From supervision to quality assurance:
The case study of the State of Victoria (Australia)

David Gurr

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Published by:
International Institute for Educational Planning/UNESCO
7 - 9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris

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David Gurr
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The publication costs of this study have been covered through a grant-in-aid offered by UNESCO and by voluntary contributions made by several Member States of UNESCO, the list of which will be found at the end of the volume.

Published by
International Institute for Educational Planning/UNESCO
7 - 9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris, France
Printed in IIEP’s printshop

Working document
© UNESCO April 1999
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Australian Principals’ Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASES</td>
<td>Computerized Administrative Systems Environment for Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Corporate Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIS</td>
<td>CASES Management Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Curriculum and Standards Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLP</td>
<td>District Liaison Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Decision Support Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAT</td>
<td>General Achievement Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLA</td>
<td>Key Learning Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAP</td>
<td>Learning Assessment Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASSP</td>
<td>National Association of Secondary School Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRP</td>
<td>Professional Recognition Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPC</td>
<td>Regional Principal Consultants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAI</td>
<td>Student Achievement Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCTP</td>
<td>Standards Council of the Teaching Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education Institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPI</td>
<td>Tertiary Preparation Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VASSP</td>
<td>Victorian Association of Secondary School Principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCE</td>
<td>Victorian Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPPA</td>
<td>Victorian Primary Principals’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSAM</td>
<td>Victorian Student Achievement Monitor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRESENTATION OF THE SERIES

This publication forms part of a series on ‘Trends in school supervision’, which accompanies the implementation of an IIEP project on ‘Improving teacher supervision and support services for basic education’. The project, which began in 1996, is one of the main research components of the Institute’s Medium Term Plan 1996-2001. The Institute wishes to express its sincere thanks to BMZ (the German Federal Ministry for Technical Co-operation) and to UNICEF for their support in the implementation of this project.

Earlier research, at the Institute and elsewhere, has pointed to the need, in an era of increased decentralization and school autonomy, to strengthen the skills of personnel involved in supervision and support at local level and in schools.

Two related points are worth mentioning here, as they form both the background to and the rationale for the IIEP’s concern with this area of management. Firstly, professional supervision and support services for teachers, although existing in almost every country for a long time, have been ignored, increasingly so since resources have become more scarce. This neglect has, until recent times, been reflected by a similar indifference among researchers. Secondly, one important reason why the quality of basic education has deteriorated in many contexts is precisely related to the weakening of these services.

The IIEP project, developed against this background, consists of research, training and dissemination activities. Its specific objectives are to assist countries in diagnosing and reforming the existing services of supervision and support, and to identify promising strategies for their reorganization and strengthening. The series of publications, of which this monograph forms a part, is the result of research, implemented in several regions, to address a number of questions, such as:
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- How is supervision and support organized in different countries? What have been the major trends in their recent evolution?

- What are the principal problems which supervision and support services are presently facing in terms of: organizational structures; overall management; and daily functioning?

- To what extent and under what conditions do these services have a positive impact on the quality of the teaching-learning processes in schools?

- What are the major innovations taking place, mainly in respect of the devolution of supervision and support to the school-site level? How do these innovations operate? What are the main results?

In order to formulate answers to these questions, the project elaborated the following operational definition of school supervision and support services: all those services whose main function is to control and evaluate, and/or advise and support schoolheads and teachers. The focus of the project is on external supervision and support, that is to say on the work of inspectors, supervisors, advisers, counsellors, etc. located outside the school, at local, regional or central levels. A common characteristic of these officers is that regular visits to schools are an essential part of their mandate.

However, many countries, in their attempts to reform and innovate supervision, are increasingly relying on in-school or community-based strategies (such as resource centres, school clusters, in-school supervision by the principal or by peers, school-based management) to complement, if not to replace, external supervision and support. The project therefore also pays attention to a number of such innovations and, in more general terms, the strengths and weaknesses of strategies, aiming at the reinforcement of internal quality-assurance mechanisms.
This series: ‘Trends in school supervision’, thus consists of a variety of titles: national diagnoses on supervision and support, comparative analyses of the situation by region, case studies on innovative experiences, monographs and discussion papers on specific management issues. It is hoped that this series will fill a gap in education research as well as be an inspiration, in particular to policy makers intending to reform supervision, and to supervisors who want to improve on their practice.

Other titles in the series include:
PART I

The reform of public education
THE REFORM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The reform of school supervision in the State of Victoria took place within an overall policy to reform the public sector, with dramatic impact on the organization and management of public education. The first part of this study therefore examines in some detail the environment in which this policy was implemented, its rationale and its main strategies.

Context

The State of Victoria in Australia has a population of over 4.6 million people, with approximately 3.2 million people living in the large metropolitan city of Melbourne. The state government has significant responsibilities in the provision of school education, vocational education and training, adult, community and further education, with limited responsibilities in the area of higher education. This paper focuses entirely on school education.

The school education system consists of primary schools from preparatory year to Year 6 (ages five to twelve) and secondary schools from Year 7 to 12 (ages twelve to eighteen). Most students (approximately three-quarters) complete 13 years of school and attain a Year 12 certificate called the ‘Victorian Certificate of Education’ (VCE). There are free government and low-fee-paying religious school systems (the largest religious system is the Catholic system), as well as a number of independent fee-paying schools accounting for approximately 66, 23 and 11 per cent of the student population respectively. In 1997 the government school system had 1,298 primary schools, 281 secondary schools and another 121 settings including special schools, P-12 schools, language schools and ancillary settings (Department of Education, 1997: 24). There were 18,159 primary teachers, 16,903 secondary teachers teaching 301,469 primary students, 209,870 secondary students and
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6,543 special and language students (Department of Education, 1997: 24, 41). The total of administrative and teacher-support staff based in 
schools was 6,022. In addition, non-school-based staff, i.e. personnel 
working in the central office, the regional offices and statutory 
authorities, consisted of 1,446 persons.

The class size in government primary schools in 1996/97 was on 
average 26, with 92.7 per cent of all classes having less than 30 pupils. 
Pupil/teacher ratios were, at primary, 17.9 and, at secondary, 12.4. Within 
the student population, 25 per cent of students were from non-English-
-speaking backgrounds. Thirty-four per cent of government primary-
school students received the Education Maintenance Allowance 
(financial support for low-income families). The average age of teachers 
was 43 years, two thirds being female (Office of Review, 1998a).

Expenditure per pupil was $5,205 (the average for the whole of 
Australia being slightly higher: $5,365); unit spending at primary level 
was $4,411 ($4,686 for Australia) and at secondary level $6,337 ($6,447).¹ 
Ninety-six per cent of total school expenditure is government funded 
(of this, 89 per cent coming from the state level and 11 per cent from 
the Federal government), while other sources of revenue, such as 
voluntary fees and fund raising, accounting for the remainder.

_Table 1_ provides a summary of some of this information.²

¹. Throughout the document, all references are to Australian dollars (1 US $ = about 1.50 Au $).
². The sources for these data and for the table are:
· *Implementing Reform in Government Services 1998* (Steering Committee for the 
  of Education.
· *An appraisal of ‘The state of our state schools’, the Report of the Synod Schools Task 
  Group on Victoria’s public education system*, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, August 
Table 1. Summary information on the Victorian education system: 1996-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Average size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1,333*</td>
<td>301,469</td>
<td>18,159 (23.5% male, 76.5% female)</td>
<td>226 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>209,870**</td>
<td>16,903 (49% male, 51% female)</td>
<td>716 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special schools</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>5,336</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(disabled students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language schools</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,207</td>
<td></td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total government schools</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>517,882</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes 35 combined primary-secondary schools.
** Includes students in the 35 combined primary-secondary schools.

The government school system is operated by the Office of Schools within the Department of Education (Figure 1). The title ‘Directorate of School Education’ which is occasionally used in this report, refers to the government body responsible for school education prior to all education services coming under the title ‘Department of Education’ in 1996. The Office of Schools is supported by three types of units: those in charge of strategy, such as the Office of Strategic Planning and Administrative Services; those in charge of accountability (Office of Review) and those in charge of policy and statutes (Standards Council of the teaching profession, Merit Protection Board, Registered Schools Board, Board of Studies). The Office of Schools reports to the Secretary of Education (the public service head) who, in turn, reports to the Minister of Education who has ultimate responsibility for the school education portfolio. It administratively divides the schools into nine geographical regions.
October 2, 1992, saw a change in government in Victoria; the socialist Labour government of ten years was replaced by a conservative Liberal-National coalition government. The coalition was swept into power on a platform of instituting major reforms across most areas of government, including education. A feature of the previous government had been the trend to decentralization of the education system. One of the key reforms of the new government was the further decentralization of the public education system through the introduction of the *Schools of the Future* reform.

*Schools of the Future* is a major ongoing educational reform that has already had significant impact on Victorian public-school education.
(Spring, 1997a, 1997b). Within a central framework, schools have been given control over curriculum, educational policies, and financial and human resources.

“Under this programme, responsibility, authority and accountability for educational outcomes have been devolved from the centralized control of the Department to a system of self-management at the local level. Each school has been provided with a high degree of freedom to focus its energies and creativity on achieving the school’s stated objectives which, in broad terms, are required to be complementary to those of the Government and the Department.”

(Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 1997: 13)

It is perhaps the most far-reaching and consistent example of school self-management anywhere in the world (Caldwell, Gurr, Hill and Rowe, 1997). The importance of this reform and the key elements are concisely summarized by Caldwell (1996: 416):

“The reform of schools in the public sector is proceeding apace in Australia and in comparable nations. The broad features are essentially the same: the creation of a system of self-managing schools within a curriculum and standards framework. Consistent with efforts to restructure the public sector, there has been downsizing of central and regional agencies, with a small but powerful strategic core ‘steering’ the system. While personnel for the most part remain centrally employed, there is increasingly a capacity at the school level to select staff and determine the mix of professional, para-professional and support arrangements. Schools have their budgets, in a process variously described as global budgeting or bulk funding, allowing discretion in deployment at the local level according to a mix of school and
state priorities, which in some places are embodied in a school charter that provides a framework for planning and accountability over a three-year period. These features are most evident in Victoria, where reform... is arguably the most sweeping in any system of state education in Australia since the establishment of government schools in the late nineteenth century... with about 1,700 schools, Victoria has the distinction of being the largest system of public education anywhere in the world to have adopted the new arrangements and to have decentralized such a large part of the state budget for school education.”

Since 1992 education in Victoria has experienced large cuts in resourcing. There was a perception by the Coalition that the previous government had overspent on education (Spring, 1997b). Evidence to support this conclusion included:

- $40 million unfunded in previous budget;
- 8,000 teachers above needs (including 5,000 tenured teachers on maternity leave and 3,000 teaching positions above formula-based staffing establishments);
- 20 per cent of teachers on leave replaced by permanent staff;
- over the previous decade there was a 2 per cent increase in teachers, but a 9 per cent decrease in students;
- 30 per cent of the state’s recurrent budget required to service borrowings.

In response to the perceived overspending, the Coalition reduced expenditure in all areas, with education experiencing major resource reductions resulting in (Spring, 1997b; Victorian-Auditor General’s Office, 1997: 13):
The reform of public education

• teacher numbers reduced by over 7,000 (18 per cent);
• $400 million initially trimmed from budget (there have been budget increases in recent years);
• administrative staff, based in central and regional offices, reduced from 4,000 to 1,200. The Department is now seen as a policy-setting body, a provider of shared support services and purchaser of educational services from schools;
• student/teacher ratios increased with the primary/secondary combined ratio increasing from 13:2 in 1992 to 15:1 in 1995.

Thus, as in many places around the world, the creation of self-managing schools through Schools of the Future has occurred in a cost-cutting environment. However, because of productivity increases associated with elements of the reform (e.g. enhanced control of financial resources by the school) the impact of the reduction in resources has probably been lessened.

Whilst in many respects the changes to education can be viewed as a ‘crash-through’ approach (Gough and Taylor, 1996), the development of key elements over an extended period and in consultation with key stakeholders (e.g. the Accountability Framework, the Curriculum and Standards Framework) and the ongoing nature of the reform suggest a more responsive, evolutionary model (Pascoe and Pascoe, 1998; Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, 1998).

The rationale for the reform

The mission of the educational reform in Victoria is “to give young people in Victoria the best chance for the future through helping each child reach his or her full potential” (Spring, 1997b: 3). Subsidiary aims are to:
• restore public confidence in government education;
• add value to students' lives;
• develop world’s best practice.

The Department’s Corporate Plan for 1996-98 focuses upon student learning, teacher skills and innovative use of technology through policy and programmes which aim to:

• provide every child with education and skills to give them the best chance for the future, including the need for all students to be literate, numerate, adept at information technology and to have a strong knowledge base;
• staff all schools with gifted and inspirational teachers able to enhance the quest for knowledge and understanding so that young people can prosper and become productive citizens;
• enhance education opportunities through innovative technologies and wherever appropriate, reduce the current emphasis on traditional capital infrastructure with investment in technological infrastructure.

**The main reform strategies**

The reform is six years into a seven-year cycle. *Schools of the Future* features multiple and simultaneous reform of all the major areas of school education through nine strategies (Spring, 1997b):

**Strategy 1**: self-management;
**Strategy 2**: leadership and professional development for teachers and principals;
**Strategy 3**: parent and community involvement;
**Strategy 4**: Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) and Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE);
**Strategy 5**: student performance, assessment and reporting to parents;
Strategy 6: literacy and programmes for students with special needs;
Strategy 7: student code of conduct;
Strategy 8: technology and classrooms of the future;

In order to implement these strategies, four policy frameworks were developed (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Policy frameworks of Schools of the Future

Source: Caldwell, Gurr, Hill and Rowe, 1997.

Each of these frameworks has many elements. Whilst most of them are in place, some are still to be fully implemented, such as staffing flexibility. A brief description of each framework follows (adapted from Spring, 1997b).
The Curriculum Framework aims to assign to schools curriculum outcomes which are expected to be achieved by all students. It includes two main elements:

- the Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF), introduced in 1995, for Preparatory year to Year 10 in the eight Key Learning Areas (KLA). The KLAs include arts, English, health and physical education, languages other than English, mathematics, science, technology as well as society and environment studies. It provides a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum framework as well as an assessment and reporting mechanism based upon agreed performance levels in all KLAs across all year levels;
- the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) for Years 11 and 12, which specifies curriculum and assessment in a wide range of subjects.

Both of these initiatives have been the responsibility of the Board of Studies. As indicated in Figure 1, the Board of Studies has some degree of independence from the Office of Schools. Pascoe and Pascoe (1998) argue that this has helped the Board to work with teachers in the development of the CSF at a time when teachers were disenfranchized with government reforms of education. This framework also includes the development of statewide assessment of student performance in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (see below for discussion of these initiatives) for which the same Board is largely responsible.

The People Framework has five elements:

- local selection of staff;
- full staffing flexibility and workforce planning;
- performance management for principals and teachers;
- professional development;
- new career structures (the creation of leading teacher categories).
The reform of public education

The Resources Framework:

- allocates 90 per cent of schools’ recurrent budget directly to schools;
- gives schools the flexibility to allocate all resources in accordance with student learning needs;
- funds schools in a clear and equitable way through the School Global Budget.

The Accountability Framework has three key elements:

- school charter;
- annual report;
- triennial review.

