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between governance, decision-making,
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Behnaz Mohajeran
University of Wollongong

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An Investigation of the Relationship
between Governance, Decision-Making,
and School Effectiveness: A Case Study of
Four High Schools.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree

Doctor of Philosophy

From

University of Wollongong

By

Behnaz Mohajeran

Bachelor of Educational Management and Planning, Master of Educational
Management

Faculty of Education

2006

Thesis Certification

CERTIFICATION

I, Behnaz Mohajeran, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

(Signature)

Behnaz Mohajeran

31 August 2006

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ABSTRACT

The Purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between governance, decision-making, and particular indicators of school effectiveness: parental involvement, professional development of teachers, planning and budgeting, facilities and resources and student outcomes. The study focused on the Principal, teachers, parents, and students of four high schools in the Wollongong area of NSW. The schools represented different governance arrangements: one government; one independent Catholic; one independent Christian parent-controlled; one Catholic systemic. Each school represented a case study in which was applied mixed-method research utilising quantitative and qualitative approaches including questionnaire, semi-structured interview and document review.

The results indicate similar approaches to and constraints on governance/decision-making across the four schools. An apparent relationship between type of governance and school effectiveness was not established. Different governance structures were not shown to have major impact on different school effectiveness indicators.

However, a clear finding was that the Principal is central to the management and direction of decision-making in the school more so than any factors or differences there may be in other aspects of governance. It is not just the structural and hierarchical aspects of the Principal's role that is important, but how he or she directs and manages school governance.

The centrality of the Principals in these schools, the way they perceived and enacted their roles both generally and in relation to the roles of other stakeholders, and their participation in school decision-making, were thus critical in the governance of their schools.

The findings of this study, as of other studies, were inconclusive on relationships between other structural governance factors and school effectiveness indicators, and suggest that the Principal's impact on such indicators as student outcomes may be significant but indirect. The study findings do, however support other findings on the importance of the Principal's role – their perception of it and the roles of others related

to it, their personal and professional capabilities, and the extent to which they lead and involve others collaboratively in school governance and decision-making.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades, there has been considerable concern with school accountability and effectiveness and student performance in all types of schools. An important issue is whether structural arrangements and organisational changes in the school influence student outcomes and school effectiveness.

This chapter outlines the purpose and context of this study, the background to the investigation, the research questions that guided the inquiry, methodology, limitations, the significance of the study, relevant literature, the theoretical and conceptual framework, overview of the remaining chapters, and definitions of key terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

Education in Australia is constitutionally a state and territory responsibility with the Commonwealth (national/federal) government providing some general and special-purpose grants. Indeed, although education is largely funded by the Commonwealth government, it is administered by state and territory governments and each state has a different governance arrangement for the management of government schools.

In terms of school type, Australian schools are divided into government and non-government sectors. Non-government schools include independent primary and secondary schools, Catholic parish primary and secondary schools, and primary and secondary schools with other religious affiliations or associated with particular philosophies. All non-government schools are partially government funded and the current policies of Commonwealth and state governments appear to support the increased privatisation of education.

Internationally, particularly in many western countries, there has been great concentration of research on school effectiveness and what makes an effective school and on different types of school structures and their possible influence on student outcomes, particularly academic achievement.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between governance, decision-making, and school effectiveness. Selected indicators of school effectiveness were:

- Parental involvement
- Planning and budgeting
- Professional development of teachers
- School facilities and resources
- Student outcomes.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In many countries there is widespread concern as to the best governance arrangements for increasing school effectiveness, and many schools are questioning traditional structures.

Answers to the research questions potentially provide valuable information for educational administrators at both the systemic and school levels about the importance of governance and decision-making in school effectiveness. Although this research was conducted through case study and generalizations would have to be made very cautiously, the outcomes are likely to benefit educational policy makers, educational administrators, school principals and parents by enhancing their understanding of how and the extent to which school governance arrangements, particularly decision-making, could impact on school effectiveness.

1.5 Research Questions

Main Research Question:

1. What is the impact (if any) of the school governance, particularly decision-making processes, on selected aspects of school effectiveness?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the governance (decision-making) arrangement for the school?

2. What is the impact of that governance (decision-making) arrangement on: parental involvement; planning and budgeting; professional development of teachers; resources and facilities; and student outcomes?

1.6 Methodology

This research was based on case studies of four contrasting New South Wales high schools (see Chapter Three) and employed mixed methods, because the researcher wanted to generate data rich in detail and embedded in context. The mixed method researcher employs multiple data-gathering techniques to identify what actually happens in the natural setting; such techniques were utilized in this research at different stages of the research process. Questionnaires and interviews with principals, teachers, parents, and students were the primary sources of data. In addition, supplementary data were collected through reviews of key school documents. Consistency of findings was obtained through use of different instruments and triangulation and crosschecking techniques to control, or at least assess, some of the influences of various factors.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

While the case study approach offers an opportunity to explore a situation in depth, a number of limitations are associated with the method, particularly the difficulty of generalising from the findings and the possible influence of the researcher's own subjectivity. As a result, any generalization of the findings has to be done cautiously. A case study such as this one investigates a complex situation that is bounded in terms of place, time and participants. Although some studies claim to focus on typical cases, drawing general conclusions from a specific situation with all of its attendant variables and interactions is hazardous (Borg & Gall, 1989). This study is limited to just four schools with different governance arrangements to enable the researcher to obtain rich qualitative data.

Another limitation of the study is that data were gathered from a small number of participants who volunteered to be involved in the process. Participants in the study were limited to principals, teachers, students, and parents in four different schools.

The variable relating to possible differences in student intake could not be controlled. However, the schools were in a similar region and socio-economic area.

In order to contain the study, it was not possible to include all aspects of governance or school effectiveness such as authority, accountability, school climate, communication, quality educational programs and teachers' sense of community.

1.8 Review of Literature

The literature review focused on those studies investigating different forms of school governance; relationships between governance and school effectiveness; relationships between leadership and school effectiveness; and stakeholder involvement in school activities and decision-making. Because of its relevance to the research questions, attention has been given to the literature on distributed leadership, student achievement, professional development of teachers, and school culture and context.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on selected theories on governance in educational organizations: centralization and decentralization theories; school effectiveness and school-based management theories; stakeholder involvement in decision-making; models of professional development; parental involvement approaches; and research on relationships of school facilities provisions and student outcomes (see Figure 2.2 page 55).

1.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed ethical considerations regarding privacy, anonymity, sensitivity, confidentiality, betrayal and deception and proper measures were taken to implement them. Because human participants were involved in the study, the following specific measures were taken.

1. Approval was obtained from the NSW Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office, and principals of independent schools.
2. Principals, parents, and teachers of the schools were informed of the purpose, confidentiality and processes of the research and their consent was obtained.
3. Students were informed of the purpose, confidentially and process of the research and written consent was obtained from them and their parents.

4. The recorded data excluded any information associated with personal identification.
5. The recorded interviews and questionnaires were kept in the University of Wollongong by the primary supervisor.
6. Data analysis and reporting did not involve or provide any identifiably personal information of the participants.

1.11 Definitions of Key Terms

Accountability: A responsibility to account for outcomes and explain actions undertaken.

Budgeting: A process of financial planning.

Centralization: Involves the concentration of functions in central-level units of administration.

Decentralization: Involves the devolution of functions from central to lower level units of administration, or as Hanson (1998, p. 112) states, "Decentralization is defined as the transfer of decision-making authority, responsibility, and tasks from higher to lower organizational levels or between organizations."

Governance: Refers to the various authority structures, decision-making processes and lines of accountability and responsibility that pertain to any organization. For the purpose of this study the focus is more specifically on school decision-making processes.

Government school: A school established by the State government, which is largely funded and administered by the government through the state Department of Education and Training.

High school: The formal educational system that includes education for students of Years 7-12 (usually 12 years old to 18 years old) in different forms of NSW government and non-government schools.

Non-government school: A school not established by the government but by another organization such as a religious organization or a group of parents. Whilst there might be some accountability and administrative arrangements that relate to government, most governance arrangements are exercised by the establishing body. The government does not fund such schools to the same extent as government schools. Such schools can be part of a system or be independent.

NSW Board of Studies: "The Board of Studies NSW was established in 1990 to serve government and non-government schools in the development of school education for Years K-12. It provides educational leadership by developing quality curriculum and awarding secondary school credentials, the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate" (Board of Studies NSW, 2002).

Parental involvement: Relates to the extent that parents participate formally and informally in school activities and their children's education (especially school decision-making).

Planning: A process by which priorities are set for the future, schemes for desired conditions, and projected student outcomes, both short-term and long-term, in measurable terms.

Professional development: Any activity designed to contribute to teachers' professional growth and improved instruction. "Professional development is usually taken as the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout the teacher's career from pre-service education to retirement" (Fullan, 1991, p. 325).

Resources: Refers to financial aspects including school budget, and physical resources including property.

School effectiveness: The extent to which a school achieves its goals in terms of student outcomes including student academic achievement, attendance, and retention; parental involvement; professional development; planning and budgeting; and resources and facilities.

Student outcomes: Includes examination results and other indicators such as student attendance and retention rates.

1.12 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is organised in six chapters:

Chapter One establishes the general aims of the study and describes the context in which the study took place. This chapter includes an introduction, background of the study, purpose of the research, significance of the study, research questions, methodology, limitations of the study, theoretical framework, ethical considerations, definitions of key terms, and outline of the study.

Chapter Two reviews literature regarding governance arrangements and school effectiveness. This chapter is organised in five major sections and each section is divided into sub-sections on particular aspects of the relationship between school governance and school effectiveness and the influential factors in this relationship.

Chapter Three explains and justifies the mixed-method approach used in the study and outlines how the study was designed and implemented. It describes the participants, the data collection methods, and the data analysis procedures used to answer the research questions.

Chapter Four presents the results and analysis of data and findings relating to the research questions. This chapter has been divided into seven sections, with each section representing the major findings from one school.

Chapter Five discusses the data in response to and reflection on the research questions of the study in light of the existing research and related literature. This chapter also looks at themes and issues emerging from the findings. The discussion is organised under sub-headings related to the sub-questions, above.

Chapter Six examines the conclusions drawn from the findings of this study. Implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are also outlined.

The following chapter provides the conceptual framework and research context of this study through an examination of current literature related to the purpose of this inquiry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This study is an investigation of the relationship between governance, decision-making, and school effectiveness. Because of the influence of different forms of school governance and the roles of relevant stakeholders, this chapter reviews literature related to school governance, leadership, stakeholder involvement, related trends and issues and their relevance for school effectiveness. The chapter is divided into five sections: Section one reviews studies of different forms of school governance; section two reviews studies of governance and school effectiveness; section three reviews studies of leadership and school effectiveness; and section four reviews studies of stakeholder involvement. Section five is a summary of these reviews and how these governance imperatives are connected and how they possibly impact on student outcomes.

2.2 Governance

2.2.1 Trends in government schools

During the last 10 to 15 years educational systems around the world have encountered great challenge and change in relation to reforms in public education intended to develop more effective school systems and raise levels of student achievement (Hopkins & Levin, 2000). Most countries agree that schools need to be restructured in order to cope with rapid and extensive change in society. However, there is no universal agreement as to how this restructuring should take place. Some believe in increased autonomy for schools, others argue for increased testing and standardization of curricula, and still others claim that schools should be made more accountable for their outcomes (Sackney & Dibski, 1994).

The 1990s saw considerable structural reform in school education in many western countries, marked by trends towards school-based management (Blackmore, 2004). Power (1997) argues that in many cases these reforms have been linked to other policy initiatives that seek to introduce a market element into the provision of education services. In Europe there have been major changes in legislative frameworks for the

provision of public education: in England (1988), France (1983 and 1989), Italy (1997), Spain (1990 and 1995) and Sweden (1985, 1988 and 1991). Developments towards school-based management have also occurred in North America and elsewhere (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000).

There have, however, been concerns over the success of school-based management. While there are significant variations in the degrees of school-level authority, countries such as America, Australia, and Sweden all vest the ultimate constitutional authority for education decision-making at the state level, in Canada, the provincial level, and in England and New Zealand at the central level. There are, however, major differences in the ways in which these central governments have implemented educational governance reforms (Williams, 2003). For example, in August 1988 the New Zealand Government published a policy document on education administration, *Tomorrow's Schools*, according to which the responsibility for budget allocation, staff employment, and educational outcomes was transferred from central and regional government agencies to individual schools (Angus, 1995).

In Australia, while all states and territories are engaged in decentralization in public education, the speed of change, the aspects of management chosen for decentralization, and the change processes utilized, have varied markedly from system to system (Caldwell, 2004; Sharpe, 1996). Additionally, Bottani (2000) raises an important point that when there is an increase in decentralization of schools in some management areas, it has been accompanied by an increase in control by the centre in areas such as curriculum. However, the common feature wherever school-based management has been implemented is that there has been an increase in authority and responsibility at the school level, but within a centrally determined framework that ensures that a sense of system is retained (Caldwell, 2004).

The Canadian experience is more varied than that in other countries. Historically, the Canadian model has given more authority to the school level for the allocation of government grants, and for the collection and allocation of local revenue, based on the property tax, to elected local school boards. In recent years, Canadian provinces have generally moved to increasingly centralize control over educational finance at the provincial level because of general financial pressures (Williams, 2003).

Within the Swedish education system the trend has been to decentralize administration but to a lesser degree than in Australia and New Zealand. There is no longer in Sweden a regional administrative level between the state and municipalities. Sweden is the most advanced in efforts to identify the state's role as one of setting clear performance standards and measuring performance on a regular, publicly visible basis (Williams, 2003). It is apparent that different countries vary in their responses to the movement for decentralized decision-making according to their particular demands and conditions, though the movement itself is widespread.

In terms of curriculum, England and Wales, Sweden and New Zealand have national systems of education, while individual states have primary responsibility for education in Australia and USA, and provincial governments in Canada are increasing central control over curriculum and mandate central evaluation processes (Sharpe, 1996; Williams, 2003; Williams, Harold, Robertson, & Southworth, 1997; Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). The point is that whether at national level or state level or province level, the trend is still towards centralized curriculum. New South Wales schools operate within a common curriculum framework developed by the Board of Studies and applying to both public and non-government sectors. The Australian government prefers a centralized curriculum and attempts to exert stronger influence, because it provides extensive funding. An example of this is in literacy education which was recently reviewed by the Commonwealth (see NSW Public Education Council, 2005).

In the United States each state is educationally autonomous and most of the 15,000 U.S. school districts design their own curricula and standards within broad guidelines issued by each of the fifty states (Peak, 1996; Schoenfeld, 2004). It is claimed that three-quarters of America's school districts have introduced school self-management (Whitty et al., 1998). In 1994, the Improving America's Schools Act was passed by the Clinton Administration and Congress and thus began the transformation of the role of the Federal government in education. Two further acts have followed: the Goals 2000 Educate America Act and the Educational Excellence for All Children Act of 1999 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). In 2001, President Bush in the United States established the No Child Left Behind Act, which considerably enhances the testing obligations of states and sets demanding accountability standards for schools, districts, and states (Linn, Baker, & Betebenner, 2002). Indeed, this act relies on assessment and

accountability requirements as a major mechanism for bringing about desired improvements in student achievement.

Australia has a variety of arrangements that define who makes decisions concerning the allocation of government grants to schools. In some aspects, the movement towards school-based management has been further and faster in Australia than in most other countries. Major changes in the focus of decentralization in Australian government schools have been summarized by Ainley and McKenzie. In the 1960s, pressure for structural changes and changes in attitudes and values supported greater teacher and student involvement in decision-making. In the 1970s, these trends continued with an additional pressure to update existing curricula and to develop new curriculum areas, and an interest in compensating for educational disadvantage and the benefits of local response in addressing individual learning needs. The 1980s were a time of accountability and to some extent movement of the responsibility for curriculum development back from individual schools and teachers to central authorities. The 1990s saw some interesting developments such as decentralizing of specific responsibilities in government school systems. In Victoria for example, these have been delegated to school councils and principals (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000).

Victoria is one of the Australian states that have implemented school-based management in the public school sector. Reform in Victoria occurred at multiple levels such as school governance, creation of quasi-markets, industrial relations, the Principal's role, and teachers' careers (Blackmore, 2004). The Education Act, 1958, made provision for school committees which function in an advisory capacity. Schools have councils as obligatory and statutory bodies with inclusion of all relevant stakeholders including the representatives of parents, teachers, students, and the local community with the Principal as an *ex officio* member (Gamage, Sipple, & Partridge, 1996). About 90 percent of the state's budget for public education has been decentralized to schools for local decision-making within a curriculum and standards framework in eight key learning areas. Schools have the capacity to select their own staff who remain employed by the central authority (Caldwell, 1998).

NSW public education implemented its first decentralization programme with the publication of the School Renewal (Scott, 1989). According to the Vinson Report (2002; see also Whitty et al., 1998), public education in New South Wales has changed

significantly during the last fifteen years. Significant structural changes have included rezoning; an increase in the number of selective schools, the creation of a number of senior and multi-campus colleges, and changes to the funding and approval processes for non-government schools. The purpose of many of these changes is to increase parental choice in schooling. The changes have also helped to transform public education into a marketplace.

Principals in NSW did not have formal involvement in teacher hiring before the second term of 2005; teachers had previously been assigned to schools by a centralized personnel unit. However, in 2005, a new agreement between the NSW government and the NSW Teachers Federation reduced centralized staffing and principals became able to choose either to simply accept the education department's selection or to proceed to interview the next five candidates on the list, employing the teacher they thought most appropriate. They also now have additional authority to appoint casual staff in permanent teacher positions (Zimmer, 2005).

2.2.2 Trends in non-government schools

Currently, over 30 percent of students in NSW are enrolled in non-government schools which provide a model of how decentralized schooling may work. The Australian non-government school sector is one of the largest, relatively, among western countries. Seventy per cent of these schools are Catholic schools (Whitty et al., 1998). However, substantial elements of education in non-government schools in Australia are highly centralized and these schools are under pressure to be more accountable to government (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000).

2.2.3 Different governance

Governance refers to the control and management structure of schools, and can have different forms. Finn (1996, p. 3) points out, "Schools can and should be different from one another rather than identical, and it is reasonable for people to select the school they want, just as they select their home, their health-care provider, their college, their church, their clothes, and their dinner." Traditional forms of school management include a kind of external control management from the central office of the school system. Under this type of governance, school members do not have much autonomy and the

school management tasks are carried out under the direction of the external central authority. These tasks often are not consistent with school characteristics and needs (Cheng, 1996). However, new forms of school governance are increasingly evident in western countries.

In 1991, charter schools as a new governance structure entered education in the United States. According to Finn Jr, Manno, and Vanourek (2001):

A charter school is an independent public school of choice, freed from rules but accountable for results. Charter schools have some similarities and differences with traditional public schools and private schools. A charter operator may be a group of parents, a team of teachers, an existing community organization such as hospital, Boys and Girls Club, university or day-care centre, even a private firm. (p. 15)

Charter schools utilize many approaches to leadership and governance. Some contract out their management to "non profit" or "for profit" groups totally or partially, some are directed by teachers and have no conventional principal, some have strong boards for decision-making, and others have charismatic principals. Rarely are there traditional principal/assistant principal roles (Manno, Finn Jr, Bierlein, & Vanourek, 1998). Bulkley (2002, p. 7) asserts that the movement towards charter schools, "provides an ideal alternative for education management companies to gain contracts to operate publicly funded schools in a context where the company has greater autonomy than in the district-run sector." Indeed, this movement is about governance and providing an alternative to the traditional district-run school (Arsen, Plank, & Sykes, 1999). Charter schools not only have accountability to the state, they are also accountable to the market (Bulkley, 2002).

Other types of school governance are self-governance and self-management. While some researchers do not differentiate between these two types of governance, others do. For example, there is significant variety in the forms of self-governing schools in different countries but they share the assumption that greater autonomy will lead to improved educational outcomes (Bush & Gamage, 2001). On the other hand, Morgan (2004) sees self-governing schools as the 'domain' of the independent school sector and self-managing schools as 'spawn' from a centralist management structure and generally

in the domain of the government school sector. Caldwell (1994) explains these differences as:

A self-governing school involves a degree of independence that is not provided in a centrally determined framework. A self-managing school exists in a system to which there has been decentralized a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions about the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities – an important caveat to the doctrine being that government clearly reserves the right to intervene where necessary to ensure the appropriate levels of outcomes for all students. (cited in the Department of Education and Employment and Training, 2001, p. 1)

Caldwell (2004) defines a self-managing school as:

School-based management is the systematic decentralization to the school-level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards, and accountability. (p. 11)

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) consider non-systemic independent schools as self-governing schools and decentralized public schools as self-managing schools.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993, p. 45) note that some schools are managed by a management team that includes, "A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." Team management is in fact an approach which is used in many decentralized schools in order to make schools collaborative and responsive (Walker, 1994) and scholars (Cardno, 2002; Hall & Wallance, 1996; O'Neill, 1997) assume that decentralized schools will rely greatly on the ability of teams to contribute to effective school management. Ridden (1992) claims that the future of leadership in Australian schools is team management. Caldwell (1993) emphasizes:

In exercising authority, the Principal should be guided by the unambiguous findings of research on leadership and management in virtually every setting in the public and private sector, namely, there should be appropriate consultation

with stakeholders, and much planning should be carried out in teams, at the management level and among staff in their areas of interest and expertise. (p. 40)

The role of the Principal in team management changes from manager to facilitator and the Principal is at the centre rather than at the top of this type of structure (Walker, 1994).

One classification scheme (Walberg, Paik, Komukai, & Freeman, 2000) distinguishes three different forms of school governance based on the extent of decision-making authority at various levels in education: centralization, decentralization, and semi-centralization. In a centralized school, the district and central office have the main decision-making roles and the schools only implement decisions that are made at higher levels. They may have some limited decision-making authority in relatively insignificant areas. In decentralized schools however, authority for decision-making in most areas has been delegated to the school level. Under a decentralized education system, authority for decision-making transfers to the school level and the school is governed by a principal or school council or school board. Through the school board or council all the stakeholders are represented.

Semi-centralized school governance is situated between the centralized and decentralized forms as some authority for important decisions is delegated to the school level while other authorities are retained at levels beyond the school. Winkler and Gershberg (2000) assert that there is no completely decentralized or completely centralized educational system. Some educational functions are decentralized even within centralized systems, and others are centralized even within decentralized systems. Weick (1976) described educational organizations as "loosely coupled systems" which were not uniformly controlled, with some things loosely controlled, and other things tightly controlled, and that over time that balance can be changed.

Bullock and Thomas (1997) argue:

We reject the view that either centralization or decentralization is good in itself...the case for or against decentralization... is subject to the larger test of how they contribute to achieving the purposes of education and individual, social, and economic principles subsumed within them. (p. 31)

As a result, there is not one best form of school governance and success of a particular form of governance depends on the situation and factors specific to it.

Researchers (Murphy & Beck, 1995; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992) identify three organizational reforms for decentralized school governance, also called school-based management. These are administrative control, professional control, and community control models. In the administrative control model, authority transfers to principals. In the professional control model teachers in the school council are in the majority. In the community control model, parents or community members hold the balance of power. Some scholars (Fullan & Watson; 2000; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998a) add a fourth type of school-based management which they call "balanced control", with equal parent and professional membership of the school council. Leithwood and Menzies (1998a) examined 83 empirical studies of school-based management. Of these, 28 were classified as administrative, 37 as professional, 33 as community, and two as balanced. Louis and Marks (1998) conclude:

Our findings suggest that the organization of teachers' work, in ways that promote professional community, has a positive relationship with the organization of classrooms for learning and the academic performance of students. Professional community among teachers proved to be associated with both [effective] pedagogy and social support [in the classroom] for achievement among students. (p. 558)

It is possible that in the professional-control type of school-based management, since teachers have more voice and can more readily connect school reforms to classroom practice, they may act more effectively in the governance of the school and the improvement of student outcomes.

2.2.4 Rationale for decentralization

The movement towards school-based management is in fact the most important reform in the past two decades and is a potential force for empowering teachers and communities (David, 1996). Sackney and Dibsiki (1994) explain that school-based management assumes that highly centralized controls are the cause of many of the problems in today's schools and are mismatched with professional organization, and that professional organizations require more autonomy.

McGinn and Welsh (1999) give reasons for the movement towards decentralization or school-based management, including increasing efficiency in management and governance, speed in identification of problems and making more appropriate responses, pressure for political democratization, accountability, and administrative reform moves. As Wholstetter and Odden (1992) state:

Data also suggest that the proposals to decentralize are cyclical, recurring during periods of stress, when districts are pushed into searching for solutions to public problems. In the 1960's and 1970's, for example, decentralization was promoted as a way to empower local communities, improve administrative efficiency, and/or balance state authority. (p. 531)

Leithwood and Menzies (1998a) suggest that an underlying purpose of many of the moves for school-based management is to effect financial saving. They also note other purposes for school-based management such as providing a direct form of accountability, providing greater discretion in the use of resources, and making more effective use of the professional capacities of staff. Ainley and McKenzie (2000) suggest that the common beliefs about the values of school-based management are related to enhancement of the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of public education.

Other specific purposes are defined by Australian educationists. For example, Sharpe (1996) refers to the purpose of delegation of authority to the school level as being to make schools more responsive to local circumstances and needs, and more flexible in coping with quickly changing environments. Caldwell (2001) sees the purposes of the reforms in Victoria as related to educational, professional, community, and accountability objectives. For Sayed (1997), educational decentralization has administrative, political, and ideological dimensions.

There are different reasons given for shifting towards school-based management in different educational systems, but all movements have a common feature: the improvement of various aspects of the education system. Despite variation in specific reasons given for decentralization of education, there is broad agreement that the overarching purpose of the movements is to improve student outcomes (David, 1996).

2.2.5 School governance in Australia

Whitty et al. (1998) note that in Australian education, educational provision is mainly the responsibility of each of the six states and the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. The Federal government has some influence on education, particularly by providing financial support to all non-government schools, developing nationwide policies and distributing particular grants to 'offset regional disadvantages'. According to a national report by Morgan (2004), the present status of educational reforms in Australia includes a mixture of school-based management practices and centralist management. Curriculum decision-making is strongly centralist and in government schools, central management through statewide systems largely controls staffing decisions. In NSW, other centralist procedures include the imposition of the new Higher School Certificate curriculum, standardized Basic Skills Testing, and in government schools the rollout of new information and communications technology, student behavior policies and child protection issues. "The NSW public education system also has the benefit of efficient, centralized management of personnel, properties and finances" (NSW Public Education Council, 2005, p. 13).

In terms of staffing, NSW has a mix of centralized and local procedures for staffing government schools. The personnel unit of the Department appoints classroom teachers, but the selection of the school Principal and those who will fill promotions (executive) position are filled through advertisement, consultations and local interview (Hatton & Watson, 2002). However, as noted previously, currently principals have more authority in selection of staff, but still cannot employ teachers directly.

Schools in Australia are divided into three types: government schools, non-government Catholic systemic schools, and non-government independent schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2002). Most of the non-government schools in Australia are systemic Catholic schools coming under the governance of bureaucracies based on Diocesan divisions. In addition, a limited number of Catholic schools are independent of these systems and are usually owned and governed by particular religious congregations (Evers & Chapman, 1998). Catholic systemic schools still have to answer to the Catholic Education Office in terms of how they spend money and organize the school. Their autonomy is limited by this accountability to the Catholic Education Office. The Catholic Education Office is responsible for schools within each diocese.

According to a review by the NSW Department of Education and Training (2002), 69 per cent of school students in NSW attended government schools in 2001. The second largest school system are Catholic systemic schools which are managed at the Diocesan level with schools in each Diocese managed through a Catholic Education Office and all being loosely linked at the state level through the Catholic Education Commission. In 2001, 20 per cent of all students attended Catholic systemic and congregational schools. Independent schools catered for eight per cent of students in 2001 (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2002).

2.2.6 Accountability

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989, p. 87) emphasize, "Accountability of schools is generally concerned with quality, school effectiveness, equity and its implied value of excellence, and efficiency." In fact, different accountability mechanisms in schools attempt to raise student performance via improving the functioning of the school organization (O'Day, 2002).

Aulich (2002, p. 8) argues, "Accountability is essentially retrospective, inquiring into actions that have already taken place. Systems of control and regulation often include accountability mechanisms such as audit or reporting requirements." According to a British study (Brown, Rutherford, & Boyle, 2000):

Schools are increasingly being held accountable for every aspect of the education which they provide. They are obliged to submit themselves to public scrutiny through the publication of test and examination results and the resultant league tables, through their OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) reports being released to the public domain and through the potential for unlimited public debate at the Annual Parents' Meeting. (p. 238)

Accountability to parents is one powerful form of accountability for both government and non-government schools. "All Australian schools are accountable to government at the national and the state levels through a complex range of measures of compliance" (Morgan, 2004, p. 15). In NSW, government schools are accountable to the state for their overall operations through different public reporting frameworks (NSW Public Education Council, 2005).

According to NSW Department of Education and Training (2002; Grimshaw, 2002), non-government schools must meet the State government criteria for registration, follow state government guidelines for curriculum, maintain minimum standards of facilities, and make budgetary reports to the State government. Calnin and Davies (2004) note that principals in independent schools are different from principals in government schools in terms of accountability to parents and governors, fiscal responsibility, admissions and enrolments, building and fundraising, and legal and business decisions. Morgan (2003) points out that because of so many external accountabilities, there is in reality no truly independent school. In New South Wales, curriculum guidelines for all schools, with emphasis on the Key Learning areas, are mandated by the state as determined by the Board of Studies and in some aspects of school discipline policy non-government schools are also accountable to the state (Morgan, 2004). Non-government schools and their students are examined for the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate by the NSW Board of Studies and are able to participate in statewide Basic Skills Tests (NSW Public Education Council, 2005). In addition, inspections are commonly used to approve or reject registration as well as for ongoing evaluation of each non-government school's operation. Non-government schools throughout Australia report to the Commonwealth (Federal Government) in terms of progress towards performance measures linked to the National Goals for Schooling (Grimshaw, 2002).

Although accountability is common to all schools in Australia, Blackmore (2004, p.272) argues, "Government schools and non-government schools do not have the same accountability. Despite increased public funding, the non-government sector is not held accountable for any selective/exclusionary policies or practices while government schools are bound to take all students." Further, as Teese and Polesel (2003; NSW Public Education Council, 2005) point out, although there is a privatization of the cost, distribution of the economic and social benefits of education is not equitable. Notwithstanding that the Commonwealth does not have direct responsibility for schools, its present policy provides greatly increased funding for non-government schools to be maintained over the quadrennium 2005-2008 and about 74 per cent of Commonwealth funding for schools will go to the 32 per cent of students in non-government schools (see also, section 2.3.8, below).

According to the Auditor-General of NSW (Audit Office of New South Wales, 1999):

The intention to achieve greater accountability for, and transparency in, public school performance is highly commendable. To date, these provisions have not been imposed by the Government on private schools even when public funds are provided to such schools. (p. 3)

It is argued that, since 2000, increases in Commonwealth funding of non-government schools have been accelerated, without consideration of availability of relative resources, through fees or other subsidies, to non-government or public schools (NSW Public Education Council, 2005).

According to a review by Grimshaw (2002), the NSW government, parents and the community all have a right to information concerning school effectiveness because non-government schools are also given considerable state government funding. However, the recent level of financial accountability of non-government schools to the State government is inadequate. In addition, in NSW, there is no complete process for reporting on educational performance of both government and non-government schools, although non-government schools do report to other bodies including the Commonwealth government. Nor do all schools report to parents and the school community.

The Commonwealth rationale for providing more funding to non-government schools is that as all parents pay taxes, they are entitled to a share of education funding, and that as state and territory governments are responsible for public schools, the Commonwealth must support other schools in order to promote parental choice and competition. However, Commonwealth policy until the early 1980s was to allocate the bulk of direct Commonwealth funding to public schools.

All schools have some form of hierarchical structure (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, & Coulter, 2000), with high schools having various departments as the base of the pyramid in both government and non-government schools. Structurally then, there is great similarity between government and non-government schools, and context aspects and common constraints cause schools with different structures to have much in common in terms of governance processes. The major differences lie in values and philosophies; for example, Christian parent-controlled schools may put higher value on

encouraging cooperation rather than competition (see Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998; Justins, 2002).

Literature on the success of school-based management will be discussed in the next section, which looks broadly at governance and school effectiveness.

2.3 Governance and School Effectiveness

2.3.1 Studies of school effectiveness

An important point in the area of school effectiveness is that not only do researchers not agree on a definition of school effectiveness and the characteristics of effective schools, but they also disagree on the factors that make a school effective (Chapman & Aspin, 1997; Stoll & Reynolds, 1997). Some authors (Cooper, 1993; Townsend, 1994) define school effectiveness as congruence between objectives and achievements. Many studies, especially in the US, use quantitative assessment of student achievement and measure achievement by student academic outcomes and the concept of the value added by the school. The fact is that academic outcomes are only one aspect of the education process and assessing school effectiveness (Leonard, Bourke, & Schofield, 2004; Sammons, 1995) and determination of school effectiveness through test scores is a narrow and limited approach (Freiberg, 1999; Slee & Weiner, 1998; Stoll & Reynolds, 1997).

Measurement of student outcomes is necessary but not sufficient for thorough evaluation of school effectiveness in different societies. Affective measures are also identified as important components of school effectiveness and quality assurance as well as their enhancement being linked to implementation of school reform and improvement (Leonard et al., 2004). Reynolds and Cuttance (1993) point out, however, that only a few school effectiveness studies try to identify relationships between aspects of school-based management and school effectiveness in terms of both affective outcomes (e.g., school climate, sense of community, sense of self-efficacy, morale) and cognitive outcomes (student academic achievement). Knuver and Brandsma (1993) identify some reasons for inadequate consideration of affective outcomes in school effectiveness studies as the lack of clear definitions, difficulties of measurement, and the diversity of affective areas.

2.3.2 School effectiveness indicators

Researchers use a variety of indicators in their studies of school effectiveness. Cheng (1996) believes that school effectiveness is a multi-dimensional concept and Leonard et al. (2004) identify shared values among school community members as a key feature of effective schools. Gaziel (1998, p. 321) asserts, "Virtually every phase, process or outcome variable can be, and has been, used as an indicator of effectiveness", and favours teachers' sense of efficacy, teachers' sense of community, teachers' commitment to the school, and the degree to which teachers feel that the school is achievement-oriented as indicators of school effectiveness.

Frequently, effectiveness measures take the form of standardized measures of student achievement in Basic Skills, and these measures continue to be the most widely used today. Some Australian researchers (Sammons & Reynolds, 1997; Sammons, 1999) believe that the best form of evaluation of school effectiveness is to study the effect of teaching behavior and school and classroom practice on social and affective outcomes in company with the traditional focus of student academic attainment.

Holdaway and Johnson (1993) suggest that schools choose a range of variables for evaluation of their effectiveness. Quality educational programs and curriculum (Bentley, 2000), effective leadership, communication, and decision making (Stoll & Reynolds, 1997), high quality teaching staff (Maglen, 1997), and, though less commonly, student absenteeism (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997) are examples of other variables that have been identified as indicators of effective schools (cited in Leonard et al., 2004). In 1991, the Australian Education Council initiated the Good Schools strategy, the first stage of which, the Effective Schools project, was conducted in 2300 Australian schools. The results of a study by Teddlie & Reynolds (2000) indicate that the factors that make a school effective are staff, ethos, curriculum, and resources.

