

**FORGOTTEN LEADERS? THE ROLE AND
WORKLOAD OF
STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL
DEPUTY PRINCIPALS
IN QUEENSLAND**

2002 Report – In-depth Study

[COMMISSIONED BY THE QUEENSLAND SECONDARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION (QSPA)]

This report comprises:

- *An executive summary outlining key findings*
- *A detailed review of the data from a questionnaire administered to all deputy principals in state secondary schools in Queensland in mid-2002. (This follows up data collected in late-2001.)*
- *A literature review is provided as an Appendix.*

It has been prepared to:

- *Identify issues relevant to the secondary deputy principalship in Queensland;*
- *Stimulate further discussion about the issues raised; and,*
- *Provide a basis for further research into the secondary deputy principalship in the future.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A preliminary study into the role and workload of state secondary school deputy principals was undertaken in December 2001 for the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association (QSPA). Data were collected by a specially designed questionnaire, comprising closed and open items. Deputy principals, who were members of QSPA, were the target group. The (tentative) findings of this study were reported at the QSPA Conference 2002 with a comprehensive report of findings made available to Association members.

The preliminary research was followed up in mid-2002 with a wider ranging study that targeted all state secondary schools (and hence all deputy principals) in Queensland. The same questionnaire was used with a response rate of over 50% achieved.

The findings are summarised below. Interestingly, there are strong similarities across the findings from the 2001 and 2002 data sets. Respondents to the questionnaire were moderately experienced, mainly from schools of Bands 9 to 11 with two deputies. They had varied backgrounds in terms of their substantive teaching curriculum areas.

The 2002 research findings can be broadly summarised as:

- *the vast majority of deputies are working more than 50 hours a week, almost a quarter more than 60 hours;*
- *about forty percent intend to seek promotion to the principalship – “lifestyle decisions” is the overwhelming deterrent to seeking promotion;*
- *most respondents report high pressure in the role, with this and hours work increasing in recent times;*
- *the variety and diversity of the role has also increased in recent times;*
- *the majority are satisfied with their role as deputy principal, a quarter are very satisfied with their role;*
- *the level of satisfaction is related to:*
 - *How well the notion of team among school administration team members is developed;*
 - *The time dedicated to strategic leadership in a typical (REAL) week;*
 - *The time dedicated to educational/curriculum leadership in a typical (REAL) week;*
 - *The alignment between what deputy principals saw as their REAL and IDEAL week in terms of what they did – (this is expanded on below and discussed further later in this report) –in sum, the closer the REAL and IDEAL are aligned, the higher the level of satisfaction;*
 - *The number of hours worked in a week;*
 - *The level of pressure felt in the role;*
 - *Their perception as to whether they believe they hold the necessary skills for the role;*
 - *Whether they see themselves as an effective and efficient manager;*
 - *Their intentions as to whether they plan to seek promotion to the principalship in the future; and,*
 - *The length of time they have held the position – the longer, the less the satisfaction experienced.*
- *there is a difference between the activities in what deputy principals see as a REAL week for them and what they envisage an IDEAL week might be like –eg. they would like to be more involved in strategic and curriculum leadership and less involved in student and staff issues, general management and administrative matters. Competing demands on their time and matters associated with their role/relationship with the*

principal are the main factors impacting on the lack of alignment between the REAL and the IDEAL.

- *Deputies identify the key skills required in their role to include strong interpersonal/people skills, inspiring and visioning change, delegation and empowerment and being a good manager.*
- *key professional development areas of need for them include financial management and leadership skills.*

*Two main areas for follow-up research are suggested: The first, most likely related to the second, is to investigate the notion of **teams and team development among the secondary school administration teams**. This presents as a particularly important area for investigation given the link team development has to the reported level of satisfaction in the role. The second are for investigation, is an examination of the **alignment of the REAL and IDEAL leadership activities** for deputies. Again, as for team development, the alignment of the REAL and IDEAL contributes to deputies' level of satisfaction in the role. Of interest would be those cases where alignment has been achieved and hence satisfaction in the role enhanced.*

2. INTRODUCTION

This study represents a joint project between the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association (QSPA) and staff at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). QUT was commissioned by the association to undertake the bulk of the research component of the study.

The (in-depth) study is a follow-up to preliminary research undertaken towards the end of 2001. The findings of this earlier research were provided to the QSPA Executive and more widely reported at the QSPA Conference 2002. This in-depth study focuses mainly on the responses, collected in mid-2002, of a wider group of secondary deputy principals. All state secondary schools across Queensland were invited to participate. The 2001 study was "repeated" in 2002 with the express purpose of endeavouring to increase the response rate.

3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The **broad aim** of the study was *to investigate the role and workload of deputy principals in state secondary schools in Queensland*. Specifically the following aspects were researched:

- Some general professional characteristics of deputy principals, such as experience, gender, background;
- Satisfaction with the role of deputy principal and future career intentions;
- The notion of team development among members of the administration and executive in secondary schools;
- The roles and responsibilities of deputy principals – general and specific;
- The skills and competencies important to the role of deputy principal;
- Aspects of preferred professional development relevant to the role.

The questionnaire research component of the study was guided by a review of the literature (refer Appendix One) and discussions with key stakeholders.