The emphasis of the reform is now on consolidation of the elements of Schools of the Future whilst exploring new directions through the introduction in June 1997 of the Schools of the Third Millennium project (Gude, 1997; Pascoe and Pascoe, 1998). This project has established three working parties – innovative use of multimedia, autonomous schools, and quality-management processes – which are progressively reporting to the Minister for Education during 1998. Each working group is chaired by a business leader and is briefed to explore ways in which the state education system can be improved. “As a result of the project, the Department will support a variety of models which schools will be able to take up” (Department of Education, 1997: 82). Thus, unlike Schools of the Future, which is a systemic and comprehensive reform, Schools of the Third Millennium is focused upon exploring possibilities and having a small number of schools voluntarily experiment with these.

Of greater interest to this paper is the working group on autonomous schools, as it is this group which has the most potential for changing the supervision structures in schools. The work of this group has resulted in the tabling, during April 1998, of the Education (self-
governing schools) Bill. It is envisaged that schools will be given new powers to better manage their physical and human resources. For example, school councils will be able to:

- co-opt members with specialist skills;
- enter into partnerships with business, Technical and Further Education institutes (TAFE) and other institutions. This arrangement has been extended to all schools with the release, in October, 1998 (Jones, 1998a), of a school-sponsorship policy which provides guidelines for seeking partnerships that directly benefit student educational opportunities, or which have some educational purpose (Department of Education, 1998c);
- apply to make their school a specialist school in a chosen discipline;
- have the power to directly employ staff.

The Department will purchase educational services from the self-governing schools and the schools will have the flexibility to purchase elsewhere services currently provided by the Department.

Whilst the response from schools has not been as enthusiastic as anticipated due to concerns over funding arrangements and staff-employment issues (Jones, 1998c), 29 schools have been selected to become self-governing in 1999. The selected schools were required to demonstrate in their application to join, how self-governance would improve student educational opportunities (Jones, 1998b).

In a move similar to the English Labour Government’s changes to Grant-Maintained Schools (the closest equivalent to Victoria’s self-governing schools), the Victorian Labour opposition has indicated that should it come to power, it would dismantle much of the self-governing initiative, including reviewing any contracts schools have entered into with other organizations and re-employing teachers in the state-wide system (Jones, 1998c; Kermond, 1998).
PART II

The present supervision and quality-assurance system

The main element of school supervision is the school-level accountability process. In addition there are supervision strategies for principals and teachers. This section will describe each of these and also comment upon the role of school councils and system accountability. It will first describe the way supervision was organized before the recent reforms.
I. THE SCHOOL SUPERVISION SYSTEM BEFORE THE REFORM PROCESS

Education in Australia is a complex interplay between federal and state governments, and between government and non-government schools. The responsibility for the provision of education constitutionally rests with the states, but increasingly there has been federal government influence especially in terms of grants to both government and non-government schools. More recently, the federal government has attempted to tie school grants to performance in national tests of literacy.

Government education in Australia has been highly centralized. In Victoria, non-staff resources were allocated by formula, regardless of need. “No funds of any kind were decentralized from system to school and any cash at the school level was raised locally by voluntary effort” (Caldwell, 1998a: 3). Until the mid-eighties, schools were divided into zones, resulting in little market competition. Buildings were supplied by the government with small local input into design. Curriculum was centrally defined with a rather narrow scope for schools to adapt the curriculum to match local needs.

In Victoria, school supervision for the greater part of this century, was conducted through an inspectorial programme where teachers and schools were regularly assessed by a government-appointed inspector. Promotion through the teaching service was largely based on seniority. Principals and teachers were allocated to schools rather than locally selected. Schools were required to submit annual reports, but given the limited control schools had of human, building and financial resources and the highly centralized curriculum, these were not as extensive as those now required, nor was there a focus on school planning and improvement. Indeed, schools had discretion in relation to both the
format and content of these reports, making comparisons between schools difficult.

Since the mid-seventies, reform of education in Victoria has been relentless, with a consistent trend to devolution of authority, responsibility and accountability to the school level, and to changes in school supervision at the school, principal and teacher levels. Teacher inspections ceased in the early seventies with school inspections following a few years later. In the eighties the pace of devolution accelerated with proposals not dissimilar to what has been implemented under *Schools of the Future* (see Creed, 1991 for a discussion of the policy and programme directions of Victorian governments during the eighties). The degree of central control over the curriculum from the Preparatory year to Year 10 diminished and was not reasserted until the release of curriculum frameworks in the late eighties and the curriculum and standards frameworks introduced as part of *Schools of the Future* during the mid-nineties. Also, under *Schools of the Future*, the Department has tended to set specific educational objectives that schools must adhere to more closely than in the past (e.g. ‘sport’ and ‘languages other than English’ have been prescribed). High levels of school-based decision-making in the areas of organization and curriculum were evident, and participatory decision-making processes were formalized in industrial awards with respect to implementing teacher work conditions and the work of administrative and curriculum committees (Ingvarson and Chadbourne, 1997). For example, as part of teacher work conditions, schools were required through an industrial award to have administrative committees to provide advice to the principal, with these committees having majority teacher membership. In 1991 a new merit-based teacher career structure (Advanced Skills
Teachers) replaced the seniority-based system of the past, although the system was tied to work positions (e.g. curriculum co-ordinator, timetabler) rather than teacher skill (Chadbourne and Ingvarson, 1994). In the mid-eighties school councils gained the right to select and appoint principals of their choice (although in some cases the government continued to appoint principals to schools).

As discussed below, many aspects of the quality-assurance system, which characterizes *Schools of the Future*, were already evident – but only as trends – in the reforms that have occurred since the mid-seventies. As such, *Schools of the Future* does not represent a break with the future, but rather a culmination of different trends.
II. SUPERVISION OF SCHOOLS:  
THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS

The Accountability Framework, quality assurance in Victorian schools (Office of Review, 1997a), is the main mechanism through which the performance of schools is monitored. The Accountability Framework is shown diagrammatically in Figure 3. Accountability starts with the development of a charter by the school. Each school prepares a report every year and undertakes, every three years, together with an external verifier, a more complete review. This review might lead to the elaboration of a new charter. Before describing each of these steps, some more information is given on the Framework’s purposes and impact.

Figure 3. Victorian school Accountability Framework

There are two main purposes of the framework: “to satisfy legitimate expectations of government about accountability for the outcomes of schooling, and to assist schools and teachers to improve standards of student learning” (Office of Review, 1998a: 4). The framework has been driven by beliefs that:

3. There are a number of different versions of this diagram, with the one shown here taken from the Guidelines for School Annual Reports, Office of Review, 1997c: 5.
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- “external evaluation is more effective in improving school performance when schools have well-developed internal processes...
- school self-evaluation without some external component lacks the rigour necessary to effect real and lasting improvements in school performance...
- evaluation processes should assist schools not only to analyze their performance but also to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their management practices...” (Office of Review, 1998a: 4).

The Accountability Framework allows schools to monitor and report on their effectiveness and focus upon improving it. It provides an integrated planning, development and reporting package in which schools develop their own educational plans and priorities within government guidelines (through the school charter) and monitor the progress in meeting these objectives through the production of annual reports and a school self-assessment. These processes involve many within the school community (Appendix I describes a typical distribution of responsibilities for meeting accountability requirements). The school self-assessment is externally monitored through the verification phase of the school-review component of the framework.

There is evidence that the Accountability Framework has improved a number of areas in schools. In a study that utilized parent surveys, principal interviews and interviews with members of verification panels, the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (1997: 85) found that as a result of the implementation of the Accountability Framework:

- one third of schools perceived some improvement in student learning, with the majority indicating that it was too soon to tell;
- schools believed that the quality of reporting to both the Department and the school community had improved, although most parents, whilst satisfied with school reports, had not perceived any change;
The present supervision and quality-assurance system

- the majority of schools believed that there had been improvements in the quality of planning;
- approximately half of the schools believed that there had been some improvements in curricula and teaching strategies.

Some evidence on the impact of each element of the Accountability Framework is presented further in this document.

The school charter, annual reports, self-assessment and independent verification are public documents, which are available for community inspection at the school level. Copies of these documents are centrally stored with the Office of Review, although the Department does not allow public access to the accountability documents from this store; this has to be accessed from the schools directly, which means that schools retain control of distribution.

Previous to the establishment of this framework there was only superficial monitoring of schools. As mentioned previously, formal school inspections had ceased two decades previously. Schools were required to complete an annual report each year, but this was neither a detailed nor an evaluative document, and it had limited usefulness in terms of planning and accountability purposes. The establishment of the Accountability Framework has been a considerable change and it is one of the success stories of the Schools of the Future reform.

The Accountability Framework has been developed and implemented by the Office of Review within the Department of Education (this was formerly called the Office of Schools Review). The Office of Review is not part of the line-management structure of the Department and reports directly to the head of the Department (Figure 1). It has some degree of independence from those areas of the Department that are responsible for schools and a brief that allows it to work across the sections of the Department in developing and
implementing the Accountability Framework. This independence has been an important element in the construction of what is a comprehensive accountability process that also serves as an important developmental tool for schools and the school system. A good summary of the Accountability Framework, written by one of the key members of the Office of Review, is found in Griffiths (1997). Also, the Office of Review (1998a) has published a paper that describes the Accountability Framework and identifies important issues that remain to be addressed, such as the support needed to promote and sustain high performance.

Each element of the Accountability Framework, namely the school charter, the annual report and the school review, is described in detail below. This is followed by a discussion of the Management Information Systems, which feed information into the whole process.

**School charters**

The school charter is the key planning and accountability document. School charters:

- underpin Department of Education accountability procedures;
- act as a conduit for policies and procedures specified by the Department of Education;
- allow school communities to systematically monitor and assess school performance and plan for improvement;
- provide a structure for planning, decision-making and resource allocation;
- are public documents.

Each charter includes a school profile, school goals, school priorities, and codes of practice. It sets the strategic directions for at least the next three years. It provides the basis for detailed action plans and allows for the identification of performance measures. Performance in meeting the goals and priorities are reported each year in the school annual
report, and every three years in the school self-assessment report.

A school charter is developed by a school in consultation with the school community. The extent and type of school-community involvement vary. A typical process would take the recommendations from the school review (see below) and provide forums for teachers, parents and school council members to provide feedback to a charter writing group on the goals, priorities, improvement focuses and codes of conduct. The school may involve regional Department of Education personnel to ensure that the intent of the school review is reflected in the new charter. The charter writing group (which would typically include teacher and school council representation) then transforms the recommendations into a document that meets the Department of Education guidelines and which is then taken back to the school community for final approval (often this is achieved through information evenings and an invitation to respond to the draft charter). The final version of the school charter is then taken to the school council for formal adoption prior to the signing of a Record of Understanding by the principal, school council president and general manager (Schools). The general manager (Schools) has the power to refuse a charter. Usually this would only happen if the school review recommendations were not reflected in the school charter, or if the charter did not meet the Department of Education guidelines.

The school charter model adopted in Victoria has a number of features that place it in the category of world’s best practice. Firstly, there is explicit detail concerning the areas identified for improvement and the goals that drive the school; it is not a document that focuses only on improvement, but includes details about the normal operation of the school. Secondly, it is student centred with explicit acknowledgement of the central importance of curriculum and improved student learning. Measurements of both goal and priority outcomes are prominent features. Thirdly, the school charters are firmly
located within a broad Accountability Framework that includes annual reports and periodic reviews. Fourthly, there is detailed specification of the roles of the school-community members and a profile of the school.

The elements of the school charter, namely the school profile, the school goals, the school priorities and the codes of practice, are described below.

**School profile**

The school profile describes the ethos of the school, its context, educational and social values, special features and future directions. The school profile is important as it influences the goals, priorities and codes of practice. It contains a description of:

- the school ethos and culture, beliefs, values and expectations;
- the school type, size and location;
- the current curriculum programme, special curriculum or facilities features and, where appropriate, the way in which the curriculum is delivered;
- projects that are being implemented, developed, or planned for the future, and which will bring about improvement in learning.

**School goals**

The core purpose of the school is defined through goals specified with relation to curriculum, environment, management and resource areas. The curriculum goals are central, with all other goals supporting these. The goals are developed within a framework that takes account of statewide policy, school policy and operations, and delivery to students; the frameworks for the development of the school goal areas are shown in *Figure 4*. 
**Figure 4. Framework for the development of school goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In defining its curriculum goals the school takes into account the following contexts:</td>
<td>In defining its environment goals the school takes into account the following contexts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State-wide policy</strong></td>
<td><strong>State-wide policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Victorian Certificate of Education</td>
<td>• Student code of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework government curriculum priorities</td>
<td>• Equal opportunity legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning Assessment Project</td>
<td>• Education of girls and boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reporting requirements to parents</td>
<td>• Facilities schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School policy and operations</strong></td>
<td>• Occupational health and safety legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provision across the eight key learning areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arrangements for curriculum delivery (e.g. promotions polices, timetable policies)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curriculum programme, including detailed course outlines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approaches to learning and teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reporting to parents on student progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation and achievement of school specific sub-groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning assessment policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery to students</strong></td>
<td><strong>Delivery to students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning needs of individual students met</td>
<td>• Welfare procedures and services targeted to need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Structured and effective teaching in the classroom</td>
<td>• Pastoral activities implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistent approaches to discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear expectations of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yard activities supervised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 4: Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In defining its management goals the school takes into account the following contexts:</strong></td>
<td><strong>In defining its environment goals the school takes into account the following contexts:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State-wide policy</strong></td>
<td><strong>State-wide policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accountability Framework</td>
<td>- School global budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Public Sector Management Act</td>
<td>- Statutory and Department of Education financial audit and reporting requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching Service Orders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personnel polices and performance processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School council legislation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Department of Education merit and equity guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Census returns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School policy and operations</strong></td>
<td><strong>School policy and operations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Workforce plan</td>
<td>- Local community support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leadership profile</td>
<td>- Internal controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff profile</td>
<td>- Financial practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- People management</td>
<td>- Funding of charter goal and priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff selection</td>
<td>- Programme budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance/annual review</td>
<td>- Cluster resourcing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional development and training</td>
<td>- Other funds (for example locally raised or targeted funds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personnel administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational structures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Facilities utilization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decision-making</td>
<td><strong>CASES applications</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Council effectiveness</td>
<td><strong>Audit report</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff welfare</strong></td>
<td><strong>Delivery to students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment agreements</strong></td>
<td>- Improved efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merit and equity/diversity management</strong></td>
<td><strong>Effective matching of resources to learning needs/curriculum priorities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surveys (parents, staff and students)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School annual report and triennial review</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Delivery to students</strong></td>
<td><strong>(Office of Review, 1997b: 44-45).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improved staff goal of congruency and morale</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Productivity improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improved teaching and learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Improvement areas and achievement measures are described for each goal. Improvement areas may include priorities and improvement focuses (which tend to be focused in one curriculum area, are less resource-intensive initiatives, and have a flexible time-frame of less than three years).

The goal achievement measures include school-specific, common state-wide and benchmark measures. The common state-wide achievement measures are those that are required in the school annual report. The benchmark data are provided by the Department of Education.

An example of the curriculum goal areas for a primary and secondary school is provided in Figure 5.