It is clear that predictors of school effectiveness are different in various contexts such as different countries, regions, school types, school populations and school sectors (Hofman, Hofman, & Guldmond, 2002). McGaw, Piper, Bank, and Evans (1992) point out that the context of the country concerned must be considered in the determination of school effectiveness indicators. For example, while many North American studies have focused on multiple-choice tests of literacy and numeracy, Australian communities

value outcomes such as the development of a positive self-concept, a sense of self-discipline and self-worth, being a productive and confident member of the society, and the development of a suitable value system.

2.3.3 Characteristics of effective schools

Notwithstanding the problems and differences of definition above, various studies have attempted to characterise the effective school. Some researchers (Dempster, 2000; Gammage et al., 1996), for example, believe that motivation and commitment in members of school councils and governing bodies and availability of resources to support new initiatives are some features of the most effective schools. Creemers (1996) focuses on school goals and leadership:

Effective leaders perform goal-oriented educational leadership. They are not only well informed about goals, but also they transmit information in educational areas to the school team. They have effective strategies of monitoring and support, high quality leadership and the time to build up the trust to make that leadership effective. (p.15)

Similar themes emerge throughout the literature on effective schools. Other characteristics identified include: purposeful teaching and professional development of teachers; high expectations of achievement and continuous monitoring of student outcomes; recognition of pupil rights and responsibilities; positive school climate/culture; and parent involvement and home-school co-operation. The effective school is seen as a learning organization, a professional learning community, open to changing ideas and practice (Bryk, Thum, Easton, & Luppescu, 1998; Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Fullan & Watson, 2000; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore, 1995; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000).

2.3.4 School climate/culture, and governance

A major theme in the literature is that of the importance for the effective school of a positive climate or culture. As Hofman et al. (2002, p. 250) put it, "The effectiveness of schools is viewed as related closely to the educational culture of school..."; and Leithwood and Jantzi (2000a, p. 120) explain, "the contribution of culture to school effectiveness depends on the content of its norms, values, beliefs, assumptions, and the

extent to which they are shared, and whether they promote collaborative work." Hopkins, West, and Ainscow (1996) argue, with considerable supporting evidence, that if teachers' work is supported by other teachers they will work more effectively (see also Hopkins, Ainscow, & West. 1994).

Dempster (2000, p. 47) highlights the importance of the school's culture in relation to change in structure, such as the successful implementation of school-based management, "If cultural norms, values, assumptions and belief systems do not change, then school personnel are likely to continue to behave as they did under previous structures." This relationship is particularly important if, as Dimmock and Walker (1998, p. 476) argue, "School-based management provides better opportunities and contexts for building school cultures in which teachers and principals feel professionally empowered and motivated to improve the management of schools."

Deal and Peterson (1998) argue that principals are central to shaping a positive school culture. Researchers find that principals in successful schools create a school culture that is caring, risk-taking, open, and supportive (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Others (Burrello & Lashley, 1992; DiPaola & Thomas, 2003; National Research Council, 1997) also believe that effective leaders consider themselves as custodians and coaches in the development of a school culture of inclusiveness which in turn impacts on school effectiveness.

It should also be noted, however, that leadership is a two-way process in which the behaviours of the leaders influence school climate and are also a product of the school environment and interaction with others (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995).

2.3.5 Influences on student achievement

A number of studies have investigated the relationships between classroom, school and context factors and student achievement outcomes. There is considerable disagreement on the results of these studies, possibly because of the problems of definition noted above, and also because of the limited transferability of results from one context, particularly internationally, to another (Sammons, 1995).

2.3.5.1 School and context factors

There is some disagreement in the literature on the effect of schooling on student achievement. Some reasons for this could be that when people say the school they sometimes mean what is outside the classroom and other times what is inside the classroom as well. Some researchers (Leonard et al., 2004; Reynolds, 1992; Wyatt, 1996) in early school effectiveness (1980s) claim that schools and teachers make little difference to student outcomes. "Research on school effectiveness has shown that differences in student achievement are due mainly to differences in students and their backgrounds and socio-economic status" (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000, p. 35). Substantial studies highlight, however, that although the ability and family background of students are the major determinants of achievement, schools in similar social situations can achieve very different levels of educational improvement (Sammons, 1995; Thomas & Mortimore, 1994; Thomas, Sammons, & Mortimore, 1994).

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000b) argue that if the structure of a school facilitates the staff's work, professional learning, and opportunities for collaboration, it will contribute to school effectiveness. Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996, cited in Watson, 2005) review some studies which indicate positive effects from teacher experience and teacher education. Sammons (1995) supports Leithwood and Jantzi, however, in showing that while many researchers have studied the impact of different governance structures on school effectiveness, only some have found direct relationships and most point to only indirect relationships between governance structures and school effectiveness.

Other studies on influence indicate that school generally has a small and indirect influence on student outcomes. Researchers (Bosker & Witziers, 1995), in a meta-analysis of over 80 British and Dutch studies, report that on average only 9 per cent of the total variance in student performance can be explained by the effects of attending different schools. Scheerens and Bosker (1997) claim that only between 8 and 15 per cent of the variance in achievement outcomes is related to the school attended. Others (Van de Grift & Houtveen, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) claim, however, that school-related effects on student achievement do explain a small, but significant amount of the variance in achievement. Kirst and Bulkley (2000) believe that in attempts to improve the performance of education, reformers will continue to utilize governance

and organizational changes, although these mechanisms may offer only indirect and uncertain strategies, for improving classroom instruction.

Another important factor in relation to school-level variables is the context of the school which shapes students' classroom experiences (Barr & Dreeben, 1983; Virgilio, Teddlie, & Oescher, 1991). A study by Heck (1993) reports a set of school context measures such as school size, school type, and teacher experience as influential on school achievement. In other school effectiveness studies, researchers (Wallance, 2002; Watson, 2005) found that within the classroom there is significant influence which makes outside influence more indirect.

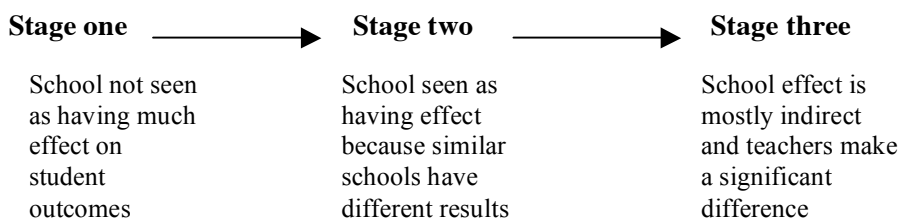


Figure 2.1 Trends in Findings of School Effectiveness Studies

As can be seen in Figure 2.1, school effectiveness studies have changed in focus at different stages of development. While early studies indicated that school has little or no impact on student outcomes, subsequent research found such impact did occur because different schools produced different levels of student achievement. More recent studies have indicated that, within the school, teachers have significant influence on student outcomes and that the school generally has a small indirect influence on these outcomes.

2.3.5.2 Teaching effects

Considerable research (Creemers, 1994a; Reynolds, Teddlie, Creemers, Cheng, Dundas, Green, Epp, Hauge, Schaffer, & Stringfield, 1994; Stoll & Reynolds, 1997) indicates that while classroom and school factors account for 8 to 18 per cent of variance in student outcomes, classroom impacts are greater than school impacts (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999; McGaw, 1997; Stoll & Reynolds, 1997). Creemers (1994b) reports that classroom variables and effective teaching account for up to 25 per cent of variation in student achievement. Others (Mortimore, 1993; Reynolds, 1992; Scheerens, 1992) conclude that school effectiveness is obviously dependent on effective classroom teaching. Since learning takes place primarily in the classroom, it is likely to be

influenced more by classroom level factors (Coe & Fitz-Gibbon, 1998). Watson (2005) concludes:

The finding that teacher effects are larger than school effects implies that strategies to improve the quality of teaching are more likely to improve student outcomes than strategies which aim to substitute one school for another (school choice) or to change the structure of schooling (e.g., devolution of school management). (p. 17)

In fact, teaching rather than leadership is planned directly to encourage student learning (Wallance, 2002). Based on their analysis, Hill and Rowe (1994) suggest that teachers and not schools make the difference in student learning. Teachers are seen to have the critical role in determining educational effectiveness and student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000). As Rowe (2002) argues:

The key to improved educational achievement by students lies in improved classroom teaching. Up to 40 percent of the variance in student outcomes is explained by differences between classrooms in which they are taught – that is, by the quality of teaching they receive. (p. 25)

Following a review of over half million studies, Hattie (2003) argues that students themselves account for about 50% of variance in their achievement, teachers for about 30%, schools and the home for about 5-10% each. It should be noted, however, that "School effects are cumulative and may be unobserved, underestimated, or partialled out in cross-sectional studies, or longitudinal studies that are short-term in nature" (Hill & Rowe, 1996, pp. 27-8).

2.3.6 Different school structures and school effectiveness

Again, there are contradictory views and evidence on structural factors and school effectiveness. Renchler (2000) explains that in spite of little quantitative evidence on the influence of governance structures on student academic achievement, many people appear willing to experiment with changing those structures in the hope that the changes will encourage teachers and students to perform at higher levels. Teddlie and Reynolds in their *International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research* (2000) conclude that when schools have more control of their academic operations, their effect is greater.

Urbanski and Erskine (2000) claim that decentralized governance structures promote changes at the classroom level because teachers and parents in each school community and at the school level have greater authority and capacity to adapt teaching and learning methods to address achievement standards as well as the unique needs of their students.

Studies in Canada and in America indicate that school-based management does increase overall school effectiveness (Gaziel, 1998; see also, O'Donoghue & Dimmock, 1996). Substantial studies (Caldwell & Hayward, 1998; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998; Fullan & Watson, 2000; Ouchi & Segal, 2003; Volansky & Friedman, 2003) indicate that there are both direct and indirect relationships between school-based management and learning outcomes. Gaziel (1998) argues that decentralized schools are more effective than non-decentralized schools in achieving affective outcomes. McNeill and McNeill (1994) suggest a possible explanation for these results is that by decentralizing decision-making through participatory management, workers will achieve a higher level of efficiency in significant areas, while the organization itself rises to new levels of effectiveness.

On the other hand, studies (Coe & Fitz-Gibbon, 1998; Reynolds & Stoll, 1996) could not demonstrate a causal relationship between schools' governance structures and their effectiveness, and Simkins (1993) reviews a number of studies in England and Wales that show little evidence of a relationship between school-based management and school effectiveness. Decentralization in Papua New Guinea and Jamaica did not improve administrative efficiency (Fiske, 1996) and Ainley and Mckenzie (2000) find that research on the impact of decentralization on student learning outcomes has not shown large effects.

Walberg et al. (2000), following a review of different studies in various countries, conclude that although there is considerable policy interest in decentralization, its features have little impact on value-added learning; and Dempster (2000) suggests that although school-based management does not lead to improved student learning outcomes, there are some data which indicate that aspects of such management connected to planning and communication do help in shaping some of the conditions which have indirect influence on classroom practice.

Leithwood and Menzies' (1998a; see also Sackney & Dibsiki, 1994) conclude:

There is virtually no firm, research-based knowledge about the direct or indirect effects of SBM on students ... the little research-based evidence that does exist suggests that the effects on students are just as likely to be negative as positive. There is an awesome gap between the rhetoric and the reality of SBM's contribution to student growth in light of the widespread advocacy of SBM. (p. 325)

Other authors (Elmore, 1993, 2000; Drury, 1999) believe that research on decentralization has indicated for a long time that there is no systematic relationship between the degree of centralization in school systems and their overall performance.

Lashway (1997) points out that most studies agree that collaboration improves teacher morale and school climate, but there is much less evidence that shared decision-making has a positive influence on student achievement. Studies also indicate that unsuccessful school-based management views management as an end in itself rather than a way to focus on improving teaching and learning; or that the Principal does not share decision-making power; or that participants in decisions are unprepared (Stiefel, Schwartz, Portas, & Kim, 2005).

Decentralized decision-making is an organizational rather than an educational reform and researchers believe that there is a difference between the two. McNeill and McNeill (1994, p. 256) explain, "Educational reform is improvement in the specific kinds of work schools do but organizational reform is improving the way an organization is structured for reaching its goals efficiently and effectively." Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994, p. 270) suggest that, "Improving school performance may be an unrealistic expectation for a governance reform that alters the balance of power within educational systems toward schools." In other words, changing the way a school makes decisions is a reform in school arrangements, not necessarily leading to improvement in how the school works (see also Farah, 1997), and Walberg et al. (2000) conclude that schools and classrooms have more reliable influences on learning than does the way decision-making is divided among levels of government. Weiss, Cambone, and Wyeth (1992) point out that change only in the governance structure of the school is not

sufficient for success of school-based management, but that such reforms also require change in the school culture.

Overall, since school-based management increases teacher authority to adapt teaching to student needs and improve school conditions, it could potentially impact on student learning if it concerns teaching and learning and is implemented purposely.

2.3.7 School effectiveness in Australia

2.3.7.1 Trends in school governance and school effectiveness

Many Australian studies from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s also conclude that differences among schools have little real impact on student outcomes. Most of these studies were based on large-scale inquiries. In the late 1970s and early 1980s there emerged a greater body of research concerned with effective schools and which mostly used case study methods and systematic comparisons. Currently, investigations of the effectiveness of schools are largely focused on differences in student outcomes in relation to student background variables and aspects of school context (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000).

Patterns of school performance in Australia indicate that social and cultural factors influence school performance (Lamb, Rumberger, Jesson, & Teese, 2004). Significantly, Mulford (1985) compares school effectiveness research in Australia and other countries and points out that Australian school effectiveness studies have tended to put greater emphasis on the total development of students rather than on only basic academic skills. However, Lamb et al. (2004) analyse school effectiveness factors in Australia and find that school performance is now most commonly evaluated on cognitive achievement measures such as final year achievement, although some measures like rates of student attendance, retention in school and entrance to further study and workplace are also used. With regard to the latter, for example, they find that a large number of non-government schools are effective in encouraging entry to further study, and many government schools are successful in terms of entry into apprenticeship and full-time work.

However, Australian effectiveness literature since Mulford's review (1985) appears to have embraced worldwide trends. Globally it is clear that there is much less research

regarding the impact of schools and classrooms on aspects of student schooling such as attendance, attitudes to school, behavior, and self-efficacy than on achievement and academics (Knuver & Brandsma, 1993, cited in Leonard et al., 2004).

2.3.8 Resources management

2.3.8.1 Trends in budgeting

In decentralized school governance, budgeting is one of the important authorities delegated to the school level. Before school-based budgeting, school finance and budgeting in most education systems was carried out by the central authority. Laporte and Ringold (1997) describe features of education systems in central and Eastern Europe before decentralization:

Education financing and delivery of education was highly centralized and inefficient. Resources were poorly allocated, with high teacher-student ratios, large classes, and high spending levels, poor upkeep and under-use of facilities. Teachers were poorly paid, under-trained and had few incentives to innovate and to improve the quality of their teaching. (p. 1)

According to the study by Hadderman (1999), critics of the centralized budget system argue that such a system prevents schools from planning specialized programs, has negative effects on staff motivation, reduces innovative instructional approaches, and obstructs teacher and parent involvement. It is apparent that under a centralized budgeting system general authority concentrates in districts or central offices of education and individual schools are constrained in their ability and authority for decision-making on financial aspects of school functioning.

Many reforms intended to improve public schools involve moving control of resources from central authorities to school-level decision-makers while at the same time holding school decision-makers accountable for student achievement. The rationale for this is that decision-makers who are closer to the ground will be better able to allocate resources to students with different backgrounds, learning styles and needs (Stiefel et al., 2005).

According to Myers and Stonehill (1993), in most American school-based management

systems, first the district office determines the total funds needed by the whole district, determines the district-wide costs, and then allocates the available funds in "lump sums" to individual schools to spend as each sees fit. Caldwell (2003a) indicates that some school systems have devolved to schools decisions related to the allocation of more than 90 per cent of the total system budget for school education in attempts to design an appropriate resources allocation model that will distribute resources in a fair and transparent way.

In terms of the importance of school-based budgeting, researchers conclude that school-based management without control over resources has very limited ability to improve student outcomes (Olson, 1997; Wohlstetter, 1995). Stiefel et al. (2005) raise an important point that, in order to have an active role in school-based budgeting, stakeholders need some knowledge of the budget-making process. School-based budgeting provides schools with discretionary authority in their allocation of their global budget among particular needs. Caldwell (1998) explains the advantages of this process:

Principals report moderate to high levels of improvement in the extent to which having a "global budget" enabled the school to plan for resource management for the next three years, build a relationship between curriculum programs and resource allocation, allocate resources to identified educational needs of students, and achieve priorities identified in the school charter. They also report moderate to high realization of expected benefits in the processes of planning and resource allocation at the school level such as the extent of realization of better resource management, clearer sense of direction, increased accountability and responsibility, greater financial and administrative flexibility, and improved long-term planning. (p. 450)

Since schools have direct or indirect impacts on the life of all people in a modern society, education is managed by government around the world and considerable proportions of schools' expenditures are paid by governments (Wyatt, 1996). It is important, therefore, to know whether schools act effectively and how effectiveness can be enhanced (Hill, Rowe, & Holmes-Smith, 1995). As noted previously, schools are expected to be accountable for student and school performance and effective utilization of their public funding and have been made more generally accountable to the system as

a unit because of the introduction of decentralisation, devolution of finance and decision-making, and the introduction of school-based management (Dimmock & Walker, 1997; 1998). In other words, since decentralized schools have more authorities in different areas, they also have more accountability to make sure that those authorities are used correctly.

However, in spite of the benefits claimed for school-based budgeting, researchers could not find a strong positive relationship between spending and student performance (Woessmann, 2000). Sammons (1995) claims that most school effectiveness research has not found a significant relationship between the level of allocated resources to schools and school effectiveness. Studies have also found that there is no strong or direct relationship between school expenditures and student performance (Burtless, 1996).

Caldwell and Roskam (2002) argue that increases in education expenditure up to a certain level provide greater educational outcomes but beyond that level there is no such guarantee and Gray (1990) concludes from his observations that although an adequate level of funding is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for school effectiveness. According to statistical evidence and historical experience, investment of extra money in the nation's schools is unlikely to improve school performance. Such improvement will not occur without concurrent change in current arrangements of school management (Burtless, 1996). However, it does appear that providing more resources to schools, usually in the form of employing additional teachers, will improve standards (Roskam, 2001).

2.3.8.2 Budgeting in government schools in Australia

In New South Wales, the Scott report found that the public education budget was framed and administered in ways that inhibited effective financial and operational management by head office, regions and schools because it was input-oriented and not closely related to educational needs or outcomes. Scott recommended that each school should be responsible for managing its own budget, and local governing school councils were established at each school (Scott, 1989).

Following the Scott report and embracing its recommendations, Schools Renewal was introduced in the New South Wales state school system in 1989. Prior to the

introduction of Schools Renewal, funds were allocated to schools following a traditional Westminster accountability approach. Monies were now supplied on a line-item, specific-purpose basis according to across-the-board funding allocations (Scott, 1989).

Caldwell (1998) notes that in Australia, there is a tendency to decentralize budgeting more, but not totally. Government makes two broad types of decisions in relation to government school finance. First, it decides on the total amount of the overall budget to be allocated to schools ("the size of the cake"), and second it decides how that amount should be allocated to schools ("how the cake is cut").

Researchers (Grimshaw, 2002; Hanushek, 1996; Rudkin, 2005) comment that although schools have global budgets, at the local level many government schools' resources are still controlled at region and state levels and schools have to spend money in line with direction from "above". Although global budgeting gives schools discretionary power and the Principal and school can determine to some degree how they spend the resources, the trend is to maintain central control over budget. Non-government schools are similarly placed and are not totally decentralized.

Approaches to needs-based formula allocation of resources to schools in Australia, the UK, Canada, New Zealand and the USA can all be classified in the same way (Ross & Levacic, 1998). However, in Victoria, in 2005 research was begun into a new funding model which would include a move to a student-centred funding model that would be powerfully linked to schools' planning, accountability and performance management mechanisms. The new method is less complex and more transparent than global budgeting and is seen to be more flexible, equitable, efficient, and student focused (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2005).

2.3.8.3 Budgeting in non-government schools in Australia

Australia is one of the few countries in the world where all non-government schools receive public funding from the Commonwealth (national/federal) government and subsidies from state and territory governments. In fact, the Commonwealth government, through the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), provides funding to both government and non-government schools to support agreed priorities and strategies. Government schools, however receive the bulk of their funding from their respective state and territory governments, and less from the Commonwealth. In

contrast, non-government schools receive most of their government funding from the Commonwealth, and less from the state or territory (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2002; Watson, 2003).

Since the 1950s, both the Commonwealth and state governments have moved to increase non-government schools' resources levels, and have increased subsidies to non-government schools. Before that, these schools in Australia like similar schools in the USA, France, and the Netherlands, did not receive public funding and for this reason had inadequate resources. Consequently, children in some non-government schools received a lower standard of education than children in state schools (Watson, 2004).

In 1968, Australian Commonwealth government assistance was provided to fund libraries in non-government schools, and from the mid-1960s, state governments also provided some assistance to non-government schools. The commitment by the Australian Labor Party in its 1972 Federal election policy to increase funding to both government and non-government schools was significant and state aid to schools became bipartisan. In 2001, new Commonwealth funding arrangements for non-government schools was introduced. According to the new arrangements, need is determined based on a measure of the socio-economic status of a school's community rather than the school's own resource levels and this was contentious (Caldwell & Roskam, 2002).

The Commonwealth government in its 1999 Federal Budget introduced a new funding scheme that provided significant funding increases to all schools, but mainly to non-government schools (Watson, 2004). Aulich (2002) states:

The Commonwealth and state governments' public funds to non-government schools are for the costs of establishment, operating expenses (including salaries of teachers), capital projects, literacy and language programs and programs for students with special needs. Funding is calculated on a formula based on a socio-economic index of the school population. The total amount of public funds averages about 60% of per pupil costs in private schools but in practice varies significantly between poorer and wealthier schools. (p. 3)

Recently, although there is public debate on increased government grants to non-government schools and the influence of their competition on government schools,

these debates have been constrained by incomplete information about the total level of available resources to non-government schools. In fact, there is no published data on non-government schools' incomes from tuition fees (Boston, 2001; Leonard, 2004; Ticher, 2004; Watson, 2003, 2004). The Commonwealth through the Minister for Education Science and Training is currently undertaking a review of the funding of non-government schools in Australia, partly due to concerns over the equity of current funding arrangements for government and non-government schools.¹ Watson (2004) reports that non-government schools operate above the average of government schools because they receive more income than the average for students in government schools through the combination of tuition fees and state and Commonwealth subsidies. Morgan (2003) asserts that the public school sector is financed by taxpayers and provides secular education, while the private school sector is financed partially by the government and mostly by its fee-paying customers.

So, although both government and non-government schools use public funding completely or partially, in practice they do not share the same level of accountability.

2.3.8.4 Planning

According to the study by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999), school planning is one school condition which contributes to school effectiveness. Whipp (1998, cited in Bell, 2002, p. 415) explains, "The important purpose of planning is to scan the context environment of the school, predict the future for the school and then organize resources for reaching the predicted situations." Scholars (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1991; Mortimore, 1993) argue that planning processes are effective to the extent that they bring together local needs and district goals into a shared school vision.

Bell (2002) claims:

Successful planning in schools needs to be collective instead of an individual responsibility; vision and the mission are derived from values of both principal and whole staff, and realization of plans requires a commitment from and the involvement of staff at the organizational and operational levels. (p. 414)

Thus, principals cannot manage schools independently, cannot determine school future

¹ Currently being conducted as at August 2006.

goals and activities without the cooperation of teachers, parents, and all the school community. In fact, the school is a community and the best management of each community is through the participation of community members in different aspects of its work and a commitment by them toward school goals and activities.

2.4 Leadership and School Effectiveness

This section will examine literature on leadership and school effectiveness because of its relevance to the central question on what makes a school effective in terms of governance and decision-making.

It is broadly accepted that effective leadership is a key component in achieving school improvement (Office for Standards in Education, 2000; Stoll, 1997) and successful school reforms (Cheng, 1998; Leithwood, 1998). Management style adopted within a school is seen to be of central importance to the perceived and realised effectiveness of the whole school (Bolam, McMahon, Pockington, & Weindling, 1993) and the literature on school governance indicates that the quality of the Principal is a critical factor in the success of a school (Southworth, 1999). Hallinger and Heck (1996a) conclude that school principals affect school outcomes by mission building, effective organizational structures and social networks, and working through people. Empirical results of a recent study by Dinham (2005) indicate that leadership is a critical factor in the attainment of exceptional educational outcomes and in developing effective, innovative schools and facilitating quality teaching and learning. Mulford (2003a) finds that a principal who is expert in transformational leadership, with administrators and teachers who are actively involved in the core work of the school (shared or distributive leadership), is the most effective leader for organizational learning and enhanced student learning.

Studies (see Leithwood, Jantzi, Silins, & Dart, 1993) confirm that the Principal's leadership has a strong direct effect on in-school processes and only indirect effects on educational outcomes. This result is consistent with the later study of Leithwood and Jantzi (2000a), which indicates that effective leaders have a powerful indirect impact on student achievement and school effectiveness (see also Mulford, 2006). Hallinger and Heck (1996a) report that the effect of leadership on school effectiveness occurs largely through actions by the Principal such as providing a clear school mission and a positive

school climate and Harris (2002) highlights such features of effective leaders as alignment to a shared set of values, distributed leadership, investment in staff development, developing and maintaining relationships, and community building.

Empirical research indicates that the social context of the school can impact in turn on the Principal's effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b).

2.4.1 Distributed leadership²

The current study is about effectiveness in governance and decision-making and how principals involve and empower stakeholders including teachers, parents, and students in school decision-making. Principals who do not make all the decisions themselves find it beneficial to involve teachers in governance and decision-making. It is therefore germane to review the concept and relevance of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership can be performed by all those in formal leader positions (e.g., head teachers, heads of departments, and assistant principals) and/or by teachers. Each will be discussed in this section.

While there is extensive current interest in distributed leadership by researchers, educators and policymakers of different countries (Harris, 2004b), the notion itself is not new. The possibility of leadership following a distributed pattern or arrangement was posed in the first edition of the *Handbook of Social Psychology* by Gibb (1954). This notion was further examined by organizational theorists and researchers who paid particular attention to models of situated cognition and the inherent patterns of distribution this theory implies and who, since 1998, have worked with empirical data and social theory to build a theory of distributed leadership (Spillane & Sherer, 2004).

In the last few years distributed leadership has become increasingly considered in the discussion of school leadership and it is presently receiving much attention and increasing empirical support (Gronn, 2000; Hopkins & Jackson, 2003). Recently, Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) and Harris and Muijs (2003, 2005) have started to explore distributed leadership in action.

The term "distributed leadership" is employed interchangeably with "shared leadership", "team leadership", "inclusive leadership", and "democratic leadership", but it is not

² A term also used interchangeably with "distributed leadership" is "distributive leadership."

synonymous with these terms and, depending on conditions, distributed leadership permits leaders to use more or less shared leadership that can be democratic or autocratic (Spillane & Orlina, 2005). Australian studies in primary and secondary schools have found that an inclusive model of decision-making leads to positive student and teacher perceptions about the school and the improvement of their performance (Mulford, 2003a).

Studies of effective leadership (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Harris, 2002) indicate that leadership authority is not necessarily situated in a leadership position but can be distributed among others within the school. From a distributed viewpoint, leadership is a system of practice including leaders, followers, and situation (Spillane, 2005) and is best considered as a group quality with a set of functions carried out by a group (Gronn, 2000) of three to seven people (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003), collaborating in completing group tasks and exchanging leadership roles frequently (Harris, Hopkins, Hargreaves, Hadfield, Day, & Chapman, 2003).

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) introduce two assumptions on distributed leadership in the school. The first is that such leadership is best recognized through distribution of leadership tasks and leadership practices among leaders and followers in the school situation or context. The second is that major improvement in effectiveness is unlikely to be attained by traditional direct and control leadership approaches (Harris et al., 2003), and that distributed leadership is vital to building the capacity for school improvement (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Gronn (2000) argues that distributed leadership changes power relationships within the school and consequently it is hard to distinguish leaders from followers.

Gronn (2000) further argues that if leadership is distributed in the school and teachers show an enthusiasm for leading school development, school improvement will probably happen. Studies also show that distributed leadership impacts positively on teacher performance, self-efficacy and levels of morale (MacBeath, 1998; Mitchell & Sackney, 2001), the quality of teaching (Little, 2000), and teacher effectiveness (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000c). Researchers have also found that distributed leadership has positive effects on pedagogy, school culture, and educational quality (Griffin, 1995; Silins & Mulford, 2002). Bell, Bolan and Cubillo (2002, p. 4) suggest that, "A distributed form of leadership among the wider school staff is likely to have a more significant impact on

the positive achievement of student/pupil outcomes than that which is largely or exclusively top down."

Harris and Muijs (2003) argue that implicit within the distributed leadership model is the leadership practice of teachers, whether as informal leaders or in formal leadership roles such as head of department, subject coordinator or teacher mentor, and that distribution of leadership among designated leaders and teachers varies according to the subject (Spillane, 2005), the type of school (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003), the size of school (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003), and the stage of school or the stage of leadership team development (Copland, 2004).

Other researchers, however, claim that there is insufficient empirical research on the effectiveness of this type of leadership (Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; Hopkins & Jackson, 2003) in relation to student outcomes and instructional improvement (Spillane, 2005). The empirical research on how leadership is distributed within more and less successful schools is weak (Timperley, 2005). Harris (2004a, p. 12) and Harris, and Muijs (2005) conclude that, "While evidence would suggest that distributed forms of leadership can assist capacity building within schools, further research is needed to investigate the nature of the relationship between distributed leadership and improved school/ student outcomes."

There is a view (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1998, 2000c) that teacher leadership has more effect than principal leadership on student engagement and that distributing leadership activity to teachers will have a positive impact on teacher effectiveness and student engagement. Andrews and Crowther (2002, p. 154) define teacher leadership as "behaviour that facilitates principled pedagogical action toward whole-school success. It derives from the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth and adults. It contributes to enhanced quality of community life in the long term." Such leadership and teacher empowerment have been found to enhance teachers' self-esteem, satisfaction, confidence, increased knowledge, and positive attitude (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Leberman, Saxl, & Miles, 2000; Ovando, 1996; O'Connor & Boles, 1992), which may well contribute to the effect indicated by Leithwood and Jantzi, above.

2.4.2 Principal leadership: Personal qualities

The literature indicates that the personal qualities of principals influence a range of things such as their leadership style, the school culture, stakeholder involvement, and collegiality, how they approach school governance and decision-making, and indirectly, student achievement and school effectiveness. It also indicates the variation in personal qualities of effective leaders from person to person and context to context. However, some features are common and have been confirmed by many studies. For example, researchers indicate that principals in effective schools have and use sophisticated interpersonal skills and are liked and respected by most stakeholders (Dinham, 2005). They also possess personal qualities such as effective communication, visibility, accessibility (Kathleen, 2003) and passion, humor, empathy, trustworthiness and reliability (Leighton, 1996). Empirical findings of a Singaporean study by Zhang (1994) are that most effective principals have displayed self-confidence, willingness to accept responsibilities, adaptability to situations, authority, competitiveness, consideration, reality-centeredness and stubbornness.

Creighton (1999) reports that recent literature identifies such positive leadership characteristics as commitment, responsibility, integrity, honesty, values/beliefs, vision, patience, courage, inspiration, love, wonder, humility, and compassion. The literature repeatedly points to being trusted as an important feature of effective school leadership (Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2001) and that trust is necessary for open communication in an organization. Principals without trust in their teachers will not share authority and responsibility with them (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The impact of the leader's personal qualities on their leadership style is emphasized by Bolman and Deal (1991).

Research by Hopkins et al. (1996) indicates that the best indicator of organizational health is the nature of communication between those working together on a daily basis. Irmsher (1996; see also Dinham, 2005) argues that it is important that the Principal be available and welcome personal contact with others. The literature on communication indicates that effective school leaders spend 70 percent of their time in different forms of communication (Irmsher, 1996). Murphy and Louis (1994) find that teacher involvement in the school increases when they perceive the Principal as open, a facilitator, and supportive empirical findings of the study by Pan (1999) indicate that

principals who are accessible can shape a harmonious school climate.

2.4.3 Student achievement

Several studies indicate that principals can play an important role in improving teaching and learning (Brighthouse & Woods, 1999; Day, Harris, Hadfield, Toley, & Beresford, 2000; Elmore, 2000; Leithwood, 2000; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001) and many researchers (Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999) have found that leadership has an indirect but strong influence on the school's capacity for enhancing student achievement. Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides (1990, p. 123) note, however, that "Principals do not affect individual students directly as teachers do through classroom instruction, but the activities of the Principal directed at school-level performance have trickle-down effects on teachers and students." This is also consistent with the findings of researchers (Leithwood et al., 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000b, cited in Griffith, 2003; Heck, 1993) that the Principal's leadership has a direct effect on school conditions such as school goals, planning, structure, climate, and work conditions which in turn show a direct effect on classroom conditions such as instruction, policies, and procedures. Hallinger and Heck (1998) reviewed research from 1980-1995 and found:

Principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement. While this effect is relatively small, it is statistically significant and supports the general belief among educators that principals contribute to school effectiveness and improvement. (p. 159)

"Leadership is important in creating positive and innovative learning cultures and facilitating quality teaching and learning" (Dinham, 2005, p. 340), and in community building in the school and the wider community (Mulford, 2003). Hech et al. (1990) measure principal influence through school governance, instructional organization, and school climate and demonstrate both direct and indirect effects on student achievement. Recently, Hallinger and Heck (1996a, cited in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000a) reported studies on the direct impact of the Principal on student achievement as showing weak or inconclusive results, while studies that include mediating and/or moderating variables in their designs tend to report significant effects. Ainley and McKenzie (2000) declare that research evidence on the effect of school governance on student outcomes is not

extensive and that the literature on the Principal's role in school effectiveness is inconclusive.

A recent study (Mulford, 2003) finds that leadership, whether traditional or distributive, makes a difference in student outcomes indirectly because it impacts on processes which influence student learning like academic expectations, school mission, student opportunity to learn and instructional organization (Watson, 2005), which are all school-level conditions (Gurr et al., 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Waters et al., 2003; Watson, 2005).

Lamb, Rumberger, Jesson, and Teese (2004) indicate that a combination of factors impacts on student performance within the school such as student intake, pupil management policies, resources, approaches to school organization, and teaching practice; and external factors like difference in the educational, cultural and material resources in families, and variations in wealth across communities. The number and complexity of these factors are the reasons, Watson (2005) claims, that it is hard to specify the particular effects of leadership on the quality of school education.

The results of a study by Dinham (2005) indicate that leadership (e.g., principal, other executive and teacher leadership) impacts on student outcomes where it is characterised by: a central focus on students and their learning; teacher learning, responsibility, and trust; external awareness, and engagement; a tendency towards innovation and action; common purpose and collaboration; effective personal relationships; and vision and high expectations in a culture of success.

As these and other studies (Keller, 1998; Maehr & Fyans, 1989) vary in their results on the relationship between leadership and student outcomes, there is clear need for further research in this area.

2.4.4 Teacher professional development

In this section, literature on trends in professional development and the Principal's approach to professional development will be examined because of their importance in school governance and decision-making.

The importance of school leadership in school-based professional development is clear. Cardno (2005, p. 293) claims, "The teaching profession is operating in turbulent times and under growing pressure. Professional development has never been of greater importance than it is right now in order to sustain and advance the profession." Literature on staff development emphasizes that any enhancement in teacher personal growth and professional development may contribute to later improvement of educational quality in the school (Cheng, 1996b).

