Submission to: Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

From: Deakin University, School of Education,

Date: October 29, 2012

Re: Inquiry into teaching and learning – maximizing Australia's investment in schools

This submission supports the view that Australia's investment in schools will be maximised through strategic developments that are designed to engage all stakeholders in actions that are focused on: creating a high performing teaching profession; building excellence in pre-service teacher education; improving the quality of school leadership, and creating equity for all students. The School of Education at Deakin University supports a response to the needs of Australian schools that is designed to foster shared responsibility for quality provision in Education between schools, systems, governments and higher education providers.

This submission has addressed four of the key items listed for consideration by this review. In order these are:

> **Item a) The effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools**
> **Item e) Factors influencing the selection training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system**
> **Item d)The adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment**
> **Item b: The structure and governance of school administration – local and central – and its impact on teaching and learning**
> **Item f) Other matters – equity**

Item a) The effectiveness of current classroom practices in assisting children to realise their potential in Australian schools

The most promising avenue for improving classroom practices to assist children to realise their potential in Australian schools is through the redirection of resources to remedy infrastructure deficiencies, staffing ratios, support workforce (such as translators, community leaders, social workers) within the school, and to provide continuing professional support for teachers. Priorities for school systems seeking to improve student learning in schools should focus on the reduction of class sizes and improved teacher capacity. Government investment in teacher professional development is needed to improve teacher capacity to use and reflect on evidence to support the professional judgments they make concerning the contextualized nature of teaching and learning.

Australian school effectiveness

While International comparative studies have Australia well-placed in international rankings of educational achievement (PISA, TIMMS, etc.) these have fallen over the past ten years. However, these comparisons do not take into account any improvement in the performances

of students in other countries. That is to say the performance of students in Australian schools appears to be standing still, while it continues to improve in other countries.

Our judgements and international comparisons of educational achievement also need to take account of the characteristics and demographics of different countries and systems. For example, countries with the most integrated and professionalised systems of education (Scandinavia, Finland in particular) produce not only high levels of conventional achievement but achieve this in the context of the lowest levels of educational inequality. Anglophone countries (especially the UK and USA but also, increasingly, Australia) have the least integrated education systems with consequent lower levels of comparative achievement and higher levels of inequality (OECD).

Most of the higher scoring PISA countries are highly homogenous ethnically, subject to comparatively low rates of immigration and diversity, and have highly centralized and formalized systems of education. Finland is a case in point. It has a largely homogenous small student population with high levels of government investment in teacher professional development and high pay scales imparting high status to teachers, and therefore an improved standard of selection into teaching. Australian schools, by comparison, are significantly less homogenous due to relatively high rates of immigration with consequent linguistic, cultural and religious diversity.

Contextual differences in school locations are also important to note. For example, analysis of NAPLAN test results has shown some differentiation within these low results for students from low SES backgrounds. Specifically, Australian students from metropolitan areas with low socioeconomic background areas are more likely to receive lower NAPLAN test results than similar students located in Australia's regional and rural areas (Shepherd 2011). Schools outside of metropolitan areas are more likely to have smaller class sizes, their students are more likely to be drawn from a range of SES backgrounds, and their teachers are more likely to know their students in greater depth. The comparative diffusion of SES in regional and rural schools and its possible effect on student outcomes, albeit still far from ideal, is particularly noteworthy

Students from low SES backgrounds in metropolitan areas tend to be concentrated in particular locations and particular schools. Indeed, there is a concentration of disadvantage in many of these locations and schools; not just in terms of education but also in areas of health, infrastructure (e.g. public transport) and other services (Vinson 2007, Glover et al. 2010). This concentration of disadvantage is matched by concentrations of advantage in other locations and schools. As the Australian Government's MySchool website demonstrates, there are quite extreme disparities in the recurrent resources available to schools. These disparities are echoed in the extreme differences in infrastructure, especially the physical conditions of schools.

Improving classroom practice

Two international instances of effective education systems provide examples of how to improve classroom practice. The first instance is that of Finland, where a thirty-year focus on the funding and organization of schools and schooling is now reaping benefits. The second is, Japan, where mathematics and science education have been supported through the practice of *Lesson Study* for over fifty years. Both of these examples indicate that system and nation-

wide gains can be made when the study of classroom practice is guided by collaborative and structured research.