4. METHODOLOGY

The same questionnaire as that used in the preliminary study in 2001 was used for the 2002 in-depth research. It is described briefly below.

(a) deputy principal instrument

The questionnaire for this study, the Secondary Deputy Principal Questionnaire (SDPQ) (refer Appendix Two), was developed using the following inputs:

- literature review;
- ideas and concepts from a similar study into the roles and workloads of secondary principals being undertaken by one of the researchers;
- feedback and comment from executive members of the QSPA;
- small-scale trialing for presentation, sense and formatting.

The final version of the SDPQ comprised:

- 25 closed items, about half of which contain several sub-sections within each item;
- 4 open-ended items providing the opportunity for explanation of specific closed item responses;
- 2 targeted open-ended items; and 1 general open-ended item.

No names of respondents or schools were required on the questionnaire, although participants were invited to indicate contact details if they were willing to take part in possible follow-up interviews and/or focus groups. It was anticipated the questionnaire would take about 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire was provided to participants electronically via email (see comment below). A covering explanatory note provided participants with background to, and purposes of the study together with instructions regarding completion and return. (Participants received two follow-up reminders to return the questionnaire.) Participants were provided with three options for response. These were:

- electronically – the questionnaire could be completed on the computer screen saved and returned via email
- electronically – participants were able to visit a web-site, complete the questionnaire and submit it entirely via their computer screen;
- hard copy – participants could print the questionnaire out, complete manually and return either by mail (free-post) or fax.

(b) study sample

In an attempt to increase the response rate over the first study, schools were contacted through the principal in the first instance to confirm deputy principals’ email contact details and seek the principals’ support in encouraging their deputies to respond. (It was anticipated that the earlier presentation of the 2001 study at the QSPA Conference would have promoted interest in the study and hence an enhanced desire on the part of deputy principals to respond at this second opportunity.) Subsequently, the Secondary Deputy Principal Questionnaire (SDPQ) was emailed to all schools with an invitation to respond. Two reminder notices were sent. Two hundred and four completed questionnaires were returned. This represents a response rate of approximately 51%. (The original response rate was 15%.)

5. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The questionnaire results are provided in both tabular and summary comment format under a number of key headings.

a) School characteristics of respondents

Sixty-two percent¹ of respondents were from city or urban schools, thirty-eight percent from rural schools. Respondents were located in schools across the **Band** range, although those from Band 8 schools were small in number.

BAND (2)²	8	9	10	11
%	9	28	39	24

The vast majority of respondents worked in schools where there were at least two other deputies.

NUMBER OF OTHER DPs (5)	1	2	3	4
%	15	61	24	1

¹ All percentages are rounded

² Number in brackets indicates item number on questionnaire

b) Summary of general characteristics of respondents

The following tables summarise the characteristics of respondents. Summary comments follow.

GENDER (6)	MALE	FEMALE
%	52	48

YEARS AS A DEPUTY (7)	3 YEARS OR LESS	4 TO 9 YEARS	MORE THAN 9 YEARS
%	39	38	23

YEARS AS A DP AT CURRENT SCHOOL (8)	3 YEARS OR LESS	4 TO 9 YEARS	MORE THAN 9 YEARS
%	54	30	16

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AS A DEPUTY (9)	2 SCHOOLS OR LESS	3 SCHOOLS OR MORE
%	91	9

TEACHING SUBJECT AREA (10)	COMMERCE/ LEGAL STUDIES/ ECONOMICS	SOCIAL SCIENCES /HUMANITIES	SCIENCE/ MATHS	LOTE	HEALTH/ PE	OTHER
%	8	26	26	9	16	15

HOURS WORKED IN A TYPICAL WEEK (16)	40-49 HOURS	50-59 HOURS	60 HOURS OR MORE
%	16	61	24

Summary comments:

- The majority of respondents were from Bands 9, 10, 11 schools, with two or more deputies (reflects somewhat the spread of band levels across the secondary sector)
- Both male and female deputy principals were well represented in the sample of respondents.
- A significant majority of respondents have 9 or less years experience with over a third with three or less years experience.
- A majority of respondents have been deputy principals in their current school for 9 or less years, although this may be influenced by the fact that just over one-third of the sample had only been a deputy for three years or less; that is, they are therefore less likely to have been mobile and had wider school experience in

the role.

- Just over 90 percent had been a deputy in one or two schools, indicating the majority of the respondents were perhaps moderately experienced in the role of deputy principal if one considers both number of schools and years in the role.
- The substantive curriculum backgrounds of respondents varied, with social sciences/humanities, science/mathematics, health and PE dominating.
- Eighty-five percent reported working 50 or more hours per week, with almost a quarter sixty hours or more.

The respondent sample comprises male and female deputy principals coming from a variety of curriculum backgrounds and of at least moderate experience in the role; few have been a deputy for a long period or held the position of deputy in their current school for a long period. Most report working more than 50 hours a week.

c) Satisfaction with role and future career intentions

“Satisfaction” in their role as deputy and intentions to seek promotion to principals were considered to be good indicators of the overall “health” and “wellness” of the deputy principalship in the state as well as pointing to “depth” of the potential promotional pool for the future.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AS A DP (11)	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED nor DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED
%	25	54	10	11

Almost 80 percent of deputies report being satisfied with their role, with a quarter very satisfied. Comments provided in the open-ended items relevant to this item included “role is exciting”; “this is a challenging yet stimulating role”.

