Region 2	Implementation of system priorities Targeted consultation and development of workshop programs and delivery. Individualised officers are assigned schools, Scheduled and regular visits conducted.	Advancing Education: Strategic Plan . Every Student Succeeding P-12 CARF	Ongoing	ARD's Regional Services: Curriculum Pedagogy Officers
Region 3	Differentiated teaching and learning program for school-based cluster to support the: implementation of the Australian Curriculum Alignment of systematic curriculum delivery Precision in teaching tailored to the needs of every student	State School Strategy	As per regional team calendar Per semester	Teaching and Learning Team
Region 4	Implement the Australian curriculum Develop a consistent and clear understanding of the Achievement Standard in English and Maths, P-10, within and across schools.	Curriculum	June 2019	Curriculum Teaching and Learning Team Director:
Region 5	All schools have a coherent and sequenced whole school curriculum plan by 2020 Support schools in adopting evidence-based pedagogies Reading practices Formal running record practices	State Schools Strategy	2019 - 2020	Principal Advisors Teaching and Learning

Region	Curriculum Actions	Curriculum Reform Policy References	Timeframe	Responsible Regional Team
Region 6	Improve the quality of advice provided to schools and their communities on the implementation of policy and procedures.	Strategic Plan Advancing Education Every Student Succeeding	No timeframe identified	No task allocation
Region 7	Develop the capability of school principals and leaders to: implement the Australian Curriculum. Implement P-12 CARF. Support the development of teacher capacity in teaching and assessment of reading and writing.	State School Strategy	12 months	State Schools Team

The difference in actions depicted in Table 4.2 reflected the regions' flexibility in determining how they delivered services to their schools while maintaining alignment to the DoE's priorities.

Wondering #6. How does the wording of regional implementation actions impact on regional education officer teams understanding of their role responsibilities?

4.5.3. *Communication and Engagement*

The DoE's position on creating a more autonomous decision-making culture to enable contextualised responses to policy implementation reflects a move towards a more decentralised system where there are multiple levels of governance, both at system and regional levels. As a result of this, policy implementation occurs through multiple layers (system, regional, and schools) or through multiple contextualised reform programs such as the "differentiated teaching and learning programme" (Department of Education, 2019d, p. 8) and "supporting the development of teacher capacity in teaching and assessment of reading and writing (Department of Education, 2019f, p. 6). These various layers positioned regions as key policy implementation stakeholders whose engagement with other key stakeholders (principals, teachers, schools, communities, and central office teams) at the school

layer, informed how they "design[ed] and deliver[ed] responsive services" (Department of Education, 2019a, p. 3; Department of Education, 2019b, p. 9).

The focus on developing flexible regional responses to meet the needs of their contexts was underpinned by multiple references to collaborative processes that "improve[d] the relationships with schools, community and various key stakeholders (Department of Education, 2019c, p. 3). Through "targeted consultation and development of workshop programs" (Department of Education, 2019c, p. 6), "increased collaboration and information sharing … to enhance data informed policy and practice" (Department of Education, 2019b, p. 30), "including collaboration … [with] reform and strategic initiatives teams" (Department of Education, 2019a, p. 4), regions were able to provide corporate advice and services to schools and stakeholders (Department of Education, 2019b, p. 1; Department of Education, 2019d, p. 1).

The regional operational model outlined that central office was responsible for "establish[ing] and communicat[ing] operational policy to the regions (DETE, 2014, p. 17), and while there was no explicit regional responsibility attributed to communication mechanisms, four of the regional operation plans outlined the use of regional communiques. These communication modes included the "use of digital technologies and tools" (Department of Education, 2019a, p. 12), collaborative cluster meetings, feedback and discussion forums" (Department of Education, 2019d, p. 5).

The documented intent of these communiques was to support regional strategy implementation "through clear and authentic communication to inspire collective ownership and moral purpose" (Department of Education, 2019a, p. 9) and "to ensure effective, responsive and accurate information is shared across the region" (Department of Education, 2019d, p. 5).

4.5.4. *Tools and Timing*

Timing and tools were designed to support policy implementation by providing clarity on what was to be achieved and by when. Within the regional operational plans' timeframes varied between regions (Table 4.2) from specific months and years to "ongoing". These varying timeframes, paired with the identified capacity building tools that were reflected within the curriculum implementation action verbs of "support", "continue", "improve" provided limited specificity on what is to be implemented and by when.

Within the operational implementation actions, it was implied that more specificity was provided to principals, teachers and schools through regional support processes, the delivery of contextualised programs and the provision of advice through "assigned individual officers" (Department of Education, 2019f, p. 8).

4.5.5. *Task Allocation*

The Regional Operation Plan (2014) articulated the following indicative regional responsibilities in relation to state schooling:

- Supervise and coach principals;
- Build capacity of school leadership teams and teaching staff;
- Consistently implement policy and procedural advice;
- Implement government and systemic priorities;
- Program manage individual/cohort intervention;
- Implement interventions when required;
- Provide education, teaching, curriculum and student support services;
- Support Year 7 to secondary transition;
- Provide transitions support;
- Manage complaints;
- Conduct and complete investigations in a timely manner. (DETE, 2014, p. 17)

Subsequent regional explicit implementation actions related to curriculum reform policy documents (with a specific focus on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum) were identified across each region (Table 4.2). The implementation actions were typically assigned to the ARDs and regional education officer teams. Regional education officer teams were referred to using a variety of names, including curriculum teaching and learning team, curriculum and pedagogy officers, regional service team, principal advisors – Australian Curriculum, and curriculum and learning team.

In alignment with the regions' abilities to flexibly develop regional responses, each of the regional operational plan responsibilities were not consistently or explicitly referred to across all of the region's operational plans. For example, coaching was referenced 20 times within five of the seven regions, through phrases such as "access to online and face to face PD, coaching and mentoring across the region" (DoE, 2019a, p. 5) and "provision of support and advice by coaches" (DoE,

2019a, p. 6). Within these regions, the role of coaching extended beyond the supervision of principals to a capability building strategy for school staff, with specialist coaches assigned to support the implementation of early years' curriculum, inclusive practices, and mental health strategies. There was no explicit coaching strategy assigned to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in any of the regions.

Wondering #7. How did regions ensure there was a shared understanding of policy and procedural advice within regional service team personnel when providing "education, teaching, curriculum and student support services" (DETE, 2014, p. 17).

4.5.6. *Data Monitoring and Accountability*

Data monitoring with associated targets were identified within each of the regional operation plans. Separate sections titled "Our Performance" (Department of Education, 2019a, p. 2) or "Measures" (Department of Education, 2019d, p. 3), were used as shown in the anonymised example operation plan in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7

Example Regional Operational Plan and Associated Measure

When identified measures were explored (across the group of operational plans) in relation to the curriculum reform implementation actions, all targets were related to student attainment, attendance, behaviour or achievement. Student achievement measures related to school-based summative assessments, with reference to A-C achievement or NAPLAN literacy and numeracy measures.

There were no identified measures explicitly aligned to the building of teaching and learning capability or indicators of effective delivery of a world class curriculum. The researcher therefore assumed that the regions attributed the quality of their service provision directly to student achievement.

Wondering #8. How are regional performance measures understood within service teams' roles and how does this influence their role enactment?

4.5.7. *Resources*

Resource provision for regional education officer teams was not explicitly stated within the regional operational plans. The alignment of implementation actions to policy instruments implied that the regional education officer teams would utilise the policy instruments when implementing their tasked actions; however there was no documented specificity in how this occurred.

Regional education officer teams were positioned as policy implementation resources utilising policy instruments to provide "advice to schools and their communities on the implementation of policy and procedures" (Department of Education, 2019d, p. 5). Through their actions, these teams provided professional learning and contextualised support to schools. The documented implementation resources, including regional education officers, and the subsequent actions by regional service team members, identified a number of human interactions that occurred as curriculum policy was interpreted, contextualised and implemented within the regional and school system layers.

Policy was interpreted and translated within each region to collaboratively develop contextualised responses and implementation actions. These implementation actions were tasked to regional education officer teams and their members. While there were identified policy instruments, it was unclear how these would be utilised by these teams to enact their role responsibilities.

Wondering #9. How do policy, resources and human interactions influence and impact on policy coherence?

4.6.   Identification of Findings in Relation to Research Question One

The purpose of this chapter was to explore how DoE's system documents presented policy implementation expectations through the application of deductive criteria drawn from Viennet and Pont's (2017) coherent policy implementation framework. This occurred through the analysis of three groups of system policy texts. The purpose of utilising the three policy text groups was to explore:

1. how the system designed policy instruments to identify the key characteristics of policy texts to develop understandings of the DoE policy implementation expectations.;

2. how the curriculum policy texts reflected the system's policy implementation characteristics and communicated these within and across the range of curriculum policy texts, to develop clarity of policy messages and implementation expectations; and

3. how policy texts were utilised by regions to inform the development of policy implementation actions and the allocation of tasks to regional education officers, to clarify the role of regional education officers.

A summary of the alignment of criteria within and across each document group is outlined within Table D1 (see Appendix D) and discussed below.

As the researcher, I reflected on the way the DoE's system documents positioned implementation expectations and considered this in light of the DoE's policy design and the policy aspects reflected within the collection of curriculum reform texts, the following findings were identified.

4.6.1.   *Objectives Criterion*

The objectives within and across each of the documents, while worded differently, reflected the notion of improving students' educational experiences through the building of teaching and learning capability. There was no explicit reference to implementing the Australian Curriculum within the policy objectives, although it was identified as a requirement for all schools within the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a).

4.6.2.   *Communication and Engagement Criterion*

When considering the communication and engagement criterion (row 3 in Table D1), the identified stakeholders within these texts were predominantly interagency and external groups. The engagement activities related to informing

policy through the collection of multiple perspectives; however, there was no explicit consideration given to the perspectives of those responsible for implementing the policy. This gap triggered a reflective process in which I, as the researcher looked back at the wonderings which had emerged from the Phase One document analyses.

When reflecting upon **Wondering 1#** (Are these stakeholders considered to be the people responsible for meeting policy requirements and how does the policy process consider the impact of the interactions between various policy actors as the policy is implemented?), I noted that stakeholders with relevant expertise were identified as policy advisors; however, it was unclear if departmental staff perspectives were considered in the policy review or in the advice process. It was also unclear how the interactions between various policy actors or instruments were considered within policy texts or the policy cycle. It was important to note that as this research was not focused on policy documentation, but rather the enactment of policy, **Wondering #1** would not be carried through to the next document analysis section. Instead, as it is outside the scope of this study, it will be positioned as an opportunity for further research .

4.6.3. Implementation Criterion

The DoE's implementation strategy was embedded within the policy design framework, as outlined in column two of Table D1, which reflected the interconnected nature of policy design and implementation. As policy was interpreted and translated into policy instruments, policy implementation became implicit and embedded within descriptive statements. This absence of an explicit implementation plan resulted in the development of regional operational plans that predominantly identified broad strategies and the tasking of these strategies to regional education officers and regional leaders. How these broad strategies were to be implemented was not explicitly stated within the documentation.

4.6.4. Data Monitoring and Accountability Criteria

Policy measures (row 4, Table D1) were identified within the curriculum reform texts; however, they were at times embedded within descriptive statements. There was no explicit reference made between policy measures and departmental role descriptions as specificity around who were the policy actors (those responsible for implementing the policy) was limited to collective terms such as the department and schools.

When reflecting upon **Wondering # 2 (**Where are policy objectives measured and was this considered within the role descriptions of regional education officers? Were regional education officers directly responsible for meeting policy requirements through the implementation of policy?), I noted that within the documentation there was no explicit reference to regional education officers. The silence within the identified documentation left Wondering # 2 unanswered.

4.6.5. *Task Allocation, Timing and Tools and Resources Criteria*

While tools and resources were identified within the documentation, task allocation was typically attributed to broad groups of stakeholders (schools, teachers and regions) and targeted regional leadership positions (RD and ARD), with no explicit reference to regional education officers. The timing of strategies was also attributed to the timing allocation of the State Schooling Strategy, with inconsistent timing references made within regional operational plans.

My reflections on how the policy documents communicated policy objectives, task allocations, resources and measures (rows 5-8, Table D1) also left **Wonderings #3, # 4 and #5** unanswered, and this left me to continue to consider those wonderings, outlined below:

Wondering #3. Was the intended relationship between formal policy instruments understood by regional education officers and utilised as policy was implemented? Did the curriculum content within each instrument aid or inhibit how policy was interpreted and translated by reginal education officers?

Wondering #4. Do those responsible for implementing policy (including regional education officers) identify that these various terms are policy through government action and what impact did this have on how they interpreted and translated policy?

Using the lens of alignment and collating these key policy aspects within and across each policy group and policy implementation criterion enabled me to consider how key policy implementation aspects were documented and translated into policy instruments and regional operational plans.

4.7. **Phase One Findings in Relation to Research Question One**

Reflecting upon the Qualitative Document Analysis and alignment implications enabled me to identify the following key findings in relation to how

policy documents presented policy implementation expectations as policy texts were interpreted and translated within and through policy document groups. Exploring the translation of policy within and across the identified policy document groups was important to this study, as it identified the various policy messages that could be utilised by system personnel (including regional education officers) and were designed to support attainment of the State Schooling Strategy principles.

A clear focus on delivering quality teaching and learning opportunities through a world class quality curriculum was consistently positioned across policy instruments. As this objective moved into regional operational plans, the focus shifted to providing students with access to educational opportunities and engaging them in learning. This identified the following finding:

Finding #1. The interpretation and translation of policy into regional operation plans resulted in no explicit or documented focus on providing high quality teaching and learning opportunities.

System policy documents identified the important role that stakeholders played in informing policy development and advice. Stakeholders at this level ensured that policies were responsive to communities and reflected multiple perspectives. At the regional level, stakeholders were identified as school-based personal and community groups, with their engagement focused on informing regional service responses. The idea that stakeholder groups inform policy review and advice was not carried through to the regional level. This led to the following finding:

Finding #2. The silence in the documentation, indicated that DoE's policy review process did not explicitly involve gathering perspectives from departmental employees responsible for implementing policy.

While Finding #2 is important when considering policy design, it is out of scope for this research study. Therefore, this finding was not carried through the study but rather positioned as an opportunity for future research within Chapter eight.

When considering how policy implementation was communicated, the policy design documents identified that a clear implementation plan should be evident through the articulation of functions, responsibilities and purpose. A clear purpose was articulated through policy documents that aligned to the policy reform objectives; despite this, it could be argued that the communication of responsibilities

and functions was inhibited by statements such as "investing in teacher effectiveness" (Queensland Government, 2019a, p. 14), which lacked the necessary specificity for stating clear functions and responsibilities. This led to the following finding:

Finding #3. The written communication of clear roles and responsibilities associated with policy implementation appears to be inhibited by their implicit positioning within descriptive text.

Regional operational plans, on the other hand, identified clear implementation actions aligned to policy instruments; however, inconsistency was evident across the regions in relation to which policy documents were referred to. It could be argued that this was a result of the regions' flexible service model and reference only to the State Schooling Strategy (ADD AUTHOR, 2019) when identifying curriculum implementation actions, rather than all associated policy documents, including the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a). It is possible, though, that such reference was sufficient ,as the State Schooling Strategy pointed to the additional policy instruments. This finding led to the another finding and subsequent wondering:

Finding #4. As policy was interpreted and translated into regional operation plans, broad implementation actions were tasked to groups of regional education officers and regional leadership. The flexible regional model, focussed on the development of contextualised strategies, resulted in inconsistent reference to policy documents across regions.

Wondering #10. Which policy instruments were used by regional education officer teams to support schools?

Similar questions were raised when considering task allocations within and across policy texts. Policy design documents stated that policies should outline the processes and responsibilities required to support policy implementation. Within the policy documents, these processes were again embedded within descriptive text such as "continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment of the … Australian Curriculum" (Queensland Government 2019a, p. 1). The use of the School Improvement Model and Whole School Curriculum Model to inform the implementation of the Australian Curriculum was identified within the P-12 CARF, (Queensland Government, 2020a); however, these processes were not explicitly

linked to regional curriculum implementation actions. This supported Finding #3 and raised another wondering:

Wondering #11. How did regional service team members utilise policy implementation processes when enacting their role and what impact did this have on policy coherence?

Regional operational plans also stated that the systems governance model would inform the direction of the Department of Education's work; however, regional education officer teams, who were responsible for supporting the implementation of curriculum policies, were not included on the system's governance model. The absence of these regional staff members led to the following finding and raised the following Wondering for the researcher:

Finding #5. The omission of regional education officer teams within the system governance model seems to inhibit the transparency of clear system roles associated with policy implementation.

The use of a lens of objective alignment (Honig & Hatch, 2004) and structural and strategic (Limani, 2015) as policy coherence concepts within and across each coherent policy implementation criterion (Viennet & Pont, 2017) and policy group enabled the development of a contextualised understanding of the DoE's curriculum policy characteristics and how these documents articulated policy objectives and implementation expectations. I then utilised the resulting findings to identify the factors (summarised in Table 4.3) that influenced the attainment of policy coherence (objective, strategic and structural alignment) within Phase One of the research. This in turn informed the early conception of an emerging policy implementation framework (Figure 4.8) based on the Phase One document analysis findings summarised within Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Summary of Phase One Findings and Identified Policy Coherence Factors and their Links to Theoretical Concepts

Phase One Findings	Identified Factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to Policy Coherence Theoretical Concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical Concepts	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research studies focus
The silence in the documentation may indicate that DoE's policy review process does not involve regional team members and as a result does not involve gathering perspectives from departmental employees responsible for implementing policy. (Finding #2)	Policy Design Review Process and Stakeholder Engagement	**Concept:** Strategic alignment of **Policy Design**	Policy Design acknowledges the importance of stakeholder engagement with recent studies by Stosich and Bae (2018) confirming that diverse stakeholder engagement including those who implement policy should be included within Policy Design and Review Processes. **This finding positions a recommendation for the case study context but is out of scope of the research focus and therefore positioned as a further research opportunity.**	
The written communication of clear roles and responsibilities associated with policy implementation appears to be inhibited by their implicit positioning within descriptive text. (Finding #3)	Roles and Responsibilities	**Concept:** Structural alignment of **Policy Implementation Requirements** (design, roles and responsibilities)	Policy implementation theory identifies that policy ideas are translated into practice through social actions (Mugwagwa et al., 2015) that require clear roles and responsibilities (Viennet & Pont, 2017).	This finding supports current policy implementation literature on the articulation of clear roles and responsibilities and extends this policy design attribute to position roles and responsibilities as an influencing policy structural factor (Limani, 2015) in the attainment of policy coherence (Suovitz & Spillane, 2015).
As policy was interpreted and translated into regional operation plans:		**Concept:**	Policy translation theory is situated within policy implementation theory and identifies	This finding connects to the theoretical role of policy actors

Phase One Findings	Identified Factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to Policy Coherence Theoretical Concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical Concepts	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research studies focus
• The interpretation and translation of policy into regional operation plans resulted in no explicit or documented focus on providing high quality teaching and learning opportunities being evidenced within these plans. (Finding #1) • Broad implementation actions were tasked to groups of regional education officers and regional leadership. The flexible regional model resulted in inconsistent reference to policy documents across regions. (Finding #4)	Implicit policy interpretation and translation processes Contextual regional responses	**Policy Interpretation and Translation**	that implementation requires consideration of "policy content, context and implementation approaches" (Mugwagwa et al., 2015, p. 6). There is consensus within this literature that policy actors shape policy. (Sausman et al., 2016).	(as interpreters and translators of policy) positions the use of policy coherence as a valuable theoretical framework for considering the impact actors interpretation and translation practices have on the strategic alignment (Limani, 2015) of policy messages.
The omission of regional education officer teams within the system governance model seems to inhibit the transparency of clear system roles. associated with policy implementation. (Finding #5)	Governance structures	**Concept:** Structural alignment of roles through **Governance Structure.**	**This finding supports the illuminated theoretical connections in above finding #3**	

The framework (Figure 4.8) captured the findings of the following four theoretical policy concepts (bolded in green with Table 4.3) that were illuminated within research Phase One.

1. **Policy Implementation Requirements**: Policy design documents clearly articulated that policy documents should outline their functions, responsibilities, and purpose. As policy was translated into contextual responses (regional operational plans) the articulation of detailed functions and responsibilities diminished with broad responsibilities being omitted or situated within descriptive text. The strategic alignment of policy in action documentation to policy implementation requirements was therefore negatively influenced.

2. **Policy Interpretation Process:** Policy interpretation practices were underpinned by the idea that interpretation was predominantly implicit as there was no documentation outlining interpretation processes. It was evident that policy interpretation was occurring through the system as the policy document was translated into other forms (strategy, guidelines and regional operational plans).

3. **Policy Translation Process:** Policy translation practices were not visible; however, the result of the process was evidenced through the development of new policy forms. Policy translation into the regions was supported by policy translation tools – consistent regional operational planning templates- that resulted in the development of contextualised policy responses and regional operational plans.

4. **Governance Structure:** Within the system governance structure, regions were identified as "play[ing] a critical role in supporting the performance of state schools" (DETE, 2014, p. 7) and "ensur[ing] consistency and alignment with departmental priorities" (DETE, 2014, p. 6). The omission of regional education officer teams within the system governance model inhibited the transparency of clear system roles associated with policy implementation (Finding #5).

The relationship between the identified factors and the alignment of policy objectives and implementation expectations (as policy coherence concepts) across the policy document groups was reflected within the framework (Figure 4.8). A large grey aligned section within the framework reflected the concept of

alignment (as a coherence concept) with the positioning of the policy document groups (indicated by their position with the system) placed within this section. The degree of alignment (initially identified with Table D1) between policy document groups was indicated by their relative position to each other.

4.8.   Emerging Policy Framework: Phase One

Figure 4.8

Emerging Framework Based on Document Analysis Findings in Phase One
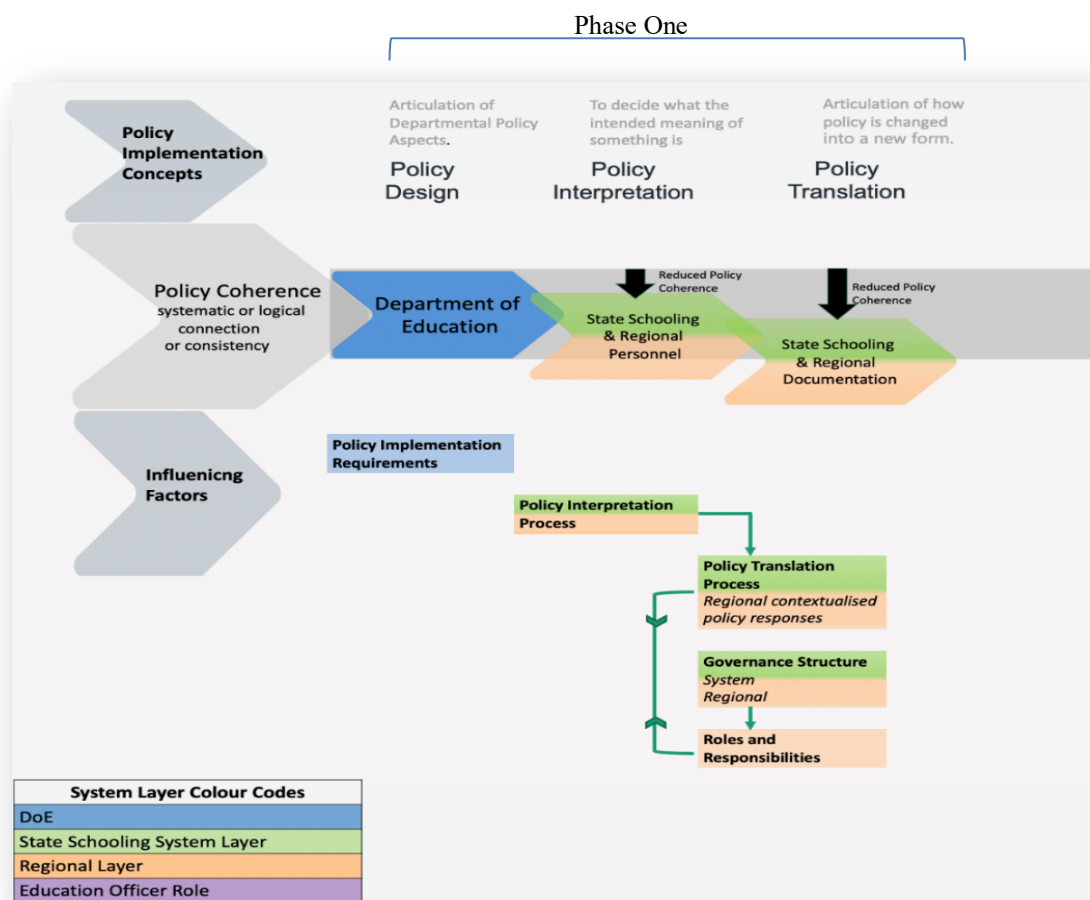
Figure 4.8 depicted the theoretical concept of policy coherence by a large grey arrow that began on the left of the framework and moved through and across the subsequent policy implementation processes to reflect the notion of policy alignment through connections and consistency. The concepts of policy implementation (policy design, policy interpretation and policy translation) were labelled across the top of the framework to indicate the focus policy implementation practices of this study. Each policy document group was reflected by the system layer responsible for their development (Department, State and Region) and were positioned within the grey

policy coherence section (within different coloured arrows). Phase One findings were positioned as factors below each system layer. The holistic effect of these factors on the alignment between each policy document group and system layer was characterised by the position of each coloured arrow (positioned in alignment or partial alignment with the preceding arrow) with the reduction of policy coherence depicted by black arrows.

4.9. Significance of Findings in Relation to Research Question One

Based on the findings that emerged, an early framework that visually explained how each policy document group reflected policy objectives and implementation expectations was developed. To highlight the significance of this emerging model within policy coherence conceptions, the findings were (see Table 4.3) juxtaposed against current theoretical concepts to illuminate aspects of the model that resonated with identified theoretical concepts. Specifically, the study's early framework provided an explanation and insights into how the use of policy coherence, as a theoretical framework, assisted in considering how policy objectives and implementation expectations were reflected with the range of policy texts available to policy actors (including regional education officers).

4.10. Summary of Findings that Emerged in Research Phase One

Upon completing the qualitative Document Analyses and discussion in research Phase One, key insights that emerged were synthesised. A summary of the data collection, analysis and interpretation procedures undertaken in research Phase One is highlighted in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Summary of Research Phase One Procedures, Findings and Wonderings

Research Phase	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Interpretation of Data	Findings help illuminate	Wonderings that emerge which are proposed for further exploration
Phase One Purpose: to address the research phenomenon by exploring how system documents reflect implementation expectations	Document analysis required the development of a corpus or group of documents for analysis. A document tracking process was implemented that identified 18 key documents organised under three groups of documents. • 4 Policy design documents	Deductive content analysis to code and reduce textual data.	Application of conceptual framework reflecting key aspects of Viennet and Pont (2017) policy analysis and Limani (2015) formal organisational alignment theoretical frameworks to organise identified codes and identify alignment within and across document groups.	Chapter 4 focussed on exploring **Research Question 1:** How do policy documents reflect implementation expectations? Policy articulated the need for clear implementation and communication plans however these were not explicitly evidenced as policy documents were interpreted and translated into policy in action documents including the State Schooling strategies and regional Operational Plans. This interpretation and translation process impacted on the alignment of nearly all	Emerging Wonderings aligned to research questions documented to illuminate researcher's interpretation and reflection on findings.
					Research Question 2: How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system? **Wondering #4:** How do those responsible for implementing policy (including regional education officers) identify and understand policy instruments what impact does this have on how they interpret and translate policy? **Wondering #6:** How does the specificity of the region' implementation actions impact on regional education officer teams understanding of their role responsibilities? **Wondering #10:** Which policy instruments are used by regional education officer teams to support schools
					Research Question 3: How do regional education officers enact their roles? **Wondering #7:** How do regions ensure there is a shared understanding of policy and procedural advice within regional service team personnel when providing "education, teaching, curriculum and student support services" (DETE, 2014, p.17) **Wondering #8:** How are regional performance measures understood within service team's roles and how does this influence their role enactment? **Wondering #11:** How do regional service team utilise policy when enacting their role and what impact does this have on policy coherence?

Research Phase	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Interpretation of Data	Findings help illuminate	Wonderings that emerge which are proposed for further exploration
	• 4 Curriculum Policy documents • 10 Policy governance and operational documents			policy implementation aspects as outlined in Table D1 and informed the development of a framework that captured and provided an explanation of these concepts and positioned emerging coherence factors.	**Research Question 4**: What factors support or inhibit their role enactment? **Wondering #3:** How are the intended relationships between formal policy instruments understood by regional education officers and utilised as policy is implemented? How does the specificity of the curriculum content within each instrument aid or inhibit how policy is interpreted and translated?
					Research Question 5: What implications for Policy Coherence and System Reform emerge from these findings? **Wondering #9:** How do policy, resource and human interactions influence and impact on policy coherence?

I reflected upon the emerging policy framework to describe how the research findings from the study addressed the first research question: How do system policy documents coherently reflect policy implementation expectations? The early policy framework was designed to specifically consider:

- What concepts and processes (if any) regarding policy implementation documentation emerge?
- What are the characteristics of the emerging policy framework that capture these concepts?

The emerging policy framework, as shown in Figure 4.8, depicted the developmental process of policy implementation and the emergence of factors (previously outlined in Table 4.3) that impacted on the attainment of policy coherence, as policy documents were interpreted and translated into new policy texts. While the study did not explore interpretation practices, the resulting policy texts within each policy group were evidence that interpretation had occurred. Through the lens of alignment (Limani, 2015) as a policy coherence concept, the framework identified the factors that emerged as policy document groups were analysed in relation to how they reflected Vienett and Pont's (2017) coherent policy implementation criterion. These factors were:

- policy implementation requirements:
- policy interpretation processes: implicit policy interpretation processes;
- policy translation processes: translation templates and contextualised policy responses evidenced in regional operational plans;
- governance structure: regional support roles were not included;
- roles and responsibilities: limited to policy developers and broad regional responsibilities.

To assist in deepening insights and gaining theoretical concepts the Early Conception of an Emerging Policy Framework (Figure 4.8) based on research Phase One findings (see Table 4.3), was utilised to explore the relationship between these factors and the attainment of policy coherence (through the lens of objective alignment).

Insights gained from the analysis of policy documentation helped illuminate the coherent aspects of policy implementation requirements, including policy objectives as policy texts were interpreted and translated into policy in action

documentation (strategy, guidelines and resources). These findings not only positioned broad policy implementation factors but also provided clarity of how the DoE's curriculum reform policy implementation expectations and objectives were reflected within the State Schooling Strategy and contextualised regional operational plans. How these policy documents were utilised by regional education officers (as policy actors) to inform their enacted role and interpret and translate policy into contextualised regional and school responses, was (at this stage of the study) unknown and positioned the next phase of this research study.

With the findings from Phase One represented in Figure 4.8 the next step was to conduct Phase Two of the Data Collection process, a qualitative survey targeted at identifying who the state curriculum education officers were and how DoE's key policy documents were utilised as they were interpreted and translated into policy instruments and regional operational plans. Chapter 5 describes the findings from this qualitative survey to reveal the initial responses to Chapter 4 Wonderings and research sub-questions (outlined in Table 4.4) and to identify Phase Three participants.

CHAPTER 5: PHASE TWO SYSTEM MIDDLE LEADERS' ROLE PERCEPTIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter details the processes underpinning the treatment of data and the findings that emerged in the second research phase which focused on participant qualitative surveys (Larid, 2004). The purpose of conducting the qualitative survey was to address the findings from Chapter 4, which explored how DoE's key policy implementation aspects were documented and translated into policy instruments and regional operational plans.

The findings from the document analysis revealed a silence within the DoE's policy documentation (within the governance structure [Figure 4.6] and regional operational plans) in relation to the composition and role of regional education officer teams. Phase Two aimed to explore how the enacted role of regional education officers contributes to the crafting of coherence (Honig & Hatch, 2004). Through this analysis and methodology outlined in Chapter 3, Phase Two began to address the research sub-question: How did system middle leaders (regional education officers) perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system?

5.1.1. Survey Sample Population

The sample target population was drawn from members of the state's regional education officers' team with approximately 56 members. Drawing from this target population, data for analysis were obtained from 22 completed surveys which equated to a 41% response rate. There was a total of 42 survey responses with 19 incomplete surveys. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, it could not be determined if the partially completed surveys were attempts by a participant who completed the survey in its entirety at another time. Therefore, the 19 incomplete survey responses were not reported on or included in the data analysis.

A completed sample from the qualitative survey data, specifically the data for Participant 34, has been presented as a table (see Table 5.1). The data in this format was used to select participants for the interview and illustrates key aspects used in Phase Two's descriptive analysis: demographic data (items 1 to 4) and perception data (items 5–12).

Table 5.1

Sample of Qualitative Survey Data (Phase Two) – Participant 34

Item	Qualitative survey Items	Participant 34's Response
1	Please identify your gender	Female
2	Please identify the Highest Degree you have completed.	Bachelor's degree
3	How many years have you have been a practising Educator?	22-24 years
4	How many years have you worked in a state/regional role?	More than 5
5	Why did you decide to apply for your current role?	I have worked in it before, so I knew there was a significant opportunity to develop my capabilities. I was also attracted by the opportunity to influence at a leadership level, and to build the capabilities of people who also have great opportunity to influence.
6	What is the purpose of your role?	At a regional level, to support school leaders to enact their improvement agendas.
7	When you began your role what processes or professional learning were offered or provided?	Approximately one third of the role involves learning EQ policy around curriculum, school improvement, pedagogy and coaching.
8	From your perspective, how did this support you in your role?	Some support but no clear role description.
9	Approximately what percentage of your time do you spend working in the following: • Your office	35
	• Facilitating professional learning	10
	• Collaborating with school leadership teams	35
	• Collaborating with teachers	10
	• In classrooms	5
	• Other	5
10	How does the system support what your do in your role?	By paying my wage, providing transport to get to remote schools, team building, support technology
11	How do you know you are effective in your role?	A chain of evidence is created for each school I work with and reflection and evaluation is built into the way we work. Ultimately, improved student outcomes is what we're looking for, but along the way we look for changes in teacher and leader behaviour, practices, knowledge and understanding.
12	What would support you in performing your role more effectively?	A longer amount of time to see the work through. Currently the role has a two-year time limit, but some work in schools takes longer to complete.

The demographic data were analysed using descriptive analysis, while the open-ended questions were coded using thematic analysis. Themes were constructed inductively that enabled the identification of repeated patterns and relationships that emerged from the data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

5.2.   Qualitative Survey Data Findings

The findings outlined in this chapter provide a description of regional education officers enacted roles and responsibilities. They also began to reveal how they perceived their role in relation to policy implementation and translation.

The findings are presented according to the question groups outlined in Table 5.1 followed by a discussion linking the findings to Chapter 4's findings (Table D1), the research wonderings and the intent of Chapter 5.

5.3.   Demographic Survey Data Findings

The following section introduces the participants' profiles through the presentation of data in Table 5.2. The presentation of the findings then moved from individual participants to considering the patterns (Table 5.3 and 5.4) within each survey item to build a collective description of the demographic characteristics of regional education officers working within the DoE to implement the Australian Curriculum and associated whole school practices. Following the data presentation and in preparation for Phase three, the researcher posted wonderings related to the findings.

Table 5.2

Participant Demographic Data Items 1–3

Participant number	Gender	Qualifications	Number of Years as an Educator	Number of years as a regional education officer
1	Female	Master's	10-12 years	Less than 1 year
3	Male	Bachelor's	22-24 years	More than 5
4	Female	Bachelor's	27-29 years	5 years
6	Male	Bachelor's	10-12 years	Less than 1 year
8	Female	Bachelor's	30 or more years	1 year
9	Female	Bachelor's	19-21 years	2 years
10	Female	Bachelor's	13-15 years	Less than 1 year
14	Female	Master's	22-24 years	2 years
15	Female	Bachelor's	22-24 years	More than 5
17	Female	Bachelor's	25-27 years	1 year
18	Female	Bachelor's	10-12 years	2 years
21	Female	Master's	10-12 years	1 year
24	Male	Bachelor's	30 or more years	3 years
25	Female	Bachelor's	16-18 years	2 years
26	Female	Bachelor's	13-15 years	Less than 1 year
27	Female	Bachelor's	30 or more years	5 years
28	Male	Bachelor's	13-15 years	2 years
30	Female	Master's	16-18 years	2 years
33	Female	Bachelor's	27-29 years	More than 5
35	Female	Master's	10-12 years	2 years
36	Female	Bachelor's	13-15 years	Less than 1 year
41	Female	Bachelor's	30 or more years	More than 5

Table 5.3

Demographic Survey Items 1–3

Identified Gender of Participants									
Male			Female			Other			
4			18			0			
Highest Qualification of Participants									
Bachelor			Master			PHD			
4 Males		13 Females	0 Males		5 Females	0			
Number of Years as a Practicing Educator									
10-15		16-21		22-27		28-29		>30	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2	7	0	3	1	3	0	2	1	3

Descriptive analysis identified that 82% of participants (18 out of 22) were female with 28% of females (5 out of 18) having achieved a Master of Education degree. Of the female participants the largest percentage 39% (7 out of the 18 female participants) had been educators for 10-15 years with 17% (3 out of 18) having practiced education for more than 30 years.

In contrast to this 22% (4 out of 22) of participants were male with no males having achieved a Master of Education degree or higher. 50% (2 out of 4) of the male participants had been educators for between 10–15 years with 25% (1 out of 4) having practised education for more than 30 years.

When considering the group of participants as a whole, 41% (9 out of 22) of participants had been educators for 10–15 years with 33% of participants having practised education for 30 years or more. Relationships (Table 5.4) between the numbers of years as a practicing educator, number of years within a regional role and the participant gender were then considered.

Table 5.4

Demographic Data: Number of Years as an Educator compared to the Number of Years in a Regional Role.

Number of years in a Regional Role	Number of Years as a practicing Educator									
	10-15		16-21		22-27		28-29		>30	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<1	1	4								
1		1				1				1
2	1	2		3		1				
3									1	
4										
5								1		
>5					1	1		1	1	1

Data indicated that the longer the participants had been practicing educators the longer they remained in a regional role (identified within the yellow cells of Table 5.4). The analysis identified that regional education officers employed for more

than four years in a regional role typically had been an educator for more than 22 years.

Wondering #12. How did career experience contribute to the enacted role of regional education officers and how did this assist them in interpreting and/or translating policy into action?

5.4. Role Perception Data

Regional education officers' role perceptions were captured through two survey questions: What is the purpose of your role? And why did you decide to apply for your current regional role? When participants described the purpose of their role, five key role characteristic themes emerged. Table 5.5 provides an overview of these themes with illustrative examples followed by a brief description of each theme.

- Leadership;
- Support;
- Capability building of self and others;
- Strategy implementation;
- Student improvement.