Researchers note that international trends in teacher professional development have moved away from earlier highly-centralized models toward school-based planning and programs in the last five or six decades. It is clear that the recent trend in most countries is toward school-based and often problem-based professional development of teachers (McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland, & Zbar, 2001; Thompson & Haslam, 2005; White, Sam, & Mon, 2005).

This trend in professional development has also been evident in Australia. The New South Wales Education Reform Act of 1990 tied the bulk of school-based professional development funds to system and organizational policies and priorities (McCulla, 1994), and governments in other Australian states and territories followed a similar line (see Varghese, 2000). More recently, the NSW Department of Education and Training (2004) has established a new professional learning policy entitled *the Professional Learning Policy for Schools*, according to which schools are responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating their own professional development programs. This policy clearly emphasises the role of the Principal and the adoption of a team approach in decision-making on its implementation in each school. In conjunction with this policy, the teacher professional learning budget was increased from \$25 to \$600-1000 per full-time teacher per year (McCulla & Gereige-Hinson, 2005).

The policy defines professional learning as a shared responsibility between employer and employee, between school and region and system, and schools are required to establish professional learning teams for planning, implementing, and evaluating of professional learning programs (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004). It situates the locus of decision-making at the school level with support from regional and statewide programs, as well as from external providers (McCulla & Gereige-Hinson, 2005). The policy places specific emphasis on the need for a form of distributed

leadership in the form of school Professional Learning Teams led by the Principal and involving teacher members. Similar trends are evident in other states and territories (Varghese, 2000).

The importance of distributed leadership in teacher professional development is supported by research which indicates that an organization's ability to improve and sustain improvement is determined mainly by its ability to promote and nurture professional learning communities or communities of practice (Holden, 2002; Morrissey, 2000) and that the school should be such a community (Hargreaves, 2002). A professional learning community is a community where teachers are involved in decision-making and leadership activities, have a common sense of goal, are involved in collaborative work, and accept shared responsibility for the results of their work (Harris & Lambert, 2003), and current trends in professional development of teachers emphasize teacher learning day-to-day in the workplace learning community rather than through unconnected individual conference attendance.

Cardno (2005) argues that school-based professional development enables principals to play an important and effective role in decision-making about forms of professional development and how it should be supported. "Principals can create conditions which ensure that professional growth is part of school culture" (DuFour & Berkey, 1995, p. 1) and their role in creation of a professional learning culture within the school is central to their role as a professional, instructional and curriculum leader (Day, 1999). Such a culture encourages all teachers to value their own initiative for continuous self-learning and development for quality performance (Blandford, 2000; Cheung & Cheng, 1997; see also Cohen & Hill, 2001).

Cardno (2005) argues that an effective leader has an important impact on student learning opportunities in the classroom and principals, by supporting and effectively managing the professional development of teachers, influence student-learning experiences positively. Others also recommend ongoing professional development in order to create a successful school (Louis, Kruse, & Raywid, 1996; Sykes, 1996) and promote reform (Cheung & Cheng, 1997).

Action learning is also seen as an ideal approach to school-based collaborative professional development and is becoming a widely accepted methodology for the

development of teachers and principals in schools. Action learning can assist teachers in gaining the essential professional capabilities for making better judgments and taking effective action in an altering and unsure environment (Yuen & Cheng, 2000). Its principle is that learners can only learn about work, at work, like learning how to ride a bicycle by riding a bicycle (Marsick & O'Neil, 1999; Smith & Peters, 1997) and through which people unite impulsively or by plan to learn from each other and share their experience (Dick, 1997, cited in Dinham et al., 2006). LaBoskey (2004, cited in Dinham et al., 2006, p. 2) believes, "Action learning is improvement-oriented, interactive, uses multiple methods and is characterised by validity, viewed as constructing, testing, sharing and retesting exemplars of teaching" and Marquardt (2000) describes it as the most effective and powerful tool utilized by organizations for developing the essential competencies in leaders to perform their roles.

2.5 Stakeholder Involvement in Decision-Making

The issue of stakeholder involvement has been an important consideration since the 1980s and the notion that schools can benefit from the input of different stakeholders is a focus in the literature, including such things as empowerment and localization of decision-making at the school level. Griffith (2001) refers to an increased emphasis on the inclusion of other stakeholders (e.g., parents, community groups, and relevant others) as well as school staff in public education during the last decade, and Davis (2000) indicates that parent and teacher consultation and collaboration in school decision-making creates the climate for greatest fulfilment of a student's potential.

An important aspect of educational leadership, therefore, is the involvement of stakeholders, particularly teachers, in school decisions. Dinham (2005), and Florez, Carrion, Calero, Gershberg, and Castro (2001) indicate that the levels of participation in school decision-making are dependent largely on the leadership style of the Principal and that it is important that the Principal promotes democratic leadership in schools. Although the role of the Principal may vary according to the type of school, the Principal is still at the locus of decision-making and plays the critical role in management of decision-making within the school (see Rice & Schneider, 1992).

2.5.1 Teacher involvement

This section reviews studies which describe perceived benefits of teachers being involved in decision-making. However, the research is a little ambivalent and finding empirical research to support this is more difficult. Generally, there has been a trend in the literature towards focusing on teacher involvement, teacher empowerment and distributed leadership.

Educators have been concerned with the issue of teacher involvement in school decision-making for decades (Rice & Schneider, 1994). In the 1950s, the important rationale for teacher involvement in school decisions was its enhancement of teacher morale and work satisfaction (Duke, 2005). By the 1970s, Alutto and Belasco (1972, cited in Newcombe, McCormick, & Sharpe, 1997) noted that much of the research to that point had been based on the assumption that teacher involvement in school decisions increases educational outcomes, and by the 1980s, the idea of participative decision-making had developed into a strategy for improving the quality of instruction (Riesgraf, 2002; Duke, 2005).

More recently, Duke (2005) argues that most studies on teacher involvement in school decisions have studied its effects on teachers, and very limited studies have attempted to relate it to student achievement. Relationships have been found between teacher involvement in decision-making and their job satisfaction (Heck & Brandon, 1995; Rice & Schneider, 1994), instructional improvement and student achievement (Smylie, Lazarus, & Brownlee-Conyers, 1996), and positive effects on teachers' work (Harris, 2005). However, Marks and Louis (1997) conclude:

Empowering teachers may be a useful strategy to improve student achievement, but the relationship between empowerment and teacher performance is not as straightforward as some early proponents of empowerment believed. Overall, empowerment is an important but insufficient condition to obtain real changes in teachers' way of working and instructional practice. (p. 267)

One aspect of the leadership behaviour of the Principal is that of teacher empowerment (Chui, Sharpe, & McCormick, 1996). The nature of the relationship between principal and teachers influences teachers' willingness to be involved (Smylie, 1992), and if principals do not trust their teachers, (Tschannen-Moran, 2001) or if they perceive a

lack of teacher commitment to organizational goals, they will not share authority or responsibility (Newcombe, McCormick, & Sharpe, 1997). Duke (2005) points to the significant role of interpersonal skills of principals rather than the structure of the school or systems within the school in encouraging successful teacher involvement and Dufour and Eaker (1991, cited in Chui et al., 1996) see the Principal's willingness to share power with teachers as an important condition for empowering teachers.

Teachers' willingness to be involved in school decisions is also an important factor in that involvement (see Leonard & Leonard, 2001; Newcombe et al., 1997); they do not always want to be involved, particularly in financial decisions where they may not have the necessary skills or interest (Newcombe et al., 1997; Rice & Schneider, 1994). Conley, Schmidly, and Shedd (1988, cited in MacDonald, 2000) highlight other factors that impact on staff involvement in decision-making: their perception of their actual influence (Gronn, 2000); and the existence of a climate of trust and open communication in the school (Pashiardis, 1994).

In spite of the considerable literature supporting teacher involvement in school decision-making and its positive impact on teachers (Busher & Harris, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), there is little on how that involvement affects the quality, implementation, or outcomes of those decisions (Estler, 1988; Heck & Brandon, 1995; Smylie, 1992). Findings are inconclusive on whether teacher involvement in school decisions has positive results or not. The lack of a shared understanding among researchers as to what teacher involvement actually looks like is perhaps the reason for this lack of definitive evidence of its effects (Somech, 2002).

2.5.2 Parent involvement

There is a general view that it is valuable to have parental involvement in school activities and decision-making and there is considerable evidence that parents can bring particular skills and support to students and teachers (Akkok, 1999; Caplan, Hall, Lubin, & Fleming, 1997; Dorfman & Fisher, 2002; Davis, 2000; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Griffith, 2001; McConchie, 2004; Marshall, 2000; MacNeil & Patin, 2005; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2005; Nechyba, McEwan, & Older-Aguilar, 2006; Osterling, 2004; Philip, 2000; Pena, 2000; Telem, 2003; Thomson, 2001). Consequently, many countries have developed programs to encourage parents to

become more involved in their children's schools and education (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 1999; see also Hill et al., 1990; Leithwood, Allison, Drake, Laveault, McElheron-Hopkins, Wideman, & Zederayko, 2004; Marshall, 2000).

The trend of increased parental involvement in school councils and school boards has been accelerated in Australia since 1984 (Hill et al., 1990), and, according to a report by the NSW Department of Education and Training (2006, p. 1), "Parents are now more actively involved in the whole education process from supporting literacy activities in the early years to subject selection and career planning in the senior years of high school." Australian states are currently developing a range of programs to promote parental involvement (Chan & Chui, 1997; NSW Department of Education & Training, 2006).

Parental involvement includes a variety of activities from support for children's academic work at home to involvement in classroom and school decision-making. Results of a study by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) indicate:

Parental involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home, the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance. (p. 4; see also Epstein, 1995; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; NSW Department of Education & Training, 2006; Black, 1998)

Despite the above, however, opinion is not all positive and evidence is less than conclusive, particularly on the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement (Brough & Irvin, 2001; Bowen & Bowen, 1998; Carter, 2002). In fact, Akkok (1999) suggests:

Some believe that parents should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions regarding the curriculum, schedule, budget, and other matters related to what goes on in school. Others believe the governance of schools should be left to professional educators. The conflict between those who argue for parental

input in the decision-making process and those who advocate professional control of the schools is a major dilemma for policy makers. (p. 3)

According to McConchie (2004), parental involvement is usually unrepresentative and only a limited number of parents are members of school councils, parent associations, and canteen or fund-raising committees. Gamage (1996) reports evidence of difficulty in attracting parents to be public school council members in Australia. On the other hand, parent control in Christian parent-controlled schools is primarily implemented by school boards on behalf of other Christian parents in their community (Justins & Sanber, 2002) and Vryhof (1994, cited in Justins, 2002) found that strong parental involvement, a powerful educational vision, and supportive relationships with the rest of the community are some features of Reformed Christian schools.

Various factors impact on the degree and type of parental involvement in schools including socio-economic background of parents, mother's level of education, absence of mother, mother's psycho-social health, single parent status and, to a lesser degree, family ethnicity (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003); previous experience, conflicting pressures and expectations of parents (Davis, 2000); and a climate of trust, the backgrounds of parents involved, their capabilities and skills, and types of decisions involved (MacNeil & Patin, 2005). Barriers such as lack of time and financial knowledge, work commitment, busy life, and lack of interest impact strongly on the degree of parental involvement in school activities (Fan & Chen, 2001; McConchie, 2004; Macgregor, 2004) and sometimes principals and teachers feel that partnering with parents will diminish the Principal's authority and teachers' professionalism (Macgregor, 2004).

One of the challenging issues in parental involvement is the issue of equity, particularly, in a culturally diverse community such as in Australia (Thomson, 2001). Researchers argue that schools have to consider cultural and economic differences between families in order to enhance parental involvement programs (Fuller & Olsen, 1998) and overcome educational inequities (Macgregor, 2004).

There are some suggestions that parental influence can be driven by allowing parents to choose their children's school rather than through school governance (Robinson, Timperley, Parr, & McNaughton, 1994). Philip (2000), following a review of some

research on school choice programs in the United States, found that choice of schools supports parental involvement in their children's education, promotes parental involvement in school activities, and engenders greater parent satisfaction.

Moles (1997) recommends that schools must facilitate parental involvement in decision-making at the school and Telem (2003) indicates that the Principal is central in this process. (see also Australian Council of Education Centres, 1999; Mulford, Kendall, Bishop, & Hogan, 2000).

2.5.3 Community involvement

Many stakeholder groups have been arguing for some time that schools need to be more accountable in various ways, one of which is through broader community involvement. Empirical support for such involvement in relation to enhanced school effectiveness is lacking, however, and community influence on school policy and decision-making other than through parent representatives is limited, except in such schools as parent-controlled Christian schools.

Sanders defines community involvement in schools as, "connections between schools and individuals, businesses, and formal and informal organizations and institutions in a community" (2003, p. 162), and it is seen as an effective strategy for attaining educational goals in any community and society (Pushpanadham & Khirwadkar, 2002). Advocates of community involvement claim that such involvement is significant for effective school functioning, economic competitiveness, student well-being, and community health and development, and provides an opportunity for democratic and collaborative approaches to school functioning (Sanders and Epstein, 1998; Sanders, 2003); a higher commitment to the school's priorities and directions; and a more productive professional relationship among teachers, parents, and community (NSW Department of Education & Training, 2006).

There have been increasing movements, internationally, towards broad community involvement in public school governance (Bush & Gamage, 2001; Education Review Office, 1999; Robinson et al., 1994; Robinson & Ward, 2005; Sanders, 2003; Townsend, 1994). Similar trends are evident in Australia. Townsend (1994) states that there was extensive community involvement in early school decision-making and activities in Australia and that by the middle of the 19th century people in the local

communities had a major voice in what happened in their schools and all schools were maintained only with community support. However, by the 1870s, most schools had become state-controlled with centralized decision-making and administration, and local communities had become little more than fundraisers and support systems and this situation continued for a hundred years or more.

In the early 1900s, a number of "alternative", community-oriented schools were established with curricula having a wider range of goals than those of government schools. In 1973, the Karmel Report (cited in Townsend, 1994) to the Commonwealth government brought changes in the decision-making processes in public schools in terms of parent/community involvement. School councils became a mechanism for in the attempt giving stakeholders a role in decision-making (Sackney & Dibsiki, 1994), and vary in their activities and influence (Leithwood et al., 2004). While some councils are involved in important decisions, others are involved only in traditional activities such as fundraising, organizing parent events, and voluntary work within the school.

The literature also indicates that because of the Principal's central position of power, the Principal essentially dictates how community involvement might develop in their particular school (Cranston, 1994). Consequently, while the rationale behind school councils is to advise on the quality of teaching and learning, facilitate parent and community involvement in teaching and learning, and advise on issues which are important to the school and community (Collins, 2000), many councils may act only as a "rubber stamp" to the Principal's decisions (Kannapel, Moore, Coe & Aagaard, 1995).

Research is inconclusive on the effectiveness of school councils in relation to improving student achievement and school performance (Collins, 2000; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998b), and at best, their effects are only moderately positive (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). Nechyba et al. (2006) argue that in spite of the fact that there are considerable empirical studies on community involvement, only a limited number go beyond the recording of correlations between family/ community resources and child outcomes. There is clearly a need for further study in this area.

2.5.4 Student involvement

Students have limited say in some school decisions and often only relatively few students are involved in the form of committees and student organizations. They are

rarely involved in core decisions such as on pedagogy or school organization. Many (Cook-Sather, 2002; Fletcher, 2004, 2005; Lee & Smith, 1993; Leithwood et al., 1993) advocate more meaningful student involvement and believe that it has many benefits for both students and schools, although the literature does not confirm these in relation to student outcomes and school effectiveness.

Fletcher (2004) argues that student participation in school decision-making is increasing in the United States, England, Australia, Norway, and many other western countries and an increasing number of writers have supported the idea of a movement from traditional student roles to involving students in classroom pedagogy decisions and school leadership (Fielding, 2001; Fletcher, 2004; Rudduck & Flutter, 2000).

Several studies (Fletcher, 2004; Lee & Smith, 1993; Leithwood et al., 1993) indicate a positive relationship between student participation in decision-making and improvement in their academic and non-academic performance. Some authors emphasize that since administrators have to respond to a diverse student population, they cannot deny students a voice and involvement in decisions, and that this brings growth, responsibility, and a sense of commitment to the decisions (Cushman, 2003; Rubin & Silva, 2003); greater connectedness and sense of community within the school, a reduction in vandalism, and overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude (Mulford & Johns, 2004). Others (Evertson, & Emmer, 1982; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979) argue that one of the main priorities of an effective school is promoting students' independence and creating ways to develop their sense of responsibility. The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2001) suggests that schools can prepare students for a lifetime of important involvement in their society and nation by encouraging meaningful student involvement.

Fletcher (2004, pp. 13-14) argues that, "Meaningful student involvement engages students as active and empowered partners in inclusive, interdependent school change", and that, "Meaningful student involvement engages students as systemic decision-makers, partnering with educators to make decisions throughout the school system, from curricula, calendar year planning, building design, to budgeting, hiring, and more." As Cook-Sather (2002) argues, in meaningful student involvement students validate and are authorized to express their own ideas, opinions, knowledge, and educational experiences in order to improve the school, and Mulford and Silins (2003) indicate that

student involvement and engagement are related directly and indirectly to improved retention and academic achievement.

In spite of many arguments for greater student involvement, many schools remain reluctant to give students a real voice in school decisions and students are overlooked and sometimes denied any role in their school's improvement programs (Cook-Sather, 2002; Fletcher, 2004, 2005). Blasé and Blasé (1999) report that most principals who share governance indicate that they struggle with the design and implementation of student governance structures. In other words, although many principals may believe in broad participation, the avenue for student involvement in decision-making is narrow.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

As a result of the review of literature and in relation to the study questions, the following conceptual framework has been developed to represent the study.

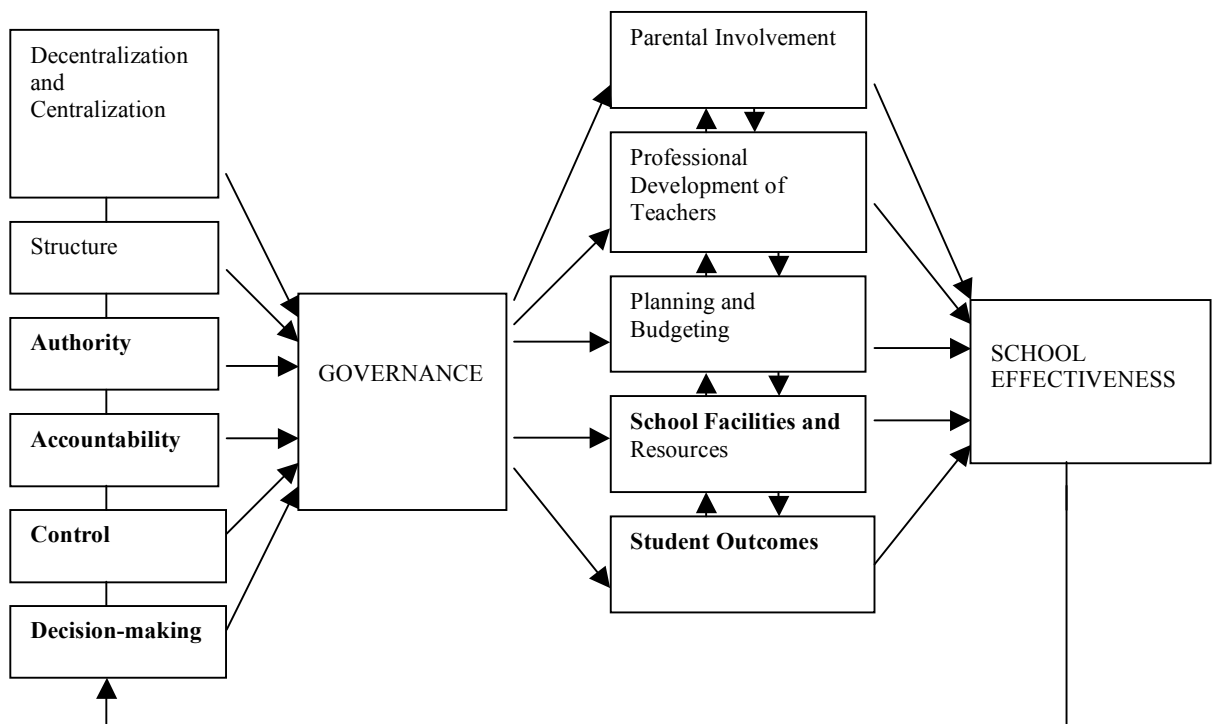


Figure 2.2 The Conceptual Framework of the Study

This framework reflects research findings that identify a number of major factors which impact upon school governance and interact with each other in that impact: the degree to which the school operates autonomously or to which decision-making authority is retained by external bodies is a major determinant of the authority and control of the

principal and staff within the school. Accountability to other stakeholders in such areas as resource allocation and budgeting, communication, and student outcomes is an important area of governance in any school.

Governance, in turn, plays a major part in determining the effectiveness of the school and the literature reveals a number of major indications of this effectiveness. This study focuses on several of these: the nature and extent of parental involvement in school decision-making and in the school generally; the quality and degree of teachers' professional development; planning, budgeting and resource utilization; and student outcomes, academic and otherwise.

The effectiveness of the school in turn influences the major structural and process factors which shape the school governance and itself impacts on decision-making in relation to those factors.

2.7 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to examine and critically review literature related to the research questions which framed this study on school governance and school effectiveness: forms of governance; governance and school effectiveness; leadership and school effectiveness; and stakeholder involvement. The following key points emerged from the literature reviewed.

The current trend in many countries is towards more school-based management in order to enhance the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of public education, while private schools have always tended to be governed in this way. Different factors impact on school effectiveness and school governance is only one of these and there are common constraints on decision-making among schools despite different governance structures.

Among school-level factors, the classroom teacher has the greatest impact on student achievement. However, while some studies limit measures of school effectiveness to student academic outcomes, others believe affective indicators are also important. A positive school climate has also been shown to be an important contributor in the success of school governance and effectiveness.

The Principal has a vital role in school governance and decision-making and an indirect, but important impact on student achievement and school effectiveness through his/her direct effect on other school factors such as school climate, which in turn may have an effect on student achievement.

Distributed leadership and the Principal's personal qualities are important influences on his/her role in governance and decision-making and on the involvement of stakeholders in the school. Many authors advocate a spread of involvement in decision-making to include teachers, students, parents, and community, although they disagree on the extent to which this is achievable. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence that such involvement actually makes a difference to student outcomes and school effectiveness.

The following chapter presents details of the methodology utilized in this study.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between governance, decision-making, and school effectiveness. This relationship was investigated in four Australian schools with varying governance arrangements – one government school, one independent Catholic school, one Christian parent-controlled school, and one Catholic systemic school in New South Wales (NSW). This chapter discusses and provides justification for the chosen methodology, describes participants, the data collection methods, and the data analysis procedures used to answer the research questions. This chapter also describes the development and final form of both the questionnaire and the interview instruments and provides a rationale for the theoretical framework that underpinned both.

3.2 Research Design

After consideration of various approaches, a multiple case study approach was regarded as the most appropriate for this study. The case studies chosen were four high schools in Wollongong, NSW. Each school had different governance arrangements from centralized to decentralized governance. To gain a greater insight into the issues, the researcher collected information by questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and review of key school documents. This contributed in the triangulation of the findings and increased their trustworthiness.

3.3 Research Questions

This study addressed one major question and two main sub-questions.

Main Research Question:

1. What is the major impact (if any) of school governance, particularly decision-making processes, on selected aspects of school effectiveness?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the governance (decision-making) arrangement for the school?
2. What is the impact of that governance (decision-making) arrangement on: parental involvement; planning and budgeting; professional development of teachers; resources and facilities; and student outcomes?

3.4 Multiple Case Study Method

According to Krueger, Casey, Donner, Kirsch, and Maack (2001), a multiple case study method includes the investigation of a limited number of naturally occurring cases. Yin (2003, p. 1) points out that a case study, "is but one of several ways of doing research, however, it is likely to be used when the focus of the research study is on phenomena within some real-life context." Tellis (1997) explains that case studies are designed to bring out the details from the perspective of the participants by using multiple sources of data and are known as a triangulated research strategy. The six multiple sources identified by Yin (1994) are: documentation, archival, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. McMillan (2000, p. 271) refers to a case study as an, "in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programs, social groups, communities, individuals, or other bounded systems." Stake (2003) suggests that because case study is specific, unique, and is undertaken in a surrounded system, it is different from other research approaches.

The requirements and inflexibility of other forms of research make case studies the only viable alternative in some instances. According to Giorgi (2005), case studies do not need to have a minimum number of cases, or to randomly "select" cases. The researcher is called upon to work with the situation that presents itself in each case. Yin (1994, p.2) points out that, "generalization of results, from either single or multiple designs, is made to theory and not to populations. Multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern-matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory." Tellis (1997) believes that case study can be seen to satisfy the three principles of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining.

Stake (1995) states that various researchers follow different purposes for studying cases. Both Yin (2003) and Merriam (1998) state that a researcher conducts a case study with

one or more of five purposes in mind. These purposes can be classified as: particularistic, heuristic, exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Mertler (2002) defines descriptive case studies as studies which attempt to provide a detailed recreation of context, meanings, and intentions focused on a particular instance.

A frequent criticism of case study methodology is its dependence on a single case or a few cases and its inability to provide a generalizing conclusion. Yin (1993) presented Giddens' view that case methodology was "microscopic" because it "lacked a sufficient number" of cases. However, because of the limitations of quantitative studies, there is a renewed interest in the application of case study. In fact, case study helps the researcher to get deeper and richer information from all selected sites.

In this case study therefore, both quantitative and qualitative methods are utilized to investigate principals', teachers', parents', and students', views, ideas and opinions on the relationships between governance, decision-making, and school effectiveness (see discussion on 3.6 following).

Each school was considered as a single case study. To gain a greater insight into the issues, the researcher interviewed stakeholders and reviewed key school documents. As a consequence of utilising the multiple case study method this researcher here could collect data that were more reliable because examining a number of cases on the same subject gave greater validity to the study.

3.5 Qualitative/Quantitative Approaches

Research in education can utilize both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, sometimes together. These terms refer to two different research traditions, each with its own terminology, methods, and techniques. While qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, quantitative research uses experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations (Hoepfl, 1997). Neither of these methods is no less significant than other methods and both qualitative and quantitative researchers use careful, systematic methods to gather high-quality data. However, differences in the styles of research and the types of data mean that they approach the investigative process differently (Neuman, 2000; McMillan, 2004).

In spite of the fact that some standard approaches to collecting and interpreting qualitative data exist, qualitative research is a relatively unconstrained approach to studying phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It stresses processes and meanings that are not thoroughly examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, strength, or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), and is strongly dependent on the researcher conducting the study. Indeed, the researcher decides on the type of data to be gathered and the methods used to analyze those data ((Libarkin & Kurdziel, 2002). In contrast, quantitative research stresses the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and utilizes a set of narrowly defined research methodologies. The tools and techniques used for gathering and analyzing data are well established, and the validity and reliability of the study's results typically depend on its methodologies (Libarkin & Kurdziel, 2002).

Morris (1991, p. 84) argues, "Survey's quantitative instruments can show only the external face of values and cannot capture the richness, complexity, and depth of value questions. It pays no attention to levels of meaning, nuances in language, or lived values." Johnson and Christensen (2004) discuss the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research methods and provide a rationale for mixed methods:

Quantitative research typically is less useful for exploring new phenomena or for documenting participants' internal perspectives and personal meanings about phenomena in their lives. Qualitative research is typically based on small, non-random samples and often is used more for exploratory or discovery purposes than for hypothesis testing and validation purposes, which means that qualitative research findings are often not very generalizable beyond the local research participants. Because of weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research, more and more researchers are advocating mixed methods, which combine quantitative and qualitative research techniques into a single research study and improve the overall quality of research. (p. 410)

The following table summarizes the main characteristics of quantitative and qualitative methods:

Table 3.1 Predispositions of Quantitative and Qualitative Modes of Inquiry (Glesne & Peskhin, 1992).

3.6 Mixed Method Research

According to the Human Research Ethics Handbook (Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, 2005), in order to provide a well-formed understanding of the research topic from a number of perspectives, many scholars recommend mixed methodologies. Indeed, qualitative methods combined with quantitative ones can provide particularly rich and robust data. Mixed method is the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language to answer research questions in a single study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Sale, Lohfeld, and Brazil (2002) explain two important reasons for using mixed methods: first, to achieve triangulation or cross-validation; and, second to gain complementary results by using the strengths of one method to improve the other.

Although some authors claim that two methodologies cannot be amalgamated (Smith & Heshusius, 1986), because mixed-method designs incorporate techniques from both the quantitative and qualitative research traditions, they can be used to answer questions that could not be answered in any other way. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), mixed methods have particular value when a problem has a complex educational and social context. In other words, when the purpose of the research is complex, it is necessary to have multiple questions, which frequently necessitates the utilization of mixed methods (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003). In fact, using both methods allows the researcher to incorporate the strengths of each approach. Researchers (Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 2005) believe that aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods combined in a mixed method approach are more appropriate and enable the researcher to collect richer and more valid data.

Examples of mixed method research involving studies with governance arrangements include:

- Nir (2002) reports a study in the Israeli system of education in 1998. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of school-based management on teacher commitment. The study used a mixed method for data gathering, comprising questionnaires and interviews.
- Walker (2002), in 2000 conducted a study on school-based management in thirty of New Jersey's poorest districts and used mixed method approaches comprising questionnaires and focused group discussions.
- Timperley and Robinson (2003) studied partnership as an intervention strategy in self-managing schools in New Zealand. The data were collected from 26 state primary, intermediate, and middle schools with mixed methods. The data instruments were questionnaires, interviews, and observations.
- Evans and Schwab (1995) used a mixed method approach in their study titled *Finishing High School and Starting College: Do Catholic Schools Make a Difference?* The researchers used questionnaires and observations to obtain the data.

This study employed a mixed method approach to take advantages of both the quantitative and qualitative research methods and to generate data rich in detail and embedded in context. Additionally, since the study investigated a complex phenomenon – the relationship between school governance and school effectiveness – it was deemed

appropriate to collect data from a variety of perspectives, using different data-gathering approaches incorporating descriptive statistics, survey questions, document review, and interviews. Following detailed coding of responses in the qualitative approach, descriptive statistics were also applied in the analysis of distribution and frequency of types of response.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) classify six major methods of data collection in mixed method: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation, and secondary or already existing data (such as personal and official documents, physical data, and archived research data). Several of these were utilized in this study.

The questionnaires and interviews with principals, teachers, parents, and students were the primary sources of data. The quantitative data were gathered from questionnaire and the qualitative data from the interviews. In addition, supplementary data were collected through the review of schools' policy documents, Newsletters, Annual Reports, School Plans and Management Plans. A time line illustrating the data collection sequence is shown in Figure 3.1.

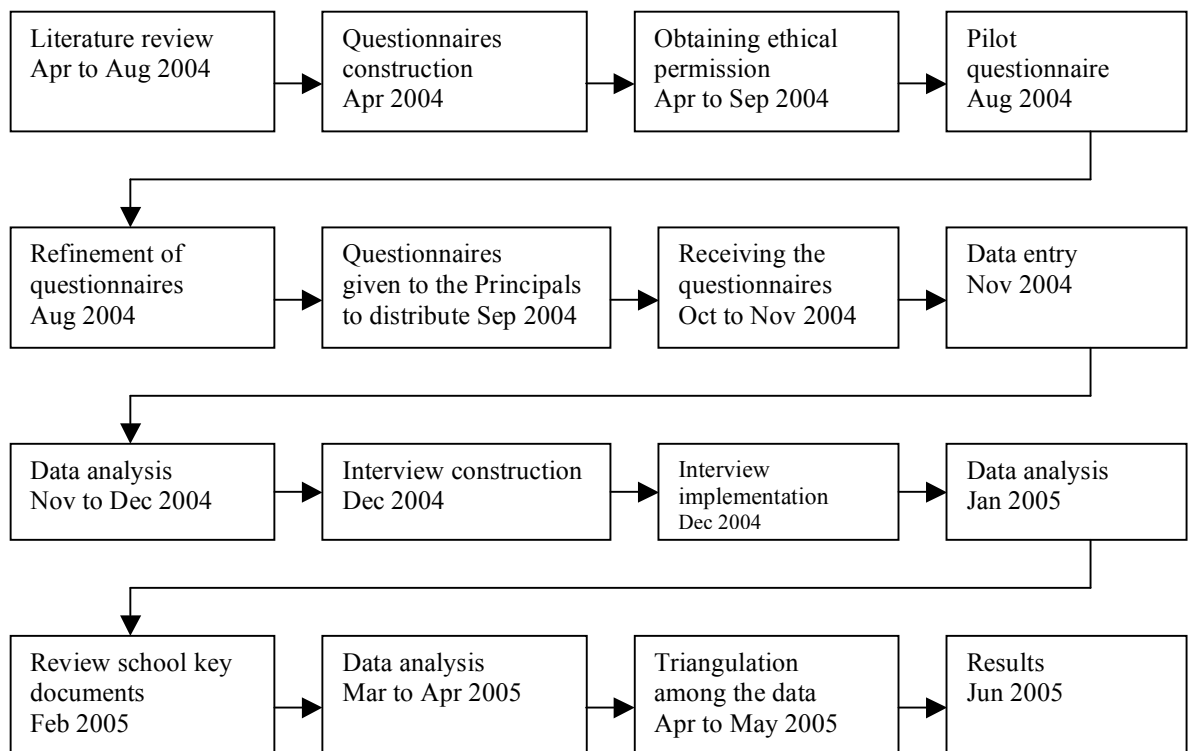


Figure 3.1 Steps in Data Collection

3.8 Ensuring Credibility/ Trustworthiness (Triangulation)

The use of multiple data sources helped to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the research. DePoy and Gitlin (1998) state that when naturalistic researchers conduct research, one of the major concerns is ensuring that they obtain an in-depth, rich description and explanation of the phenomena they are studying. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that a variety of measures should be used throughout a study to ensure the trustworthiness of the data gathering and analysis phases.

Triangulation is one of the techniques which is used to ensure the accuracy of collected data. McMillan (2000) notes that the use of multiple methods of data collection is also referred to as triangulation. Mays and Pope (2000) explain that triangulation compares the results of two or more various methods of data collection to find patterns of convergence to expand or confirm an overall interpretation, and DePoy and Gitlin (1998) describe triangulation as an approach used in naturalistic research when one source of information is checked against one or more different kinds of sources to find out the correctness of 'hypothetical understanding'. In other words, triangulation is the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993), in relation to different types of triangulation, state:

Triangulation leads to credibility by using different or multiple data (time, space, person), methods (observation, interview, videotapes, photographs, documents), investigators (single or multiple), or theory (single versus multiple perspectives of analysis). (pp. 137-138)

In this study triangulation occurred when data from the survey questions on the participation of different stakeholders in school decision-making was checked by comparing responses to related questions in the questionnaires with the interview responses and related documents for consistency of the responses. Not only were the responses compared for different categories of respondents in one method of data collection, but responses were also compared across different data collection methods. In this study, internal consistencies in the data were checked by cross-referencing the data. For example, the questionnaire data were crosschecked with the data from the interviews, and the document analysis. Of the four basic types of triangulation

(Janesick, 2003), data triangulation and methodological triangulation were used in this study. Data were collected from the Principals, teachers, students, and the parents of four schools with different governance arrangements in 2004. Methodological triangulation occurred in this study by using a number of data collection methods. Whilst these methods have been previously described, the following figure captures how they interact to add credibility to the study's findings:

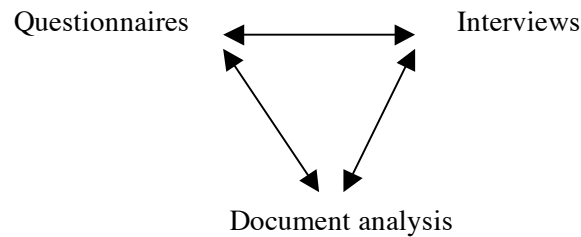


Figure 3.2 Methodological Triangulation

Since this study is a case study, any generalization of the results to a wider population is carried out very cautiously. In fact, the results pertain only to the cohort of the four schools described in the study, although there may be wider implications of the findings of the study.