The *level of satisfaction* deputy principals felt in their role was considered a key characteristic that might arise as a result of various factors, including those related to their role and their sense of team development. To investigate if there were any such (statistically) significant relationships, analyses of responses on the satisfaction item and other key items on the questionnaire were undertaken. The following were found to be significant in terms of their relationship with the *level of satisfaction*:

- How well the notion of team among school administration team members was developed;
- The time dedicated to strategic leadership in a typical week;
- The time dedicated to educational/curriculum leadership in a typical week;
- The alignment between what deputy principals saw as their REAL and IDEAL week in terms of what they did – this is discussed further later in this report;
- The number of hours worked in a week;
- The level of pressure felt in the role;
- Their perception as to whether they believed they held the necessary skills for the role;
- Whether they saw themselves as an effective and efficient manager;
- Their intentions as to whether they planned to seek promotion to the principalship in the future; and,
- Their time in the role of deputy (the longer, the less satisfied they were).

These are important issues and discussed again in the final section of this report.

Deputy principals indicated their intention (or otherwise) to seek promotion to the position of principal as follows.

INTENTION TO SEEK PROMOTION (12)	YES	NO	NOT SURE
%	39	27	34

Reason (s) for not seeking promotion to principal for those responding “no” or “not sure” to previous item are provided in the following table:

REASON FOR NO PROMOTION (13)	% INDICATING THIS REASON ³
• Satisfied in DP role and see as future career	10
• Role of principal is too demanding with too much responsibility	11
• Lifestyle decision – work/home/family balance more manageable as a DP	36
• Role of DP is closer to teaching-learning context	12
• Role of principal has too much accountability with insufficient authority	14
• Other reasons (see below)	17

Other reasons listed included:

- Disillusioned with promotional process
- Current role too demanding to take time to seek promotion
- Lack of opportunities to act as a principal
- Principal has accountabilities without resources

Summary comments:

- **Over three-quarters of the respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their role of deputy principal, with only 11 percent indicating they were dissatisfied.**
- **There are a number of key factors contributing to this level of satisfaction including:**
 - **How well the notion of team among school administration team members was developed;**
 - **The time dedicated to strategic leadership in a typical week;**
 - **The time dedicated to educational/curriculum leadership in a typical week;**
 - **The alignment between what deputy principals saw as their REAL and IDEAL week in terms of what they did – this is discussed further later in this report.**
- **Two in five respondents indicated an intention to seek promotion to principal, although another third were unsure of their intentions in this regard.**
- **Reasons provided by those indicating they would not be seeking promotion focused mainly on (a) lifestyle decisions, based on balancing work/home/family and to a lesser extent (although probably building on the first) the demands on principals they saw as negatives, such as the role holding too much accountability with insufficient authority as well as the role being too demanding.**

³ Respondents able to indicate more than one reason – represents % of actual respondents to this question – some did not respond

The respondents present as a positive group with respect to their role as a deputy principal, are satisfied with their role, with many holding career goals of promotion to principal.

d) notion of development of team among administration members

The notion of “team”, and how well developed it is among administration/executive members in secondary school were considered important issues in the context of devolution in the operation of schools, and perhaps more importantly because these issues impact on the overall satisfaction of deputies in their role. Generally, respondents reported positively in regard to team development in their schools.

HOW WELL DEVELOPED IS NOTION OF A TEAM (14)	HIGHLY DEVELOPED	SOMEWHAT DEVELOPED & EVOLVING	SOMEWHAT DEVELOPED BUT COULD BE BETTER	NOT WELL DEVELOPED AT ALL
%	55	24	14	8

FACTOR (S) CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT OF A TEAM (15)	% INDICATING THIS FACTOR AS VERY IMPORTANT ⁴
• Attitudes and skills of the principal	91
• Attitudes and skills of other members of the team	83
• Past practices and culture of the school	30
• Well developed interpersonal relationships among team members	93
• Opportunities to engage in appropriate professional development re teamwork	59

Open-ended items included comments such as “ the need for a team and teamwork is vital to success in the deputies role”.

Summary comments:

- **Almost 80 percent of respondents commented positively regarding the notion of team development among administration members at their school, with 55 percent indicating that the “team” was highly developed in their school.**
- **The major factors contributing to this situation were the attitudes and skills of the principal and other members of the team and the existence of well-developed relationships among team members.**

One respondent noted:

“I have no idea how secondary deputies could possibly operate without a highly developed sense of team with their principal and other deputies”

The notion of team is well developed (or developing) in most schools. The attitudes, skills and competencies of team members, principal and deputies, are key contributors to this.

⁴ Respondents able to indicate more than one reason

e) aspects of roles & responsibilities of deputy principal

i. general aspects of the role

Respondents were asked to comment on a number of general aspects of their role in terms of broad changes in recent years.