For example, in Japanese Primary schools, there is a long-established culture of teacher Professional Learning that has been developed through Lesson Study. Lesson Study now has (modified) versions running in several Western countries such as Sweden, the United Kingdom, and perhaps most notably, the United States of America. However, the original version in Japan appears to be more potent than the Western adaptations. In brief, Lesson Study in Japan consists of teachers within school planning a 'research lesson' together, one teacher then teaching that lesson in front of the remainder of the planning team and other interested staff from their school or even other schools. After the lesson, all observers meet to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson, and in some instances the lesson may be re-taught in another class.

The research lesson has a particular structure, a point that many of the Western adaptors appear to ignore. The research lesson is structured by teachers to permit students to examine their own, and classmates, thinking in a public display and discussion of their work: this is the largest part of the lesson. In order to facilitate the discussion classrooms are equipped with room-wide magnetic blackboards that allow both displays of children's work and children's written (on the board) explanations of their thinking. Ironically, in Japanese Primary schools, no technology is used, despite the country's large investment in manufacturing of educational technological goods. The answer to the question of 'why no technology?' lies in faith in the quality of the teachers and the breadth and depth of their pedagogical knowledge and skills.

While the introduction of this approach into Australian schools may seem counter-intuitive given differences in educational cultures between Japan and Australia, a small-scale research project is underway in Victoria. In this example, Victorian Primary teachers are using an un-adapted *Japanese Lesson Study* approach with great success, and much Professional Learning. Although is still in its infancy, the project is being greeted enthusiastically by participants, who are keen to continue despite very limited funding the (refer to Groves, Doig, Vale, and Widjaja, 2012).

Item e) Factors influencing the selection training, professional development, career progression and retention of teachers in the Australian education system

Teacher professional development

The convergence in the research literature, on effective professional development agrees with the approach taken to support the Lesson Study. For example, studies of professional learning support an emphasis on developing subject matter/content knowledge, active learning sustained over time, with opportunities to put the learning into practice, and with follow up and support, a focus on student learning and examination of student work and collective participation (e.g., Garet et al. 2001, Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis 2005, Kennedy 1998, Kriewaldt 2008, Meiers & Ingvarson 2005, Supovitz 2001, Thompson 2003, Timperley, 2008, Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007, Wilson & Berne 1999). These convergent findings are reflected in one of the most widely cited works in this area, namely, Hawley and Valli (1999) who, through a meta-synthesis of relevant contemporary research in the USA, propose a number of design principles for effective professional development:

1. The content of professional development focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material
2. Professional development should be based on analyses of the differences between actual student performance and goals and standards for student learning
3. Professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved
4. Professional development should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching
5. Professional development should be organised around collaborative problem solving
6. Professional development should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning—including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives
7. Professional development should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on learning outcomes for students and the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development
8. Professional development should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned
9. Professional development should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning (Hawley and Valli 1999, pp.137-143)

Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis (2005) examined the effects of features of professional development programs on teachers' knowledge, practice and efficacy by drawing on survey data of 3,250 Australian teachers who had participated in eighty professional development activities as part of the Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme (AGQTP) during 2002-2003, and reported that the most effective programs, as identified by these teachers, reflected Hawley and Valli's (1999) design principles. However, they also noted that 'feedback' and 'collaborative examination of student work' appear to have the least influence 'despite strong evidence for their importance in other research studies' (Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis 2005, p.16).

In their synthesis of a large body of international and New Zealand research, Timperley et al. (2007) identified seven elements in the professional learning *context* that are important for promoting professional learning in ways that impacted positively and substantively on a range of student outcomes:

1. Providing sufficient time for extended opportunities to learn and using the time effectively;
2. Engaging external expertise;
3. Focusing on engaging teachers in the learning process rather than being concerned about whether they volunteered or not;
4. Challenging problematic discourses;
5. Providing opportunities to interact in a community of professionals;
6. Ensuring content was consistent with wider policy trends; and,
7. In school-based initiatives, having leaders actively leading the professional learning opportunities.