**School priorities**

Key result areas for school improvement are described in the priorities identified by the school. Priorities are generally focused on improving student learning outcomes. They are substantial programmes that might take the term of the charter to achieve and that will require schools to target resources to achieve the priority. Often a priority will impact over a number of goal areas. In the primary-school curriculum priority found in Figure 5, the exact nature of the programme is not specified; literacy P-2 is a broad concept that could involve a number of implementation strategies such as the introduction of ‘reading recovery’ to target students who have fallen behind, the introduction of lower class sizes, professional development for teachers, the introduction of a ‘parents as tutors’ programme, the purchase of support materials, etc. Often schools will have a more tightly focused priority such as:

- to develop and implement programmes to cater for children with specific needs, including higher achievers and students at risk;
### Figure 5. Primary and secondary school curriculum goal areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary school example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide a comprehensive curriculum through planned learning programmes encompassing the eight key learning areas at all stages of schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure that all children are extended and supported to improve their achievement in all key learning areas</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School specific</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Secondary school example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School goals</th>
<th>Goal Achievement Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td><strong>Improvement areas</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| To provide a planned Years 7-10 curriculum that prepares students for the VCE | • To progressively integrate learning technologies across the curriculum (priority)  
• To plan for and implement the introduction of compulsory LOTE at Year 10  
• Provide enrichment programmes for high achievers in each KLA (priority)  
• Provide additional support for students more than one year level below expected CSF levels in literacy  
• Provide relevant vocational education and dual recognition programmes |
| To provide a Year 7-10 programme which ensures that all students are able to achieve, and indicative improvement of two levels over the four years against the CSF | |
| To optimize levels of students’ achievement and success in attaining tertiary entrance, further education, training and employment | |
| **School specific** | |
| | • Retention to Year 12  
• Competency checklist for Year 10 students on use of learning technologies  
• Achievement levels of top 25 per cent of students in each KLA  
• Proportion of students more than one year level below expected level in literacy  
• Proportion of VCE students involved in dual recognition and vocational education programmes  
• VCE results in all learning areas  
• Retention patterns Year 10-12 |
| **Common state-wide** | |
| | • Time allocation for KLAs by year level  
• Student achievement in mathematics and English against the CSF  
• Parent opinion: quality of teaching and academic rigour scales  
• Participation rates  
• VCE results in English and Maths  
• VCE aggregate grades  
• Apparent retention rates  
• Student exit and destination data  
• Participation rates |

From supervision to quality assurance: the case of the State of Victoria (Australia)

- to develop the Keys to Life programme from the preparatory year to Year 2 and adopt and extend the programme across Years 3-6 with a view to improving student outcomes for all students in literacy across the whole cycle until Year 6.

If the priority is broadly defined it will often be supported by a number of improvement focuses. For example, the priority could be:

- the development of improved teaching and learning strategies in order to maximize learning outcomes for all students, across Years 7 to 12.

To support this priority the following improvement focuses could be used:

- integration of learning technologies across the curriculum;
- ongoing professional development for staff to ensure students are assessed as consistently and as accurately as possible, across all Key Learning Areas;
- review of the Year 7 to 10 curricula in mathematics and English.

**Codes of practice**

Codes of practice are described for school councillors, members of the principal class, staff and community. These Codes focus on the expectations of professional and organizational behaviour and are framed within the appropriate Government Act or guidelines. Framed within Department of Education policy guidelines, a student code of conduct is also described which establishes a school’s guiding principles and practices for student management. The codes of practice are designed to facilitate a consistent and explicit approach to the achievement of the goals and priorities specified in the school charter. Examples of the codes of practice and of a student code of conduct are included in *Appendix 3*. 
To support the school charter, schools will typically also establish planning summaries in the areas of curriculum, workforce management, budget and accountability. Schools may also develop detailed implementation strategies associated with goals and improvement areas. Whilst these are encouraged, and were part of the first charter guidelines, they are no longer a formal part of the charter document. The formal charter for signing off by the general manager (schools) only requires the school profile, goals, planning for improvement and codes of practice.

Because school charters are meant to be living documents, schools have the opportunity to change aspects of their charter. Minor changes need no approval, but a significant change to a goal or the creation of a new priority needs approval from the general manager (Schools).

The development of the school charter is a major strength of *Schools of the Future*. Over a number of surveys of principals, questions associated with the impact of the school charter on schools have shown moderate to high ratings for perceived improvement in the areas of curriculum, learning environment, resourcing, management and accountability (Co-operative Research Project, 1998). For 14 questions associated with these areas the overall mean for extent of improvement on a five-point scale has varied from a low of 3.3 in 1995 to 3.7 in 1997.

**Annual report**

The annual report is a report covering school performance, student achievement, goal performance, priority performance, and financial performance. It is a requirement of the Accountability Framework that all schools complete an annual report in accordance with Department of Education guidelines (Office of Review, 1997c, 1997d).
In preparing an annual report, schools often leave the task to a designated teacher (in a large school this will often be the Assistant Principal or Leading Teacher) or to a committee comprised of teachers and school council members. Usually, teachers with responsibility in certain areas will provide reports to the teacher or committee responsible, who will collate the information and prepare a draft report, which is then submitted to the school council for approval. The completed document is forwarded to the Office of Review and is also available at the school for inspection by the school community. As the documents are often large (many are over 50 pages) and technical in nature, schools are encouraged to produce a version of the report that is more suitable for wide distribution in the school community (often this takes the form of a small glossy booklet or poster that celebrates the school's achievements).

The data to be collected

The Department of Education requires that schools collect, analyze and report certain data (Office of Review, 1997f: 15). Three types of data are used: data that determine the current standard of student achievement (e.g. CSF, VCE); data on factors that impact directly on student achievement (e.g. student attendance, staff opinion, time allocation to Key Learning Areas); and, data that measure aspects that may be considered preconditions to student learning (e.g. staff absences, teacher professional development, enrolment). Box 1 offers a detailed list of the data which will be used to prepare an annual report.

The reliability of the CSF as a measure of student performance is still developing. The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (1997) considered this to be one of the current limitations of the Accountability Framework. Most teachers have only had three years’ experience of assessing students using the CSF. In secondary schools, the experience has often been less due to slower implementation of the programme. Teacher judgements are now beginning to become more reliable, so
The present supervision and quality-assurance system that schools will soon be able to usefully compare student performance across years. In addition state-wide testing of student performance through the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) at Years 3 and 5 and the Victorian Secondary Assessment Monitor (VSAM) at Years 7 and 9 will be able to provide validation data for the school-

Box 1. List of data for an annual school report
The required data include:
• Student achievement:
  - P-10 (CSF);
  - 11-12 (VCE) and VET;
  - specialist schools - teacher opinion of student progress;
  - time allocated to the eight Key Learning Areas;
  - parent opinion scales of:
    academic rigour;
    teaching quality;
    student reporting;
    school environment.
  - exit and destination data on students leaving secondary colleges;
  - apparent retention in secondary colleges for Years 11 and 12;
  - student attendance;
  - staff opinion scales of:
    professional development;
    school morale;
    supportive leadership;
    goal congruency;
    professional interaction.
  - outcomes of school priorities.
Recommended data include:
• specialist schools – Parent opinion of reasonable student progress;
• student enrolment at each year level;
• Years 7-10 apparent retention;
• professional development undertaken by staff;
• student accident information;
• non-certificated staff leave;
• financial statement.

that schools will soon be able to usefully compare student performance across years. In addition state-wide testing of student performance through the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) at Years 3 and 5 and the Victorian Secondary Assessment Monitor (VSAM) at Years 7 and 9 will be able to provide validation data for the school-
based CSF assessments. For 1998, all primary schools undergoing school review have been asked to include their LAP data. As the VSAM is developed further, secondary schools will most likely be asked to include this in their school review, and both the LAP and VSAM will most likely become required data.

For student performance, benchmarks are provided for the state average and for similar schools\(^4\) (defined as schools with a similar socio-economic and ethnic mix). It is the analysis of the annual reports by the Office of Review that provides much of this benchmark data. A summary and commentary on the annual report achievement measures, including sample data, is provided in Griffiths (1997).

Analysis of the data (Office of Review, 1997c: 8) will generally include:

- trend data provided from comparison with previous reports;
- comparison with state-wide and ‘like’ school benchmarks;
- an interpretation of the data presented based on knowledge of the school context;
- a statement of implications and possible actions that might be taken.

**The parent, staff and student surveys**

The surveys used to collect the data for the school annual report and review, within the Accountability Framework, are described in the following paragraphs.

The *parent opinion survey* has been constructed by the Office of Review to provide schools with a means of collecting parent opinions in a consistent, systematic and easy-to-administer way. Six scales have been constructed with these derived from a review of literature on

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\(^4\) What is called in the Victorian context ‘like schools’.
Box 2. Examples of data analysis by schools

An example of how a secondary school might interpret VCE student-performance data is:

“Inspection of the data indicates that the mean result for the college is above both the state-wide average and the ‘like’ school average for all three study areas. However, there is concern as to the performance of a small percentage of students. This is to be investigated by Year 12 teachers and suggestions for action considered. As well, the rather low Year 11–12 apparent retention rate may be leading to the overall results being higher than would be the case if a larger percentage of students completed Year 12. The destination of exiting students is to be more closely monitored to ascertain whether action should be taken to improve retention.”

(Office of Review, 1997c: 20)

As a further example, below is the interpretation by a secondary school of student attendance data:

“Student absence is below the state-wide average for all year levels. This is very pleasing. However, the higher absence level at Year 10, considered in conjunction with a pattern of increasing numbers of Year 10 students exiting the school to attend other government schools, indicates some attention is required in this area. It is intended that the student survey included in CASES be administered for Year 10 to gain further information.”

(Office of Review, 1997c: 29)
effective schools. Two scales have five statements (teaching quality and academic rigour), three have four statements (reporting, school environment and customer responsiveness) and one has one statement (general satisfaction). The statements within each scale were developed from a trialing programme conducted with schools and parents in 1993 and 1994. For each question there is a seven-point scale from 1 (don’t know), through 2 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Table 2 indicates the six scales and the questions; the question that accounts for most of the scale variance is the first one listed for each scale.

The Office of Review (Office of School Review, 1995: 10) suggests that schools aim for 100 per cent from a small sample of parents, rather than using a large sample of parents and getting a low response rate. The suggested sample size is 5 per cent of families, the minimum however being 30 families. There is an overlap of 10 per cent of families across two surveys. A random, stratified sample is generated through the CASES system. With such a small sample, schools are encouraged to ensure that all parents sampled respond to the survey, thus negating the typical problem with surveys in which the views of the people who did not respond remain unknown. Using this approach, the workload is minimized, yet worthwhile opinion data are obtained. The downside of this approach is that the small sample makes longitudinal comparison difficult. Contrary to Department suggestions, many schools conduct much larger samples, and some schools target specific groups of parents. Schools also have the option to add a few school-constructed questions, and there is space on the survey form for parents to respond with written comments to the question, ‘What suggestions do you have for improving the school?’

5. Refer to the section on Management Information Systems for a discussion of the CASES system.
## Table 2. Parent opinion survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teaching quality           | Teachers at the school motivate my child to want to learn.  
My child’s teachers are committed and enthusiastic in their approach to teaching.  
Teachers at this school provide a stimulating and challenging environment. My child receives high-quality teaching.  
My child’s teachers care if my child is not doing as well as he/she can. |
| Academic rigour            | This school is meeting the academic needs of my child.  
The school has high academic standards.  
The school has realistic educational expectations of my/our child.  
The school is meeting the social needs of my/our child.  
The school provides sufficient challenges for my/our child in other areas (e.g. sport/music, etc). |
| School environment         | The student management policy at this school is fair and reasonable.  
The school is caring.  
The school has high standards of student behaviour.  
The school has a safe and secure environment. |
| Customer responsiveness    | The school takes the concerns I have seriously.  
The school is well managed. I believe there is effective educational leadership within the school.  
I am given the opportunity to be involved in the school’s educational activities. |
| Student reporting          | My child’s school reports are informative in that they indicate achievement levels.  
My child’s reports are comprehensive.  
The staff at this school are approachable (by parents).  
The school provides helpful information about my/our child’s progress. |
| General satisfaction       | Overall I am satisfied with the education of my/our child. |
The **staff opinion survey** is based on research carried out by The University of Melbourne and the Department of Education (Office of Review, 1998b). The full staff survey contains 14 scales that measure staff opinion of the organizational health of the school.

These 14 scales include 11 positive and three negative scales (See Figure 6 for the full list of scales).

**Figure 6. Staff survey**

(Office of Review, 1998b: 9)

The survey required for the annual report utilizes only the first five of 14 scales (refer to Table 3). For each statement there is a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
It is suggested by the Office of Review that under normal circumstances the full staff survey consisting of the 14 scales should only be used as part of the school self-assessment (i.e. once every three years), although this is not compulsory and few schools appear to use it. The five-scale survey is usually given to all staff regardless of the school size. In schools with less than six teachers the survey is usually completed by the teachers but not returned for formal analysis; the survey questions are used as part of a staff discussion.

Schools may provide their own data (e.g. student surveys, data from school involvement in research projects, additional parent-survey data) and student-performance data can be disaggregated by gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, aboriginality, isolation and disability.

A non-compulsory **student survey**, developed by The University of Melbourne, has been provided by the Department of Education. The student survey measures the perception of students to teaching and teachers and is available in a form suitable for primary students in Years 4 to 6 and one suitable for secondary students (Years 7 and above). There are nine scales: empathy, teacher energy/enthusiasm, fairness/firmness, helpfulness/responsiveness, high expectations, quality of instruction, feedback, appropriateness of instruction, and time. For each scale there are from four to six statements, with students indicating agreement on a four-point scale from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). *Table 4* indicates the statements used in the empathy and teacher energy/enthusiasm scales for the primary-student survey. Similar to the parent survey, 10 per cent of students or a minimum of 30 is recommended and to make administration easy, schools are encouraged to select whole classes of students rather than a sample. The reading level required to complete the survey means that it is not appropriate for classes below Years 4-5.
From supervision to quality assurance: 
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Table 3. Statements from the annual report component of 
the staff survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School morale</td>
<td>Teachers go about their work with enthusiasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers take pride in their work. The morale in this school is high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is good team spirit in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal congruence</td>
<td>The goals in this school are not easily understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The school has a clearly stated set of objectives and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My personal goals are in agreement with the goals of this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is agreement in the teaching philosophy of this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The staff are committed to the school's goals and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive leadership</td>
<td>I am able to approach the administration in this school to discuss concerns or grievances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is support from the administration in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The administration in this school can be relied upon when things get tough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The school's administrators do not really know the problems faced by teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is good communication between teachers and the administration in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional interaction</td>
<td>I feel accepted by other staff in the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers in this school can rely on their colleagues for support and assistance when needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is good communication between groups in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is good communication between staff members in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I receive support from colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>I am encouraged to pursue further professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others in the school take an active interest in my career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The professional development planning in the school takes into account my individual needs and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are opportunities in this school for developing new skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is not difficult to gain access to in-service courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Primary-student survey statements for the empathy and teacher energy/enthusiasm scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>My teacher cares about me. My teacher understands my feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My teacher accepts me for what I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My teacher understands my point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher energy/enthusiasm</td>
<td>My teacher gets excited about the work he/she teaches us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My teacher is enthusiastic about teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My teacher makes the work we do in class interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My teacher puts a lot of energy into teaching our class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My teacher is inspiring to listen to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact of the annual report**

Evidence concerning the impact of the introduction of annual reports is limited. In the last report of the longitudinal survey of principal perceptions of *Schools of the Future* conducted by the Co-operative Research Project:

“Principals noted moderate to high improvements arising from the introduction of guidelines for annual reports, with highest ratings on measures of performance common to all schools, establishing an ongoing record of performance to assist in triennial reviews, and providing annual information on the progress made towards achieving the goals and priorities in the school charter.”