Table 5.5

Role Perception Data Themes with Illustrative Examples

Themes	Illustrative Examples
Leadership	• I was approached by regional staff to take a new role, after they had invited me to lead professional training session about leading a school differentiation change process. (Participant 42) • I was also attracted by the opportunity to influence at a leadership level, and to build the capabilities of people who also have great opportunity to influence. (Participant 16)
Support	• To support school leadership teams [to] implement the Australian Curriculum in their schools. (Participant 28) • Support and [provide] professional learning for school leadership teams and teachers in whole school processes. (Participant 42) • I support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. (Participant 34) • I provide "curriculum support, leadership support in managing change, pedagogy support." (Participant 37)
Capability building	• I build capacity and retain quality teachers through building knowledge in Australian curriculum, pedagogy and Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Participant 22) • I improve school leadership teams' capability to implement the Australian Curriculum according to State Schooling requirements." (Participant 19)
Strategy Implementation	• Liaise with ARDs and support cluster work, deliver professional learning, deconstruct key documents to enable implementation, uphold the reputation of the regional team (and DET) in a professional manner and work within the team to achieve regional improvement agenda goals. (Participant 36)
Student Improvement	• Best platform to make a difference for multiple students." (Participant 4) • "to increase upper two bands." (Participant 2)

Each of these role characteristics will now be explored in more detail.

5.4.1. Leadership

The role of regional education officers was strongly associated with the notion of leadership with 10 of the participants identifying this as one of the reasons they applied for the position. Participants saw the opportunity to be employed within these roles being associated with either leading others or a career pathway into leadership through the development of their own leadership capability. These notions were reflected within statements such as "I wanted to further develop my leadership skills" (Participant 11); this role was a "chance to work at a higher level" (Participant 7) and "I was attracted to the opportunity to influence at a leadership level" (Participant 16).

Participants also saw the movement into a regional role as an opportunity to "develop [their] capabilities within the job, with a huge amount of professional learning being a part of the role" (Participant 16). They identified that they "wanted to develop leadership skills in curriculum" (Participant 11) which in turn would "open up more options for future roles within education" (Participant 5).

5.4.2. Support

The provision of support to regional and school leadership teams and teachers was perceived as a key characteristic of the role with over 12 coding references identified. When exploring the purpose for support two main categories emerged: supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the enactment of school improvement agendas.

Supporting "school leadership teams to implement the Australian Curriculum according to State Schooling requirements" (Participant 19) by "working with teachers and leaders" (Participant 26), through the provision of "professional learning" (Participant 27) was viewed consistently by … as a critical aspect to their roles and reflected the DoE State Schooling Strategy (Queensland Government, 2019a) and P-12 CARF policy (Queensland Government, 2020a) in action document objectives.

"Support[ing] school leaders to enact their improvement agendas" (Participant 41) and "manage change" (Participant 23) was also stated by participants. With a focus on "whole school processes, teacher knowledge and skills in curriculum provision" (Participant 41), participants identified that they "support[ed] cluster work" (Participant 22) that directly aligned to "implement[ing]

state school initiatives" (Participant 8) and the "achieve[ment] of regional improvement goals" (Participant 35).

5.4.3. *Capability Building of Self and Others*

In addition to the provision of professional learning, participants identified that their role was to "develop the capacity of leadership teams [school clusters, school leaders] and teachers" (Participant 4) in achieving school and regional improvement agenda goals. Nine of the 23 participants indicated that they worked directly with leaders as they "provide[d] leadership support in managing change" (Participant 23) and "built the capabilities of people who also [had] a great opportunity to influence" (Participant 10) others. Regional education officers identified that they "improv[ed] school leadership teams" (Participant 13) capability to implement the Australian curriculum according to the state schooling requirements" (Participant 13) and "assist[ed] school leadership teams to deliver high quality education programs. These were designed to meet individual needs in an inclusive context, considering student wellbeing, attendance, academic achievement and successful transitions" (Participant 6).

In conjunction with this, three participants stated that they moved into their role to "share their passion" (Participant 8) for curriculum, which they demonstrated as they "impart[ed] strong knowledge and understanding of the Australian curriculum" (Participant 22) and "share[d] knowledge, practice and pedagogy with teaching professionals" (Participant 6). One participant explained that this was one way that they gave "back to the system that ha[d] developed [their] capability" (Participant 18).

5.4.4. *Strategy Implementation*

The participants identified that regional education officer roles supported departmental initiatives and regional priorities, through various ways of working and with a focus on targeted strategies. 25 coding references supported this.

Working closely with school leadership teams was the most common way and this was evident in 14 coding references. Three of the participants identified that they "liaise[d] with ARDs to support cluster work" (Participant 22) and worked first within school clusters followed by "working closely with schools [identified through] priority school reviews" (Participant 21).

The participants also worked with schools and school clusters. They "deconstruct[ed] key documents" and "synthesise[d] information into accessible and

realistic ways based on in-school experience" (Participant 22). This was often shared through the delivery or "designing, producing and developing [of] professional learning for adults in an educational context" (Participant 6).

Within the survey, three key state and regional strategies were identified as the foci of regional education officers' roles. The most frequent role responsibility was to "implement and align [school processes] to the Australian Curriculum" (Participant 17). Participants identified that they "buil[t] capacity and retain[ed] quality teachers through building knowledge [of the] Australian Curriculum, pedagogy and the APSTs" (Participant 14). While the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) stated that the Australian Curriculum was to be implemented in Prep to Year 10, one participant identified that the focus of their work was "Curriculum, Assessment, Pedagogy and Reporting in the Early Years" (Participant 16), indicating different focus areas for regional education officers.

Within the focus of the Australian Curriculum, two more specific foci areas were identified by the survey participants. Three highlighted that their work was to "promote the importance of Science and Technology in … schools" (Participant 19) and "support the key messages and initiatives of the STEM team" (Participant 5). Four participants identified that they were responsible for "leading school differentiation change process[es]" to support schools in the implementation of "critical and creative thinking for all students" (Participant 41) or to "challenge, extend and enrich their [students] learning" and cater for "gifted and talented students" (Participant 6) and "Indigenous EALD" (Participant 9) learning needs.

5.4.5. *Student Improvement*

The participants closely aligned the purpose of their roles to having either a direct or an indirect impact on student learning as the role provided them, as Participant 3 stated, with "the best platform to make a difference for multiple students." Similarly, Participant 6 indicated that the role provided them with an opportunity to have a greater "impact … than working within [just one] school."

About half of the participants made broad indirect statements about the impact of their roles on students, such as my role is to "improve student outcomes at schools" (Participant 13) or to go in with the "motivation to improve outcomes for students" (Participant15). Three participants highlighted that their roles were directly responsible for measurable student impacts such as "increasing upper two bands" (Participant 2) in NAPLAN data, "re-engaging disengaged youth" (Participant 2) and

"having a measured positive impact on student achievement" (Participant 7). These measures aligned to those articulated with regional operational plans and the DoE State Schooling Strategy (outlined in Chapter 4) which references increased literacy and numeracy outcomes.

5.5. Role Enactment Data

This sub-section discusses the participants' responses to role enactment survey items 7–12. The presentation of the findings began by considering how individuals (Figure 5.1) and the collective (Figure 5.2) distributed their time when enacting role tasks (using descriptive analysis of item 9). This was followed by considering the emerging themes within each subsequent survey item to build a collective description of whether and how regional education officers interpreted and translated policy when they enacted their roles.

Figure 5.1

Summary of How Individual Participants Distributed their Time
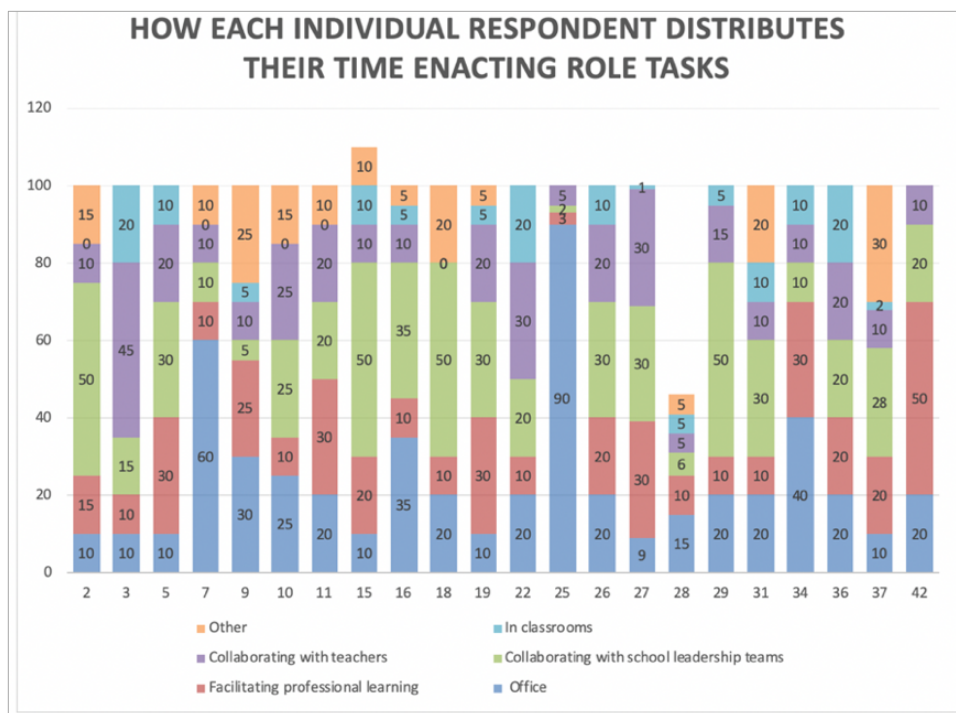
Figure 5.2

Collective Summary of how Participants Distributed their Time
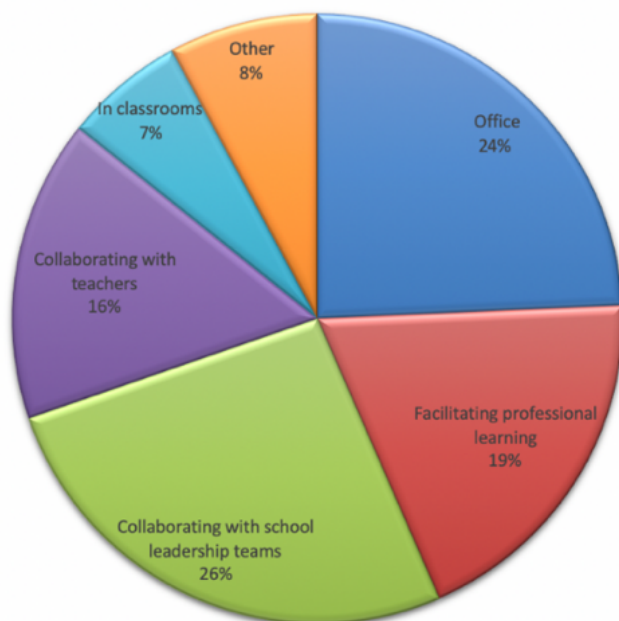
Figure 5.1 revealed that each individual participant distributed their time differently, while Figure 5.2 showed that the group collectively spent the majority of their time collaborating with school leadership teams, professional learning and working in the office. However, two participants (Participant 7 and 25 in Figure 5.2) spent significantly more time in the office than others (Participant 7 spent 60% and Participant 25 spent 90%).

When participants described how they had been inducted into and supported within their roles, the following themes emerged.

1. Departmental policy and resources;
2. Role responsibilities;
3. Collaborative practices;
4. Accountability and monitoring performance.

5.5.1. Departmental Policy

The participants stated that the key role of central office was to provide regions with specific information, including, for example, "policies and procedures, knowledge-based articles" (Participant 20) and "policy directives" (Participant 12). They noted that while there were opportunities to "engage with central office to progress their work" (Participant 14) and attend "state curriculum conferences [and] state organised professional learning" (Participant 4), the "documentation from

central office [was] quite brief with [limited] descriptions" (Participant 8). According to two participants, "there seem[ed] to be a mismatch between central expectations and regional realities" (Participant 8), resulting in role tensions and confusion. Participant 19 said:

> There is a large disconnect between Central Office and their understanding of what is happening in schools. This creates a conflict between what the organisation [Central Office]is asking regional staff to do and what they are able to do.

Two participants identified that "effective induction on processes and policies in the role of a public servant"(Participant 18) and "the system having more consistency and commitment to building teacher capability" (Participant 3) would support them in enacting their role.

5.5.2. Role Responsibilities

Role responsibilities such as mandatory training and administrative processes were outlined by the regions during participants' role induction. As Participant 2 explained, information was provided about "who to submit forms to, what forms to submit, who do I need to ask permission from, what do I need to ask for permission to do." Seven participants identified that they were provided with a brief overview of their role through various modes, including "a brief conversation with a colleague who had just joined the team three weeks prior" (Participant 7) and through "telephone check-ins … with [the] director" (Participant 20). However, 13 participants stated that their induction was insufficient. Participant 5, for example, explained that it provided "very little direction for day-to-day operations [and did not provide clarity] of my role nor how my role fits in with other related teams."

For Participant 5, "the diversity of the role meant that each team member operated differently and supported schools in different ways. Therefore, despite the induction, [I] felt the lack of agreed processes across the team were exposed." This resulted in Participant 17 identifying that:

> it took about 6 months for me to feel comfortable in my role and to understand what I was meant to achieve. I have now been in the role 2 years, and I am still learning processes of working in a corporate office.

The lack of detail within induction meant that, for Participant 8, "it was very confusing as to exactly what my role would entail. There were conflicting statements at times and at others I felt like my manager was expecting me to "guess my role."

Another three participants identified that because "central office gave the regional office an extra allocation which did not align with the region's explicit improvement focus, it meant that there was a conflict in expectations" (Participant 19) around their curriculum role. This resulted in regional education officers having no clarity of their role as depicted by Participant 13 who stated I have "no clear role description or expectation [and as a consequence] had to make [my] own path" (Participant 13).

Three participants identified that their induction was "very valuable" (Participant 12) and gave them "confidence in working with leadership teams" (Participant 9). They identified that their role involved "learning EQ [Education Queensland] policy around curriculum, school improvement, pedagogy and coaching" (Participant 10). The provision of detail enabled some participants to have an understanding of how their role was accessed. As articulated by Participant 18 who stated that "[I have] a clear line of sight for access to my role for support in schools".

Three participants also identified that having "clearer parameters for [my] role function" (Participant 5) and "streamlin[ing] support much more effectively across regions and between regional teams ... would address the disparity between the way teams work and [their role] expectations, which resulted in a disjointed system of support" (Participant 4).

5.5.3. Collaborative Practices

When enacting their roles, over 50% (12 of the 22) of participants identified that they engaged in collaborative practices with one participant identifying that this "help [ed] [them] to understand their [role] expectations" (Participant 7). Further, some participants described their collective identity as belonging "to a regional team" (Participatn 4). They identified that frequent team meetings allowed [them] to "talk with others in the same role" (Participant 7), which provided an opportunity to "work shadow" (Participant 12) and be "induct[ed]into the diverse aspects of the role" (Participant 4). Team meetings occurred through various modes including "face to face" (Participant 7) meetings and "fortnightly teleconferences" (Participant 18). While most participants identified that these meetings were led by a line manager, one participant identified that one of the regions' ARDs would also attend the meetings.

Three participants identified the use of common processes as outlined by Participatn 7 who identified that "working as part of a team we have standard forms and reporting templates team professional learning opportunities are also approved when needed".

Mentoring was also identified as a common formal support practice where new regional education officers had "a mentor, who was currently in the role" (Participant 4) or were "mentored by the ARD" (Participant 16) or "Director" (Participant 20). These mentoring relationships provided participants with opportunities to "work shadow" (Participant 12) , to "co-visit schools with other team members" (Participant 13) and to have "processes modelled" (Participant 16) to them which "gave [me] a very good idea of what [my] role entailed" (Participant 17).

While many participants identified the benefits of working collaboratively, one participant identified that "a more consolidated approach (3-5year plan)" instead of short-term plans and "closer working ties with [various regional] curriculum teams" would support "a team approach to goal achievement … as there is a lot of overlap in roles" (Participant 6).

Six participants also suggested that implementing a collaborative approach with involvement from those in higher positions would be important for all parts of the regional team to understand what their role is. Currently "regional leadership [does not] understand the role or its importance" stated (Participant 9) and "more collaboration with ARD's" (Participant 23) and being on the same page would support "stronger, more targeted engagement with ARD's" (Participant 22) and provide a clear direction for regional education officers.

5.5.4. *Accountability and Monitoring Performance*

When participants described how they knew they were successful in their role, four key themes emerged:

1. Feedback;
2. School data;
3. Uptake of support by schools;
4. Accountability ambiguity.

5.5.4.1. Feedback. Sixteen participants identified that feedback was their main indicator of success and was informally and formally received. Three participants identified that they utilised process to gather feedback. Participant 16 identified that they "collect[ed] feedback and data on [their] impact. Participant 13

outlined that she utilised tools such as "evaluation forms" to gather the feedback from schools.

Informal feedback was "received from schools and specific teams" (Participant 4) and through "anecdotal conversations" (Participant 13) that occurred "after working with groups" (Participant 8). Four participants identified that "positive feedback" from schools "lead to more requests for assistance or guidance" (Participant 8). Six participants identified they received feedback from their line managers, with one Participant 22 stating that this form of feedback lead to "being identified to lead projects."

Formal feedback tools that supported self-reflection and growth including "360 feedback" (Participant 7), "filming of presentations" (Participant 23) and the DoE "developing performance plan with supervisors" (Participant 22), were identified by four participants. Participant 10 identified that formal processes such as "reflection and evaluation [were] built into the way [we] work[ed]."

Feedback in the form of research and awards was also identified, with Participant ? stating that they have had their "methodology … endorsed by Australian's leading mathematicians" and "published in METGA international mathematics journal." Participant 3 stated that the DoE had "recognised the success and scalability of the work and it [the participant's region had] won state school of the year twice in 2015 and 2017."

When considering how the provision of feedback could be improved, four participants identified that having "processes in place for tasks and useful feedback" (Participant 21) would provide structures that enabled them to use the feedback to be "more responsive" (Participant 24). They also identified that having "clear expectations of behaviours towards, networking [and] work ethics" (Participant 22) would assist them in enacting their role more effectively.

5.5.4.2. School data. Seven participants identified that "student outcomes [were] the measure of success" (Participant 14) with three participants identifying that school data were collected and "an analysis of regional data [was] used" (Participant 7) to identify "student improvement in triangulated data sets, including A-E and normed data" (Participant 41). One participant identified that they used comparative state data to "show [that] our student gain [is] more than the rest of the region and state" (Participant 3).

Two participants identified that "ultimately, improved student outcomes [were] what [they were] looking for, but along the way [they] look[ed] for changes in teacher and leader behaviour, practices, knowledge and understanding" (Participant 10). Identifying changes in school practices was also reflected in the following comment, where Participant 10 outlined that "a chain of evidence [was] created for each school work[ed] in." Five participants identified that they formally "recorded [the] improvement of [the] change processes of school leadership teams … changes in] teacher practices (use of new skills and tools) and student engagement" (Participant 41).

Two participants identified that utilising a "team approach to goal achievement" (Participant 6) so they could "collaborate [and] share ideas" (Participant 14) would assist all team members in understanding how to measure their impact and success.

5.5.4.3. Uptake of Support by Schools. The third theme to emerge was the notion that the number of schools implementing an initiative or requesting support from individual education officers was an indication that they were being successful in their role. While participants attributed increased uptake to positive feedback, three participants also identified that various tools were used, including "a reporting template completed once a term to track progress" (Participant 7). Participants identified that these tools provided evidence of their "completion of tasks" (Participant 15) and "increased implementation or uptake of initiatives" (Participant 8) by schools.

Participants also identified that uptake would be enhanced through the provision of a "clear direction and collaboration with ARD's" (Participant 23). A stronger direct relationship with regional leadership would help the ARDs to "understand [the] role" and support the participants and regional leadership to "be on the same page" (Participant 22).

5.5.4.4. Accountability Ambiguity. While participants identified processes for reporting, they did not attribute these processes to the measurement of role effectiveness. Four participants explicitly identified that they were not clear on how to measure their success. They stated that their "team struggles to answer this" (Participant 4) question and while "everyone asks this question – it is very difficult to answer" (Participant 8).

One participant attributed the absence of role measures to their inability to identify how to measure "the direct impact of [their] work on improving student outcomes" (Participant 4). This same notion was reflected in Participant 5's comment that the "team is a project, so student performance can't directly be attributed to [their] effectiveness."

Overall, these participants agreed that measuring their impact and success was "a tricky one" (Participant 4). Participants also identified that to address this ambiguity there was a need for regions to develop and implement "processes [for] measuring own short-term performance" (Participant 12). According to the participants, these processes would be underpinned by having "clarity of expectations, a goal post that does not shift" (Participant 21) and a "clear line of site" (Participant 2). Having "access to data … to measure impact" (Participant 14) and the provision of "support in measurement and tracking of impact" (Participant 13) would assist in supporting these participants to enact their role effectively.

5.6.   Identification of Findings in Relation to Research Question Two

The purpose of this chapter was to address the findings from Chapter 4, which revealed a silence within the DoE's policy documentation in relation to the composition and role of regional education officer teams, specifically regional education teams, through the exploration of how the DoE's system middle leaders (regional education officers) perceived their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system. This addresses Research Question 2, which asked ????

Through the implementation of a qualitative survey and the subsequent application of descriptive and thematic analysis, the following questions were explored:

1. What are the key demographic characteristics of regional education officers?

2. How do regional education officers perceive their role and how do these perceptions align to DoE's action policy documents?

3. How do regional education officers enact their role and how do these role tasks and descriptions align to DoE's action policy documents?

A summary of regional education officers' role perceptions and the alignment to the DoE's action policy documents is summarised within Table D2 (see Appendix D) and discussed within the next section. This table builds on the findings from Chapter

4 outlined in Table D1 (see Appendix D), through the addition of another column titled regional education officers' role perception.

5.6.1. *Phase Two Role Perception Discussion*

I reflected on how regional education officers perceived their role and identified several details.

5.6.1.1.   Objectives Criteria. The objectives within and across each of the Phase One document groups reflected the notion of improving students' educational experiences by building teaching and learning capability through:

- alignment - shared understandings of the … Australian Curriculum … and the policies that govern [the] work;
- precision – how evidence is used to identify the "right work" and do the "right work" by planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing; and
- intentional collaboration – as the deliberate actions taken to work, learn and improve together. (Queensland Government, 20201, p. 1)

In addition to this, regional education officers perceived their role in supporting the implementation of this policy, to be focussed on providing clarity and direction to schools. Their descriptions revealed that they achieved this through the building of leadership capability, as well as building teaching capability for improving student outcomes (row 1 of Table D2, Appendix D). These various role purpose perceptions in supporting policy implementation demonstrated that collectively there was partial role alignment to policy objectives and the translated regional operational plan objectives (Phase One).

While the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) within Phase One QDA identified the implementation of the Australian Curriculum as the key curriculum reform action, only two participants explicitly stated that supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum was an aspect of their role. When considering this from a collective perspective, partial role purpose misalignment was thus identified as a key theme.

5.6.1.2. Communication and Engagement Criterion. When considering the communication and engagement criterion (row 2 within Table D2, Appendix D), regional education officers identified the use of contextualised regional communiques as tools for supporting regional improvement strategies. Participants identified the use of personal interactions between regional staff, schools and central

office personnel as the mode for communicating policy messages. No reference was made to formal communication practices related to the role of regional education officers and their purpose in supporting policy implementation. The data analysis across research phases identified that there was alignment of some policy communication and engagement aspects (the use of formal communication modes) as indicated by green boxes. The identified gaps or potential misalignment with other aspects (e.g., the use of formal communication plans to support policy messages and policy implementation strategies including associated support roles) were outlined by red and orange aspects within column four row two of Table D2 (see Appendix D).

     5.6.1.3. Implementation Criteria. The Phase One analysis revealed that, as policy was interpreted and translated into policy instruments, policy implementation became implicit and embedded within descriptive statements. This absence of an implementation plan within the DoE curriculum policy group resulted in regional operational plans that predominantly identified broad strategies and the tasking of these strategies to regional education officers and regional leaders.

     Phase Two analysis (column three, row three of Table D2, Appendix D) identified that regional education officers reported that policy was implemented by multiple system personnel, including regional education officers, using collaborative practices that focussed on building teacher and leadership capability. The identification of these practices supports the notion of intentional collaboration; however, it was unclear if there was collective alignment of policy messages within these interactions. This identifies that those collaborations and interactions with others were utilised to craft policy responses; however, whether this supported coherent policy implementation was unclear.

     Regional education officers identified that they had limited clarity in how to enact their role in relation to supporting schools in implementing curriculum policy. The lack of role clarity and silence within the data about the use of formal implementation plans identified misalignment to the DoE's policy implementation requirements, as identified in Phase One.

     5.6.1.4. Data Monitoring and Accountability Criterion. Phase One policy measures (row four, Table D2, Appendix D) were identified within the curriculum reform texts; however, as policy was interpreted and translated into regional operational plans there was no explicit link between policy measures and departmental role descriptions.

Phase Two analysis revealed that seven regional education officers stated that improved student achievement was a key role measure, identifying a high alignment to overarching policy measures outlined within DoE's strategic plan where the foci on student measures were explicitly stated as:

- Literacy and Numeracy achievement;

- Student … engagement;

- Retention;

- Year 12 certificate;

- Engagement in further education, training and employment. (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 11)

When identifying their role enactment effectiveness, regional education officers were unable to collectively and consistently articulate the specific measures or targets attributed to their role effectiveness. This resulted in collective role and accountability ambiguity, with only two participants exploring how they could identify their role impact through the development of a "chain of evidence" (Participant 10) for improving student outcomes in individual schools.

As regional education officers' roles were positioned within regional operational plans (Phase One) as policy implementation resources, the lack of regional education officers' ability to collectively articulate role accountability measures or reference the measures within regional operational plans identified misalignment between the use of regional operational plans across the enacted role of regional education officers.

5.6.1.5. Task Allocation, Timing and Tools and Resources Criterion. My reflection upon how the regions communicated policy objectives, task allocations, and resources (row 5-8, Table D2, Appendix D) suggested that regional operational plans were not referred to by participants. This resulted in the absence of any references to project time allocations and the inconsistent identification of policy resources by regional education officers' responses.

In the absence of role purpose descriptors, regional education officers relied on central office, their line mangers, RD and ARDs to allocate tasks. This in turn created role tensions and partial alignment of role tasks to policy and regional operational plans.

Collating these emerging role perceptions within and across each research phase and the policy implementation criterion enabled me to consider how key policy implementation aspects (Viennet & Pont's (2017) criteria) were described as they were translated from policy instruments and regional operational plans into actions through the regional education officers' enacted role.

5.7.   Phase Two Findings in Relation to Research Question Two

Reflecting upon the alignment between Phases One and Two enabled me to identify key findings in relation to how policy was perceived to be interpreted and translated within and through regional education officers' enacted roles. Within regional operational plans (Chapter 4), regional education officers were positioned as policy resources. Their enacted role descriptions revealed that collectively their role was to support regional and schools' policy translation and to develop contextualised policy responses, including regional resources, professional learning and school improvement plans and strategies. These role perceptions suggested that regional education officers were one group of system personnel responsible for policy interpretation and translation. The participants of my research identified that they relied on their own interpretations of their role, with no explicit reference to formal policy interpretation or translation processes.

While policy instruments clearly and consistently articulated a focus on delivering quality teaching and learning opportunities through a world class quality curriculum, there was no evidence of this vision within regional education officers' description of their role. Collectively, the participants identified that the purpose of their role was to build leadership and teaching capability and to improve student outcomes. The lack of explicit alignment to policy objectives may be attributed to regional education officers' inability to reference regional operational plans and the apparent misalignment between policy instruments and regional operational plans (evidenced within Chapter 4's findings), as a large majority of participants identified that their role was responsible for the implementation of regional strategies and initiatives (Figure 5.2 and 5.3). This led to the following finding:

Finding #6. Collectively participants did not explicitly associate their role with the DoE's policy instruments' identified measures and therefore their close association with regional directions, rather than with policy instruments, may indicate why there was partial alignment between policy and regional role objectives.

It was also interesting to note that there was a lack of discussion regarding formal role implementation communications beyond induction processes that focussed on administrative tasks. Seemingly, the lack of process resulted in a variety of role purpose notions emerging, including regional education officers as leaders, school support personnel, builders of school and leadership capability and supporting state schooling and regional improvement strategy implementation.

When considering how policy should be implemented, the DoE's policy design documents (evidenced in Chapter 4) showed that a clear implementation plan should be evident through the identification of functions, responsibilities and purpose. In the absence of explicit implementation plans or role descriptions, regional education officers were able to broadly describe the purpose of their role as a leadership role that provided support to schools and focused on building teacher and leadership capabilities. The participants' comments did not provide explicit reference to specific regional implementation plans, policy instruments or policy resources. The participants were able to identify broadly that their role was linked to "support[ing] departmental initiatives and regional priorities" (Participant 6) through implementing the Australian Curriculum, promoting STEM and catering for diverse student learning needs.

Participants' lack of clarity regarding their role responsibilities and functions in relation to a policy, strategy or implementation plan was inhibited by the lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities within regional documentation, and the diverse regional inductions and support processes, which lacked the specificity required to identify clear roles and responsibilities in relation to everyday tasks and ways of working. This led to the following finding:

Finding #7. The omission of explicitly documented and communicated roles and responsibilities for regional education officers within policy implementation texts and role induction processes resulted in diverse role purpose perceptions.

When identifying the purpose of their roles, the participants directly aligned their work to having a direct or indirect impact on student learning and changes in school improvement processes. These notions directly aligned to policy texts where the regional operational plans (see Figure 4.7) identified measurable targets related to student attainment, attendance, behaviour and achievement. It was therefore interesting to note that regional education officers did not articulate any of their regions' specific targets and furthermore, while the participants identified that they

used informal feedback and data related to the uptake of support by schools to report on their role, 15 participants identified that they found it difficult to identify how they measured their role effectiveness. This perception of ambiguity in role accountability could be directly aligned to the perceived lack of information related to participants' role tasks and day-to-day functions, as individuals who do not have clarity of their role would in turn be unable to identify how to measure their impact. This led to the following finding:

Finding #8. There is a potential disconnect between identified policy implementation resources (including regional education officers' roles) and identified implementation measures. Regional education officers experience accountability ambiguity.

Similar notions were raised when considering how participants described the link between policy and their role responsibilities. Policy design documents stated that policies should outline the processes and responsibilities required to support policy implementation. This notion was reflected through policy in action documents (described within Chapter 4) when they positioned the use of tools such as the School Improvement Model and Whole School Curriculum Model to support continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment of the … Australian Curriculum" (Queensland Government 2019a, p. 1).

However, when regional education officers discussed their role responsibilities, inconsistent understandings emerged. Participants identified that their role used policy documents to direct and provide support to schools, however they they did not have clarity of their role and they were provided with little direction. Participants did identify that they engaged in collaborative practices with other team members, ARDs and regional teams, which assisted them in understanding their role expectations. It was unclear whether collective understandings of policy were utilised within these collaborative practices. These responses led to the following finding:

Finding #9. Regional education officers built clarity of their role responsibilities through their own interpretation of policy texts and from human interactions that occurred during inductions and team collaborations. Interactions highlighted that there was limited reference to policy use when articulating role responsibilities.

This finding reinforced the need to explore Wondering 4 further.

Wondering #4. How [and where] did regional education officers identify and understand policy instruments and what impact did this have on how they interpreted and translated policy?

Using the lens of alignment within and across each policy group and regional education officers' role perceptions (as reflected within the questionnaire answers) enabled the wonderings from Chapter 4 (previously outlined in Table 4.4 and responded to in Table 5.6) to be explored. Table 5.6 will be carried through into Chapters 6 and 7, to capture the responses to each of the research questions that emerged from each data phase.

Table 5.6

Summary of Policy Document Analysis Wonderings (Chapter 4) and Responses to the Research Questions drawn from the Qualitative Survey Responses (Chapter 5).

Research Questions and Chapter 4 Wonderings	Emerging Responses from Research Findings
Research Question 2: How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system?	
Wondering #4: How and where do regional education officers identify and understand policy instruments. What impact does this have on how they interpret and translate policy?	There was limited reference to policy within the survey responses. **Therefore, this Wondering required further investigation.**
Wondering #6: How does the specificity of the regions' implementation actions impact on regional education officer teams' understanding of their role responsibilities?	Participants did not identify explicit links to regional implementation plans. They did identify regional priorities and the impact this had on some of the participants' role purpose. Participants did identify inconsistent understandings of their role. Participants identified alignment to aspects of regional implementation plans, including impact measures such as improved student results. **This indicates a level of role ambiguity that requires further investigation.**
Wondering #10: Which policy instruments are used by regional education officers to support schools?	Participants did not explicitly identify policy instruments; however, they did describe aspects of the P-12 CARF when describing their role purpose. **This wondering requires further investigation**
Research Question 3: How do regional education officers enact their roles?	
Wondering #7: How do regions ensure there is a shared understanding of policy and procedural advice within regional education officer team personnel when providing "education, teaching, curriculum and student support services" (DETE, 2014, p. 17)	While there was evidence of collaborative practices used to support the understandings of policy, within these practices there was no focus on cognitive cohesion, but rather knowledge transmission. This resulted in no affirmation or correction of individual's policy interpretations. This positioned the notion that individuals relied on their own interpretations of policy to enact their role. It is unclear whether policy was used within these processes, as this was not explicitly identified within participants' descriptions. These findings indicated that an individual's uncertainty around policy understandings could create role tension.
Wondering #8: How are regional performance measures understood within service teams' roles and how does this influence their role enactment?	There are inconsistent understandings of role impact measures. Participants identified a link between changed school processes and the role in building leadership and teacher capability. Although student improvement was identified as a common measure, it is unclear how or if this influences regional education officers' role enactment. These findings suggest accountability ambiguity. **The link between role impact measures and role enactment requires further investigation.**

Research Questions and Chapter 4 Wonderings	Emerging Responses from Research Findings
Wondering #12: How did career experience contribute to the enacted role of regional education officers and how did this assist them in interpreting and /or translating policy in to action?	A new wondering to be explored in Chapter 6.
Research Question 4: What factors support or inhibit their role enactment?	
Wondering #3: How are the intended relationships between formal policy instruments understood and utilised as policy is implemented? How does the specificity of the curriculum content within each instrument aid or inhibit how policy is interpreted and translated?	Participants positioned policy as a knowledge base and source for directives; however, it is unclear how policy is understood or used while they are enacting their role. Participants identified that ARDs' understanding of their role could enhance or inhibit their role enactment. **This use of policy for providing school support, providing professional learning opportunities or building capability requires further investigation.**
Research Question 5: What implications for policy coherence and system reform emerge from these findings?	
Wondering #9: How do policy, resource and human interactions influence and impact on policy coherence?	The participants identified that their understandings of their role was developed through numerous human interactions. The use of policy within these interactions was absent in the participants' descriptions. The findings suggest that participants were experiencing role ambiguity. **Therefore, this aspect requires further investigation.**

When I reflected upon each of my wonderings, it became evident that the use of policy was not consistently or holistically referred to when regional education officers described their role. However, there were aspects of their role descriptions (role purpose, role measures and role support processes) that indicated partial alignment to policy instruments.

The analysis also revealed that regional education officers crafted their role perceptions and purpose as they engaged in role inductions and interactions, both informal and formal, with line managers and other system personnel, and constructed their own understandings of what their role should entail. Within their role perception descriptions, the interpretation and translation of policy was evidenced as an integral component of their role, as they deconstructed key documents and "synthesised information so it was accessible. This included developing professional learning programs. There was evidence that participants drew off their own interpretations of policy texts when enacting their role; however, there was no evidence to suggest these interpretations were collectively aligned.

Table 5.7 summarises Phase Two findings and the identified policy coherence factors and their link to theoretical concepts

Table 5.7

Summary of Phase Two Findings and Identified Policy Coherence Factors and their Link to Theoretical Concepts

Phase Two Findings	Identified Factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to Policy Coherence Theoretical Concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical aspects	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research focus
Participants did not explicitly associate their role with the DoE's policy instruments and, therefore, their close association with regional directions rather than policy instruments may indicate why there is partial alignment between policy and regional role objectives. (**Finding #6**)	Documented roles and responsibilities	Strategic alignment of **policy implementation expectations**	A role is a set of behaviours shaped by an individual's belief, attitudes and role expectations within a certain context (Walker & Shore, 2015). When these processes result in diverse role perceptions, role tension is evidenced (Rai, 2016). Policy implementation theory (Viennet & Pont, 2017) identifies that the clear articulation of policy roles and responsibilities within an implementation plan will assist in coherent policy implementation.	These findings position the use of role theory as a valuable theoretical framework to identify how policy (that is shaped by the policy context and social interactions with various actors) is interpreted and translated. This leads to emerging notion of policy role enactment.
The omission of explicitly documented and communicated roles and responsibilities of regional education officers within policy implementation texts and role induction processes resulted in diverse role purpose perceptions. This results in role tension. (**Finding #7**)	Diverse role perceptions Governance structure	Structural alignment of **policy implementation processes** (roles and responsibilities) **Role ambiguity** **Role tension**	However, Viennet & Pont's (2017) research fails to consider how articulated policy roles and responsibilities are reflected in formal organisational roles and the impact this has on policy enactment.	

Phase Two Findings	Identified Factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to Policy Coherence Theoretical Concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical aspects	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research focus
Regional education officers built clarity of their role responsibilities through their own interpretation of policy texts and a number of human interactions that occurred within inductions and team collaborations. These interactions also highlighted that there was limited reference to policy use when articulating role responsibilities. (**Finding #9**)	Individual policy interpretation and dialectic translation processes	**Policy interpretation and translation** **Role ambiguity**	Policy sensemaking has been utilised within studies of organisational change to explore actors' experiences (Bansler & Havn, 2006). Organisational sense-making theories (Weber & Glynn, 2006; Jeyaraj, 2011) identify the importance of developing shared understandings when contextualising improvement strategies. There is consensus in the literature, outlined in Chapter 2, that current implementation practices result in varied contextualised approaches which led to the theoretical notion of cognitive alignment. The literature, however, has not explored how sense-making occurs or is distributed across organisations.	The findings position the notion of cognitive alignment and sense-making as a critical policy implementation factor and additional organisational alignment lens to incorporate when achieving policy coherence. The findings position a connection between policy sense-making and role ambiguity as factors for policy coherence, supporting the use of role theory as a valuable theoretical framework for policy coherence.
There is a disconnect between the identified policy text implementation	Role success indicators	Strategic alignment of role accountabilities/measures	Accountability ambiguity is typically concerned with ensuring government	The findings position accountability ambiguity theory within the context of

Phase Two Findings	Identified Factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to Policy Coherence Theoretical Concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical aspects	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research focus
resources, including regional education officers' roles, and the identified implementation measures. This suggests that regional education officers experience accountability ambiguity. (**Finding #8**)		**Accountability ambiguity**	agencies are spending responsibly (Williams & Taylor, 2013) and consider how they manage internal and external expectations. Derived from this literature is the notion of role accountability. Within educational literature, this idea relates to educators being responsible to the education community for quality education that leads to enhanced outcomes (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2011).	policy implementation and coherence theories. By doing this, the findings illuminate the importance of identifying policy role accountabilities within an organisational structure that are more specific and still connected to the broad policy objectives. This finding also supports the use of role theory as a theoretical framework for analysing policy coherence.

5.8. Emerging Policy Role Enactment Framework: Phase One and Two

The emerging policy role enactment framework (Figure 5.3) builds on and explains the findings and the identified connection to four theoretical policy concepts: policy coherence, policy design, policy interpretation and policy translation, that were identified within research Phase One. Through the exploration of the theoretical concept of policy coherence (objective and crafting alignment) and policy enactment concepts (bolded in green in Table 5.7) within Phase Two, factors impacting on regional education officers' role enactment and the attainment of policy coherence were illuminated.