In their study, the *content* of effective professional learning included:

1. Discipline knowledge and the interrelationship between such fundamentals as new curricula, pedagogy, and assessment information. Theory provided the basis for making curricular and pedagogical decisions;
2. Knowledge of students, including their developmental progressions through particular curricula, and their culture;
3. Linguistic and cultural resources; and,
4. Theoretical frameworks and conceptual tools. Skills of teacher inquiry included analysis of the teacher's own practice and new possibilities in relation to a standard of practice; the ways in which practice impacted on diverse student learners, and new possibilities for greater impact; and methods of inquiring into the adequacy and improvement of practice.

A large-scale project in Australia, which mapped teacher professional learning activities across the country (Doecke et al., 2008) has proposed the following guidelines for quality professional learning:

1. Professional learning should involve strategic planning, at system-wide, school and individual levels
2. Professional learning should be explicitly embedded within teachers' work
3. Professional learning should be diverse, and appropriate to the individuals' and groups' needs
4. Teacher registration bodies, systems and schools should work together to share their historical and contemporary knowledge about inducting early career teachers into the profession
5. Governments, teacher registration bodies and schools themselves should investigate and value a variety of evidence in accounting for teachers' professional learning
6. Schools and teachers should be encouraged to form and develop a range of professional learning partnerships
7. Teachers should be encouraged to develop and/or extend professional learning networks with colleagues
8. Sectors should be encouraged to work collaboratively in cross-sectoral partnerships
9. Teaching should be recognised as engaging in continuing inquiry into practice, and this inquiry should be recognised as strongly collegial and collaborative in nature

Moreover, this project reviewed various effective approaches to professional learning and posited six principles of professional learning:

1. The collaborative nature of teachers' knowledge and teacher learning is fundamental.
2. Much professional knowledge is anchored in the specific contexts in which teachers work.
3. Knowledge of teachers and teaching develops from, and usually involves, sustained inquiry into teaching and learning by teachers themselves.
4. The findings of research into the knowledge of teachers and teaching are often not simple or certain.
5. Teachers draw on a range of evidence to evaluate and review their existing practices.
6. Teachers engaged in rich professional learning tend to work together with other teachers to build more dynamic and rigorous learning communities in which everyone – teachers, students and parents – can participate. (Doecke et al. 2008, pp.26-27)

Professional development programs may take multiple forms, including formal coursework in face to face or online mode, workshops organised by professional associations, informal learning opportunities situated in practice and self-initiated action research. Knapp (2003) suggested that opportunities for professional learning can occur:

1. Within the practice itself (as professionals investigate and draw conclusions about their daily work);
2. In settings outside practice;
3. In formalised structures and activities designed for professional learning (e.g., workshops, courses, PD sessions); and,
4. In informal settings (e.g., reading journals, conversations with colleagues).

Much of the literature focuses on highlighting important aspects of the *curriculum* of professional development, rather than its *pedagogy* – the 'what' and not so much the 'how'. Teacher learning is seen as an additive process based on accumulation of new knowledge to an existing repertoire (Day 1999). However, this is not a linear, step-by-step process of successive 'in-service' opportunities but requires understanding of the complex processes by which professional learning is developed. But, much of the literature posits strategies or structural features of effective professional development programs. For example, Loucks-Horsley et al. (1998) identified a number of strategies for effective professional learning, each based on a range of research studies:

1. Immersion into inquiry and problem solving
2. Curriculum
   2.1. Curriculum implementation
   2.2. Curriculum development and adaptation
3. Examining practice
   3.1. Action research
   3.2. Case discussions
   3.3. Examining student work and thinking, and scoring assignments
4. Collaborative work
   4.1. Study groups
   4.2. Coaching and mentoring
   4.3. Partnerships with mathematicians in business, industry, and universities
   4.4. Professional networks
5. Vehicles and mechanisms
   5.1. Workshops, institutes, courses, and seminars
   5.2. Technology for professional development
   5.3. Developing professional developers

Meiers and Ingvarson (2005) mapped a classification of these strategies according to their core purposes: developing awareness; building knowledge; using new knowledge; practising new approaches; and, reflection on teaching and learning and found that they paralleled what we know from the literature about stages in the change process.