3.9 The Sampling Technique

Most sampling methods are purposive because they approach the sampling problem with a specific purpose in mind. Reid (1996) claims that in qualitative research small and purposive samples are used because they can provide important information. Purposive sampling was used in this study because of the decision to study schools with different governance arrangements. According to Mertens (1998), researchers select a purposive sample because of certain characteristics. Silverman (2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) believes that purposive sampling provides an opportunity to the researchers to seek out individuals where the process being studied are most likely to occur. For this reason, four contrasting New South Wales high schools – one state government school; one independent Catholic school; one independent Christian parent-controlled school; and one Catholic systemic school – were chosen to enable the researcher to study schools with different degrees of decentralization.

Government School

This school is part of the system of government schools and subject to the authority, decision-making and accountability arrangements of the largely centralized NSW education system.

Christian Parent-Controlled School

This school is an independent school established by parents. Parental involvement in the education of their children is paramount and most of the Christian families associated with this school come from the Reformed, Evangelical or Pentecostal (Protestant) traditions.

Independent Catholic School

This school was established by a Religious Order of Nuns. The Order exercises certain authority over the school, but many management decisions are made by a Board.

Catholic Systemic School

This school was established by the Catholic Education Office, which operates by delegation for the Catholic Bishop.

Within each school, selection of a sample to whom the survey was administered occurred as follows:

1. Principal

The Principal from each selected school.

2. Staff

All the teaching staff were provided with a copy of the survey and invited to complete it.

3. Students³

All students were selected by the Principal.⁴ The surveys were completed by students including:

- a. Two student leaders (selected by Principal);
- b. Four students involved in student leadership activities (from any class);

³ While it is not normally expected that students have extensive knowledge of questions about school governance and decision-making, the students approached here were in Years 10 and 11 and mostly were leaders who had some appreciation of school governance and school leadership.

⁴ The researcher wrote a letter and guided the Principals about the method of randomly selecting participants. However, the researcher could not ascertain whether the selected participants were representative or not.

- c. Fourteen students selected from year 11.

4. Parents

All surveyed parents were selected by the Principal. They included:

- a. Two leaders of a parent organization e.g., the President and Secretary of the Parents and Citizens Association;
- b. Four other parent members of a school association or committee (Selected by the Principal);
- c. Fourteen other parents of year 11 students- who participated in the study.

Samples for interview were the Principal, 2 teachers, 2 students, and 2 parents from each school.

3.10 Participants

The participants in the research were the key school stakeholders including principals, teachers, parents, and students from years 7 to 12. The reason why these groups were chosen as participants was that many of their members had different perspectives, acknowledging that some of them might have little knowledge of some aspects of governance. The numbers of selected participants per school were twenty parents, all teachers, and twenty students from each school for the questionnaire and the Principal, two teachers, two parents, and two students for the interview. McMillan (2000) points out that in the most common type of mixed method, research data are collected in two stages. First, quantitative data are collected. Second, depending on the results, qualitative data are accumulated to clarify, elaborate on, or explain the quantitative findings. The following table shows numbers of participants for each instrument of data collection from each school:

Table 3.2 Participants

Schools	Participants				
	Questionnaire			Interview	
		Intended	Actual	Intended	Actual
School A	Principal	1	1	1	1
	Teachers	72	26	2	2
	Students	20	20	2	2
	Parents	20	4	2	2
School B	Principal	1	1	1	1
	Teachers	26	4	2	2
	Students	20	7	2	2
	Parents	20	7	2	2
School C	Principal	1	1	1	1
	Teachers	74	27	2	2
	Students	20	16	2	2
	Parents	20	1	2	2
School D	Principal	1	1	1	1
	Teachers	58	26	2	2
	Students	20	20	2	2
	Parents	20	4	2	2

3.11 Questionnaires

The questionnaire can be designed and used to gather large quantities of data from a diversity of respondents. It has several benefits over other forms of data collection in that it can be simply and quickly analyzed once completed, and is usually inexpensive (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

In this study participants completed a survey instrument titled "The Impact of Decision-making Arrangements on School Effectiveness" (Appendix A, B, C, & D). The questionnaires covered demographic information and six areas of the study: governance arrangements, parental involvement, planning and budgeting, professional development of teachers, and student outcomes. Each category of respondent had a separate questionnaire and completion of each questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes. The questionnaires included closed and open-ended questions. Data in relation to the demographic information were nominal. Responses were used to gain information about the Principal, teachers, students, and parents: their years of experience, position in the school, educational qualifications, parents' occupation, and the level of students' class. The questionnaires were divided into five parts.

Part One of the questionnaire required responses to ten different questions, which referred to various decision-making arrangements in the school and their impact on school effectiveness. The constructs of these questions reflected various governance

arrangements in schools, which were distilled from the literature and from discussions with the doctoral supervisors. Questions in this section were closed and related to: constraints on decision-making at the school level; the most important levels for the most important decisions; the involvement of different groups in school decision-making; adequacy of involvement in the school decision-making processes; adequacy of decision-making processes in the school; decision-making processes and impact on school effectiveness; concentration of key decision-making functions at the school level; adequacy of the Principal's authority; and adequacy of teachers' autonomy.

Part Two concerned the respondents' views regarding levels of parental involvement in school decision-making, different parental involvement opportunities, and the impact of the governance arrangements on parental involvement in the school. Questions were based on factors highlighted in the literature. This part consisted of four closed and one open-ended question. Closed questions included: adequacy of the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making; the extent of encouragement of active parental involvement by the Principal; different school/ parent interaction activities in the school; and the percentage of parents active in the school activities. The open question explored views about barriers to full and active parental involvement in the school.

Part Three sought information in relation to the impact of governance arrangements on planning and budgeting. Questions in this section were closed, related to: participants in planning and budgeting decision-making; adequacy of opportunities for involvement in planning and budgeting; percentage of government funding of teacher salaries; the extent of government funding of the operating costs of the school; monitoring of the implementation of the school budget; and adequacy of the Principal's authority to manage the school budget.

Part Four explored information concerning the impact of different governance arrangements on resources and facilities at the school level. To obtain quantitative and qualitative data, Likert-style and open-ended questions were used. Questions related to: the adequacy of physical facilities in the school in comparison to others; and the adequacy of decision-making arrangements in the school to allow stakeholders to have an impact on physical facilities in the school.

Part Five was designed to elicit the perceptions of respondents on the impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on student outcomes in areas such as attendance, retention, and examination results. This part included one question with three sections. Each section included one yes or no question followed by an open-ended question to gain further information with regard to the respondents' perceptions.

3.12 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaires

The piloting of all questionnaires was conducted by giving five questionnaires from each type to a group of principals, teachers, students, and parents respectively. Principals' and teachers' questionnaires were piloted by postgraduate students of the University of Wollongong who were principals and teachers. Some of the staff members of the University's Faculty of Education and their children were used for piloting parents' and students' questionnaires. All agreed to discuss the research instruments after their administration on the understanding that the results would not be part of the actual study and would not be recorded.

The researcher asked respondents to examine the questionnaires for readability, relevant terminology, clarity of questions and suitability and adequacy of response categories. As a result of these preliminary trials, some questions were reworded and reformatted. To assist in the refinement of the questionnaires and to overcome the problems associated with the use of more closed questions, interviews utilizing open-ended questioning were held with principals, teachers, students, and parents in the pilot study.

To pilot the interview, two faculty members were individually interviewed. The results of the pilot of the interview were satisfactory. The members found the vocabulary appropriate; they felt that they understood each question, and that the length of time taken for the interview was within the time limit specified.

3.13 Gaining Access and Ethical Clearance

This researcher observed all ethical considerations to ensure privacy, anonymity, sensitivity, confidentiality, and to guard against betrayal and deception. Because the participants of the study were human subjects, the following measures were taken.

1. Approval for the study was obtained from the University of Wollongong/ Illawarra Area Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix E), the NSW Department of Education and Training in the case of the government school (Appendix F), the Catholic Education Office Diocese of Wollongong in the case of the Catholic systemic school (Appendix G), and the Principals of the independent Christian parent-controlled and independent Catholic schools.
2. Principals, teachers, and parents of students were informed of the purpose, confidentiality (Appendices J, K, L, & M) and processes of the research and their consent was obtained (Appendices O, P, R, & S).
3. The students were informed of the purpose, confidentiality, (Appendix N) and process of the research and written consent was obtained from them and their parents (Appendices T & U).
4. The recorded data excluded any information associated with personal identification.
5. The recorded interviews and questionnaires were kept in the University of Wollongong in a secure cabinet.
6. Participating schools were not identified by name or compared with one another.

Each participant received a consent form and information sheet about the process before data gathering commenced. The information sheet also included an outline of ethical issues relating to confidentiality, freedom to withdraw from the study and access to findings. All agreed "to participate in the study after being informed of its purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, alternative procedures, and limits of confidentiality" (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 102).

3.14 Distribution and Return of the Questionnaires

A package consisting of questionnaires for principals, teachers, students, and parents along with covering letters for each respondent, letters from the NSW Department of Education and Training's Division of Planning and Innovation, and the University of Wollongong/ Illawarra Area Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee, and

reply-paid envelopes was delivered to the Principal of the public school through the post. The Principals of the Catholic independent school and the Catholic systemic school received these documents as well as a letter from the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Wollongong. The Principal of the independent Christian parent-controlled school received questionnaires with covering letters for each respondent, the letter of the University of Wollongong/ Illawarra Area Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee as well as reply-paid envelopes. All questionnaires were without name to reduce the likelihood of individual respondents being identified by the researcher or records being kept at the school level as to who completed each questionnaire.

3.15 Interviews

Interviews are employed as methods of data collection in most research designs. Interviews can range from unstructured to structured. They are useful for collecting detailed information or information from a limited number of people. According to Stake (1995), case study researchers use interviews to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others. In addition, interviews give people an opportunity to explain responses or give responses that may not have been predicted. The degree to which interviews are structured depends on the research topic and purpose, resources, methodological standards and preferences, and the type of information sought as determined by the research objective (Sarantakos, 1998). Rubin and Rubin (1995, p. 23) describe the qualitative interview method as an, "intentional way of learning about people's feeling, thoughts and experiences." In fact, this enables the researcher to determine the participants' perspectives on the issues, which contributes to the richness of the data included in the study.

In this study the purpose of the interview was to feed back information obtained from the surveys to seek comments, confirmation, and additional information. The interviews used a semi-structured schedule based on the study's research questions and guided by its conceptual framework. Semi-structured interviews, based upon the outcomes of the questionnaire, were held with principals, teachers, parents, and students. All interviewees were asked the same questions, but there were some additional questions derived from the survey responses (Appendices V, W, Y, & Z). These interviews allowed great flexibility and depth of investigation (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003).

Interviews were conducted at pre-arranged times in private. Proposed questions for the interview, information sheets, and consent forms were made available to the Principal prior to the interview taking place. The questions were different for the different categories of interviewees, but the same order was used for all participants in each category. Rubin and Rubin (1995) point to three different types of questions in an interview: main questions, probes, and follow-up questions. The interviews here, which were conducted by the researcher, used a range of these types of questions. Furthermore, all interviews were taped to record exactly what was said by the Principals, teachers, parents, and students. This increased the validity of the interview as a method of enquiry (Brenner, 1998). All taped interviews were transcribed.

Each interview was arranged in two parts. First the interviewer gave some brief information in relation to the project and the interviewee's role in it. The participant signed the consent forms approved by the University of Wollongong/ Illawarra Area Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee and NSW DET Planning and Innovation in the case of the public school, and the Catholic Education Office in the case of Catholic schools. Each participant was then interviewed individually for approximately 30 minutes. Most questions were open-ended questions, which were extended by follow-up questions. Interviewees were then asked to suggest anything that should be added or highlighted in order to ensure that the interview responses would be clear, relevant to and engaging with the impact of governance arrangements on school effectiveness.

3.16 Data Analysis

Punch (1998) claims that there is a wide diversity of approaches to qualitative data analysis. This means that the choice of analytic tools and/ or procedures depends on the purpose of the research, which in turn determines the paradigm the research is ultimately located within.

In this study, data analysis was a continuous and on-going process. As data were collected from a number of research participants using a variety of data collection methods, the researcher was faced with a wealth of data to organize and analyze. Since organization of the data needed to be both systematic and purposeful, it was organized into four folders, one for each of the cases. To facilitate the development of individual

case studies, questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, and relevant documents were collated within each folder.

Within each folder data analysis was divided into three sections: quantitative, qualitative, and documentary analysis. The first data analysis was the analysis of the responses to the questionnaires. These responses were initially analyzed using the Research Questions as the framework and the software SPSS (Blanksby & Barber, 2006) was utilized to categorize the frequency and percentage of responses. Research questions required the use of descriptive statistics based on percentage response to questions where nominal and ordinal data were appropriate. For example, the researcher determined the frequency and percentage of respondents who believed that the level of parental involvement in the school activities was adequate or inadequate. This analysis of data was then used to formulate the questions to be posed in the interview such as, "Why do you think the level of parental involvement in the school is inadequate?"

The responses given to the interview questions were also analyzed using the NVivo software program (Bazeley & Richards, 2000) to categorize the data in terms of the initial research questions. NVivo is a program for qualitative data analysis which helped the researcher to classify interview responses in different categories according to the interview questions. Indeed, the researcher assigned a code in the form of descriptive words for each question and all answers to one question or similar responses within the answers to other questions in the forms of sentences or paragraphs were located under the same code or category. For instance, the code for the first question was "school autonomy" and all questions which directly or indirectly referred to autonomy were located within this category. Finally, the responses to the questionnaires and in the interviews were compared, related to key school documents where appropriate, and conclusions were drawn.

3.17 Document Analysis

Sarantakos (1998) claims that social research has always used documents as a source of information, either as the only method or in combination with other methods. Researchers describe document analysis as secondary analysis since it is not primarily developed for the study in which it is used. Documents can be print or non-print materials (Merriam, 1998). The types of data sources used in document analysis include

a variety of items, such as "letters, agendas, minutes, administrative reports, files, books, diaries, budgets, news clippings, photographs, lists of employees/pupils, etc" (Burns, 1996, p.372).

Document analysis is an important mechanism for checking the validity of information derived from other sources. It can contribute a different level of analysis from other methods, for instance, on the gap between official policy and practice (Bryman, 1989). Documents are rarely used as the only method of data collection. Many researchers use document analysis to provide additional data and to check on findings obtained from other sources of data (see Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006; Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997).

Maxwell (1996) identifies the greatest advantage of document analysis to be the unobtrusive nature of data collection. Several researchers (Creswell, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004) consider documentary evidence to provide stronger insights about the phenomenon under study, by cross-validating, corroborating and augmenting evidence gathered from other sources, therefore contributing to data triangulation.

The selection of documents in this case study was generally based on the research questions. For example, for the question regarding student outcomes some documents such as schools' annual reports and newsletters were checked to identify any data on student achievement. For data on participation of different stakeholders generally and in planning and budgeting decisions, the researcher studied documents such as newsletters, annual reports, and school plans. The collection and analysis of relevant documents such as school plans, management plans, annual reports, newsletters, budgeting and school policy documents were used to supplement other data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews and provided more information about the school governance arrangements, particularly decision-making and school effectiveness.

3.18 Summary

A naturalistic paradigm of inquiry utilizing a case study framework and multiple data collection methods was adopted for this study as it best suited the purpose and research questions framing the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance arrangements (particularly decision-making) impacts upon the effectiveness of the school with reference to: parental involvement,

planning and budgeting, professional development of teachers, school facilities and resources, and student outcomes. A range of data collection methods, and a series of procedures to ensure credibility and trustworthiness were applied in case studies of one government school, one independent Catholic school, one independent Christian parent-controlled school, and one Catholic systemic school. Results are reported in the following chapter.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the relationship between governance, decision-making, and selected aspects of school effectiveness including parental involvement, planning and budgeting, professional development of teachers, school facilities and resources, and student outcomes. Four types of high school each with varying governance arrangements – one government school, one independent Christian parent-controlled school, one independent Catholic school, and one Catholic systemic school – within the Illawarra region, were involved.

Data were collected by questionnaire, interview, and analysis of documents. The respondents answered questions in relation to the extent and type of parental involvement, the processes of planning and budgeting, the opportunities and extent of professional development for teachers, decision-making, school resources, and student achievement within their respective schools.

The data analyses are each divided into two sections. The first part is the analysis of questionnaire responses. These responses were initially analyzed using the research questions as the framework, and the software programs SPSS and NVivo were utilized to categorize the range of responses. This analysis was then used to formulate the questions to be posed in the interviews. The responses given to the interview questions were also analyzed using NVivo. Finally, the responses to the questionnaire and to the interview were triangulated and conclusions drawn.

The results are organised by the major areas into which the survey was divided. These areas are: the governance arrangements (decision-making) of the school; the impact of the governance arrangements on parental involvement; the impact of governance arrangements on the planning and budgeting; the impact of governance arrangements on professional development of teachers; the impact of governance arrangements on the resources and facilities; and the impact of governance arrangements on the student

outcomes. The results from the interviews with the school Principals, teachers, students, and parents and the review of school key documents are organised into these areas.

In each area, the number of the participants who responded in a particular way is indicated. Since each school was a separate case study, the analysis for each school is reported separately.

4.2 Case Study One: School A (Government High School)

School A, a government school, was established in 1966 to serve six local communities. Three communities represent new housing divisions with predominantly middle class, dual-income families. In other communities many low-income families are living in "Housing Commission" houses and it is estimated that by 2009, up to 25% of residents will be housed in this way. An indication that this school is in an area of socio-economic disadvantage is its participation in the Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP) initiative of NSW Department of Education and Training. This is means-tested and gives schools extra funds to address areas of deficit. Many students are from different nationalities and come from homes where languages other than English are spoken. The school is widely recognised for its innovative student welfare programs.

The school has a Parents and Citizens Association. This is open to all parents and they participate in the Parents and Citizens Association voluntarily. The school tries to involve parents in teams and community approaches. According to the school Annual Report in 2004, a small but very committed group of parents regularly attend each Parents and Citizens Association meeting with many insightful and constructive suggestions acted upon. There is a very good attendance at the Parent-Teacher Night, Curriculum Awareness Night, presentation nights, and Year seven Parent Afternoon Tea. The Principal considers the Parents and Citizens Association as a body that he can expect to ratify the significant decisions the school has made. The school plan, school budget, and school directions are all ratified by the Parents and Citizens Association before they are implemented. Although some parents participate in the Parents and Citizens Association, they are not representative of all parents in the school.

The Principal uses collaborative decision-making and parents, staff, and sometimes students have representatives in different decision-making committees. The school has a

student population of 1030. Overall, there are 102 full-time and part-time staff who include 12 school executives, 69 teachers, three part-time teachers, three para-professional full-time staff, five para-professional part-time staff, and nine full-time support staff.

There are 45 classrooms, six science laboratories, and four computer laboratories, 80 computers in the computer rooms, four computers in each classroom, one library, two specialist rooms, one gymnasium/multi purpose hall, two ovals, one shelter area, one canteen, five toilet blocks, and seven toilets in each block.

Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 provide a profile of the sample of respondents.

Table 4.1 Respondents Sample Size

Participants	Survey Sample Size	Survey Respondents	Interview Sample Size	Interview Respondents
Principal	1	1	1	1
Teachers	72	26	2	2
Students	20	20	2	2
Parents	20	4	2	2

Table 4.2 Full-time Staff Information

Position	Number	Gender		Education Qualification			Years of Service							
		Male	Female	BA	MA/MSc	PhD	6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18-21	21-24	24-27	27-30
Principal	1			1			1							
Teachers	26	8	15	23	2	1`	4	2	1	1	1	2	2	3

Table 4.3 Parent Respondent Information

Number	Gender		Occupation				Education Qualification				Active Member of the Parent Association	Member of the executive of the Parent Association
	Male	Female	Nursing	Service	Teaching	Domestic	SC	HSC	BA	MA/MSc		
4	1	3	1		1	1	1		3	1	4	1

Table 4.4 Student Respondent Information

Number	Gender		Class						Student Leader
	Male	Female	7	8	9	10	11	12	
20	7	13	3	4	4	2	7	0	16

The number of teachers who responded to the survey represents 45% of the total number of teachers in the school. The number of parents who responded to the survey represents 20% of the total parents' sample for the study in this school and the number

of student respondents represents 100% of the total students' sample for the study in this school.

There were more female teachers, parents, and students than males. The majority of teachers had a Bachelor degree, four teachers had a Masters degree and one teacher had a Doctorate. All four parents were active members of the Parents and Citizens Association and one of the parents was a member of the executive of the Parents and Citizens Association.

4.2.1 The governance arrangement (decision-making) of the school

4.2.1.1 Constraints

There was general agreement among participants in response to the question on decision-making constraints at this school. The Principal identified the State government, the Board of Studies and system policies as major factors here and expressed the need for greater school-level autonomy in decision-making. The Principal said:

... In some areas I feel very frustrated, particularly in terms of staffing. I would like to have a lot of freedom to be able to select staff. At the moment, there is a combination of centralized bureaucratic staffing formula and transfer system with the occasional opportunity to select staff on merit. We always take the opportunity to select on merit and I think if I am going to be responsible for the results of the school and the productivity, then I would like to have significant say in staff that are going to be a part of the team.

The majority of the 26 teachers surveyed expressed similar views about the decision-making constraints at the school: state government (16); Board of Studies (19); system policies (14). One experienced teacher said:

For the majority of teachers he/she [the Principal] has no control over who they [teachers] are and sadly that is one of the biggest problems that we have. We have no say over whom we get. We all feel he/she should have that power and that is a political bone of contention at the moment.

Nearly half of the 20 students surveyed agreed on the constraints imposed by the Board of Studies but also saw the teacher union/industrial agreement as a factor in school decision-making. Three of the four parents surveyed agreed with the latter but similar numbers nominated the State government and the Parents and Citizens Association and two parents saw the Board of Studies and local community ⁵as significant. The Principal and the majority of teachers did not see the latter as having significant influence on decision-making in the school.

4.2.1.2 Levels of significant decision-making

The Principal here saw the most important decisions in the school as being made at the levels of principal and school community⁶. The teachers generally agreed that the Principal (23 of 26) and staff (13 of 26) made the most important decisions and student responses were similar: 17 of 20, and 10 of 20, respectively. Half of the students also nominated the state as a significant level of decision-making.

Three of the four parents also agreed on the level of importance of the Principal but also perceived the school community, staff and students, the local community and parents and Citizens Association as significant.

There was general agreement among respondents – Principal, 21 of 26 teachers, 19 of 20 students, all four parents – that "key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level", despite the limited autonomy of the school in areas of staffing, budget and curriculum.

4.2.1.3 Participants in different areas of decision-making

In response to the question here, the Principal indicated that he/she participated most in decisions on professional development, resources and facilities and parental involvement. The Principal also indicated that, within the constraints imposed by government and board of studies⁷, the Principal had some input into curriculum and budget decisions, and that staff also participated in almost all areas of decision-making

⁵ The local community is the community within which the school is situated and which is served by the school.

⁶ The school community usually comprises of the Principal, teachers, students, and parents who are on the representative councils.

⁷ Government schools do not have real control over the curriculum framework, the amount of budget, and the number and full selection of staff.

except parental involvement. The Principal saw the Parents and Citizens Association as having some input on resources and school facilities but no input beyond this from the local community generally. The Principal did not respond to questions on specific student participation in decision-making.

The majority of teachers perceived the Principal as playing a major part in decision-making on budget (24 of 26), professional development (14 of 26), resources and school facilities (20 of 24) and parental involvement (15 of 29), in fact, everything except curriculum as determined by the Board of Studies. More than half of the teachers surveyed believed that staff had some participation in all decision-making except on curriculum where they played a major part in the decision-making process.

In their interviews, these teachers emphasised this Principal's use of collaborative management and its contribution to greater school effectiveness. As one teacher said:

I think the Principal doesn't make decisions himself/herself. The Principal makes decisions based on the information that we provide him/her and that works pretty well, and he/she uses collaborative decision-making... We run a system of teams. Every teacher in the school is a member of at least one of these teams. There is at least one teacher from each faculty in each team.

Most teachers said that the school community was involved in decisions on professional development (13 of 26), resources and school facilities (18 of 26) and parental involvement (15 of 26). Similarly, most teachers perceived little involvement of the local community or students in any major areas of decision-making except, in the case of students to some extent, on curriculum.

Student views on school decision-making varied considerably from the above. Slightly more than half of the student respondents (11 of 20) perceived the Principal's major role in decision-making on professional development of teachers; slightly less than half (9 of 20) believed that the Principal had considerable say in decisions on curriculum and budget. Three of four parent respondents believed that the Principal participated significantly in all areas of decision-making; a similar number of parents saw staff participating widely in all areas, though they were divided equally on the area of parental involvement.

Parents were also equally divided on the role of the local community in school decision-making generally, although three of the four believed that this community participated strongly in decisions relating to parental involvement, and there was agreement on the opportunity to participate in decision-making through the Parents and Citizens Association. One parent said, "Parents get to our school and they make a lot of decisions." Another believed that parents should not participate in "educational" decision-making:

...I don't think that I should be able to make decisions about children's education because I don't know anything about it. But I think I should help to make decisions on the sort of things like what the school spends money on if it does not have to do with the curriculum. Whether we for instance, if we have a school bus, whether we should have a school bus or don't have a school bus. If we decide to build a new building whether we build it or we don't. I think parents should have those kinds of decisions. But parents should not participate in educational decisions regarding children because they do not know anything much about it.

Parents' opinions were divided on the extent of student participation in school decision-making.

4.2.1.4 Adequacy of involvement in the school decision-making

The Principal rated his involvement in school decision-making as very adequate, except in the area of staffing, which is largely determined by the hierarchy outside the school. There was general agreement among other respondents – 20 of 26 teachers, all 20 students, and all parents – that the Principal's authority was adequate for decision-making in the school.

A similar pattern emerged in relation to the autonomy of teachers in decision-making, though fewer students (13 of 20) agreed/strongly agreed with this. Teachers believed their participation in school decision-making was adequate to very adequate (21 of 26). As one experienced teacher said:

I have been here for 20 years and I have seen principals coming and going. The Principal at the moment seems to be one that has got the most ideas about how

to make decisions and use expertise in this school. A lot of expertise is available in this school to help him/her with his decisions. I have sufficient say now.

Another confirmed:

I am pretty happy with this [decision-making process] and probably part of a really good head teacher's responsibilities is to listen to what the teachers say and bring up to meetings and we have team meetings and we all have an input in the school planning, we have the chance.

Of the 26 students surveyed, 17 responded that their involvement was adequate, but in subsequent interviews opinions were more divided. For example, one student noted, "We participate in the decisions; we have the Student Representative Council which is for students from every year. It makes the decisions based on what students want." Another, however, said, "Students sometimes are confused about why they have to do this and why they have to do that. School will be better if the school and students work together. I think students should participate in the in-school decisions."

One student leader expressed the view that, despite the existence and functioning of the Student Representative Council, students believed that they should have more opportunities to participate in decision-making. The Principal supported this to some degree, "I think they [students] should be involved. I don't know about direct decision-making, but they should be asked about the decisions being made. Students are part of the school and they should be involved." Another student commented, "We have the SRC, which is a Student Representative Council in the school, and all people in the SRC are elected from each year. So, I think students if they want to participate really can."

All of the parents surveyed agreed with the adequacy of their involvement in school decision-making. As one said in interview:

We have the P& C [Parents & Citizens Association]. We meet once a month and people bring up ideas, they discuss ideas and if everyone agrees, that time a lot of our decisions are made. So, parents get to our school and they make a lot of decisions.

The Principal and the majority of teachers (19 of 26) perceived the level of parental involvement in school decision-making to be adequate or very adequate, though only 11 of the 20 students surveyed agreed with this.

In general, respondents – the Principal; 23 of 26 teachers; 17 of 20 students; two of the four parents – were agreed on the adequacy of the school's decision-making processes

4.2.1.5 Decision-making and school effectiveness

There was broad agreement among respondents on the impact of decision-making on school effectiveness. The Principal, strongly, and most teachers (24 of 26), strongly or very strongly, agreed with this view. One teacher emphasised the potentially bad results of bad decisions. Another said:

Two possibilities could make things run badly. Depending on the school, if a new principal or old principal is not that clever and goes through the motions and makes some poor decisions and has not been fortunate enough to have experienced staff and they cannot fix the damage, it can impact negatively on school effectiveness. If the school has some experienced staff... it can still perform well because people who belong know how to keep it going.

Students (19 of 20) and all four parents also agreed or strongly agreed on this. One parent argued: "I think any decisions in the school like resources, computers, all of these kinds of things, I think they would impact on everyone, not just students (but) teachers and parents as well."

4.2.2 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on parental involvement

The school Management Plan (2005) indicates that community partnerships are central to development of genuine and meaningful relationships with the wider community to ensure improved outcomes for the school.

4.2.2.1 Levels and types of parental involvement

There was inconsistency among respondents on the degree to which parents were "actively involved in school activities". In their interviews, most parents were satisfied with their involvement in school activities generally, but some thought that greater

parental participation could be useful to the school. As one parent said, "We want more parents to come to the school... to see more of the school needs...[and] be helpful in such things as fund-raising." Another favoured more parental participation, "because the children need support and help..."

Survey data indicate some inconsistency among respondents on actual involvement of parents in school activities. The Principal and most teachers (16 of 26) believed that 1-10% of parents were actively involved, but student perceptions varied widely and only one of four parents surveyed responded on this question. All respondents agreed, however, that ample opportunities for parental involvement were provided but that many parents were unable to make use of these.

The Principal, teachers and students agreed on the following as major links between school and parents: regular newsletters; invitations to school events; the technological contact⁸; school assemblies; parent-teacher conferences; workshops for parents; telephone hotlines; school groups/ council; planning meetings; budgeting meetings; canteen; "helping" activities (in classrooms, sport, cultural activities, excursions, etc.); Parents and Citizens Association; take-home educational information packets.

Of these, the four parents surveyed rated most highly the newsletters, parent-teacher conferences and canteen. Assemblies, take-home educational information packets, planning and budgeting meetings and helping activities were also seen as important by three of the four parents in facilitating parent involvement in the school.

The Principal summed up:

The P&C has on average about twenty parents coming along to approximately two formal meetings per term. Certainly, there are events in the school that attract the parents almost like a magnet...we have attracted 200 people into Parents' & Teachers' meetings. The Parents' & Teachers' meetings are twice a year. We also have informal meetings with parents. We also have parents in the school helping in the library and mentoring for reading and acting as tutors. We have planned a youth program to operate in the school. We have retired parents coming in, grandparents giving time and expertise to work with students.

⁸ School contacts which are available through electronic means such as email, website, etc.

The Annual Report of the school (2004) emphasised the school's welcome of parent and community involvement and generally reflected the above information and perceptions.

4.2.2.2 Barriers to parental involvement

Survey responses on this issue were limited, but some barriers to parental involvement were identified. These included work and time constraints (principal; teachers; students; parents); parental apathy and lack of motivation (teachers); children's lack of enthusiasm about parent involvement (teachers, students, parents). There was general agreement that opportunities for parental involvement were well provided but that, for one or more of the above reasons, many parents were unable to avail themselves of them.

4.2.2.3 The Principal's role in promoting parental involvement

The Principal was seen by almost all respondents as having an important role to play in promoting parental involvement in the school, and that he/she was very active in this area in this school. The Principal explained that he/she always encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community through team and community activities. Most teachers (23 of 26) perceived the Principal to be very active in this role. As one teacher noted, "the Principal spends money to encourage parental involvement. Parents want to come and do a lot of things at the school. The school is very open."

Half of the students surveyed (10 of 20) agreed – though others were less certain – that the Principal frequently encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community. Parent respondents supported this view and indicated their satisfaction with the Principal's efforts in this area.

4.2.3 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on planning and budgeting

4.2.3.1 Participants in planning and budgeting decisions

Within the external constraints imposed by state authorities, there was general agreement among respondents that the Principal and staff – teachers and others – were the major decision-makers in planning and budgeting within the school. The majority of

teachers (25 of 26) agreed with the Principal on his/her central role here, with 24 of the 26 agreeing on the importance of the school community – teachers and other staff – in this decision-making. As one teacher said:

We all put in suggestions. Depends on how much money is in the school. We need new books, we need equipment for experiments, if we do not have it, we could not do it. We just decide. We have quite a discussion at lunchtime. We cannot decide without the head teachers. Also, the Principal can say yes or no.

Most student respondents (19 of 20) also perceived the Principal and staff (12 of 20) to be the main participants in budget and planning decisions and all four parents surveyed expressed similar views. One parent said, however, "I'm not sure exactly how that works, but I think it's between the Principal, deputies and head teachers. I think they all get together and ask, 'How much funding for each department?'" Three parents saw the school community as also having significant input. One parent pointed out that parents could sit voluntarily on planning and budgeting committees: "The Principal asks for parents who are interested in participating in the committee with him/her. The Principal asks because if the Principal doesn't, no one wants to do it. I think if the Principal asks who wants to do it they will..."

Two of the four parents believed that Parents & Citizens Association members and students were involved in budgeting and planning, but students indicated otherwise. One student said, "We don't really get much choice on that. We have less opportunity...[and] not much time, and the young students probably aren't mature enough to make good decisions." Another said, "I don't think students are involved in budget decisions". The Principal argued against such involvement:

Students do not have financial knowledge and interest. They are interested in studying, they are interested in talking with their friends, they are interested in having their lunch but not particularly interested in giving time to sit on the budgeting committee. I don't think students have an understanding of the school dynamic and school finance. Kids do not have the necessary skills for making financial decisions.

The Principal emphasised the need for professional development in budgeting for those involved in decision-making in that area:

I think one of the challenges for schools is to update their [students'] skills if we are really serious in giving voice to the kids, the parents too and for some staff... professional development applies to all aspects of the school including the school finances. I think there is not enough done in terms of finances and training even for principals, particularly newly appointed principals.

4.2.3.2 Adequacy of opportunities for participating in the planning and budgeting decisions

The Principal's response here was positive. As he/she confirmed in interview:

I think the school budgeting procedure from the Principal's viewpoint is fine. The school budget is based on the payment from the government based on the school population. So within that budget formula, we have certain parameters, which we need to work within. The freedom that I have within the context of budgeting is appropriate and so far during the audit reports that the school goes through there have not been any problems. Of course, we never have enough [money].

A teacher supported this view in seeing the Principal as, "expected to be the chief executive officer of the school ... plus the treasurer. He's the one that is responsible for not only management and what's happened in the school but also the money manager."