- **Policy implementation expectations**: The Phase One findings identified that, as policy was translated into contextual responses (regional operational plans), the articulation of detailed policy functions and responsibilities diminished, with broad responsibilities being omitted or situated within descriptive text. Phase Two data also showed the absence of clear policy role functions and responsibilities. This resulted in various role perceptions and a reliance on individual policy understandings to inform policy interpretation and translation tasks. Therefore, based on the data, the collective strategic alignment of policy documentation objectives and measures to policy implementation actions within the enacted role of regional education officers seemed to be negatively influenced that could result in partial strategic alignment.

- **Policy interpretation process:** Policy interpretation practices within the collective enacted role of regional education officers were underpinned by the idea that interpretation was predominantly individual, as there was no evidence outlining how shared policy understandings were developed through formal interpretation processes. It was evident that policy interpretation was occurring through the system, as the policy documents were translated into other forms, such as regional strategy and resources including professional development sessions and policy advice. There was evidence that individual policy interpretations and absence of formal explicit interpretation practices resulted in regional education officers utilising various interpretations and understandings of policy, because

policy advice was provided to schools. The collective strategic alignment of policy objectives and processes through the policy implementation within the enacted role of regional education officers was inconsistent.

- **Policy translation process:** Policy translation practices were not visible within regional education officers' descriptions; however, the result of the individual interpretation (sense-making) process was evidenced through the development of new policy forms, as outlined within policy interpretation processes. While regional education officers identified that they provided policy advice to schools and supported schools in their improvement journeys, there was no evidence of formal translation practices (e.g., the use of school improvement templates, or practices that utilised the school improvement hierarchy and school review reports, as outlined in the DoE curriculum reform monitoring processes discussed within Chapter 4).

- **Role ambiguity**: Role clarity through the documentation and articulation of roles and responsibilities was not evidenced. As a result, regional education officers identified that there was a disjointed system of support within and across regions. They articulated that having clearer parameters for their role function and streamling support across between regional teams would address the disparity between the way teams worked and their role expectations, which were not clearly defined.

- **Role tension**: In the absence of clear roles and responsibilities, regional education officers were tasked by multiple system personnel (state system, regional system leaders and schools) that may or may not have aligned with their role purpose perceptions or the articulated role function (within Phase One regional operational plans).

- **Accountability ambiguity**: The participants closely aligned the purpose of their roles to having either a direct or an indirect impact on student learning, which directly aligned to policy strategic directions. Clarity of how the role of regional education officers contributed to achieving policy objectives was unclear. Regional education officers were unable to collectively and consistently articulate the measures or targets attributed

to their role. The way in which regional education officers' role
contributed to the strategic alignment of policy was therefore unclear.

The relationship between the identified factors on the attainment of policy
coherence across a system was reflected within the emerging policy role
enactment framework depicted within Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3

*Emerging Policy Role Enactment Framework Based on Findings from Research
Phases One and Two*
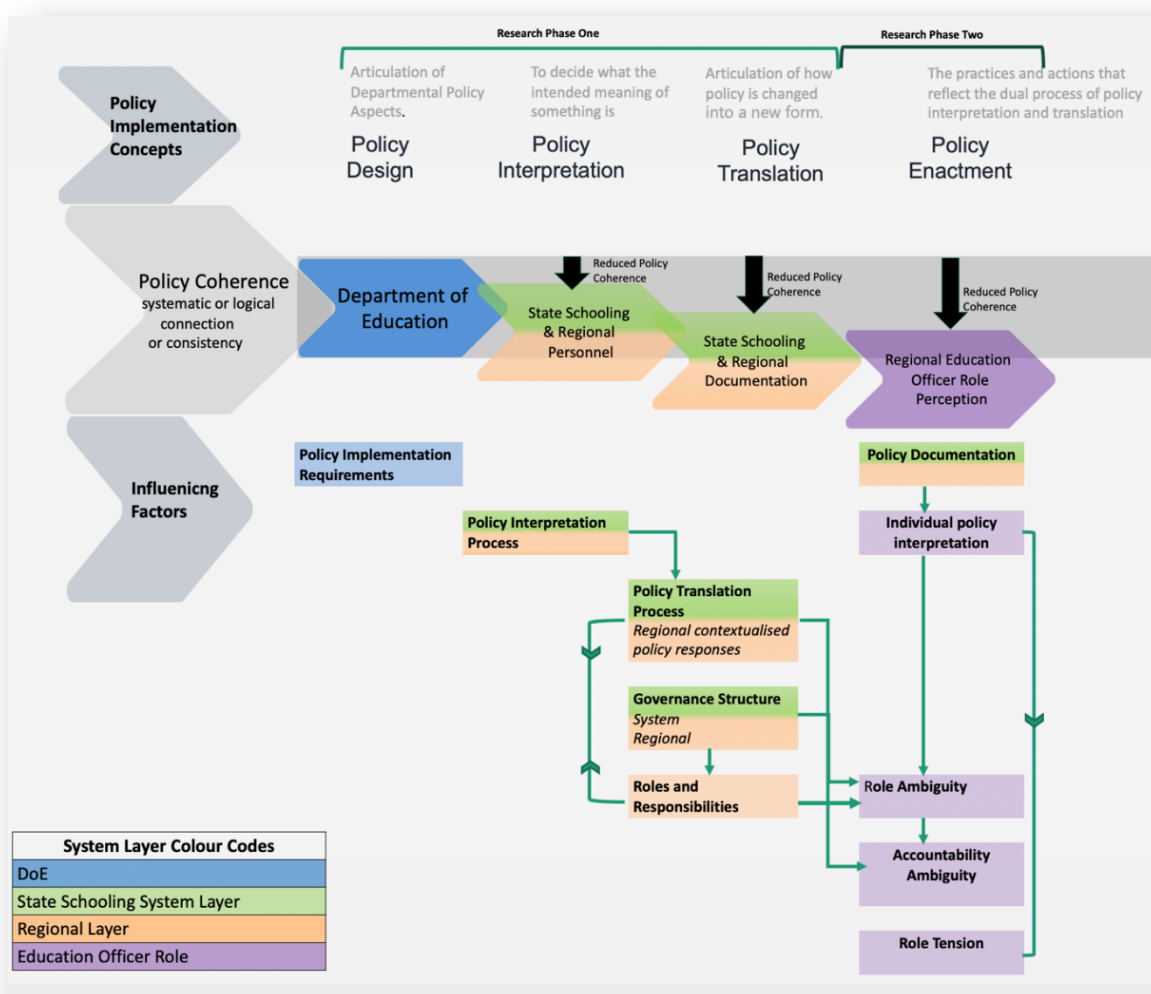
Figure 5.3 depicts the theoretical concepts of policy coherence by the large
grey arrow that began on the left of the framework and moved through and across the
subsequent policy implementation processes to reflect the notion of policy
connections and consistency. The research Phase Two policy implementation
concept of policy enactment was labelled across the top of the framework, with the

responsible system layers identified within the associated coloured policy implementation arrows (positioned below each label and within the grey policy coherence section). The initial factors that influenced policy enactment were identified as influencing factors positioned below the policy enactment concept. The effect of these factors on the coherence between the policy translation and policy enactment concepts was characterised by the position of each coloured arrow (positioned in alignment or partial alignment with the preceding arrow) with the reduction of policy coherence depicted by black arrows. The connections between influencing factors were depicted by green arrows.

5.9. Significance of Findings in Relation to Research Question Two

Based on the findings that emerged, an emerging policy role enactment framework depicting the influence of regional education officers' perception of their role (position and purpose) on policy coherence was presented. To highlight the significance of this emerging model within policy coherence conceptions, the findings were collated in Table 5.7 against current theoretical concepts. These illuminate the aspects of the model that resonate with current concepts and, at the same time, identify how they help to further enlighten current understandings of the connection between role enactment and policy coherence. Specifically, the study's emerging policy role enactment framework provides insights into:

- the use of role theory as a valuable theoretical framework to identify how policy (that is crafted by the policy context and social interactions with various actors) is interpreted and translated. The new term **policy role enactment** reflects the important connection between role enactment and policy enactment.

- how identifying policy role accountabilities within an organisational structure requires accountabilities directly linked to the role and, at the same time, connected to the broad policy objectives through contextualised regional and school policy responses that include chains of evidence.

- the notion of **collective cognitive alignment** and sense-making as a critical policy coherence factor (in developing shared understandings of policy objectives and measures), and how incorporating cognitive alignment into the organisational alignment framework (Limani, 2015) as

a critical aspect of policy coherence could enhance understandings of how policy is enacted (objectives alignment and coherence crafted) through regional education officers' roles.

5.10. Summary of Findings that Emerged in Research Phase Two

Upon completing the data analyses and discussion in research Phase Two, the key insights and wonderings that emerged were synthesised and explicitly aligned to theoretical concepts (outlined in Table 5.7 and Figure 5.3). A summary of the data collection, analysis and interpretation procedures undertaken in research Phase Two is highlighted in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8

Summary of Research Phase Two Procedures and Findings

Research Phase Two	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Interpretation of Data	Findings Illuminated	Wonderings
Purpose: to address the research phenomenon by exploring how system middle leaders (regional education officers) perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy.	Qualitative survey was administered through the DoE statewide regional education officer network. 22 completed surveys (reflecting a 41% response rate) resulted.	Descriptive analysis was utilised for the demographic data Thematic analysis was utilised for open-ended questions	Identification of role enactment characteristics (themes) and influencing factors. The conceptual framework using key aspects of Viennet and Pont's (2017) policy analysis and Limani's (2015) formal organisational alignment theoretical frameworks organised the findings and	Chapter 5 focussed on exploring Research Question 2: How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system? Participants predominantly described their role in terms of its function (as a leadership or support role) with limited reference to policy use. Participant descriptions reflected the notions of: • Role ambiguity • Accountability ambiguity • Role tension - related to varied understandings of their role purpose.	Emerging wonderings aligned to research questions were documented to illuminate the researcher's interpretation and reflection on findings. **Research Question 2**: How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system? **Wondering #4:** How do those responsible for implementing policy identify and understand policy instruments what impact does this have on how they interpret and translate policy? **Wondering #6:** How does the specificity of the regions' implementation actions impact on regional education officer teams' understanding of their role responsibilities? **Wondering #10:** Which policy instruments are used by regional education officer teams to support schools? **Research Question 3**: How do regional education officers enact their roles? **Wondering #8:** How are regional performance measures understood within service teams' roles and how does this influence their role enactment? **Wondering #11:** How do regional service teams utilise policy when enacting their role and what impact does this have on policy coherence? **Wondering #12**: How did career experience contribute to the enacted role of regional education officers and how did this assist them in interpreting and /or translating policy into action?

Research Phase Two	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Interpretation of Data	Findings Illuminated	Wonderings
			showed alignment within and across research phases.		**Research Question 4**: What factors support or inhibit their role enactment? **Wondering #3:** How are the intended relationships between formal policy instruments understood and utilised as policy is implemented? How does the specificity of the curriculum content within each instrument aid or inhibit how policy is interpreted and translated?
					Research Question 5: What implications for policy coherence and system reform emerge from these findings? **Wondering #9:** How do policy, resource and human interactions influence and impact on policy coherence?

The researcher, reflecting on the emerging policy role enactment framework to describe the illuminated research findings from the study that addressed the second research question: How do system leaders perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy? What factors support or inhibit their role enactment?

The policy role enactment framework was designed to specifically consider:

- What concepts and processes (if any) regarding system middle leaders' policy interpretation and translation emerge?

- What are the characteristics of a policy role enactment framework that capture these concepts?

In the absence of clear roles and responsibilities, regional education officers perceived their role to predominantly be a leadership role responsible for supporting schools to implement school improvement strategies and build teaching and leadership capability. These perceived roles and responsibilities required regional education officers to utilise policy interpretations to translate policy. Factors that influenced their ability to interpret and translate policy (as depicted in the Emerging Policy Role Enactment Framework, Figure 5.3) were:

- individual policy interpretation practices;

- contextualised policy translation practices;

- diverse role purpose perceptions (individual education officers' perception and associated tasks);

- role induction processes.

As these findings were reflective of participant perceptions where the dynamics of the workplace were not considered, the need to explore in more depth the role of the education officers' role and how they interpreted and translated policy through their enacted role emerged. This is explored with Phase Three described in Chapter 6.

In order to conduct the semi-structured interviews within Phase Three, the next step was the selection of a smaller sample of participants (drawn from the initial qualitive survey) to engage in a follow up interview.

5.11. Selecting Participants for Phase Three Interviews

Through the implementation of the qualitive survey, participants could identify their interest in participating in a follow up interview. From the 23 survey participants, 13 indicated that they were willing to be interviewed.

As outlined in Chapter 3, a critical case purposive sampling processes was used with the intentions of making generalisations from the sample to the case group. The criterion for selection (Table 5.9) was also influenced by this approach, as these emerged from characteristics of the larger group (Patton, 2002). An examination of the participants' survey data enabled me to select a smaller sample that reflected the diverse demographic characteristics of the wider sample and were situated across multiple regions, to narrow the field to 10 participants for interview.

Table 5.9

Criteria for Selection of Participants for Semi-Structured Interview

Participant selection would:

1. reflect the range of years as an educator as identified in the survey (Appendix A);
2. reflect the number of years employed in a regional role (Appendix A);
3. reflect the range of curriculum roles (regionally developed or centrally developed);
4. reflect multiple regions to gather a whole of system perspective of the enacted role of regional education officers

Utilising the demographic data, the selected participants were plotted against the wider groups' demographics to ensure they were representative of the initial group as outlined in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10

Selected Interview Sample Compared to Larger Participant Group

	White squares indicate wider group demographics that are not reflected in the purposive sampling Green squares indicate selected interview participants.									
Number of years in a Regional Role	**10-15**		**16-21**		**22-27**		**28-29**		**>30**	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<1		2								
1										1
2		1		1		1				
3										
4										
5								1		
>5					1			1		1

Table 5.11 provides an overview of the type of role and regions reflected in the selected participants. Participants 15, 18 and 28 were not selected as their demographic data was already represented by other participants, who were able to engage in the research in a timelier manner. They were, however, available in the event that a participant withdrew from the study.

Table 5.11

Selected Participants Role Type and Region Distribution

Type of Role	**Regions**						
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Regional Role	0		2	1	2	1	0
Central Role based in a region	0	1		1	1	1	0

When reviewing the selected participants, there was a gap of expressed interest from two regions. Therefore, the selected sample were representative of five

of the seven regions within the DoE. Across the regions there was a balance of regionally developed and centrally developed (based in a region) education officer roles.

With the interview sample selected and the study's research questions and additional wonderings in mind (e.g., Wondering #13: Was there a connection between policy in action implementation communication processes, role clarity and accountability ambiguity?), the next step was to conduct Phase Three of the data collection process, semi-structured interviews with the selected (purposive) sample of participants. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 describe the findings from these semi-structured interviews to reveal in-depth responses to the study's research questions and inform the study's findings and recommendations outlined in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 6: PHASE THREE SYSTEM MIDDLE LEADERS' ROLE ENACTMENT

6.1. Introduction

The intent of this study was to investigate how policy was interpreted and translated within the DoE's regional middle system layer and, more specifically, through the assignment and enactment of regional education officers' roles. As established in Chapter 3, the research design approach of exploratory case study and the subsequent three phases of data collection were implemented to answer the research questions. This chapter details the findings that emerged in the third research phase which focused on participant semi-structured interviews.

The purpose of conducting the semi-structured interviews was to build on the findings from Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 (summarised in Table D2 within Appendix D), which explored the system policy processes and policy in action documentation (Chapter 4), the demographics of regional education officers and began to explore their perception of how policy was interpreted and translated within their enacted role (Chapter 5).

The findings of these chapters highlighted the need to explore in detail the workplace perceptions from the voice of the regional officers and factors that contributed to how policy was interpreted and translated (Chapter 5). While aiming to identify these factors, Phase Three also continued to address the following research sub-questions:

- How do system middle leaders perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system?
- How do regional education officers enact their roles?
- What factors support or inhibit their role enactment?

The findings from Phase Three are presented in two sections that reflect the interviewing process:

1. Phase Three Part A presents the participants' perceptions of where they saw their role within the system; and

2. Phase Three Part B presents participants' descriptions of how they enacted their role, revealing the factors that impacted on how they interpreted and translated policy.

The presentation of the data is followed by an analysis and discussion of findings.

6.2. Role Position Within the System: Findings

Each participant was asked to select an image and describe why and how the selected image connected with their role description and identified role position. Significantly, this resulted in six images being selected from the 150 available images (Table 6.1), with many participants selecting the same image.
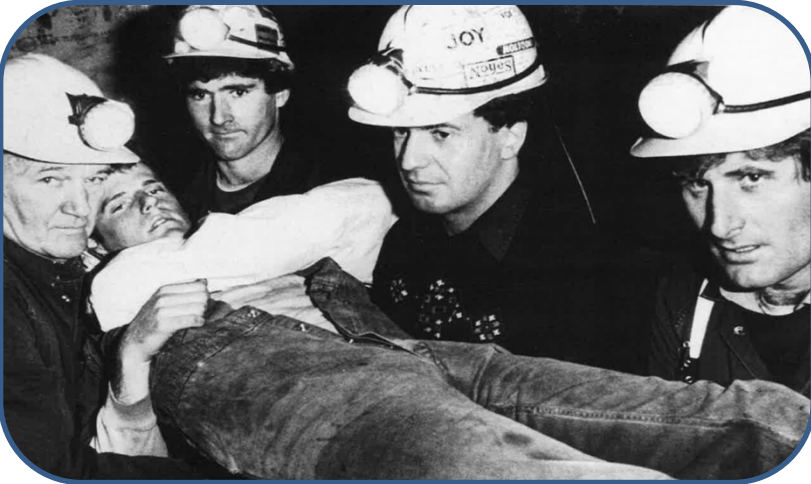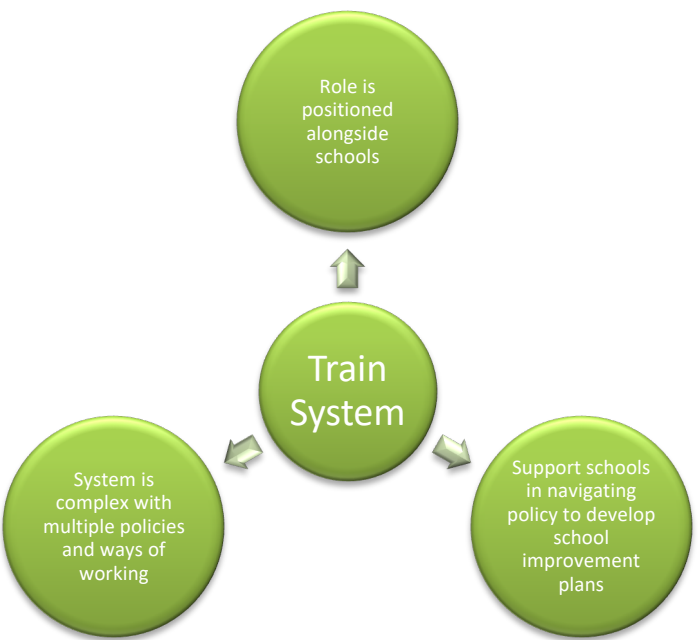
The visual mapping in Table 6.1 captures and summarises the key role characteristics that emerged from participants' descriptions. Using the role perspectives and selected photographs, I collated the data within a table which enabled me to classify each of the participant's descriptions and group them to understand the collective perspective. This analysis revealed four distinct ways in which the role and its relationship to other aspects of the system were perceived.

As each participant described the role using their selected photograph, their description used the language of a simile associated with their identified image and, in addition to this, often referenced characteristics identified within one or more of the these similes:

- Like a rescue team for schools (photograph of mining team);
- Like a train system (photographs of interconnecting train tracks and people on train);
- Like a lone ranger (photographs of crowded beach and refugee);
- Like a network (photograph of spider web).

Table 6.1

Visual Mapping of Role Position Characteristics Drawn from Selected Photographic Images and Descriptions

Selected Photographic Images	Role is like being a rescue Team Member	Visual Mapping of Role Simile Characteristics

Simile: Role is like a rescue team member

The role is positioned as a regional school support structure; however, enactment is impacted by the implementation of competing agendas. The role is responsible for reflecting the needs of schools to report upwards and inform regional strategies.

Participants who described their role as a **member of a regional team** with **expert knowledge and skills** outlined that they were responsible for "support[ing] people that the system represented". They identified that they were **physically with the people that the system represented**. "We are the people standing actually with the teachers" (Participant 3). A similar perspective was encountered by Participant 10 who stated:

> like [they were] one of these guys on the outside holding up [the miner] and I see the person [that] is lying down as … the school people, so the staff within a school setting and I see some of these other miners as the different teams that work in regions with their different roles … working to support … the school. (Participant 10)

Role is like Navigating a Train System

Participants who described their role as a **support structure** that assisted schools to **navigate the complexity** of implementing **multiple system agendas** described policy pathways within schools that reflected either the contextualised school improvement journeys of multiple schools within a region or the multiple agendas schools needed to mitigate to develop a clear improvement journey. As outlined by Participant 41: "We have a lot of different policy and we need travel to certain points." This notion was also evident in Participant 8's comments:

> The tracks reflect the journeys that you want to help people get to, because I think if you were standing in a school, and you wanted to get to a point on the train track … it's very confusing as to which pathway you were actually going to do, or which train you were going to get on. (Participant 8)

Simile: Role is like a train system

The role is positioned as a regional school support structure that assists schools in navigating the complexity of mutliple agendas. The end point is often not known, but there is an agreed notion that everyone is working towards the same policy goals through the development of strategies that respond to each school's individual needs

Selected Photographic Images

Simile: Role is like being a lone ranger

The role is positioned as a regional school support structure; however, enactment is impacted by the overwhelming complexity of multiple agendas from state and regional perspectives, as well as the individuals supporting schools and their individual needs.

Role is like being a Lone Ranger

Participants who described their role in the system as **overwhelming and at times isolating** focused on the state and regional structures and the impact this had on how well they felt they could enact their role.

"There is no structure within the department to support my role in the region. … you sort of have to make it up" (Participant 14). This was also reflected in the following excerpt: "my role was not valued [within the regional office] as it sat outside of the confines of the regional system." (Participant 14)

Gemma and Wendy identified the **complexity of the system** and implicitly identified how the role of the region was to support the implementation of multiple policy agendas. This notion was highlighted as they described the people on the beach. There were "just too many people," Participant 33 stated, it was "crowded, [that is] there [was] a lot happening in our system" echoed Participant 4. "I think the complexity of the beach is a bit like the complexity of the department … that whilst we are all the same place … we were all busy, as individuals doing our own thing. … not actually interacting but at the same place." (Participant 4)

Visual Mapping of Key Role Position Characteristics

Role is like a Network

Participants, who described their **role as an integral interconnected aspect of a wider system** identified how the three layers of the system were interconnected. This was reflected in the following comment: "You've got the state system, the regional system and me. So, it's that balancing of the top-down bottom-up approach … to make sure the regional system satisfies both." (Participant 3)

Participants saw themselves as a **key contact for schools** as they provided a "safety net for schools and leaders and teachers to know they have a **point of contact** in a space that they can be supported and and have umm … information disseminated to them and shared." (Participant 35)

Simile: Role is like a Network

The role is positioned as a regional school support structure that provides schools with a personal contact point to disseminate information and support implementation. Each person has an impact on the system. The web reflects the system and how policy moves through layers to schools, where individual school needs are addressed.
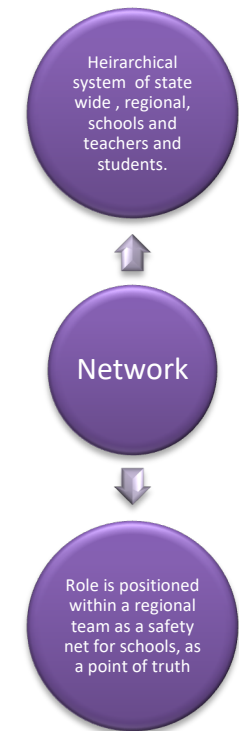
Note. Photographic images from *Photolanguage* by the Catholic Education Office, 1986, Catholic Education Office, Sydney. Copyright 1986 by the Catholic Education Office, Sydney.

6.3. The Collective Role Characteristics of Regional Education Officers

Table 6.2 summarises the collective role position characteristics that emerged in the four identified groups in Table 6.1. The implications of these role perceptions for how each regional education officer supported policy implementation was captured within the analysis of individual participant descriptions (located within Appendix C) are summarised in Table 6.2. Participants were assigned an alias name to personalise their description whilst protecting their anonymity. To connect the Chapter 5 survey participant responses (that were attributed to participant number) to Chapter 6 participant responses (that have been assigned an alias) a completed list of the participants' assigned numbers and their aliases are shown in the table.

Table 6.2

Summary of Participants' Role Position Perceived Characteristics

Participants		Like a Rescue Team		Like a Train system		Like a Lone Ranger		Like a Network
		Expert	Guiding and supporting Schools	System is complex with multiple policies and ways of working	Support schools to find improvement path using policy	Role purpose is overwhelming and complex	Role position with a region does not align to regional focus	Role is positioned as an interconnected aspect of a wider system
Participant 1	Sally	■	■		■			■
Participant 10	Eden	■	■	■			■	■
Participant 3	James	■	■					■
Participant 8	Chantelle	■			■		■	■
Participant 33	Wendy	■			■			
Participant 41	Lucy	■			■			■
Participant 4	Gemma			■	■			■
Participant 9	Stephanie		■	■			■	■
Participant 14	Amber				■		■	■
Participant 35	Michelle	■						■

While the participants selected an image on which to base a description of their role, the explanation of their role often reflected role position characteristics associated with more than one role simile. The following sub-sections provide a detailed description of these role position characteristics as outlined in Table 6.2.

6.3.1. Like a Rescue Team

As shown in Table 6.1 and 6.2, the participants within this group described their role as a regional, expert and supporting role. When describing their role position within the system, these participants viewed the predominant system in

which they worked in as the region, with the state system responsible for setting the strategic direction. This notion was reflected in the following comments.

> Our role provides [each participant] with the ability to head in a direction that is put in place by the system with their charters. (Sally)
>
> The system would be telling me what I need to do … how I should do it … and making sure it's consistent. They [would] just give me the instruction manual. That's their only role. (James)
>
> As an organisation we should be all working towards the same goal and to do that, it relies on those teams to support the people who are doing work. (Eden)

It was also acknowledged by Eden that there were additional external factors that influenced her role. Eden stated that "there [had] been a push from the Federal Government to address an area and that their role was a direct response to that [push] by the State Government". Eden's perception supported the identified strategy within the policy focus section (identified in Chapter 4) that stated: "Every state school [would have] access to a specialist science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teacher" (Queensland Government, 2020d, p. 6). The subsequent regional education officer role was positioned to be one of the DoE responses to the Advancing Education Action Plan (Queensland Government, 2020a). Participants within this group identified that their role was positioned within a region and was responsible for "balancing … the top-down bottom-up approach … to make sure the regional system satisfied both [the state and the schools] systems" (James).

The second role positional characteristic was as experts working with schools. James identified that the role position:

> was a platform where you [could] make a difference on a large scale … I [could] go and use my expertise in maths and infiltrate. Sit with teachers and so therefore I decided that the position … this platform would suit my skills as a presenter … I'm not researcher … but I know how to teach … well.

This notion of leading schools was also reflected in Sally's description:

> So, I was a leader; I wasn't just doing what the region said, I was taking that information and leading other people along that pathway as well, so that was really important … so I had some … power … some

credibility … that I could lead people and I was allowed to lead people with the department pathway.

Similarly, Eden identified that schools often sought expert advice rather than support or guidance, because

from a school's perspective, what they were looking for [was] somebody to come in and actually help them … to actually do the work with them [because] when the initiatives were first announced … it [identified] something like every school will have access to an expert.

6.3.2. *Like a Train System*

The Like a Train role perspective positioned the role of regional education officers as working alongside schools, assisting them to navigate the complexity of multiple policies to develop school improvement plans. While this role perspective implicitly acknowledged various layers within the department (the system, the region, and schools), the participants did not place a focus on discussing the structural features of the system; rather, they discussed their role in relation to departmental policy. Sally, for example, saw her role as an important piece in the system "that [tended to] ebb and flow and move [because the] role isn't really defined." She identified that policy informs what "we do but that sometimes it may be unclear what we have to do and how we try to get [the] support we need for our role."

As the participants described their role function as assisting schools to have clarity on how to implement policy, they suggested that the enacted role was predominantly positioned alongside the school layer within the system. This was illustrated by Gemma, who stated that her role was "supporting schools, both the leadership teams and teachers to enact curriculum and pedagogy to maximise student learning." She identified that this was informed by particular regional guidelines and state policies and that when she supported schools she would ask:

What are you doing in your school around curriculum and pedagogy that is impacting on student learning? Where does this sit within that next layer of the guidelines and policy and that bigger picture?

Within these descriptions, the notion that the regional education officers' role was couched with policy messaging and contextualised policy interpretation was consistently stated by each participant:

The policy is our point of truth, it's the thing that we are here to enact and in our work with the Australian Curriculum, with this state education policy they are our foundation … our point of truth. But they will all require interpretation to bring them to life. (Lucy)

I felt … that often in my role, and [the] outcomes, [were] about student learning, but schools were all on different tracks at times and … some of these tracks intersect[ed] … but often they didn't … and hopefully you ended up at the same spot. (Wendy)

Each one of those train tracks is important for taking people somewhere but it doesn't make a lot of sense and if you were on that journey, it is incredibly important that you are on the right train track and that you don't get waylaid on any of the other ones. I also think it is a bit of a mess; I can't tell which train track is going where, however if you were on the train track and on that journey, it would be very important that you are on the right one. (Chantelle)

As participants described their role in translating policy into school improvement strategies, two participants identified that this was impacted by varied understandings of policy that led to a lack of clarity. Wendy stated that: "As a [regional] team, or as a department or an entity of the department … we're all in a train and we're all heading somewhere. Sometimes I wonder where that is." This uncertainty was also reflected by Chantelle, who outlined that "there would need to be a sign post [on the train track] for schools … that gives [the schools] a bit more clarity. I would have to make it a bit more obvious [for them]."

6.3.3. *Like a Lone Ranger*

The Like a Lone Ranger role perspective described the role as being influenced by both the state and regional system layers, often resulting in a feeling of being overwhelmed and isolated. As participants continued to describe the notion of multiple people on the beach, they positioned the role as an individual working within the regional layer of the system to implement system agendas. This was reflected in the following statement: "So we have the state agenda and [we are] in the region to do this work" (Stephanie). Participants provided limited descriptions of the structure of the wider system, beyond acknowledging that they are part of a state system. This resulted in the participants focussing on their perceptions of how their

role was operationalised within the region. These notions were reflected in the following descriptions:

> In terms of people on the beach, the image involves people because in terms of the regional [education] officer role it was working with other people … everybody doing their own thing in the one place and I think sometimes that happened within our role. While we were all in the same place, we were all busy, as individuals doing our own thing … but not actually interacting. (Gemma)

> So, this [crowded beach] to me is the other groups, whoever that is in the region and the water is the rest of the system. (Stephanie)

> So, I looked at this beach shot with people everywhere … [and] I thought at that we're just one person even though there's a small team of us [within the region] … in that image I think they are individual people, because of the role that we are playing at the moment. (Wendy)

Additionally, participants linked the experience of being an individual in a region to the emotions of being overwhelmed or isolated in their work. Wendy noted that "there's just too many people that you want to do things for … how many people can you affect or support?" While Stephanie explained how "there are a few of us that are really excited and want to get in and make a change, make our mark and share our passion around but we can't." Gemma identified how this is a result of how individuals work within a region when she stated that "as a region you know we are all together, but the different parts of the region work in different ways … we all have an important role … but I don't feel that we always worked together" (Gemma).

Participants also connected the feeling of isolation to how their role focus was perceived within the regions. Stephanie outlined that "I can have an influence over schools but their [the schools] priorities can be different to what my work is and you know with such a narrow [regional] focus my role doesn't get a look in because it is not a priority." This perception was also reflected in Amber's description when she identified that her role "is isolating … it is not valued … within the context of the region ... but at a school level it is very different … people can't get enough of you."

6.3.4. Like a Network

Participants who were identified as perceiving aspects of their role as an integral interconnected aspect of a wider system saw their role in terms of the Like a

Network simile. They described their role as part of a hierarchical system that was positioned as a regional support for schools and as responsible for acting as a point of truth for schools.

As participants described their role, they paid attention to positioning this within the wider perspective of the system and associated policy. This was reflected in the following comment, where Wendy outlined that the networking web "represented the many layers" of the system and that their role was underpinned and supported by "the hierarchy of the broader state-wide initiatives." Others identified that their role purpose "belonged to a central team [with a] state agenda" (Stephanie) and they were placed within a region to enact that role.

This perspective description also identified that the role was closely aligned to supporting the implementation of policy initiatives into practice, as they considered the system objectives and how they were interpreted and translated into regional, school and classroom strategies. Michelle stated that they "liked the notion of [policy] into practice" and that the role required each person to "be knowledgeable about departmental documents … protocol … school improvement agendas and even the way the school principal and teachers worked."

This notion of role alignment to state and regional policies was also reflected within Gemma's description. She stated that their role was to support "school leadership teams and teachers to enact curriculum and pedagogy to maximise student learning. But within that there is particular … regional guidelines … state policies that flow through" how they worked.

Michelle also positioned the idea that system improvement was underpinned by the support provided through their role, as this provided schools with stability and a "safety net," which was represented by the spider web that was "fine and gentle but strong." However, this perspective also acknowledged that the sustainability of their work was dependent upon continued school support. As Michelle stated:

> I don't see [our role needing to] have neon lights saying "we have all the answers" … we are very solid and strong in our knowledge, but we are also learning and growing … and [are mindful that] with a gust of wind or a change of budget, the job is gone, and [the] spider web is gone.

6.4. Collective Role Position Perceptions of Regional Education Officers

Across the four similes, the articulation of the regional education officers' role position within the system reflected the interconnection between the system governance structures, the three predominant system layers (state, regional and school) and the communication of policy messaging within and across each system layer. Within these interconnected system layers, 9 out of the 10 participants described each of these layers, but chose to place a particular focus on one more than the others when describing their role. This is outlined in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

Predominant Participant Identified Role Positions within the System Layers

Colour		Role Function within the identified System Layers
Red		Provided regional advice in close proximity to the state system layer
Dark Blue		Regional support for schools with little connection to the state schooling layer beyond policy updates
Light Blue		Connected state system policy messages and strategies through the regional layer to provide support and advice to school personnel.
Orange		Provided point of truth advice and support to schools

Note: This figure highlights the four system role position perceptions identified within each identified simile.

Figure 6.1 describes the various ways regional education officers perceived their role to operate within each layer in the system.

6.4.1. State Layer

When describing their role position within the system, participants viewed the predominant system in which they worked in as the region. While they acknowledged the various layers within the department (the system, region and

schools), they consistently identified that the state system was responsible for setting the strategic directions and directly providing policy messages.

Within these descriptions, the notion that the regional education officers' role was couched with policy messaging and contextualised policy interpretation was reflected by participants as either an implicit notion (n=6 participants) or explicit notion (n=3 participants).

For participants, the role of the system provided them with varying degrees of policy clarity that appeared to be influenced by how they individually connected with the state system. Those who attended state curriculum meetings were able to share practices and seek answers to questions directly, whereas others perceived the state system as the provider of policy messages through passive teleconferences or indirectly through regional system leaders. This suggested that varied policy messaging and modes of communication impacted on regional education officers' understanding of policy and consequently their role position within the system.

6.4.2. Regional Layer

Participants' descriptions identified that the regional education officers' role was closely aligned to supporting the implementation of policy initiatives into practice as they interpreted and translated policy. As regional education officers' everyday role enactment was physically located within the regional layer, they were directly responsible for implementing regional strategies and regional ways of working. The communication of regional strategies and the resulting implementation actions were directly impacted by the regional governance structure, regional policy interpretations and perceptions of power. For many of the participants, this resulted in role tensions as they tried to balance the policy messages from the state system layer, the expectations of the region and the needs of schools. The participants identified that the lack of role clarity and communication to schools directly contributed to the development of varied role position perceptions.

6.4.3. School Layer

When the participants described their role function as assisting schools to have clarity on how to implement policy, they suggested that their enacted role, while physically positioned within the regional layer of the system, was predominantly enacted alongside the school layer within the system, through the provision of regional professional development strategies and support for school

clusters or individual schools and teachers. Through the provision of support, they interpreted and translated policy to find clarity through the identification of contextualised improvement strategies.

The participants identified that they either moved into or were identified for the role because of their level of expertise and that this expertise (identified as knowledge or career experience) assisted them in supporting and guiding schools.

6.5. Phase Three Part B: Role Enactment

Following the selection and description of a photographic image (Phase Three Part A) participants were asked to discuss how they enacted their role using a placemat of images, as outlined in Chapter 3.

Following this, thematic and inductive analyses were applied to the remaining interview data to identify the categories, patterns and themes that emerged (Janesick, 2004). This involved colour coding the interview transcripts and recording these in NVivo. Once the data codes were entered into NVivo, coding frequency was utilised to reduce the number of initial codes into themes.

Working inductively, the following four themes, emerged in response to the main research question: What emerged as significant factors influencing how system middle leaders interpreted and translated policy to enact their role?

- Role position within the system (discussed in Phase Three Part A);
- Policy interpretation practices;
- Role purpose perceptions and actions; and
- Role accountabilities and policy measures

Within each theme, participants described their enacted role from one or more of the following four interconnected perspectives; a regional perspective; a school perspective; a role perspective; and, or an individual perspective (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2

A Visual Representation of the Emerged Interview Themes and Enacted Role Perspectives
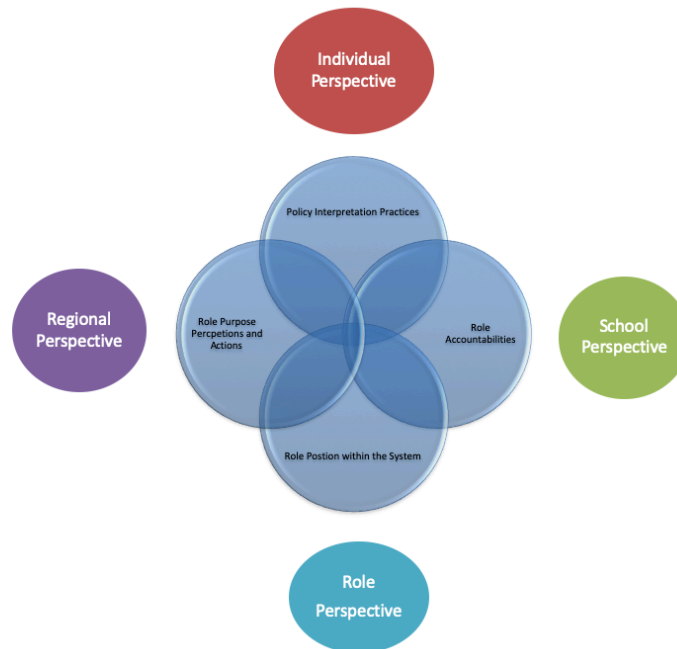
To ensure the appropriateness and validity of the identified themes, information redundancy, "the point at which no new themes or codes emerge from the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 201), was utilised. This entailed reviewing the data to identify when the prevalence and meaning of a code and the resulting theme had stabilised, which was "the point at which no additional issues [were] identified" (Hennink et al., 2017, p. 594). This process required the refinement and reduction of codes outlined in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3

Summary of Thematic Analysis and Codes Frequencies within Each Theme

Themes	Number of participants who identified the code total?	Frequency of code
Policy Interpretation		
Policy interpretation practices	10	41
Policy documentation	10	47
Role Purpose Perceptions and Actions		
Interactions with System Leaders		
Regional Structure	9	45
Task Delegation Processes	8	36
Interactions with Peers		
Career Experience	9	26
Team Cohesion	10	27
Interactions with School Personnel		
School Leadership	10	54
Supporting School Autonomy	10	32
Connecting Policy to School Strategies	10	32
School Based Relationships	7	16
Role Accountability		
Impact Measures	9	29
Role Position	10	14

This next stage of the data analysis and review of the emerging themes included mapping the themes, along with their accompanying annotations to ensure that the context of each identified code was not diminished. The next section outlines the findings.