While these are useful in guiding the 'delivery' of professional development and learning opportunities, increasingly we have come to understand that, like all types of learning, teacher learning is not only individual, but 'social' as well (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 2009, Lieberman & Miller 2008, Lieberman & Pointer-Mace 2010). Teachers who plan and work together over time build commitment not only to each other but also to further learning (Little 1992, 1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, Little & McLaughlin 1993, McLaughlin & Talbert 2001).

Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis (2005) identified 'professional community' as a mediating variable in the effectiveness of professional development programs and that 'a substantial level of professional community is vital to significant change' (p. 17). Teachers' involvement in networked learning communities seems to lead to changed practices, philosophies, instructional time and collegial interactions (Borko 2004). Moreover, there is some evidence that strong professional learning communities within schools contribute to improved student achievement (e.g., Timperley et al. 2007). However, as Little (2002a) reminds us, though 'research spanning more than two decades points to the benefits of vigorous collegial communities … relatively little research examines specifically how professional communities supply intellectual, social and material resources for teacher learning and innovations in practice' (p. 917).

In addition, the literature is increasingly supporting the notion of teachers making their practice public as a significant professional learning opportunity for both themselves and others (e.g., Hatch et al., 2005; Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2010). A powerful outcome of teachers making their work public is new conversations about teaching (Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2010). As Lieberman and Pointer-Mace (2010) remind us:

> When professional development opportunities start with other peoples' ideas *first*, they deny what teachers know. Starting with teachers' practice invites teachers into the conversation and opens them up to critique, to learning, and to expanding their repertoire (p. 86)

Even though the desired outcome of effective professional development and its resultant professional learning is a change in professional practice that leads to enhanced student learning opportunities and outcomes, it is not always easy to show this outcome in simple causal ways. Though we do know from the literature a good deal about effective professional development, we know very little about what teachers actually learn from professional development (Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal 2003, Wilson & Berne 1999) and even less about what students learn as a result of changed practices (Supovitz, 2001). However, there is some guidance in the literature in relation to how we can go about evaluating professional development opportunities. Guskey (2000; 2002) argued for five levels of evaluation of professional development:

Level 1: Participants' Reactions
Level 2: Participants' Learning
Level 3: Organization Support and Change
Level 4: Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills
Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes

He stressed that, 'Level 5 addresses 'the bottom line' and should ask questions like: How did the professional development activity affect students? Did it benefit them in any way? He also stressed that, in planning professional development to improve student learning, the order of the levels must be reversed; planning must be 'backward', i.e. starting where you want to end and then working back. However, a growing body of literature supports the notion of considering a broad range of evidence of teachers' learning when evaluating the outcomes of that learning, cautioning about using a smaller range of evidence like students' test scores (e.g. Doecke et al. 2008, Elmore 2000). Likewise, the OECD's report, *Education Policy Analysis 2004* (OECD, 2005) stresses the importance of considering 'a wider range of outcomes in education, not only cognitive abilities' (p. 12). Fishman et al. (2003) argued for

evaluating professional development using a combination of teacher reflection, classroom observation and ongoing assessment of student performance.

Quality teacher education

Rigorous, large-scale statistical research demonstrates that the teacher training and qualifications *do* make a difference to student outcomes. Using data from a 50-state survey of policies, state case study analyses, the 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Darling-Hammond (2000) found that teacher certification had a stronger positive correlation with student achievement in reading and mathematics than class size, teacher salaries, or school spending even after controlling for poverty and language status. Similar, large-scale studies support the positive impact of longer teacher training on student outcomes, particularly in the early years of schools. For example, analyses of student achievement and teacher qualifications using data from the US Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) found that first-grade students had higher levels of achievement in mathematics and reading when teachers had higher levels of coursework in these subject areas (Croninger et al. 2007).

Studies suggest a cautious approach should be adopted when employing short and intensive training programs to address staffing shortfalls in schools. For example, higher levels of student achievement have been associated with fully trained, qualified teachers compared with truncated training programs offered under the 'Teach for Australia' program that replicates the "Teach for America" (TFA) model. Large scale US studies have shown differences in student performance to be greater in the early years of schooling. Early primary school students assigned to new TFA recruits scored significantly lower in reading and language arts and marginally lower in mathematics when compared with teachers prepared in college preservice programs (Boyd et al. 2009)

The US evidence base tells us that TFA graduates get better as they undertake advanced training and gain more experience but teacher retention is a major problem. The majority of TFA teachers leave the profession because they had always planned to do so or have failed as teachers. By the end of their second year of teaching, 69% of TFA teachers have left teaching; by the end of their fourth year of teaching, 85% of TFA teachers have left the profession. In short, the majority of TFA teachers do not stay in education long enough to make up for the negative impact on student outcomes they cause during their first few years of teaching.