(Co-operative Research Project, 1998: 11-12)

In general, principals are highly satisfied with the achievement measures used in the annual report, especially for the areas of financial statements, staff and parent opinion surveys, and teacher professional development. They have less, but improving, satisfaction
with CSF and VCE student assessment. The annual report was also viewed as being useful in evaluating school performance, providing school councils with annual progress information and reporting on unique aspects of the school charter. These findings were largely confirmed by the review of the Accountability Framework conducted by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (1997), although there was less certainty about the reliability and usefulness of many of the achievement measures. The author is not aware of any research on teacher perceptions concerning school annual reports.

**School review**

The school review is a triennial review based on a school self-assessment and independent external verification leading to the development of a new school charter; this process is described in *Figures 7 and 8*.

Community consultation is encouraged at all stages of the process, with many schools utilizing significant community input into the development of the school self-assessment, including community representation on the verification panel, and community involvement in the final development of the new charter. Whilst schools valued this process, there is concern about the time and resource demands (Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 1997: 67).

In *Figure 8* there are three annual reports indicated. Most schools complete two annual reports, with the school self-assessment doubling as both the summary of three years’ achievement and the third annual report. Schools only complete three annual reports if the triennial review is conducted a considerable time before or after an annual report is due.
Figure 7. The school review and the development of the school charter

(OFFICE OF REVIEW, 1997f: 7)
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Figure 8. School review

After a trial involving 59 schools in 1996 (Office of Review, 1997k), the school review process began with over 450 schools reviewed by the end of 1997. Early anecdotal evidence suggests that schools have considerable control over this process, dependent upon the effort put into the school self-assessment through the collection, analysis and interpretation of the available data. The process constructed in Victoria is very much a developmental process focused upon school renewal. Importantly, it also satisfies systemic accountability requirements.

The following paragraphs cover in more detail the different phases of the triennial review: the school self-assessment, the external verification and the school verification report.

School self-assessment

The school self-assessment forms the summary document of the performance of the school over the three-year span of the charter. It is this document that is used in the external verification process. For most schools this document is the third annual report of the three-
year term of the school charter. It is important to emphasize that it is the school that constructs this document, albeit in a government framework. It is not until the verification process that external review of this data is conducted.

As for the school annual report, the Department of Education requires that schools collect, analyze and report certain data in the school self-assessment (see Box 3).

**Box 3. List of data for a triennial school review**

The required data include:

- **Student achievement:**
  - P–10 (CSF);
  - 11–12 (VCE) and VET;
  - Specialist schools – teacher opinion of student progress;
- **time allocated to the eight Key Learning Areas;**
- **parent opinion scales of:**
  - academic rigour;
  - teaching quality;
  - student reporting;
  - school environment;
  - general satisfaction.
- **exit and destination data on students leaving secondary colleges;**
- **apparent retention in secondary colleges;**
- **student attendance;**
- **student enrolment at each year level;**
- **student accident information;**
- **professional development undertaken by staff;**
- **staff opinion scales of:**
  - professional development;
  - school moral;
  - supportive leadership;
  - goal congruency;
  - professional interaction.
- **non-certificated staff leave;**
- **global budget report;**
- **programme budget report;**
- **Outcomes of school priorities.**
There are more detailed guidelines as to how schools interpret data for self-assessment as compared to the annual report. In working with the data, schools are required to present and interpret the data, make judgements as well as recommendations. The recommendations are focused upon the school goals and priorities for the next charter. For example, recommendations related to the curriculum goal area could include:

- review and evaluation of the syllabi;
- further teacher professional development in assessment within the CSF;
- the development of improved teaching and learning strategies in order to maximize learning outcomes for all students across all years.

In constructing the self-assessment, schools are encouraged to involve their school community, although the extent of involvement varies. Schools will typically use a process similar to that described for the production of the school annual reports, although there may be increased opportunities for community involvement through forums designed to consider the recommendations arising from the interpretation of the data. A draft report is sent to the school council for comments before a final report is prepared and sent to the Department of Education. Some schools utilize consultants to help facilitate the process and/or the analysis, with a few schools relying on consultants to do most of the work.

The final document is often large, with many running to over 50 pages in length. The best of the self-assessments are those where the school has clearly involved the school community and where they have spent time working with the data to construct explicit and appropriate recommendations for the goals, priorities and improvement focuses of the next charter period.
External verification

The verification of the school self-assessment is conducted by an external verifier, called a school reviewer, who is contracted by the Department of Education. Currently, external verification is contracted out to ten firms who then employ accredited school reviewers to conduct the reviews.

School reviewers are expected to be able to demonstrate: educational experience and expertise (usually at principal, professor, or general manager level); ability to establish productive professional relationships; commitment to the measurement of performance; and, high ethical standards (Office of Review, 1998c). School reviewers must be accredited by the Office of Review, through an accreditation programme for prospective school reviewers, conducted in January of each year on a cost-recovery basis. Accreditation involves the following elements: consideration of relevant experience and background; participation and satisfactory performance in all aspects of the programme, which includes a two-day training programme on accountability in government schools, and a two-day individual assignment. Included in the training is the conduct and writing-up of a simulated school review. Participants are awarded full accreditation, provisional accreditation, or non-accreditation based upon an evaluation of the applicant’s curriculum vitae, an assessment of the simulated verification by the school principal co-opted to help, and by the Office of Review, and assessment of the written verification report.

The verification process has been designed to be both affirming and challenging. It is affirming in that the work of the school and the progress made over the past three years is acknowledged and celebrated. It is challenging in that the process leads to the setting of new goals, improvement priorities and focuses for the next three
years. School reviewers act as critical friends. They assist the school by taking a fresh look at the analysis of the school data so as to ensure that the self-assessment is supported by the data presented. They will assist the school in highlighting achievements, noting areas that can be improved or those that have been overlooked, and setting the planning and improvement agenda for the next three years (Office of Review, 1997e).

The verification is conducted over one school day, with the school reviewer typically meeting with the principal, school council president, and one or more teachers. At the conclusion of the meeting the school reviewer prepares a report which is then forwarded to the principal for consultation before he/she, the school council president and the verifier sign the document. A copy of the document is then forwarded to the central administration. The end result of the process is that there should be a set of firm recommendations on the goals, priorities and improvement focuses to be included in the next charter.

It is possible for the school reviewer and the school to disagree over the verification report recommendations. If this cannot be resolved by direct negotiation, the school reviewer can submit a report that has not been signed by the principal and/or school council president. In such cases, the Department of Education deals directly with the school to resolve any outstanding issues.

The school is in considerable control of the process through its writing of the school self-assessment, ensuring wide representation on the verification panel and through the principal chairing the verification day. The process is summarized in Figure 9.

Schools have indicated satisfaction with the role and performance of school reviewers and believe that the triennial review process has been a positive initiative in terms of providing directions for developing their new charter (Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 1997: 51).
School verification report

The report has a number of sections, which are described below. For each section, other than the school context, there is a statement on the school’s achievement, issues emerging from the review findings are identified, conclusions drawn and recommendations for new goals, priorities and improvement focuses made. The curriculum goal area is divided into two sections: student-achievement goals and curriculum-provision goals.

- **School context**

In this section there should be enough information to paint a picture of the school, including what it physically looks like, where it is located, what the educational and philosophical values are, what is unique about the school, and what it wants to emphasize.
- **Student-achievement goals**

For Years P-10 and the VCE there is reporting on student performance in English and mathematics. For the VCE there is also reporting on performance across other study areas, discussion of retention rates and of exit and destination data. For all levels, analysis should also be conducted by student groups appropriate to the school situation (disaggregated data are available by gender, socio-economic status, non-English-speaking background, aboriginality, transition, rurality and isolation, and disability). Schools are also being asked to include state-wide assessment data. This began in 1998, with primary schools being asked to include data from the Learning Assessment project.

The primary features of the data that are commented upon are trend, spread, performance against expected levels, and comparison with benchmark data provided by the Department of Education.

- **Curriculum-provision goals**

This area includes data on time allocation across the eight Key Learning Areas; parent-opinion scales of academic rigour, teaching quality and reporting, exit and destination for students leaving secondary colleges, and apparent retention in secondary colleges. The majority of the recommendations are located within this and the student-achievement goal areas. In the pilot schools, 54 per cent of primary goals and 65 per cent of secondary goals were in these areas (Office of Review, 1997k).

- **Environment goals**

This area includes data on student attendance, student enrolment at each year level, parent-opinion scales of school environment and general satisfaction, and student accident information.
- **Management goals**

  This area includes data on professional development undertaken by staff, staff opinion (all scales), and non-certificated sick leave.

- **Resource goals**

  This is an optional area, but if included the global budget report and programme budget report will be used as the basis for discussion.

- **Priorities**

  In the early school reviews, the evidence for the attainment of the priorities often relied upon the establishment of programmes rather than changes in student outcomes. Greater emphasis is now given to priorities that directly impact on student outcomes and to the measurement of this change. The number of priorities identified is dependent on school size and identified need. Larger schools have greater capacity to target more priorities, with the largest schools (over 1,200 students) able to manage up to five priorities. Smaller schools tend to target one or two priorities, with most schools identifying two or three priorities. In the pilot schools the majority of priorities were located within the curriculum goal area (79 per cent of primary school and 78 per cent of secondary school priorities; Office of Review, 1997k).

  Typical recommendations that might be included in a report are:

  - that a curriculum goal be: to develop the intellectual, physical, social and creative potential of each child, with particular emphasis on mathematics and language development;
  - that within the curriculum goal area a student-achievement priority be: to improve student outcomes for all students in numeracy across the whole cycle;
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- that within the curriculum goal area a student-achievement improvement focus be: to develop a whole school literacy programme.

Management information systems

In both the annual report and school review elements, the processes are informed by an extensive array of school and system-generated data on student and school achievement. To facilitate collection and analysis of data used in the operation of the Accountability Framework, and in the day-to-day operations of the school, a management information system has been constructed (Gurr, 1997a; Office of Review, 1998a). This is shown diagrammatically in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Department of Education Management Information System: KIDMAP, CASES, CMIS AND EMIS.
**KIDMAP**

KIDMAP is a commercial product (Mercator, 1998) adapted to Victorian requirements. Used to its full capabilities, KIDMAP provides student assessment and recording, analysis and profiling of student progress/needs, preparation of reports for parents, and access to teaching resources.

“Well-stocked and well-used, KIDMAP is the place where teachers go to learn, think, plan, and prepare. KIDMAP can help empower teachers, enhance learning, and improve schools.”

*(Victorian School News, 1997: 13)*

It also allows schools and school systems to access student data and to analyze and interpret them in a variety of ways. In the case of Victoria, this is achieved with the help of additional software (CASES and CMIS). Schools were supplied with the software, but the provision of hardware to run this programme was a school responsibility.

**CASES**

The Computerized Administrative Systems Environment for Schools (CASES) “...is the strategic information technology platform which provides a standard administrative system for *Schools of the Future* with electronic links to Directorate of School Education corporate information” (Directorate of School Education, 1995a).

CASES stores and processes a range of data including student records (often from teacher input via KIDMAP), and financial, physical and human resource data. Some of the information processed in CASES is available to the centre’s management information system (EMIS). At this stage, it is limited to demographic data used to facilitate the allocation of School Global Budgets, but it is planned to make it possible for most of the CASES data to be downloaded electronically to the corporate information system.
CMIS

The CASES Management Information System (CMIS; Directorate of School Education, 1995b) is designed as a management tool to enhance the value of the information recorded and maintained in CASES. CMIS is an ‘add-on’ software package to make better sense of CASES for management purposes. It provides a range of summary reports, often presented graphically, which have been developed in consultation with schools and central personnel. One of the driving forces for this programme has been the Accountability Framework and the need to provide schools with easily produced tables and figures summarizing the range of school performance measures.

Both the CASES and CMIS programmes have been developed in-house by the Department of Education, which is currently involved in negotiations with external contractors to update these programmes. Most schools were supplied with hardware to operate the CASES/CMIS programmes.

EMIS

EMIS is the Education Management Information System used by central office and regional personnel (Directorate of School Education, 1995c). It has some linkages to the CASES/CMIS environment (as indicated with a grey arrow in Figure 10), with more two-way linkages anticipated in the near future (e.g. the exchange of school and system-level student performance data). The basic system in EMIS is the Corporate Information System (CIS) which contains basic school profiles, diary of events, phone directory and a range of documents. EMIS also includes a decision support system (DSS) which contains the same directories as CIS, but with additional features which provide further information, as illustrated by the search facilities available in some of the databases to individually construct school profiles and the
provision of a range of statistical information for downloading to a spreadsheet/word-processing package. It is noteworthy that little of the information on EMIS/DSS is available at the school level, although it is anticipated that, in the future, state and like-school benchmark data will be available to schools electronically. Likewise, school data will be available electronically at the system level; currently the Office of Review produces benchmark data through the collation of data supplied by schools in the hardcopy of their annual reports. This means that ultimately there will be a capacity for the government to have real-time access to a range of school data, including financial records, student performance, student demographics and personnel information.

There have been problems in the implementation of the management information system. The adoption of the KIDMAP software has been hampered by numerous upgrades, lack of a version that would work on Apple computers (until 1997), the need for teacher professional development, and the adequate provision of hardware in schools to allow teachers to enter and access information easily. The CASES and CMIS programmes have also been troubled by continuous pressure to incorporate new features resulting in frequent upgrades, the provision of poor quality and outdated hardware, the need for frequent professional development, and problems associated with the linkages between the systems. The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (1997: 61) indicated that improvements in the reliability of the management information systems would help schools in the implementation of the Accountability Framework. Despite this, the main elements are in place for an integrated system that can have information flow between classroom, school and system levels. When fully operational, data entered by teachers (KIDMAP) and schools (CASES) will be able to be changed easily into useful, user-friendly information that will be used for student improvement, school improvement and systemic accountability purposes.
There has been little in the way of research investigating the development, implementation and impact of the management information system, although there is some information on principal attitudes to CASES, CMIS and KIDMAP. In a longitudinal survey of principals’ views of *Schools of the Future* (Co-operative Research Project, 1998) principals have consistently anticipated problems associated with support for the implementation of CASES (mean rating between 3.3 to 3.5 on a five-point scale, with five representing a high magnitude of problem) and the quality of the hardware and software (mean rating of 3.5 to 3.8 on a five-point scale, with five representing a high magnitude of problem). In the same survey, the CMIS programme has received moderate to high levels of satisfaction by principals, with ratings on a five-point scale of 3.4 in 1996 and 3.2 in 1997 (Co-operative Research Project, 1998). Of more interest is the very low satisfaction associated with the KIDMAP programme in supporting the planning and implementation of the Curriculum and Standards Framework (mean ratings on a five-point scale, with five standing for high satisfaction, from 1995 to 1997 of 2.2, 2.0 and 1.6 respectively). It is not clear whether these low ratings are associated with the relevance of KIDMAP to the CSF, problems in the software, difficulties in supplying appropriate hardware, provision of professional development for teachers in the use of KIDMAP, or some combination of these elements. Anecdotal and case-study (Victorian School News, 1997; Wee, 1998) evidence suggests that those schools with sufficient hardware and professional development support are able to use KIDMAP effectively.