6.6. Role Enactment Findings

The findings provide the themes that described the qualitative ways in which regional education officers experienced their role in interpreting and translating policy. This second section aimed to make explicit the smaller nuances of information within each theme outlined in Table 6.3, by considering the contextual factors of the region, schools, role and the individual role attributes that emerged from the individual contextualised responses.

6.6.1. Policy Interpretation

The identified factors impacting on regional education officers' role enactment discussed within this section are:

1. Policy interpretation practices
   a. Policy dialogue and discourse conversations
   b. System directives
2. Policy documentation
   a. Communication modes and pathways
   b. Policy structure and language

Understanding policy messages was identified as a key characteristic of regional education officers' roles in nine participants descriptions. When exploring the factors that contributed to how they made sense of documented policy messages, two main categories emerged: interpretation practices and policy documentation.

6.6.1.1. Interpretation Practices. Perspectives of policy interpretation practices were underpinned by the idea that interpretation was either developed or predominantly conveyed through conversational processes. When participants identified that "there [were] no actual processes to check" (Amber) their understanding of policy, they positioned the use of conversational structures (Angel, 2016) in which they described how they developed their understanding of policy messages.

Two participants' descriptions of these conversations were reflective of a collaborative conversation structure that utilised policy dialogue. For example, they described team meeting structures that supported the development of new thinking or a more in-depth understanding of policy by building on other team members' ideas, as reflected in the following comment: "Every time we come together … we are asking questions of each other which keeps clarifying what [the policy] means and what [the policy] should mean" (Stephanie).

The second conversational structure reflected in participants' descriptions was in the form of a policy discourse conversation. This conversational structure was again situated within team meetings, where policy information was conveyed to team members by a person higher in the organisational hierarchy. Information was conveyed in two ways: utilising policy as the point of truth as reflected by Lucy who

stated that "I've been very clearly directed by my management to have the policy as my foundation," or through a leader's interpretation of policy messages.

Closely related to these policy discourse conversational practices was that policy interpretation was conveyed through system strategy directives, as articulated by Chantelle who stated that the role was to "head in a direction that [was] put in place by the region."

However, despite participants valuing these practices, articulating that they "learn through talking and collaborating" (Gemma) and describing how these conversational practices assisted them in "getting clarity around the message" (Eden), three participants identified that there were perceived irregularities between people's understandings of policy. These varied understandings or perspectives of policy resulted in individualised regional ways of working.

In addition to conversational structures situated within team meetings or initiated by leaders, some participants identified that they felt that policy interpretation was an individual's responsibility: "You need to be willing to spend time building your knowledge base, to be familiar with the documents and what they mean … how they relate to schools and bigger systems, but also be on top of research" (Gemma).

The descriptions of individual policy interpretation practices also reflected the importance of conversational interactions for learning. Michelle outlined that she "stumbled across the P-12 Assessment and Curriculum Framework and learnt … while [she] connected with others." This sense-making process was also articulated by Chantelle, who stated that "when I was beginning in the role, I had that fuzzy understanding … but I connected with a lot of people and listened to people and tried to make sense of it [policy] myself."

As participants sought clarity, some shared ideas and strategies across regions, with three participants identifying that they found ways to make sense of their role through interregional collaborations. These descriptions indicated that individual policy interpretation depended on an individual's understanding of what policy should look like and how it was underpinned by and aligned with previous experiences, practices, and beliefs.

6.6.1.2. Policy Documentation. Achieving the State School Strategic Plan's (2019c) policy focus, through the provision of high-quality teaching for student improvement, was identified in Chapter 4 (p. 75). At the centre of the DoE's policy

in action strategy was the implementation of the P-12 Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Framework (P-12 CARF) (Queensland Government, 2020a) which documented key system wide curriculum elements aimed at lifting system performance in a range of student outcomes, including literacy and numeracy performance and the attainment of the Queensland Year 12 certificate. As the participants described how they interacted with these policy documents, two factors emerged: communication of policy messages and policy documentation structure and language.

As the DoE's policy strategies were translated into multiple targeted regional strategies, the participants' perceptions were that the amount of change and subsequent documentation being implemented at once was overwhelming. Gemma suggested that this had resulted in there being "no clarity around [the] policy," as the plethora of policy documents were often required to be accessed and interpreted simultaneously. The participants noted that this lack of clarity often resulted in the perception that there were conflicting policy messages and a lack of knowledge in schools "that certain policies exist" (Amber).

Policy language was also identified as contributing to differing policy interpretations. The participants identified that "some policies are very wordy" (Michelle) and that because "the policy is so carefully worded and so broad that it is open to interpretation" (Wendy). The participants suggested that vague policy language resulted in incorrect policy interpretations from individual perspectives, as it became necessary to "make up [their] own idea as to what that would look like" (Eden).

As the participants described the impact policy language had on departmental employees' (regionally and school based) interpretations, they also positioned that policy documents were able to be accessed and interpreted independently by school staff, resulting in a variety of policy interpretations at the school system layer.

6.6.2. *Role Purpose Perceptions*

The identified factors impacting on regional education officers' role enactment discussed within this section are:

1. Role perceptions and actions of system leaders, peer and school personnel
   a. Interactions with System leaders
      i. Regional structures and task delegation processes

     b. Interactions with Peers

       i. Career experience

       ii. Team Cohesion

     c. Interactions with Schools

       i. School Leadership

       ii. School Autonomy

       iii. Connecting policy to school improvement strategies

       iv. School Based Relationships

2. Role accountabilities

     a. Accountability ambiguity

       i. Role Position

       ii. Impact Measures

Understanding how policy was translated into action and recognising the connection to role purpose were issues shared by 10 participants when they described how their role supported policy implementation. The analysis of the participants' descriptions revealed that the enactment of their role was impacted by the following factors: role perceptions, the actions of system leaders, peers and school personnel, and role accountabilities.

As participants discussed how their role was perceived by others, they predominantly described how their work interactions between system leadership and school personnel, such as "the regional line managers, principals, teachers" (James) and peers, reflected a diversity of role expectations. As a result of these, regional education officers' translation of policy was shaped as they navigated these various role expectations simultaneously.

6.6.2.1. Interactions with System Leadership. Within the participants' descriptions, system leaders were identified as regional directors (RDs), assistant regional directors (ARDs), line managers and state curriculum directors. The participants' descriptions revealed that interactions were impacted by the regional structure and task delegation processes.

6.6.2.1.1. Regional Structure and Task Delegation. Nine participant descriptions revealed that when they enacted their role "there [was] a hierarchy that they need[ed] to adhere to" (Michelle). The participants acknowledged that "decision-making" occurred within the region as the system leaders "would tell [them] what they would be doing or how that [would] fit within the current agenda"

(Wendy). Six participants identified that "the ARDs would tell [them] where to go … [or] when support was asked for, it went through the ARDs" (Sally). While this hierarchical task delegation was commonly identified, the descriptions of how the ARDs delegated tasks varied. The participants identified the use of pre-planned timetables or pre-determined school allocations. Also, the participants also identified the use of responsive task delegations based on ARD school visit observations and conversations with principals, as well as part of a school review support strategy.

In addition to the ARD task delegation, three participants identified that they were also directed by their line managers to access schools in a more flexible way. They stated that the managers "made it very clear that we had abilities to run our role as we needed to run our roles" (Sally). The notion of freedom or flexibility in deciding how to work or which schools to work in was also attributed to the amount of trust or credibility a regional project officer had with system leaders.

However, three participants identified that meeting system leaders' role expectations resulted in role tensions, as they were delegated regional tasks that did not align to their role. While most participants appeared to accept that system leaders expected regional education officers to fulfil assigned delegated tasks, three participants explained that they felt uncomfortable about their lack of voice within the process and that the various understandings or the perceived value of their role inhibited how they were utilised within the region.

6.6.2.2. Interactions with Peers. Team structures within each region were identified as supporting regional education officers in the functions of policy interpretation and task delegation, led by a team leader or director. As the participants described how they operationalised their role, they revealed how career experience and team cohesion impacted on their role enactment.

6.6.2.2.1 Career Experience. The participants utilised knowledge of their team members' strengths and weaknesses to explain how and why they interacted in particular ways and how these interactions impacted on their ability to support schools and their team culture. A key characteristic of six participants' descriptions was the reference to how they had a "wealth of knowledge … career knowledge" (Lucy) or had a "career journey" (James) across a variety of teaching and leadership roles, including pedagogy coaches, heads of curriculum, acting deputy principals and acting principals, that enabled them to develop a deep understanding of policy

documentation and implementation at a school level "through applied experience" (Michelle).

Drawing on their career experience, the participants were able to contextualise policy responses "with ease" (Michelle) as they brought their experiences to school personnel and moved flexibility between sharing a teacher or leadership perspective. Michelle identified that this was important in building credibility, as "schools then perceive[d] you as knowing how to be involved in or lead the school agenda".This notion was also echoed in Sally's reflection where she stated that having "experience in the job and knowing different situations and different ways of working or pathways to go down or seeing the different options they can take" was valuable.

Having a career that developed expert classroom experience only was perceived as a strength by two participants. Lucy t outlined that her "career had been as a classroom teacher, working with students. [She] had not been in middle management positions in a school however, what [she] can do is think, know and understand as a teacher" (Lucy).

While having teaching and leadership career experience was reflected positively for interacting with schools, the absence of leadership experience was identified as a barrier to working effectively with regional senior leaders and school leadership teams with participants identifying that "leadership experience provided credibility" (Participant 3). These reflections identified a divide in the participants' perceptions on whether having leadership experience was a necessary role characteristic. As Stephanie explained, although leadership experience provided them with an "innate ability to take something and contextualise it and see how all [aspects] link," the role was "often about knowing about curriculum and good pedagogy," suggesting that strengths from both perspectives were important.

Two participants suggested that the regional role recruitment process could be enhanced to address the diversity in career experiences, as the "role descriptions were school based and did not necessarily work" (Lucy) within a regional role context. It was suggested by Gemma that roles were not being filled by:

> the right people … as the role was paid and advertised as a Head of
> Curriculum [HOC] level which meant that people in leadership roles
> probably weren't being attracted to a role like that because they might
> have been coming from HOC role and going into a regional role so

there was no pay advantage, or we may have been attracting people that couldn't get a HOC role. This meant that we had some people with limited teaching and leadership experience coming into the roles.

6.6.2.2.2. Team Cohesion. Some of the participants identified that multiple regional teams were given responsibility for implementing the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) and, while each team had "a definite role" (Sally), the delegation of support into schools often resulted in the overlapping of role responsibilities. The use of co-ordination mechanisms, including common support processes, and as outlined by Stephanie, enabled each team member to "approach [how they supported the school] in the same way, [they] use[d] the same processes and … had the same language base" (Stephanie). Participants noted that the inclusion of "structures was important" (Gemma) as they provided them with role clarity and supported teams to understand what their actions were when they worked collaboratively in schools. However, it was also noted that "this didn't always work" (Sally)

A lack of collective efficacy was commonly attributed to individuals being "perceived on a personal level rather than by their role" (Gemma), which led to "a lot of professional jealously … at a system level" (Amber) and "power plays" between colleagues (Lucy). Three participants identified that the notion of "overtly undervaluing the level of expertise and experience" (Amber) of individual team members contributed to some teams "splintering because people started [being perceived] as specialists and, therefore, you lost the sharing and relationship part of the role" (Gemma). The specialisation of roles within teams was also attributed to some "role[s] not really fitting or being seen" (Stephanie) within the team and regional structure.

Six participants noted that "personalities got in the way" (Eden) of cohesively supporting schools when the role "encompassed the work of other teams." The merging of team roles resulted in role tensions. However, the desire to work effectively with "team members who [were] willing to share and support each other" (Sally) was identified by four participants as a factor that would enhance their ability to enact their role effectively as "we all bring something different to the work and that's ok because they all bring something else that I can learn from" (Amber). This notion was also connected to the need to have "greater clarity within documentation

and … clarity around role enactment [as] working in a team would have a greater impact than one person" (Eden) alone.

6.6.2.3. Interactions with School Personnel. Within the participants' descriptions, school personnel were identified as principals, school leadership team members, and teachers. The participants' descriptions revealed that, as they worked with school personnel, school leadership impacted on how they translated policy into action, how they supported school autonomy, how they connected policy to school strategies and how they developed trusted relationships.

6.6.2.3.1. Acknowledging the Role of School Leaders. Five participants identified that school principals and leaders were responsible for the contextualisation of policy messages within their schools, as they selected and implemented their school improvement strategies. As regional education officers were either tasked or invited into schools, principals' expectations varied. This required regional education officers to be flexible in how they supported principals, as the type and duration of support was often "dependent on the principals and on how much [time] they want[ed] to invest" (Sally). This required regional education officers to initiate their work by "building trust with the principals while work[ing] strategically with a variety of personalities to be able to identify blockers and select how to overcome them" (James). Two participants identified that the "principals [were often] the gatekeepers" (James) of the schools, and as "it [was] their school … If you [were] going to go in and tell them how to do it ... it [would be] like a mother telling a child what to get dressed into and then they go and change afterwards" (Stephanie).

The participants acknowledged that the relationship between the principal and the regional support officer influenced how they worked with schools to clarify school support expectations. They identified that it often-required multiple communications to identify and agree on the support needs of a school "because what they thought they wanted versus what they actually needed was different to what they started out with" (Sally). The participants also identified that the focus of their support did not always align with schools' current priorities, making it difficult to initiate or continue supporting schools.

Some participants were directed into schools to, as Michelle explained, "support the ARDs by working through action plans." This identified support strategies that [were] critical for schools" (Michelle). However, it was also

acknowledged by some participants that some of the "schools who [were] priority review schools [were not] ready for curriculum change" (James) and the appropriate processes to be implemented at that time, as the need for support was externally determined. This was viewed as "an added extra and unless [the school] had that ownership over the direction of the support, then they [the school, were] not going to find it valuable" (Stephanie). This often resulted in role tension, as regional education officers were torn between what the school requested and their role focus.

Other school principals liked to access the available regional support, but they were sometimes unsure about how it would be utilised within their schools, resulting in the regional education officers' time being consumed by schools. This often meant that they would have little to no impact due to a lack of focus or not being aware that support had been allocated. Some participants identified that this "resource grab" (Participant 10) may have been a result of schools' size, geographical location or gaps in leadership or staff capacity.

6.6.2.3.2. Supporting Schools. Many participants identified that the school principal was responsible for the selection and implementation of school improvement strategies, and seven participants articulated that their role was to intentionally support schools in utilising their resources to make a difference in classrooms. This required constructing contextualised responses to policy, "because how teachers, schools, students and families respond to [policy] is going to look different" (Amber).

The utilisation of a coaching method was positioned as the predominant way of working with schools, "because coaching is where … you get the greatest impact of change on practice and its effect on students learning" (Wendy). The participants' descriptions indicated that regions explicitly directed regional education officers to utilise this dialogue-focused process as they were "told very carefully not to tell people what to do but to coach them through it, to find answers themselves" (Michelle). As a result of these processes, participants and school leaders developed ownership of their improvement strategies. These were "shaped by the regional goals and regional improvement agenda" (Michelle).

Supporting schools to own their improvement journeys was echoed in seven participants' descriptions as they identified that when "the schools know what they want and how it is going to work, they then have ownership of it (James). As Lucy

outlined, "once they have ownership then it becomes embedded into the school system."

6.6.2.3.3. Connecting Policy to School Strategies. The utilisation of policy when supporting the interpretation of policy at a school level was identified by all participants as being imperative when assisting schools to "find their way through the curriculum, through the myriad of information that they have or don't have" (Sally). As participants supported schools to connect their current school practices to policy, the participants identified that they needed to draw on their understandings of policy to "walk [schools] through [policy] to identify what they were already doing" (Gemma). Uncovering the complexity of policy documents and understanding the associated language required participants to be "knowledgeable about school improvement agendas" (Amber), "familiar with the documents … what they mean[t] and how they related to [the] school and system" (Gemma). Utilising their knowledge of policy through "an ability to summarise and emphasise information really well … and [in] a way that made sense to others … [and] assist[ed schools] to understand what the policy was asking schools to do" (Michelle).

Pairing policy with knowledge about the "way school principals and teachers worked" (Amber) enabled participants to select how they would work within each school. As James indicated, "sometimes the language and conversation I have with the region leaders and the principals are different to the teachers." The ability to connect with teachers and classroom practice was identified by participants as being integral to showing how policy looked in action, because "when you put your teacher hat [on] you can explain what [the policy] is talking about from a teaching perspective…to show teachers what that looks like" (Chantelle) Participants acknowledged that while they provided a range of "professional learning to schools" (Michelle), teachers valued understanding what it could look like in their classrooms.

6.6.2.3.4. School Based Relationships. The need to have relationships underpinned by trust was articulated by five participants who identified that they "need[ed] to be willing to go in and help people from where they're at without [their] own filter on it" (Gemma). This resulted in some participants describing their need to consciously consider how they were perceived. As described by Michelle, " [she] knew that trust development [was] critical, so that leaders [did not] feel challenged or threatened by someone coming to visit" (Michelle).

The participants' ability to remain impartial and maintain confidence was also highlighted by three participants as a critical attribute when developing trusting relationships with schools. Two participants stated that, once they had built trust in schools, they were able to utilise a range of policy resources including school data. According to Chantelle, this "could be challenging." However, some participants outlined that though the development of "school plans that provided … clarity for schools to focus on looking at data" (Stephanie), schools could identify "a number of pathways" (Chantelle) that were not opinion-based but data driven and owned by each school.

6.6.3.   *Role Accountabilities*

The identified factors impacting on regional education officers' role enactment discussed within this section are:

1. Role accountabilities
   a. Accountability ambiguity
   b. Impact Measures

Because the Queensland education system positioned its clear policy focus on the provision of high-quality teaching (using the Australian Curriculum) for student improvement (Queensland Government, 2020a), the participants consistently articulated that their roles were to support schools in implementing contextualised school improvement strategies. However, as the participants described their role, it became evident that they struggled with articulating how their role impact or effectiveness was measured. The participants identified that accountability ambiguity was impacted by their role position within schools and their understanding of impact measures.

The participants also connected their lack of impact measures to knowing whether they were successful in their role. This resulted in the participants listing various qualitative measures, including "the stories behind my role" (Stephanie), "verbal feedback" (Chantelle) and "people asking to book me" (Gemma), as well as quantitative measures including "school [data] trends" (James) and increases in students achieving in the "upper two bands" (Michelle) of NAPLAN, to attempt to articulate how they would measure their impact.

6.6.3.1. Accountability Ambiguity. This accountability ambiguity seemed to result in the participants articulating a desire for a clear focus on how to measure

their impact and how to know they are successful within their role. Role position was communicated as a critical factor for five participants in understanding who owned the results of school improvement strategies and, therefore, what data could be attributed to their role impact.

Another critical factor was that their role was positioned as a "support for schools" (Stephanie), where there was no accountability aligned to the support offered, because the uptake was dependent upon whether a school chose to implement the suggested support strategies or not. The participants also articulated that "sometimes the person that you [are asked] to support doesn't want to be supported. And sometimes it does feel like you're pushing ... a story that they don't want to hear" (Eden). This notion of delegated support and its negative impact on support uptake were also echoed by James, who compared delegated and volunteered school engagement in regional support strategies.

6.6.3.2. Impact Measures. Many participants agreed that there was a lack of impact measures directly aligned to their roles and that "the system contributes a lot of money and effort into [supporting schools] even though we don't get a lot of change" (Chantelle). However, pockets of perceived sustainable school improvement were also identified by two participants who had been in the role for more than 5 years and had tracked school improvement in locations they supported. When describing how the absence of their role would impact on schools, the regional education officers seemed to agree that their role was integral in assisting schools to find clarity within policy messages, even though this was unable to be directly measured.

6.6.4. Identification of Findings in Relation to Research Question Three

Following the implementation of the semi-structured interviews and the subsequent application of inductive and thematic analysis, the conceptual framework for analysis (outlined in Chapter 3) was applied to identify the Phase 3 findings. With the addition of a Phase 3 column, Table D3 (See Appendix D) identifies the notions that emerged from participant voices and their alignment (objective and crafting alignment [Honig & Hatch, 2014]) to the principles contained within Viennet and Pont's (2017) coherent policy implementation criterion and Limani's (2015) theoretical organisational alignment model. The next section provides a description of how Phase 3 notions are reflected within each criterion The merging

of the collective participant voices with the conceptual framework has then been summarised within the Phase Three findings.

6.6.5. *Phase Three Role Enactment Discussion*

With reference to Table D3 (see Appendix D) and using the criteria established for analysis in column one of the table, this sub-section identifies the findings of how education officers positioned their role in supporting the implementation of policy and the implications.

6.6.5.1. Objectives Criterion. Regional education officers perceived their role in supporting the implementation of the policy focused on improving students' educational experiences through teaching and learning capability. As regional education officers described their enacted roles, they provided examples of diverse policy interpretations and the implementation of partial aspects of policy. These data highlighted a lack of explicit policy interpretation processes and awareness of the DoE strategy objective to develop shared understandings of policy objectives related to the Australian Curriculum.

6.6.5.2. Communication and Engagement Criterion. When considering the communication and engagement criterion (see Table D3, Appendix D), the regional education officers identified that they lacked an authoritative voice in informing regional strategies, although some participants said that they were responsible for interpreting policy to develop regional professional learning and provide contextualised policy advice. They observed that broad and varied policy language across documents and the number of supporting documents often created confusion, resulting in partial policy implementation. Examples of how partial policy implementation was evidenced included descriptions of how schools paid attention to policy aspects they were aware of, and individual regional education officers omitted aspects of policy they did not agree with when providing advice to schools. There was no reference made to formal communication practices related to the role of regional education officers and their purpose in supporting policy implementation. While policy was utilised by regional education officers, the gap of formal communication practices enabled varied role purpose perception to emerge.

6.6.5.3. Implementation Criterion. The Phase Three analysis identified that regional education officers continued to have limited clarity in how to enact their role in relation to supporting schools in implementing curriculum policy. The absence of policy interpretation practices and role clarity was reflected in diverse

role perceptions and inconsistent use or reference to policy documents. This was illustrated within the data by only three participants identifying the Australian Curriculum as an aspect of their role.

The use of collaborative practices was positioned as a mode for engaging with policy and the development of contextualised responses within regions and at the school level; however, the lack of collective policy understandings between stakeholders (regional staff and schools) continued to be highlighted.

6.6.5.4. Data Monitoring and Accountability Criteria. The Phase Three analysis identified the absence of regional strategy measures or targets utilised within regional education officers' role enactment. Even though the DoE documents (outlined in Chapter 4) identified policy measures, these measures were not collectively reflected within regional education officers' descriptions. As regional education officers' roles were positioned with regional operation plans as policy implementation resources, the lack of regional education officers' ability to articulate role accountability measures and their desire to identify regional education officer role impact measures within the context of policy implementation was also identified within participant descriptions.

6.6.5.5. Task Allocation, Timing, Tools and Resources Criteria. Within Phase Three, regional operational plans continued to not be utilised as a reference point for regional education officers role enactment. There was a absence of articulated time allocations and the inconsistent use of policy resources within regional education officers' descriptions.

In the absence of collective role purpose descriptors, regional education officers relied on their line mangers, RD and ARDs to allocate tasks. At times, their allocated tasks did not align with their perceived role purpose, resulting in role tension which was collectively attributed to the lack of consistent role purpose perceptions between central office personnel, regional system leaders, regional education officers and school leaders. Within regional education officers' role enactment descriptions, there was no reference to achieving tasks within specific timelines. Regional education officers' inconsistently referred to their use of policy resources such as the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) and the School Improvement Hierarchy increased within Phase Three; however, there continued to be inconsistent use and articulation of policy resources. By collating these role perceptions from two research phases and using the lens of objective and crafting

alignment [Hoing & Hatch, 2004], I was able to consider how key policy implementation aspects were described by the regional education officers.

6.7.   Phase Three Findings in Relation to Role Enactment

The participants' identified role purpose was to enact the state's strategic direction. For some of the participants, this was achieved by supporting schools, like a rescue team, or assisting schools, like navigating a train system, to identify school improvement strategies aligned to policy. For other participants, this was an overwhelming and isolating task, like that of a lone ranger, as they navigated the complexity and number of policy documents. Others, though, described the interconnected nature of the system and how their role was positioned within the wider policy context, like a network. This articulated role purpose directly aligned to the DoE policy development key objectives (outlined in Chapter 4) which stated it was the DoE's responsibility to implement "contemporary policy and legislative frameworks" (Queensland Government, 2019b, p. 12).

Within participants' descriptions, broad references were made to the use of policy with no discerning references made to individual policy documents. There was no reference made to meeting specific goals or objectives, such as the need to implement quality teaching practices for improved student outcomes. This lack of specificity highlighted a misalignment between the role and the policy objectives that stated schools were to be supported to deliver a "world-class education and improve the progress and academic achievement of every student" (Queensland Government, 2020a, p. 1). The participants' identified role purpose was to build leadership and teaching capability with no discerning reference made to the need to make sure all students had access to high quality learning opportunities (Queensland Government, 2019c, p. 8), as outlined in the State Schooling Strategy.

The participants stated that informal conversational structures were utilised to discuss or relay policy messages associated with regional strategies. Despite the identification of these conversational structures, participants stated that their resulting individual policy interpretation and subsequent role purpose remained "cloudy" (Eden), as they often came out of the conversations and knew that they "still didn't understand" (Wendy) the policy documents. This led to the following finding:

Finding #10. The partial misalignment between policy role purpose and policy objectives is attributed to the omission of explicitly documented and

communicated specific policy roles and responsibilities and the impact of policy interpretation and translation processes. These include the impact of informal conversational policy interpretation and communication practices on policy role purpose clarity.

Participants did not consistently refer to regional plans or strategies and it therefore remained unclear as to what departmental documents the regional education officers collectively utilised to inform their role purpose. When I was reflecting upon their position within the wider system, the complexity of system coherence from a policy perceptive and personal perspective emerged. Participants identified that the vast array of policy support documents diminished the clarity of policy implementation at the school level. This resulted in schools seeking clarity from regional education officers who themselves may have felt overwhelmed (like a lone ranger) by the volume of priority policy strategies and the number of individual schools that required support. This led to the following finding:

Finding #11. Awareness of the interconnected nature of policy documents (at a regional and school level) was inhibited by the lack of policy understanding caused in part by individual policy interpretation practices, policy online locations and role isolation.

When considering how policy messages were communicated, participants made no reference to the use of a policy or regional strategy communication plan. Participants did articulate that the policy documents' structure and broad language contributed to how individuals interpreted the messages. They also identified that because policy documents, such as P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a), and associated messages could be accessed from a variety of sources, participants were often confronted with different and at times incorrect policy interpretations when working with regional peers and school personnel. This led to the following finding that supports finding #10:

Finding #12. Diverse policy interpretations paired with the lack of policy interpretation clarification processes contributed to the implementation of misaligned policy responses at a school level.

Participants broadly described their role function as supporting schools to understand policy directions and develop school improvement strategies. As participants described their role, their descriptions identified a desire for clear roles

and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of policy or regional strategies. This led to the following finding:

Finding # 13. The described lack of role clarity experienced by regional education officers resulted in a range of perceptions of where the regional education officer role predominantly sat and subsequently impacted on how regional education officers articulated their role purpose.

Within the DoE's operational plans, regional education officers' roles were positioned as policy support resources for the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) document that focussed on utilising continuous improvement cycles to maximise, improve, or optimise teaching and student learning. However, participants' role enactment descriptions lacked any reference to continuous improvement or working towards attaining specific policy goals. This led to the following finding:

Finding #14. Within the context of describing where their role position is situated within the system, the absence of data monitoring and accountability descriptions identified that regional education officers did not identify their role purpose as a policy resource to support schools in meeting targeted school or regional outcomes that aligned to policy outcomes.

Participant descriptions revealed consistency in the identification of their role as a support role. While some participants couched their role alongside policy (like navigating a train system), no explicit link was made to their role being positioned as a policy resource. Instead, the role of a regional education officer was positioned as a regional or school resource. This was echoed in statements such as I "work with schools, within clusters to support them" (Lucy).

In addition to these findings, the participants' role position descriptions lacked any reference to previously identified policy resources such as online guidelines and resource hubs, coaching and mentoring opportunities and School Improvement Reviews.

While the DoE's policy design framework (2019c) identified that policies required clear articulation of roles and responsibilities, participants' descriptions lacked any specificity beyond broad role purpose statements. The lack of evidence within participants' descriptions to collectively articulate policy role responsibilities indicated a potential misalignment and risk to enacting the DoE's State Schools Strategic Plan's departments tasks, which included:

1. using data and evidence to inform their work;
2. developing leadership at all levels of the organisation:
3. clearly defining expectations;
4. building individual and collective responsibility for outcomes;
5. supporting our culture as a continual learning and growth organisation by investing in teachers;
7. empowering people to challenge the status quo and be creative in the pursuit of innovation. (Queensland Government, 2019c p. 5)

In addition to the lack of role responsibilities, four participants identified that their role purpose did not align to the strategic focus of the regional or ARDs' understanding of their role. These various role purpose descriptions resulted in role tension.

When the participants considered what their role was in implementing policy, there was no mention made or any reference given to a regional or role implementation plan. Although the participants could broadly describe their role function as supporting schools to understand policy directions and develop school improvement strategies, their descriptions continued to lack the specificity required to identify clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the implementation of policy or regional strategies. At this point, it was interesting to note that participants could not consistently articulate a shared understanding of how their role built shared understandings of the Australian Curriculum or built the capability of others.

Similar notions were raised when participants described the link between their role position and the various role perceptions of system leaders, schools and peers. At the system level, participants identified that there were a variety of ways in which they could promote or connect with schools to offer support. Typically, they were assigned by ARDs to support particular schools; however, the purpose of the support and their role responsibilities were not articulated. According to participants, this resulted in a lack of clarity around how they were perceived and to be utilised within schools.

Therefore, when participants interacted with school personnel, they were required to flexibly respond to the type of leadership and diverse understandings of policy presented within each context. Participants identified the need to acknowledge the role of the school principal in developing contextualised policy responses, and that this often resulted in the need to spend significant time, using a coaching model,

with school personnel to collaboratively develop understandings and shared ownership of developed school improvement plans. The uptake of these plans, according to participants, was dependent upon the alignment of the suggested support to existing school priorities, the expectations of the school, and whether the school sought or was delegated regional support. Participants also identified that they received a greater uptake from schools who sought support, rather than those who were delegated support. Participants attributed this to the diverse range of schools' readiness, leadership and teacher capabilities.

It became apparent through their descriptions that, while the participants' role was to support schools in building teaching capability (and having expert teaching experience was essential), their interactions with school leaders was a key factor in determining if their support was welcomed and valued. This identified the need for participants to engage in leadership and school improvement conversations that, according to participants, were enhanced or hindered by their career experience. Participants with backgrounds in middle and senior school leadership roles articulated that they were able to build trust as they were perceived "as knowing how to be involved in or lead the school agenda" (Wendy); whereas participants lacking leadership experience might be perceived as not knowing or that they "couldn't possibly understand what [the] school is going through" (Michelle). These reflections have implications for regional education officers' role recruitment processes, as participants articulated that current processes may be limiting the application pool to teachers with no leadership experience. This led to the following finding:

Finding #15. The enactment of regional education officers' roles is impacted by role perceptions, leadership career experience and the perceived relevance (by schools) of the tasked support.

Another critical factor impacting on participants' role enactment was regional team cohesion. Participants articulated that when multiple teams or team members were tasked to support a school, the lack of role clarity and support responsibilities could result in competitive conversations around who owned the policy messages. Two participants attributed this behaviour to "professional jealously" (Amber) and power plays (Lucy) between regional team members, resulting in individuals stepping away from supporting their assigned schools. These interpersonal

challenges contributed to participants articulating their desire to work collaboratively through "greater clarity in documentation and role enactment roles" (Eden).

These participant descriptions led to the following findings:

Finding #16: Regional education officers' enacted role in interpreting and translating policy was shaped, and impacted by the power perceptions underpinning their interactions within the system (state and regional) and school level.

Finding #17. The consistent lack of role clarity through the system layers and diverse policy interpretations required participants to have high functioning interpersonal skills and flexibility for engaging in productive conversations across a range of professional roles.

It appeared that, through these various human interactions, participants and schools negotiated the type and level of support required; however, how the identified support aligned to policy and regional strategies remained unclear. This lack of clarity was compounded by participants' inability to articulate how they measured their effectiveness. These descriptions supported the findings in Chapter 5 (Finding #9), where participants did not articulate any of their regions' specific targets. Participants attributed their accountability ambiguity to the lack of role clarity and specified responsibilities as well as raising the notion of their role position. Participants were challenged by the notion of who owned improvement data. They consistently espoused that the school owned their improvement data, which in turn created accountability ambiguity, as some participants stated that they also used student improvement data as an indicator of their role enactment quality.

The identification of role position perceptions contributed to the developing understanding as to why there was a described disconnect between policy texts and their implementation. These notions support Finding #8 and Finding #11.

Using the lens of alignment within and across each policy group, regional education officers' role position perceptions enabled the Wonderings (aligned to the research questions) from Chapter 5 to be explored further as in the next section.

6.8. Aligning the Findings from Phase Three to Policy Coherence and Theoretical Concepts

Upon completing the semi-structured interview analyses and discussion in research Phase Three, key insights were synthesised and explicitly aligned to theoretical concepts (outlined in Table 6.4). Furthermore, through the exploration of the enacted role of regional education officers, the findings reveal that there are a number of

factors that enhance and/or inhibit how policy is interpreted and translated through the regional system layer that can be attributed to how policy coherence could be achieved through an organisation. Table 6.4 positions these Phase Three factors to identify their links to the study's research questions and theoretical policy coherence concepts.

Table 6.4

Summary of Phase Three Findings and Identified Policy Coherence Factors and their Links to Theoretical Concepts

Phase Three findings	Identified factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to policy coherence theoretical concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical concepts	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research studies focus
Finding #10: The partial misalignment between policy role purpose and policy objectives is attributed to the impact of policy interpretation and translation process. These include the impact of informal conversational policy interpretation and communication practices on policy role purpose clarity. (Refined Finding #10)	Policy roles and responsibilities Informal conversational policy interpretation and translation practices Individual policy interpretation practices	Strategic alignment of **Policy implementation plans** Structural alignment of **Policy implementation processes** (design, policy roles and responsibilities) Cognitive alignment of **policy interpretations**	Sense-making focus on policy interpretation and translation posits that as individual actors internalise policy ideas by combining new ideas with "existing tacit knowledge" before applying them (Sausman et al., 2016 p. 194). The use of dialogue was also utilised within policy sense-making theory (Coleman et al., 2010) when policy objectives and directions were broad and open to interpretation Cognitive theories expand on the translation and dissemination notions of policy implementation to include processes that highlight the acquisition of new knowledge as an interactive process where individuals draw on "existing 'tacit and experiential knowledge before either incorporating them into their local policy or internalising them (or not) into their mind lines' (Wieringa & Greenhalgh, 2015 p 194).	The findings build on from international organisational research and Australian School cognitive research to provide an Australian organisational perspective of the ways in which policy meaning is made and the impact this has on policy coherence.
Finding #12: Diverse policy interpretations paired with the lack of policy interpretation clarification processes contribute to the implementation of misaligned policy responses at a regional and school level.	Implicit individual policy interpretation and translation processes	Strategic alignment of **policy documents** Cognitive alignment of **policy interpretations**		The findings position consideration for an awareness of and the impact individual policy interpretation has on policy coherence and posits the notion of developing **collective cognitive cognisance** as system approach to achieving cognitive alignment.

Phase Three findings	Identified factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to policy coherence theoretical concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical concepts	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research studies focus
Finding #11: Awareness of the interconnected nature of policy documents (regional and school level) was inhibited by the lack of policy understanding caused in part by individual policy interpretation practices, policy online locations and role isolation.	Interconnected policy documents Implicit individual policy interpretation and translation processes.	Strategic alignment of policy documents Cognitive alignment of **policy interpretations**	There is consensus within the policy implementation literature that current implementation practices result in varied contextualised approaches (Weber & Glynn, 2006).	The findings extend on policy implementation theory to identify the connection between policy interpretation practices, contextualised policy responses and policy coherence.
Finding #13: The continued lack of role clarity experienced by regional education officers, resulted in various perceptions of where the regional education officer role predominately sat and subsequently impacted on how regional education officers articulated their role purpose.	Policy roles and responsibilities Individual role interpretations	**Policy interpretation and Translation** **Role Ambiguity**	A role is a set of behaviours shaped by an individual's belief, attitudes and role expectations within a certain context (Walker & Shore, 2015). When these processes result in diverse role perception's role tension is evidenced (Rai, 2016).	**Findings continue to support** the use of role theory as a valuable theoretical framework to identify how policy (that is shaped by the policy context and social interactions with various "actors") is interpreted and translated.
Finding #14: Within the context of describing where their role position sat within the system, the absence of data monitoring and accountability descriptions identified that regional education officers did not identify their role purpose as a policy resource to support schools in meeting targeted school or regional outcomes that aligned to policy outcomes.	Role accountabilities	Structural alignment of roles through **governance structure** and **policy implementation** plans. **Role Ambiguity**	Accountability Ambiguity is concerned with ensuring government agencies are spending responsibly (Williams & Taylor, 2013) and consider how they manage internal and external expectations. Derived from this body of literature is the notion of role accountability. Within educational literature this idea relates to educators being responsible to the education community for quality education that leads to enhanced outcomes (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2011).	
Finding #15: The enactment of regional education officers' roles is impacted by role perceptions, leadership career experience and the perceived relevance (by schools) of the tasked support.	Policy Roles and Responsibilities Individual role interpretations Career leadership experience	**Policy Interpretation and Translation** **Role Ambiguity** **Role Tensions**	A role is a set of behaviours shaped by an individual's belief, attitudes and role expectations within a certain context (Walker & Shore, 2015). When these processes result in diverse role perception's role tension is evidenced (Rai, 2016).	Positions the use of role theory as a valuable theoretical framework to identify how policy (that is shaped by the policy context and social interactions with various "actors") is interpreted and translated.