Over the past two or three decades several highly successful school-based teacher education programs have been run by various university schools of education (previously by Deakin and currently by VUT for example). These programs, which have been designed to more closely integrate the academic and practical course components have overcome many of the shortcomings of existing programs, however they are notoriously resource intensive, and consequently, have been unable to be scaled up to engage all teacher education students. Without improved funding and support for teacher education the expertise gained from such limited experiments is unable to be universally applied.

Teaching students who are engaged in school-based programs are a resource to schools. These students could, for example, be employed as teacher aides during lengthy placements and internship, until they are qualified as teachers. This would help to make up for salary loss and reduce the time teaching students would need to engage in part-time employment to

support themselves while preparing to become a teacher. The in-school component of the university program could also be part of a whole-school professional development program where teachers, as mentors, are offered professional development and credit for advanced work on issues relevant to the specific school context. Teachers and school leaders could benefit from the opportunity to experience/take part in the professional development programs offered in schools associated with the university program. Research has shown that leadership and professional development programs which take account of the diversity of contexts within which teaching and learning occurs, build a shared culture and commitment to learning, community and responsibility (Starratt 2003).

Though pre-service training appears perennially hamstrung by financials, pre-service teachers need to spend more time under supervision in schools. One model may include university staff as 'translators' in schools. A measure of the quality of teacher education programs could also focus on the quality of teachers chosen as supervisors for pre-service teachers. An aspect of this lies in the seeming disconnect and lack of understanding of pre-service training by some teachers and there remains a substantial amount of work to be done in changing the ways most mentor teachers view the practicum experience (Ure, Gough and Newton, 2010).

Resources are needed to provide time for university and school staff to engage in meaningful discussions. Time and funding is needed to allow teachers and academics to have meaningful conversations about teaching and learning. Teacher education academics need to be able to get alongside mentors in the schools to ensure that the messages given to teaching students and expectations for their performance are consistent. In those instances when this does occur, we see good results. At present there is not enough funding to schools or universities to support activities of this type across all teacher education courses. Staff in the School of Education at Deakin University have put time and effort into rethinking the strategies they use to engage with the schools to improve support for teaching students. However, without the ability to get out amongst the profession this approach can be hit and miss.

Teacher Education in Australia is undergoing major review to ensure all courses meet the professional standards defined for national course accreditation and teacher registration required by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). In addition, universities are actively engaged in a review of policies governing teaching and learning in higher education settings to respond to national initiatives such as the new AQF, the English language requirements developed by DEEWR for TESQA and other issues arising from the Bradley review. For example, Deakin University has developed a new learning framework ‘Live the Future’ to guide further developments in teaching and learning. All courses, including those for teacher education, are being reviewed against the six criteria defined in the "Live the Future" agenda. The criteria include:

- Graduate learning outcomes
- Assessment requirements, and degree of challenge as judged by Bloom's taxonomy
- Feedback, and how this is given and its purpose
- Employability
- Engagement
- Accessibility

The review and re-development processes for teacher education now provides the potential for greater exploration of teacher development against a range of issues including English

language, professional standards for teaching, volume of learning and elements of employability and engagement.