This discussion on the EMIS concludes the overview of the School supervision system. In addition to changes in the supervision of ‘schools’ as an entity, *Schools of the Future* has also introduced major reforms in the supervision of principals, teachers and non-teaching staff in schools. The following chapters will focus upon the supervision of principals and teachers.
III. SUPERVISION OF STAFF

One of the key reform strategies of *Schools of the Future* is concerned with the leadership and professional development of teachers and principals (Spring, 1997b: 4-5). This strategy has two elements:

- to select and develop the best possible professional teachers, leaders and managers as teachers and principals of schools;
- to link teacher remuneration, selection, promotion and performance into a coherent system for career development.

The Department believes that for both principals and teachers this has resulted in focused and coherent professional development support, linked explicitly to school and Department outcomes, merit-based selection and promotion, and performance review.

**Supervision of principals**

The work of principals is complex, their role undergoing many changes as a result of *Schools of the Future* (Gurr, 1996). Principals are specifically accountable for school education programmes, student support, school council functioning, parent communication and involvement, school organization, planning, review and accountability, personnel, finance, facilities, community representation of the school, and, they are expected to act as the representative of the government (Directorate of School Education, 1994).

The supervision of principals has been expanded within the *Schools of the Future* reform. The performance management system for principal class officers was developed in 1994 and introduced in 1995. It has two components, accreditation and annual performance management. Principals are now subject to a system of accreditation and performance management in a way that was not evident
previously. At the same time, there were two significant initiatives that helped to support the performance management system: the creation of the Australian Principals’ Centre (APC) and the creation of District Liaison Principals (DLP), which were replaced with Regional Principal Consultants (RPC) in 1997. The APC was created to independently conduct accreditation, induction and management training for principals. The APC has been jointly sponsored by the Department of Education, the University of Melbourne, the Victorian Primary Principals Association (VPPA) and the Victorian Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP). At a regional level, the creation of Regional Principal Consultants (RPC) serves both as collegial support for principals and as a Departmental officer with a clear responsibility for supporting improvement and the implementation of policy. RPCs are former principals (selected through an internal competitive selection process) who are regionally based and responsible for the support and supervision of approximately 60 schools. RPCs function closer to central management than the strongly focused collegial role of the former DLPs.

To improve the leadership and management skills of principals, the Department created a ‘life-cycle’ process of professional training and development, with accreditation and performance management two elements of this approach. As soon as teachers get their first appointment to posts of assistant principals or principals, there is induction into the principal class through accreditation, a focus on developing clearly defined competences and Key Result Areas, followed by professional development through a range of initiatives such as performance review with associated rewards, participation in mentoring/coaching programmes, professional development programmes, as well as career diversity (work in a variety of schools and possible career progression to a regional principal consultant position). The ensuing paragraphs cover in more detail these two aspects of improving principal competence: accreditation and performance management.
**Accreditation**

One year after their initial appointment, principals go through an accreditation process conducted through an accreditation centre. Success results in a 5 per cent performance bonus and access to the bonuses available as part of the performance management system. In recent surveys of principals, the extent of accreditation has varied from 93 per cent of principals (Co-operative Research Project, 1998) to 89 per cent (Co-operative Research Project, 1997). It is clear that the majority of principals have undergone accreditation.

The objectives of this process are: the encouragement of a critical self-analysis by principals of individual strengths and weaknesses as a principal; the provision by principal accreditation centres of a fair and equitable opportunity for principals to demonstrate their mastery of the competences which include: team development; leadership; interpersonal effectiveness; planning and organization; curriculum commitment; thinking and judgement; self-management; managerial expertise; commitment to excellence; and contextual sensitivity.

The accreditation follows closely the recommendations of the consultant firm Cullen, Egan and Dell, who undertook the initial work in providing accreditation for approximately 93 per cent of eligible principal class officers (over 2,300) during 1995 (McClure, 1996: 33). The process involves assessment of the competencies mentioned above using assessment methodology taken from non-educational management programmes and adapted to education (McClure, 1996: 31-33). A typical assessment takes a day and involves a range of activities including participation in a decision-making simulation, an individual presentation on a given topic, and involvement in a group forum on a given topic. A panel of assessors look for demonstration of the principal competencies during these activities and meet at the end of the day to judge whether the candidates have demonstrated enough of the competencies to be accredited. The programme has many
similarities to that of the American National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), although it is not as extensive (McClure, 1996: 8-9).

Principals have been critical of the programme. In surveys, they have indicated only moderate confidence that the objectives of accreditation will be met, with ratings for level of confidence on a five-point scale varying from 2.6 to 3.0 (Co-operative Research Project, 1997, 1998). McClure (1996) found that whilst principals were generally supportive of the process conducted in 1995, there were concerns associated with the developmental support offered and the implications of and support provided for those that did not gain accreditation (that was the case, in 1995, for 36 out of 2,300 principals).

**Performance management**

All principals are now on performance-based five-year contracts under the Principal Performance Management System. This is a three-stage process involving self-assessment, peer audit and involvement of the head of the region (general manager (Schools)). Successful completion of this process can result in performance bonuses of up to 15 per cent, dependent on the amount of funds available and the overall performance of all principals involved.

The performance plan is designed to help principals: establish priorities consistent with charter objectives and the school annual report requirements; set realistic targets for improvement; and, clarify the priorities of the school leadership team.

Within the self-assessment phase principals complete a plan that sets out agreed performance targets within specific result areas. The specific result areas nominated by the principal must be consistent with both the school charter goals and priorities and the stated priorities of the Department of Education. Completion of the agreed targets is
judged by both the principal and a designated regional officer. A report is then sent to the general manager (Schools) for approval and allocation of any performance bonus. In addition principals can request that they have their assessment peer reviewed.

Principals do not have a high regard for the Principal Performance Management System (Co-operative Research Project, 1997, 1998). They believe that the Principal Performance Plan has little impact on school planning. With respect to the performance assessment process, they are not satisfied with the system-level involvement concerning the processes for negotiation of plans and involvement of the general manager (Schools). Indeed, when the process was voluntary many principals chose not to be involved. This was due to interference in the process at the system level, the programme being under-resourced so that most principals could not access a worthwhile bonus. In addition, they were uncomfortable with a process that rewards them for work that their teachers have contributed to. On the other hand, they were moderately satisfied with the self-assessment and peer audit stages of the assessment process.

Given the high levels of dissatisfaction, it is apparent that much work needs to be done in this area. It is worthwhile noting that this system has been introduced at the same time as the Professional Recognition Programme for teachers. The dissatisfaction expressed by principals suggests that this system has not been a good model for principals to follow when developing their own in-school teacher performance management processes.

**Supervision of teachers**

In between the period when teacher inspections ceased and the current supervision requirements were put in place there was little, apart from the teacher registration process, that acted to supervise
the work of teachers. The Department (Spring, 1997b: 5) believed that principals needed a framework within their schools that could:

- improve the quality of teaching by having teachers set annual objectives which focus on improvement for each student;
- enable the selection of their own teachers according to the needs of the school community as expressed in their School Charter;
- facilitate the conduct of an annual individual performance review for each teacher, reviewing performance against the annual objectives set.

The Professional Recognition Programme (PRP) described below is the main tool used by the government to address these needs (Department of Education, 1996a, 1996b).

As part of Schools of the Future, the Standards Council of the Teaching Profession (SCTP) was set up in 1993 as a statutory body of the Victorian government. It provides advice to the Minister for Education and the Secretary of the Department of Education about matters relating to professional standards for members of the teaching service including:

- minimum standards of academic qualifications and teacher training for entry to teaching;
- criteria for the initial appointment and probation of teachers;
- professional criteria for promotion;
- professional development needs;
- evaluation of teacher education courses.

SCTP has specified five dimensions of teaching (content of teaching and learning; teaching practice; assessment and reporting of student learning; interaction with the school community; and, professional requirements) and professional standards across the levels of teaching expertise (teacher level 1 beginning; teacher level 1 experienced;
leading teacher level 2; leading teacher level 3). These dimensions and standards are an integral part of the PRP.

This section describes the main elements of the current teacher supervision processes.

**Accreditation**

Most school teachers are four-year trained, either with a three-year degree and one-year approved postgraduate teacher qualification, or an approved four-year undergraduate degree with these courses having been approved by the SCTP. Teachers so qualified can seek registration through the Registered Schools Board for non-government schools. For government school employment there is no formal registration process now in place (before the SCTP was created, government schoolteachers also went through a registration process). Principals have a list of courses approved by the SCTP for employment as a teacher, and principals use this to ensure that prospective teachers are appropriately qualified.

Within the workplace, teachers are employed on a contract or tenured basis. As most teachers currently employed have ongoing tenure and the average age of teachers is over 40 (Ingvarson and Chadbourne, 1997), the majority of new appointments are on a contract basis, giving schools some degree of staffing flexibility. Contract teachers are not required to have a probation period. Those appointed with tenure undergo a probationary period as a level 1 teacher which typically lasts for one year, supported by a school-based induction programme. The principal, in consultation with the teacher, prepares a mid-cycle and end-cycle report, with the result being either confirmation, extension of the probation period, or termination of the appointment.

There are also similar accreditation processes for new appointees to Leading teacher Levels 2 and 3 positions. Following a year of
induction, leading teachers can present themselves for accreditation, at which point their performance is assessed against key competences. Once leading teachers have had their appointment confirmed, they can access performance-related bonuses (see below).

**Teacher appraisal and assessment: the professional recognition programme**

The PRP was introduced initially in 1995 as a voluntary programme, but one which required those who joined to relinquish their protection under a previous industrial award. Following a challenge by the key Victorian teacher union (the Australian Education Union Victorian Branch), a modified programme became compulsory for all teachers as part of an industrial award, with the official title of *Teachers (Victorian Government Schools) Conditions of Employment Award* (Ingvarson and Chadbourne, 1997).

The PRP is intended to provide a system in which teacher skill development is encouraged and rewarded, and teachers receive formal performance feedback to facilitate career planning and development (Spring, 1997b: 14). The PRP is focused upon outcomes and performance, with assessment of teacher performance and appropriate rewards occurring at the school level. Key features of the PRP are listed in Box 4.

Ingvarson and Chadbourne (1997: 8) describe how principals of *Schools of the Future* are now either directly or ultimately responsible “for a formidable range of teacher evaluation functions” including “who gains entry to the teaching profession, who gains annual salary increments, who shall be recognized as having attained advanced professional standards (for leading teacher positions), and who shall be awarded annual salary bonuses.”
Box 4. Key features of the Professional Recognition Programme:

- common career pathways for primary and secondary teachers;
- local merit-based selection of teachers at all levels;
- removal of service and eligibility barriers to promotion;
- three levels of teacher classification;
- probation for all new ongoing employees;
- performance review at all levels;
- performance incentives at all levels;
- enhanced opportunities for planned teacher professional development;
- special payments for designated tasks that vary in monetary amount and in duration;
- sabbatical leave.


There are three levels of teacher classification: teacher level 1, leading teacher level 2 and leading teacher level 3. As mentioned above, each level is described by professional standards developed by the SCTP. For teachers at level 1, progression is through an incremental 12-point salary scale, with progress contingent upon a successful annual review of performance against the professional standards, and with the capacity for outstanding performance to be rewarded by quicker advancement. Level 1 teachers whose performance is assessed as outstanding may have their next review brought forward, thereby enabling them to move more quickly through the incremental scale. Poor performance can result in delayed advancement on the incremental scale. In severe cases principals can instigate teacher review and disciplinary procedures. For most teachers the top of the incremental scale is reached after nine years.

The two promotion levels (leading teachers 2 and 3) are tenured for up to five years and are determined at a local level, depending on
school leadership and management needs. Accredited leading teachers can access up to 10 per cent of their base salary as a performance bonus based upon achievement of outcomes against an agreed performance plan. Schools are given money within their budget allocation to pay for performance bonuses and whilst most schools use the money in the way intended, they do not have to use this money for this purpose. For example, some schools pay performance bonuses to teams of teachers and some schools use the money for other purposes such as funding staff professional development. Teachers do not have to participate in the process; some teachers decide not to submit a performance plan. It is not a fully funded system in that should all eligible teachers access full bonuses, the school would have to contribute money additional to what was received from the Department.

The Department believes that the PRP allows the principal to vary the mix of teachers, leading teachers and assistant principals to best suit the school. Typically, the proportion of the school positions filled by principal class and leading teacher appointments is about 30 per cent. In theory there is considerable flexibility in determining the mix of fixed-term and ongoing positions and the mix of teaching and non-teaching staff, although in practice many schools do not have this flexibility due to the high number of tenured positions in schools and the lack of movement of staff. The lack of staffing flexibility has been highlighted as one of the key areas of Schools of the Future that remains to be developed to fully attain the objectives of this reform. (Co-operative Research Project, 1998).

Ingvarson and Chadbourne (1997: 6) describe the PRP as a mixture of ‘career ladder (job-based pay) and career development (skill and knowledge-based pay).’ As such the PRP is a development of the Advanced Skills Teacher programme that existed prior to Schools of the Future. The same authors highlight five areas of difference between the two programmes:
The present supervision and quality-assurance system

- the requirement that every teacher undergoes an annual performance review;
- incremental performance-based salary progression for level 1 teachers;
- accelerated progression on the incremental scale for level 1 teachers and the provision of special payments for designated tasks;
- two substantive salary levels (appointment and accreditation) for leading teachers level 2 and 3;
- three performance-related salary levels for leading teachers levels 2 and 3 - fully effective (5 per cent bonus), superior performance (7.5 per cent bonus) and outstanding performance (10 per cent bonus).

To support teacher career and skill development there is extensive teacher training and professional development through the Personal Professional Development Programme component of the PRP. The annual review process is designed to identify individual professional development requirements related to both teacher professional and school needs.

The Standards Council of the Teaching Profession (1997a) organized eight case studies on how schools conducted the teacher annual reviews. These studies portray the great variation that exists between schools. Principals, assistant principals, leading teachers or review teams are used to conduct the review process, which may consist of an initial meeting, and mid-cycle and end-cycle reviews. Some schools use support groups, appraisal teams or mentors to provide continuous support and advice to teachers. In some schools teachers choose their reviewer. The emphasis of the reviews tends to be more on formative evaluation and teacher appraisal than summative evaluation and teacher assessment. In some schools appraisal and assessment were clearly separated parts of the process. The type and extent of evidence teachers used to support their review varied and often included teacher portfolios of exemplar work (see Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, 1997a).
Profession, 1997b). Schools have indicated concern with the time involved, the consistency of judgements when more than one person is conducting the reviews, the lack of incentive systems for teachers at the top of the incremental scale, and the lack of awareness of the professional growth possibilities in the process (Standards Council of the Teaching Profession, 1997a). In another study (Ingvarson and Chadbourne, 1997), although principals found the PRP to be a valuable management tool, there were concerns that principals were being asked to do something that they did not have the time or expertise to fulfil. In addition, teachers believed that the process had not improved the quality of their teaching. There was concern that the PRP gave higher status and rewards to administration rather than teaching, and there was evidence of increased workload for teachers as well as principals.