Phase Three findings	Identified factors What influenced policy coherence?	Links to policy coherence theoretical concepts	Aspects that resonate with current theoretical concepts	Aspects that further enlighten current theoretical concepts in alignment with the research studies focus
Finding #16: Regional education officers enacted role in interpreting and translating policy, were shaped, and impacted by the power perceptions underpinning their interactions within the system (state and regional) and school level.	Power perceptions Role perceptions	Structural alignment of roles through **governance structure** and **policy implementation** plans. **Role ambiguity** **Role tensions**	**No additional connections** This finding connects to existing sensemaking theory outlined in findings #10 and #14.	
Finding #18:Participant role descriptions suggest that the building of capacity within schools is limited to the provision of professional learning and policy clarification and raises the question of whether there are shared understandings of what capacity building is and how it can be achieved.	Role purpose Role measures	Strategic alignment of **Policy Implementation Roles and Responsibilities.** **Accountability measures** (capacity building)	**No new connections** Finding connects to previously identify accountability ambiguity and the need for role policy position accountabilities that are connected to the broader policy objectives.	

As identified and displayed in Table 6.4, the factors influencing policy coherence are:

1. **Policy implementation expectations**: Phase One findings showed that, as policy was translated into contextual responses (regional operational plans), the articulation of detailed policy functions and responsibilities diminished, with broad responsibilities being omitted or situated within descriptive text. Within Phase Three Part As and B, the absence of clear policy implementation plans, processes with role functions and responsibilities supported the findings of Phase One.

2. **Policy interpretation process:** Policy interpretation practices within the enacted role of regional education officer continued from Phase One and Two to be underpinned by the idea that interpretation was predominantly individual as there was no collective articulation of formal interpretation processes. There was evidence of various policy interpretations within regional team members and between regional education officers and school personnel. The data suggested that this was caused in part by a lack of collective cognition (shared policy interpretations), individual policy interpretation practices aligned to individuals' beliefs and individuals' ability to access policy documents. (Finding #11). The lack of articulated policy communication and implementation practices was attributed to the evidenced diverse policy understandings.

3. **Contextualised policy translation process: As policy was crafted into contextualised responses,** there was no evidence of formal policy translation practices; however, the result of the individual interpretation (sense-making) and translation process was evidenced through the development of new contextualised policy forms that at times were not aligned to intended policy objectives. There was evidence that collaborative practices that relied on dialectic processes were utilised as intentional collaboration tools to develop teacher and leadership capability. There was no evidence that the translation of policy into contextualised responses was based on shared policy interpretations.

4. **Governance structure.** Regional education officers' role purpose had not been explicitly positioned as a policy resource to support schools in meeting targeted school or regional outcomes that align to policy

outcomes. This is reflected in the regional education officers' role position within the system, the continued absence of explicitly communicated role responsibilities, data monitoring, and accountability descriptions.

5. **Power perceptions:** Regional education officers' roles were shaped through various role perceptions and the allocation of tasks by personnel with perceived power. This included system executive leaders and school principals. Perceptions of power inhibited regional education officers' ability to question or challenge the allocation of tasks or policy interpretations and, as expressed by one participant, resulted in being berated for developing resources that did not meet the approval of the senior leadership.

6. **Role ambiguity**: Role clarity through the documentation and articulation of roles and responsibilities was not evidenced. As a result, the regional education officers identified that, in the absence of clarity about their roles and responsibilities, they relied on their own interpretation of their role that was shaped through a variety of interactions with system, regional and school personnel.

7. **Role tension:** The lack of articulated and documented role descriptions and the resulting role ambiguity resulted in regional education officers experiencing role tension. Role tension was experienced interpersonally between regional support team members, where there were perceived role purpose overlaps and/or differing policy interpretations. It was experienced personally when regional education officers had to support school improvement agendas, when they did not agree with the identified strategy or the tasking of school support by ARDs did not align with their perceived role purpose.

8. **Accountability ambiguity:** Regional education officers' lack of role clarity continued as they discussed their role measures. Their perceived role position within the system was identified as a factor to understanding who owned school improvement measures. This lack of clarity illuminated the gap in their ability to articulate their role impact in relation to their role position and the policy implementation role. While three participants articulated their impact point being with school

leadership teams and at times teachers, there was a lack of collective understanding of how regional education officers articulate or measure their policy role impact.

9. **Diverse role perceptions:** The identified absence of policy implementation plans, with explicit role functions and responsibilities, resulted in the individual interpretation of regional education officers' role. The role was broadly understood to be a regional support role. The enactment of regional education officers' roles was influenced by the various and diverse role perceptions evidenced within regional education officers' interactions with system, regional and school personnel. These diverse role perceptions, paired with the career experiences of the regional education officers, influenced the way their role was enacted. The tasks they had to do either aligned or did not align with role purpose perceptions and/or policy objectives.

The next chapter is positioned to discuss these factors by drawing together the findings and identified factors from across the three research phases to highlight the significance of the research through the development of a policy role enactment framework.

CHAPTER 7: BRINGING THE PIECES TOGETHER

7.1. Introduction

This study explored the factors that impact on how policy was interpreted and translated through the enacted role of regional education officers, as a means of identifying how this role contributed to the attainment of policy coherence within the context of system reform. Regional education officers, as one group of middle system leaders, are formally responsible for supporting policy implementation through targeted regional strategies. As the regional education officers enacted their roles, they mitigated the challenges of upholding their understandings of their role and the policy directive and meeting the contextual needs of schools.

This chapter addresses the research questions that focused this study, summarising the findings and key issues that have emerged.

7.1.1. Analytical Tools and Frameworks

As the study's purpose was to explore role enactment factors that contributed to achieving policy coherence for system reform, there was a need to draw from multiple theoretical perspectives to analyse the data within the case study. As existing theoretical frameworks (as identified within Chapter 2) had not yet considered the interconnection between policy implementation, organisational alignment and role theory as a mechanism for achieving policy coherence for system reform, two conceptual frameworks were identified.

The conceptual framework for analysis (outlined within Chapter 4) drew upon the principles contained within Viennet and Pont's (2017) theoretical policy implementation analysis framework, with a focus on the components of cohesive policy implementation, and Limani's (2015) Organizational Alignment Model, a theoretical organisational alignment instrument. These two conceptual frameworks were selected for the study, as there was considerable cohesion across the policy design and implementation key elements outlined within these two informing theories.

7.1.2. Research Analysis and Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to determine what emerge as significant factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy to enact their role? The exploration of this question required inquiry into the sub-questions through the implementation of Chapter 3's methodology.

Utilising the study's conceptual framework, a summary of regional education officers' role perceptions (drawn from Phases Two and Three data analysis) and the alignment to the DoE's action policy documents (drawn from Phase One). Table 7.1 maps the findings across the three phases. This summary is followed by an analysis of each criterion that draws upon the implications from Phases One, Two and Three that established the foundations for the study's policy role enactment framework.

Table 7.1

Summary and Formal Organisational Alignment (Limani, 2015) of Viennet and Pont's (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criterion Within and Across Research Phases.

	Phase One Document Analysis Findings			P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		Research outcomes
Criterion	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Identified Role Enactment Factors**	**Identified Role Enactment Practices**		**Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.**
					Part A	**Part B**	
			Green indicates alignment to policy aspects Orange indicates partial alignment to policy aspects Red indicates no alignment to policy actions through omission or new information. (Crossed out factors indicate that the next phase evidenced the factor)				
Objectives *An identified result/s or aim/s that underpin policy documentation*	Policies should provide a point of truth and be published in one place		.	Role of policy is to provide clear directives to regions.		Policy guidelines and resources available from multiple online platforms including statewide and regional	Multiple policy guidelines access points create confusion with participants indicating schools personal are not consistently aware of policy resources.
	Align with other policy instruments	Supported Government directives through aspects identified below.		No policy specificity identified	Policy use was utilised when developing contextual school improvement responses.	No formal practices to check for individuals understanding of policy messages.	System middle leaders rely on own interpretation impacting on policy coherence. Schools utilise their own interpretations or seek clarity from regional system middle leaders.
	Support strategic objectives	Delivery of a world-class education system supported by responsive services.	Providing a great start for children and ensuring successful educational outcomes.	There is a perceived mismatch between policy expectations and regional realties		Policy instruments were informally unpacked through conversations practices – no explicit link to policy objectives or desired results related to role.	Strategic objectives are positioned within documentation although wording and focus may change - impacting on coherence.
	Clearly define roles and responsibilities	Responsive services included: Working together to provide quality learning experiences for all students and to maximise student learning.	Provide advice and services to schools Build capability of schools and school personnel for improvement.	Role was positioned to improve leadership, teaching capability and student outcomes	Participants agreed that their role was to support the implementation of the state's strategic direction.	No specific role descriptions aligned to regional strategic direction or middle system leadership role.	Lack of articulated regional role responsibilities aligned to policy objectives; regional policy measures and agreed system practices. Lack of Induction process into System Leadership ways of working,

| Criterion | Phase One Document Analysis Findings | | | P0hase Two Survey Findings | Phase Three Interview Findings | | Research outcomes |
| | Policy Design Documents | Curriculum Policy Documents | Regional Policy Operational plans | Identified Role Enactment Factors | Identified Role Enactment Practices | | Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation. |
					Part A	Part B	
						Role descriptions drawn from broad school-based role responsibilities including Head of Curriculum and Head of Department.	role responsibilities and accountabilities
Communication and Engagement *Consultation and stakeholder engagement to gather support and understanding of policy language.*	Policies development should consider key, appropriate and relevant stakeholder consultation	Partnerships with stakeholders, industry, university and communities to: Inform and develop government policy Provide advice and analysis Represent and service the community.	Regions engage with principals, teachers, schools, communities and central office teams. No documentation of stakeholders informing policy design or review.	Regional team members engage with school leadership teams, principals, regional teams and at times central office. No reference to stakeholders informing policy identified.	No direct interactions or processes with policy personnel identified. Lack of perceived voice in contributing to the development of regional strategies, implementation plans or informing policy		Stakeholder engagement through policy development. No clear stakeholder involvement documented that utilises implementation feedback or objectives as reflection measures.
Communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy	Policy should consider relevant stakeholder communication No reference to communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy	No reference to how policy was explicitly communicated to stakeholders.		Regional communications identified. The focus of these communique was on contextualised regional approaches aligned to operational plans. No reference to State Schooling communication beyond policy documentation that state policy objectives e.g. State Schooling Strategy, P-12 CARF		Policy messages were translated into regional strategies. The number of supporting documents created confusion and resulted in a variety of policy interpretations. Policy language and the broad nature of policy documentation contributed to misaligned	No formal policy communication plan Policy support documents accessible through multiple online platforms by all DoE stakeholders – contributes to partial policy alignment. Regional communications focus on contextualised regional approaches aligned to policy objectives with language that may or may not align to overarching policy objectives.

Criterion	Phase One Document Analysis Findings			P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		Research outcomes
	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Identified Role Enactment Factors	Identified Role Enactment Practices		Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.
					Part A	Part B	
						interpretations and resulting actions. Change in school leadership impacted on consistency of policy interpretation.	
Implementation Strategy *Articulated plans explaining how to enact policy while the policy can identify the theoretical implementation underpinnings. May provide a vision and be open and flexible to accommodate changes.*	Identified policy Implementation cycle.	Embedded within policy instruments:	Governance was used to design and align direction of work however there was no explicit implementation plan. Operational Plans listed activities and identified responsible team with broad (often misaligned) measures.	Regional leadership members or central office determined role activities – perceived as the process for implementing policy Limited clarity of how to implement strategies on a day by day basis			
	Policies should articulate their functions, responsibilities and purpose	Develop shared understandings of the Australian curriculum	Australian Curriculum			3 out of the 10 participants described the use of the Australian Curriculum and their role in clarifying teaching expectations. 1 participant explicitly describe building capability. No formal processes to confirm policy interpretations are aligned to policy intent.	Multiple policy interpretation points that rely on individual policy interpretations that may or may not align to policy intent.
		Use evidence through inquiry improvement cycles				The inquiry model was identified as a resource however the use of the	Knowledge of inquiry models evidenced.

Criterion	Policy Design Documents	Phase One Document Analysis Findings		P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		Research outcomes
		Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Identified Role Enactment Factors	Identified Role Enactment Practices		Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.
					Part A	Part B	
						inquiry model was not discussed.	Application of inquiry models as a role enactment tool was not discussed.
		To collaborate to work, learn and improve together.		Collaborative practices were positioned within each region.	Lack of perceived voice in contributing to the development of regional strategies, implementation plans or informing policy Career experience enhanced ability to collaborate with regional and school leaders	Interactions with system leaders could either support role enactment or hinder role enactment Interactions with school leaders could support role enactment or hinder role enactment Regional Team cohesion hindered role enactment	Role clarity impacts on role enactment.
		Build teaching and learning capability		Building teacher and leadership capability to implement the Australian Curriculum	Role was identified broadly as a school support	Building leadership and teacher capability was positioned however role descriptions predominately positioned role as facilitators, clarifiers of policy and strategy rather than building capability.	Understanding of capacity building was predominately limited to provision of knowledge and providing policy clarification.
	Policies should manage operational issues and risks						

Criterion	Phase One Document Analysis Findings			P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		Research outcomes
	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Identified Role Enactment Factors	Identified Role Enactment Practices		Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.
					Part A	Part B	
Data monitoring and accountability *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision making.*	Policy monitoring should: Examine policy content to ensure accuracy relevance, clarity and reliability No reference to measuring or monitoring policy implementation No mention of using policy outcomes to review or refine policy	Continuous improvement was positioned within policy descriptions.	No reference to continuous improvement	No reference to continuous improvement Changes in school process were identified as a school measure with no reference to continuous improvement.	No reference to continuous improvement or accountabilities.	No reference to continuous improvement. Identification that the same work continues to be implemented after 5 years of working within the role indicating limited impact.	Reliance on point in time school-based data as outcome measures. Absence of role impact measures linked to capacity building. Identified need to develop shared understandings of what aspects of policy implementation regional education officer's role supports and how impact could be measured.
Data monitoring and accountability continued *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision making.*		Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure. Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure. **Continued**	Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure.	Student achievement data was identified as a key measure. Number of schools supported indicated as a measure. Informal feedback indicated as a role measure. Participants identified that they were unsure how to measure impact resulting in role tension.		Role position descriptions identified tensions in who owns the data and are student measures relevant to the regional role? Project schools and showcase awards identified as indicating impact.	Lack of measurable role responsibilities. Lack of knowledge and application on what is the point of impact for regional education officers' role. Absence of formal role measures resulted in informal and varied measures being used
		No targets were identified.	Targets were identified.	No targets were identified	No targets were identified.	No clear targets.	Accountability Ambiguity Lack of role targets
		Annual School Review was implicitly positioned as a tool to monitor curriculum implementation.	No clear link between School Reviews and Curriculum Implementation Service provision	No reference to the use of school reviews processes as a measure or monitoring tool.		Clear links between school reviews and regional education officer's role	Regional education officers were tasked with supporting schools for their school reviews, however the outcome of reviews was not considered to be a role measure.

	Phase One Document Analysis Findings			P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		
Criterion	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Identified Role Enactment Factors	Identified Role Enactment Practices		Research outcomes Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.
					Part A	Part B	
						No link to school reviews as a monitoring tool.	
Resources *Inputs necessary for policy implementation. Typically fall into three categories:* 5. *Funding financial and human resources*		Resources are targeted to be responsive and provide support	Regional education officer teams positioned as a support structure. Responsive services	Regional Role described as a: Implement regional or state strategies to improve student improvement including the Australian curriculum		Implementation of regional strategies positioned with limited specificity beyond literacy, numeracy or STEM.	Role positioned a school support role however did not directly align this to a policy implementation support role.
6. *Technology and knowledge: supporting guidelines and online documents*	Policy implementation should be: Supported by aligned policy instruments including procedures, guidelines, supporting information	Use evidence to inform practice e.g. Annual School Reviews; Inquiry Model P-12CARF identified online and documented resources to support curriculum implementation at a school level.	Inconsistent reference made to Policy in action documents: State Schooling Strategy, P-12 CARF, Annual Reviews and Inquiry Models	No specific mention of policy resources		Use of the Australian Curriculum and P-12 CARF when supporting schools and principals. Use of school reviews, state inquiry model identified	Policy documents used inconsistently
7. *Capacity building*		Resources are targeted to build capability	Build capability to evidence improvement and student outcomes through the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.	Role purpose described as: Leadership role Support role Capacity building role	Role described as a support role Building leadership and teaching capability		No explicit definition or ways of working associated with building capacity identified to achieve policy outcomes.
Task Allocation	Policy procedures should:	Department task identified to support schools and departmental staff.	Regional Directors specific roles were identified.	Assistant Regional Director were identified as leaders within the region.	Regional Directors, Assistant Regional	ARD's and Managers delegated tasks.	Role ambiguity results in role tension;

Criterion	Phase One Document Analysis Findings			P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		Research outcomes
	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Identified Role Enactment Factors	Identified Role Enactment Practices		Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.
					Part A	Part B	
	Outline the processes and responsibilities required to support policy implementation		Assistant Regional Directors task were identified. Regional Services Team tasks identified. No specificity regarding who the teams were or how many members were in each team. Support to schools specified.	Regional team purpose was broadly understood as a support role. Task specificity was lacking with little direction provided for day-to-day operations. Role tensions between some central office role tasks and regional role tasks.	Directors, Team Managers identified as leaders.	Some regions allowed direct contact with schools. Task specificity was lacking from leadership but developed with school personnel. This either supported or partially supported policy actions. Role tensions between team members due to overlapping role responsibilities	1. Misaligned task allocated 2. Varied understandings of role purpose 3. No articulated specific role responsibilities.
		School tasks were to implement improvement cycles using the: school improvement model	Inconsistent reference ot school tasks.			Regional education officer to support schools in their school reviews. Schools access different regions support if not offered by their own region.	
		School Improvement Hierarchy Standards of Practice.	No explicit references made to School Reviews, School Improvement Hierarchy or Standards of Practice	Lack of agreed role enactment processes within regions and across regions for similar roles.			School reviews used a support focus, however specificity in what support looked like was limited. No use of standards of practice.

Criterion	Phase One Document Analysis Findings			P0hase Two Survey Findings	Phase Three Interview Findings		Research outcomes
	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Identified Role Enactment Factors	Identified Role Enactment Practices		Factors impacting on policy interpretation and translation.
					Part A	Part B	
Timing	Policies should: Reflect current, reliable and trusted information	Five-year policy timeframe (2020-2024) Schools are to implement the Australian Curriculum Version 8 by the end of 2020. Continuous improvement cycles	Annual and ongoing time frames identified. 1 Region only identified 2020 timeframe for Australian Curriculum implementation No link to ongoing improving rends. Point in time measures only identified.	No reference to timeframes.	No reference to timeframes.	No reference to timeframes	No policy implementation timelines identified
Tools	Policies should:

Identify mandatory requirements and Be easy to access through DoE's central policy and procedure register. | Requirements outlined within P-12 CARF. Mandatory language not evidenced.

Documents can be accessed on policy register and through an open Internet search (Figure 4.2) | Statements used to communicate services with high modality though the use of verbs at the beginning of statements. No mandated requirements identified. | No mention of P-12 CARF or policy tools.

No mandated requirements mentioned beyond completing mandated annual training modules. | ~~No mandated requirements mentioned.~~

~~No links to regional strategy measures or timeframes identified.~~ | Links made to the use of: P-12 CARF School Reviews Inquiry Model | Policy mandates embedded within descriptions. |

7.1.2.1. Objectives Criterion. Phases One and Two identified that, as policy documents were translated into other forms (State Schooling Strategy and Regional Operational Plans), the language of objectives changed. Within Phase One, regional education officers' roles were documented as policy support roles for regions and schools. However, as regional education officers described their role (within Phase Two), there was partial alignment to their documented role within Regional Operational Plans.

Phase Three revealed that as regional education officers described their enacted roles, they evidenced examples of diverse policy interpretations and the implementation of partial aspects of policy. The data highlighted a lack of explicit policy interpretation processes and awareness of the DoE strategy objective to develop shared understandings of policy objectives related to the Australian Curriculum. These findings highlight that, as policy is crafted through the interpretation and translation of policy documents, there is potential for (from a collective perspective) policy objectives to be misaligned to resulting contextualised policy responses due to diverse policy interpretations.

7.1.2.2. Communication and Engagement Criterion. Phase One (row 2 of Table 7.1) revealed that within the analysed documents there was no explicit reference made to how policy messages were communicated to stakeholders. Within Phase Two the absence of a documented communication plan continued to be evidenced within participant descriptions. While there was no evidence of a formal communication plan, Regional Education Office descriptions revealed that policy documents and meetings with regional and school stakeholders were the predominant form of communication in relation to policy and regional strategies. Within participants' descriptions, there were no consistent practices that focussed on the building of shared policy understandings. The participants identified that they utilised their individual policy understandings when providing advice to key stakeholders.

Phase Three revealed that, when considering the communication and engagement criterion ,regional education officers identified that they did not have an authoritative voice in informing regional strategies. When considering the communication and engagement criterion, regional education officers identified that, as they interpreted policy to develop regional professional learning and provide contextualised policy advice to schools, they observed that broad policy languages

and the number of supporting documents often created confusion, resulting in partial policy implementation. While policy was utilised by regional education officers, minimal formal communication practices enabled varied role purpose perceptions to emerge. Together, these findings suggested an ongoing partial misalignment between policy implementation expectation, and the use of communication plans and practices in relation to regional education officers' role purpose and role enactment expectations.

7.1.2.3. Implementation Criterion. Phase One analysis revealed that, as policy was interpreted and translated into policy instruments, policy implementation became implicit and embedded within descriptive statements. This absence of an implementation plan within the DoE curriculum policy group resulted in regional operational plans that predominantly identified broad strategies and the tasking of these strategies to regional education officers and regional leaders.

Phase Two analysis identified that regional education officers articulated that policy was implemented through the use of collaborative practices that focussed on building teacher and leadership capability, with limited explicit reference made to developing shared understandings. The identification of the implementation process, although not housed within implementation plans, aligned to policy implementation requirements.

Phase Three analysis identified that regional education officers continued to have limited clarity in how to enact their role in relation to supporting schools in implementing curriculum policy. The absence of policy interpretation practices and role clarity resulted in diverse role perceptions and inconsistent use or reference to policy documents.

The use of collaborative practices was positioned as a mode for engaging with policy and the development of contextualised responses; however, the lack of collective policy understandings continued to be highlighted. The ongoing lack of role clarity and silence within the data in relation to the use of formal implementation plans identified misalignment to policy implementation requirements, as outlined within Viennet and Pont's (2017) policy implementation framework.

7.1.2.4. Data Monitoring and Accountability Criterion. Phase One policy measures were identified within the curriculum reform texts. As policy texts were interpreted and translated into regional operational plans. there were no explicit links

made between policy measures and departmental role descriptions, resulting in a lack of role accountability for regional education officers.

The Phase Two analysis revealed that, collectively, the regional education officers identified that improved student achievement was a key role measure and should show alignment to overarching broad policy measures statements. However, the regional education officers did not identify specific student measures, such as literacy and numeracy outcomes. When identifying their role enactment effectiveness, the regional education officers were unable to collectively and consistently articulate the measures or targets attributed to their role effectiveness.

The Phase Three analysis identified the ongoing absence of regional strategy measures or targets (within participants' descriptions) utilised within regional education officers' role enactment. While the DoE documents (Chapter 4) identified policy measures, these measures were not collectively reflected within regional education officers' descriptions. Regional education officers' roles were positioned with regional operation plans (Phase One) as policy implementation resources. However, the lack of regional education officers' ability to articulate role accountability measures (Phase Two and Phase Three) identified potential role enactment misalignment between policy objectives, articulated regional measures (within regional operational plans) and the articulated measures within the enacted role of regional education officers. The desire to identify regional education officer role impact measures within the context of policy implementation was also identified within participants' descriptions.

7.1.2.5. Task Allocation, Timing, Tools and Resources Criterion. Phases One and Two document analysis revealed that while policy procedures should outline processes and responsibilities to support policy implementation, regional documentation lacked task specificity. The lack of specificity was identified as a factor impacting on regional education officers' day-to-day role clarity. When regional education officers described who identified their role tasks, they identified various stakeholders (central office and regional staff). Within their descriptions, the allocation of tasks from these various stakeholders highlighted a diverse range of role expectations.

Within the Phase Three data, regional education officers' regional operational plans continued to not be utilised as a reference point. There was a continued absence of articulated time allocations and the inconsistent use of policy resources

(as illustrated within row 5-8 of Table 7.1) within regional education officers' descriptions.

In the absence of collective clear role purpose descriptors, regional education officers relied on their line mangers, RD and ARDs to allocate tasks. At times their allocated tasks did not align with their perceived role purpose, resulting in role tension. Role tension was collectively attributed to the lack of consistent role purpose perceptions between central office personnel, regional system leaders, regional education officers and school leaders.

Within regional education officers' role enactment descriptions, there was no reference made to achieving tasks within specific timelines. The lack of timelines contributed to regional education officers' lack of role clarity and ability to measure their effectiveness. Some regional education officers' referenced policy resources, such as the P-12 CARF (Queensland Government, 2020a) and the School Improvement Hierarchy within Phase Three; however, collectively there continued to be inconsistent use and articulation of policy resources.

Collating these emerging role perceptions within and across, using the lens of objective and crafting alignment (Hoing & Hatch, 2004), each research phase and policy implementation criterion, enabled me to consider how key policy implementation aspects were described as they were translated from policy instruments and regional operational plans into actions through the regional education officers' enacted role. They also enable the wonderings that emerged through the study to be addressed.

7.1.3. *Addressing Wonderings Using Phase Three Findings*

This section links Phase Three findings to the wonderings that emerged with Phase 1 (Chapter 4) and Phase Two (Chapter 5) of the study to provide a holistic perspective of Phase Three research findings (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2

Summary of Chapter Responses to the Research Questions and Previous Wonderings

Drawn from Semi-Structured Interviews

Research Questions and Wonderings	Emerging Responses from the Research Findings (Chapters 4, 5 and 6)
Research Question 2: How do regional education officers perceive their role in interpreting and translating policy within a system?	
Wondering #4: How and where do those responsible for implementing policy identify and understand policy instruments? What impact does this have on how they interpret and translate policy?	Policy in action documents were consistently referred to by participants. They identified broad policy document use; however, formal processes supporting the clarification of policy interpretation were limited, resulting in varied policy interpretations. Participants drew on their individual understandings when translating policy, although it was unclear if their interpretations were accurate.
Wondering #6: How does the specificity of the regions' implementation actions impact on regional education officer teams' understanding of their role responsibilities?	There were no implementation plans identified. Participants did not identify explicit links to regional operation plans. Instead, they referenced broad strategies. Participants did identify inconsistent understandings of their role. Participants identified that they were typically assigned to schools and that their role was negotiated with school personnel, with no requirement to report back to system leaders.
Wondering #10: Which policy instruments are used by regional education officer teams to support schools	Participants identified the use of the P-12 CARF, the school improvement cycle, school reviews and the state schooling inquiry model.
Research Question 3: How do regional education officers enact their roles?	
Wondering #7: How do regions ensure there is a shared understanding of policy and procedural advice within regional service team personnel when providing "education, teaching, curriculum and student support services" (DETE, 2014, p. 17)	There was no evidence of formal policy interpretation and translation processes. Collaborative conversational processes were evidenced, and the relaying of policy interpreted messages identified. This revealed that knowledge transmission rather than reflective practice was predominantly evidenced.
Wondering #8: How are regional performance measures understood within service teams' roles and how does this influence their role enactment?	There are inconsistent understandings of role impact measures. No role impact measures were aligned to role tasks or purpose. While student improvement was identified as a common measure, regional education officers identified that they did not own this data and could not attribute it to the impact of their role. There remains no clarity on how role impact is measured.

Research Questions and Wonderings	Emerging Responses from the Research Findings (Chapters 4, 5 and 6)
Wondering #12: How did career experience contribute to the enacted role of a regional education officer and how did this assist them in interpreting and/or translating policy into action?	Participants were divided in their perceptions of career experience impacts. Leadership experience was valued as the majority of their role was spent with system and school leaders. Those with leadership experience identified that this assisted them with translating policy into school improvement strategies and working collaboratively with leadership teams. Responses identified implications for role recruitment.
Research Question 4: What factors support or inhibit their role enactment?	
Wondering #3: How are the intended relationships between formal policy instruments understood and utilised as policy is implemented? How does the specificity of the curriculum content within each instrument aid or inhibit how policy is interpreted and translated?	Participants positioned policy as a knowledge base and source for directives. Their individual interpretation was used as they drew on policy to develop contextualised school improvement responses. Participants identified that the ARDs' understanding of their role could enhance or inhibit their role enactment and was often attributed to role tension.
Research Question 5: What implications for policy coherence and system reform emerge from these findings?	
Wondering #9: How do policy, resource and human interactions influence and impact on policy coherence?	Participants identified that role responsibilities are shaped through the various interactions at a system, school and peer level. The lack of formal role clarity impacted on their role enactment. Alignment to policy at a school level is dependent upon individual policy interpretations.
Wondering #13: Was there a connection between policy in action, implementation communication processes, role clarity and accountability?	The lack of explicit policy implementation plans directly impacted role clarity. Participants did not describe their role as a policy resource or articulate their role position within the implementation process. This directly impacted on their ability to articulate role policy measures.

When reflecting upon each of the wondering responses, it became evident that regional education officers' perception of their role position and purpose was not informed by regional strategic plans, but rather each participants' interpretation of their role was informed by their individual understanding of informing policy documents and notions of what the role should be. This, at times, was challenged by the variety of role perceptions and allocation of tasks that were not in alignment with regional education officers' collective role position perception. This gap and lack of specificity within participants' descriptions indicated a collective lack of role clarity that resulted in varying role purpose and position descriptions.

The findings also indicated that formal policy implementation expectations including policy implementation and communication plans, were not explicitly considered by regional education officers as policy was interpreted and translated into actions within the regional system level.

Policy instruments were positioned as integral to the regional education officers' role enactment, as they utilised these when interacting with schools. However, the lack of role clarity and absence of formal policy interpretation practices indicated that key policy instrument criteria, including implementation and communication plans and accountability measures, were not explicitly considered as policy was translated into actions within the regional system level.

The next sub section draws together the study's findings to discuss the theoretical dimensions in more detail.

7.2. Research Findings

Within and across each research phase (Chapter 4, 5 and 6), the findings listed in Table 7.3 were identified. The theoretical dimensions and concepts that emerged within and across the research findings illuminated the impact of policy implementation and role enactment on policy coherence. The understandings that emerged shed light on the relationship between policy role enactment and the following two aspects of organisational alignment (for policy coherence), that is, strategic and structural. In addition, the findings revealed the illuminated impact role enactment has on organisational cognitive alignment as another alignment aspect of policy coherence.

Table 7.3

The Research Study's Complete List of Findings

	Findings
Finding #1	The interpretation and translation of policy into regional operation plans resulted in the focus on providing high quality teaching and learning opportunities being omitted from these plans.
Finding #2	The silence in the documentation may indicate that the DoE's policy review process does not involve regional team members and, as a result, does not involve gathering perspectives from departmental employees responsible for implementing policy.
Finding #3	The written communication of clear roles and responsibilities associated with policy implementation appears to be inhibited by their implicit positioning within descriptive text.
Finding #4	Broad implementation actions were tasked to groups of regional education officers and regional leadership. The flexible regional model resulted in inconsistent references to policy documents across regions.
Finding #5	The omission of regional education officer teams within the system governance model seems to inhibit the transparency of clear system roles associated with policy implementation.
Finding #6	Participants did not explicitly associate their role with the DoE's policy instruments and, therefore, their close association with regional directions rather than policy instruments may indicate why there is partial alignment between policy and regional role objectives.
Finding #7	The omission of explicitly documented and communicated roles and responsibilities of regional education officers within policy implementation texts and role induction processes resulted in diverse role purpose perceptions. This results in role tension.
Finding #8	Regional education officers built clarity of their role responsibilities through their own interpretation of policy texts and a number of human interactions that occurred within inductions and team collaborations. These interactions also highlighted that there was limited reference to policy use when articulating role responsibilities
Finding #9	There is a disconnect between the identified policy text implementation resources (including regional education officers' roles) and the identified implementation measures. This suggests that regional education officers experience accountability ambiguity
Finding #10	The partial misalignment between policy role purpose and policy objectives is attributed to the impact of policy the interpretation and translation processes. These include the impact of informal conversational policy interpretation and communication practices on policy role purpose clarity.
Finding #11	Awareness of the interconnected nature of policy documents (at a regional and school level) was inhibited by the lack of policy understanding caused in part by individual policy interpretation practices, policy online locations and role isolation.
Finding #12	Diverse policy interpretations paired with the lack of policy interpretation clarification processes contribute to the implementation of misaligned policy responses at a regional and school level.
Finding #13	The continued lack of role clarity experienced by regional education officers resulted in various perceptions of where the regional education officer role predominantly sat and subsequently impacted on how regional education officers articulated their role purpose.
Finding #14	Within the context of describing where their role position sat within the system, the absence of data monitoring and accountability descriptions identified that regional education officers did not identify their role purpose as a policy resource to support schools in meeting targeted school or regional outcomes that aligned to policy outcomes.
Finding #15	The enactment of regional education officers' roles is impacted by role perceptions, leadership career experience and the perceived relevance (by schools) of the tasked support.
Finding #16	Regional education officers' enacted role in interpreting and translating policy was shaped, and impacted by the power perceptions underpinning their interactions within the system (state and regional) and school level.

Finding #17	The consistent lack of role clarity through the system layers and diverse policy interpretations required participants to have high functioning interpersonal skills and flexibility in engaging in productive conversations across a range of professional roles.
Finding #18	Participants' role descriptions suggested that the building of capacity within schools was limited to the provision of professional learning and policy clarification and raises the question of whether there are shared understandings of what capacity building is and how it can be achieved.

The next presentation of findings (see Table 7.4) outlines the alignment between the policy role enactment findings, the identified theoretical dimensions and concepts, and their impact on the alignment of policy messaging as policy was implemented and crafted. The alignment is expressed as one or all of three forms: structural, strategic or cognitive.

Table 7.4

The Impact of the Research Findings and their Identified Policy Coherence Factors on Policy Coherence Strategic, Structural and Cognitive Alignment Aspects

Research phase	Research findings	Policy coherence factors and their impact		
		Strategic alignment	**Structural alignment**	**Cognitive alignment**
Research Phase One document analysis	#1	Policy interpretation		Policy interpretation
		Policy translation		Policy translation
	#2	Policy implementation		
	#3		Policy implementation	
			Roles and responsibilities	
	#4	Roles and responsibilities		
		Governance structure		
		Role tension		
	#5	Governance model	Governance model	
		Policy implementation	Policy implementation	
		Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities	
	#6	Governance structure	Governance structure	Governance structure
		Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities
Research Phase Two survey	#7	Diverse role perceptions	Diverse role perceptions	Diverse role perceptions
		Role ambiguity	Role ambiguity	Role ambiguity
			Role Tension	
	#8	Policy interpretation		Policy Interpretation
		Policy translation		Policy translation
		Role ambiguity		Role ambiguity
	#9		Accountability ambiguity	
Research Phase Three semi-structured interviews	#10		Policy implementation	Policy implementation
			Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities
			Diverse policy perspectives	Diverse policy perspectives
			Role ambiguity	Role ambiguity
	#11	Policy implementation		Policy implementation
		Policy interpretations		Policy interpretations
	#12	Policy implementation		Policy implementation
		Policy interpretation		Policy interpretation
	#13		Policy interpretation	
			Policy translation	
			Role ambiguity	
	#14	Accountability ambiguity		
		Governance structure		
		Policy implementation		
	Finding #15		Policy interpretation	
			Policy translation	

Research phase	Research findings	Policy coherence factors and their impact		
		Strategic alignment	**Structural alignment**	**Cognitive alignment**
			Role ambiguity	
			Role tension	
			Role perceptions	
Research Phase Three semi-structured interviews	Finding #16	Governance structure	Governance structure	
		Policy implementation	Policy implementation	
		Role ambiguity	Role ambiguity	
	Finding #17	Diverse role perceptions		Diverse role perceptions
		Role ambiguity		Role ambiguity
		Policy interpretation		Policy interpretation
		Role enactment		Role enactment
	Finding #18	Role ambiguity	Role ambiguity	
		Accountability ambiguity	Accountability ambiguity	

7.3.   Research Questions Summary

The proposed research study was guided by the following overarching research question:

What emerge as significant policy implementation factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy as they enact their role?

Within Chapters 4–6, five research sub-questions were responded to in detail. The summaries of these are presented to connect the key findings within and across the research study.

7.3.1.   *How Do Policy Documents Coherently Reflect Implementation Expectations?*

Within Chapter 4's document analysis findings (#1–#5, as outlined in Table 7.1 and 7.3), it became apparent that within the formal policy instruments there was a clear and consistent focus on delivering quality teaching and learning opportunities through a world class quality curriculum. As policy instruments were translated into strategy and regional operation plans, there was a shift in policy language to providing students with access to educational opportunities and engaging them in learning. This shift in language impacted on the coherent translation of policy messaging through the documentation.

When considering how policy implementation was communicated, the policy design documents identified that a clear implementation plan should be evident through the identification of functions, responsibilities, and purpose in relation to policy design and review. As policy was translated into the State Schooling Strategy

(Queensland Government, 2019a) and regional operation plans there was a silence in the documentation related to an explicit implementation plan and specific policy roles and responsibilities. This included any reference to regional education officers within the departmental governance structure. This study identified that the silence was attributed to the system's focus being on supporting schools in implementing state strategies, without clearly identifying how this would be operationalised through careful consideration of policy role responsibilities.

The findings suggest that, while policy documentation coherently reflected broad implementation expectations, they lacked specificity in relation to clearly defined policy role and responsibilities and associated role implementation expectations.

7.3.2. *How Do Regional Education Officers Perceive Their Role in Interpreting and Translating Policy Within a System?*

Within Chapter 5's survey findings (#6–#9, as outlined in Table 7.1 and 7.3), it became apparent that in response to the absence of clearly documented roles and responsibilities, participants called on their own beliefs, experiences, and interpretations of policy documents to create their role functions, with four distinct role perceptions emerging (as previously outlined in Chapter 6, Table 6.2).

Within these role perception descriptions, participants' survey responses (Chapter 4) and their role position descriptions (Chapter 5) revealed that collectively their role was to support regional and schools' policy translation; the use of policy to develop contextualised policy responses, including regional resources, professional learning, and school improvement plans and strategies. The findings revealed that, when regional education officers described their role, they identified role tensions that included a perceived disconnect between central office and their understanding of what was happening in schools. This perception resulted in a mismatch between central expectations and regional realities. The regional education officers also attributed a lack of consistency to how they operationalised their role to the lack of role responsibilities, coordination or streamlining in the provision of support within and across regions.

Collectively, the participants identified that the purpose of their role was to build school leadership and teaching capability and to improve student outcomes through the implementation of regional strategies and initiatives. Regional education officers' inability to reference regional operational plans and the identified lack of

policy role coherence between policy instruments, regional operational plans and role perceptions resulted in a lack of explicit alignment to policy objectives within participant role perception descriptions.