Item d) The adequacy of tools available for teachers to create and maintain an optimal learning environment

A recent Australian study, *The MCEEDYA Mapping Project on Student Academic Engagement* (Ure and Gray, 2012), demonstrates that benefits accrue to schools when there is a coherent program of professional support to schools that is supported with additional resources. Reported case-studies of a selection of Australian schools with a low Index of Community Socio – Economic Advantage (ICSEA), from all jurisdictions, demonstrates that schools that had accessed support through National Partnerships funding, and made use of allied support programs offered through departmental offices, improved student learning outcomes. Importantly all schools in this study were found to have adopted whole of school approach toward:

- Leadership
- Learning culture
- Curriculum and pedagogy
- Management of resources
- Community partnerships
- Collegial professional learning

The case-study schools responded positively to the National Partnerships initiative and made gains in the achievement outcomes of students over a relatively short period. Each case-study school had worked to embed the new practices, which they had been able to build with additional support

All schools in the study had a school plan that incorporated a "synergy of special initiatives" that were designed to provide a safety net for all students and ensure that their individual learning and behaviour needs could not be overlooked. In most cases, National Partnerships funding had been used to improve the pastoral care support for students. This enabled teachers to focus more of their time on the development of differentiated teaching practices in their classrooms. Teachers were able to develop an evidence-based practice across the whole school through a more studied approach to the use of NAPLAN and other sources of data. Case-management and whole-of-school data management approaches were used to monitor the learning trajectories of students across the areas of literacy, numeracy and behaviour.

Schools used multiple forms of data to report on student learning and behaviour and to inform school policy and practice. Schools used data to:

- establish a school-wide approach to monitor student learning and behaviour, and identify areas of need
- target student learning needs at transition to primary and secondary school
- identify behaviour and attendance needs of students and provide more targeted pastoral care of students and remove the burden from classroom teachers,
- improve curriculum delivery in the key areas of literacy and numeracy across the school
- develop more individualized and differentiated teaching strategies for literacy and numeracy

- create a student-centered pedagogy that was and focused on problem-solving and higher order thinking
- support teacher professional learning using collegial processes that were focused on the review of evidence of student learning and behaviour
- share information about learning with students and their parents more effectively and improve home-school partnerships
- improve information exchange with community agencies supporting students and their families.

A key feature of the case study schools was the whole of school approach to student academic engagement that encompassed student learning, behaviour and well-being. Although excellent behaviour management practices were embedded in school processes they were not the platform on which student academic engagement initiatives were based. The focus in these schools was on monitoring student learning and fostering positive outcomes for all students. This approach reduced the likelihood that students could fall into patterns of unproductive learning behaviour. Overall, the response of these schools to their students was inclusive, proactive and preventative.

The whole of school approach involved data collection across classes and year levels for regular review, planning and on-going case management. Teachers shared information on students to build case management plans and assist students to develop personal learning trajectories.

The driving force for this change at school level was the leadership of principals and their vision for a whole of school focus on productive learning behaviours. Leadership responsibilities were also well distributed among deputy, assistant or associate principals and other staff, and there was a strong emphasis on the professional development of staff to build their capacity to meet students' needs. This professional development was collegial, targeted, evidenced-based, and focused on skills for differentiated teaching.

School change at this level is not possible without external funding and support. School leaders in the case study schools were proactive and strategic in accessing such resources in order to be able to develop initiatives and build capacity in their schools without negatively impacting the overall school budget.

It is also important to note that the effort put in by teachers can take its toll. The literature clearly demonstrates that schools of high need are working at capacity and that high needs schools are more likely to have a higher rate of teacher attrition and loss of knowledge (Angus et al., 2007). Additional support for students through specialist teachers and pastoral care staff were essential to the success of the low ICSEA schools.

The findings of this study were consistent with research literature indicating a greater need for more specialist assistance in schools by workers who are trained in appropriate professions – e.g. social workers rather than chaplains, while career workers need to develop pedagogical approaches to promoting student engagement. Health and well-being are recognized as creating a critical precondition to student learning and achievement (Blackmore & Kamp 2006, Wilkinson & Pickett 2010). There is greater need for suitable support in classrooms where there are students with an array of disabilities across the spectrum.

Item b: The structure and governance of school administration – local and central – and its impact on teaching and learning

The focus on school leadership has become narrowly understood as the principalship since the move to self-managing schools in 1990s. Research on leadership and in the school effectiveness and improvement paradigms has after 20 years determined that school leaders are important *indirectly* in that they provide a sense of direction, have the capacity to harness and distribute resources, can encourage the development of a culture of inquiry and professional learning, create structures and processes of collaborative decision-making, work with community, organize school structures and time so it is conducive to productive pedagogical approaches, as well as reward and recognize student and staff achievement. However, there is no *direct* link between school leadership (principals), and student learning outcomes (achievement scores), (Hallinger & Heck 1996, Barker 2007, De Maeyera et al. 2007). Numerous studies now indicate teacher –student interaction, engagement and satisfaction as well as sense of efficacy on part of both teachers and students has a far greater effect, and therefore principals can enhance this by creating the most conducive conditions for that work (Hattie 2003, 2009, Lingard et al 2005, Hayes et al 2006).