NO. HOURS WORKED COMPARED WITH EARLIER (17)	INCREASED	ABOUT SAME	DECREASED
%	40	54	6

PRESSURE IN ROLE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPAL AT THE MOMENT (18)	HIGH	AVERAGE/MEDIUM	LOW
%	73	25	2

PRESSURE IN ROLE COMPARED WITH EARLIER (19)	INCREASED	ABOUT SAME	DECREASED
%	56	38	6

VARIETY AND DIVERSITY IN DP ROLE COMPARED WITH EARLIER (21)	INCREASED	ABOUT SAME	DECREASED
%	68	24	8

These data indicated that the time demanded by the role of deputy had increased in recent years, as had the pressure and variety and diversity of what the role entails. A number of deputies commented in the open-ended items about the role and workload of deputies being too great. Some identified negative effects of this, including no time for professional development and no opportunity to take any extended holidays.

Respondents were also asked to reflect on how the roles of other professionals in their schools had changed recently.

ROLES OF OTHER STAFF COMPARED WITH EARLIER (23)	INCREASED IN VARIETY & DIVERSITY (%)	REMAINED SAME (%)	DECREASED IN VARIETY & DIVERSITY (%)
• Principal	80	17	4
• other deputy principals	74	23	3
• heads of department	71	26	4
• teachers	68	28	4

Summary comments:

- Two in five of the respondents indicated the *number of hours* worked in their role as deputy principal had increased, although most of the remainder reported them about the same.
- Almost three-quarters indicated the *pressure* they felt in the role was high, with over half indicating this pressure had increased in recent years. Over a third saw the pressure as about the same as earlier.
- The key factors contributing to this *increased pressure and increase in variety and diversity* were identified as:
 - Unrealistic systemic demands
 - Challenging students and community demands and expectations, student behaviour management
 - Changes in the school administration eg arrival of new principal
 - Expanding range of expected responsibilities
 - Teacher “quality” and other staffing issues
 - Changes in school demographics eg enrolments, staffing.
- A large majority reported the *variety and diversity* of what they did in their role as having also increased.

Some comments from respondents illustrate some of the above points:

“I now have to deal with family problems ... the emotional condition of many students and their carers means I have to be many things to many people”

“increasing demands of behaviour management”

“increased parent bullying, exerting ‘their rights’ and refusing to be accountable for their student’s actions”

“Staff morale is an issue ... in a climate of change teachers look to admin to blame”

“poorer quality staff appointed to the school”

“the jobs being passed down the line with no more resources ... the latest flavours of the month from central office”

“increasing demand on me to be effective in a huge range of roles, which are not specifically defined or described ... in which I do not have experience or expertise”

- The majority of deputy principals noted that all professional staff in schools (principals, deputy principals, heads of department, teachers) had experienced over time an increase in the variety and diversity in their roles .

Some deputy principals reported an increase in the hours they worked, the pressure felt in the role and the variety and diversity of activities undertaken in that role. Both systemic and local issues were seen to contribute to these increases. Other staff in the school were also seen to have experienced an increase in variety and diversity in their roles in recent years.

ii. Specific aspects of role

In an endeavour to identify what deputy principals actually did in their role, respondents were asked to indicate the broad times dedicated to a number of key aspects/categories of their role.

In a typical or REAL week they indicated as follows:

IN A TYPICAL WEEK (REAL), TIME DEDICATED TO THESE ACTIVITIES (24)	GREAT DEAL OF TIME (%)	SOME TIME (%)	'TOTAL' (great + some) (%)
• strategic leadership	14	44	59
• educational/curriculum leadership	21	53	74
• management/administration	59	33	92
• student issues	84	16	100
• parent/community issues	28	59	87
• staffing issues	51	43	94
• operational matters	58	32	90

They were then asked to indicate how they might like to spend their time in an IDEAL situation relative to the same aspects/categories.

IN AN IDEAL WEEK, TIME DEDICATED TO THESE ACTIVITIES (25)	GREAT DEAL OF TIME (%)	SOME TIME (%)	'TOTAL' (great + some) (%)
• strategic leadership	58	42	100
• educational/curriculum leadership	69	30	99
• management/administration	7	63	70
• student issues	7	48	55
• parent/community issues	12	72	84
• staffing issues	13	61	74
• operational matters	6	39	45

COMPARISON – ACTUAL AND IDEAL WEEK (24-25)	ACTUAL (%)	IDEAL (%)	DIFFERENCE ACTUAL/IDEAL %
• strategic leadership	59	100	41 *
• educational/curriculum leadership	74	99	25 *
• management/administration	92	70	22 #
• student issues	100	48	52 #
• parent/community issues	87	72	15
• staffing issues	94	61	33 #
• operational matters	90	39	51 #

Those aspects/categories marked with a * indicate where deputy principals would like to spend more time. Those marked by a # indicate where they would like to spend less time. There is clearly a lack of alignment, that is lack of *role alignment*, between what deputy principals see as the REAL and the IDEAL for their role. Factors impeding achievement of the IDEAL are summarised below,

FACTORS OR BARRIERS PREVENTING IDEAL/PREFERRED ACTIVITIES (26)	MAJOR INFLUENCE (%)
• too many demands on time to do any more	78
• lack of necessary skills	3
• responsibilities set and prioritised by principal	33
• influence of flow-on effect of changes in principals' roles & responsibilities	38

Clearly, the attitude and actions of the principal, and changes to that role are important, although not as important as a suggestion that there simply was too much to do at the moment

to change. Those in schools where they were the only deputy indicated that it was extremely difficult being the only such officer and that the situation made their roles different from what it might be in other school locations where there was more than one deputy.