There was wide agreement among respondents (Principal, 25 of 26 teachers, 15 of 20 students, three of the four parents) on the adequacy of the Principal's authority to manage the school budget.

Most teachers (22 of 26) were satisfied with their opportunities for involvement in planning and budgeting decisions. One teacher said, "For most committees, first volunteers are called for. If we've got more volunteers than positions – and that never happens – the Principal would go through some selection process." Another explained:

We have a faculty group. For example, we have nine persons in the science faculty; we have meetings, we talk about what we think is important. Then I fit that into the school overall budget and the Principal says you want \$3000 to do

this. He basically says you can have this much. We have to spend on the planned programs and we cannot spend for other things.

More than half the students surveyed (11 of 20) and all the parents were satisfied with the adequacy of their involvement in planning and budgeting decisions. In interview, however, one student stated:

I don't think students are involved in the budget decisions. I think in the SRC they only have their own budget and there's not a lot of student involvement. I think the students have experience and they should have a say in the school decision-making and express their opinions.

A parent confirmed in interview:

Most committees in the school have got parents on them. I don't think they [parents] have any limitations [in participation in the planning and budgeting decisions]. They can come to any meeting that they want. So, parents are always welcome to the school

4.2.3.3 Sources of school budget

There was general agreement among respondents on the importance and degree of government funding of the school. The Principal saw this as contributing 90 – 100% of teacher salaries and most teachers (21 of 26) agreed. Barely half of the students (11 of 20) and only two of the four parents indicated awareness of this, and it is apparent that the Principal and teachers had more information in this area than respondent students and parents.

On the question of other operating costs, the Principal and more than half of the teachers (14 of 26) again saw the government as providing most of the finance. Student responses in this area varied widely and two of the four parents believed that all operating costs were funded entirely by the government.

4.2.3.4 Planning, budgeting and monitoring

The Principal stated that, while he/she had the main responsibility for the school budget and its oversight, the district/state department had significant monitoring roles in its implementation. The Principal further explained:

The Principal is responsible for the school budget... we have a finance committee and if something goes wrong, the Principal is responsible. So, at the end of the day I am responsible. Having said that we have the community partnership teams that are able to allocate budgets to the activities after they tell me what the priorities are.

The teachers agreed (25 of 26) on the Principal's monitoring role and also saw staff – teachers and others – as monitoring its implementation. Most students (16 of 20) agreed on the monitoring role of the Principal and almost half of them (9 of 20) perceived monitoring roles for the staff and the state. All four parents agreed on the monitoring role of the Principal, only two of the four on staff as budget monitors.

It is interesting to note here that the Principal did not perceive staff as playing a part in monitoring the budget as did the teachers, especially, and other respondents. The Principal also indicated a clearer awareness of the nature of the monitoring process – district/state – beyond the school.

4.2.4 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on professional development of teachers

4.2.4.1 Adequacy of professional development programs

The Principal confirmed the existence of a school professional development program as well as specific professional development days. Survey responses on these provisions varied widely. In his initial response the Principal described the school program as "adequate", but subsequently expressed dissatisfaction with the existing provisions, "No, I do not think you can have enough professional development and I do not think we have a coordinated and structured approach to professional development that is going to create long-term lasting changes and excellence in what we do."

The Principal and most of the teachers (16 of 26) confirmed that they had taken part in professional development activities in the previous year but there was a general view expressed (Principal, 15 of 26 teachers) that the variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs met their needs.

One teacher pointed to the difficulty, despite adequate budget, of obtaining relief for teachers attending professional development programs:

The biggest problem we have is there are not enough relief teachers. We have money to pay them but getting a casual teacher is the biggest problem. So, even though the money is available, we can't use it, which is crazy.

4.2.4.2 Planning and resourcing professional development

The budget for professional development of teachers is provided by the NSW Department of Education and Training and is separate to that of the school generally. The school has no say in the amount provided but can largely determine how it is spent.

The Principal believed that teachers were most important in decision-making on "the budget, type and content of (their) professional development", with the Principal, Parents & Citizens Association, district, Board of Studies and state also having influence. The Principal spoke of the school's decision-making "professional development team" of the Principal, Deputy Principal, head teachers and teachers. As he/she said:

Staff have been responsible for generating the school plan and the goal of the plan dictates the priority of professional development needs. We run a system in the school in which the school executive is the professional learning team of the school. So, the head teachers, the Deputy Principal and the Principal all work to ensure the best training and professional development opportunities are accessed...It is based on needs and on the expectation that staff go to the professional development programs.

More than half the teacher respondents (14 of 26) agreed with this, with several pointing to the "major task" of one of the two Deputy Principals as, "being aware of", "co-ordinating", "promoting" and making available professional development activities. One teacher also indicated, however, that, "Most of the professional development programs are outside of the school."

The Principal expressed the view that funding for profession development is inadequate, despite a significant increase from "\$27 per teacher ... (to) \$700...". Most teachers (17 of 26) agreed, but again emphasised their inability to utilize this funding without adequate availability of relief teachers.

The Principal and teachers generally confirmed that professional development of teachers was a significant part of the school's planning and a priority in relation to the achievement of planned outcomes. Only one teacher saw little evidence of this relationship.

4.2.5 The impact of governance (decision-making) arrangements on resources and facilities

4.2.5.1 Adequacy of physical facilities in the school

The majority of respondents expressed the view that the physical facilities in this school were adequate, particularly, as the Principal pointed out, in comparison with others in the same category. In interview, however, the Principal emphasised that despite being one of the best-resourced schools, there was a need to extend facilities to meet the particular needs of the school population and, particularly, to better cater for the presence of a number of physically disabled students in wheelchairs.

Most teachers (21 of 26) agreed with the Principal on the adequacy of the school's facilities, although two science teachers pointed to inadequacies in the number of science laboratories, especially when compared to the facilities in "some private schools". One of these also pointed to the need for more outside covered areas and playgrounds, although most students (17 of 20) and all four parents surveyed believed these facilities were adequate. The school's Annual Report (2004) noted significant capital expenditure and financial support for ongoing maintenance of equipment and facilities.

4.2.5.2 Impact of decision-making arrangements on physical facilities

The Principal believed that he/she had adequate authority to make significant decisions on the school's physical facilities within the limits set by external funding arrangements. More than half of the teachers (14 of 26) agreed and felt that they too had some say in decision-making in this area. As one teacher said, "I guess in a way we make clear what we need." Another said that, while the Principal had the final say, teachers had the opportunity, especially now under the collaborative approach of this principal, to influence decisions on facilities. The majority of students (15 of 20) also believed decision-making on physical facilities to be adequate or very adequate and all four parents' responses supported this view. As indicated in a previously quoted

comment, however, one parent believed more things could be achieved in fund-raising and expenditure on facilities if more parents visited the school and became more involved in it.

4.2.6 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on student outcomes

4.2.6.1 Decision-making and student attendance

The Principal was definite in his/her view that decisions made in the school related very strongly to student outcomes in attendance, retention and examination results. On attendance the Principal said:

...Different decision-making such as what sort of learning environments are you trying to create, what sort of curriculum you are offering, what pattern of subjects, what courses, what outcomes you are looking for, what alternative pathways exist for students, those sorts of decisions have really fundamental impact on student outcomes. They [students] will attend if you create conditions for them to be there... our attendance rate is one of the best in the district. Certainly, we are above the state average in terms of student attendance on a daily basis and yearly basis across each of the years. Any given day we would have approximately only nine percent of students absent across the school in 2004.

Eighteen of the 26 teacher respondents and 12 of the 20 students agreed with this view. One of the latter said, "If a kid doesn't like the school, the way it's run, they don't come to school. I'm not really sure how many people don't come ... [but] the attendance situation in this school is getting better, especially in my year [11]." Another, however, expressed a different view: "I don't think there's much impact [of school decision-making] on students' attendance. Attendance of students is, I think, an obligation ...".

Three of the four parents agreed that decisions made by the school contributed positively to student attendance, especially decisions on processes of teacher-student interaction. A parent describes these:

We have a pretty good student attendance record. I think we have been successful with regard to student attendance. The teachers too, we have a lot of

teachers for a long time because we know our school is one of the better schools in our area. The students are good and the teachers are good. If the teachers are good, the students will be good and if the students are good, the teachers will be good. There is a relationship.

A parent expressed the view that because the Principal had created a more positive school culture attendance had improved. "I think there is a lot of improvement (in attendance) here this year. ...The kids feel the good morale and I think we've been lucky."

The school's Annual Report confirms that attendance levels remain equal to, or better than both district and the state averages.

4.2.6.2 Decision-making and student retention

The Principal believed that there was a positive relationship between the decision-making in the school and student retention. As he/she said:

If we get the teaching right, if students are being taught in the preferred learning styles, if I see technology being accessed, it is a means to an end rather than an end itself, what we are going to have are engaged kids. When we engage kids, we retain kids and when we retain the kids, we do not have an attendance problem. In terms of student retention, we would retain 80 percent of students for years 7-10, 60% for years 10-12.

The majority of teachers (18 of 26) agreed. One said, "The retention in our school has improved. If you keep providing worthwhile lessons, the extent of retention goes up. If the Principal and executive don't care, retention decreases."

Student response on retention was limited (10 of 20), possibly because many students did not understand the concept of student retention. However, in interview, one year 11 student claimed:

In Year 10 last year we had about 130 students and this year we have about 100 and we lost 30 students. Some got jobs and they don't want to do anything with the school and education and some do not want to do HSC. From Year seven to 10 the school might lose some students every year and 3 to 4 students come in to

Year 10 and go down again. People leave school at the end of Year 10. Generally, retention in the school is good from Year seven to 10.

All four parents acknowledged the link between school decision-making and student retention. One parent, also a staff member, said:

Retention is tricky because of the children. We have a lot of children in Year 10 to Year 11. We have probably 169 students in Year 10 this year. I'd say probably ten of those leave without having something to do and some get a job. What we do is in the beginning of this year the community decided to ring all Year 10 students and see what they are doing. If we find someone sitting at home and watching television, then we try convincing him or her that they should come back to the school and try again. We usually have good retention. But last year we lost some students because of a new Christian independent school that got some of the Year seven students.

4.2.6.3 Decision-making and examination results

While direct relationships here cannot be specified, the Principal expressed his firm belief that links exist:

The decisions we make in relation to the teaching methodology, curriculum, and technology have direct impact on examination results. The decisions about professional development and training will also have direct impact on examination results. So, I think it is a given that decisions in those key areas will affect student results.

More than half of the teachers (16 of 26) agreed. One argued, however:

There are a lot of debates on the examination results. If you look at the examination results during the years and look at the Higher School Certificate results and the examination results, they go up and down depending on what the students are like at the time. Last year the Higher School Certificate was about around the state average, this year they would be above because Year 12 is a better group of students. That would be with exactly the same teachers. The only decision we can make to affect those students is to make sure Years 11 and 12

have the best teacher in each subject. We make conscious decisions. The way we do it is we put the best teachers for that particular subject on that class.

Another teacher said, "It's all about morale. If the Principal and executive support the teachers and our morale is better, we'll be better with the kids and encourage them to be better."

Only half of the students (10 of 20) saw a relationship between decision-making processes and students' examination results, but all four parents believed there was such a relationship. Whatever this relationship, there are certainly a number of indicators of positive student result outcomes at this school. The school Annual Report (2004) notes such achievements as HSC marks in the top percentile band, successful participation of students in Mathematics, Science and Chemistry Quizzes, acceleration for talented students in specific subjects, approximately one-third of students proceeding to university from the HSC, a successful Intensive Literacy Program, and recognised student achievements in Drama and Photography.

4.2.7 School summary

School A is a government school and part of a centralised system. Although various stakeholders perceive that the Principal has considerable decision-making authority, several of them, and the Principal himself/herself, are aware of the limitations imposed on in-school decision-making by the policies and legislation of the State government, the Board of Studies, and system policy and budget constraints. The Principal pointed to his/her limited control over curriculum, budget and staffing, both numbers and selection. The curriculum framework is set by the Board of Studies, and in-school decisions are confined to its implementation at school level. Major financial support is provided by the state Department and determined on the basis of school enrolment. The Principal and teachers, however, have considerable say in how the budget is spent.

The Principal has made considerable efforts to establish a collegial school community where staff, and other stakeholders to some degree, participate collaboratively in important decisions and there is general agreement on the success of this approach. Only a small group of parents were actively involved in school affairs and were happy with this involvement, though unwilling to have a say in the professional development of teachers.

Some expressed the view that more extensive involvement of parents would be beneficial, although a number of "barriers" to this were widely recognised. Communication with parents and the local community by the school was a feature.

Students had very little say in major decision-making in the school and had only limited awareness of the complexities involved. With some exceptions, students were relatively happy with this situation.

Stakeholders were involved in decision-making in different ways. In relative terms, the Principal played the major role in decision-making in the school, with executive, teachers/staff, parents then students having some say. The Principal's authority, together with his/her broad awareness of issues and knowledge of possibilities and limitations, were major factors in his/her position at the locus of decision-making and stakeholders were happy with this and with the contributions they were able to make. Decision-making at the school appeared to have an influence in some way on all the major indicators of school effectiveness according to these findings.

4.3 Case Study Two: School B (Christian Parent-Controlled High School)

School B, a non-government school, was established in 1982 by the Association of Committed Christians. The Association has a membership of 200 members and about 225 associate members. Members of the Association and of the broader school community come from a wide range of denominations, theological backgrounds, church traditions and Christian experience. The Association is the prime decision-making body of the school and operates through a board.

The school's major decisions are made by a majority vote of the board financial members. Parents have a lot of say through the School Board. The Association elects the board and the board, as the elected representative of the Association, is responsible for setting the school policy, the administration of the school including the financial affairs, appointment of staff and the enrolment of pupils, and providing and maintaining all school buildings and equipment. Some of parents on the School Board no longer have children there but they have chosen to still be involved as they share the faith and values and support the school fully.

The Principal is an employee of the Association and an authority in all school matters and as such is an advisor to the board. The Principal is the main link between the Board and teaching staff, facilitating the free flow of information, advice and policy decisions.

The socio-economic background of the school population is very diverse. A small number of families have some level of fee remission because they are unable to pay full fees. Some of the families are in unskilled employment, have part-time employment or are unemployed and have very low income. Other families are from professional or semi-professional backgrounds and earn a much higher income.

The school has two campuses with a student population of 375. Overall, there are 32 full-time staff that includes six school executive and 26 teachers. The part-time staff include 27 teachers, one school executive, four para-professionals, and two support staff. There are 37 classrooms, four science laboratories, three computer laboratories, and 51 computers in the computer rooms, one computer in each classroom, two

libraries, one gymnasium/multi purpose hall, two ovals, four toilet blocks, and four to six toilets in each block.

Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 provide a profile of the sample of respondents.

Table 4.5 Respondents Sample Size

Participants	Survey Sample Size	Survey Respondents	Interview Sample Size	Interview Respondents
Principal	1	1	1	1
Teachers	26	4	2	2
Students	20	7	2	2
Parents	20	7	2	2

Table 4.6 Full-time Staff Information

Position	Number	Gender		Education Qualification				Years of Service					
		Male	Female	BA	MA/MSc	PhD		6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	27-30	No Response
Principal	1				1						1		
Teachers	4		4	4				1	1		1	1	0

Table 4.7 Parent Respondent Information

Number	Gender		Occupation				Education Qualification				Active Member of the Parent Association	Member of the executive of the Parent Association	
	Male	Female	Nursing	Service	Teaching	Domestic	SC	HSC	BA	MA/MSC			
7	2	5	1		1	1	4	2	1	3	1	4	3

Table 4.8 Student Respondent Information

Number	Gender		Class	Student Leader
	Male	Female		
7	2	5	11	3

The number of teachers who responded to the survey represents 15% of the total number of teachers in the school. The numbers of parents and students who responded to the survey represent 35% of those approached.

There were slightly more female respondents than males. The majority of teachers (88.5%) had a Bachelor degree and three teachers had a Masters degree. Four parents were active members of the School Board. Three of these were members of the executive of the School Board.

4.3.1 The governance arrangement (decision-making) of the school

4.3.1.1 Constraints

The Principal believed that the State government, the Board of Studies, and the School Board significantly influenced decision-making at the school level. Throughout the follow – up interviews the Principal remarked on his/her autonomy in decision – making at the school. The Principal pointed out:

There are some occasions that the decision-making processes are slow because of the governance. But in principle, I think our model of governance works well and is an appropriate one. But sometimes it can cause things to go more slowly than would be perhaps helpful. One example of this can be the employment of staff. Because our Board is involved in the decisions regarding the employment of staff, sometimes it takes longer because we need to organize the panel of the Board members. The decision needs to be made by people outside of the actual functioning and operation of the school. That is why it can be slow...

An interesting finding was that the Principal thought that the local community (as distinct from the formal parent structure) did not have much influence on school decision-making, although members of the School Board come from the local community and have a lot of say. In fact, the local community is represented through the School Board. Additionally, there is some contradiction between the Principal's response here and his/her response in the interview when he/she said that because of parental involvement in decision-making, decision-making was slow. Indeed, because of the consultative nature of school governance involving committed parents and the School Board, the governance processes are slow. Since parents own the school and have responsibility for it, they have much influence and there is greater parental involvement generally.

All four of the teachers believed that the State government (legislation, common law, and regulation) and three of the four that the Board of Studies (e.g., curriculum, policy, assessment etc.) influenced the school's key decision-making. Teachers' opinions were evenly divided on the School Board. While two of the four teachers felt that the School Board had a very significant influence on decision-making, an equal number thought that it only had some influence. Additionally, half of the teachers perceived that system

policies (i.e. for Christian schools) had somewhat significant influence on the school decision-making. A teacher referred to the School Board as a main barrier constraining the Principal's autonomy. She argued:

I do not think the Principal has enough autonomy because there is a School Board. At the moment a number of people on the Board are very controlling and they are actually making life very difficult for the Principal to be able to make the decisions which are necessary.

Four of the seven students perceived important influence of the State government, and six that the Board of Studies, and three that the School Board had very important influence on the school decision-making. Additionally, five of the seven students believed that system policies, and four that the teachers union/ industrial agreement had somewhat important influence on the school decision-making.

Six of the seven parents believed that the Board of Studies and five that the School Board had very significant influence on school decision-making. Three parents perceived that the State government and system policies also had very important influence.

In general, respondents agreed that the State government, the Board of Studies, and the School Board had very significant influence on decision-making at the school level.

4.3.1.2 Levels of significant decision-making

The Principal and teachers overwhelmingly believed that the most important decisions were made at the Principal and the School Board levels to ensure school effectiveness.

All seven students regarded the Principal followed by the Board as the most important levels in school decisions. Five of them believed that the student level was the least important.

Four of the seven parents felt that the School Board was the most important and the students least important in the most significant decisions for the school.

There was general agreement among the Principal, five students and six parents that "key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level." However,

three of the four teachers disagreed. Responses of teachers were a little contradictory on the statement about the adequacy of their involvement in school decision-making. Some teachers felt that they were listened to less than students, that although the Principal believed that the model of leadership was very inclusive and encouraged high levels of staff participation in decision-making processes, some teachers felt that decision-making arrangements for the teachers were more casual and informal.

4.3.1.3 Participants in different areas of decision-making

Respondents generally agreed that the Principal participated in all types of school decision-making. There were however, differences between the Principal and other respondents in their responses on the areas of budgeting, resources and facilities, professional development of teachers, and parental involvement.

The Principal explained that he/she had considerable participation in resources and school facilities and "some" participation in curriculum offering, budget, professional development of teachers, and parental involvement decisions.⁹ The Principal maintained that staff had considerable participation in decisions on curriculum and some in those on budget, professional development of teachers, and resources and school facilities, and that the school community only had limited participation in parental involvement matters. The Principal believed that the wider school community¹⁰ had only some participation in decisions on resources and school facilities and on parental involvement.

The Principal stated that the School Board participated significantly in budget decisions and to some extent in those on curriculum offering, resources and school facilities, and parental involvement, considerable say in the non-governmental budget of the school and selection of staff, and some say in how to implement the curriculum at the school level, but not in the decision-making on professional development of teachers.

The Principal explained that students had very limited participation in different types of the school decisions. According to the Principal, the Student Council was the major decision-making avenue for students and the Parent Association and the School Board

⁹ Non-government Schools do not have real control over the curriculum framework and the amount of governmental budget.

¹⁰ The wider school community comprises people who support the school although their children might not be at the school. It could include business, political groups, and local council, etc.

were the major avenues for parental involvement in the school decision-making. The Principal clarified:

The students from Year five can be involved in the School Council but they are not involved in the financial decision-making. They are certainly given opportunities and appropriate times to be able to make comments and their opinions are valued. They are also in the position to be able to bring their opinions and recommendations to me.

Three of the four teachers stated that the Principal participated extensively in decisions on curriculum offering, resources and school facilities, and parental involvement. Two teachers said that the Principal participated more in budget decisions and professional development of teachers, and three of the four perceived that staff participated considerably in curriculum decisions, and in budget decisions and professional development of teachers decisions. The teachers' opinions were also evenly divided on staff participation in parental involvement decisions.

The majority of respondents (17 of 19) indicated that they believed that teachers had adequate authority in decision-making. The Principal in the interview stated:

Staff have the opportunities to be involved in the school decision-making with me and other executive. Also, my model of leadership is very inclusive and encourages a high level of participation by staff in the decision-making processes. We have very talented staff, who have a great deal to offer and I personally believe that having decision-making without collaboration with staff and hearing their opinions is very foolish. Certainly, staff input is valued. What has to be considered, however, is that some decisions should be made with the help of staff and some decisions I would make, or the Board would make, and simply inform staff.

The teachers' responses were divided on the participation of the school community in the different decisions. Half of the teachers responded that the school community had some participation in decisions on budget, and professional development of teachers. The remainder, however, believed that the school community had almost no participation in budgeting and parental involvement decisions.

Two of the four teachers perceived that the School Board had considerable participation in the curriculum offering, budget (three), resources and school facilities (three), and parental involvement (all four) decisions. Three teachers believed that students did not have any participation in different types of decisions.

Six of the seven students perceived that the Principal participated in budget decisions but only three thought that the Principal participated in decisions on curriculum offering, professional development of teachers, resources and school facilities, and parental involvement. Five of the seven students believed that staff had some participation in decisions on curriculum offering, professional development of teachers (four), resources and school facilities (four), and parental involvement (five). Similarly, more than half (four) of the students believed that the school community participated in decisions on budget, resources and school facilities (five), and parental involvement (five). In relation to school community (excluding staff), four students noted that the wider school community had some participation in resources and school facilities decisions. In addition, all students stated that the School Board had considerable participation in the budget and school facilities decisions at the school.

Six students believed that they did not play any part in the different school decisions. In the interview one student pointed out, "I think we can't have a say in the school decision-making because we do not feel comfortable although we should have some say here definitely. We have a right to know what we want to learn and what is happening here."

Five of the seven parents surveyed perceived that the Principal had considerable participation in decisions on curriculum offering, budget (four), professional development of teachers (six), and parental involvement (five). More than half of them perceived that staff had some participation in decisions on curriculum offering (four), budget (four), professional development of teachers (five), resources and school facilities (four), and parental involvement (five).

More than half of the seven parents perceived that the school community had some participation in decisions on curriculum offering (five), resources and school facilities (four), and parental involvement (four). Four parents believed that the wider school community had hardly any participation in budget decisions, but more than half thought

that the School Board had considerable participation in decisions on budget (four), resources and school facilities (four), and parental involvement (five). The majority of parents believed that the students did not have any part or did not have much part in decisions on budget (six), professional development of teachers (five), and parental involvement.

It is interesting to note the differences between the Principal's and other respondents' responses regarding the participation and significance of the School Board in the resources and school facilities and parental involvement decision-making processes. The Principal perceived that the School Board had only some participation in parental involvement, resources and school facilities' decisions. However, three of the four teachers and more than half (four) of both parents and students (four) perceived that the School Board had considerable participation in those types of decisions.

There were also different perceptions among the Principal, teachers, and parents in relation to the Principal's participation in some decisions. For example, the Principal believed that he/she had only some participation in budgeting, professional development of teachers, and parental involvement decisions. But two of the four teachers and four of the seven parents perceived that he/she had considerable participation in the budget decisions; two of the teachers and six of the seven parents thought that he/she had considerable participation in the professional development of teachers decisions, and three of the four teachers and five of the seven parents perceived that the Principal had considerable participation in the parental involvement decision-making processes.

The Principal and the teachers shared similar perceptions with regard to staff involvement in different decisions except in relation to resources and school facilities decisions. The Principal perceived that staff had some participation but only two of the four teachers perceived their participation to be greater here. More than half of the students (five) and the same number of the parents also believed that staff had some participation in those decisions. Furthermore, the Principal believed that the school community had hardly any participation in the different decisions except parental involvement, but more than half of the teachers, parents, and students perceived it had some participation. Similarly, the majority of teachers (three), the students (four), and parents (four) perceived that the School Board had considerable participation in the resources and school facilities decisions, but the Principal stated it had only some

participation. Additionally, the Principal asserted that the School Board had some participation in parental involvement decisions while all four teachers and the majority of parents (five) perceived that it had considerable participation in those decisions.

4.3.1.4 Adequacy of involvement in school decisions

The Principal confirmed that his/her involvement in the school decision-making processes was adequate. Similarly, three of the teachers agreed that their involvement in the school decisions was adequate to very adequate. However, one of the teachers dissented, insisting, "As a teacher, I think there should be more decision-making, more listening to the teachers. I do not think there is enough, particularly for those who are more experienced and know the school well."

Four of the seven students thought that they had adequate involvement in the school decisions. But during the interviews two students indicated that they wanted more say in the school decision-making processes. The Principal pointed out:

The students are not involved in financial decision-making. This has never been an area that is particularly relevant to involve students. We certainly give opportunities at appropriate times [for them] to be able to make comments and their opinion is valued...

Five of the seven parents perceived that their involvement in the school decision-making was adequate to very adequate. One of the parents, however, felt, "Because my children's education is important to me, I think we should have more say in the way that the school is run and the direction that the school goes in."

The Principal agreed that, "decision-making processes in the school are generally adequate" and five of the seven students and the same number of parents thought that the decision-making processes in the school were adequate to very adequate. However, the Principal, in relation to parent involvement in school decision-making, pointed out:

No, they [parents] don't have equal opportunities. We have those parents who are members of our School Association and those who are not. The members are permitted to vote and those who are not members have no right to vote on a motion of the Board. Non-Association members have limited access to the decision-making process.

Three of the four teachers disagreed on the adequacy of decision-making processes in the school. It appears that the teachers' responses to this question are contradictory to their responses to the survey question, "I feel my involvement in the school decision-making process is adequate." So, while they felt that involvement was adequate the processes available for involvement were apparently not.

The Principal, six of the nine students and seven parents agreed that the Principal's authority was adequate for decision-making in the school. On the other hand, teachers' opinions were evenly divided. As noted before, some teachers believed that the Principal did not have sufficient autonomy because he/she had to consult with the School Board. But as another teacher said, "There is a partnership that exists. So, it is not totally autonomous. That is a partnership and I think the Principal has enough authority."

There was general agreement among respondents – the Principal, all teachers and parents, and five of the seven students – that the teachers' autonomy was adequate for their work. However, teachers' responses to this question were a little inconsistent with their responses to the question on the concentration of key decision-making functions at the school level. On that question three of the four teachers believed that key decision-making functions did not concentrate at the school level while teacher autonomy could be enhanced with greater concentration of some key decision-making functions at the school level.

According to the school's Mission Statement and Constitution (1997), teachers are responsible for the implementation of the school's curriculum. They are encouraged to work in partnership with parents so that they may more effectively assist parents in the Christian education of their children. This would include communicating with parents in regard to the welfare and progress of their children. The statement emphasizes that when partnership is genuine, teachers value and utilize the insight and knowledge that parents have concerning their own children and that school community supports the professional authority of the teachers.

4.3.1.5 Decision-making and school effectiveness

The Principal and all four surveyed teachers strongly agreed with the statement, "Decision-making processes can have an important impact on school effectiveness." A

teacher said, "Bad decision-making can be dangerous to any organization. If a School Board does not employ good teachers, this can impact on student achievements." Six of the seven students either agreed or strongly agreed on that impact. As one student said, "I guess bad decisions can affect our learning and affect the way we feel about the school. We would feel useless and not feel comfortable." All seven parents agreed that the decision-making processes impact on school effectiveness. It was generally seen as important that school decisions were made with a great deal of thought, otherwise school effectiveness could be affected.

4.3.2 The impact of the governance arrangements (decision-making) on parental involvement

According to the School Mission Statement and Constitution (1997), members/ parents can and should communicate with the teaching staff and/ or the Principal on a wide range of matters including issues concerning the welfare and progress of the children, the day-to-day running of the school and the content and methods of teaching. Parents are encouraged to value and utilize the professional expertise of staff members.

4.3.2.1 Levels and types of parental involvement

There was general agreement among all respondents – the Principal, all teachers and parents, and four of the seven students – that the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making was adequate. The Principal explained, "Parents participate in the cooperative decision-making process of the school but they do not have participation in the individual educational decision-making of the school." As a teacher pointed out:

This school actually is a parent-controlled school. So, it is run by a parent association; not all parents in the school are actually members of the Parent Association. They need to be Christian people and Christians come and become members of the Association... So, in theory it is good. I do not know if there is any dissatisfaction.

Another parent commented, "At this particular school we have the School Board; you can join the Board and you can have a lot of say in the decisions...I think there are a lot of facilities here if parents are involved and if they want to be."

The responses on "levels and types" are a little inconsistent with the responses to the question, "What is your perception of the involvement of each group in the decision-making processes in your school?" According to answers to this question parental involvement as members of the School Board was high, but there was not a great deal of participation of the school community in the general school decision-making.

Survey data indicate some inconsistency among respondents on actual involvement of parents in school activities. The Principal believed that 11-20% of the parents were actively involved, but teachers', students', and parents' perceptions varied on this question. All respondents agreed, however, that ample opportunities for parental involvement were provided but that many parents were unable to make use of these. In the interview the Principal explained:

...We also have the School Association which consists of those parents within the school community who wish to be part of that association and who are accepted into it, who would be given opportunities to elect our School Board and so they could influence the decisions of the School Board. They can bring motions to the School Association meeting as the parent body involved in the major decisions within the school community. Parents participate in cooperative decision-making process of the school but not individual education decision-making. Individual parents do not have authority to do it.

The Principal and teachers and students agreed on the following as major links between school and parents: regular newsletters; invitations to school events; the technological contact; school assemblies; parent-teacher conferences; workshops for parents; children given take-home educational information; telephone hotlines; planning meetings; major decision-making meetings; "helping" activities (in classrooms, sport, cultural activities, excursions, etc.).

Of these, all seven parents rated most highly the newsletters, invitations to school events, the technological contact, the parent-teacher conferences, planning meetings, major decision-making meetings, parents on excursions, and helping activities.

The information contained in the Annual Board Report (2004) supported these findings. According to the Report, an important and valued part of the continued success of the school was involvement of parents in the school community and its activities. Different

avenues for parental involvement mentioned included the working bees, Parents and Friends Auxiliary, uniform shop, grounds and maintenance, and parent help in the daily activities of the school.

4.3.2.2 Barriers to parental involvement

Survey responses on this issue were limited, but some barriers to parental involvement were identified. These included work and parental choice constraints (Principal); work and lack of time (teachers; parents); the School Board and the distance from the home to the school (students). There was general agreement that opportunities for parental involvement were well provided but that, for one or more of the above reasons, many parents were unable to avail themselves of them.

4.3.2.3 The Principal's role in promoting parental involvement

The Principal was seen by almost all respondents as having an important role to play in promoting parental involvement in the school, and that the Principal was very active in this area in this school. The Principal explained that he/she always encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community through team and community approaches.

All four teachers, five of the seven students and six of the seven parents agreed that the Principal frequently encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community. A teacher in the interview claimed, "I think people feel listened to, particularly the parents and students."

4.3.3 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on planning and budgeting

4.3.3.1 Participants in planning and budgeting decisions

There was general agreement among surveyed respondents (the Principal; all teachers; six of the seven students; all parents) that the Principal and the School Board were the major decision-makers in planning and budgeting within the school. In addition, the majority of teachers (three) perceived that staff, and the school community also participated in financial decisions. However, the Principal explained in the interview:

We don't actually have a budgeting committee and the Board Treasurer and the Board Business Manager have primary responsibility for that and some responsibility is for the board chair and if someone needs to be involved they are asked to do that. But those three people do most of the planning and operation of it, especially just between the Treasurer and Business Manager.

Most respondents, including students, believed that the students did not have any participation in the planning and budgeting decisions. A student commented, "I don't think we have much say in financial decisions. Since the majority of students do not really worry about the budget, they are not interested in budgeting." Another student said, "I think we are still too young to make our choices and that is why the parents make our choices. Also, we do not have enough knowledge on planning and budgeting issues." The Principal agreed, "Budgeting has never been seen as an area of particular relevance to involve students."

The Principal strongly agreed with the adequacy of his authority to manage the school budget. Three of the four teachers however, and five of the seven students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the adequacy of the Principal's authority to manage the school budget and these views were supported by interview results. However, five of the seven parents agreed or strongly agreed with the Principal.

4.3.3.2 Adequacy of opportunities for participating in the planning and budgeting decisions

The Principal and a majority of the teachers perceived that the opportunities for their involvement in the planning and budgeting were very adequate. However, many of the students (five) disagreed with the adequacy of opportunities for their involvement in financial decisions. Importantly, the results of the interviews with the Principal and the students were consistent with the results on this survey question. As mentioned before, the students did not participate in financial decisions. Five of the seven parents believed that the opportunities for their involvement in planning and budgeting decisions were adequate to very adequate. It seems that students were the only respondents who had no access to participation in the planning and budgeting decisions.

4.3.3.3 Sources of school budget

Most of the respondents (all four teachers, six of the seven students, and six of the seven parents) could not respond to the question "What percentage of teacher salaries in your school does the government fund?"¹¹ The Principal however, believed that 70-80% of teacher salaries in the school were funded by the government.

The Principal, in response to the question on operating costs, said that the state/ and Commonwealth governments funded the operating costs of the school to a great extent. All four teachers and five of the seven parents thought that the operating costs of the school were funded by the government to some extent. The majority of students (five) did not respond to this question. It appears from the different perceptions among the Principal, teachers, parents, and students that most of the teachers, students, and parents were not aware of school finance and how it operated.

4.3.3.4 Planning, budgeting, and monitoring

The Principal identified the Principal, staff, the School Board, and the Bursar as monitoring the implementation of the school budget. However, as the Principal in the interview explained, "...We don't actually have a budget committee. The board treasurer and the Board Business Manager have the primary responsibility for monitoring and some responsibility is on the board chair..."

Three of the four teachers perceived that the Principal, staff (two), and the Bursar (four) acted as the monitors of the school budget. The majority of students (six) and parents (six) felt that the Principal, the School Board, and the Bursar were the monitors of the school budget.

4.3.4 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on professional development of teachers

4.3.4.1 Adequacy of professional development programs

The Principal responded positively to the question on the existence of a school professional development program and three of the four teachers agreed that there was such a program in addition to the professional development days. The Principal and all

¹¹ Non-government schools receive a mix of the State government and Commonwealth government funding.

the teachers confirmed that the professional development programs at the school were adequate and that the variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs met their needs.

The Principal and all four teachers confirmed that they had taken part in professional development activities apart from the school development day in the past year and all of them expressed satisfaction with the available professional development programs.