Principals have noted improvements due to the PRP, especially in terms of establishing review and performance processes for all teachers as part of their professional growth and providing opportunity for teachers’ professional growth and renewal. However, principals were concerned about the implementation of the programme including the professional development support, programme documentation, and the timelines and advice provided by the Department (Co-operative Research Project, 1998).

In a recent study of the PRP, Warren (1998) found that:

- principals valued the PRP as a cohesive performance management programme;
- there is a high workload associated with the programme for principals;
- the PRP has little impact on teachers at the top of the incremental scale (especially as there are few promotion or incentive consequences attached to the process);
- a low proportion of leading teachers went for accreditation;
• principals found the professional development associated with implementing the PRP inadequate, and they were concerned about the lack of consistency in approach across schools;
• many schools had professional development planning processes in place and resented having to incorporate the PRP;
• there were difficulties in providing special payments for level 1 teachers.

Whilst there are clearly benefits and concerns about the PRP, there is no evidence that it has led to increased staff turnover, or to an overall change in the relationship between principals and their teachers. In many respects its value is still open to debate as it remains at an implementation stage, with models of best practice still to be confirmed. However, there are enough benefits and positive examples to suggest that the PRP can be a useful tool for both staff development and performance review.

Before the paper addresses school council and system accountability, it is worth noting that under current arrangements, teachers and principals are restricted in speaking publicly on education matters. The Teaching Service Order 140 prevents employees of the Department of Education making unauthorized public comment on education issues. The way the order is worded suggests that teachers are not allowed to speak ‘freely to School Councils or gatherings of parents on matters of educational policy’ (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998: 44). In a letter to the Minister of Education, and reported in The Age (Jones, 1998d), 48 teachers at a school criticized Department policy on the use of contract employment. Whilst there was no suggestion from the Department that these teachers would be disciplined, the journalist reporting the incident noted that reprimand or dismissal are options that are available under the Teaching Service Act. Whilst these teachers are unlikely to be reprimanded, principals who have criticized government policy and/or programmes, through letters to
newspapers or by speaking at public gatherings, have been disciplined by the Department (typically by the general manager (Schools), making principals aware of their obligations). In some respects the Teaching Service Order is an extension of what has been a long public-service tradition of not commenting publicly on government matters. What has caused concern is the disciplinary action taken by the Department in instances where principals have responded publicly in a professional manner to issues of concern, and the threat of action implicit in the Order for others such as the teachers mentioned above.
IV. SCHOOL COUNCILS

There has been a relatively long history of parent and community involvement in schools in Victoria through participation in school councils. Across four of the six states, including Victoria, and in the two territories, school councils are compulsory (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, 1998: 42).

Victorian school councils were given legal status in 1975 through an amendment to the Education Act. The powers of school councils continued to increase over this time to include not only responsibilities for finances and facilities, but also an increased role in determining policy and, together with the Department, responsibility for selecting the school principal (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, 1998: 7). This trend has been consistent through different governments. School councils agree to operate within a broad government policy framework. They now have responsibility for “amongst other things, approving the School Charter, establishing the school’s goals and priorities, approving the school’s budget, and reporting annually to the school community and the Department” (Spring, 1997b: 5). The Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision (1998: 17) listed the following current responsibilities for school councils:

- developing the school charter;
- developing the education policy of the school;
- appointing the school principal (with the Department);
- employing non-teaching staff;
- developing a student code of conduct;
- reporting to the school community and the Department;
- managing school funds;
- contracting for services such as financial and student services and school cleaning;
contracting for minor repairs and maintenance work and managing capital grants for major capital work (after Departmental approval).

An example of the Code of Conduct for a school council is provided in Appendix 3. This illustrates many of the features mentioned above.

Under current proposals for self-governing schools, school councils will also have responsibility for the employment of all staff, and have the capacity to enter into a wider range of legal contracts (e.g. business partnerships).

Within the strategy developed by the Department of Education regarding parent and community involvement, one of the aims is to “ensure that the opportunity exists for parents to participate in a majority on school councils to influence the directions of education at their school by establishing democratic local arrangements to involve parents, teachers and the wider community that each school serves” (Spring, 1997b: 5). Under the current reform there have been significant adjustments to the composition and responsibilities of councillors. All school councils must have a higher proportion of parent membership than Department of Education employee membership (usually teachers), and the principal must be included as an ex-officio member of the Department of Education employee membership category. Parent and teacher members are elected to council for two-year terms, with elections for half of the membership normally held in the first term of the school year. School councils also have the option to include student and community members as co-opted members, with many schools seeking out the assistance of community members with skills in financial, educational and legal areas. The numbers in each category can vary, but more than one third of members must be from the parent member category, and less than one third must be from the Department of Education employee category. The minimum number of members is 6 and the maximum 14, with between 3 and 13 parent members and 1 to
Previously, many schools opted to have a majority of teaching staff (which included the principal and teachers). Principals and teachers are now included in the definition of places for Department of Education staff, which also includes those parents who are employed within the Department of Education. For parents in this category to be voted on to a school council would mean them occupying a place that would traditionally have been filled by a teacher. Thus, the current provision means that parents of students at a school, who are also employees of the Department of Education are effectively excluded from participation on school councils. Department of Education employees cannot be co-opted members. Thus, a significant source of expertise is effectively excluded from participation.

The changes in the composition of the school council are premised on the belief that the “range of backgrounds and experiences of councillors, and in particular the input of parents, adds value to the school” (Spring, 1997b: 5). It was also designed to “prevent the control of the education agenda and the operations of schools by special interest groups, especially trade unions” (Spring, 1997a: 2). This concurs with the perception of the main teacher union, who viewed this as part of a policy to diminish the strength of teacher opinion. Clearly, under the current arrangements there are more opportunities for parents to influence school decision-making, but this comes at a cost in terms of being able to access the expertise of parents who may be teachers at another school, or occupy another position within the Department of Education. Despite this, school councils tend to work in a harmonious way, supporting the school direction as articulated by the principal and teachers. In recent years there have only been two cases where the Minister of Education had to intervene in a dispute between the principal and school council (Caldwell and Hayward, 1998: 55).
Another change is the explicit acknowledgment that “councillors formally do not represent any group requiring its mandate before they vote” (Spring, 1997b: 5). In the past it was often practice for teacher representatives to formally consult with colleagues about issues prior to voting, and for this to occur to a lesser extent for parent representatives. The change in emphasis values the diversity of views rather than representativeness; that is, councillors are expected to provide a parent, teacher, student or community perspective rather than represent the group from which they derive their membership.

Whilst the changes highlighted above have altered the composition of school councils, there has been minimal impact at the school level. As mentioned earlier, school councils have been an integral part of Victorian schools for over two decades. Thus, the recent changes have been evolutionary rather than revolutionary. It is also worth noting that the changes have largely been limited to council membership rather than processes. The decision-making processes and the good relations between school councils and the school communities remain unchanged.

Schools will usually attempt to ensure that the parent body is fairly represented, taking into account such aspects as ethnic background and socio-economic status. Some schools provide extensive interpreting services to ensure that parents with a non-English-speaking background can participate. Schools may also run an induction programme for new parent members to help them be full and active members. Despite these efforts to recruit from the diversity of parent backgrounds typically found in school communities, some schools struggle to secure sufficient parent members or parents that reflect the community diversity.
School councils and school council members have access to support through independent service organizations such as the Victorian Council of School Organizations and the Association of School Councils in Victoria. The support available includes regular newsletters on a range of issues associated with schools and school councils, policy advice, advocacy, information brochures, training and conferences focused on the work of school councils.
V. SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY

It is not only the schools and those who work in them that are the subject of supervision. The school system also has to be accountable to the public, as it is one of the key platforms of the current government that all government departments provide information on their performance.

The Accountability Framework described above is the main avenue for reporting on system performance. In addition there are a range of other measures and methods of reporting including:

**System-wide testing**

System-wide testing of student performance in English and mathematics occurs through the Learning Assessment Project (LAP) at Years 3 and 5 and the Victorian Student Achievement Monitor at Years 7 and 9 (this is being trialed in 1998 for implementation in 1999). In addition, another Key Learning Area is monitored via the LAP each year on a rotational basis. The aggregate LAP performance is publicly reported, and individual students and schools receive confidential reports of their performance. There is also discussion about the possible inclusion of a ‘readiness to read’ test at the end of the first year of primary school and an ‘end of compulsory schooling’ assessment at the end of Year 10 (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, 1998: 30). The Labor opposition has indicated that should it gain office, it would expand system-wide testing with a more detailed system designed to better inform parents and to provide the Department with information that would allow for improved targeting of resources to schools and students in need (Kermond, 1998).
Australia-wide testing

Benchmarks in Australian literacy performance are being established. All states and territories are required to conduct full population testing of students from a range of year levels (Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 1997: 50). This is part of a 10-point literacy strategy to improve national literacy standards of students in government schools.

Public reporting of individual school performance

Each year since 1996, a range of information has been published about school performance based upon the results of Year 12 students. At the Department’s request, this information has been published in one of the two leading newspapers in Victoria (The Herald/Sun). Some of this information, such as schools that have the highest proportion of the best-performing students, has been reported for a number of years pre-dating Schools of the Future. In 1996, however, the Department constructed what was then called the Student Achievement Index (SAI). In its current form, called the Tertiary Preparation Index (TPI), student performance in the VCE (as measured by their Tertiary Entrance Rank, which is a rank score from 0 to 100) is compared to performance on a test of general ability (the General Achievement Test) taken by all students completing the VCE. These results are published for all secondary schools (government, Catholic and independent). The GAT was designed for use as a moderation tool for the school-assessed components of the VCE. Students normally sit this test in June of their final year. Thus, the TPI is a measure of the value a school adds to student performance over the last six months of students’ school education. It is a simplistic measure which has received much criticism (Boyle,
The present supervision and quality-assurance system

1998; Rowe, 1996; Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 1997: 48). In effect, this publication serves as a league table of school performance.

The impact on schools of the publication of the TPI has not been documented, although there is anecdotal evidence to suggest some schools with high ranks gained students and others lost students. In New South Wales, the publication of league tables has been stopped, due to the adverse impact on poorly performing schools (Gurr, 1997b), whilst in Western Australia dual tables are published with one based on a value-added measure and the other based on raw student performance data (Boyle, 1998). In Victoria the impact may be minimal because the simplistic conceptual basis of the TPI suggests that it is not treated as seriously as other measures of performance such as Year 12 student completion rates, percentage of students gaining university places, and percentage of students receiving high Year 12 scores. Nevertheless, in an uncommon move, the main secondary principal associations covering state, Catholic and independent schools - the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, the Principals’ Association of Catholic Secondary Schools and the Association of Heads of Independent Schools (Victoria) - released a joint statement in 1997 condemning the use of the TPI (Blake and Fary, 1997).

With the widespread use of the LAP, the introduction of VSAM and possible inclusion of a ‘readiness to read’ test at the end of the first year of primary school and an ‘end of compulsory schooling’ assessment at the end of Year 10, there is the potential to construct more useful measures of value-added school performance than the conceptually weak TPI. The construction of these measures was one of the recommendations of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office and an area that the Department of Education indicated was already being explored (Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 1997: 48).
Financial audits

Annual financial audits of schools are conducted by independent contract auditors overseen by the Office of Review. There have been no major reports of financial mismanagement under the *Schools of the Future* programme.

Independent reports

Reports from the Victorian Auditor General’s Office provide an independent review of government programmes. The Victorian Auditor General’s Office is a government-instituted body designed to provide evaluations of government programmes. In education, reports from the Auditor General have focused upon school reorganization and school accountability (Victorian Auditor-General’s Office, 1995 and 1997).

The reports utilize a range of evidence including interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. government, school council members, parents, principals, and teachers), document analysis and literature review. The research is conducted by a team of researchers which may include members from the Auditor-General’s Office and contracted staff.

Because of the independence of the Auditor-General’s Office and the high degree of rigour used in the data collection and analysis, these reports have a high status and have the capacity to directly influence policy and practice. With respect to school accountability, as the report was largely favourable and confirmed the Department of Education directions, the impact of the report on policy and practice has been minimal. For example, one of the recommendations was that the Department explores the development of value-added measures of school performance, a strategy which – as was mentioned before – is already being explored.
Publication of department-sponsored research

The Department conducts research on a variety of topics. Previously most of this research was conducted in-house. With the reduction in central office staff, much is now contracted out (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998: 44).

Some research, such as the longitudinal survey of principals conducted by the Co-operative Research Project (a joint initiative between the Department of Education, the University of Melbourne and principal associations), is published as a matter of course in the public domain. Other research, such as that which was designed to inform the development of the School Global Budget (Education Committee For the School Global Budget Research Project, 1996), has been published in the public domain at the discretion of the Minister of Education or as a result of the pressure from Freedom of Information inquiries. The report on School Global Budgets was completed at the end of 1996 but was not released until early in 1998 at the discretion of the Minister of Education, although this was just before a Freedom of Information inquiry, which would have forced the Department to release the report.

There has been criticism of the reduction of Department resources for research and the increased reliance by universities on corporate and government-sponsored research, with the suggestion that there is now less willingness to conduct research that is critical of government policies and programmes (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998: 44). There is some evidence to suggest that such potential criticism has been curtailed: “Restrictions on undertaking research in schools have been placed on academics who are considered to be critical of recent changes” (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998: 44). Whether these restrictions are more so than at other times is unclear. The positive side
is that there has been research published by the government which has been critical of government directions, and the government has been quick to produce evidence to refute adverse comment.

**Department of Education annual report**

The Department of Education publishes an annual report, which is available in book form and electronically via the Department’s web site. The current report (Department of Education, 1997) contains extensive information on Department structure and function, performance indicators (e.g. student performance, programme provision, financial data), major achievements, and a range of supplementary information (e.g. freedom-of-information requests, consultancy report, workforce statistics, senior officer information). For the 1997/98 annual report, it is anticipated that aggregated information on the school performance measures currently reported by each school (but excluding student learning achievement data) will be included.

**Department of Education web site**

The Department maintains a comprehensive web site through which most of the government documents referred to in this paper are available in electronic form. The *Schools of the Future* section of the web site, SOFWeb (http://www.dse.vic.gov.au), receives more than 1.5 million hits per month (Department of Education, 1997).

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6 Consult the reference section at the end of this report.
PART III

Conclusions
THE IMPACT OF THE REFORM ON THE QUALITY OF SCHOOLS

From a government perspective (Spring, 1997a, 1997b; Department of Education, 1997, 1998a, 1998b), the education reform has led to considerable achievements.

Most relate to the establishment of innovative and successful programmes in educational administration (e.g. school global budgeting, local selection of staff, workforce management planning, teacher professional recognition programme, principal performance management, management information systems, school charters, school annual reports, school reviews, state-wide testing in Years 3 and 5) and curriculum (e.g. establishment and review of the Curriculum and Standards Framework, establishment of the eight Key Learning Areas, review of the VCE, and the focus on early literacy through the Keys to Life programme).