Summary comments:

- The role of the deputy principal shows a lack of *role alignment* between the REAL and the IDEAL situation.
- A typical REAL week was reported as being dominated by:
 - student and staffing issues; and ,
 - operational, management and administration matters.
 Strategic leadership and educational/curriculum leadership both had less prominence.
- The role of the deputy principal in an IDEAL week would see this situation effectively reversed ie. comprising a:
 - significant focus on strategic and educational/curriculum leadership; and,
 - less focus on student, staff and operational matters.
- Deputy principals indicated that the many demands on their time and matters associated with the principal (eg expectations of the principal) were the key factors in creating barriers to their adopting their preferred roles. They did not see a lack of skills acting as a barrier.

Deputy principals reported their (REAL) role very much as focusing on operational matters, of an administrative/management nature with less focus on leadership. Their preferred role (IDEAL) would be essentially the reverse of this. That is, there is a lack of role alignment between the REAL and the IDEAL. They believed they had the skills to move to their preferred roles, although principals' roles (and hence flow-ons to deputies) and expectations were considered to act as barriers in this regard.

This set of findings is particularly important given their relationship to the reported levels of satisfaction noted earlier. That is, the closer the roles align (ie REAL and IDEAL) the higher levels of satisfaction. Further investigation of the barriers and facilitators in achieving the preferred state are indicated.

f) skills and competencies important to the roles & responsibilities of deputy principal

In considering their role, deputy principals were asked to identify the key skills and competencies required to undertake the role.

SKILLS, COMPETENCIES IMPORTANT TO ROLE AS DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (27)	VERY IMPORTANT (%)	IMPORTANT (%)	'TOTAL' (very import + important) (%)
• inspiring, visioning change for school	58	34	92
• demonstrating strong interpersonal, people skills	75	15	90
• capacity to delegate, empower others	59	35	93
• managing uncertainty for self and others	35	57	92
• managing change for self and others	52	43	95
• capacity to develop networks	46	39	85
• effective and efficient manager, administrator	58	33	91

Summary comments:

- Deputy principals identified strong interpersonal/people skills (very important option 75%) as a key skill in undertaking their role.
- The capacity to delegate/empower, being an effective and efficient manager/administrator and being able to inspire and vision change were also highly rated.
- When asked (in an open-ended item) to identify the particular skills and competencies they saw as their personal strengths for the role of deputy principal, similar capacities to those as above were noted. For example, open-ended comments about their strengths for the role identified the following:
 - Interpersonal skills (overwhelmingly the most frequently mentioned);
 - Personal attributes (contributing to their interpersonal skills);
 - Leadership capacities;
 - Management skills.

Generally, deputy principals identified both leadership and management skills and competencies as being critical to their role. Respondents indicated in general, that what the role required, and what they brought to the role, were essentially consistent.

g) professional development

Respondents were asked to identify their main professional development needs and how they might best be “delivered” for them.

Summary comments (from open-ended item):

- The TWO most frequently mentioned professional development “areas” indicated were:
 - financial management (major)
 - leadership, various – including change management, team building
 - management, various – including IT skills, legislation/policy; time management, timetabling, performance measurement/management.
- Desirable strategies for professional development identified by respondents included:
 - acting in the roles of principal;
 - work shadowing;
 - opportunities to share best practice; and,
 - mentoring.

Induction programs for deputies were identified as desirable by a small number of respondents.

h) Summary of findings and general comments

The majority of deputy principals in state secondary schools are satisfied in their roles. This is despite working long hours and seeing those hours, the pressure in the job and the variety and diversity of what they do as having increased in recent years.

Their levels of satisfaction are linked to a number of factors, two of the more important being how well the notion of team is developed in their school among administration/executive members and how closely aligned is their job in reality (REAL) with how they might desire it to be in an IDEAL situation. Future research into these is indicated. That is, there are some interesting questions to be asked about what are the circumstances, contexts, facilitators and so on that lead to some deputies achieving close alignment in their REAL and IDEAL roles, particularly with regard to strategic and educational/curriculum leadership. Further what are the circumstances, contexts, facilitators and so on that have led to the development of teams in their schools.

Clearly each of these would require examination in-depth of not only the deputy principalship, but also the principalship since it is an examination of the relationship between these two groups, as the literature suggests, that is paramount in determining how the 'team' will be conceptualised. Follow-up investigation of these matters, together with others identified in this study is probably best undertaken through in-depth case studies across a number of schools.

There are clearly elements of uniqueness to the role deputy principals in Queensland state secondary schools, as well as some broad similarities with the general findings reported in the literature (refer Appendix One). This study has contributed to an under-researched area and as such has illuminated the critical role that secondary deputy principals potentially can play in schools.

6. APPENDIX ONE– Literature review

This literature review comprises two sections. The first examines some of the broader literature for deputy or assistant principals. The second section summarises the key aspects of the role the deputy principals as formally documented by the employing authority, Education Queensland.