What is evident in all the research is that too much effort time and energy has been spent on management work rather than pedagogical work in schools as the job of the principal in self-managing schools has expanded (e.g. Robinson 2007). Principals require greater administrative support to manage the everyday routine work of schools so that they can pay greater attention to community capacity building, leading learning and also strategic development. Pedagogical leadership has been linked indirectly to improved teacher and student learning (Mulford 2003, Mulford & Silins 2003), and so while drawing upon the expertise of the business and industry sectors might seem attractive to incorporate into the role of principalship of schools to help address the demands of administration work, we consider this to be of secondary importance to the need for expertise in educational leadership for this role.

Schools are now working differently in terms of new learning spaces and technologies, use of time, community capacity building and personalized learning (Shields 2002, Pounder et al. 2002). There is now significant need for principals in culturally diverse communities to develop intercultural understandings and sensitivities, professional networks with community and government organisations to garner support, to model professional learning, to create cultures of ongoing and systematic inquiry in schools, to recognise and value difference and diversity, to have strong pedagogical knowledge across the curriculum as well as capacity to mobilise resources appropriately in terms of use of people, but also built and virtual environments to focus on student learning (Murphy & Vriesenga 2006, Robinson 2006). This means they need to have opportunities to travel, to visit, to research and work with, and in universities. Critical to all this is to create participatory redesign which includes all stakeholders to plan and organize in ways that lead to ongoing refection on action for action (Lumby 2006).

In this context, one small but highly consequential investment in school-based personnel entitlement has proven to create substantial savings – both in money and in time for school leaders, while enabling principals to focus on their key role of improving teaching and learning. Providing each school with a qualified school business manager aids better business management at the local level while enabling educators to spend more time and focus on teaching and learning responsibilities (Starr, 2012).

A Management and Institutional Development Unit report from the University of Manchester (2010) found that while education leaders work between 50 and 80 hours per week, those with business managers were able to delegate almost 30% of their work (19 hours) to business managers. The report also highlighted that business managers created 'soft savings', with educational leaders working alongside an effective business manager being less stressed and anxious about business affairs, while also being more prepared to stay longer in their posts or apply for further principal appointments.

While much research demonstrates principals' frustration with increasingly complex and growing demands (audits, legislative requirements, regulations and accountability obligations) (Gronn, 2009; McWilliam & Perry, 2006; c), the employment of a qualified school business manager can divert this mandatory work away from school principals. In other words, while school business is growing in scope and complexity, a school business manager can help a school's improvement strategy by enabling the principal to focus on school improvement initiatives.

It is interesting to note that while the response of UK's Cameron government to the global financial crisis of 2008 was to implement 'austerity measures' across all public services, it provided increased funding to enable a further 1000 school business managers to be trained. Education business managers were shown to create savings of time and money, paying for their own salaries within a three-year period (see McKinsey, 2007; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2010a; 2010b; Oakley Consulting (2010). Oakley Consulting's (2010) analysis estimated that the return on investment for the monies spent on education business managers in 19 case study sites was 575%, and that the more qualified the business manager, the greater the returns.

Australian research conducted during 2010 and 2011 (Starr, 2012) focused on the current state of affairs for members of the education business profession. The Australia-wide research included all educational levels and sectors through a nation-wide survey and interviews with 199 business managers and their professional associations across the country. The research also explored the state of play overseas (UK, USA, Canada, South Africa and NZ). One overwhelming finding was that school business managers are of most benefit to schools when they work alongside school principals and are accepted as members of school leadership teams. While every educational decision has a business implication, business managers have a role in strategic planning. Furthermore, recent emphases on distributed school leadership demonstrate that education leaders of diverse skills and interests working as a team are able to make the most prudent educational and business decisions for schools – in much the same way a court jury or board of directors operates.