The Principal indicated 11-20 hours, while the teachers had different perceptions, in relation to the hours that were provided per year for professional development for each teacher. However, the results of the interviews show that the teachers felt a need for more professional development than was available. One teacher said, "There are some good opportunities for teacher professional development in our school but it is not enough. We can participate in conferences and other professional development programs according to the budget limitations of our school."

Another teacher, who was the coordinator of the professional development programs, expressed a similar view:

... We told them [teachers] there are a certain amount of opportunities available for them in professional development but we are conscious that we do not have a lot of money. But the thing that people need to know in the implementation of the professional development budget is that this budget is provided for all teachers. Teachers should not expect that they could participate in any professional development program that they want.

The Principal said that 1-20% of the school budget was allocated for professional development programs while the majority of teachers (three) did not respond to the question. During the interview the Principal explained:

According to the recommendation of some professional analysts, five percent of the budget should go to professional development. For example, for next year's budget this would be \$350 to \$450 per teacher. Also, teachers can participate in different conferences.

4.3.4.2 Planning and resourcing of professional development

The Principal believed that the Principal and the teachers had the most important responsibilities for the budget, type, and content of professional development activities. The interview with the Principal showed that the school did not have a professional development committee and consequently the Principal and heads of campus had significant roles in the decision-making about professional development of teachers. The Principal explained:

I do in consultation with the heads of campus [this school had two campuses]. A lot of daily operations have been delegated to the heads of campus but I am involved also in that. It is a delegated responsibility that they have... We do not have a professional development committee, but there is opportunity for staff to have input and for their opinions to be valued...

All four teachers perceived that the Principal was central in professional development decision-making, and three of the four teachers perceived that the teachers also were responsible for the budget, type, and content of their professional development. During interviews teachers also identified the Principal as the main authority in relation to professional development of teachers. One teacher said:

The Principal does all of that [arrangement of professional development programs]. The Principal gets people into elections for the different national student Christian Teacher Education groups. The Principal encourages people to do courses. In this school in the last two years quite a lot of teachers got their degrees and Masters through Christian Education...

On the other hand, two teachers believed that the Board of Studies, the School Board (two), and the state (three) were least important in decision-making on the budget, type and content of professional development of teachers. The Principal responded positively to the question "Are the funds available for professional development adequate?" However, teachers expressed divergent views on this question.

The Principal indicated that professional development was well linked to the school's planning and budgeting and three of the four teachers agreed. The interviews with teachers also showed that professional development, especially in relation to budget and

needs aspects, was linked to the school's general planning and budgeting. A teacher said:

The budget for professional development of teachers is included in the school plan. The allocations of budget for different professional development programs and recognized needs are based on history and what we needed in the past... There is recognition that we need more money this year because there is a change and staff have to go to in-service in particular areas.

Another teacher noted, "We have the school plan and professional development of teachers' budget is included in that plan."

4.3.5 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on resources and facilities

4.3.5.1 Adequacy of physical facilities in the school

The results of the survey indicated that the Principal believed that the physical facilities in his/her school in comparison to others were adequate. This response was a little inconsistent with his response in the interview. As the Principal argued:

The school facilities are limited because we are a low-fee school, charging fees to our parents which are significantly below what a lot of other schools charge. We also have a different structure; there are two campuses. This means it is a very expensive to operate... the structure limits the building, facilities, and staffing and a whole range of other areas.

However, all four teachers pointed out that the facilities in their school were inadequate to very inadequate. According to the interview with one teacher, the physical geography of the school and the budget limitations were the main constraints on the adequacy of the physical facilities in the school. She emphasized:

Because of the physical geography of the school and we are on the hill, we cannot develop the school and that is one of the main constraints. The financial consideration is another... we could have more resources if we increase fees. But this will limit the people who can come to the school.

This was confirmed by another teacher.

Six of the seven students agreed with the teachers. However, parents' opinions were divided on the adequacy of physical facilities.

4.3.5.2 Impact of decision-making arrangements on physical facilities

The Principal responded positively to the question on his ability to have an impact upon the physical facilities of the school. The Principal supported this in his interview:

I think the system we have actually works very well. We have input from members of staff who have expertise. They can use those facilities and interact with the community and the school Board and we have all the influence we need to have.

Three of the four teachers, however, noted that these arrangements were inadequate to very inadequate. In interview, one teacher indicated that lack of teacher participation in decision-making has been the cause of bad decisions on school facilities. She gave an example:

I think as far as the design of a new kitchen for the technology teacher, they decided not to put a smoke detector in. After finishing they decided to change some of the design because it was not going to work well. It was done without consulting us, which was very unwise because now they have to put a smoke detector in which is high cost and is a legal requirement.

Another teacher pointed out that the participation of teachers in school decision-making enabled teachers to become familiar with the realities and big picture of the school. She asserted:

I think that as a teacher and coordinator we participate in decision-making and providing information about what is needed. I think it works well in the sense that our teachers understand the bigger picture. I might want many things but I cannot have all of them because of other needs too...

Five of the seven students had similar perceptions to the teachers. One of the students in the interview clarified:

I guess they cannot know what we want and what we need to learn more effectively. They cannot make big decisions without our say and we have to say what resources we want to use... involvement would give us more opportunity, like bigger playgrounds and basketball courts.

More than half of the parents (five) perceived that the decision-making arrangements on facilities were adequate to very adequate. According to the interview with one parent, however, participation of parents in decision-making here would improve the facilities and fund-raising processes at the school level. The parent argued, "... It is a fact that with parent involvement in decision-making, you can have good facilities and help the children... I think parent involvement in decision-making will result in people being more willing to give more money to the school."

4.3.6 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on student outcomes

4.3.6.1 Decision-making and student attendance

There were slightly different opinions on the relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and student outcomes (attendance, retention, and examination results). For instance, the Principal confirmed that there was a relationship between the decision-making processes on home and school relationships and student attendance. In the interview the Principal said the extent of student attendance in the school was high because of the model of education and partnership between home and school. The Principal said, "We have a partnership between home and school and because of the shared vision parents are committed to, their children's attendance at school is at a very high level. So, we rarely have problems with poor attendance."

Half of the teachers (two) agreed with the Principal. One teacher noted:

Our attendance is pretty good. We have very clear processes. Our students must enrol and students' attendances are checked every day. If somebody has not got a note or has unsatisfactory attendance, there is a letter sent home. We contact parents enquiring why a child has been away for a while. There is a lot of accountability. We don't have any problem in relation to attendance.

This was confirmed by another teacher who said, "I think attendance in our school is pretty good and one of the main reasons for this is because the model of decision-making is a parent-partnership one." Similar views were expressed by both teachers in interview.

The students' opinions were divided. Only three of the students agreed, but an equal number disagreed on the relationship between the decision-making arrangements and the students' attendance. One student noted:

I think student attendance is pretty good because the school follows students who do not come to the school and asks parents about the reasons for their children's absenteeism. School decisions can cause us to feel comfortable and like to come to school everyday. If we were dissatisfied with the school, we would not have much motivation for coming to school.

Four parents also confirmed the positive relationship between the school decision-making processes and student attendance.

Consistent with the general school policies, it is the school's legal responsibility to ensure that student absences from school are accounted for and valid reasons for absenteeism must be given to the school. If a child is absent from school for any reason then he/she must bring a signed note from the parent stating the reason. Each child is regarded as responsible for his/her actions and unexplained absence may lead to punishment of some kind. Full ranges of measures are used within the school including encouragement, counsel, correction, reprimand, deprivation, detention, family conference, and suspension or in extreme cases, expulsion.

4.3.6.2 Decision-making and student retention

In relationship to retention, there were similar survey responses to almost every answer except for five of 19 respondents who did not answer the question. The Principal perceived a positive relationship between the decision-making processes and student retention in the school. During the interviews the Principal said, "Retention from compulsory to post-compulsory from Year 10 to Year 11 - is 80 to 85 percent because of the nature of the community here."

Three of the four teachers agreed. In the interview one of the teachers reported, "Retention from Year seven to Year 10 is one hundred percent and then at least 70% go to Years 11 and 12. Our retention is good." A teacher in the interview clarified, "We have quite good retention in our school and this year in Year 10 we are only losing two of them and most of them go on. We have a very good reputation academically as well as in Christian needs."

The majority of students (five) and parents (five) agreed on this positive relationship between the decision-making processes and student retention. A student in interview argued that providing a safe and comfortable environment in the school encourages student retention. She explained:

I was here from Kindergarten and if we like the school and the teachers, we like coming to the school and continuing with this school. I think if the students feel comfortable and there is a safe environment, the students like to continue with the school. Actually, the extent of retention in our school is high, particularly in our Year 12.

4.3.6.3 Decision-making and examination results

The survey indicated that the Principal believed that there was a positive relationship between the decision-making processes and the students' examination results. The Principal noted:

Because we have parents, students, and teachers working within the same framework and shared vision, the examination results are exceptionally high. ... We are not a selective school. We have a full range of abilities within our school. Our results at Higher School Certificate and Basic Skills Test levels are always dramatically above the State average level. So, the decisions that we make as the school community are accepted and adapted across the school-parents, staff, and the student levels.

Teachers were divided on the relationship between the decision-making processes and student examination results. While half of the four surveyed teachers disagreed on the existence of such a relationship, the interviewed teachers both confirmed it. As one teacher noted:

Our examination results probably are one of the best in the region. Our Higher School Certificate results in the last few years were first in the region. We are a little school, we are not great, we have some special needs and we have got a very good special needs' program. We have very good results and these good results come from good school decisions.

Four of the seven students also confirmed this relationship. In interview one student said, "I think the school and staff decisions can impact on the examination results. I think we have pretty good results. Our school is a top school and teachers are good and definitely have an impact on the student examination results."

The majority of parents (five) also agreed with the positive relationship between the decision-making processes and the students' examination results in the school.

4.3.7 School summary

School B is a Christian parent-controlled school in a highly decentralised system of governance. Although teachers, students and parents perceive that the Principal enjoys considerable authority, the Principal himself/herself and teachers see his/her authority limited by the State government policies and legislation, the Board of Studies, and the School Board. The Principal does not believe he/she has real control over the curriculum and the amount of government funding. The School Board has full authority for selection and appointment of staff. The curriculum framework is set by the Board of Studies but the school has considerable say in implementation of the academic curriculum at the school level, and the curriculum in religious education.

The amounts of government and non-government funding are largely based on school enrolment. The school has a business manager and the Principal works collaboratively with him/her to ensure the educational needs of the school are addressed. Because of the consultative nature of the school governance and the high degree of parental involvement by committed parents, the governance processes are slow. The Principal uses collaborative decision-making and consequently staff feel that they are listened to more by the Principal than the School Board.

A large group of committed parents are active in school affairs and are largely happy with the opportunity to be involved, but certain barriers prevent them from greater involvement.

In spite of the fact that students have very limited say in the school decisions and do not understand the complexity of decision-making as well as other stakeholders, they are generally satisfied with their opportunities for involvement in decision-making. The Principal considers planning and budgeting decisions as an area that students do not possess enough expertise in to make important contributions.

Stakeholders are involved in decision-making in different ways. In relative terms, the Principal has most say in decision-making at the school, then teachers, parents, and then some students. However, students and teachers feel the need for more inputs into school decisions. The Principal and the School Board have the clearest ideas and awareness of issues because they are closest to the locus of decision-making. The school facilities are limited because the school is a low-fee paying school, has two campuses and a consequent geographical problem. Overall, the school has an inclusive and positive culture and all stakeholders, especially parents, seem to be happy with opportunities to be involved. Decision-making at the school relates positively to all major indicators of school effectiveness including parental involvement, professional development, planning and budgeting, resources and facilities, and student outcomes.

4.4 Case Study Three: School C (Independent Catholic High School)

School C is an independent Catholic high school owned by a Catholic religious order and governed by a Board of Directors. It was founded as a parish school in 1873 by the Sisters of the religious order. Many of the school families are professional or in management while some are tradespeople, or salaried employees. The school has a very high rate of fee collection (over 95%), which suggests that the community is reasonably affluent, places a high value on education, and makes the required sacrifices to meet its financial obligations.

The school has a Parents and Friends Association. The Parents and Friends Association is an important grassroots organization. It provides parents with an independent forum within their children's school where they can interact with other parents and discuss educational, funding and related issues. It is open to all parents and they participate voluntarily. The Principal considers the Parents and Friends Association as a place where the Principal gets a chance to explain what is going on in the school. The executive of the Parents and Friends Association talk to parents about what is happening in the school and influences school decision-making by making suggestions to the school. The Parents and Friends Association is not empowered to interfere in the day-to-day running of the school or the curriculum, although parents' views are often sought by the Principal and school staff members.

The school has a student population of 1155. Overall, there are 106 full-time and part-time staff including four school executives, 74 teachers, two part-time teachers, one para-professional full-time staff member, and 27 full-time supports.

There are six science laboratories, five computer laboratories, 25 computers in the computer rooms, one library, one specialist room, one gymnasium/multi purpose hall, one shelter area, one canteen, six toilet blocks, and six toilets in each block.

Tables 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 provide a profile of the sample of respondents.

Table 4.9 Respondents Sample Size

Participants	Survey Sample Size	Survey Respondents	Interview Sample Size	Interview Respondents
Principal	1	1	1	1
Teachers	74	27	2	2
Students	20	16	2	2
Parents	20	1	2	2

Table 4.10 Full-time Staff Information

Position	Number	Gender Male Female	Education Qualification BA MA/MSc PhD	Years of Service							
				6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18-21	21-24	24-27	27-30
Principal	1			1							
Teachers	27	3 24	14 9 1 ²	2	3		1			1	

Table 4.11 Parent Respondent Information ¹²

Number	Gender Male Female	Occupation Nursing Service Teaching Domestic	Education Qualification SC HSC BA MA/MSc	Active Member of the Parent Association	Member of the executive of the Parent Association
1	1	1	1		

Table 4.12 Student Respondent Information

Number	Gender Male Female	Class 7 8 9 10 11 12	Student Leader
16	16	16	5

The number of teachers who responded to the survey represents 36.5% of the total number of teachers in the school. The number of parents who were offered opportunity to be involved was 20 parents, but only one parent responded. Consequently, this result must be interpreted with extreme caution. The number of student respondents represents 80% of the total student sample in this school.

There were more female teachers, parents, and students than males. The majority of teachers had a Bachelor degree, nine teachers had a Masters degree, and one teacher had a Doctorate. The parent respondents were not active members of the Parents and Friends Association.

¹² It is possible in School C that communication in respect of the study with parents was not as effective as at the other three schools.

4.4.1 The governance arrangement (decision-making) of the school

4.4.1.1 Constraints

The Principal believed that the State government and the Board of Studies significantly influenced decision-making at the school level. Additionally, the Principal said that the system policies and the teachers' union had somewhat significant influence on decisions in the school. During the follow-up interviews, however, the Principal argued for the adequacy of his/her autonomy in decision-making at the school level. The Principal said, "...Really, as long as it is within legislation, there is nothing within the College [school] that I cannot direct. I do not have to answer to anybody except the Board of Directors."

The majority of teachers surveyed (19 of 27) perceived that the State government, and 23 of 27 teachers perceived that the Board of Studies influenced key school decisions

Nine of the sixteen students believed that the system policies and seven thought the Board of Studies influenced school decisions significantly. The parent considered the Board of Studies and system policies as significant influences and the School Board and the teachers' union as somewhat significant influences on the school.

4.4.1.2 Levels of significant decision-making

The Principal and all teachers (27) said that the Principal was the most important level for making the most significant decisions to ensure school effectiveness and 13 of 16 students surveyed agreed. The respondent parent believed that the most important levels of decision-making were the Principal, staff, and the school community.

The Principal confirmed that key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level. As mentioned previously, the Principal claimed that he/she directed everything within the school and all decisions went through him/her. Most respondent teachers (23 of 27) and the majority of students (13 of 16) and the parent agreed that this was so.

4.4.1.3 Participants in different areas of decision-making

The Principal confirmed that he/she had most participation in the curriculum offering, budget, and resources and facilities decisions.¹³ Additionally, the Principal had some participation in decisions on professional development of teachers and parental involvement.

The Principal indicated that staff had some participation in the curriculum offering and professional development of teachers decisions. The Principal perceived that staff had hardly any participation in the budget, resources and facilities, and parental involvement decisions. In terms of the wider school community, the Principal did not respond to the survey question. However, during the interview The Principal said that the wider school community had major influence in the parental involvement decisions but did not have any participation in other types of decisions. The Principal did not respond to the sections in relation to the Parents and Friends Association, congregational owners¹⁴, and student participation in the different school decisions. In relation to student involvement in financial decisions the Principal noted, "There is no involvement of students in planning and budgeting decisions. The limitation would be lack of expertise and broad knowledge of financial understanding [by students]."

All 27 teachers confirmed that the Principal had considerable participation in budget decisions and the majority of teachers perceived that the Principal had considerable participation in decisions on curriculum offering (18 of 27) and resources and school facilities (23 of 27). Almost half of the teachers (13 of 27) believed that staff had some participation in the curriculum and professional development of teachers and 15 of 27 teachers perceived that they also had some involvement in the resources and school facilities decisions. A teacher in the interview stated:

I think as teachers we have a lot of contact with students and parents and know what is happening in the school and class situations. We have full understanding of what the kids want and basically I like to be involved in the school direction to know what is happening.

¹³ Independent schools do not have real control over the curriculum framework and the amount of government grants.

¹⁴ Congregational owners are the group of people who belong to the particular religious group who owned the school.

Teachers had divergent views on participation of the school community, the wider community, the Parents and Friends Association, and the congregational owners participation in school decision-making.

The majority of teachers thought that students did not have any say in decisions on budget (19 of 27), professional development of teachers (20 of 27), resources and school facilities (14 of 27).

More than half of students (10 of 16) thought that the Principal participated in the budget decisions, but had various perceptions on the Principal's involvement in other decisions and a similar number (10 of 16) perceived that staff had considerable participation in curriculum decisions. Half of the students (8 of 16) said that the school community had very little participation in resources and school facilities decisions. Students varied more widely in opinions on the participation of the wider school community, the Parents and Friends Association, the congregational owners, and students in the different school decisions. However, the interview with one student showed that although students had a Student Representative Council, she felt that more involvement in the school decisions would be beneficial to students, teachers, and the school. She argued, "Because we are students, we have to work around here. If we have a say, obviously it will be more beneficial to us. Also, it will be good for teachers and the school."

The parent believed that the Principal had considerable participation in the budget, professional development of teachers, and resources and school facilities decisions and some participation in the curriculum offering and parental involvement. The parent noted that staff, the school community, the wider school community, the Parents and Friends Association, and the congregational owners had some participation in all types of decisions. However, the parent said that students did not have any participation in decisions on curriculum offering, budget, resources and school facilities, and professional development of teachers, but parents had some say in parental involvement in decision-making. In the interview the parent explained, "Students don't have involvement in planning and budgeting decisions because they don't have expertise and broad knowledge or financial understanding."

4.4.1.4 Adequacy of involvement in the school decisions

The Principal confirmed that his/her involvement in the school decision-making process was very adequate. This was consistent with what he/she stated in the interview. The Principal explained:

I have enough autonomy because I am the employer and so I have control over all employment decisions and I have major influence on all budgetary decisions and I am consulted by the Business Manager and Finance Committee. Basically I direct where the resources are going to go and I direct where the money goes and also policy direction. I initiate and drive policy direction, changes in educational direction, and introduction of new curriculum.

More than half of the teachers (16 of 27) said that their involvement in the school decision-making process was adequate to very adequate. A teacher in the interview believed:

I do [participate in school decision-making]. I wish to participate in many decisions to be made which affect most teachers in the school. I think we should have a certain amount of say in decision-making but also I have been a coordinator in the school and I know how much say in any decision-making is really not related to you. If it is blanket decision-making like changing the timetable, yes it needs everyone working together to identify their own needs... we give some recommendations in decision-making so that we feel part of the school decision-making and have a sense of ownership.

More than half of the students (10 of 16) did not think that they had sufficient involvement in school decision-making processes, although one student said that their involvement in school decisions would have benefits for students, teachers, and the school. Another student stated:

We should have more say, but not too much obviously, because people can go over the top when they are given too much power. I think it is very important that students are allowed to participate in decisions in the school at large because participation in the school decision-making makes you feel that you're wanted and accepted in the school. I think in order for students to stay at the

school from Year seven to Year 12 they have to be able to feel like that. They should have some impact on what is going around.

The parent perceived that she had adequate involvement in the school decision-making process. She explained, "I think [parent participation in the school decisions] is very necessary. I think the education of children starts at home... parents certainly have control of their children's development."

In contrast, one of the parents in the interview commented that parents should only have a limited say in the school decisions. She said:

I like to participate in the school decisions on a limited basis. It seems that if the school is open for decision-making, they already have something in their head and I don't know how much of my information would be taken into account. Sometimes, they want parents to co-operate with them and give them their ideas and you don't know how much this would be used. So, you don't know whether your ideas work or not.

The Principal and more than half of teachers (17 of 27) agreed that "the decision-making processes in the school are generally adequate", however, students' opinions were evenly divided. Eight of the 16 students considered the decision-making processes in the school as adequate while an equal number (8 of 16) thought that those processes were inadequate to very inadequate. The surveyed parent identified the decision-making processes in the school as very adequate.

The Principal, the majority of the teachers (25 of 27), more than half of students (12 of 16), and the parent strongly agreed that the Principal had enough authority for performing his/her duties. A teacher observed:

I think the Principal has enough authority with regard to the faculty that belong to the private system.... I really cannot say because I've never been to a Board of Directors' meeting and I don't know whether the Principal has to argue for things or fight for things or not. You know his/her word is accepted and everyone goes along with him/her.

The Principal, most of the teachers (18 of 27) and more than half of the students (10 of 16) and the parent agreed that, "Teachers have sufficient autonomy over their work." These results are consistent with teachers' responses to the question in relation to the adequacy of their involvement in the school decision-making processes and their response to the question regarding the concentration of key decision-making functions at the school level.

4.4.1.5 Decision-making and school effectiveness

The Principal strongly agreed with the statement, "I believe that decision-making processes can have an important impact on school effectiveness." The majority of surveyed teachers (25 of 27) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This result was consistent with what teachers said in interviews. For example, a teacher stated, "If decisions have not been made properly, then we do not have facilities and training. If we don't make good decisions, we'll lose money." Similarly, another teacher argued, "If students don't agree with decision-making, they'll be unhappy and this can impact negatively on their education. Also, non-consultation with parents can impact on school effectiveness."

The clear majority of students (14 of 16) also believed that decision-making processes have an important impact on school effectiveness. As one student pointed out, "If bad decisions were made in relation to parents, students, and teachers, this would definitely impact on school effectiveness."

The parents also confirmed that there was a relationship between decision-making and school effectiveness. One explained:

Bad decision-making starts from the top and affects everyone else. So, if a bad decision is made, this makes people upset. For example, a decision is made about which teachers would take leave. So, another decision has to be made to replace that teacher. The teacher replacing that one comes and doesn't know [the] curriculum and isn't used to teaching that grade and isn't perfect for this job. It affects the students' education and it affects the HSC results too. This is very bad and it would be detrimental to the future of the school to make a bad decision about who to employ.

Another parent argued:

Well, unsatisfactory decision-making leads the school in the wrong direction and is not accepted by the parents and staff body. So, sometimes if students go the wrong way, actually it takes a long time to come back on to the right. This school has a very good reputation academically. So, decisions in relation to employing staff members are important. If a school doesn't hire experienced staff, it can bring academic standards down and people don't want to come to the school in future years. That's an impact of unsatisfactory decision-making.

4.4.2 The impact of the governance arrangements (decision-making) on parental involvement

The information contained in the School Strategic Plan (2002-5) indicates that encouraging and recognising contributions made by community members in all endeavours is part of the values which underpin the school vision statement.

4.4.2.1 Levels and types of parental involvement

Except for some students, all respondents thought that the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making was sufficient. The Principal confirmed his/her view that parental involvement in school decision-making was adequate and most teachers (17 of 27) and the parent agreed. Students' perceptions on parental involvement were evenly divided (eight of 16).

Survey data indicate some inconsistency among respondents on actual involvement of parents in school activities. The Principal and the parent said that 31-40% of parents were actively involved in the school activities, while there were divergent views among teachers and students. All respondents agreed, however, that ample opportunities for parental involvement were provided but that many parents were unable to make use of these.

Responses in relation to the question on parental interaction with the school indicated that the school provided for ample interaction with parents. The Principal, teachers and students agreed on the following as major links between school and parents: regular newsletters; invitations to school events; the technological contact; school assemblies; parent-teacher conferences; take-home educational information packets; planning

meetings; the canteen; "helping" activities (in classrooms, sport, cultural activities, excursions, etc.). One of the students in the interview explained:

Parents have the P&F [Parents and Friends Association]. They can make decisions in their own committee. Mothers and fathers work in the canteen... The school has an information night and parents come with their children and are told about their daughter's progress in different classes and things like that and there is question time. We have a student executive too. We can give our ideas to the school.

Of these, the parent surveyed rated most highly the newsletters, the technological contact, parent-teacher conferences, the take-home educational information packets, telephone hotline, and canteen as the school/ home interaction activities which most facilitate parent involvement in the school. Parents were satisfied with parental involvement opportunities in the school. As a parent noted:

Every parent has the same opportunity and no one is told not to participate. They don't make it hard for anyone to approach the school because it's only a phone call away or a letter away. If they go to the P&F meeting, they'll have more inputs because they're given more information and more opportunities to make their point of view heard.

Another parent pointed out:

I think they [parents] have the same opportunities. It's up to them on a personal basis whether they are actually going to be active on that or not. I think every parent has a choice to get involved in the school but it is up to him or her whether they do something about that. I think they do.

4.4.2.2 Barriers to parental involvement

Survey responses on this issue were limited, but some barriers to parental involvement were identified. These included lack of time and inconvenience with school activities (Principal); parents' work, lack of time, lack of adequate training by parents, and child protection issues (teachers); lack of trust by school of parents, and reduction in the number of events by the Principal and consequently less opportunity to be involved

(students; parents). Work and lack of time were repeatedly mentioned as the main barriers to parental involvement by all respondent stakeholders.

In the interviews with respondents regarding the question on equal opportunity of parents to participate in the school, the Principal explained:

They do have equal opportunity. The opportunity is equal to parents through the P&F [Parents and Friends Association] and through access to me. When there is a major decision, we put on the website documents for response or we send out on paper documents for response.

However, A parent referred to family commitments as the main barrier to equality of parental involvement and said:

I do not think they [parents] have the same opportunity. I know some parents feel that they aren't given opportunities in relation to their own family commitments... perhaps they are given opportunity but they can't respond because their families are large and they're very busy. So they don't get to the P&F meetings... I guess they do have the opportunity but things hold them back.

4.4.2.3 The Principal's role in promoting parental involvement

The Principal said that he/she encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community. The Principal stated:

I would say it's a difficult area regarding consultation mainly because it is deciding what (issues) should be at the parent decision-making level. Certainly on major things like the strategic plan or financial situations parents are communicated to verbally as well as written to and responses are invited. We have a Parents and Friends Association where I get a chance to explain what is going on in the school. They have a chance to ask questions and so on.

Teachers and students had divergent views regarding this question. A teacher in the interview noted:

The community is invited; parents are invited, and talk to teachers and communicate with them about students. Also, the College has strategies that bring parents in. So, there are a lot of activities within the College that parents are invited to take part in such as religious aspects. We also have a lot of meetings. We have a meeting at least one or two times a year; parents are invited to come and we discuss the next block work and students are involved. There is teacher-parent communication.

The parent believed that the Principal always encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community. The parent response to this question was consistent with her response to the question regarding the adequacy of the level of specific parental involvement in school decision-making.

4.4.3 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on planning and budgeting

4.4.3.1 Participants in the planning and budgeting decisions

The data from the survey in this area indicate that there was general agreement among the respondents that the Principal played a major role in planning and budgeting decisions. The Principal said that he/she had a major influence on all budgetary decisions and was consulted by the Business Manager and the Finance Committee of the school.

A strong majority of teachers (26 of 27) also perceived that the Principal was central to these decisions and a slight majority of teachers (18 of 27) thought that staff, the Parents and Friends Association, and the congregational owners were also involved in them. A teacher said:

Planning and budgeting are initially concept-developed by the Board of Directors of the school. Then they come up with final decisions, then contact us by email and letters and staff meetings and we have discussions and we suggest further developments.

All students also said that the Principal was greatly involved in the planning and budgeting decisions, but their opinions were divided on participation of the

congregational owners in the school financial decisions. The parent believed that the Principal and the Parents and Friends Association were the only participants in planning and budgeting decision-making in the school. One of the parents in the interview clarified:

I am only in the canteen. The only thing I can guess is that they're looking for community involvement for the school. They put out letters and everyone is asked to volunteer for this community. So, in that way they do ask for parent volunteers. The Principal, staff, and Business Manager would be involved and maybe an ex-parent and the representatives of the Order [of nuns] would be involved. But not a lot of parents would ever be asked to be involved. It would be the member of the community who is respected and might be in the financial area... I think there have been ex-parents not current parents...that type of information is not widely distributed and not known through the general parent population of the school.

Although this school had a business manager, it is clear that the Principal and, to some extent, staff and parents also participated in financial decisions.

The Principal believed that he/she had sufficient authority to manage the school budget. This result was consistent with what the Principal said in the interview but inconsistent with his/her response to the survey question regarding the adequacy of the opportunities for his/her involvement in planning and budgeting decisions. Similarly, a strong majority of teachers (24 of 27) agreed or strongly agreed on the Principal's authority and this was confirmed in the interviews with the teachers. However, a slight majority of students (10 of 16) and the parent disagreed with the adequacy of the Principal's authority to manage the school budget.

4.4.3.2 Adequacy of opportunities for participating in the planning and budgeting decisions

The Principal indicated that the opportunities for his/her involvement in planning and budgeting decisions were inadequate despite his/her assertion in the interview that he/she had the main impact on all budgetary decisions.

In contrast, more than half of teachers (18 of 27) felt that their opportunities for involvement in planning and budgeting decisions were adequate to very adequate. In relation to the process of selection of members of the planning and budgeting committees a teacher stated:

...Usually a couple of people on the executive and part of it, the Deputy Principal and the Principal, are members of the Planning and Budgeting Committee. But also we usually find in the Parents and Friends Association whether anyone likes to be on it or not. They would be voluntary. The Board of Directors and executive probably will be on it and there will be volunteers as well.

Another teacher said, "They normally ask for volunteers for the budgeting and planning committees and these are made up of the school executives, the Business Manager, and teachers."

In contrast, a strong majority of students (14 of 16) believed that the opportunities for their involvement in planning and budgeting decisions were inadequate to very inadequate. One student noted:

I don't think students are allowed to have power to change anything. The students would have to get a number of students together and the support of others in the positions of authority like teachers and parents. I think one of the main barriers to student involvement in planning and budgeting decisions is their lack of knowledge.

However, Another student stated:

I think this school is really good in allowing students to make decisions already. I don't think I can take anything that I would improve. Maybe within each subject, the methods that they teach, like three choices, maybe they could get students' feedback about what methods they should teach within each subject like English, History... This school is really good in providing resources for students.

Although the surveyed parent expressed similar perceptions to the teachers, another parent in interview said:

I am not invited. Maybe I don't have any idea; I don't have any education. I think I don't want to do planning and budgeting except at the most basic level to get the idea of what it is the school needs. Maybe they say we think we need this. Then, they would be listening too. I don't know how much involvement actually they want.

4.4.3.3 Sources of school budget

Respondents varied in their perceptions of the percentage of teacher salaries funded by the government.¹⁵ For example, the Principal indicated that the government funded 90-100% of teacher salaries in the school. But, almost half of the teachers (13 of 27) did not respond to the question and remaining teachers had different opinions. Students also had divergent views and the parent thought that the government funded 30-40% of teacher salaries.

There were also different perceptions on government funding of other school operating costs. The Principal again saw that to a great extent the operating costs of the school were met by government funding. Almost half of teachers (13 of 27) perceived that government funded the operating costs of the school to some extent. Students had different opinions and the parent was uncertain.

It is apparent that only the Principal had adequate and accurate information about the extent to which governments fund non-government schools.

4.4.3.4 Planning, budgeting, and monitoring

There were also a variety of responses to the question on monitoring the school budget. The Principal indicated that the Principal, staff, the school community, the congregational owners, and the Bursar had the monitoring roles in the implementation of the school budget with the Principal again playing a major role.

The majority of teachers also believed that the Principal (26 of 27), staff (18 of 27), the Parents and Friends Association (14 of 27), and the Bursar (25 of 27) monitored the

¹⁵ Independent schools receive a mix of State government and Commonwealth government funding.

implementation of the school budget, through the budgeting and planning committees made up of the school executive, the Business Manager, and teachers.

Most of the students perceived that the Principal (14 of 16) and the Bursar (10 of 16) had monitoring roles on implementation of the school budget. Students were divided on the monitoring role of the Parents and Friends Association. Similarly, the parent identified the Principal, the Parents and Friends Association, and the Bursar as the monitors of the implementation of the school budget.

4.4.4 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on professional development of teachers

4.4.4.1 Adequacy of professional development programs

The Principal and the majority of teachers (24 of 27) responded positively on the provision of a school program for professional development, the Principal and most teachers (22 of 26) also confirmed that the professional development programs at the school were adequate. The Principal explained:

... I think here there has been sufficient professional development because it is handled very professionally and thoroughly. So, we do, in relation to whole-school changes such as curriculum change, ensure staff have enough information and also time to work through things and so on.

Almost half of the teachers (13 of 24) and the Principal agreed that the variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs met their needs. The Principal and most of teachers (20 of 27) confirmed that they had taken part in professional development activities other than the school development day in the past year.

Furthermore, the Principal and a majority of surveyed teachers (20 of 27) expressed satisfaction with the available professional development programs, although one teacher explained:

One of the Assistant Principals has the responsibility for staff development. We look at the Faculty Booklet for finding something [programs for professional development], which we would like to do. We apply for it. I applied for 16 issues [programs] and I have not got any. I have had some professional

development with my Middle School but they were very general. Also, sometimes we have people coming to the College. I think we do get a lot of generalized professional development.

The Principal expressed the view that 21-40% of the school budget other than for salaries was allocated for professional development programs. During the interviews the Principal said:

...We have \$55000 as a global budget for professional development, and we have 80 teachers. That's about \$687.5 per teacher. Global budget is not spent on every individual teacher and it is also mostly used to fund running projects instead of just going to courses and some long-term learning projects. They go to improvement projects... So, put together, professional development programs or improvement projects are learning projects for teachers and funds are for projects and support for experts inside the school and experts outside the school. It is project-based learning. It may take six months or sometimes nine months. It is quite new. It goes together with evidence-based strategic planning and project-based professional learning.

A majority of teachers (18 of 27) did not respond on the proportion and adequacy of budget for professional development. However, the remaining teachers (nine of 27) had divergent views.

4.4.4.2 Planning and resourcing of professional development

The Principal believed that the Principal and teachers were the most responsible for "the budget, type, and content" of school professional development programs. The Principal also indicated that:

Developing of staff is the responsibility of one of the Assistant Principals. He arranges for training. He runs programs and designs and implements programs. He also looks after professional development budget and authorizes payments for in-service courses and so on.

Approximately half of the teachers (14 of 27) perceived that the Board of Studies and teachers were responsible for the budget, type and content of teacher professional

development. A teacher in interview said:

The Dean of Community [Assistant Principal] is actually in charge of our professional development. He gives us all of the information about professional development. We look through it and we get back to him and request with regard to professional development. He tells us ok. He is a major factor in whole-school development as well staff development day.