When identifying the purpose of their roles, participants either described their work as having an impact on student learning or talked about changes in school improvement processes. It was therefore interesting to note that regional education officers did not articulate any of their particular region's specific targets and outlined that they found it difficult to identify how they measured their role effectiveness. This perception of role accountability ambiguity could be directly aligned to the perceived lack of information related to participants' role tasks and day-to-day functions. Within participants' descriptions it was evident that, while they identified informal role measures, they were unsure if these were sufficient to measure how effective they were in their role. These findings support the notion that individuals who do not have clarity of their role would in turn be unable to identify how to measure their impact.

While role perceptions identified that regional education officers were one group of system personnel responsible for policy interpretation and translation, the participants lack clarity and consistency in how they and others perceived their role. Participants' lack of clarity regarding their role responsibilities, functions and measures in relation to a policy, a strategy or an implementation plan was inhibited by:

- a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities within regional documentation;
- the diverse regional inductions and support processes which lacked a focus on identifying role functions in relation to policy; and
- allocation of task and individualised ways of working.

7.3.3. *How Do System Middle Leaders Enact Their Roles?*

Participants' identified role purpose was to by supporting schools by enacting the strategic direction articulated within policy documents or regional strategies. Participants identified that they were like a rescue team or assisted schools (like navigating a train system) in identifying school improvement strategies. At times they utilised policy or their understanding of policy to inform the identification of these strategies. For some participants this felt overwhelming and isolating (like a

lone ranger) as they assisted schools in understandings the complexity and number of policy documents. For others, they could identify the interconnected nature of the system and how their role was positioned within the wider policy context (like a network). Regional education officers described role purpose aligned to the DoE's responsibility to implement "contemporary policy and legislative frameworks" (Queensland Government, 2019b, p. 12).

Participants identified that informal conversational structures were utilised to discuss or relay policy messages associated with regional strategies; however, these structures relied on individual policy interpretations and resulted in inconsistent policy understandings. These descriptions identified that there was limited evidence within the study's findings on processes that supported the development of cognitive coherence as a critical aspect of how policy messages were interpreted and translated throughout the system layers. The lack of cognitive coherence (through the reliance on individual policy interpretations) was evidenced by the diverse policy interpretations described by participants.

Within participants' descriptions, broad references were made to the use of policy with no discerning references made to individual policy documents. The participants did not consistently refer to regional plans or strategies and it therefore remains unclear as to what departmental documents regional education officers collectively utilised to inform their role purpose.

When reflecting upon their position within the wider system, the complexity of the system from a policy perceptive and personal perspective emerged. Various role perceptions resulted in a variety of role expectations that may or may not have aligned to regional education officers' assigned tasks or personal understandings of their role. Navigating these various role expectations was compounded by the perceived power relationships within each interaction, their career experience and access of and understandings of policy. Therefore, regional education officers often experienced role tensions as they simultaneously navigated various role perceptions and policy understandings while enacting their role.

7.3.4. *What Factors Support or Inhibit Their Role Enactment in Relation to Policy Implementation?*

Through the exploratory case study, how policy was interpreted and translated was explored and analysed. The resulting findings were then considered in relation to the research questions and were utilised to identify factors that informed

an explanation of what was occurring. One way of representing these findings and the subsequent explanation was through the development of a visual policy role enactment framework (Figure 7.1). This framework identified the connections between the findings and four theoretical policy concepts: policy coherence, policy design, policy interpretation, and policy translation. These concepts were illuminated across the three phases of the study (document analysis, survey, semi-structured interviews). Through the exploration of the theoretical concepts of policy coherence (objective and crafting alignment) and policy enactment, the factors that impacted on regional education officers' role enactment and the attainment of policy coherence (structural, strategic) with the illuminated need for cognitive alignment, were illuminated. The Policy Role Enactment Framework visually summarises these aspects to reflect how regional education officers' role enactment and their interpretation and translation of policy influences the attainment of policy coherence.

7.3.5. Policy Role Enactment Framework

Figure 7.1

A Policy Role Enactment Framework Based on Research Findings
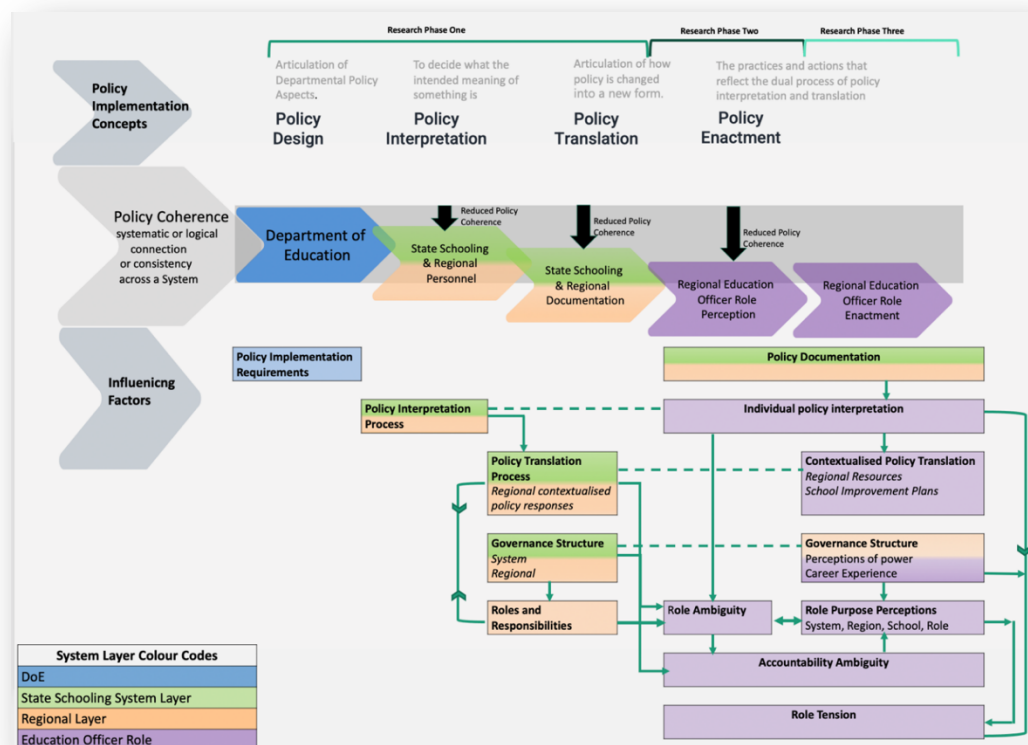
Figure 7.1 (developed from Figures 4.8 and 5.3 in Chapters 4 and 5) depicted the theoretical concept of policy coherence by a large grey arrow that began on the left of the framework and moved through and across the subsequent policy implementation processes. As each research phase findings were identified, they were placed under the policy coherence section. Using the lens of organisational alignment, policy coherence is achieved when policy is aligned. Where factors were not aligned across the research phases the attainment of policy coherence seemed to be impacted.

The initial factors that influenced policy enactment were identified as influencing factors positioned below the policy enactment concept. The effect of these factors on the coherence between the policy translation and policy enactment concepts was characterised by the position of each coloured arrow (positioned in alignment or partial alignment with the preceding arrow) with the reduction of policy coherence depicted by black arrows. The emerging relationships between influencing factors were depicted by green arrows. The identified factors with the framework are discussed in the next section.

7.3.5.1. Policy Implementation Requirements. Policy design documents (Chapter 4) clearly articulated that policies instruments should outline their functions, responsibilities, and purpose. As policy was translated into contextual responses (regional operational plans), the articulation of detailed functions and responsibilities diminished, with broad responsibilities being omitted or situated within descriptive text. The strategic alignment of policy in action documentation (for example, State Schooling Strategy [2019a]) to policy implementation requirements (for example, regional operational plans) was therefore negatively influenced.

7.3.5.2. Policy Interpretation Practices. Policy interpretation practices through conversational structures were underpinned by the idea that interpretation was predominantly implicit and individual. As the development of shared understandings, through a focus on developing shared cognition was lacking, policy interpretations were influenced by an individual's perceptions of what policy should look like, previous experiences, practices and beliefs.

The notion of shared policy understandings were supported by participants' descriptions that identified that broad and vague policy language was also identified as contributing to differing policy interpretations. As the participants described the

impact policy language had on regional and school-based departmental employees' interpretations, they also posited that policy documents were able to be accessed and interpreted independently by school staff, resulting in a variety of policy interpretations at the school system layer.

When considering how policy coherence is achieved, a critical aspect identified by Hoing (2013) is that policy translations are based on shared policy interpretations and understandings. Within this study this has been attributed to the notion of collective cognition alignment of policy messages. It is evident within this study that the lack of formal policy interpretation practices that ensure there are shared understandings of policy messages has resulted in a lack of collective cognitive alignment.

7.3.5.3. Policy Translation Practices. Although formal policy translation practices were not explicitly described within participants' descriptions of their enacted role, policy documents identified that the system had policy templates for regional operational plans, school improvement plans and the inquiry model and these were utilised by regions and schools in the development of contextualised policy responses, guidelines, resources and school improvement plans. The regional or school strategies that were inputted into the translation tools were influenced by policy interpretation practices. As the DoE's policy strategies were translated into multiple targeted regional strategies, the perception of the amount of change and subsequent documentation being implemented at once was overwhelming (Finding #10).

The findings identified that this resulted in there appearing to be no consistent clarity around policy messages as the plethora of policy documents were often required to be accessed and interpreted simultaneously. These notions suggested that the strategic and collective cognitive alignment of policy was therefore negatively influenced.

7.3.5.4. Governance Structure. Within the system governance structure, regions were identified as "play[ing] a critical role in supporting the performance of state schools" (DETE, 2014, p. 7) and "ensur[ing[consistency and alignment with departmental priorities" (DETE, 2014, p. 6). The omission of regional education officer teams within the system governance model seemed to inhibit the transparency of clear system roles associated with policy implementation (Finding #5). This in turn influenced the perception of the regional education officers' role within policy

implementation and the subsequent structural alignment of policy implementation practices.

7.3.5.5. Roles and Responsibilities. Within policy in action documentation (State Schooling Strategy [2019a] and P-12 CARF), the roles and responsibilities associated with policy implementation were tasked to collective state schooling stakeholders (e.g., schools, school leaders, teachers) and implicitly positioned within descriptive text. Regional roles and responsibilities were not evidenced within these documents.

As policy was translated into regional operational plans, the partial alignment of school support to policy reflected regions' autonomy and flexibility in determining how they would deliver services to their schools and therefore resulted in inconsistent reference to policy documents across the regions. The lack of specific roles and responsibilities within documentation resulted in regional education officers developing their own individual role responsibilities. The participants utilised their interpretation of policy documents (State Schooling Strategy and P-12 CARF [Queensland Government, 2020a]), their own career experience and how they were tasked by regional system leaders to create their own role responsibilities. As a result, there was a variety of regional education role perceptions that included a leadership role, a support role, responsibility for building the capability of others, responsibility for implementing system and state strategies, and responsibility for improving student outcomes.

While the implementation of strategies aligned with broad policy objectives, that is, to implement and align school processes to the Australian Curriculum, regional education officers did not articulate specific role responsibilities or describe their role as a policy resource. This resulted in the partial misalignment of regional education officers' policy role purpose and policy objectives.

7.3.5.6. Role Purpose Perceptions. Understanding how policy was translated into action and the connection to role purpose as reflected in role responsibilities, was influenced by the diversity of role perceptions. In the absence of regional education officers' role responsibilities, individuals shaped their role through a variety of interactions at the system, regional and school system layer. As a result of this, they predominantly perceived their role to be a leadership role that was responsible for supporting schools to implement school improvement strategies and build teaching and learning capability. Regional education officers, as system middle

leaders, were unable to clearly articulate how this was achieved or how they knew they were successful in enacting this role perception.

The participants acknowledged that within the system structure there was a hierarchical relationship between formal roles (RD, ARD and school principals) which was reflected within the system governance structure. This structure influenced how role tasks were assigned and received by regional and school personnel. At times, this resulted in misalignment between regional education officers' role purpose perception and the strategic focus of the regional system leaders (ARDs) or other system leaders (regional peers, school principals and leadership teams). This in turn caused role tension for regional education officers and influenced the structural and strategic alignment of policy.

7.3.5.7. Role Ambiguity. Role ambiguity was commonly experienced by regional education officers when they had "uncertainty about which tasks and responsibilities [were] part of [their] role" (Ebbers & Wijnberg, 2017, p. 143). Regional education officers consistently expressed the need to clarify their role purpose and associated responsibilities and ways of working. In the absence of clearly articulated policy implementation roles and responsibilities, regional education officers' roles were continuously shaped by their own interpretation of policy texts and the depth and breadth of human interactions that occurred between system leaders, peers, and school personnel. Further, the regional education officers noted that there were often diverse role perspectives that caused role tension and required system middle leaders to draw off their career experience to be flexible in how they mitigated these diverse role perspectives to enact their role. Ongoing role ambiguity resulted in role tension and influenced the structural and strategic alignment of policy as it was implemented.

7.3.5.8. Accountability Ambiguity. Role accountability was closely linked to role responsibilities. As regional education officers attempted to identify the aspects of a role they were held account for their (Christensen et al., 2016), they were unable to articulate formal consistent role accountabilities or success criteria. Regional education officers articulated that the absence of role measures led to their inability to identify how to measure the direct impact of their work. They articulated that being able to measure their impact would provide them with clarity of expectations and a clear line of sight, that in turn would support them to reflect upon and improve their role enactment.

7.3.5.9. Role Tension. Role tension (Rai, 2016) was experienced by system middle leaders (regional education officers) when they were faced by diverse role perspectives and differing role expectations. These experiences occurred within a number of human interactions (system leaders, peers and school personnel) and were often reflective of power perceptions between the various roles. Role tension resulted in regional education officers enacting role tasks that were in direct conflict with their individual role perceptions or additional role tasks assigned by other system personnel. Therefore, role tensions influenced the structural and strategic alignment of policy implementation.

The theoretical dimensions and theoretical concepts that emerged within and across the research phases illuminated the impact of policy role enactment on policy coherence (underpinned by policy implementation and organisational alignment theory).

7.3.6. *Emerging Implications for Policy Coherence*

Based on the findings that emerged, a policy role enactment framework depicting the impact of regional education officers' role enactment (interpretation and translation of policy) on policy coherence was presented. To highlight the significance of this emerging model within policy coherence conceptions, the findings were collated in Table 7.3 and aligned to current theoretical concepts. Utilising the alignment to current theoretical concepts, the study's findings also enlightened current understandings of the connection between role enactment and policy coherence. Specifically, the study's policy role enactment framework supported and refined earlier insights into how:

- the combination of role theory, together with policy implementation and organisational alignment as a valuable theoretical framework to identify the impact of policy that is shaped by the policy context and social interactions with various actors, enactment both interpreted and translated on policy coherence.
- individual policy interpretation impacts collective role enactment and posits the notion of being aware of the importance of developing collective cognitive alignment of policy messages and policy role responsibilities. Together these two notions would enhance the coherence between collective policy interpretation practices that are utilised to developed

contextualised policy responses (Figure 7.2). This positions the emerging notion of the importance of systems developing collective cognitive cognisance.

- incorporating cognitive alignment (Jeyaraj, 2011) into organisational alignment framework (Limani, 2015) is depicted in Figure 7.1. This critical aspect of policy coherence enhances understandings of how policy is coherently enacted through regional education officers' roles as they collectively interpret and translate policy into contextual responses based on shared understandings of policy objectives and measures.

Figure 7.2

A Case for Collective Cognitive Cognisance
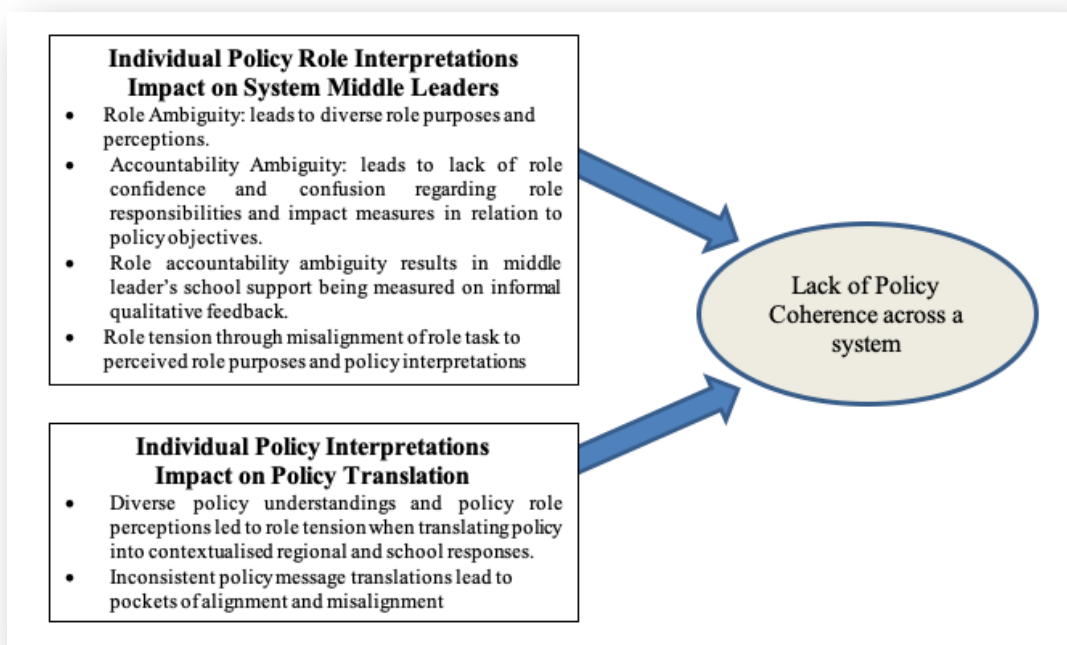
With the findings from the study represented within the Policy Role Enactment Framework the next step was to reflect upon these study findings and existing and emerging theoretical concepts to consider what implications for policy coherence and system reform.

Chapter 8 explores the implications of these findings for theory, policy implementation and practice and positions the resulting theoretical framework for promoting policy coherence through the enacted role of regional education officers.

CHAPTER 8: A POLICY COHERENCE THEORY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Introduction

The findings that emerged from the research study illuminated the perceptions and experiences of regional education officers and through their voices, the factors that impacted on how policy was interpreted and translated through the enacted role of regional education officers within Queensland's Department of Education. Through the development of a detailed account of how regional education officers understood and talked about their role and expectations, the study considered the factors that were seen as influencing policy translation and role enactment.

The findings of each research phase cascaded from chapter to chapter, unfolding the nature of this complexity as reflected in the policy role enactment framework within Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. The voices of the system middle leaders (regional education officers) bounded this study, and it was through their voices that the impact of role enactment on coherent policy implementation was revealed.

The study identified that the lack of policy coherence across the system was attributed to (1) the impact that role enactment had on how policy was interpreted and translated, resulting in the emergence of collective cognitive cognisance, and (2) the subsequent impact of collective cognitive cognisance on coherent policy implementation. Together these two findings answered the study's identified research question: What emerge as significant policy implementation factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy as they enact their role?

This final chapter brings the thesis to conclusion by considering the findings and presenting the emerging theory and the implications for practice.

8.2. Research Implications for Theory: Resulting Frameworks

Currently the research on coherence and research the role of regions (sometimes referred to as districts) are seen as separate entities. The current research study utilised two theoretical framework that drew upon relevant literature of organisational alignment (Limani, 2015) and coherent policy implementation (Viennet & Pont, 2017) to explore how policy was implemented within the system's middle layer. Considering the findings, the policy role enactment framework, discussed within Chapter 7, was conceptualised to reflect the interdependent policy implementation and role enactment factors that influenced the attainment of policy coherence, as an aspect of system reform.

It became evident from the findings that regional education officer's role enactment appeared to directly impact the achievement of policy coherence through policy enactment (interpretation and translation). As their role was originally positioned in the literature as either inconsequential or positive institutional actors in system reform (Botelho et al., 2016; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Rorrer et al., 2008), this finding adds a valuable perspective to the impact that middle system leaders' roles have on attaining coherent policy implementation.

In addition, the findings identified that in the absence of formal sense-making processes and collective cognition, a variety of individual policy interpretations were being utilised to translate policy into new forms. In light of this, the attainment of achieving system-wide policy coherence was negatively impacted. This finding positions the need to understand how coherent policy messaging through policy interpretation and translation practices was attained. This research study posits that this is achieved when systems utilise formal practices that support the development of collective cognitive cognisance (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1

Collective Cognitive Cognisance
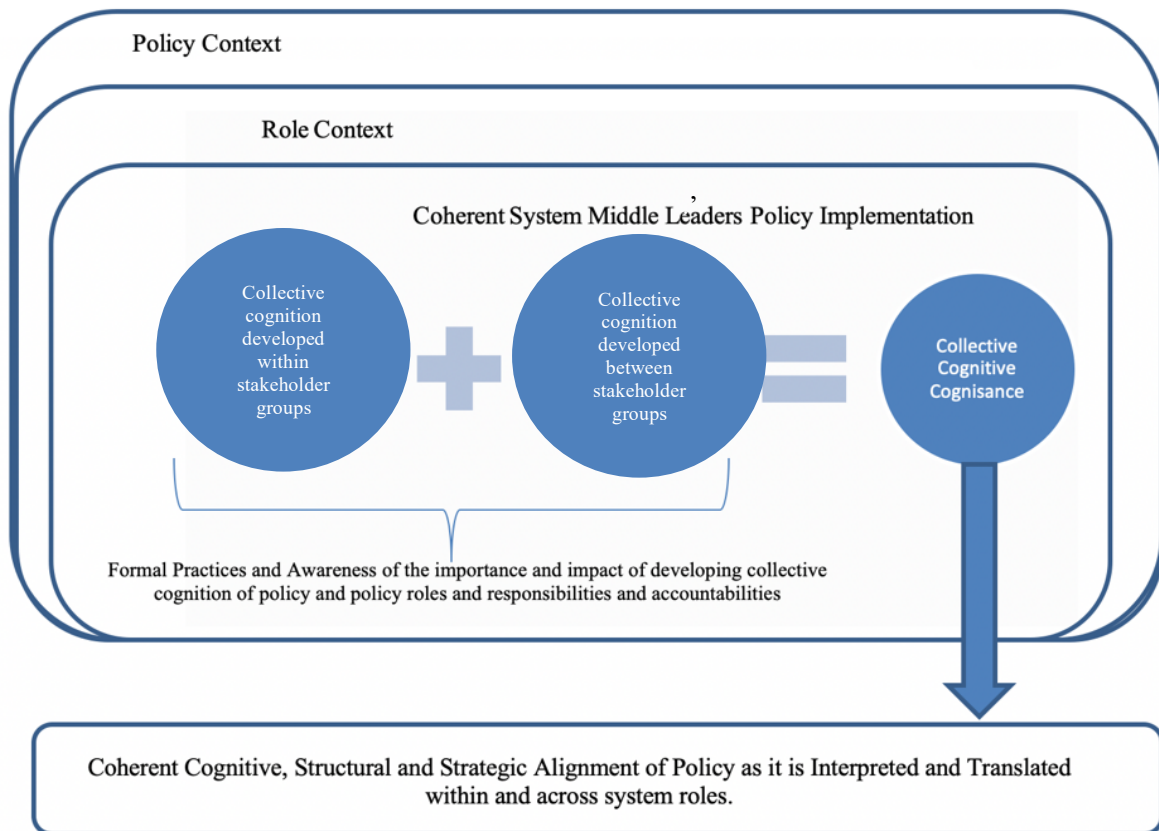
Collective cognitive cognisance from a system's perspective is an awareness of the impact that collective cognition plays in attaining policy coherence. Through the intentional development of collective policy understandings and the interpretation and translation of these understandings through the enactment of formal policy roles, policy coherence is promoted.

Collective cognitive cognisance is therefore defined within this study as a system's awareness of the need to utilise its governance structures consciously and strategically to make sense of policy messages and how policy is translated. This collective sense-making ensures there is a common understanding from which policy is interpreted and translated through enacted policy roles. This in turn promotes coherent policy implementation as suggested by Coburn et al. (2016) who outlined that having a variety of policy understandings and interpretations contribute to the development of misaligned policy strategies.

Over the past decades, the role of system middle leaders and regions in educational reform theory has highlighted that, when regions (districts) take a system approach to aligning their regional focus and vision for student achievement through

a comprehensive strategy (Burns et al., 2019), they positively impact student outcomes within individual schools (Fullan, 2009).

Within this literature, there was consensus that foci for education reform should be on improving quality teaching and learning through empowered school leadership with a focus on the school as the unit of change with identified collective regional (district) actions. This study's findings, therefore, build on these notions to consider policy implementation roles within the regional (district) system layer. Until now, this focus been limited to studies on roles associated with senior leadership and principal supervision (Alsbury & Whitaker, 2015; Bloxham, 2014,) as well as small-scale studies on how individual district personnel have supported district-wide strategy implementation within schools (Hoing, 2006; Wahl, 2015).

The interdependent relationship between these three alignment aspects, policy role factors and coherent policy implementation is depicted in Figure 8.2. Further, Figure 8.2 utilises the emergence of the notion of collective cognitive cognisance to illuminate the interdependent relationship between traditional organisational alignment aspects (strategic and structural) and the need to include a cognitive alignment aspect as policy is interpreted and translated. This depiction adds further clarity to how the inclusion of cognitive alignment with policy coherence theory promotes coherent policy implementation as policy is interpreted and translated through enacted policy roles.

Figure 8.2

A Case for Strategic, Structural and Cognitive Alignment within Coherent Policy Implementation Theory
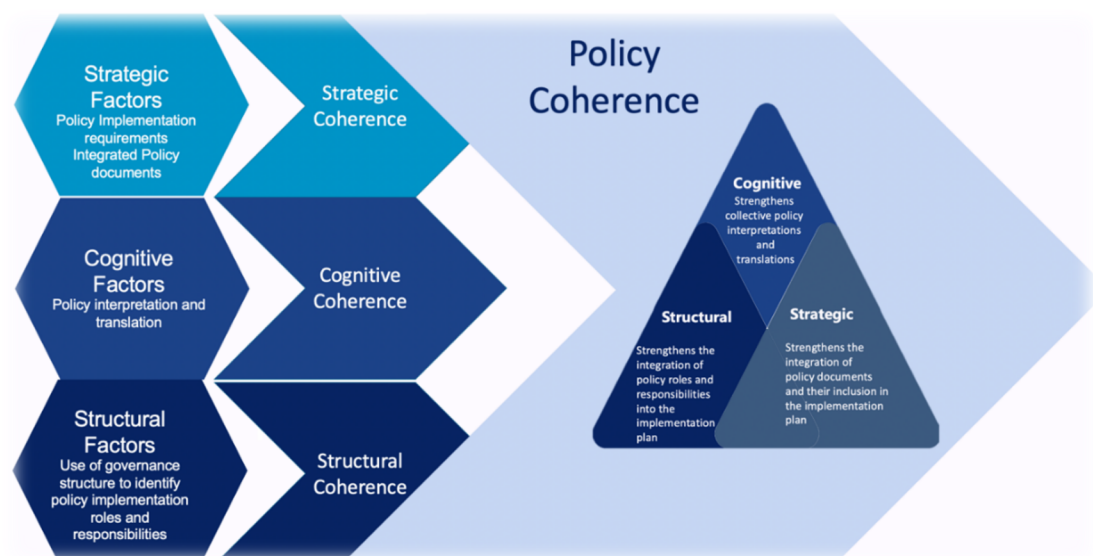
Figure 8.2 begins on the left by identifying which organisational alignment aspect (strategic, cognitive or structural) policy implementation, role and role enactment factors contribute to. As each factor and alignment aspect is interdependent, the attainment of policy coherence cannot be achieved without considering all coherence aspects together, as depicted by the overlapping triangles in the figure.

The notion of cognitive alignment was previously silent within system reform literature that emphasised the importance of utilising structural and strategic alignment (Barki & Pinsonneault, 2005; Leppitt, 2006) as a precursor to transparent policy implementation processes. While policy translation was positioned as a characteristic of policy coherence (Peurach et al., 2019), the literature on how policy translation occurred was limited to cognitive and sociocultural processes positioned at the individual school level (Ganon-Shilon & Chen, 2019; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009). In the systems' literature, they were couched within organisational learning culture concepts.

The study's findings, therefore, broaden the literature on coherent policy implementation through the identification of the need to include processes that explicitly support the development of cognitive alignment. The inclusion of this aspect supports the coherent crafting of policy messages, as policy is interpretated and translated through enacted policy roles.

Utilising the overarching findings, the framework that emerged from the study (see Figure 8.3) highlights role theory as a valuable theoretical framework that identifies how policy implementation (that is shaped by policy and social interactions with various actors) is interpreted and translated. Role theory, together with policy implementation and organisational alignment frameworks, provides a useful tool through which to analyse and improve policy coherence theory. These findings led to the emergence of the term policy role enactment, which extends on the notions of policy actors within policy implementation to explicitly consider how role factors influence implementation. This term is positioned as of greatest importance or prominence within the policy role enactment framework (indicated by a yellow circle within Figure 8.3).

Figure 8.3

A Framework for Achieving System Policy Coherence
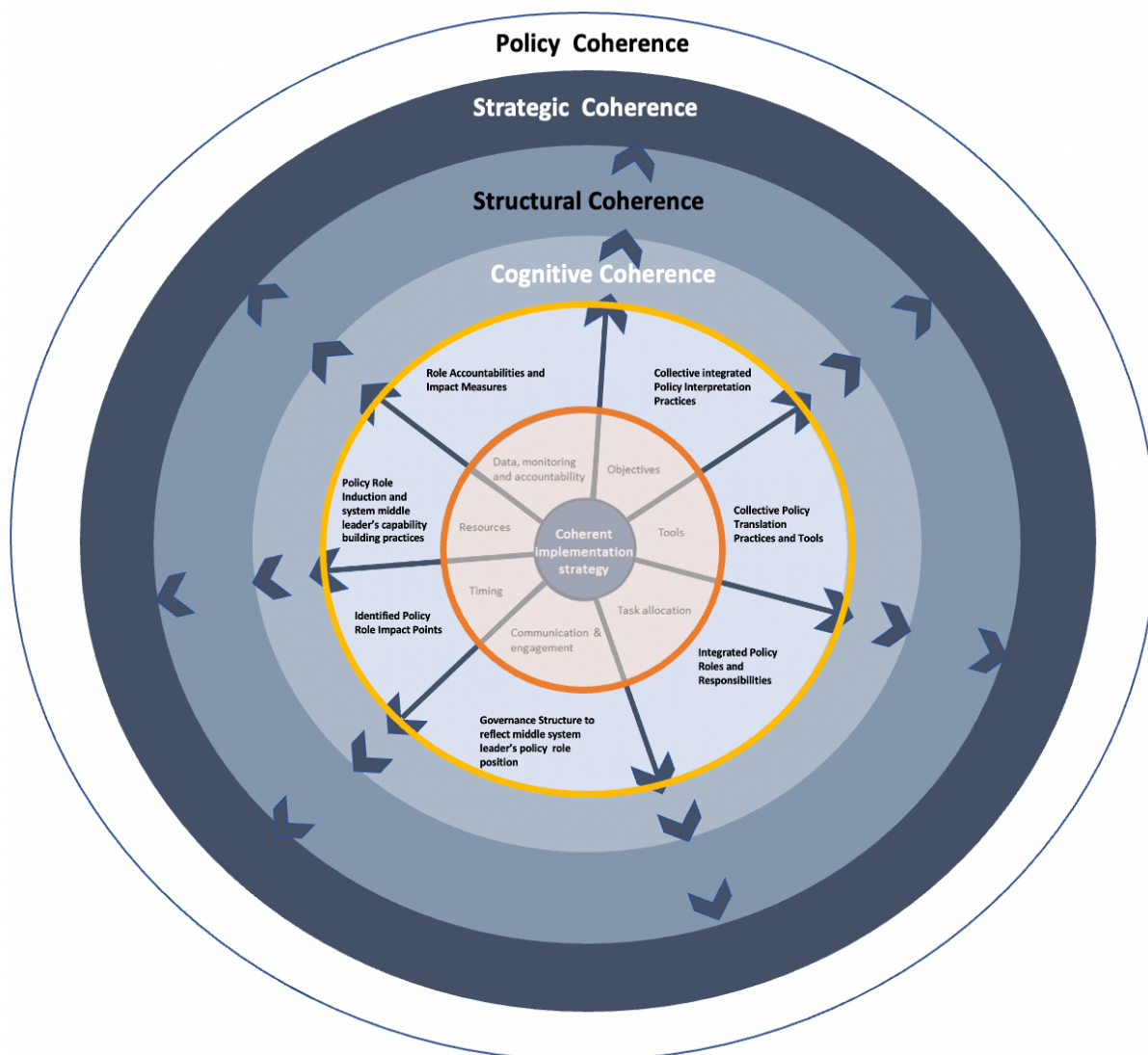
Note: The Framework connects this research study's policy role enactment factors (the outer four circles) to existing coherent policy implementation criteria (the inner circle). Centrally positioned are elements from Viennet & Pont (2017). From Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework (p. 7), by R. Viennet & B. Pont, 2017, OECD. Copyright 2017 by OECD

The Framework for Achieving System Policy Coherence utilises Viennet and Pont's (2017) coherent policy implementation (the inner circle shaded in light orange) criteria that identifies the influence of policy design and implementation

criterion on the attainment of policy coherence. The third circle (outlined by yellow borders) captures the findings and recommendations of this study to explicitly connect the concept of policy role enactment to the concept of coherent policy implementation. The key criteria were:

- Governance structures to reflect middle system leaders' policy role positions;
- Policy role induction and system middle leaders' capability building practices;
- Integrated policy roles and responsibilities;
- Collective policy translation practices and tools;
- Collective integrated policy interpretation practices;
- Role accountabilities and impact measures; and
- Identified role policy impact points.

Together the two concepts of coherent policy design and implementation, and policy role enactment and their identified criteria, identify the factors that influence the level of (vertical and horizontal), cognitive, structural and strategic alignment collectively achieved within each middle system policy role group (e.g., regional education officers) responsible for interpreting and translating policy.

8.3. Research Implications for Practice

As the main purpose of this study was to determine what emerges as significant factors influencing how system middle leaders interpret and translate policy to enact their role. The analysis of the data and subsequent research findings were synthesised within the Policy Role Enactment Framework Figure 7.1 (Chapter 7) that informed the identification of factors and their implications for regional education officers' policy role enactment. The policy design, implementation and role enactment factors that influenced the attainment of policy coherence were:

- policy implementation requirements;
- policy interpretation practices;
- policy translation practices;
- governance structure;
- roles and responsibilities;
- role purpose perceptions;
- role ambiguity; and

- accountability ambiguity.

This study's findings provided significant insights into how policy is utilised to develop contextualised policy responses and it subsequently illuminated the importance of basing the translation of policy messages on consistent policy understandings. These findings were in contrast to Hoing (2006) and Wahl's (2019) research, that aimed to explore the role of regions (districts) when implementing regional (district) wide strategy responses and positioned the importance of developing contextualised ongoing policy responses with schools. Key district role characteristics associated with effective school support were identified, these included flexible approaches to meet individual school needs and supporting not dictating policy responses. Hoing (2006) and Wahl's (2019) research, however failed to consider how district personnel utilised policy and the impact this had on achieving system wide policy coherence.

This study, therefore, adds these additional contributions to Hoing's (2006) coherent policy messaging and crafting notions. Furthermore, the factors that impacted on policy role enactment, that is, the interpretation and translation of policy, have been utilised to develop a set of recommendations (Table 8.1) that support the attainment of coherent policy implementation.

Table 8.1

Research Recommendations: How to Put the Findings into Practice to Achieve Policy Coherence

Recommendations for Policy Coherence	Policy Coherence Impacts		
	Strategic Alignment	Structural Alignment	Cognitive Alignment
Recommendation #1: *Policy documents be located in one area and explicitly integrated to strengthen the **strategic alignment** within and across each policy document group.*	▪		
Recommendation #2: *Utilise policy implementation expectations to reduce the number of policy documents and identify, document and communicate policy roles, responsibilities, and role measures to strengthen the **strategic** and **structural alignment** between policy document objectives, their implementation and policy role purposes.*	▪	▪	
Recommendation #3: *Intentionally incorporate cognitive (interpretation and translation) processes that aim to develop policy understanding through the development of new policy forms (contextualised regional policy plans and school responses) to strengthen the **strategic** and **cognitive** alignment of policy messages and intended outcomes*	▪		▪
Recommendation #4 Identify and document policy roles, responsibilities, and role measures (in alignment with policy objectives) to strengthen the **strategic** and **structural alignment** within policy implementation.	▪	▪	
Recommendation #5 *Incorporate formal collaborative policy interpretation practices aimed at building **collective cognitive alignment** to strengthen the **structural alignment** within and between policy implementation plans and policy roles.*	▪		▪
Recommendation #6 Induct and develop the leadership capacity of system middle leaders because system leaders strengthen the structural alignment between role purpose and role enactment.		▪	
Recommendation #7 Identify and develop collective capacity in relation to the measurement of role impact connected to the broader policy objectives to strengthen strategic and structural alignment in relation to policy implementation within the middle system-layer.	▪	▪	

Further, the recommendations were utilised to develop a *Regional Education Officers' Policy Role Enactment Framework* (outlined in Figure 8.4) which positions each recommendation in relation to the three-policy coherence alignment

characteristic (structural, strategic and cognitive). These characteristics align to the Framework for Achieving System Policy Coherence (Figure 8.3) to provide practical examples of how to implement practices that holistically support the attainment of cognitively, structurally and strategically coherent policy implementation through enacted policy roles.

Figure 8.4

Regional Education Officers' Policy Role Enactment Recommendations
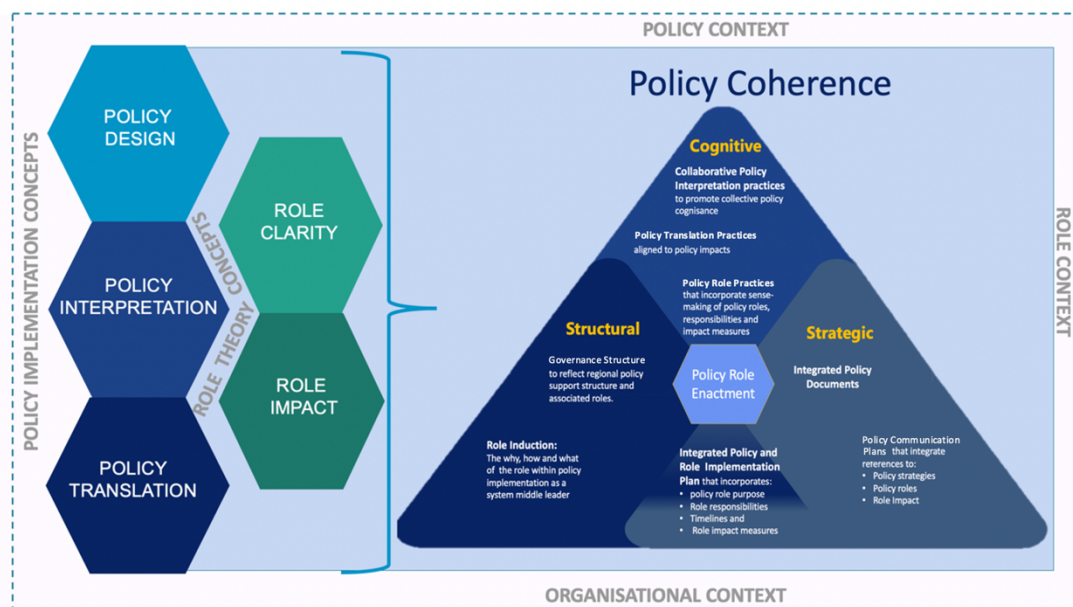
Figure 8.4 outlines that, within a policy and organisational context, there are structural, strategic and cognitive policy design and implementation characteristics that through policy role enactment and with an explicit understanding of policy role responsibilities and policy role impacts, can promote the attainment of policy coherence.