(a) general literature

Richard (2000) has observed from a United States school perspective that their system's equivalent to a deputy principal, that is the assistant principal, holds perhaps the toughest job in American education. He notes it is often a thankless position that places heavy demands on those who take it, while rewarding them with only a few thousand dollars more a year - or even less - than the highest-paid teachers. This observation raises questions then as to what is it that is unique about such positions in schools, what challenges do deputy principals face, and what specifically are those holding such positions charged with undertaking in terms of their roles. Unfortunately, little research has been undertaken either in Australia or elsewhere to examine such questions in any depth. This is despite the fact that considerable research has been conducted into the principalship over the past decades (Ribbins, 1997) or the acknowledgment that deputy principals hold a key leadership and administrative position in schools (Webb & Vulliamy, 1995).

The significance of the fact that the role has been under-researched is exacerbated by recent devolution and school-based management developments both in Queensland and elsewhere that have resulted in enhanced responsibilities and accountabilities for all school personnel, particularly those holding leadership or administrative positions. Not only is the general area of the deputy principalship under-researched, but what literature is available is typically not recent, not focussed on secondary school principals and not grounded in Queensland experiences.

Further, a review of the available literature also identifies only a partial representation of that role. For example, the identified role of the secondary deputy principal, also referred to as the assistant principal in the United States of America or deputy headship in the United Kingdom, is described in terms of traditional and restricted sets of administrative, managerial and custodial responsibilities. Further, most research into the field has done little to progress an alternative future focussed, strategic and collaborative leadership view of the role needed to meet the increasing complexity of schools in the twenty-first century. This omission is highlighted when one considers the "expected" roles a deputy principal is expected to play, at least as stated in the formal position descriptions developed by major employing authorities (see later discussion).

Panyako and Rorie (1987, p.6) endeavoured to explain this partial representation some years ago now by asserting that historically the assistant principal's role has been the most overlooked in terms of significance and prestige and that their recognition and authority are invisible (see also Michel, 1996). Further, Golanda (1991, p.266) suggested that the position of assistant principal 'emerged without a proper philosophical basis, and its development as a profession has continued to be more a matter of expedience than an end product of careful planning' (see also Harvey, 1994).

Within the Australian educational context, Harvey (1994, p.7) argued that the position and role of deputy principal has been a wasted educational resource in education systems. He portrays a rather gloomy picture of their traditional role, seeing it centring:

on a mosaic of administrative routines which contribute to the maintenance of organisational stability in the school. The work of the deputy principals is largely defined by the needs of other school participants. This includes supporting the principal and the teachers, as well as providing for the welfare and maintaining the standard of behaviour of students. Deputy principals have not been given responsibility for the curriculum and for leadership in the teaching-learning process. Traditionally they have had little autonomy in the responsibilities they perform and have not been the initiators of school level change. They lack opportunities for self-expression and their contribution to maintaining the administrative routines of the school has become taken for granted.

Koru (1993, p.70) agreed with Harvey (1994) and saw the role as a somewhat “limited” one because it ‘centres on the routine clerical tasks, custodial duties, and discipline. Assistant principals are constantly in a reactive mode, juggling the tasks that need to be done. Their activities are characterized by brevity, variety and fragmentation’. He contended that these tasks and mode of operation maintained the status quo and stability within the organisation and school culture (p. 67). Overall, the result according to Koru limits the training for the deputy principal wishing to move on to the principalship (p. 71), a role that embraces visioning, knowledge of curriculum and instruction, and the power to move others to commit to innovative solutions. In such a situation, the deputy principalship has not developed as a clear stepping stone or career path stage to the principalship. Hartzell (1993a, p.713) agreed, noting concerns regarding the preoccupation of deputy principals with the maintenance and effectiveness of present operations in that they have fewer opportunities to practice educational leadership, a key role of the principal. And according to Golanda (1991, p.273) the underlying skills which ‘if not utilized, are more likely to be lost’.

Despite this circumstance of limited opportunity, Harvey (1994) has reported evidence to suggest that deputy principals themselves are demanding a greater involvement in instructional leadership and management of school level change (p.16). Research from the United States, albeit 17 years old now, reported that assistant principals desired a ‘greater sense of shared responsibility with the Principal in regard to all administrative functions’ (Gorton & Kattman, 1985, p.39). Significantly, when the anticipated or the ideal does not meet the reality or actuality, higher levels of *alienation* compared with principals result (Hartzell (1993a, p.717).

Norton and Kriekard’s (1987) study of 263 secondary assistant principals across 6 states within the United States of America validated the “real” (those actually performed) and the “ideal” (those that should be performed) competencies performed by secondary assistant principals. The results indicated that ‘assistant secondary school principals viewed every competency as below the level that ideally would make the position more effective’ (p.29). Norton and Kriekard (1987, p.29) saw implications of this lack of congruence for training and in-service development, in reviewing the job description, in selecting and evaluating performance, and for further study. Other negative consequences of differing expectations included the deputy principal’s departure from the system, displaying characteristics of disloyalty and/or becoming a saboteur (Golanda, 1991).