The Principal believed that the professional development funds were adequate. The Principal explained, "From a budgetary point of view I think it is reasonable. From a point of view of does it develop staff enough? I don't think you can have adequate budget for that." The teachers expressed varied opinions. One teacher argued:

I do not think it is enough. I think if you're expecting teachers to pick up any single change in education, you should give them time and opportunity to do something about it. If you expect teachers to be counsellor and baby-sitter for a lot of students, then we need to be trained. You can't expect somebody to make a cake without being told how to make a cake. You need preparation time and you need time to prepare for change.

However, another teacher believed, "It (the budget of professional development) is enough... We have enough money."

The teachers' responses to this question were also a little contradictory to their responses to the statement, "A variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs meets my needs."

In response to the question on links between professional development and the school's planning and budgeting, the Principal said that these links were adequate. This is consistent with what he/she said in interview:

The budgeting is department-based and each department has allocated some [funds] for professional development. They submit to one of my Assistant Principals who controls and leads this area...within the budget they have freedom to make decisions and then we make sure it is balanced throughout the year. Professional learning is project-based. The projects locate within the

Strategic Plan. So, each year there are particular foci in the Strategic Plan. For example, last year [2003] the most important focus was Middle School Year Seven to Year Eleven; Middle School Pedagogy, Middle School Philosophy, student engagement, curriculum planning. So, that was the Strategic Plan for that year.

More than half of teachers (19 of 27) also believed that professional development was linked to the school's general planning and budgeting sufficiently to very well. A teacher in interview explained:

Planning determines the whole budget for professional development and then this is broken into each faculty and then each group gets an equal professional development budget. Of course, if a faculty has more teachers, it gets more budget in relation to the curriculum, teaching, learning, and staff.

4.4.5 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on resources and facilities

4.4.5.1 Adequacy of physical facilities in the school

The Principal felt that the physical facilities in the school in comparison to others were very adequate. However, in the interview, in relation to the reasons for limitations on physical facilities the Principal emphasised, "the limitations of size (geographical limitation). The area is too small. We have physical limitations not budgetary limitations."

A clear majority of teachers (22 of 27) thought that the physical facilities in their school were adequate to very adequate. But, in the interview one teacher also spoke of limitations:

The inadequacy is probably in computer facilities or rooming. If we have no extra ground across the road, it will be a little crowded. We have a building but it is very old, about 130 years old. But I am a historian and feeling wonderful that we are able to live in historical classes. I have a room for a drama class. I think if you want to be a specialist teacher, you will feel that there are not enough facilities.

Most students (12 of 16) and the parent agreed with the Principal. It seems that although all surveyed respondents agreed with the adequacy of physical facilities in the school, they clarified in the interviews that the building was too old and the geography of the school was the main limitation on the adequacy of physical facilities.

4.4.5.2 The impact of decision-making arrangements on physical facilities

The Principal pointed out that the decision-making arrangements in the school were very adequate and allowed him/her to have specific impact on the physical facilities. He/she argued:

Well, my greater involvement in decision-making improves facilities because I have control over the budget. So, I put the money where it is needed. So, we respond to the demands of the College and the curriculum because I have control over the budget.

A strong majority of teachers (23 of 27) agreed with the Principal. One of the teachers noted, "We talk to the Principal and other executives about what is here and what facilities we need. I have involvement in decision-making on physical facilities." Another teacher believed, "I suppose because I am able to put my opinion without some type of background knowledge, I think I might be more hindrance than help. I was coordinator last year. I am part of the committee at the moment..."

In contrast, slightly more than half of students (9 of 16) thought that the decision-making arrangements were inadequate for them to have an impact on the physical facilities of their school. However, one student believed, "This school is really good in providing resources for students and allowing students to make decisions."

The parent agreed with the Principal and teachers on the adequacy of the decision-making arrangements on physical facilities in the school. The interview with a parent indicated the potential importance of parent involvement in the school's physical facilities decisions. She said, "I think the fact is that if parents have more inputs into the decision-making, then I guess with their support and their push for things that I guess that facilities would certainly improve."

This was confirmed by another parent who stated:

If they knew what exactly parents and children wanted, then it would be better for them [school executives] to provide for those children and what subjects they would be interested in. When they know a child wants to study music... they might be able to have equipment ready for them.

4.4.6 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on student outcomes

4.4.6.1 Decision-making and student attendance

The Principal expressed his/her belief in the positive relationship between decision-making and student attendance generally. The Principal explained:

I cannot think of a particular decision that would have an impact on the student attendance except with the students. They [students] have a positive attitude to school attendance. They come because they feel it is worthwhile. I think the decisions that we made around the Curriculum, Pastoral Care, and other areas impact on student attendance.

The strong majority of teachers (22 of 27) agreed with the Principal. One teacher in the interview stated, "We have a pretty high level of student attendance in our school." Another teacher summed up:

Yesterday was academic assembly in this school and children were presented a report regarding children's attendance. It was 100 percent in the school and I was absolutely amazed the number of students who are attending school every day. Obviously, something is happening and they are quite happy with what is going on. So, they are happy and they want come to the school.

Most students (13 of 16) also shared this view. A student said, "Our school is quite strict making sure students come to school when it is required." Another student explained:

The school makes some good decisions about absenteeism. Parents have to call the school before 10am and bring a letter to the school next day. The way that they approach school absenteeism is very good and makes it hard for those

people that are lying about the reason for their absenteeism. The extent of absenteeism is less because they follow up and check reasons.

The surveyed parent also agreed that there was a positive relationship between decision-making processes and student attendance.

4.4.6.2 Decision-making and student retention

The Principal believed in the relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and student retention. This was demonstrated in the interview with the Principal where he/she noted:

I think similar sorts of things such as academic results, achievement, and a sense of success that students experience has an impact on student retention. We have a reward system like most schools, that causes you to be recognized and rewarded and it could increase the number of students who wish to remain.

The majority of teachers (21 of 27) agreed on this relationship. One of the teachers in the interview said, "Seven years ago we had 150 students each year and less in Years 11 and 12 and now we have 300 each year. There is no problem with enrolment." In the same way another teacher noted, "We have a pretty high rate of retention until Year 12. We usually have 90% enter Years 11 and 12."

Half of the students (8 of 16) perceived a positive relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and student retention. A student stated:

The school definitely encourages retention because it improves education and promotes further education. Students are happy here and happiness would come from the decisions that are made... they continue in the school when students think they have an impact and say on decisions.

Another student believed:

Our school is a good school from the morale and discipline aspects and one of the reasons that I came here was because the school is good and provides good education. Teachers are well trained and they're insistent on order and keeping

things together. Our school is a girls' school and my parents think it's good and there is no distraction.

The parent did not respond to this section of the survey, but in interview another parent stated:

I think every girl doesn't want to leave the school because of the fact that this school offers to students not only education but also a lot of opportunities. I think opportunities are here from decisions to make such a broad curriculum... the school offers a lot of opportunities for students and students are happy to stay here.

Another parent commented, however:

My children study a broad range of subjects. They're able to study the subjects that they want. But other girls that study other subjects like music have found if there are not enough girls, the music class will stop. Then they have to decide to change their subjects or change their school and they have been forced to look to other schools. They want to leave school because there is not their needed subject and this has an impact on their retention. Sometimes, uniform policy causes some students to leave the school...

4.4.6.3 Decision-making and examination results

There was general agreement on the positive relationship between decision-making processes in the school and students' examination results. During the interview the Principal noted:

.... There is very much a relationship [between the decision-making processes in the school and student outcomes]. From the decisions around how they are recognized and also when there are good results, there is a general benefit and feeling of satisfaction and achievement. We keep all examination results like School Certificate and Higher School Certificate and we're above the State average in all of those exams. Some students in the School Certificate get outstanding results... and the HSC is the same.

Many of the teachers (16 of 26) agreed with the Principal. One of the teachers stated:

I think different decision-making has an impact on examination results. For example, decision-making on professional development has a big impact on examination results. Professional development causes teachers to feel confident and if we had more money for professional development, and time, teachers and students would be more confident and examination results would be even higher.

Another teacher said, "We are not a selective school but examination results in this school are always above the average, some years getting better and some years not quite so good. Generally, examination results are very good."

A slight majority of the students (11 of 16) also believed that the decision-making processes in the school impacted on the students' examination results. A student in the interview stated, "I think teachers provide good materials for students to work with. Our school has good results in the HSC."

The surveyed parent did not respond to this section. However, another parent in interview elaborated, "I think teachers move around class and care about children and this has an impact on children.... Decision-making about selection of teachers for students can impact on student performance."

4.4.7 School summary

School C is an independent Catholic school with a substantially decentralised system of governance. The Principal appears to use a more autocratic leadership style with a "hands on" approach to decision-making. There is not sufficient evidence to indicate the use of collaborative decision-making. Although the Principal enjoys considerable authority and autonomy in substantive and strategic matters as a result of the more decentralized governance structure, he/she does not have complete control over the curriculum and the amounts of government funding. The academic curriculum is set by the Board of Studies although the school has some say in its implementation at school level, and more in the curriculum in religious education. The Principal believes that he/she has considerable authority on important matters such as budgeting, but feedback from his/her interview indicates that this authority could be greater.

The school has a business manager who is accountable to the Principal who is accountable to the Finance Committee of the Board. The amounts of government and non-government grants are determined largely according to school enrolment. However, teachers and, especially, the Principal and Business Manager have considerable say in how the non-salary budget is spent. Although staff have important say in the curriculum offering, budget, and resources and facilities decisions, they have limited say in the professional development of teachers and parental involvement decisions. However, the Dean of the Community (Assistant Principal) has considerable authority in professional development of teachers. Certain barriers such as a busy professional and personal life, lack of time and financial knowledge prevent teachers from effective participation in the school financial decisions.

A small group of parents are active in school affairs and are happy with the opportunity to be involved, but certain barriers prevent others from more active involvement.

In spite of the fact that students have very limited say in the school decisions, they are generally satisfied with opportunities for involvement in decision-making, although some want more involvement. They do not understand the complexity of decision-making as much as other stakeholders. The Principal argues that in planning and budgeting decisions the students do not possess enough special expertise to make important contributions.

With some exceptions, stakeholders are involved in decision-making in different ways. In relative terms, the Principal has most say in decision-making at the school, then teachers, parents, and some students. The Principal has the most information and awareness of issues because he/she is central in decision-making processes.

School facilities are limited because of the school's geographical location. Overall, since this school has a unique governance structure and dynamics of leadership, it has a positive culture, and most stakeholders appear to be happy with existing opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes. These processes contribute to the school's reputation and effectiveness.

4.5 Case Study Four: School D (Catholic Systemic High School)

School D, a Catholic systemic high school established in 1982, is under the management of a NSW Diocese. The population served by the school is diverse both in socio-economic structure and geographic location, ranging from farming to coastal centres to newer urban areas. As a Catholic school servicing a large regional area, it enjoys a rich multicultural background. The school's cultural heritage includes parents and students from Italian, Spanish, Croatian, Macedonian, Filipino, and Greek backgrounds.

Systemic schools are owned and administered by the Catholic Education Office, even though there may be religious orders in positions of administration within the schools. School documentation refers to the Parents and Friends Association as a dynamic, active and dedicated group, which strives to provide the children with a school that is well maintained and well resourced. It is a school where parental involvement is integral to the school's mission in education. Parents are invited to participate closely with teachers and they play a vital role in their children's education. The major functions of the Parents and Friends Association are to act as a forum for discussion on matters concerning the school; as a channel of communication between parents and the Catholic Education Commission and the Archbishop; as an advisory body and support to the Parish Priest on matters concerning the Parish School; as an advisory body and support for the Principal and the school executive; and to support the Principal in the financial management of the school.

The school has 1000 student population. Overall, there are 97 full-time teachers who include 11 part-time teachers and 28 support staff. The majority of teaching staff have four years of university training. There are 44 classrooms, six science laboratories and three computer laboratories, 75 computers in computer rooms, one library, 14 specialist rooms, one gymnasium/multi purpose hall, one oval, two shelter areas, two hallways, one canteen, three toilet blocks, and six toilets in each block.

Tables 4.13, 4.14, 4.15, and 4.16 provide a profile of the sample of respondents.

Table 4.13 Respondents Sample Size

Participants	Survey Sample Size	Survey Respondents	Interview Sample Size	Interview Respondents
Principal	1	1	1	1
Teachers	58	26	2	2
Students	20	20	2	2
Parents	20	4	2	2

Table 4.14 Full-time Staff Information

Position	Number	Gender		Education Qualification			Years of Service							
		Male	Female	BA	MA/MSc	PhD	6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18-21	21-24	24-27	27-30
Principal	1			1			1							
Teachers	58	22	36	46	10	2	2	1		2		1	1	

Table 4.15 Parent Respondent Information

Number	Gender		Occupation				Education Qualification				Active Member of the Parent Association	Member of the executive of the Parent Association
	Male	Female	Nursing	Service	Teaching	Domestic	SC	HSC	BA	MA/MSc		
4	1	3	1		1	1	2	1	1		4	1

Table 4.16 Student Respondent Information

Number	Gender		Class						Student Leader
	Male	Female	7	8	9	10	11	12	
16	10	6				14		2	1

The number of teachers who responded to the survey represents 26% of the total number of teachers in the school. The number of parents who responded to the survey represents 20% of the total number of the parents' sample for the study in this school, and the number of student respondents represents 80% of the total number of the students' sample for the study in this school.

There were more female respondents than males. The majority of teachers had a Bachelor degree, ten teachers had a Masters degree, and two teachers had a Doctorate. Two of the four parents surveyed were active members of the Parents and Friends Association and one of the parents was a member of the executive of the Parents and Friends Association. Two students were active members of the Student Representative Council.

4.5.1 The governance arrangement (decision-making) of the school

4.5.1.1 Constraints

The Principal identified the State government, the Board of Studies, system policies, and teachers' union/ industrial agreement¹⁶ as very significant constraints on decision-making at the school level. The Principal also indicated that stakeholders such as the Parents and Friends Association and the local community did not have significant input into areas of decision-making in the school constrained by externally imposed policies and agreements. In the interview, however, the Principal explained:

Effectively, in school-based decisions I have flexibility just in terms of the context of the school environment. Sometimes I need to consult with senior people in the Catholic Education Office to help me make appropriate decisions in regard to the school. I have full autonomy here in terms of teaching positions in the school or teacher aide positions. Effectively, I control that process in terms of making decisions.

Five of the nine teachers perceived that the State government and seven that the Board of Studies significantly constrained decision-making in the school. All nine teachers thought system policies had either significant or very significant influence. Three of the four teachers believed that the Parents and Friends Association did not have very significant influence and that the teachers' union had somewhat significant influence in areas such as policy and curriculum as determined by the state and Board of Studies, and systemic policies.

In interview, however, a teacher indicated that he believed that the Principal had adequate authority within the school. He said, "I think the Principal has enough autonomy. The Principal gets to make the [in-school] decisions. The Principal gets information from all of us and he/she makes the decisions. The Principal has authority in budgeting, staffing and policy within the school."

¹⁶ All schools – government or non-government – must work within the Board of Studies framework for New South Wales schools and this school also operates within the Catholic Education system policies and practices.

The interview with another teacher indicated that although the Principal individually had enough autonomy for decision-making within the school, he/she preferred to use collaborative decision-making. The Principal explained:

Hopefully, there is enough autonomy for the Principal to make decisions. Within that autonomy the Principal does not make decisions on his/her own. The Principal can make decisions but generally it is a whole-school thing. Then it's always done democratically. It is very rarely a single person decision.

Eight of the 16 students perceived that the Board of Studies limited the school's autonomy but that the teachers' union/ industrial agreement did not. More than half of the students (10 of 16) thought that the Parents and Friends Association had somewhat significant influence in constraining in-school decision-making.

Three of the four surveyed parents believed that the State government and half of the parents thought that system policies and the teachers' union/ industrial agreement significantly constrained decision-making in the school. All four parents believed that the local community and the Parents and Friends Association did not have significant influence in such decisions. Half of the parents perceived that the Board of Studies had very significant influence while the other two thought that it had somewhat significant influence on school decision-making.

4.5.1.2 Levels of significant decisions

The Principal indicated that the Principal, staff, the school community, the Parents and Friends Association, the Diocese, and the state were the most important levels for making the most important in-school decisions related to school effectiveness.

All nine teachers thought the Parents and Friends Association and six of them also perceived the Principal to be the most important levels for the most important in-school decision-making for school effectiveness. However, six of the nine teachers perceived the wider school community and the students and three of them perceived the state as the least important levels for the most important decisions within the school.

From the students' point of view, the level for the most important decisions was the Principal (10 of 16). Three of the four parents thought that the Principal was the level

for the most important decisions. Parents' opinions were varied on staff decision-making. In contrast, all four parents thought that the Parents and Friends Association and two parents felt that the wider school community and the students were least important levels for major decisions.

According to the interview with the Principal, the school had different decision-making bodies in various areas. The executive meeting with participation of different staff in key learning areas was seen as the decision-making body for staff. The Parents and Friends Association, the student election process, and the Clothing Committee were important avenues for parents. Students had the Student Representative Council that could make recommendations in decision-making in some areas.

Six of the nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the concentration of key decision-making functions was at the school level. A teacher said:

It depends on the areas of development. We have the Curriculum Committee, which usually are the Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator. If it involves the area of pastoral care, it will be myself and the Pastoral Care Coordinator. If it was a whole-school thing, then it would be the Principal and Assistant Principal. So, generally, it is really coming down to the person who is driving that particular area within the school.

Another teacher said:

Students are involved through the Student Representative Council. Parents have a big say in the Parents and Friends Association. Staff have a say in staff meetings and from time to time there is a questionnaire and staff put priorities on the questionnaire. So, there are opportunities for students, staff, and parents; whether they take the opportunities or not, it is up to them.

Most students (10 of 16) and all four surveyed parents agreed to strongly agreed with the Principal and teachers. The responses to this question were consistent with the responses to the statement, "I feel my involvement in the school decision-making process is adequate."

4.5.1.3 Participants in different areas of decision-making

Respondents generally agreed that the Principal participated in all areas of decision-making in the school. The Principal confirmed that he/she had considerable participation in the curriculum offering, budget, resources and school facilities, parental involvement, and some participation in professional development of teachers. The Principal believed that staff had considerable participation in parental involvement, some participation in curriculum offering, professional development of teachers, and resources and school facilities, and almost no participation in the budget decisions. The Principal said:

In terms of school decision-making arrangements with respect to staff, we have the School Executive Meeting: The Principal, Deputy, and Religious Education coordinator, one of the Key Learning Areas coordinators, one of the E-coordinators and two staff coordinators represent staff. That body is effectively the main decision-making body in the school. We have other bodies such as the coordinators for key learning areas that is a separate body who make curriculum decisions.

The Principal thought that the school community had considerable participation in professional development of teachers and parental involvement decisions and some involvement in curriculum offering, budget, resources and school facilities decisions.

The Principal indicated that the wider school community and the Parents and Friends Association did not have much participation in all types of decisions except parental involvement in which they participated considerably. According to the interview with the Principal, parents had some say in the school decisions, especially with regard to students. He/she explained:

In terms of parents, we have a very active Parents and Friends Association and effectively they have excellent representatives just in terms of recommendations they make to the Principal. Effectively, many of the committees involve parents, such as the student election process and clothing committee, which looks at the school uniform. There is much parental involvement in that. So, there is more parental involvement in the decision-making relevant to kids and the Student Representative Council.

The Principal reported that students had almost no participation in the curriculum offering and budget decisions and did not respond to the sections regarding the participation of students in professional development of teachers, resources and school facilities, and parental involvement decisions. However, in the interview he/she clarified:

We have student involvement in a lot of committees that we run such as the clothing committee and social...with regard to the financial decisions I think the kids can make recommendations in terms of what their needs are to us, as part of the planning. That's fine. But I do not feel students can have a place in the planning of funds of the school.

Eight of the nine teachers confirmed that the Principal had considerable participation in all areas of decision-making except professional development of teachers where he had some participation. They perceived that staff had some participation in curriculum offering, budget (six), professional development of teachers (four), and resources and school facilities (six). Similarly, six of the nine teachers thought that the school community had some participation in all types of decisions except parental involvement. The teachers had different perceptions in relation to the participation of the wider school community in different decisions.

Seven of the nine teachers thought that the Parents and Friends Association had only some participation in budget decisions. However, a teacher in the interview claimed, "...There is opportunities for students, staff, and parents for participation in the school activities. Whether they take those opportunities or not it is up to them."

The majority of teachers noted that students had hardly any participation in decisions on curriculum offering (all nine), budgeting (six), professional development of teachers (six), resources and school facilities (six), and parental involvement (five) in the school.

Students believed that the Principal had considerable participation in professional development of teachers (11 of 16), resources and school facilities (nine) and some participation in curriculum offering (eight) and budget (eight) decisions in the school. Although eight of the 16 students thought that staff had some participation in parental involvement decisions, they had various opinions regarding the participation of staff in other types of decisions. In interview, a student indicated, "Staff in the school have a lot

of authority to influence the decision-making. Teachers obviously get a big part of planning..."

Students also had various perceptions in respect to school community participation in different decisions. More than half of the students (10 of 16) believed that the wider school community and the Parents and Friends Association had hardly any participation in curriculum offering and professional development of teachers.

More than half of the students perceived that students had almost no participation in budget (10 of 16), professional development of teachers (nine), and parental involvement (nine) decisions at the school level. A student leader in the interview in respect to the decision-making arrangements for students, said:

We actually have a Student Representative Council. It is generally run by one of the teachers just to keep things official. The seniors of SRC are the two school captains and one of them is myself. We run more things; we run the school socials, and we run fund-raising and things like that. We can approach the Parents and Friends Association. We suggest things from the student perspective. We are also close to the teachers. Teachers can help us with fund-raising things. We can help teachers in some things that they're trying to do. Generally, it's just a really relaxed, kind of free-flowing relationship. We just speak to each other and try to get each other through things. But we do not have any real say.

Another student in the interview explained, "...We don't have any say. Students are seen to have very limited understanding about what is involved in the school budget and things like that. So, our opinions are not taken seriously."

Two of the four parents perceived that the Principal had considerable participation in budget decisions and some participation in professional development of teachers. All respondent parents thought that the Principal had some or high participation in resources and school facilities and parental involvement decisions.

Three of the four parents responded that staff had some participation in curriculum offering and resources and school facilities decisions and two parents perceived that staff had some participation in budget decisions. In contrast, half of the parents (two of

four) believed that staff had almost no participation in professional development of teachers and parental involvement decisions. Additionally, two of the four parents believed that the school community had hardly any participation in the different types of decisions in the school. All four surveyed parents confirmed that the wider school community had no participation in the different decisions.

The four respondent parents believed that the Parents and Friends Association had no involvement in decisions on curriculum offering, professional development of teachers, and budget (three of four). In the interview the parents expressed their ideas on school decision-making. One said, "I would like to be involved in the school decision-making because it affects my son and his future." Another parent stated, "I think I'd like to have some inputs into decisions that the school makes...I think the parent body should be consulted in the school decision-making. But I do not think we should be regulating schools."

Generally, parents perceived that the students had little involvement in decisions on curriculum offering (two of four), professional development of teachers (two), parental involvement (two), budget (three), and resources and school facilities (three).

4.5.1.4 Adequacy of involvement in the school decision-making

The Principal said that his/her involvement in the school decision-making was very adequate. Five of the nine teachers perceived that they also had sufficient involvement in the school decisions. One of the teachers explained:

Yes, I would and I do [participate in the school decisions]. I am consulted quite regularly about things which are important. I have participation. I think through participation in the school decisions, the Principal has feedback from staff, students, and parents and he'll have the big picture.

However, the majority of students felt that their involvement in school decision-making was rather inadequate. As noted before from the interviews, students wanted more involvement in the school decision-making processes.

Three of the four parents thought that they had adequate to very adequate involvement in school decisions. A parent in the interview noted, "I am involved in the school

decisions because I feel that I would like correct decisions to be made for my son..." Apparently, students were the only group who felt that they had no real participation in major school decisions.

The Principal and seven of the nine teachers thought the decision-making processes in the school were generally adequate. Similarly, most of the students (10 of 16) thought that the decision-making processes in their school were adequate, but believed that they should have a say in how the school was run. All four parents perceived that the decision-making processes in their school were either adequate or very adequate. This response was consistent with responses in the parent interviews, where one said:

I think the decisions should not be up to the parents. I think the parents' views should be taken into account but you cannot please all parents. So the decisions in the end are up to the hierarchy running the school. As I said, I cannot see any deficiency in the school at the moment.

The Principal and eight of the nine teachers agreed to strongly agreed that the Principal had enough authority in decision-making. This was supported by the Principal in interview.

According to the interview with a teacher, the Principal used collaborative decision-making with the participation of teachers, parents, and students. He pointed out:

I believe that the Principal works within the budget. The budget is determined by the numbers of students in the school and in association with the Catholic Education Office. So, hopefully, there is enough autonomy for the Principal to make the decisions. Within that autonomy he/she doesn't make decisions on his/her own. The Principal can make decisions but generally it is a whole-school thing, then it is always done democratically. It would first be discussed with the executive staff and then perhaps the KLA coordinator and staff.... So, it is very rarely a single person's decision.

Most surveyed students (14 of 16) and all four parents also agreed with these views. It seems that the Principal had adequate authority for performing his/her duties within parameters set by the state and the Catholic system. Since Catholic systemic schools

operate under the Catholic Education Office directions, authority is not fully decentralized.

The majority of respondents agreed on the adequacy of teachers' autonomy over their work. As noted, the Principal explained that staff participated in the different decision-making bodies at the school level. Eight of the nine teachers agreed with the Principal and this was also confirmed by the interviews with teachers. Most students (11 of 16) and all four parents expressed similar perceptions.

This is consistent with the responses to the question regarding the adequacy of teachers' involvement in the school decision-making processes and the question on the concentration of key decision-making functions at the school level.

4.5.1.5 Decision-making and school effectiveness

All respondents agreed that decision-making processes could have an important impact on school effectiveness. For instance, the Principal argued:

If wrong decisions are made, if decisions are made which are limited, they clearly can impact educational outcomes, curriculum outcomes... The Principal's decision-making and school executives' decision-making have to be based on information that we get from the broad community, all staff and stakeholders of the school and from our broad knowledge of the school as well.

All nine teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the impact of decision-making processes on school effectiveness. This was confirmed in interview by a teacher who said:

I suppose if the decisions are made unsatisfactorily by staff in general, people are going to feel pretty annoyed. They feel their money has been wasted; time has been wasted as well. So, I suppose it can be annoying and frustrating to them. It can make them feel that they have been undervalued. What they are getting is not what they need.

All 16 students and the four parents agreed or strongly agreed on this impact. One student explained:

Well, any decision that the school makes about budgeting and things like that of course is going to affect the school. They go to students and get their perspectives on the school. I think the main point that I'm trying to say is the fact that students only care if they know about it. People may say I'm really interested in the budget why not get involved in that? If students are not happy with the decisions, they are not going to work effectively.

A parent noted:

I think incorrect decision-making can impact on students' futures. If you have incorrect decisions whether at the school level or home level, if you make the wrong decisions, the child gets the wrong attitude, and wrong opinions. It affects their own interpretation and their decision-making, which impacts on their future. At the school level for example, there may be particular resources that the school can look at to purchase for the school. If the wrong decision is made, and those resources do not quite fit with what the curriculum says or the children need, then that would be a waste of money and a waste of time for students.

Similarly, another parent said:

If you make the wrong decisions, the whole school can come down if it is a major decision. If it is a minor decision, then you probably get away with that. Minor decisions are like, drink machines, and major decisions could be uniform. If students have a big push with regard to the school uniform, they can have major impact on people who are not as well off as some other students and they can dress very poorly in the school and cause social equity issues ...

4.5.2 The impact of the governance arrangements (decision-making) on parental involvement

The School Newsletter (Vol 23, November 2004) indicates that the school has traditionally enjoyed a reputation of high parent involvement and there are considerable avenues for parental involvement which greatly facilitate the quality of school decisions and relationships with the wider community. Specifically mentioned were the Rock Eisteddfod and School Musical, school sporting events, working bees, the Arts Festival, school exam supervision, and the Parents and Friends Association.

4.5.2.1 Levels and types of parental involvement

There was consistency among respondents on the degree to which parents were "actively involved in school activities". In their interviews, both parents were satisfied with their involvement in school activities generally, but one thought that greater parental participation could be useful to the school. As noted, the interview with a teacher indicated that parents had a big say in the Parents & Friends Association. Most students held similar perceptions. One student in relation to the decision-making arrangements for parents said:

We have got the Parents and Friends Association. They have general meetings and they discuss a lot of issues. The P&F has a big part in the plan of the school. In that way, the P& F participates in the meeting and say what they want... The P&F runs such things like art exhibitions, arts and craft. Whenever the Principal needs funds for certain operations, they ask the P&F and the President generally grants what they need.

Survey data indicate some inconsistency among respondents on actual involvement of parents in school activities. The Principal believed that 31 – 40% of parents were actively involved, but teachers and students had divergent views. Half of the parents perceived that only 1-10% of the parents were active in the school. As noted, documents and interviews with the parents indicated that the school had an open policy and provided various equal parental involvement opportunities which greatly facilitated the quality of school decisions and the relationship with the wider community.

The Principal, teachers, students, and parents agreed on the following as major links between school and parents: regular newsletters; invitations to school events; the technological contact; school assemblies; parent-teacher conferences; workshops for parents; take-home educational information packets; telephone hotlines; school groups/council; planning meetings; canteen; "helping" activities (in classrooms, sport, cultural activities, excursions, etc.). The Principal explained:

There are a lot of committees in the school and parents are able to get involved. I think we have probably greater parental involvement than many schools and most schools in our area. Effectively it is up to parents whether they have or haven't the time. But there are opportunities there.

One student spoke of the many opportunities for parents to participate in the school. He explained:

Every parent has the ability and has an option to get involved in the school. There are a lot of functions that are organised for working with parents if they like. For example, the school musical, cleaning, and supervising kids doing the HSC. They have a very active role to play, a very big part in the operation of the school and they are able to do that. They are able to come along and have a say, often much more than students because they come to the meetings and there is a very good communication between school and parents.

However, another student believed that although apparently every parent had equal opportunities, in practice many parents could not use those opportunities or could not participate effectively in the school. She explained, "I think officially every parent does have that opportunity, but some parents obviously do not take that opportunity as much as others." During the interviews a parent said:

One activity is of course survey forms, which go out and ask parents' input into the school. The Parents and Friends Association is always there. The school always invites parents to come in and talk with staff. Where there is an issue, there is an open policy and I think it is very good.

Another parent commented:

I think every parent has equal parental involvement opportunities. Whether they take that opportunity is another matter. Some parents get more involved in the school than others because they have got more time or more opportunities to do so. But every parent has the same right in the school. Whether a parent takes that opportunity basically is up to them.

4.5.2.2 Barriers to parental involvement

Survey responses on this issue were limited, but some barriers to parental involvement were identified. These included busy life, work commitment, children's lack of enthusiasm about the involvement of their parents, and time constraints (principal; teachers; students; parents); parental apathy and lack of motivation (teachers); lack of interest; distance from the school, "teachers think they can do whatever they want all by

themselves" (students; parents). There was general agreement that opportunities for parental involvement were well provided but that, for one or more of the above reasons, many parents were unable to avail themselves of them. One student pointed out:

When you think about parental involvement opportunities, parents who don't have a view and the kind of background, they don't really know much about money... So, basically yes they do have the same opportunities but it's a lot more complex when it gets to a closer level. So, they have opportunity to access but aren't necessarily able to be involved.

4.5.2.3 The Principal's role in promoting parental involvement

The Principal was widely recognized by respondents as having an important role to play in promoting parental involvement. Eight of nine teachers and most students (10 of 16) perceived that the Principal frequently or always encouraged parents to become fully participating members of the school community. All four parents perceived that the Principal always promoted parental involvement.

4.5.3 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on planning and budgeting

4.5.3.1 Participants in the planning and budgeting decisions

The data from the survey indicate that the Principal saw the Principal, staff, and the school community to be involved in the planning and budgeting decisions within the school.¹⁷ The interview response of the Principal was consistent with his response in the survey. He/she explained:

Effectively, I run the budget in terms of maintenance of the school, which despite financial limitations I am able to manage effectively. Obviously I am accountable in terms of how I spend money and how I keep the budget. In terms of other aspects, the Catholic Education Office controls other aspects such as salary and other things.

In response to another interview question regarding the method of selection of members for the Planning and Budgeting Committee the Principal explained:

¹⁷ There are certain obligations to be met when government grants are provided to the schools.

We don't have a committee as such. Well, effectively in terms of planning and budgeting, the Planning Committee is made up of the school executives who do a lot of the planning. In terms of budgeting, budgeting is done effectively by the Bursar and me together with the Deputy Principal.

Most of teachers perceived that the Principal (all nine), staff (six), and the Parents and Friends Association (seven) participated in the planning and budgeting decisions. However, one of the teachers stated:

Well, we cannot really be involved with the planning and budgeting decision-making, it's part of the executive. When it gets back to staff meeting, then staff will be asked for their ideas. So, there isn't any constraint and you always offer your opinions. Then those opinions always go to the meeting and if they need to be discussed further, it goes back to the executive before a decision is made. Also, time and lack of financial knowledge are probably the constraints on individual teachers. They would not know how much budget is available to run particular projects.

Another teacher noted:

I think participants in the planning and budgeting decisions are the Religious Education coordinator, the Principal, the Assistant Principal, Administration coordinator, pastoral care coordinator and there are staff representatives and the KLA coordinators. Those last two are elected by staff. Those people actually plan the areas of development and the budgeting comes down more to the Principal and Assistant Principal.

Students confirmed the participation of the Principal (15 of 16), staff (10 of 16), and the Parents and Friends Association (12 of 16) in financial decisions in the school. In interview a student commented:

Students don't have any say in the budgeting decisions. They [students] can say to the SRC [Student Representative Council] people this is what we want. But there is no guarantee we'll get it. Time is a big limitation. Students generally focus on academic issues.

Parents thought that the Principal (all four), staff (four), and the Parents and Friends Association (three) participated in the planning and budgeting decisions. A parent explained, however:

I think the biggest process is that they look to see what needs to be done, they figure out best, I guess, how to do it and then they do it in consultation with all stakeholders whether parents or students or teachers. From that consultation it goes back to the community and then the community makes decisions and passes them on to the Principal for consideration.

In contrast, another parent said:

That I do not know. I assume that would be at the Department level or within the school. I don't know about the budget... whether it comes from the state level or within the Catholic school system...I think time and financial knowledge could be the main constraints for parent participation in the school planning and budgeting decisions.

The Principal strongly agreed with the statement, "The Principal has sufficient authority to manage the school budget." However, as noted, he/she claimed that he/she ran the school budget in terms of maintenance of the school and was accountable with regard to budget and expenditure. In addition to this, the Catholic Education Office controlled other aspects such as teachers' salary. The Principal in interview said, "In terms of budgeting, budgeting is done effectively by the Bursar and myself together with the Deputy Principal. Effectively I guess we look at the overall budget and I have basic responsibility for getting this or that."

Eight of the nine teachers, most students (14 of 16), and all four parents agreed or strongly agreed on the Principal's authority to manage the school budget.