Recent, highly publicised cases of inadequate educational business management and governance have highlighted the necessity of prudent business oversight in schools, while alerting the community – particularly parents – to the fact that governors who serve on the councils of educational institutions bear personal liability for the stewardship of schools (e.g. Preiss, 2012; Rintoul, 2012). Such cases also highlight the importance of educational institutions as community assets that belong to geographical and learning communities. When education business goes bad, whole communities suffer.

While some may find it offensive to contend that schools are businesses, the business obligations surrounding and within education are increasing. Education business managers

deal with budgeting and financial control; human resources management; facilities / resources development and maintenance; legislative compliance and accountability requirements; strategy and governance. If principals and other school leaders (who are not trained in these areas) can delegate these responsibilities to school business managers who are integral members of school leadership teams, then school improvement in teaching and learning can remain their primary focus.

Item f) Other *matters – equity*

Evidence indicates that processes leading to increased autonomy in schools without responsibility for all students, or to a system, leads to inequitable outcomes and for some students (Connors 2002, Kirby 2002). Privileging competition as the primary goal on which schooling is organized leads to inequitable practices, such as focusing on those students you can make the most difference to fastest. This may result in putting resources into activities that look good, but which do not address the real issues (Gillborn & Youdell 2000, Campbell et al. 2000). For every successful school there is usually a failing school as in a market system there are always winners and losers. Schools in disadvantaged communities are obviously worse off as they do not have the capacity to raise the additional industry, philanthropic, and alumni's social and economic capital that many government and non-government schools can achieve in wealthier communities. In this sense, success breeds success. In disadvantaged communities, neither parents nor local industries and communities have the resources to invest in schools. In these communities the additional funds needed to support flexible, comprehensive and well-rounded educational programs (e.g. extra-curricular activities) are lacking. Students feel not valued when they know they are not getting the same activities as their counterparts (Muschaump et al. 2007). Despite this, schools in disadvantaged regions tend to have to offer a greater breadth of curriculum (VET, VCAL and VCE) and provide additional resources for students from non-English speaking backgrounds, or with disabilities and specific learning needs. A market driven system means that those schools that need the most support often have the least.

While schools need to be able to address localized problems and still remain accountable to systems and governments, education departments need to provide consistent policies and supports at regional and central levels, as well as funding for new initiatives and professional learning programs for school teachers and leaders.

The increased requirements and external pressure for teachers, schools and departments of education to be publicly accountable is necessary. However, the form of these accountabilities and the emphasis on uniform, standardized assessment and outcomes for students and teachers runs the risk of embedding a culture of one-size-fits-all within the administrative hierarchies of departments of education. This culture is being reinforced by public display of performance data (e.g. MySchool), and this has diminished the capacity of schools to be innovative and responsive to changing circumstances at the local level. A better balance between external and internal accountabilities as drivers of school improvement is therefore desirable. Research indicates that strong internal accountability (e.g. culture of systematic inquiry and peer review) is more likely to improve student learning and encourage teacher professional learning (Elmore 1997).

New policy directions that are aimed at maximising Australia's investment in schools should be designed to build a culture of research and development that includes all stakeholders. Previous evaluation of successful models of the research-policy nexus shows that there needs

to be regular ongoing dialogue between researchers, policymakers, practitioners and teacher educators to inform policy and practice (DETYA 2000). For researchers and educators, policy often seems to emerge out of a vacuum suggesting that there is currently scope for a stronger link between policy formation and education research.

The School of Education at Deakin University therefore supports further investment in Australian school through a focus on:

- Quality learning environments that are well resourced and supported through research informed teaching that is responsive to contexts and student needs.

- Quality teacher professional development support that is designed to support teachers in the use of inquiry and evidence in responding to and differentiating student instruction.

- Quality initial teacher education through improved partnerships between schools and higher education providers that are focused on preparing future teachers with the professional capacities they need from the first day of teaching.

- Quality school leaders with time, responsibility and capacity to build a strong culture of internal accountability and professional collaboration.

- Developing an environment where policy makers, educators and researchers plan, implement and evaluate a coherent and sustained program of development for schools and teacher professional development.

The School would welcome the opportunity to engage further in discussions toward a comprehensive response to the complex problem of maximising Australia's investment in schools.

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