Golanda (1991) considered the assistant principal role in terms of the relationship between the assistant principal and the principal (see also Michel, 1996; Ogilvie, 1977; Panyako and Rorie, 1987). He argued that the essentially supportive and complimentary role of the assistant principal to the principal in conjunction with the already traditionally assigned and delegated responsibilities determined by the principal insufficiently prepared and equipped the assistant principal for the role of principalship. Harvey (1994) identified the origins of the features of the relationship between the principal and deputy principal as including: the paternalistic nature of principal authority, the principal’s determination of the delegated responsibilities, the broad range of disparate tasks for the deputy principal, and the list of

responsibilities drawn from the same pool as the principals. He suggested that for the deputy principal the result was ‘an ad hoc set of tasks which are not grounded in a clear conceptualisation of the purpose of the role’ (p.16).

Even when one considers somewhat dated views of the role of the deputy principal there are strong suggestions that the role should be both broad and complex, embracing ‘all aspects of school management, ranging from financial accounting, school law, and educational and psychological measurement, to staff supervision and evaluation, and effective communication with students, parents and general public’...must also ‘deal with matters relating to curriculum design and implementation, vocational guidance, and assessment of the unique educational needs of students’ (Panyako & Rorie, 1987, p.7). Indeed, the 1991 NASSP statement on the role of the assistant principal described roles that were *assigned* through job descriptions, contracts, organizational structure, directions from superiors, mentors, and personnel evaluations, *expected* through tradition, training programs, media, interactions with constituents (faculty, staff, colleagues, parents and students) and *assumed* which the assistant principal chooses to complement and expand upon the assigned and expected role and ones that provides opportunity for more active leadership roles (p.1). It could be argued that the former two categories can be ill defined, restrictive and merely perpetuate a dissonance between the role of the principal and assistant principal. This situation may also result in a lack of alignment among the assigned, expected and assumed roles that might be developed and based on a strategic and collaborative view of leadership.

The dissonance may be further compounded by the existing leadership paradigm and bureaucratic structure within which the principal and deputy principal operate. For example, Hartzell (1993b, p.16) asserted that the ‘environments are different because principals and assistant principals exist at different levels of the hierarchy, the duties are different, and subordinates perceive principals and assistant principals differently’. For example, the principal may be seen to be operating at higher level constructs such that they communicate a compelling vision, display conceptual talents, organise and coordinate between the various departments, engage in complex decision making, and are involved in a wider spectrum of activities. On the other hand, the deputy principal may be seen to be operating at a lower level within the hierarchy and in an environment where the timelines are shorter, work is internal, and the responsibility is to implement rather than construct vision, objectives and purposes of the organisation. In short, in this conception, the principal is predominantly a leader, the deputy principal predominantly a manager.

It could be argued that the terms ‘assistant’ and ‘deputy’ imply a subordinate, relational and dependent role to another individual, and may not fully acknowledge the qualifications, expertise and experience held by those in such positions. This sense of being under-valued is noted by Panyako and Rorie (1987, p.7) who believed the assistant principal ‘brings just as much educational, academic, and professional experience in school administration to the job as the principal, and in some cases, a higher level of academic training and a respectable number of years of on-line job experience’. Michel (1996, p.8) posits an alternative view suggesting that most educators think assistant principals *should* be subordinate to principals because of less experience and less training. This may lead to a lack of positive identity for those in such positions, For example, Harvey’s (1994, p.17) earlier research on primary deputy principals revealed a lack of positive identity contributed to by unrealistic expectations of being a member of the team, the effect of which is compounded by a lack of control over work duties, insufficient recognition, limited resources and opportunities and unfulfilled career expectations.

Almost 20 years ago, Bates and Shank (1983) argued that the symbolism of changing the title ‘assistant’ to ‘associate’ could accompany a concomitant change in role and relationship whereby an ‘associate principal’s’ role is a synergistic one which shares responsibility with the principal, and participates in all major decisions. They asserted such a relationship could

be advantageous in enhancing the associate's self-esteem and image with staff and parents, and in increasing and strengthening leadership and management skills. Panyako and Rorie (1987) argued that such moves, together with strategies to relieve the deputy principal of some of the more clerical, administrative and custodial duties that could aptly be taken over by other personnel within the school could lead to an enhanced status of the deputy principal role.

“Old” notions of structured hierarchies in the administrative team in schools are less easy to sustain as a result of recent devolution and school-based management changes as noted earlier. For example, Harvey has suggested that in a context of moves towards self-managing schools, the resulting increased complexity of schools as organisations ‘requires the establishment of an administrative team (management team, leadership team or executive team) for the effective management of all aspects of school operations’ (p.16) with an emphasis on new professional relationships and responsibilities and a greater sense of shared decision making. Such trends offer the potential to redefine the role both at the institutional and at the school level and represent a marked shift from earlier views of the role as discussed above. Harvey (p.18-20) suggested that the self-managing schools changes offered new opportunities for deputy principals and principals to define and redefine their roles. This view is consistent with the 1991 NASSP monograph delineating the role of the deputy principal that suggested that the assistant principal should participate, be proactive and have authority in explicitly defining their role (p.2-3). The suggestion here, then, is that devolution/school-based management changes may be the catalyst to change the roles of deputy principals from a rather conservative management focus to one embracing greater leadership responsibilities.