The Accountability Framework is perhaps the area of the reform that has received the most support. In the review of the Framework conducted by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, it was concluded that “at this point in time, the three key elements of the framework provide a sound basis for assisting the Department and schools in effectively evaluating and improving school performance, including student learning outcomes” (Victorian Auditor-General's Office, 1997:4). The Auditor-General noted areas that could be strengthened, including enhancing the quality and usefulness of the performance measures, including value-added measures, assessing non-academic goals of education, increasing the reliability of the data collected by schools, encouraging greater developmental use of the data collected, and ascertaining from parents the type of performance data that they prefer. Nevertheless, the report was congratulatory and optimistic
about the direction set by the Accountability Framework. As reported earlier in this paper, surveys of principals and verification panel members contained in the audit report indicated general agreement that there had been improvement in the quality of reporting school performance and in school planning. Also, there was moderate agreement that there had been some improvement in curricula and improvement strategies. In a five-year longitudinal study of principal perceptions of *Schools of the Future*, items concerned with the Accountability Framework (especially school improvements associated with the school charter) have consistently been rated highly by principals (Co-operative Research Project, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 1998).

Less certain are achievements in relation to student outcomes (see Caldwell, 1998c for a general discussion of evidence for improved student learning in self-managing schools). There is increasing consensus amongst principals that there have been positive changes (Co-operative Research Project, 1998), parent satisfaction at the school level is high, there has been an increasing proportion of government school students receiving awards in the VCE, and there is evidence from case studies of improved student outcomes being directly attributed to *Schools of the Future* (Hillier, 1998; Wee, 1998). Yet, results from three years of state-wide testing of Years 3 and 5 through the LAP are inconclusive with regard to improved student outcomes, and surveys conducted by the principal and teacher unions generally indicate little perceived improvement (e.g. The Australian Education Union News, 4(13), June 18, 1998).

There are other signs of improvement, with enrolments in government schools increasing (although this is marginally so, and enrolments are increasing at a proportionately higher rate in non-government schools; Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998), apparent retention rates remaining above national averages at approximately 70
per cent, and participation rates for students 15 to 17 years of age above national averages (more than 70 per cent of 17 year-olds are at school).

The Co-operative Research Project (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 1998) has also recorded positive perceptions from principals in relation to resource allocation (but not the level of resourcing), human resource management (but not the lack of flexibility for most schools in selecting the staff that they want), curriculum improvement due to the introduction of the CSF, and teacher professional development.

Despite the achievements noted, there is evidence of negative impact, including increased teacher and principal workload and time demands (Co-operative Research Project, 1998), concern over the level of resources (Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998; Co-operative Research Project, 1998; Townsend, 1996), increased reliance on local fund raising including the collection of fees (Townsend, 1996, 1997), teacher disempowerment (Blackmore, Bigum, Hodgens and Laski, 1996), and a decrease in school diversity (Townsend, 1996). There is also frustration at the inability of parts of the reform to be fully implemented, especially the promise of school control over staffing and the implementation of the principal performance management plan (Co-operative Research Project, 1998).

Perhaps the most powerful critique to date of the reform is that of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne. The Synod of the church called for the Archbishop to set up an investigative task group to report on: teacher/student ratios; current levels of funding; voluntary contributions; the state of ancillary and support services; the resourcing of schools and students; and, proposed Federal government changes to the resourcing and funding of schools. The report, *The State of Our State Schools*, was released in August 1998 and presented to the Synod at its October 1998 meeting. After
extensive debate and the tabling of an Education Department rebuttal to the report (see below), the report was narrowly passed (219 votes for and 212 against) as a document to be circulated to parishes (Heinrichs, 1998a, 1998b). The summary is worth quoting verbatim:

“Government funding of education, as a proportion of Australia’s Gross Domestic Product, has been declining since 1982-83. In the first two years of the Kennett government, Victoria’s public education system suffered very severe cuts. Its budget was reduced by over $275 million (some 10%), its staff cut by 11,000 (about 14%), and 282 of its schools (14%) closed. Student/teacher ratios climbed from 15.8 students per teacher at the primary level to 18.3, and from 10.8 at the secondary level to 12.1. The percentage of large primary-school classes (over 25 students) burgeoned from 39.7% to 61.8%. Many specialist and support programmes were dismantled and a large proportion of their staff were among those retrenched. At the same time, radical re-structuring of the schools was begun. Schools were freed to compete for students and resources, while being subject to centrally determined standards. More recently, the Howard government (Federal) has increased competitive pressures by making it easier for small, low-fee private schools to be opened. Its grant for new enrolments in non-government schools are to be paid for by reductions in its funding of government schools.”

(Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1998: 45)

This summary highlights the decline in resources, indicates some of its impacts (larger class sizes, decreases in specialist and support staff), and indicates changes to schools through the promotion of autonomous public schools which are subject to market pressures and through Federal government initiatives that are encouraging the
construction of non-government schools in Victoria. In particular, the report highlights the difficulties in determining the sources of impact and ascertaining how much has been due to the *Schools of the Future* reform. Many of the cutbacks in education resources at the state level were part of an overall reduction in government spending and in the provision of government services (the State of Victoria has privatized public utilities such as gas and electricity during the nineties). The increase in the level of government support for non-government schools is largely a Federal initiative and one that reinforces what has been occurring since the early sixties.

The Department has responded to this report with an equally persuasive refutation of the findings (Department of Education, 1998a, 1998b). In particular, the Department notes that:

- the resource reduction was almost exclusively during the first three years of the reform, with dollar increases in the budget beginning in 1995/96. Since then, there have been real increases in expenditure to the point where the current budget is now 4 per cent higher in real terms than 1991/92 when the government came to office. In addition, the per-student expenditure is now comparable to other states and territories;
- schools remain funded almost entirely by the government, with only a small amount funded by parents (approximately 4 per cent of the total cost of running a school, or 17 per cent of operating costs, not including salaries);
- whilst class sizes and student/teacher ratios have increased, the Victorian figures are comparable with all other states and territories, except for the Northern Territory, which requires lower student/teacher ratios to meet the provision of educational services for isolated communities. The Department has also committed itself to providing extra teachers in 1999 in order to reduce class sizes in the early years of primary school;
From supervision to quality assurance:  
the case of the State of Victoria (Australia)

- school retention rates are comparable to other states and territories;
- there have been improvements in the provision of services to students with disabilities and impairments;
- parent opinion of schools is high and teacher survey results indicate satisfaction ranging from moderate to high, with no decline in teacher morale in Victoria;
- the funding of schools is more transparent and equitable, with clear provision of extra resources for schools in disadvantaged areas;
- there is no evidence that schools have had to rely more on local fund raising. Disadvantaged schools, which have a lower potential for fund raising, are compensated through additional funding in the school global budget;
- there has been an expansion in subject and course options for students in Years 11 and 12.

Lessons to be learned

The *Schools of the Future* reform has devolved considerable authority and responsibility to the school level. However, there remain significant constraints on schools (see Caldwell, 1998b, for a discussion). In particular, as discussed in this paper, there are a variety of mechanisms of school supervision that are controlled by the government.

The Accountability Framework is the main tool of school supervision. It is also one of the most successful components of the reform in that all the elements have been implemented and there is unanimous praise for the intent and main features of the framework. Important features of this success include:

- the framework presents an integrated programme that works at two levels: school planning and development, and system accountability. It is this dual utility that is the key to success. Schools value the
Conclusion

framework for it provides them with a helpful developmental tool. Inspection programmes, such as those used in England, do not give the same degree of support to schools that the Accountability Framework offers. The inspection process in England is firmly focused on summative evaluation of school performance. There is little active involvement of the schools in the inspection process, and whilst the recommendations of the report can be used for developmental purposes, there is not an integrated process for this to occur. In contrast, the Victorian Accountability Framework is primarily an integrated school development framework, but one which also meets government accountability needs;

- the framework has been supported by the development of a range of performance measures. Some have been developed especially for the framework (staff and parent opinion surveys), whilst others have been developed as part of other elements of the reform (e.g. CSF). Importantly, benchmarks of performance have been created which allow schools to assess their performance against that of both the state average and schools that have a similar student population;
- the development of the performance measures has been supported by the development of software to facilitate the display and analysis of the data;
- the three previous points describe a process which has provided schools with the tools to monitor performance, a quality-assurance framework within which to operate, and a quality-assurance process that meets systemic requirements. In essence, the Accountability Framework includes the benefits of an inspectorial model of school supervision, with an explicit and extensive programme that requires and supports school planning and development;
- appropriate levels of professional development have been used to support implementation of the framework;
- extensive consultation and trialing occurred in the development of the school charter, the annual report and the triennial review. The Office of Review also consulted widely with experts
throughout the world and the personnel at the Office of Review have been active in gaining international experience of best practice;

• the independence of the Office of Review from the schools section has enabled it to develop the Accountability Framework without the constraints that it might have been subject to had it been part of the bureaucratic structure of the Office of Schools.

The Accountability Framework has areas that may be improved. Many of these have been highlighted in the 1997 report of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office mentioned previously. Possible future directions include:

• the provision of value-added measures of school performance based upon literacy and numeracy performance measured at a number of year levels (currently at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, with measurement also foreshadowed at the end of the preparatory year and at Year 10);

• further developments in the measurement of parent and student opinion to make it more reliable and valid, and the possible inclusion of measures of employer and tertiary institution satisfaction;

• increased assessment of non-academic educational goals such as those identified by the Victorian Auditor-General, which included the social and cultural development of students, good citizenship, work preparedness and school efficiency;

• increased development of skills in the use of the performance data to assist in improving student learning outcomes;

• expansion of the student performance benchmark data to include non-government schools. This will assist government schools to gain an understanding of their performance in relation to all schools rather than just within the government system;

• development of a range of support services for underperforming schools;

• increased rigour in the collection and substantiation of school data.
Conclusion

Under current arrangements, the work of principals and teachers does not feature directly in the supervision of school performance, unlike school inspection programmes such as that conducted in England, in which the inspectorial teams explicitly judge the contribution that school staff make to the performance of a school. However, the school charter, the codes of conduct contained within the school charter (Appendix 1) and the PRP provide an explicit and transparent link between school direction and the work of teachers. In addition, whilst the Accountability Framework monitors outcomes and not processes, concerns over school outcomes can be backward mapped by the school to the underlying processes. Through this mechanism the work of teachers and principals is indirectly linked to the supervision of school performance. Importantly, it allows modifications to the processes to be undertaken at the school level by schools, with appropriate support provided centrally or by external providers as identified by the schools or prescribed by the Department of Education. As will be discussed later, such support options are currently being developed by the Office of Review. The trend to further school autonomy will enhance this process as schools will receive additional funding (due to the savings made by the central office in not providing services such as student support, curriculum support, materials supply, etc.) to buy in the support services they need. Indeed, there may be increases in the number of private-service providers similar to those created in England to meet the needs of grant-maintained schools, and similar to what currently exists in Victoria to meet the needs of independent schools (e.g. the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria; the Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria).

The supervision of principals through the main performance management plan has not gained the support of principals. The system does not appear to tap into what they consider to be the important
elements of their work. Indeed, one of the criticisms of the process is that it is divorced from the school planning process that is central to the Accountability Framework and central to the work of principals. Surveys of principals have indicated that they see little impact of the process on school planning, they are dissatisfied with the role of the system in the process, and the reward system is regarded as inadequate (in terms of monetary value) or inappropriate (in that a monetary bonus paid to the principal is all that is available). The corollary of these conclusions is that this performance management system needs to be refined so that the principals see that it is valuable both to themselves and to the school.

The supervision of teachers through the PRP continues to evolve. As it is a locally-developed arrangement within a government framework, the usefulness of this for supervision of staff by the system is questionable. As described previously, the arrangements used by schools vary greatly, making reporting of the effectiveness of the programme difficult. However, the local development of staff appraisal and assessment is also one of the strengths of the programme, as it allows schools to develop processes that suit local conditions, and which can offer considerable support for teacher development.

All the supervision mechanisms described in this paper are efficient in terms of cost to the centre and involvement of centre staff. The majority of the supervision functions have been located at the school level (e.g. school self-assessment, all the appraisal processes in the PRP, principal performance self-assessment and peer review) with supervision at the central level mainly concerned with verifying the school-level work (e.g. verification of school self-assessment, involvement of the general manager (Schools) in principal performance management plans). As a result, the Office of Review had a staff of only 16 in 1997, and less than this for most of
the time that the Accountability Framework was developed. Yet, this small group of people is responsible for overseeing the accountability of all schools (as well as a range of other functions such as continuous development of the framework, financial audits and the production of benchmark data), with the support of outside contractors to do the verification of school self-assessments (the Department and school compliance costs per school review is between $5,000 to $6,000 per school; Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, 1998: 31). The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office is supportive of the effort of the Office of Review in maintaining an economical school review process, but cautions that the costs/benefits of the process need to be monitored. As a further example, the cost of the PRP is almost entirely in terms of staff time at the school level. The advantage of the devolved nature of the supervision systems is that it is a financially efficient process, which is arguably more relevant and responsive to local needs, whilst still meeting centre accountability requirements. The disadvantages are largely associated with workload at the school level (as mentioned previously, increased teacher and principal workload is one of the most often cited impacts of Schools of the Future).

In all the areas, how underperformance is supported is not clear. Currently, departmental assistance to underperforming schools consists of additional support from regional management teams and some assistance in developing action plans for particular problems (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, 1998: 35). Within the Accountability Framework, models are currently being developed, which may include a process similar to that employed in the State of Kentucky in which experienced external personnel work with school administration to improve performance. The Office of Review is foreshadowing the development, in conjunction with the private sector, of an extensive school-support industry. This will be
designed to support both schools and school personnel that are underperforming, in addition to providing a range of normal support services. With respect to principal performance, under current arrangements Regional Principal Consultants can provide support for those principals who are not performing well, whilst for teachers, the process of support varies across schools with principal class or leading teachers usually involved. To ensure that all schools are providing quality education, there remain policy issues that need to be resolved, especially in relation to staffing (placement, selection, recruitment and management of underperformance), so that the Department can effectively intervene to improve school performance (Office of Review, 1998a). In this regard, Caldwell identifies eight driving and twelve constraining forces on efforts to provide greater autonomy to government schools (see Box 5).

All but one of the constraining forces (stance of teacher unions) are directly attributed to the role of government in schools. The extent to which these forces can be reduced is unknown: “unless a significant initiative appears on the scene to either add to the driving forces or mitigate the constraining forces, there is unlikely to be a change to current patterns of authority, responsibility and accountability” (Caldwell, 1998b: 2). With the introduction of self-governing schools, the Victorian school system is extending the autonomy of schools. Schools that elect to become self-governing will enter into service agreements with the government. In return for providing services the government will provide funds. Self-governing schools will remain regulated through such mechanisms as adherence to the curriculum directions of the government. Yet, they will also have considerable freedom in such areas as staffing, resource allocation, and forming educational partnerships. How the government supervises the work of these schools is yet to be determined, although the Office of Review is currently developing a modified Accountability Framework to suit self-governing schools.
Box 5. Driving and constraining forces affecting school autonomy in Australia

**Driving forces**

- Changes in the role of government in delivering public services in the face of concerns about efficiency and effectiveness.
- The capacity of state governments to deliver more autonomy within current legislative frameworks where there is the will to do so.
- The preferences of professional associations of school principals.
- Competition policy that challenges the current discriminatory funding arrangements in the use of public funds for private schools.
- The building of social capital in relation to school education and the burgeoning home school movement.
- Knowledge and skills of staff.
- Technology.
- Flexibility in workplace arrangements.