Identifying how the system's governance structure explicitly supports policy implementation ensures policy roles can be clearly and transparently communicated. This in turn informs the induction of system regional middle leaders into their roles and provides clarity of the role of system leadership in supporting policy interpretation and translation.

Through the use of intentional policy design processes that incorporate a focus on policy role enactment, systems develop integrated policy documents and policy communication plans. The explicit and intentional documentation of policy

strategies, policy roles and policy role impact points, strategically supports the interpretation and translation of coherent policy messages.

Coherent policy implementation is further supported through the intentional inclusion of the following collective cognitive cognisance processes:

- Collaborative policy interpretation practices that promote sense making and collective cognition.

- Formalised policy translation practices and templates aligned to identified policy goals and impacts

- The development and documentation of policy role practices that support the development of collective cognitive cognisance.

Together these practices support system regional middle leaders to coherent implement policy through their enacted roles.

8.4. Research Limitations

The study identifies a possible research limitation. The study is limited to one education system which, whilst large, has specific contextual and cultural aspects that would not necessarily be replicated in other systems. Whilst generalisability is not a concern for this research approach, the significance for the size of this system, as well as aspects of the findings, may indicate possible application of the generated framework to other contexts. It could also provide a platform for future research

The limitations identified in this study were focused on the case being limited to one educational system and that the data, while aimed at being reflective of the broad composition of regional education officers was reliant on interview and the sample size. It is acknowledged that further research into the policy implementation, as explored in this study, would contribute to an essential and growing body of research on the role enactment of system middle leaders and their impact on system reform.

8.5. Further Research

The following range of opportunities for further research address the research limitations as well as capturing opportunities identified during the data analysis and findings chapters. Firstly, the policy role enactment framework could be utilised as a tool to develop understandings of policy role enactment through the various roles of system middle leaders. The findings could be utilised to explore the consistency of system middle leader's role perceptions and enacted practice.

In addition, as the focus of the study was to investigate how policy was interpreted and translated through regional education officer's enacted roles with the Queensland Department of Education. Research could be conducted to explore policy role enactment within additional system leaders' roles (outlined in Chapter 4) and within similarly placed leaders in public education systems of other states and territories within education systems to determine the consistency of policy role enactment practices and their impact on policy coherence. Another approach could be to conduct further research on the enacted role of regional education officers through observing their role in action.

Finally, further research into the use of collective cognitive cognisance practices and their impact on policy coherence interpretation and translation practices. The focus on coherent policy messaging would extend upon this study research findings and provide deeper insights into how systems create policy coherence awareness.

8.6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of role theory, policy implementation theory and organisation alignment theories provide an interpretivisit insight into the development of policy coherence through system middle leaders' policy role enactment. Through understanding the interdependent relationships between the bodies of research, role factors that influence policy coherence were illuminated. The use of the resulting policy role enactment framework would contribute to validation of the framework which in turn could be utilised within other education systems within Australia and internationally, and is an identified area for research in other contexts and roles.

The study also offered insights into the importance of including cognitive alignment as a critical aspect of organisational policy coherence theory. This theoretical implication illuminates that achieving structural and strategic alignment through policy role enactment is dependent upon the development of collective cognitive alignment. This study's theoretical contribution positions the importance of sense making interactions between system leaders, their regional teams and schools to consider cognitive alignment as an organisational construct underpinning the attainment of policy coherence.

Finally, the research sheds light on the concept of organisational cognisance and cognitive alignment through the identification that system-wide cognitive

coherence requires an awareness of developing collective understandings of policy and policy roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities within and across a system. The research posits that this is achieved when systems strategically utilise their governance structure and formal practices to support the development of collective cognitive cognisance.

The knowledge and frameworks developed from this study provide a more in-depth understanding of the system middle leaders' role in interpretation and translating policy through their role enactment and more importantly an integrated policy role enactment framework, which provides an area for future research. The recommendations point the way forward in the complex and important quest for policy into practice through coherent policy implementation, to fully utilise the valuable but often times underutilised resource of the system middle leader.

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APPENDIX A

Self-Administered Online Qualitative Survey

System Reform: An Exploration of the Enacted Role of System Middle Leaders

This project is being undertaken as part of a PHD research study that seek to investigate how policy translation is developed within the middle system level, through an exploration of the enacted role of middle system leaders.

The purpose of the research is to develop a detailed account of how role perception and expectations influence policy translation and role enactment across each of the 7 regions. Through this case study, this research will enhance current understandings of the role of system middle leaders in building policy coherence as an aspect of effective System Reform.

The research team requests your assistance because as a Middle System Leader you have a unique insight into the factors that impact on how you enact your role. We are interested in what provisions may already be in place to support your role and what provisions you would like to see developed in the future.

By completing the following survey you are **confirming your agreement** to participate in this project. Anonymous responses will not be able to be identified or deleted once submitted.

At the end of the survey you will have the option of selecting to participate in a follow up interview.

If you select to participate in this follow up interview you will be emailed a project overview and consent form.

If you have any questions please email the researcher Tania Leach: Tania.Leach@usq.edu.au

System Middle Leaders

Please identify your gender *
❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Female
◯ Male
◯ Prefer not to disclose

Please identify the Highest Degree you have completed. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Diploma
◯ Bachelor Degree
◯ Masters Degree
◯ Doctoral/PHD

How many years have you have been a practising Educator? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ 1-3 years
◯ 4-6 years
◯ 7-9 years
◯ 10-12 years
◯ 13-15 years
◯ 16-18 years
◯ 19-21 years
◯ 22-24 years
◯ 25-27 years
◯ 27-29 years
◯ 30 or more years

How many years have you worked in a state/regional role? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Less than 1 year
◯ 1 year
◯ 2 years
◯ 3 years
◯ 4 years
◯ 5 years
◯ More than 5

Why did you decide to apply for your current role? *

Please write your answer here:

What is the purpose of your role? *

Please write your answer here:

When you began your role what induction/support processes or professional learning were offered or provided? *

Please write your answer here:

From your perspective, how did this support you in performing your role? *

Please write your answer here:

Approximately: what percentage of your time (with a total of 100%) do you spend working in the following: *

❶ Only numbers may be entered in these fields.
Please write your answer(s) here:

Your Office	
Facilitating professional learning	
Collaborating with school leadership teams	
Collaborating with teachers	
In classrooms	
Other	

How does the system support what your do in your role? *

Please write your answer here:

e.g. documentation, professional learning

How do you know you are effective in your role? *

Please write your answer here:

What would support you in performing your role more effectively? *

Please write your answer here:

Please indicate if you wish to be contacted to engage in a follow up interview.

Interviews will be approximately 40minutes in length and occur at a time and location negotiated with you.

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ No

◯ Yes, please provide your name and email address in the comments section

Make a comment on your choice here:

APPENDIX B

Table B1

Policy Development Documents Data Reduction Summary with Resulting Themes and Subthemes.

Criterion	NVivo Word Tracing using High Frequency Terms Associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples	Theme 1 Policy Development	Theme 2 Policy Implementation
Objectives		This procedure outlines the department's approach to developing effective policies and procedures consistent with the Policy Management Framework development and improvement cycle (Document A). This policy supports the department's approach to developing effective policies and procedures consistent with the Policy Management Framework. (Document C) Outlines what the government intends to do through stated plans of action (Document D)	**Policy approach** • Framework • Converts government intent into policy and into action • Management and improvement cycle • Guided by key principles.	**Policy Focus** • Outlines government intent • Plans of action
Timing		Each financial year, policy/procedure owners should consider who the appropriate approver is for each policy and procedure within their area of responsibility (Document A) Policies are to be reviewed at least every five years and procedures are to be reviewed at least every three years. (Document A)	**Review cycles:** • Policy at least 5 years • Procedure at least 3 years	**Review cycles**: • documented versions • Review process

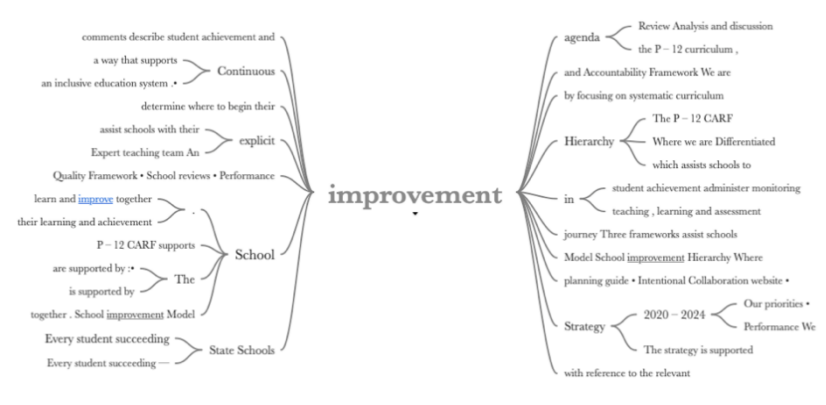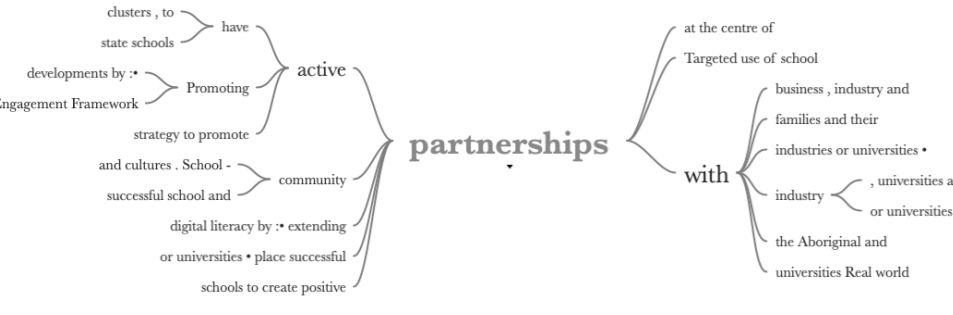| Criterion	NVivo Word Tracing using High Frequency Terms Associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples	Theme 1 Policy Development	Theme 2 Policy Implementation
Tools	do not have mandatory application . / as they do not / policies and procedures that / have / Compliance with a policy / Compliance with a procedure / is / means applies across Queensland 4 / procedure clearly identifies the minimum / **mandatory** /)• provides / government direction and purpose • / the ' how to ' and / Guideline A guideline :• is often / . / Policy and Procedure Register New / Procedure A procedure :• provides the ' / application / across the department or / mandatory requirements for the / is determined by direct interpretation / requirements / and who is responsible / for the development , implementation	Ensure the policy or procedure clearly identifies the minimum mandatory requirements (Document A) Compliance with a policy is mandatory (Document C)	**Requirements** • Mandatory requirements identified for policy and procedure development Published on policy and procedure register	**Requirements** • States that compliance with policy or procedure is mandatory • Requires direct interpretation
Task Allocation	clearly outline the / process / departmental approach , including / complaints management system . / information Define clear / principles Clearly defines / and / Roles / **responsibilities** / department to articulate its functions , / or direction informing those activities . / to implement the policy • identifies / Act as a control for / and purpose , while also managing / Executive Management Board (EMB)• consi / for / individuals or business areas / managing customer complaints a / Key Features Policy owner Procedure / o o c c e / required to support policy implementation • / What this means for DoE •	These instruments detail what the department and its officers will do, how they will do it… (Document A) Clearly defines roles and responsibilities (Document C) Deputy Directors-General (DDG) – as the policy/procedure owner • ensure policies convey government intent and procedures clearly outline the process and responsibilities required to support policy implementation (Document A) Policy owner: Ensures the intent of government policy. Accountable for approving policies or delegating approvals. (Document C)	**Instruments** • Clearly defined roles (who, what how) • Outlines departmental approach • Departmental functions • Delegating approvals • Operational policies and procedures are mandatory • Standalone guidelines and fact sheets do not have mandatory applications	**Documented processes** • Roles and responsibilities to support implementation • Mechanisms for feedback Processes for implementation
Communication and Engagement	cycle • / consult with / to / all relevant / English . 1.4 . Consult / and guidelines . Consults with appropriate / consider the needs of all / **stakeholders** / advice is provided to / and consider feedback from / key / This plan should identify / Quality assures content . Provides quality / Uncontrolled copy . Refer to the / about the change . 4 . Monitor / and end users . 4.3 If / throughout the policy and procedure / be consulted throughout the / to / ensure policies and procedures / • quality assure content to meet	consult with all relevant stakeholders to ensure policies and procedures consider the needs of all stakeholders (Document A) Support a consistent user approach: accessible, easy to search and navigate, topic based, clear and easy to understand; current and reliable (Document C) Ensures information, such as 'what', 'when', and 'how' is clearly communicated to support policy implementation (Document C)	**Quality assurance processes** • Meets relevant stakeholder needs • Includes consultation processes with stakeholders • Utilises feedback from stakeholders • Identifies key stakeholders Published in one place	**Policy accessibility** • Consistent user approach • Easy to search and navigate • Clear and easy to understand including what, when and how Published in one place

Criterion	NVivo Word Tracing using High Frequency Terms Associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples	Theme 1 Policy Development	Theme 2 Policy Implementation
Data, monitoring and accountability	*as a control for risks; stakeholders about the change . 4 .; the Policy and Procedure Register •* **monitor** *, review and provide management inf; Aligns to strategic priorities Commun; and review policies and / or*	Monitor and review policies and/or procedures 4.1 Policy/procedure owners should initiate reviews of their policies and procedures. (Document A) Ensures major review of policies and procedures. (Document C)	**Review cycles** • Control risks • Align to strategic priorities • Produce management information	**Version updates** • Communication of updates to stakeholders. • Update management information
Resources	**support**	Supporting information provides advice and tools to support staff to comply with the department's policies and procedures (Document B) Supporting information may provide advice and tools to support staff to comply (Document C) process and responsibilities required to support policy implementation (Document A)	**Supporting information** • Support compliance • Processes: • Delegate Responsibilities to support implementation • Align to development and improvement cycle Is located in implementation and communication plans	**Supporting instruments (tools and advice)** • Target staff compliance • Support decision making • Templates • Guidelines • Procedures • Standalone guidelines and fact sheets do not have mandatory applications
Implementation Strategy	**implementation**	A procedure: • provides the 'how to' and sets out processes to implement the policy (Document A) develop an implementation and communication plan to support the new instruments (Document A) is committed to developing and implementing policies and procedures that provide current, reliable and trusted information that is easy to access and understand (Document B)	**Accountabilities** • Policies must reflect current reliable and trusted information • Identifies mandatory requirements	**Implementation support plans** • Implementation plan – includes instructions • Communication plan • Supporting instruments •

Table B2

DoE Strategic Documents Data Reduction Summary with Resulting Themes and Subthemes

Criterion	NVivo Word Tracing using High Frequency Terms Associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Objectives		Our priorities: continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment of the Queensland Kindergarten Learning guideline, the Australian curriculum and senior syllabuses. (P 1 Document f) Making sure students have access to high quality learning opportunities is the success for each student and for Queensland. (Document E) Teachers and school leaders are focused on lifting educational outcomes through evidence-based practice and by monitoring the progress of students. (Document e) Queensland's plan to lift the performance of every state school, student, teacher and principal is outlined in Every student succeeding — State Schools Improvement Strategy (Queensland government, 2020a, p.1)
Communication and Engagement		Working with our partners to develop strategic policy responses using research and evidence. (p 15 Document e) Intentional collaboration — the deliberate actions we take to work, learn and improve together. (Queensland Government, 2019a, p. 19) A key approach (to continuing to deliver improvements for Queensland) will be designing services in partnership with our people, stakeholder and the broader community.

Criterion	NVivo Word Tracing using High Frequency Terms Associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Implementation Strategy		Using our governance to design and align the direction of our work, deliver our purpose and improve our performance (p15 document E) Our measures: achievement, engagement and wellbeing and transitions. Our principles Alignment: our shared understanding of the Queensland Kindergarten earning guideline, the Australian curriculum, the senior syllabuses and the policies that govern our work. Precision: how we use evidence to identify the right work and do the work right by planning implementing monitoring and reviewing. Intentional collaboration – the deliberate actions we take to work, learn and improve together. (Queensland Government, 2019a p. 1)
Data, monitoring and accountability		**Measures: financial** and delivery performance and workforce engagement (p15 Document e) Tracking the achievements of students and giving feedback tailored to each individual's learning will see very student and every school achieve growth every year. (Document E) Our measures: literacy and numeracy achievement….(Queensland government, 2019a, p. 11)

Criterion	NVivo Word Tracing using High Frequency Terms Associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Resources	Word tree centred on "resources". Left branches: are supported by :• Inclusive education / diverse needs resources • Indigenous / Indigenous education resources • Youth engagement / Intentional Collaboration website • School review / partnerships Targeted use of school / resources • Students with diverse needs / student with a disability succeeding. Right branches: 200187 Informing our conversations Every / Early Years Connect • Support for / Every student with a disability / Indigenous education resources • Youth engagement / Investing for Success e c / Students with diverse needs resources • / Youth engagement resources • Early Years	system wide independent school reviews that "provide [d] feedback on improving strategies and sharing innovative practices across the system" (DET, 2015, p. 20) The P-12 CARF is complemented by a series of supporting documents that provide additional detail to deliver a world-class education and improve the progress and academic achievement of every student in Prep to Year 12. (Queensland Government, 2020a, p.1) "developed to assist users to understand or comply with policy instruments and [were] located with the relevant policy instrument" (DET, 2015,)
Task Allocation	Word tree centred on "requirements". Left branches: 1 Photography : Welcome to the fold / external assessment) programs comply with the / Queensland Certificate of Education (see eligibility / Queensland state schools The following are / specifies the curriculum , assessment and reporting. Right branches (via "for"):) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement / all Queensland state schools in / curriculum provision , assessment and reporting / Queensland state schools The following / of the relevant authorities , for example :[?]	"every state school having access to a specialist science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teacher" (Queensland Government 2020d, p. 6) "a responsive government" that would "ensure [that] the next generation of Queenslander[s] are healthy resilient and ready to be productive members of society" (Queensland government, 2019c, p. 4).
Timing	Word tree centred on "2020". Left branches: and in OneSchool / for reporting scales / learning and achievement / of the teachers / to Year 7 / succeeding State Schools Improvement Strategy — . Revised January. Right branches: P 12 curriculum , assessment and / – 2024 : Our priorities • Success and / Performance We are guided	Strategic plan 2020 – 2024 Schools are required to: implement (teach, assess and report on) the Australian Curriculum Version 8 by the end of 2020 (p2 P102)
Tools	Word tree centred on "requirements". Left branches: 1 Photography : Welcome to the fold requirements for Queensland state schools The following are / all teaching , learning and assessment (including internal and external assessment) programs comply with the / curriculum , assessment and reporting framework (P – 12 CARF) specifies the curriculum , assessment and reporting / may include a : o statement of results o Queensland Certificate of Education (see eligibility / P – 12 curriculum , assessment and reporting framework Page 1 Photography : Welcome to the fold. Right branches (via "for"):) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement o ensure that all teaching , learning and assessment (/ all Queensland state schools in delivering the curriculum from Prep to Year 12 . / curriculum provision , assessment and reporting to parents / carers . These apply to all Queensland / Queensland state schools The following are requirements for curriculum provision , assessment and reporting / of the relevant authorities , for example : [?] QCAA (General and Applied Senior Syllabuses and QCAA	A requirement of the Australian Government is to provide the Australian Curriculum or equivalent to Prep – Year 10 (Queensland Government, 2020a , p. 2) The following are requirements for curriculum provision assessment and reporting to parents/carers. These apply to all Queensland State Schools from Prep to Year 12 (Queensland Government, 2020a , p. 2)

Table B3

DoE Governance Documents Data Reduction Summary with Resulting Themes and Subthemes

Criterion	NVivo Word tracing using high frequency terms associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Objectives	Word tree centred on **opportunities**. Left branches: in state schools • creating international; increase school to work transitions; industry school partnerships, and funding; jobs for all Queenslanders. More; Coding Academy to provide; dots - K - 2; succeeds Our Alignment — Early — learning; Education system • — Enhance the; system 17. ; need • staff feel valued, have; or the workplace, technology provides; 370364 CENTRAL QUEENSLAND REGION; HPRM19 / 404512 Our principles; managements system, Risk Express. — Our; prepared for the future; Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023; Trim No 19 / 393071); Our opportunities We will embrace; outcomes. 4 Ramey, Sparling & Landesman; partnerships and identifying student communication; pathway to careers by creating; procedures Principals are provided with; design summative assessment to; DoE Strategies 2019 - 23; governance and management processes; local priority employment areas — Provide; of Queenslanders. Our strategies •. Right branches: for — improvement in service delivery; parents to have discussions; regional VET stakeholder networks; review in Years 11; , teachers and education; students — and teachers — to • supporting; to — design their; study science, ; them to use state -; have been delivered to school; Identify and Implement strategies that; Implementing programs that link to; In — 2019 - 20, Metro Region; technological advancements to ensure; a — connected and global; quality education. We; of — changing technologies and new; diversity in communities Provide; new industries, technology and; rural and remote students; Our purpose Central Queensland Region; provided by the early childhood; RD approved : 28 October 2019; reform agenda. More detailed performance; School Opinion Survey : Parents and; that further our strategic objectives.	"To ensure successful educational and training opportunities for all children and young people" (p 1); "Building Queensland future by giving all children a great start and engaging young people in learning" (CQ p 1) "Advancing Queensland's. priorities by giving all children a great start, engaging young people in learning, and creating safe and inclusive workplaces and communities" (North Coast p 1).
Communication and Engagement	Word tree centred on **communication**. Left branches: and implement a key stakeholder; communication of legislative changes though; community partnerships and identifying student; Early Years services and schools. ; infrastructure and — integrated information and; working Deliver; Early Childhood Community Networks — Regular; key action groups (KAGs); strategy through clear and authentic; technologies and tools for regional; understanding and support central ECCE. Right branches: and — planning between Early Childhood; support to schools Monthly; of legislative changes though communication; opportunities School Opinion Survey : Parents; plan Phase 1) CH004A – " Connections; technology — ICT) solutions to maximise; solutions including improved broadband; to inspire collective ownership and; via CQ TeamSite, Regional Update; with — all sectors Promote understanding; early years and schooling.	"working in partnership with schools…to plan for and deliver innovative services that meet the needs of students, children and families…and improve learning and training outcomes" (DETE, 2014, p 5) "provide [d] principals and schools with additional support and professional guidance" and "support [ed] capability building in an increasingly autonomous environment" (DETE, 2014, p. 5)

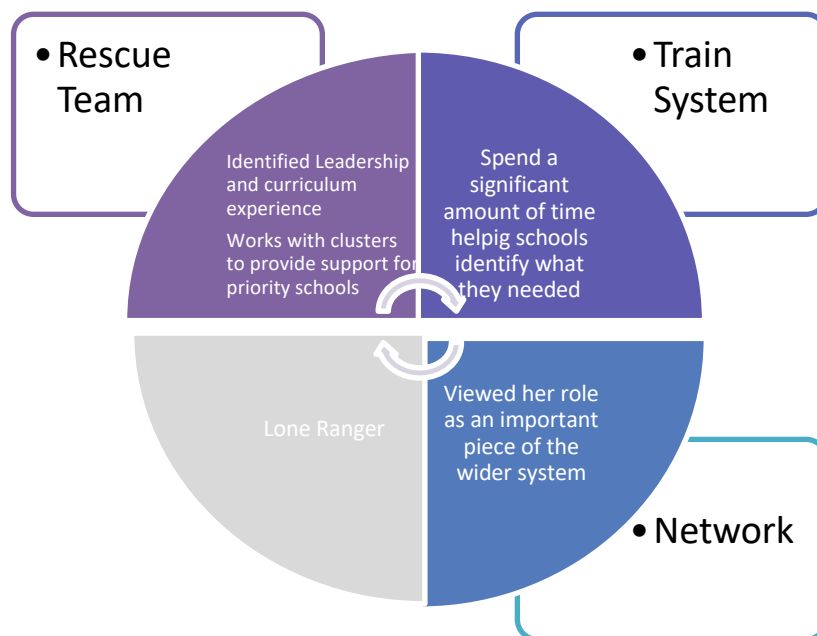| Criterion	NVivo Word tracing using high frequency terms associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Implementation Strategy	delivery . A flexible approach to / from 2017 The requirements for / improve learning outcomes Market facilitation / its obligation and intent in / STEM strategy and evidence / the curriculum and ways — of — **implementing** / school partnerships , and funding opportunities / Every student succeeding All / learning success All secondary / by 2025 — 100 % / Outcome Measure — of — schools / focus schools / in the — Number / of State Delivered Kindergarten / schools). Sem . 1 : 95 % / of — schools who have been / PBL Culturally responsive teaching framework Data / evidence based strategies to improve / government priorities and commitments . 16 / Tech Ambassadors are supporting / it — The Assessment and Moderation / new ways of gathering the / PBL for — 2 years score / a minimum of / policies and procedures that provide / programs that link to the / Regional vision & values , Collective Efficacy , / regulation Centre Funding and purchasing / that respond to their / strategies — to — improve principal and / support disengaged youth • / 8 learning areas of	"increasing school autonomy so schools, through greater local decision making and innovative practices, can better respond to the needs of students and the community, and improve student outcomes" (DETE, 2014, p 11) "Deepen understanding of all principals and middle leaders to confidently lead teachers to teach, assess and report on all eight of the Australian curriculums learning areas in prep to year 10 through shared focus on student learning progress and ongoing review of practices" (DDSW, 2019, p 8)
Data, monitoring and accountability	Mental health , regional services • Meeting / of permanent staff with a / Opportunities reform agenda . More detailed / and Emergency Management Framework . / and various key stakeholders / Framework . HPE # 18 / 434003 / managements system , Risk Express — Our — **performance** / our purpose and improve / outcomes for all students / Teacher supply • Youth engagement / planning and capacity building • monitoring / practice and optimise professional engagement / providers . Their core functions include Strategic policy and program / All students 90 % Improve / Assessment and rating of / Attendance Rate All Queensland / Branch budget on track / ECEC – 01 / 7 / 18 – / Increased percentage of services / Proportion of — NCR children / Year 12 / Rate of WorkCover claims / measure — Regional Services Regional performance / Staff satisfaction - Agency Employee / State Schools Division / Region /	"Core functions include monitoring performance outcomes and interventions" (DETE, 2014) Accountabilities for improving school performance (DDSW, 2019).

Criterion	NVivo Word tracing using high frequency terms associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Resources		"advice to schools and their communities on the implementation of policy and procedures" (Metro, p5). Continuum using the DDSW alignment resources (DDSW) Monitor the allocation of resources to support curriculum, teaching and learning (DETE, P.5)
Task Allocation		"provision of support and advice by coaches" (CQ p 6) "access to online and face to face PD, coaching and mentoring across the region" (CQ p 5) "• Supervise and coach principals; Build capacity of school leadership teams and teaching staff ; Consistently implement policy and procedural advice; Implement government and systemic priorities; Program manage individual/cohort intervention ; Implement interventions when required; Provide education, teaching, curriculum and student support services ; Support Year 7 to secondary transition; Provide transitions support; Manage complaints; Conduct and complete investigations in a timely manner."(DETE, 2014, p 17)

Criterion	NVivo Word tracing using high frequency terms associated with the Criterion	Illustrative Examples
Timing	coordinating responses to appeals • managing / Diverse Learners Team End 2019 / 2 and 9 / Strait Islander Responsibility → Each term / each term annual data analysis / Education "- Domain 3 Curriculum Scan / Performance ongoing Strategy & Performance → Group / Register # 555 Capability Reference / implementation of NQF (Phase 3 / Improvement Plan for Services implemented / Investigations completed within agreed timeframe / of leadership teams to continue / and Wellbeing (CLAW) ongoing / Islander Responsibility Each term / Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW) → ongoing / of 8 semester semester / ongoing Strategy & Performance Group / Phase 4B ongoing)(Phase 4 / programs such as VETiS & GENR8 **ongoing** HR Business Partnering Director / Strategy and Performance Strategy / Director — DET Strategic Plan / Training — FET Act 2014 / Schools VET Partnership / DoE Strategies 2019 - 23 Ensure / Improved participation , attendance and retention / inquiry of current inclusive school / involvement in CCMS Pilot Program / ongoing — HR Business Partnering / Director — Strategy and Performance / ongoing Director HR Business / Principal , Capability Delivery of / Youth Engagement Reference Group / PA Aboriginal and Torres Strait / Principal Capability Delivery of regional / professional learning through Community of / Quarterly Regional Services Team Principal	Ongoing each term annual data analysis (metro p1) ARD's and Student Engagement Team monitors ongoing data collection each term (FNQ) Improvement Plan for Services implemented through ongoing delivery of sector engagement sessions (metro)
Tools	access and use of EALD / all staff in the region • / accountabilities to ensure effort / All frameworks , programs , workshops → and / are achieved , risks managed / identify and source expertise / and monitor the allocation of / Continuum using the DDSW alignment / DET ECEC has representation Develop / FTE (actual headcount – 62)• Project / are referred centrally to / Directors / Managers Annual Director → Human / regional involvement or oversight . / Kindergarten Pilot Promote centrally developed / education and care services / of communicating Our risks / opportunities for every child •••• → Our / reported in Risk Express / to schools and stakeholders / 4 . 5 . 6 . Target → regional / feedback and supervision • Align / staff through professional development , advice , / student outcomes • developing and directing / The distribution of some ISSU / the Prep Year by sharing / traineeships in the region • focus **resources** (HR Business Partnering Half yearly / . Numeracy Continuum The Numeracy Continuum / allocated and structure created • Strategic / effort on improving the / and — training • support regional access / are directed to the department's / between early childhood services and / e.g Edstudio Termly Weekly Various / for — assessment . Matters may then / state schools to improve / have EYLF , Abecedarian and / or / in central office continues to / Our services • Partner ECEC services / responsive to the communities and / that promote engagement in kindergarten / ensure the delivery of / to — help schools address specific / support — curriculum , teaching and / schools to improve / used responsibility and in a / will provide a greater regional / – 40 FTE • DSR Organisational Chart / 2017 18 Regional Budget - 17520940 • / 2018 2019 Regional Budget • FNQ / Central Queensland Region Budget 200 / / Organisational Structure (12 / 13404)• 2018 - / Regional Budget $ 13.1 million (Trim	Tools for regional communication and support (CQ, 2019) Tools to improve our services (CQ, 2019) Human resources to support curriculum, teaching and learning Human resources to support schools to improve

APPENDIX C

Participant 1 (Sally)

- Rescue Team
- Train System
- Network

Identified Leadership and curriculum experience

Works with clusters to provide support for priority schools

Spend a significant amount of time helpig schools identify what they needed

Lone Ranger

Viewed her role as an important piece of the wider system

Sally was a female educator with a Masters degree, who had been teaching for 12 years, predominately in regional contexts. She had been employed as a regional education officer for 3 years, having moved into the position because she "was bored and was looking for a challenge or something new". Seeing herself as "having had leadership capacity of some type…but not officially" though "being in charge of school projects or leading teams with a project" she felt that when she moved into a larger school context these "roles were taken away" and that moving into her current role provided her with a leadership opportunity.

Role position within the system. Sally viewed her role as "an important piece in the system" that tended to "ebb and flow and move" because the "role isn't really defined". She identified that policy "informs what we do but that sometimes it may be unclear that we have to do and how we try to get [the] support we need for our role".

As she engaged with schools, she identified that she would spend a significant amount of time clarifying expectations "because what they thought they wanted verses what they actually needed was different to what they started out with".

🧍 **Participant 10 (Eden)**

- **Rescue Team**
- **Train System**
- **Lone Ranger**
- **Network**

Identified leadership expertise

Her role is a state repsponse to provide schools with access to an expert

Different role approaches in each region although they have the same goals.

Often works alone although would like to work as part of a regional team

Her role belonged to a state school system working towards common goal

Eden was a female educator with a two Bachelor degrees and 15 years of teaching experience in predominately large regional high schools. She had been employed as a regional education officer for less than 1 year. As Eden moved from a school context into a regional context, she described how she was "frustrated in the school [as she felt] that there was some lack of clarity around what her focus was" as a member of the school leadership team. She felt that schools were "all off doing our own little thing…and there was [a feeling that] there was no one organisation". She hoped that by moving into the regional role she could "take on more of a leadership role in terms of bringing schools together and realising that we are a team and that we are not competing" against each other". She firmly believed that she "belong [ed] to a state school system, so we [all schools] should all be working for the quality education for all of our kids even if that means sharing our knowledge with each other".

Role position within the system. The reality of fulfilling her role as a person within the "organisation…supporting the people who are doing the work" was challenged as Eden articulated that she was still unsure what her role was. She

identified that her role was developed as a "state response" to the "federal governments push to focus on an undervalued area" and that when she commenced her role she was "given some clarification from central office around what they wanted… [which was] supporting schools to take control of their own agendas". However, as her role was positioned within a region, she often felt that there "was a misunderstanding around [her role] and that the [senior leadership team] didn't necessarily hear what [she] was saying". This description indicates that Eden's role was influenced by both the state (referred to as central by Eden) and the regional system layers.

Participant 3 (James)
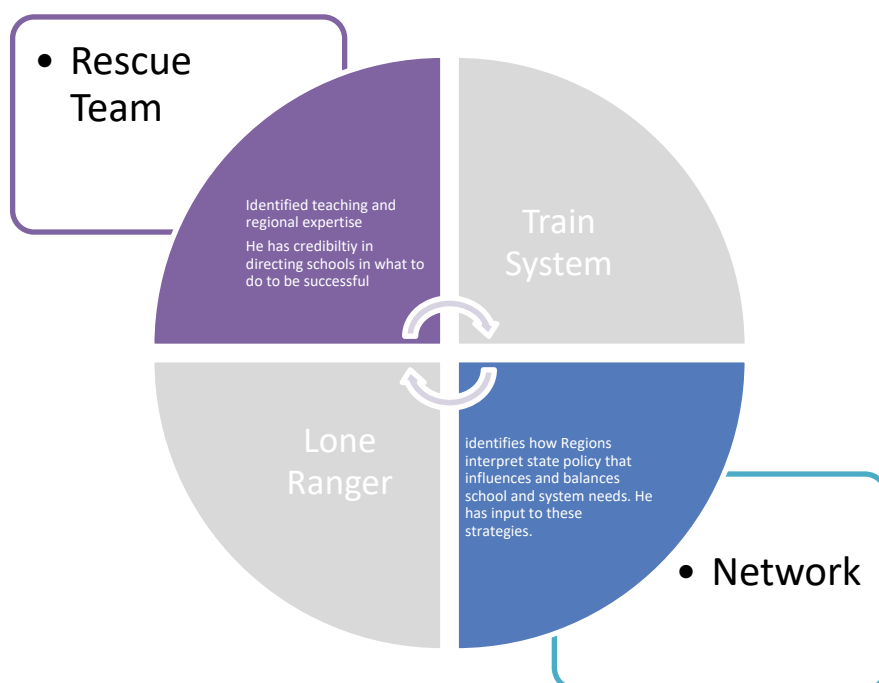
James was a male educator with a Bachelor degree and over 24 years of teaching experience in a wide range of international and national contexts. He had been employed as regional education officer for over 6 years and identified that he "attributed his longevity in the position as nurturing a strong trust between his manager, line manager and ARD's". James moved into the regional role "because [he] realised that the regional support role was a platform where you [could] make a difference on a large scale". He articulated that after attending a regional PD and watching how one of the regional education officers stepped into a classroom and "modelled in prep…modelled in year 6...they had credibility instantly".
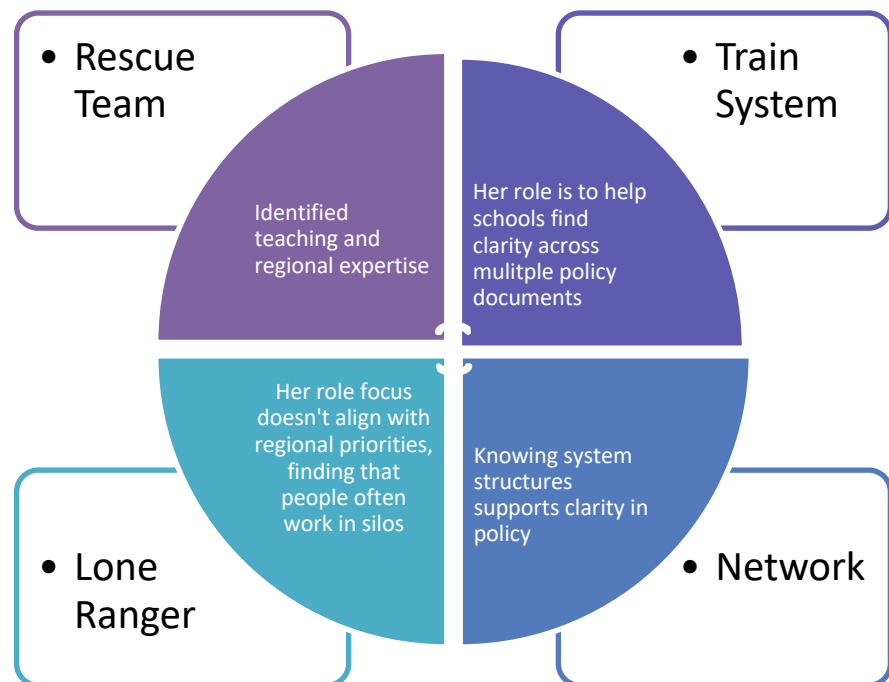
When the position was advertised, James thought he "could go and use [his] expertise…and infiltrate". He felt that this "platform would suit [his] skills as a presenter as [he] wasn't a researcher but knew how to teach and win kids over". He also identified that when he moved to Queensland, he noticed that "teachers were over being told what to do. That they were telling [him] we are over this, we have so much to do, we don't know if we are coming or going, can't we just learn how to teach?". James felt that this knowledge assisted him in developing his role focus.

> So, the role was this…how can I with my team create the necessary conditions to translate research into classroom practice with saleability, sustainability and you know autonomy. That was the goal that we had…because you know even now it is still a huge issue, not just for [my focus area] but all areas…how do you translate research into practice.

Role position within the system. James articulated that while his role sat as a conduit between schools and the regional leaders, the regions were also responsible for managing the messages from the state.

> I see the system…the system would be telling me what I need to do… how I should do it… and making sure it's consistent. Yeah…they will tell… they will just give me the instruction manual [policy]. That's their only role. You get the instructional manual, and they will judge what happens by saying everybody's got an instruction manual so their job is done. We have done our duty.

Participant 8 (Chantelle)

- Rescue Team

Identified teaching and regional expertise

- Train System

Her role is to help schools find clarity across mulitple policy documents

Her role focus doesn't align with regional priorities, finding that people often work in silos

Knowing system structures supports clarity in policy

- Lone Ranger

- Network

Chantelle was a female educator with a Bachelor degree and 28 years of teaching. experience in a range of regional and rural contexts. She had been employed as a regional education officer for 1 year within her current role, however she had previously been employed in a range of regional projects that were focussed on supporting students directly.