Preparing (training, selection, professional development) for the deputy principalship would also need to change in light of such changes. This would need a shift in thinking, as Golanda (1991) has observed, from the ‘mistaken notion that mere ‘experience’ within the atmosphere of a school and occasional observation of leadership behaviour, regardless of its relative strengths or weaknesses, might well result over time in the acquisition of the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes required for such a leadership position. He argued this ‘osmosis’ theory appears to have been practiced far too long in education, and with poor results’ (p.274).

Mentoring, and similar current professional development strategies, may provide a valuable option for deputy principals wishing to move into the role of principal. For example, Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991, p.68-74) have argued that mentoring can enable the principal to facilitate maturation and professional development of the deputy principal. Well planned and structured approaches to such strategies as mentoring might well address the criticisms raised by writers such as Golanda (1991, p.268) who warned that it is misguided to assume that principals ‘will skilfully and artfully without supervision or motivation, serve as a model, monitor, and mentor’. Any such strategies, however, would need to be grounded in the expectation that the principal was secure and confident (Bates & Shank, 1983, p.114), and willing to delegate and share in the decision-making (see also Panyako and Rorie, 1987).

If we take a future-oriented view of the role of the deputy principal, Kaplan and Owings (1999) argues that the growing workload of public secondary school principals is becoming increasingly unmanageable and that the principal needs to share the role of instructional leader (ie curriculum leadership) with assistant principals if school reform changes are to be achieved. To this end, he argued that one of the greatest challenges was for principals to share power and to empower.

Harvey (1994, p.21) attempted to reconceptualise the emergent role of the deputy principal in response to the changes occurring in schools. Using a more holistic framework to reframe the role, he saw it involving:

- prioritising competing demands and a coherence of purpose;
- redefining the role to encourage professional growth;
- sharing responsibilities for significant aspects of school operations;
- involvement in educational and curriculum leadership and management;
- accepting responsibility for change;
- adopting a critical perspective to scrutinizing new guidelines and policies;
- being involved in organisational and instructional effectiveness; and,
- selecting the concept and paradigm of leadership to base practice.

Harvey's reconceptualising is powerful as it has the capacity to mirror the emerging role and position descriptions as delineated for deputy principals in the late 1990s (see following discussion). It also has the potential to counter the deficiencies of the traditional and historical views of the role, reframe the relationship between the deputy principal and other significant stakeholders within the school and potentially enhances their professional contribution to school effectiveness. It represents a conceptualisation of the deputy principal embracing both leadership and management roles. It is similar to other models now emerging in the literature, such as that proposed by Kaplan and Owings (1997) who see a need to reduce the crisis oriented reactive nature of the assistant principal's daily routine.

This section of the literature review provides some general suggestions for examination in this Queensland study. However, the rather diverse contexts (sector, country) within which the available research has been conducted does limit specific input. Much of literature is also quite old and does not, therefore, reflect the current operational environments of schools, characterised by rapid change and uncertainty. It is also to be noted that really apart from Harvey's work, no Australian research, and certainly no Queensland research, has attempted to look at similar issues as those of interest here.

Despite these limitations, some general themes in summary derived from the literature review include:

- in general, there is limited research into the deputy principalship locally and otherwise – there is none undertaken recently in Queensland for state secondary deputies;
- considerable variability is reported in the roles of deputy principals (or assistant principals or deputy heads) in different education systems and across different time periods;
- the role of the deputy principal has become more complex and varied over time;
- principals play an important role in determining the particular activities a deputy principal might undertake;
- there are questions as to how best to prepare deputy principals for the principalship;
- of late, there has been a call for the role to involve a greater leadership focus, with less emphasis on management – the management focus has predominated despite some arguments for change quite some years ago;
- there is a general move towards a more collegiate leadership model for principals and deputy principals
- the last two points reflect a general call for a reconceptualisation of the role, particularly in response to recent changes impacting on schools such as devolution and school-based management.

b) formal statement of position

Education Queensland (2001a) states explicitly in the position description for deputy principals that their role focuses on aspects of both educational leadership and management. The position description is consistent with the framework as proposed by Harvey (as above). In particular, the position description identifies the following roles:

- participate in the articulation of a vision for learning
- promoting a supportive learning culture that responds to the needs of the community
- interacting with parents, community and business
- managing the human, financial, facilities and curriculum resources of the school.

When contrasted with the position description for a principal in the same system (Education Queensland, 2001b), the roles are very similar. Differences are evident in that the emphasis on resources is less for principals in a direct sense and that principals are expected to take a more significant *leadership* position in the other aspects of the role.

The expectation for deputy principals is clearly for the role to comprise aspects of both leadership and management. These aspects are detailed in terms of the six key roles articulated in the “Standards Framework for Leaders” (Education Queensland, 1997), viz.

- leadership in education
- management
- people and partnerships
- change
- outcomes, and
- accountability.

What is worth reflecting on in reviewing such position descriptions and statement of roles are Webb and Valliamy’s (1995) comments that formal job descriptions tend to reflect what looks ‘feasible on paper’ rather than what deputy principals actually do. Despite the, the position description for deputy principals is generally consistent with the ‘recommendations’ for changes to the role as identified in the first section of this literature review. That is, the role has shifted into one with responsibilities different from earlier times and now is expected to encompass both leadership and management responsibilities.

This study, then, endeavours to fill a void in the research into the deputy principalship in secondary schools in Queensland. In particular, it focuses on role and workload issues for deputy principals.

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