**Constraining forces**

- Role specification and accountability requirements.
- Inertia at the state level in taking up the capacity in existing legislation and tendencies for recentralization in the implementation of policy on decentralization.
- Staffing requirements to meet the needs of a system.
- Curriculum and standards frameworks.
- Registration requirements and the employment of teachers.
- Stance of teacher unions.
- Industrial relations framework.
- Commonwealth-state arrangements and relationships.
- Funding mechanisms for public and private schools.
- Obligations under international agreements.
- Knowledge and skills of staff.
- Values in public policy and issues of trust.

Source: Caldwell, 1998b; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998.
The system of school supervision in Victoria clearly reflects international trends (Carron and De Grauwe, 1997). There is a high degree of openness and transparency and much of the work of supervision is located at the school level. The school supervision process also generates information that assists with system evaluation. Work still remains, with some areas such as principal and teacher supervision needing more substantial development and other areas, such as the Accountability Framework, needing no more than the ongoing development that is to be expected. Importantly, the Victorian experience demonstrates that school supervision can be both summative and formative. Useful information is generated on school performance that not only provides a summary of performance, but also indicates developmental directions that are then supported by an integrated school development framework.


From supervision to quality assurance: the case of the State of Victoria (Australia)


REFERENCE SITES

There are a number of information-rich and well-maintained Internet sites that are relevant to this paper and from which some of the material has been taken.

The Victorian Department of Education’s main site is at http://www.eduvic.vic.gov.au

Within this site there are links to the following sections of the Department:

• *Schools of the Future* http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au
• Board of Studies http://www.bos.vic.edu.au
• Office of Training and Further Education http://www.otfe.vic.gov.au

For general information on education in Australia the EDNA site at http://www.edna.edu.au provides a range of useful links.
From supervision to quality assurance: the case of the State of Victoria (Australia)

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<td>School and Department of Education priorities</td>
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<td>Literacy Prep-Year 2</td>
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APPENDIX 1. ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS

The following figure is taken from the Office of Review publication, *Developing a School Charter* (1997b: 39).

**Figure 11. Accountability arrangements**

<table>
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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Audience</th>
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<td>Aggregation of selected data for the annual report</td>
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<td>School council</td>
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<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>Timetables</td>
<td>Principal and education committee</td>
<td>Each term</td>
<td>Principal and school council</td>
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<td>Participation rates (secondary) Exit student destinations (secondary)</td>
<td>Team leaders, principal and education committee</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>School council and staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student assessments and reports</td>
<td>Teachers and leading teachers</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>Co-ordinators, students, parents, principal and school council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written reports and interviews</td>
<td>Leadership team</td>
<td>Twice yearly</td>
<td>Students, parents</td>
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<td>Parent opinion surveys</td>
<td>Principal and education committee</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>Principal and school council</td>
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<td>Student attendance</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Co-ordinators, leadership team and school council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/student accident reports</td>
<td>Co-ordinators, assistant principal</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
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<td>Parent opinion surveys</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
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<td>CSF student achievement in English</td>
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<td>Yearly</td>
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<td>Twice yearly</td>
<td>Principal and school council</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2. EXAMPLE OF A SCHOOL PROFILE

The following extract is taken from the Office of Review publication, *Developing a School Charter* (1997b: 13-14). Highlights as per original document.

**Fountain Gate Primary School**

**School profile**

Fountain Gate Primary School is located on Prospect Hill Road, Narre Warren, in the City of Casey. Situated in a residential area within the south-eastern growth corridor, its position offers the following advantages:

- located next to the Fountain Gate Campus of Eumemmerring Secondary College, Dandenong Valley Special Developmental School and Fountain Gate Preschool;
- close to major facilities.

The 1995 enrolment of 532 is likely to increase during the next three years thus maintaining flexibility in both staffing and curriculum.

Great emphasis is placed on caring for our students, staff and parents by:

- providing an environment that is safe and secure;
- facilitating effective communication to foster a strong partnership within the school community;
- providing equal opportunity for all members of the school community;
- providing professional development;
- enhancing academic excellence;
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- extending students to their individual potential by encouraging, recognizing and rewarding achievement and effort;
- developing in students, qualities and life skills such as responsibility, communication, independence, inquiring minds, problem-solving and creativity;
- providing a co-operative environment where students can share the responsibility for their own learning, behaviour and health;
- preparing students for their next stage of learning by building on their strengths and experiences.

**Our main aim is to foster in students qualities and skills which will enable them to adapt to change.**

At present the school provides a comprehensive curriculum in: English, mathematics, health and physical education, science, technology, studies of society and environment, and the arts and is developing a language other than English programme. Specialist teachers provide: library, physical education, computer studies, art and craft, and special assistance (which includes reading recovery, English as a second language and integration).

To actively support these curriculum areas, the following enrichment programmes are provided: life education, swimming, religious education, house system, bike ed, camping, interschool sport, health and human relations, school band, safety house, junior school council, perceptual motor programme, developmental learning, and parent education programmes. In recognition of academic excellence and leadership, the Ian George Scholarship is awarded annually to a Year 6 student who will be attending the Fountain Gate Campus of Eumemmerring Secondary College.

The Fountain Gate Primary School grounds consist of: four large-grassed playing fields, basketball and netball courts, three sets of fixed
playing equipment (one of which is a joint community playground), shaded and passive recreation areas. The buildings consist of a main core which includes: administration block, first-aid room, resource room, multi-purpose hall, store room, canteen, art room and library. There are three galleries each consisting of four classrooms surrounding central learning areas. The remaining classrooms are portable.

Current projects being undertaken by the school are:

- the upgrading of a classroom for use as a computer and technology learning centre;
- incorporation of computers and CD-ROM technology in the library to efficiently access information;
- upgrading of hardware to each classroom for the reception of television, video and interactive satellite programmes.

To facilitate improvement in student learning the school community has identified three major priorities. These are aimed at enhancing:

- teaching strategies to improve student outcomes;
- the reading skills of children; and
- the problem-solving skills of children.

**Fountain Gate Primary School will continue to provide quality education for its students so they can become effective members of our community.**
APPENDIX 3. CODES OF PRACTICE


**School Council Code of practice**

The Council of Northwest College acknowledges that it operates within the Education Act and Regulations.

Northwest College Council will observe the following principles:

- the learning needs of the students will be the primary consideration in decision-making;
- monitoring of achievements of charter goals and priorities will be regular and rigorous;
- school community views will be canvassed and considered on major policy decisions;
- diversity within the school community will be recognized and utilized;
- discussions related to employees will be strictly confidential;
- disagreements will be resolved within the council;
- the council will develop policy directions and observe the principal's right to implement policy in the most appropriate way;
- members of the council will be trained regarding their responsibilities, current school practices and Department of Education policies and directions;
- public comment will be the responsibility of the college council president and principal;
- decisions of college council will be publicly justifiable;
- councillors will declare conflict of interest where appropriate.
Using the following practices:

- the council will meet on the third Monday of each month for two hours;
- the council will receive progress reports and indicators of achievement for all goals and priorities in the charter each month;
- meeting procedures and decision-making processes will operate as detailed in the college council standing orders;
- clearly stated guidelines for elected office bearers will be provided.

Three sub-committees will operate:

- environment;
- curriculum;
- resources (physical and finance).

Sub-committees will consist of a minimum of two parents, one teacher and at least one council member who will act as convenor.

Sub-committees will have the responsibility of developing draft policy relevant to the area, particularly for the stated goals and priorities in our charter, and for monitoring progress of charter implementation.

**Role of executive officer (principal)**

As executive officer of the college council, the principal will ensure that:

- performance information on charter goals and priorities is provided regularly to council;
- adequate advice is provided to the council on educational and other matters;
- the decisions of council are implemented in an efficient and timely manner;
• adequate support and resources are provided for the conduct of council meetings.

Principal Class Code of practice

The principal is responsible for the leadership, management and development of the college and its programmes. The principal of North West Secondary College operates within the relevant sections of the Education Act, Department of Education policies and the ‘Role and Accountabilities’ statement (1994).

In providing effective leadership to the whole college the principal will:

• lead and manage the implementation of the school charter and report on school performance;
• provide leadership and accurate advice to the college council and ensure that the policies and programmes developed in partnership with the school community are implemented;
• lead all staff to adhere consistently to school teaching and learning, assessment and discipline policies;
• encourage and foster a purposeful learning environment that recognizes and rewards student achievement;
• facilitate the use of quality teaching and learning strategies to maximize student outcomes;
• ensure an effective, safe and harassment-free environment for students and staff;
• ensure principles of merit and equity and valuing diversity are applied;
• manage the development and operation of the college financial and administrative systems;
• promote the college and further enhance links with all sectors of the educational community.
It is the responsibility of the **Assistant principal** to manage the establishment of administrative structures and procedures to ensure the efficient operation of the college on a day-to-day basis.

In exercising responsibility, the Assistant principal will:

- support the implementation and monitoring of the school charter within his/her designated area of responsibility;
- supervise and co-ordinate the work of leading teachers;
- be responsible for the effective use of teaching staff;
- take responsibility for implementation and support of the student code of conduct;
- co-ordinate programmes to improve the knowledge and skills of teaching staff.

**Staff Code of practice**

The staff code of practice for North West Primary School applies to the professional behaviour of the school staff in the performance of their duties.

**All staff**, both teaching and non-teaching, will demonstrate commitment to North West Primary School by:

- devoting themselves to the educational and social values outlined in the school profile;
- successfully implementing and achieving the school charter goals and priorities;
- treating all members of the school community with empathy and respect;
- behaving and dressing in an appropriate professional manner;
- demonstrating the ability to manage and adapt to change;
• contributing to whole school activities and taking an active role in the school community;
• presenting a positive role model.

**Teachers** at the school are part of a team responsible for providing high quality programmes that ensure success for all children within a safe and secure environment.

In addition to specific role statements, teachers will:

• teach according to the school’s published approach to the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills;
• maximize effective teaching and learning time within structured class programmes;
• recognize that all students have the capacity to learn and be taught;
• have an understanding of how students develop and learn;
• recognize and cater for individual students’ differences, backgrounds, abilities and learning styles;
• promote high but achievable expectations for all students;
• monitor and assess students continuously using a variety of techniques within the school’s assessment policy;
• report to students and parents in a meaningful, clear and accurate manner in accordance with school council policy and practice;
• manage student behaviour and welfare in strict accordance with the school’s stated policy and practice;
• ensure that the classroom and school environment is safe, caring and purposeful.

**Community Code of practice**

The Northern Secondary College community comprises a diverse range of people that includes parents, guardians, members of the local business sector, district organizations and local residents.
In providing the highest quality education that meets the needs of students, Northern Secondary College relies on close liaison with community members to:

- support college rules, codes of practice, programmes and decisions made by the college;
- provide access for students to local resources that enhance their learning experiences;
- provide support for college activities;
- obtain appropriate feedback and advice on college programmes.

Wherever access is obtained to community resources, Northern Secondary College will ensure that:

- all members of the community are welcomed at the college and treated with respect;
- demands placed on resources are not excessive;
- rights of community members are respected and confidentiality guaranteed;
- appropriate protocols are established.

Northern Secondary College will keep the community informed of its achievements and activities through:

- the fortnightly college newsletter;
- regular communication through media releases to the local media, businesses and other organizations;
- holding regular meetings with parents, parent club and college council;
- publishing college council annual reports on the college performance in terms of the college charter;
• encouraging an ‘open door’ approach to the community and establishing clear points of first contact with the college;
• developing appropriate ‘open day’ and ‘presentation night’ programmes.

Northern Secondary College will obtain the community’s views on its performance by:
• seeking and including community responses in the evaluation of college goals and programmes including parent opinion surveys;
• undertaking such surveys cyclically, by sampling techniques or by any other appropriate method.

**Student Code of conduct**

The code of conduct for students at North West Primary School has been formulated within and is consistent with Department of Education guidelines and regulations. We recognize that our school must provide all children with a safe and orderly learning environment that meets the needs of our children at all levels of their primary school life.

The code of conduct is based upon the following principles:

• all children have the right to be safe;
• all children have the right to work and play without interference;
• all children should be encouraged to be polite, courteous and well mannered;
• all children will be encouraged to exhibit pride in their school;
• teachers should expect to be able to teach in an atmosphere of order and co-operation;
• parents have an obligation to support the school in its efforts to maintain a productive teaching and learning environment;
• principal and staff have an obligation to implement the code of conduct fairly, reasonably and consistently.
School rules

There are five basic school rules:

• move and play safely;
• care for yourself, others and property;
• resolve problems calmly, sensibly and fairly;
• respect others through your speech and manners;
• work as well as you can and allow others to do the same.

Early each year, teachers will establish a set of classroom rules for their own classes that are consistent with the whole school rules. School and class rules are to be displayed prominently around the school.

Our approach to discipline

At North West Primary School we have a consistent and positive approach to behaviour that will foster a school climate where personal responsibility and self-discipline are developed. We are committed to the following strategies:

• giving positive reinforcement to improve self-esteem, e.g. sports awards, ‘student of the week’;
• acknowledging student achievements in the newsletter and at assemblies;
• encouraging friendships;
• requiring children to accept some responsibility for their actions;
• providing adequate supervision in the school grounds;
• encouraging understanding and awareness of the school rules.
Sanctions

Breaches of school rules may incur some penalty or action which will be a logical consequence of misbehaviour. Serious and continued breaches of school rules may lead to suspension/expulsion procedures in line with Department of Education guidelines.
IIEP publications and documents

More than 1,200 titles on all aspects of educational planning have been published by the International Institute for Educational Planning. A comprehensive catalogue, giving details of their availability, includes research reports, case studies, seminar documents, training materials, occasional papers and reference books in the following subject categories:

- **Economics of education, costs and financing.**
- **Manpower and employment.**
- **Demographic studies.**
- **The location of schools (school map) and sub-national planning.**
- **Administration and management.**
- **Curriculum development and evaluation.**
- **Educational technology.**
- **Primary, secondary and higher education.**
- **Vocational and technical education.**
- **Non-formal, out-of-school, adult and rural education.**
- **Disadvantaged groups.**

Copies of the catalogue may be obtained from the IIEP Publications Unit on request.
The International Institute for Educational Planning

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) is an international centre for advanced training and research in the field of educational planning. It was established by UNESCO in 1963 and is financed by UNESCO and by voluntary contributions from Member States. In recent years the following Member States have provided voluntary contributions to the Institute: Denmark, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Venezuela.

The Institute’s aim is to contribute to the development of education throughout the world, by expanding both knowledge and the supply of competent professionals in the field of educational planning. In this endeavour the Institute co-operates with interested training and research organizations in Member States. The Governing Board of the IIEP, which approves the Institute’s programme and budget, consists of a maximum of eight elected members and four members designated by the United Nations Organization and certain of its specialized agencies and institutes.

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