When Chantelle moved into her role, she "did not realise what regional office actually did" because she had been a "classroom teacher for 28 years" and was focused on the students in her class. As she reflected on her time in regional office, she noted that:

"There are too many policy and strategy messages coming through a system and schools don't know what to believe. Sometimes the messages are conflicting, sometimes they are not, and everyone is working so hard and even this happens at a regional level, but even though everyone is working hard, they are also working in silos".

She identified that schools and regions "appear[ed] to be reactive rather than proactive" because of the rapid change in messaging which "can take up a lot of time".

Position Within the System. Chantelle began by describing the system as being made up of multiple policies and pathways that "do not always make sense".

She noted that the system is 'complex" with so many schools on different journeys where "it is difficult to see where each journey is going". She reflected that it is therefore very important that when the school had selected their improvement journey that "they got on the right train track and did not get distracted by the other train tracks". In this description Chantelle referred to the train tracks as policies and school improvement journeys utilised policy.

When reflecting upon her role position within these policies and school improvement journeys she noted that she was not "the fat controller" telling people where to go but rather was a 'signpost' or person 'painting the tracks in different colours' that provided schools "with a bit more clarity". She also noted that her role did not sit within one train track but across multiple tracks.

As Chantelle continued to describe her role enactment, she predominately referred to her role as school support. When asked how she developed clarity on her role, her description moved into discussing policy messaging and how the state system influenced her role.

Participant 33 (Wendy)
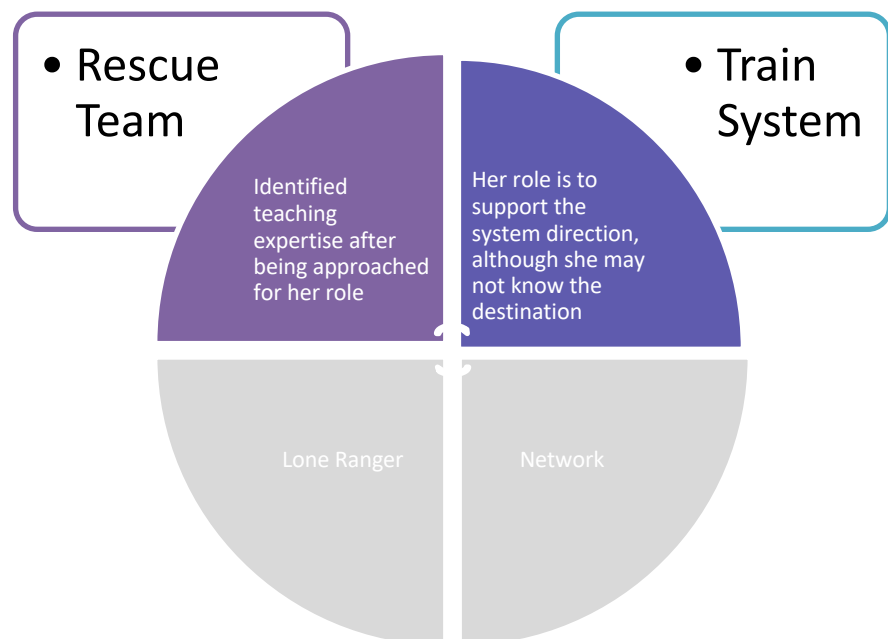
Wendy was a female educator with a Bachelor's degree and 30 years of teaching experience. She had been employed within the regional education officer's role for 5 years. Wendy moved into the full-time role after being approached by a regional team member during a professional development day. She had previously

worked in the role on a part time basis while also attached to a school as a Head of Curriculum. When she moved into the full-time regional position, she experienced a variety of roles as she "had to apply for the position every 6 months because it [was] not a secure position".

Role Position within the System. Throughout Wendy's experience within these roles, she outlined that they did not "really have a [regional] role descriptor" but that the role was "based on the Head of Department or Head of Curriculum "role descriptor for school-based personnel. These school-based role descriptors were also used to guide her "annual performance review process" and reapplication process. She noted that this "was a challenge because our job did not really have a relevant descriptor" suggesting that the use of the HOC or HOD role descriptor did not reflect the regional role context or role tasks.

When describing how she developed clarity around her role, Wendy outlined that "State Schooling – once a term- provide[d] a bit of a brief [to the team] with policy message updates". This briefing took place over a "teleconference or web conference directly from State Schooling or [at other times] they [provided] it to the regional director and the director related messages" to the team. As she described these briefings, she noted that the team's interactions were "passive" as they "sat around a coffee table listening". She also noted that the regional "director would tell [them] what they would be doing and how it would fit in with the current state agendas".

She noted that while she was "part of a regional team or as a department…we [could] be heading somewhere but she sometimes wonders where that is". She described this as being on a train stating that "sometimes the destination is not very clear and sometimes the destination changes and we go down a different track without any warning". This description suggested that while Wendy's role was located within the regional layer of the system, the provision of policy messages and how they were translated into role tasks by the regional system leaders rather than the structural description of the system impacted on her role enactment. She identified that the regional system leaders provided them "with the direction" but also noted that she felt there was "a big gap between [stating] what they want[ed] and [sending the team] off to do it" stating that she thought "people know what they want [to achieve] but not what it looks like". She illustrated this through an example where the team was given little direction on how to implement an aspect of the
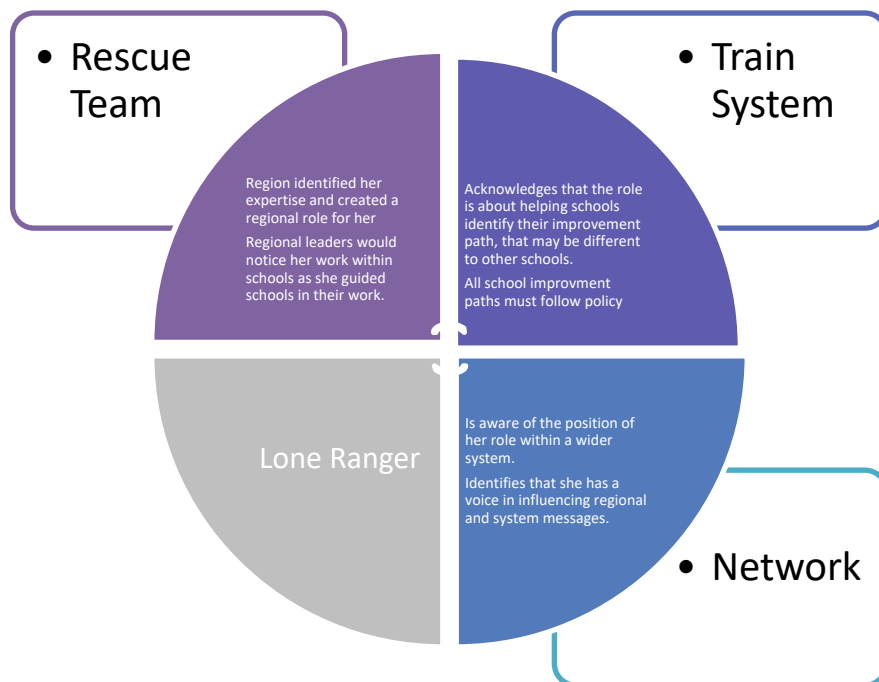
regional agenda, which created an opportunity for the team to shape their role. She also noted that after developing and implementing the strategy the team was informed that it "was not what the [regional leaders] wanted". This was also reflected in the following excerpt:

> as a team or as individuals we do what we think and what research says we have to do and then you get the message from up top going "no that's not going to work… that's not what we want" … but then they don't tell us what they don't tell us what they want. So, if that's not what they wanted… why didn't they tell us what they want it before we started.

Wendy's description also outlined that sometimes it felt as though "she was on the train but didn't really want to go to the destination" as she didn't agree with the regional implementation plan or processes". She described how she did not "think that it was a good attitude to be working with when your heart's not in it" resulting in the enactment of her role "being very hard as [she] agrees with the message that she is selling but is frustrated by the way in which the message is being delivered".

The identification of multiple policy message pathways and implementation plans suggested that while the role focus and regional direction were established by the regional system leaders, regional education officers had the opportunity (with regional approval) to individually interpret and translate policy messages into role tasks. However, as noted by Wendy, the regional system leaders determined the final implementation plan.

Participant 41 (Lucy)

Rescue Team
- Region identified her expertise and created a regional role for her
- Regional leaders would notice her work within schools as she guided schools in their work.

Train System
- Acknowledges that the role is about helping schools identify their improvement path, that may be different to other schools.
- All school improvment paths must follow policy

Lone Ranger

Network
- Is aware of the position of her role within a wider system.
- Identifies that she has a voice in influencing regional and system messages.

Lucy was a female educator with a Bachelor's degree and over 30 years of teaching experience. She has been employed as a regional education officer for five years. Lucy described her current role as her "dream job". She moved into the role after "being noticed while delivering a school project at a regional professional learning day" and was invited to come and join the regional team" where they "basically created a new role" for me. She expressed that the role was not a "steppingstone" for her but rather "an opportunity "to access a large number of schools and huge number of teachers [who] by association impact a lot of children". While Lucy also acknowledged that being in the role meant that she "stopped her teaching work and as a consequence had the perpetual, six-month contract…that kept rolling over" she outlined that "she would just keep going with the role as long as it [was] open".

Role Position within the System. Lucy described her role as "trying to encourage people to find a path that is not necessarily the path that anyone else has taken but it is the right path for them". When she unpacked how she achieved this, Lucy identified that she worked with "schools, within clusters across the region" and when she supported them, they would "have this pause point. We kind of pause and we work together and then we choose the tracks or the path that's going to be right for us". She noted that each "group of people may go on slightly different tracks, but

they are also following the policy line". This description identified that Lucy's work supports the "notion of the interplay between following policy line and arranging [the resulting] pathways that lead [schools] in similar or different directions".

When describing how she had "understood her role over time", Lucy identified that it had "changed" as policy changed because she had "been clearly directed by management to have policy as her [work] foundation". She noted that at various points in her regional career the region drew off "her specific skills" to determine how she enacted her role. In her words "my management allowed me to innovate because they recognised for me that was a very important part of what made me functional and valuable".

Participant 4 (Gemma)
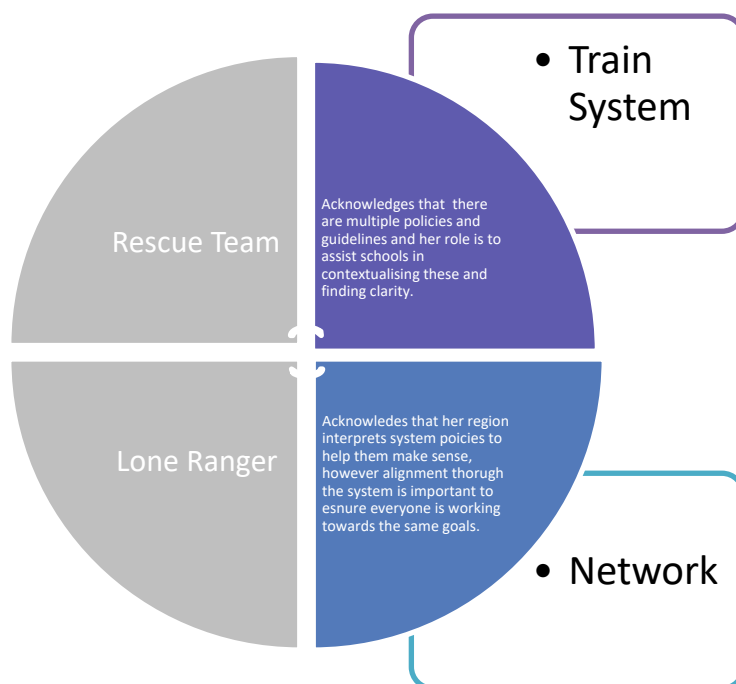
Gemma was a female educator with a Bachelor's degree and 29 years of teaching experience in classrooms and coaching positions. She had been employed as a regional education officer for 5 years after deciding to step out of schools to share her classroom experience with others. In her words "it took her a while to actually build up the self-confidence to put [herself] out there to apply for a job at that level…because there wasn't really any long-term planning about the role and so there was a lot of insecurity about the role"

Role Position Within the System. As Gemma described her role, she articulated that "her role [was] supporting schools, both the leadership teams and teachers to enact curriculum and pedagogy to maximise student learning". She identified that this was informed by "particular regional guidelines and state policies" and that when she supported schools she would say "what are you doing in your school around curriculum and pedagogy that is impacting on student learning? Where does this sit within that next layer of the guidelines and policy and that bigger picture?".

As Gemma described where her role sat, she identified that "her role [was] to work with other people" and acknowledged that within the system it can feel as through "everybody is doing their own thing" rather than purposefully working together. She outlined that this is further compounded by the fact that there are "lots of different agendas that sometimes intersect but often we could be fairly single minded about one agenda and forget about the other things that we need to do".

As she described her role, she also identified that:

As a system we don't work individually, we work within a bigger picture, so if you don't do your bit then that prevents other people from being as effective and I think, and the complexity of the beach is a bit like the complexity of the department.

Gemma positioned her role as sitting "within the region" and acknowledged that she felt that it was an important part of the regional support offered to schools that could been enhanced through greater clarity of what other regional education officer's role purpose was.

We all have a really important role. So, some [regional education officers] are student services curriculum, some are behaviour, some are Indigenous infrastructure, so we all have different pockets that all need to work together. But I think when we're talking about student learning and what happens within a school to impact on student learning… I don't feel that we always worked together or knew what each other's agenda was to be able to be as helpful as we could.

It can therefore be seen that while Gemma acknowledged the need for system alignment, she focused her description on how her role was operationalised within the regional layer of the system.

👤 **Participant 9 (Stephanie)**
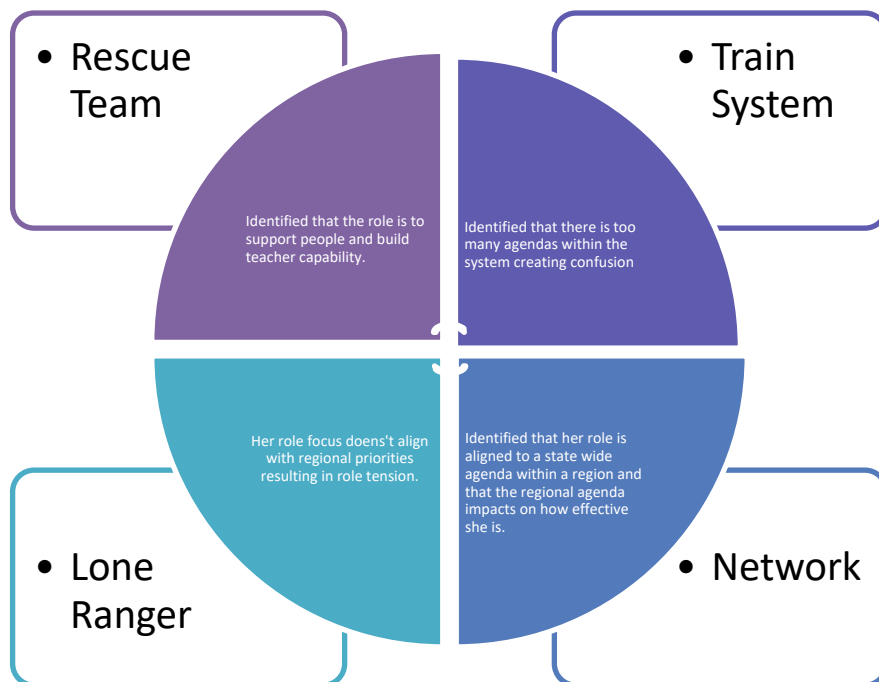
Stephanie was female educator with a Bachelor's degree and 21 years of teaching experience. She had been employed as a regional education officer for 2 years. She moved into a regional role after participating in a regional curriculum project as a teacher which sparked her interest in how regional roles are there to support and build teacher's capabilities.

> I thought the role was that I could get support out to more people
> because at that time I was only affecting the kids that were in front of
> me but if I was in a role like that then I would have a much bigger
> audience.

She was emailed the regional role advertisement by her line manager who said, "you should apply" and "I got it".

Role Position Within the System. As Stephanie described her role (using the beach image), she stated that the people on the beach are "my team and whoever else is in the region or central team and the water is the rest of the system". She articulated that the people laughing and running into the water were "keen to jump into it [the water] and [were] excited but I still feel like there is too much going on in the system to do stuff". She explained that there "are a few of us who are really excited and what to get in and make a change and make it [our role] work and share

all that passion around but we can't". She noted that this resulted in her experiencing role tension as she worked within a "role and a priority area that was given to the regions". She felt that this impacted on how the regional leaders supported her role because "it was not something that had come from the ARD's or RD…it was an added extra and unless they have ownership of that role then they are not going to find it valuable".

Stephanie continued to describe how in her role she felt that she "belonged to a central team [with a] state agenda and I am put in the region to do his work but that doesn't translate to the people in the region that I need to work with", this resulted in her feeling isolated in her work.

Participant 14 (Amber)
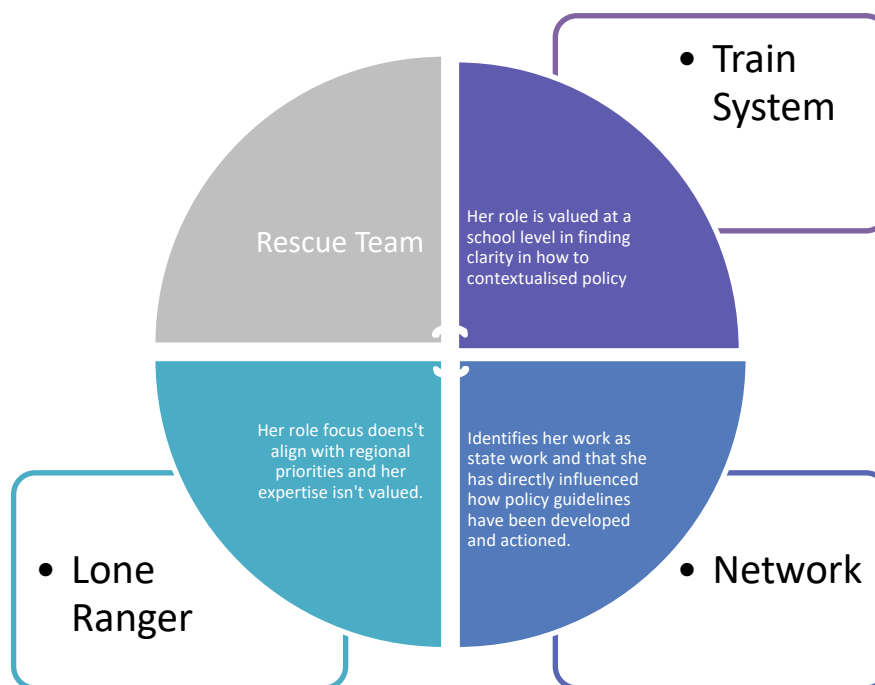
Amber is a female educator with a Masters degree and 24 years of teaching experience within both internationally and national culturally diverse contexts which is why she selected the image of the refugees. She has been employed as a regional project officer for 2 years and draws off her "career journey… to engage with… leadership team and teachers". She is seeking to return to a school when her position ends.

Role Position Within the System. Amber identified that she "predominantly works to support the region…[within] a project that has 5 schools". Within her project she utilises the systems "inquiry model to look at the way [schools] can

improve" student learning. She identified that the focus of her role directly aligned to the focus of her "Master's thesis" which enables her to "get more stuff done".

Amber described how her role was influenced by central office when she identified that "we have a team meeting in Brisbane where we talk about the work that we do". She stated that the "project was set by the state" but has been influenced by "the base line data within my context and…the investigations using the inquiry model to identify what the project schools' needs are". While her project had focus schools, Amber identified that "the policy is limited in how in informs the schools in how to engage with" the focus area and targeted students. As a result of this role clarity, Amber felt that her "role was not valued [within the regional office] as it sat outside of the confines of the regional system but that at a school base it [was] very different…people [could not] get enough of you".

Participant 35 (Michelle)

- Rescue Team

Identified that she acquired her expertise from a diverse career expereince.
Her role is to put policy into practice from the region to the school, teacher and student.

Train System

Lone Ranger

Positons her role within the wider perspective of the system and associated policy

- Network
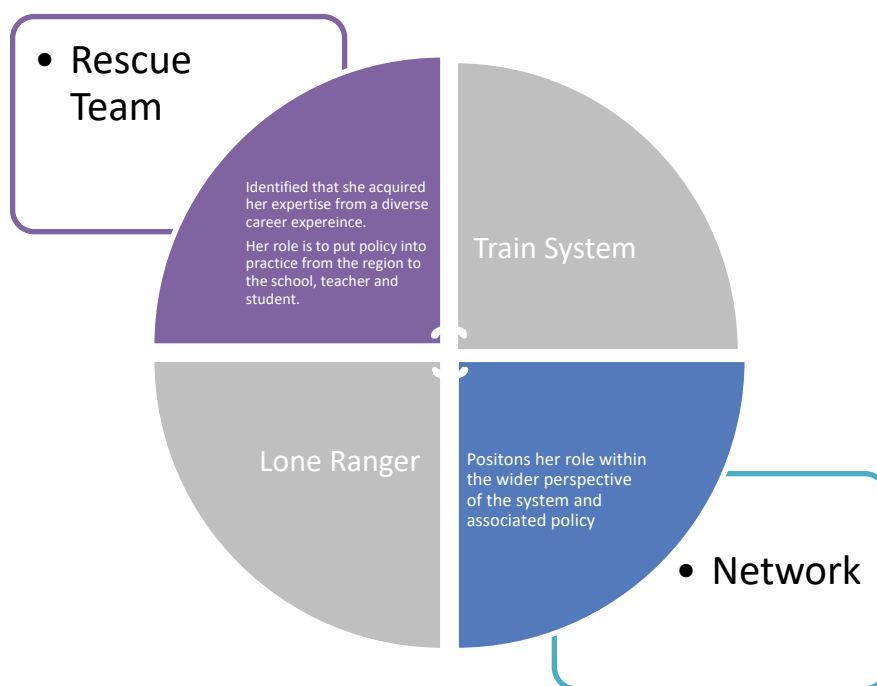
Michelle was a female educator with a Master's degree and 12 years of teaching and leadership experience across rural, regional and metropolitan contexts. She has been employed as a regional education officer for over 4 years, at two different times in her career. She has been in her most recent regional role for 2 years, after she chose to change career paths after successfully implementing a "comprehensive and authentic…whole school approach" to improving student

engagement and learning. Following the success of this approach, she was approached by the region to join the regional education office for a second time.

Role Position within the system. As Michelle described her role, she paid attention to positioning this within the wider perspective of the system and associated policy. This was reflected in the following comments where she described how the web "represented the many layers" of the system and that her role was underpinned and supported by "the hierarchy of the broader state-wide initiatives".

She noted that she saw her role as being "interconnected to the [various] parts of the system", as her role required her to engage in a "range of duties…hat impact on other parts of the role". She illustrated this by describing how when she "works with clusters of schools, the work can be shared or added onto" between and across schools.

As Michelle moved into describing her role within the system, she identified that "there is a lot of ambiguity around [her current] role" as she felt that while "she was fortunate to step into the role for a second time… [she has noticed] that there have been "some gains made but also certain things have been lost from the way we used to work". She then moved on to describe how her role within the system is therefore "fragile like a spider web…because with a gust of wind or change in budget these roles could be gone". While she acknowledged this political nature of the system, she also identified that the system could also provide "stability and a safety net for schools, leaders and teachers to know they have a point of contact and can be supported". It therefore became evident that Michelle positions her role as a system role that is located within a region.

Michelle's description also identified that the role was closely aligned to supporting the implementation of theory into practice as they considered the system objectives "right down to the region, to the school, the teacher and down to the student". Michelle stated that they "liked the notion of theory into practice" and that the role required each person to "be knowledgeable about departmental documents… protocol… school improvement agendas and even the way the school principal and teachers worked".

APPENDIX D

Table D1

Summary and Formal Organisational Alignment (Limani, 2015) of Viennet and Pont's (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria Within and Across Policy Document Groups

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings		
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria			
			Green indicates alignment to policy aspects Orange indicates partial alignment to policy aspects Red indicates no alignment to policy actions through omission or new information. (Crossed out factors indicate that the next phase evidenced the factor)
Objectives	Policies should provide a point of truth and be published in one place		.
Identified result/s or aim/s that underpin policy documentation	Align with other policy instruments	Supported Government directives through aspects identified below.	

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings		
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**
	Support strategic objectives	Delivery of a world-class education system supported by responsive services.	Providing a great start for children and ensuring successful educational outcomes.
	Clearly define roles and responsibilities	Responsive services included: Working together to provide quality learning experiences for all students and to maximise student learning.	Provide advice and services to schools Build capability of schools and school personnel for improvement.
Communication and Engagement *Consultation and stakeholder engagement to gather support and understanding of policy language.*	Policies development should consider key, appropriate and relevant stakeholder consultation	Partnerships with stakeholders, industry, university and communities to: Inform and develop government policy Provide advice and analysis Represent and service the community.	Regions engage with principals, teachers, schools, communities and central office teams. No documentation of stakeholders informing policy design or review.
Communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy	Policy should consider relevant stakeholder communication	No reference to how policy was explicitly communicated to stakeholders.	

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings		
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**
	No reference to communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy		
Implementation Strategy *Articulated plans explaining how to enact policy while the policy can identify the theoretical implementation underpinnings. May provide a vision and be open and flexible to accommodate changes.*	Identified policy Implementation cycle.	Embedded within policy instruments:	Governance was used to design and align direction of work however there was no explicit implementation plan. Operational Plans listed activities and identified responsible team with broad (often misaligned) measures.
	Policies should articulate their functions, responsibilities and purpose	Develop shared understandings of the Australian curriculum	Australian Curriculum
		Use evidence through inquiry improvement cycles	
		To collaborate to work, learn and improve together.	
		Build teaching and learning capability	

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings		
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**
	Policies should manage operational issues and risks		
Data monitoring and accountability *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision making.*	Policy monitoring should: Examine policy content to ensure accuracy relevance, clarity and reliability No reference to measuring or monitoring policy implementation No mention of using policy outcomes to review or refine policy	Continuous improvement was positioned within policy descriptions. Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure. Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure. **Continued**	No reference to continuous improvement Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure.
		No targets were identified.	Targets were identified.
		Annual School Review was implicitly positioned as a tool to monitor curriculum implementation.	No clear link between School Reviews and Curriculum Implementation Service provision
Resources *Inputs necessary for policy implementation. Typically fall into three categories:*		Resources are targeted to be responsive and provide support	No articulated implementation plans Regional education officer teams positioned as a support structure.

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings		
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**
1. *Funding financial and human resources*			Responsive services
2. *Technology and knowledge: supporting guidelines and online documents*	Policy implementation should be: Supported by aligned policy instruments including procedures, guidelines, supporting information	Use evidence to inform practice e.g. Annual School Reviews; Inquiry Model P-12CARF identified online and documented resources to support curriculum implementation at a school level.	Inconsistent reference made to Policy in action documents: State Schooling Strategy, P-12 CARF, Annual Reviews and Inquiry Models
3. *Capacity building*		Resources are targeted to build capability	Build capability to evidence improvement and student outcomes through the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
Task Allocation	Policy procedures should: Outline the processes and responsibilities required to support policy implementation	Department task identified to support schools and departmental staff.	Regional Directors specific roles were identified. Assistant Regional Directors task were identified. Regional Services Team tasks identified. No specificity regarding who the teams were or how many members were in each team. Support to schools specified.

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings		
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**
		School tasks were to implement improvement cycles using the: school improvement model	Inconsistent reference of school tasks.
		School Improvement Hierarchy Standards of Practice.	No explicit references made to School Reviews, School Improvement Hierarchy or Standards of Practice
Timing	Policies should: Reflect current, reliable and trusted information	Five-year policy timeframe (2020-2024) Schools are to implement the Australian Curriculum Version 8 by the end of 2020. Continuous improvement cycles	Annual and ongoing time frames identified. 1 Region only identified 2020 timeframe for Australian Curriculum implementation No link to ongoing improving rends. Point in time measures only identified.
Tools	Policies should: Identify mandatory requirements and Be easy to access through DoE's central policy and procedure register.	Requirements outlined within P-12 CARF. Mandatory language not evidenced. Documents can be accessed on policy register and through an open Internet search (Figure 4.2)	Statements used to communicate services with high modality though the use of verbs at the beginning of statements. No mandated requirements identified.

Table D2

Summary of the Alignment of Viennet and Pont's (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria as evidenced across Policy Document Groups and Regional Education Officers' Role Enactment Perceptions.

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
			Green indicates alignment to policy aspects Orange indicates partial alignment to policy aspects Red indicates no alignment to policy actions through omission or new information. (Crossed out factors indicate that the next phase evidenced the factor)	
Objectives *An identified result/s or aim/s that underpin policy documentation*	Policies should provide a point of truth and be published in one place		.	Role of policy is to provide clear directives to regions.
	Align with other policy instruments	Supported government directives through aspects identified below.		No policy specificity identified
	Support strategic objectives	Delivery of a world-class education system supported by responsive services.	Providing a great start for children and ensuring successful educational outcomes.	There is a perceived mismatch between policy expectations and regional realties

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Role Enactment Factors
	Clearly define roles and responsibilities	Responsive services included: Working together to provide quality learning experiences for all students and to maximise student learning.	Provide advice and services to schools Build capability of schools and school personnel for improvement.	Role was positioned to improve leadership, teaching capability and student outcomes
Communication and Engagement *Consultation and stakeholder engagement to gather support and understanding of policy language.*	Policies development should consider key, appropriate and relevant stakeholder consultation	Partnerships with stakeholders, industry, university and communities to: Inform and develop government policy Provide advice and analysis Represent and service the community.	Regions engage with principals, teachers, schools, communities and central office teams. No documentation of stakeholders informing policy design or review.	Regional team members engage with school leadership teams, principals, regional teams and at times central office. No reference to stakeholders informing policy identified.
Communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy	Policy should consider relevant stakeholder communication	No reference to how policy was explicitly communicated to stakeholders.		Regional communications identified. The focus of these communiques was on contextualised regional approaches aligned to operational plans.

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
	No reference to communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy			No reference to state schooling communication beyond policy documentation that state policy objectives e.g., State Schooling Strategy, P-12 CARF
Implementation Strategy *Articulated plans explaining how to enact policy while the policy can identify the theoretical implementation underpinnings. May provide a vision and be open and flexible to accommodate changes.*	Identified policy Implementation cycle	Embedded within policy instruments	Governance was used to design and align direction of work; however there was no explicit implementation plan. Operational Plans listed activities and identified responsible team with broad (often misaligned) measures.	Regional leadership members or central office ,determined role activities – perceived as the process for implementing policy Limited clarity of how to implement strategies on a day-by-day basis
	Policies should articulate their functions, responsibilities and purpose	Develop shared understandings of the Australian curriculum	Australian Curriculum	
		Use evidence through inquiry improvement cycles		

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
		To collaborate to work, learn and improve together.		Collaborative practices were positioned within each region.
		Build teaching and learning capability		Building teacher and leadership capability to implement the Australian Curriculum
	Policies should manage operational issues and risks			
Data monitoring and accountability *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision making.*	Policy monitoring should: Examine policy content to ensure accuracy relevance, clarity and reliability No reference to measuring or monitoring policy implementation	Continuous improvement was positioned within policy descriptions. Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure.	No reference to continuous improvement Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure.	No reference to continuous improvement Changes in school process were identified as a school measure with no reference to continuous improvement. Student achievement data was identified as a key measure.

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
Data monitoring and accountability continued *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision making.*	No mention of using policy outcomes to review or refine policy	Student achievement, attendance and engagement data was identified as the key measure.		Number of schools supported indicated as a measure. Informal feedback indicated as a role measure. Participants identified that they were unsure how to measure impact resulting in role tension.
		No targets were identified.	Targets were identified.	No targets were identified
		Annual School Review was implicitly positioned as a tool to monitor curriculum implementation.	No clear link between School Reviews and Curriculum Implementation Service provision	No reference to the use of school reviews processes as a measure or monitoring tool.
Resources		Resources are targeted to be responsive and provide support	No articulated implementation plans	No articulated implementation plans

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
Inputs necessary for policy implementation. Typically fall into three categories: *Funding financial and human resources*			Regional education officer teams positioned as a support structure. Responsive services	Regional Role described as a: Implement regional or state strategies to improve student improvement including the Australian curriculum
Technology and knowledge: supporting guidelines and online documents	Policy implementation should be: Supported by aligned policy instruments including procedures, guidelines, supporting information	Use evidence to inform practice e.g. Annual School Reviews; Inquiry Model P-12 CARF identified online and documented resources to support curriculum implementation at a school level.	Inconsistent reference made to Policy in action documents: State Schooling Strategy, P-12 CARF, Annual Reviews and Inquiry Models	No specific mention of policy resources
Capacity building		Resources are targeted to build capability	Build capability to evidence improvement and student outcomes through the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.	Role purpose described as: Leadership role Support role

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
				Capacity building role
Task Allocation	Policy procedures should: Outline the processes and responsibilities required to support policy implementation	Department task identified to support schools and departmental staff.	Regional Directors specific roles were identified. Assistant Regional Directors task were identified. Regional Services Team tasks identified. No specificity regarding who the teams were or how many members were in each team. Support to schools specified.	Assistant Regional Director were identified as leaders within the region. Regional team purpose was broadly understood as a support role. Task specificity was lacking with little direction provided for day-to-day operations. Role tensions between some central office role tasks and regional role tasks.
		School tasks were to implement improvement cycles using the:	Inconsistent reference ot school tasks.	

Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
	Policy Design Documents	Curriculum Policy Documents	Regional Policy Operational plans	Role Enactment Factors
		school improvement model		
		School Improvement Hierarchy Standards of Practice.	No explicit references made to School Reviews, School Improvement Hierarchy or Standards of Practice	Lack of agreed role enactment processes within regions and across regions for similar roles.
Timing	Policies should: Reflect current, reliable, and trusted information	Five-year policy timeframe (2020-2024) Schools are to implement the Australian Curriculum Version 8 by the end of 2020. Continuous improvement cycles	Annual and ongoing time frames identified. One region only identified 2020 timeframe for Australian Curriculum implementation No link to ongoing improving rends. Point in time measures only identified.	No reference to timeframes.
Tools	Policies should: Identify mandatory requirements and	Requirements outlined within P-12 CARF. Mandatory language not evidenced.	Statements used to communicate services with high modality though the use of verbs at the beginning of statements. No mandated requirements identified.	No mention of P-12 CARF or policy tools. No mandated requirements mentioned beyond completing mandated annual training modules.

	Chapter 4 Document Analysis Findings			Chapter 5 Survey Findings
Viennet & Pont (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria	**Policy Design Documents**	**Curriculum Policy Documents**	**Regional Policy Operational plans**	**Role Enactment Factors**
	Be easy to access through DoE's central policy and procedure register.	Documents can be accessed on policy register and through an open Internet search (Figure 4.2)		

Table D3

Summary and the Formal Organisational Alignment (Limani, 2015) of Viennet and Pont's (2017) Policy Implementation Analysis Criteria Within Phase Three of the Research

Criterion	Phase Three Interview Findings	
	Identified Role Enactment Practices	
	Part A	**Part B**
	Red indicates no alignment to policy actions through omission or new information. (Crossed out factors indicate that the next phase evidenced the factor) Orange indicates partial alignment to policy aspects Green indicates alignment to policy aspects	
Objectives *Identified result/s or aim/s that underpin/s policy documentation*		Policy guidelines and resources available from multiple online platforms including statewide and regional
	Policy use was utilised when developing contextual school improvement responses.	No formal practices to check for individuals understanding of policy messages.
		Policy instruments were informally unpacked through conversations practices – no explicit link to policy objectives or desired results related to role.
	The participants agreed that their role was to support the implementation of the state's strategic direction.	No specific role descriptions aligned to regional strategic direction or middle system leadership role. Role descriptions drawn from broad school-based role responsibilities, including Head of Curriculum and Head of Department.
Communication and Engagement *Consultation and stakeholder engagement to gather support and understanding of policy language*	No direct interactions or processes with policy personnel identified. Lack of perceived voice in contributing to the development of regional strategies, implementation plans or informing policy	

	Phase Three Interview Findings	
Criterion	**Identified Role Enactment Practices**	
	Part A	**Part B**
Communication of goals, objectives and processes required for policy		Policy messages were translated into regional strategies. The number of supporting documents created confusion and resulted in a variety of policy interpretations. Policy language and the broad nature of policy documentation contributed to misaligned interpretations and resulting actions. Change in school leadership impacted on consistency of policy interpretation.
Implementation Strategy *Articulated plans explaining how to enact policy while the policy can identify the theoretical implementation underpinnings. May provide a vision and be open and flexible to accommodate changes.*		3 out of the 10 participants described the use of the Australian Curriculum and their role in clarifying teaching expectations. 1 participant explicitly describe building capability. No formal processes to confirm policy interpretations are aligned to policy intent. The inquiry model was identified as a resource; however, the use of the inquiry model was not discussed.
	Lack of perceived voice in contributing to the development of regional strategies, implementation plans or informing policy Career experience enhanced ability to collaborate with regional and school leaders	Interactions with system leaders could either support role enactment or hinder role enactment Interactions with school leaders could support role enactment or hinder role enactment Regional team cohesion hindered role enactment
	Role was identified broadly as school support	Building leadership and teacher capability was positioned; however, role descriptions predominantly positioned role as facilitators, clarifiers of policy and strategy rather than building capability.

	Phase Three Interview Findings	
Criterion	**Identified Role Enactment Practices**	
	Part A	**Part B**
Data monitoring and accountability *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision-making.*	No reference to continuous improvement or accountabilities.	No reference to continuous improvement. Identification that the same work continues to be implemented after 5 years of working within the role indicating limited impact.
		Role position descriptions identified tensions in who owns the data and are student measures relevant to the regional role? Project schools and showcase awards identified as indicating impact.
	No targets were identified.	No clear targets.
Data monitoring and accountability continued *Sharing of knowledge via an instrument that informs decision making and contributes to discussions and transparency of decision making.*		Clear links between school reviews and regional education officers' role No link to school reviews as a monitoring tool.
Resources *Inputs necessary for policy implementation. Typically fall into three categories:* 1. *Funding financial and human resources*		Implementation of regional strategies positioned with limited specificity beyond literacy, numeracy or STEM.
2. *Technology and knowledge: supporting guidelines and online documents*		Use of the Australian Curriculum and P-12 CARF when supporting schools and principals. Use of school reviews, state inquiry model identified
3. *Capacity building*	Role described as a support role	

Criterion	Phase Three Interview Findings	
	Identified Role Enactment Practices	
	Part A	Part B
	Building leadership and teaching capability	
Task Allocation	Regional directors, assistant regional directors, team managers identified as leaders	ARDs' and managers' delegated tasks. Some regions allowed direct contact with schools. Task specificity was lacking from leadership but developed with school personnel. This either supported or partially supported policy actions. Role tensions between team members due to overlapping role responsibilities
		Regional education officer to support schools in their school reviews. Schools access different regions' support if not offered by their own region.
Timing	No reference to timeframes	No reference to timeframes
Tools	~~No mandated requirements mentioned.~~ ~~No links to regional strategy measures or timeframes identified.~~	Links made to the use of: P-12 CARF School Reviews Inquiry Model