4.5.3.2 Adequacy of opportunities for participation in the planning and budgeting decisions

The Principal responded in the survey that the opportunities for his involvement in school planning and budgeting decisions were very adequate. Six of the nine teachers

believed that their opportunities for involvement in financial decisions were also adequate. A teacher noted:

In terms of budgeting, we are given a form for data collection as coordinator. So, I go back to my faculty and say, "What do you need for the next year? What programs do you need to run? What sort of money do you need for them? And any special things, professional development, and resources"... they go on the budget and I submit this to the Principal and everybody else. Then the Principal looks at what other staff want besides electricity and insurance and allocates funding and informs us of what is going on. In terms of planning, the Principal puts draft priorities for the year. We are able to ask for feedback on that.

However, the majority of students (13 of 16) reported that the opportunities for student participation in financial decisions were inadequate or very inadequate. This response was consistent with the responses of students in interviews. A student believed that students did not participate at all in financial decisions. She said:

... One of the things we have very little say in is the school budget. If we want to do something in the budget, they generally say we can't because we do not have the money. The Parents and Friends Association has their own funds, and the teachers work within that. The SRC can occasionally get into the P&F funds but we really do not have any say in the budget.

Three of the four parents had similar views to the Principal and teachers.

4.5.3.3 Sources of school budget¹⁸

With regard to the survey question on teacher salaries there were varied responses among respondents. For instance, the Principal reported that the government funded 70-80% of teacher salaries in his school. The teachers had different perceptions in relation to the percentage of government funds in teachers' salaries. Half of the students perceived that 10-20% of the teachers' salaries were funded by the government. Two of the four parents did not respond to the question and the other two differed in their responses.

¹⁸ Catholic systemic schools receive a mix of the State government and Commonwealth government funding.

The Principal reported that "to some extent" the government also funded school operating costs. The teachers had various perceptions regarding the extent of this funding, but most students (10 of 16) expressed the same perceptions as the Principal. Two of the four parents did not respond to this question and the other two varied in their responses.

4.5.3.4 Planning, budgeting, and monitoring

In response to the question, "Who monitors the implementation of the school budget?" there was a variety of perceptions. The Principal confirmed in both the survey and interview that the Principal, staff, the Bursar, and the Diocese monitored the implementation of the school budget.

Eight of the nine teachers perceived that the Principal, staff (seven), and the wider school community (seven) had monitoring roles in the implementation of the school budget. The students thought that the Principal (15 of 16), staff (10 of 16), the school community (nine), the Parents and Friends Association (13 of 16), and the Diocese (11 of 16) were the monitors. All four parents felt that the Principal, staff, and the Diocese monitored implementation of the school budget.

It should also be noted here that as some parts of Catholic systemic schools' budgets are funded by the Federal government which requires accountability from schools and therefore has a remote monitoring role in the implementation of their budgets.

4.5.4 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on professional development of teachers

4.5.4.1 Adequacy of professional development programs

The Principal and six of the nine teachers agreed on the existence of an adequate professional development program in addition to professional development days in the school. The Principal and five of the nine teachers also indicated that the variety and quantity of in – school professional development programs met their needs. Eight of the nine teachers and the Principal confirmed that they had taken part in the professional development activities apart from the school development day in the past year.

Expressions of satisfaction with the program were consistent with the Principal's response in interview:

We have an adequate professional development budget. I think each of the KLA coordinators has opportunity to look at professional development in the faculties that is related to the school plan and look at it in terms of what their needs are. And effectively we very rarely waste decisions which are made at the Deputy level and the Principal level in terms of in-services and so on. We prioritise in terms of school needs.

An interviewed teacher noted, "We have ample opportunity for professional development. We can request participation in the professional development programs."

4.5.4.2 Planning and resourcing of professional development

The Principal confirmed that he/she and the teachers were most important in planning/decision-making on professional development. The Principal perceived that the Parents and Friends Association, the state, and the Diocese were least important in decisions on the budget, type, and content of professional development of teachers. According to the interview with the Principal, the school did not have a professional development committee. The Principal explained:

We do not have a Professional Development Committee and I would argue that in fact the Professional Development Committee is two bodies: KLA coordinators who meet regularly because they are responsible for the professional development of staff in terms of mentoring and developing it; and ... myself and the Deputy Principal, who make decisions in terms of such things. Also, the school executive effectively looks at professional development needs as well. So, there are three bodies which actually effectively have an important part in the decision-making in respect to professional development.

Five of the nine teachers thought that the Principal and the Diocese (four) were responsible for the planning and resourcing of professional development of teachers. One teacher stated, however:

Well, depending on what area of development; if we are looking at curriculum then they are usually the Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator. If it

was an area involving pastoral care then it would be myself and the pastoral care coordinator. So, it really comes down to who is driving that particular area within the school.

Another teacher said, "The KLA coordinators and Learning and Teaching Committee, the Catholic Education Office to some extent and then the Principal put money there to do that."

The Principal said that 1-20% of the school budget was allocated to professional development programs. Seven of the nine teachers did not respond to the question. However, in the interview a teacher pointed out:

Schools vary in providing professional development programs. I think they [decisions] are at the regional level and the Catholic Education Office. There is not probably enough diversity in the area of professional development. It seems to be very limited in some areas...I'd like to see more opportunities for teachers to learn skills. As I said, the school has been supportive in helping us.

The Principal confirmed the adequacy of funds available for professional development and five of the nine teachers agreed. As noted, however, the teachers in interviews were divided on the adequacy of the amount of professional development programs.

The Principal stated that professional development was very well linked to the school's planning and budgeting. The Principal said:

In terms of planning, our school plan effectively each year looks at our needs across areas such as curriculum, teaching and learning, teaching and leading, administration, and facilities. In all those areas we look at what our goals are for 12 months and part of that is looking at what our professional development goals are in respect to staff.

Seven of the nine teachers thought that professional development was sufficiently linked to school planning and budgeting. A teacher noted:

The school budgeting is usually done within faculties. So, the faculties set the priorities for professional development for the year and try to link to the school priorities for the year. The school has its priorities for the year in a number of

areas and they would probably highlight where people need to get professional development. Then within faculties, the faculty determines its priorities for the year and individual teachers probably have their own. So, they would indicate to the coordinator that, "this is an area that I need for professional development and is budget available for meeting that need?"

4.5.5 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on resources and facilities

4.5.5.1 Adequacy of physical facilities in the school

The results of the survey indicated that the Principal felt that the physical facilities in the school were very adequate in comparison to others. The Principal explained:

Actually, we have very good resources. In terms of sporting, the school has the gymnastic building. In terms of buildings, we have seven science labs and that is more than other schools of this size. We spent \$85000 for covered areas. We probably need new walkways and as part of the project a new gym... Our library is a little small and in the years coming, we'll build a new library. Classroom facilities and specialist rooms are better than the majority of schools in the region.

Seven of the nine teachers agreed that the physical facilities in the school were adequate. In contrast, however, in interview a teacher explained:

I think there are two reasons for that inadequacy [physical facilities]. First, the land area is only limited for a start and secondly the design of the school with open land does not leave a lot of extra space around. So, to get extra land you have to change the design of the school... So, we do not have an oval. We have an area behind the school for a playground, but there's a damaged area that is close to the playing surface. I think it's a very pleasant place to come and it's a very nice school, but I would like it just to have an oval.

The majority of students (12 of 16) thought that the facilities were adequate to very adequate, but parents' opinions were evenly divided. While two of the four believed that the physical facilities were adequate, an equal number thought that they were

inadequate. In interview a parent expressed satisfaction with the school physical facilities. She noted:

Actually, I think the facilities are good here in the school. I am quite happy with them. I think we have a lot of facilities, the school resources, and the school equipment... So at the moment I cannot see a deficiency. I can't really see I would make them any better because I am quite happy with what they offer.

The Annual Report (2003) indicated that the School Renewal Plan had focused on the key area of developing the grounds and school facilities to meet learning and teaching requirements for a period of 3-5 years. Furthermore, according to the School Strategic Plan (2004), improvement in the maintenance of school facilities was both a short-term and a long-term priority of the school from 2004 to 2008.

4.5.5.2 The impact of decision-making arrangements on physical facilities

The Principal and seven of the nine teachers pointed out that the decision-making arrangements in the school were very adequate and allowed the Principal to have an impact on the physical facilities. The Principal in the interview clarified:

I think my involvement is really up to them [Catholic Education Office] just in terms of those aspects of decision-making in respect to the resources and facilities of the school. I work effectively in conjunction with the office to look at and do a need analysis in terms of the work priorities for the next few years. I effectively plan and consult with appropriate people in the office. I think arrangements [decision-making arrangements] are good. I have to seek permission of the Director for any building program over \$10,000 and that is appropriate in terms of accountability and in terms of resources of the whole Diocese.

A teacher in the interview said:

The library has great books on particular subjects. Anything I want...the library gets that... Some computers are in my room that senior students can access, get to the Internet and look for information. I found that when I need things, I am able to approach different parts of the school and get assistance that way.

Eight of the 16 students agreed with the teachers. The parents' opinions were evenly divided on the adequacy of the decision-making arrangements for the school. A parent believed:

I think the decisions on facilities should not be up to the parents. I think the parents' views should be taken into account but you cannot please all parents. So the decisions at the end are up to the hierarchy of the school. As I said, I cannot see any deficiency in the school at the moment.

The school Newsletter (Vol 23, September 2004) reported that the Parents and Friends Association voted to provide the funding necessary to build a gymnasium at the school. The \$300,000 project is to be built on the cricket pitch area near the school to provide the school with a sports complex that would do a great deal to enhance the sporting facilities at the school.

4.5.6 The impact of governance arrangements (decision-making) on student outcomes

4.5.6.1 Decision-making and student attendance

In relation to the question on the "positive relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and student outcomes (attendance, retention, and examination results)" the Principal responded in the affirmative. During the interview the Principal explained:

For example, the School Certificate finishing up, which is a government decision, has a huge impact on student attendance. Most of the Year Ten students don't come to school after the School Certificate and it is a huge issue for the school. We made the decisions together on what the students want in terms of providing programs for Year Ten and looked at their needs in terms of pastoral care needs. These kids are an important part of the decision-making process in terms of what their needs are. We keep records of student attendance. We follow up student absenteeism. We are very strong in that area. The school is accountable. Our student attendance is 92-93 percent.

Five of the nine teachers agreed with the Principal. This was confirmed in the teacher interviews, where one said:

...We found that in the time following the School Certificate they had negative attitudes to coming to school. So, we designed a special program to encourage them to come to school. I can't say it is hundred percent effective. But we are getting more kids... So, that decision is made at the meeting of the executive, and then it goes to the planning group and the people who are interested... So that also helped to keep Year Ten here, and the way that we check on attendance in the front office, that is the E-coordinator and home-level coordinator, is helping people keep track of students when they are away.

Another teacher explained:

Student attendance is very high. We check to make sure students are in the school. Students are happy here. We had a building program over the last two years. As a part of that building program we developed a learning centre here for disadvantaged and disabled kids. The school remodelled it and we created special facilities and special toilets for them and because of that, students now and their families are very happy being here.

A strong majority of the students (14 of 16) agreed that there was a positive relationship between the decision-making processes and student attendance in the school.

Three of the four parents confirmed that there was a relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and student attendance. In the interview a parent explained:

Two decisions are made in the school with regard to student attendance. One is senior attendance and another is junior attendance. Senior attendance is flexible attendance. They can come any day to the school and go after they do their study.... The other one is simple. State law says students have to attend school between 9 and 3.30.

Another parent believed:

I think if the school hierarchy makes the school a comfortable place to attend, you will have a low non-attendance and kids are happy to come to the school. In my opinion, it seems that the hierarchy are making the right decisions because

my son is comfortable. In relation to the extent of attendance, I can only comment from the list that I see when I am in the canteen. We do get a list of the number of students who are away and I've never seen a great fluctuation in attendance and non-attendance. I think non-attendance most of the time can be related to probably sickness or other activity or medical reasons.

4.5.6.2 Decision-making and student retention

The Principal confirmed that there was a positive relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and student retention. He/she explained:

Retention is very high. Of 176 students in Year 10 there are 157 students coming back. So, less than 20 students leave. Probably, we have 81-82 percent student retention. The school decision-making in terms of what are the student needs and in terms of curriculum making: we provide a broad curriculum, which ensures kids come back, and they can take vocational parts and academic parts. There are many subjects for them in terms of what their needs are. So, there is a strong correlation between student needs and the curriculum that we offer. We do not lose children to other schools because of offered subjects. The school tries to see most students get a good curriculum.

There were different perceptions among the teachers regarding the relationship between decision-making and student retention. A teacher in interview said, "Obviously we have to put in place curriculum, especially for Years 11 and 12, which is relevant to students. That's considerably changing. We look at that and retention rate is very high."

Another teacher confirmed:

Just off the top of my head, in the senior years we have been returning about 150 or 180 students in Year 11 to Year 12 each year ... a percentage of about 80 percent. From year to year, we have very few students who leave to other schools. They generally leave when they go to other areas.

The majority of students (13 of 16) shared this view as confirmed by one student in interview:

There are a lot of good people in the school who are always keeping up and consistent... They like getting to school as much as they can. Also, the decisions that the school makes to encourage students increases the extent of retention.

In contrast, only two of the four parents saw a link between decision-making processes and student retention in the school although one parent noted a positive example:

...One does come to my mind is one of my son's school friends. Their family moved to another area which is away from here and the student was taken to the school close to their home but that only lasted a week and the student came back to this school. The parents had decided to travel every day to bring their children to the school and pick them up in the afternoon.

Another parent said, "Our retention is high. The main decision of course is the allocation of subjects. What type of subjects that the school teaches, that generally is done through consultation of the student body and teachers. So, we try to satisfy [their wishes]."

4.5.6.3 Decision-making and examination results

The Principal confirmed that there is a positive relationship between the decision-making processes in the school and the students' examination results. The Principal noted:

Obviously, decisions such as the curriculum you offer in the school, maximising student choice, are important and the HSC standards are always very high. There is a strong relationship between the decision-making regarding curriculum and student outcomes. Our examination results are very good and very strong. We normally get high numbers of students who get into university... We get very strong results in terms of Year 12 results.

Five of the nine teachers had similar perceptions and this was consistent with teachers' responses in the interviews. A teacher commented:

We look at things, especially in Years 11 and 12, types of examinations, how we report to the parents, and that sort of decision. We always want to improve

student outcomes. Generally, the examination results in our school are above the average.

Another teacher stated:

Decision-making on what courses run can impact on student outcomes. For example, some courses that consist of only small numbers of students don't run and students have to choose other subjects. That causes some difficulty for some students who don't have any interest in other subjects that are available at the same time. Actually, it has caused some students to go to other schools because they can't get the combination of courses here and leave the school and go to somewhere else. That is generally in Year 11. I think from the last year about 65 percent of the HSC students were above the State average and I think about 70 percent qualified for university.

The majority of students (13 of 16) believed that there was a link between the decision-making and student examination results. One student said:

Part of the decision-making of the school is to give regular feedback on how the students are going in terms of their assignments, their assessment tasks and their examinations and their other activities. With regard to the examination results, generally we have high standards of results.

Another student commented, "... Any decisions regarding exams or learning are going to make very serious impact on examination results."

Three of the four parents agreed with the students. One parent said:

I am quite happy with my son's performance. I can gladly tell you there's been a great improvement in his grades this year alone. It looks like the correct decision has been made because my son has improved in his grades. This is very important for my husband and me. We work with the school and the school works with us.

The information contained in the Annual Report (2003) confirmed the findings from the survey and interviews. According to the Report, overall performance in the Higher School Certificate was strong. The top two UAI (university admission index) results

were 99.15 and 99.05. Students from the school appeared on the Distinctive Achievers list in 32 subjects after gaining Band Six results (Band one is lowest, Band six is highest). There were no students in Band One in 35 out of the 37 subjects attempted. Significantly, there was a decline in the number of Band One awards, a total of only six across the cohort. In addition to this, students of Year 10 in the Trial School Certificate Computer Skills test performed above the state average.

4.5.7 School summary

School D is a Catholic systemic school and part of a semi-centralised system. The Principal uses a consultative leadership style with delegation to staff level. The Principal has authority in budgeting (for maintenance), staffing and policy within the school. Although various stakeholders perceive that the Principal enjoys considerable authority, the Principal himself/herself sees his/her authority as limited by the policies and legislation of the State government, the Board of Studies, system policies of the Catholic Education Office, and the teachers' union/ industrial agreement. The Principal consults with senior people in the Catholic Education Office on a regular basis. Decisions about appointments of the Religious Education coordinator, Deputy Principal, and the Principal positions are made at the Office level. The Principal does not have complete control over the curriculum or the amount of budget. The curriculum is set by the NSW Board of Studies although the school has some say in implementation of the curriculum at the school level and the curriculum in religious education.

The amount of budget is largely based on the school enrolment, but the Principal, the Deputy Principal, and the Bursar have considerable say in how the budget is spent. The Principal has made many efforts to establish a collegial culture where staff have opportunities to participate in important decisions, but lack of time and financial knowledge or the view that it is not their responsibility prevent some staff from effective participation in the school's financial decisions.

Caution has to be exercised in drawing definitive conclusions about parental involvement because of the very small sample. However, although surveyed parents were divided on the adequacy of their involvement in the school decision-making, in the interview parents expressed satisfaction with the opportunity to be involved. The Principal claimed that more parental involvement is related to the decision-making

relevant to 'kids' and the Student Representative Council. Parents do not think that they should play a major role in regulating the school. They have a lot of opportunities to be involved, but certain barriers prevent some parents from more active involvement. Students on the other hand have very limited say in school decision-making, but are happy with the range of subjects that are made available to them. Lack of time and financial knowledge are the main barriers to their involvement. The Principal does not believe that students should participate in the budgetary decisions because they lack adequate knowledge and experience to participate in complex school matters.

With some exceptions, the Principal, teachers, students, and parents are largely happy with their inputs to decision-making of the school. Stakeholders are involved in decision-making in different ways. Respectively, the Principal is most involved in school decisions, then teachers, parents, and then some students. The Principal has the most information and awareness of issues because he/she is close to the locus of decision-making.

The school has good facilities though some teachers and students feel a need for more. Overall, a lot of collaborative work has been done. The school governance and collegial culture, level of resources, pastoral support for students, and collaborative leadership style of the Principal appear to have very positive impacts on student retention, learning outcomes and student achievement.

4.6 Chapter summary

School A is part of a centralized system, but Schools B and C are in decentralized systems and School D a semi-centralized system. Except for teachers in School B, relevant stakeholders perceive that the Principals enjoy considerable authority in all four schools, but the Principals themselves see their authority limited by the State government and the Board of Studies. Schools A and D stakeholders feel that system policies are also a constraint. Additionally, stakeholders in School D also consider the teachers' union/ industrial agreement a constraint. Those in School B say that the School Board is an important influence on decision-making in the school. The Principal and, particularly, teachers in School B feel that the Principal does not have considerable authority. This is related to the fact that School B is a parent-controlled school and the Principal is an employee of the School Board. The Principals in all four schools do not

have real control over the curriculum and the amount of budget. Additionally, School A does not have control of staffing because it is a government school. In all four schools the curriculum is set by the Board of Studies, but the school has some say in implementation of the curriculum at the school level. Schools B, C, and D have considerable authority on extra curriculum in religious education.

Except in School B, the Principals and teachers have considerable say in how the budget is spent. All the schools except School A have a business manager. The Business Managers in Schools C and D are accountable to the Principal while in School B the Principal is accountable to the School Board. In Schools A and D the Principal has made efforts to establish a collegial community where staff have opportunities to participate in important decisions. Lack of time and of financial knowledge prevents some parents from active participation in the school financial decisions. In spite of the Principal using collaborative decision-making in School B, staff do not feel they are listened to, especially by the School Board. Although the Principal does not use collaborative decision-making in School C, staff have some say in decisions on curriculum offering and professional development of teachers.

A small group of committed parents are active in school affairs in Schools A, C, D while School B is a parent-controlled school and parents have a major say in school decisions. Although surveyed parents are divided on the adequacy of their involvement in decision-making in School D, most parents in Schools A, B, and C think that their involvement is sufficient. Parents in all four schools have extensive opportunities to be involved, but some individual barriers prevent many parents from active involvement. In all four schools students have very limited say in school decisions as they may not understand the complexity of decision-making as much as other stakeholders. Students are however, largely happy with their participation in decision-making in School A but want more involvement in Schools B, C, and D. Except in School A, the Principals do not believe that students should participate in school budgetary decisions.

With some exceptions, all stakeholders are largely satisfied with their inputs in decision-making in Schools A and D. In contrast, only the Principal and parents are completely happy with their inputs in decision-making in Schools C and B. In addition to this, in School C teachers are reasonably happy with their involvement in the school decisions.

The Principal has the most knowledge and awareness of issues in all four schools because he/she is close to the locus of decision-making. Schools A and D are among the best-resourced schools in their region, but School B has geographical and financial limitations for expanding school facilities while School C has only physical limitations, but no major budgetary problems. Overall, in comparison to others, Schools A and D have positive and inclusive cultures, consultative Principals and all stakeholders seem to be largely happy with opportunities to be involved. School B has a positive culture and all stakeholders, especially parents, seem to be happy with their involvement opportunities and, within the constraint of the authority of the School Board, the Principal attempts to be as collaborative as possible. School C has a unique governance structure and a more autocratic leadership style, a relatively positive culture, and most stakeholders seem to be happy with opportunities to be involved. In all four schools, to varying degrees, decision-making processes relate positively to indicators of school effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the relationship between governance, decision-making, and school effectiveness. However, what the researcher found was that it was not so much structure but the centrality of the school Principal and the way that the Principal perceived his/her roles in relation to others that impacted most on school governance.

It seems that the personal qualities of the Principals here were a major influence on their role. There were also two other broad influences on the role of the Principal in school governance and decision-making. These are the Principal's perception of stakeholder status and power; and school culture, context, and to a small degree structure. As a result the Principals seem to adopt a particular style or approach to consciously managing the decision-making of the school and this is reflected in leadership style and stakeholder involvement in decision-making. This then has an influence back on school culture, context, and structure but as far as school effectiveness and student achievement go, it is more difficult to demonstrate an apparent relationship (Hattie, 2003; see also Figure 5.1, p. 179).

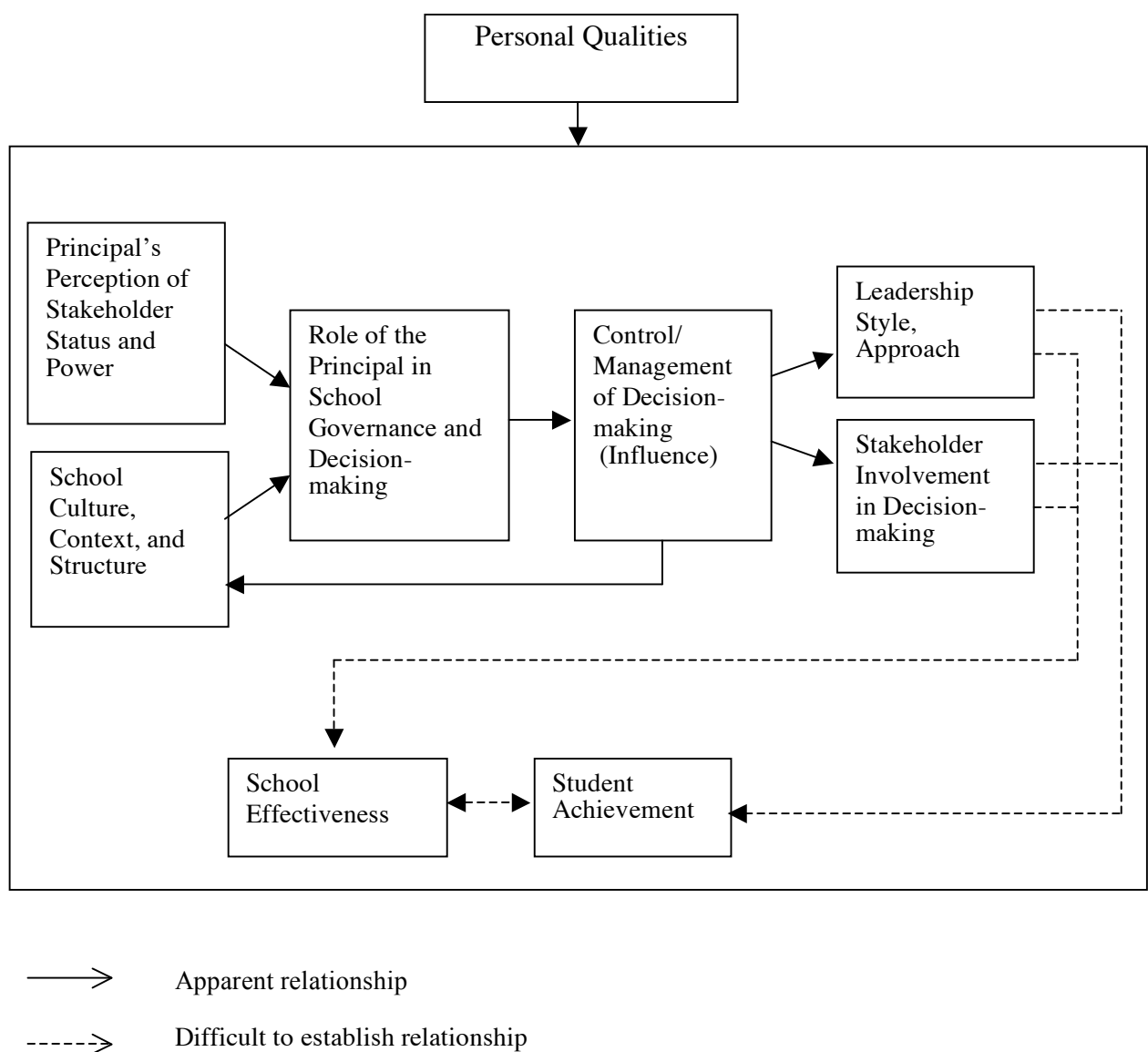
Collaborative leadership was a feature of the roles of three of the four Principals. Literature on school effectiveness highlights the impact of collaborative leadership in schools¹⁹. A number of writers draw attention to the importance of collaboration and collegiality either at the school or individual teacher level (Day, 1999; Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001). As noted by Lashway (1997), principals in shared decision-making collaborate with teachers and sometimes parents in order to improve instruction and school climate. The literature emphasizes that student outcomes are likely to be improved if leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and if teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them (Silins & Mulford, 2002). In the same way, Dinham (2005) finds that leadership is a key factor in the achievement of outstanding educational outcomes. The following

¹⁹ In this study the terms collaborative leadership and distributed leadership refer to the same concept. The terms autocratic leadership and authoritarian leadership are also used interchangeably.

flow chart maps the emerging issues found in this study and their relationships with school governance and school effectiveness.

The discussion that follows explores the various elements or aspects of the model of school governance and decision-making derived from the study.

**Figure 5.1 A Model of School Governance and Decision-Making:
Influence of the Principal**



As it can be seen here there is a relationship between the above model and the conceptual framework of the study. In other words, this study found that among different influential factors on school governance and decision-making, the leadership of the principal is one of the most important. Although this study could not establish an apparent relationship between governance and school effectiveness, it does demonstrate an apparent relationship between leadership of the principal and governance which could also impact indirectly on school effectiveness.

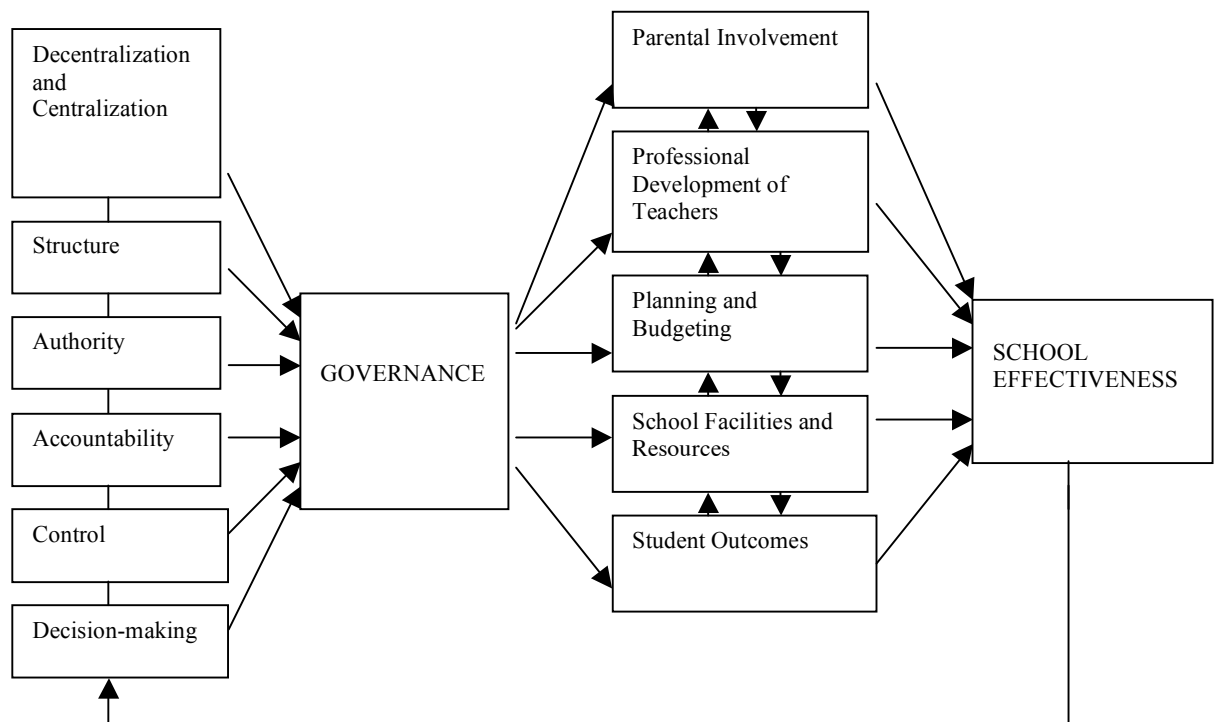


Figure 5.2 The Conceptual Framework of the Study (See Figure 2.2, p. 55)

5.2 Role of the Principal in School Governance and Decision-Making

Literature on school governance confirms that the quality of the Principal is a critical factor in the success of a school (Southworth, 1999). Hallinger and Heck (1996b) conclude that school principals affect school outcomes by mission building, effective organizational structures and social networks, and working through people.

This study looked at school governance and decision-making and found that the major influence on these is the Principal. This is in agreement with the findings in the research literature that the Principal plays the main role in school governance and decision-making to varying degrees depending on the types of school governance. Based on the

study's findings, it matters less what kind of structure in which the Principal acts; he or she has the main responsibility for and influence on governance and decision-making in the school.

However, the type of structure in which the Principal performs could facilitate or limit his/ her role. It is also possible that school context and culture impact positively or negatively on the Principal's role. Importantly, the Principal's perception of stakeholder status and power also impacts on his/her role in governance and managing of decision-making in the school. It is clear that a principal who feels that main stakeholders should be involved in school governance and decisions performs differently from a principal who does not believe in involving all stakeholders or believes that a particular group of stakeholders should or should not be involved in some types of decisions. In addition to this, personal qualities of the Principal impact on how they perform their role.

In School A, respondents agreed that the Principal had adequate involvement in different school decisions except staffing. The Principal of School A in some areas felt frustration, particularly in staffing. This shows how the structure could constrain or facilitate the Principal's role. In School B there was a partnership between the Principal and the School Board, and the Principal explained that the Board Treasurer, Business Manager, and the Board Chair made most budgetary decisions. The Principal in School C had considerable autonomy in school governance and decision-making and claimed that there was nothing within the school that he/she did not direct, and that he/she did not have to answer to anybody except the Board of Directors. In School D, the Principal had flexibility in school-based decisions within the context of the school environment, but sometimes needed to consult with senior people in the Catholic Education Office in decision-making regarding the school.

5.3 Personal Qualities

The literature indicates that the personal qualities of principals influence a range of things such as their leadership style and approach, their perception of status, the school culture, stakeholder involvement, and collegiality, how they approach school governance and decision-making, and indirectly, student achievement and school effectiveness. In fact, the Principal's personality and approach influences the degree to which other people are involved in school governance. If the Principal is a person who

likes to control and direct others, he/ she will make most decisions alone and possibly will adopt an authoritarian leadership style. On the other hand, a principal interested in talking to other people, getting and respecting other views, may use a collaborative leadership style and approach and consequently involve different stakeholders in school decision-making. Personal qualities of the Principal such as the degree to which he/she consults, the degree to which he/she listens and is inclusive, and how he/she feels about involving other people in his/her decision-making in the schools are all important. Bolman and Deal (1991) recognize that individual leaders have a preferred leadership style, which reflects their own personality. The following are some of the personal qualities which emerged as important from this study and how they influenced decision-making and school governance.

5.3.1 Openness and inclusiveness

Except for School C, a common finding concerning governance and decision-making across the other three schools was the openness and inclusiveness of the Principal in communicating budgetary information to the school community. The reasons why the Principal of School C showed less openness and inclusiveness and a more autocratic leadership style could be that the Principal did not believe in inclusiveness, or did not trust the school community. It is possible that, given the likely conservative "Christian" nature of the parents/community/school, a culture of the "principal is the boss" exists in which all stakeholders were quite accepting of allowing him/her to make all major decisions. It might also be that the Principal's feeling about sharing power with others impacted on his/her openness on budgetary information.

Empirical evidence indicates that trust is necessary for open communication in an organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). If a principal trusts his/her stakeholders, there will be greater possibility of communication of relevant and important information to stakeholders.

The Principal of School C explained that parents were not shown the detailed budget or the school's accounts, but could find information in the Annual Report about the percentage of expenditures in different areas. Teachers in School C commented that the Principal made more decisive than consultative decisions, passed these on to teachers and wanted their feedback in the form of recommendations, but the Principal had the

final say in all types of decisions. It appears that teachers in School C were not involved in school decisions directly and the Principal did not show inclusiveness and openness as much as the other Principals. In other words, teacher involvement in school decisions was superficial rather than active involvement compared with the other three schools.

5.3.2 Accessibility

Irmsher (1996) argues that it is important that the Principal be available and welcome personal contact with others. A finding of interest here is that except for School C, the Principals in the schools studied were determined to be accessible to most stakeholders within the school. Not only did they have formal meetings with staff, but they also met stakeholders informally. The evidence indicates that although the Principal of School C was not perceived as accessible by other stakeholders, yet the Principal perceived himself/herself as sufficiently accessible. The Principal pointed out that parents could access him/her through the Parents and Friends Association or personally. It seems that there was low congruence between what the Principal of School C said and his/her behavior in practice. One interpretation for School C could be that since this school was a highly decentralized school, the Principal's workload and sense of personal responsibility were greater than those of the other Principals and consequently he/she could not be available to stakeholders or be as willing to share as much authority as the other Principals in the study were. It might also be that the culture of this school and its expectations influenced the Principal's accessibility, or the Principal's feeling about sharing power with others and stakeholder status that influenced his/her accessibility.

5.3.3 Communication

Research by Hopkins et al. (1996) indicates that the best indicator of organizational health is the nature of communication between those working together on a daily basis. The literature on communication indicates that effective school leaders spend 70 percent of their waking moments on different forms of communication (Irmsher, 1996). In all four schools an important factor in governance and decision-making was the Principal's capacity for formal communication. This study indicates that in Schools A and D the Principals were more effective communicators and used different avenues of formal and informal communication with stakeholders, particularly parents. This was also partly true for School B, but it was less apparent in School C where the leadership

style of the Principal and his/her personality and attitude may have limited his/her communication with others.

From 20 intended parents surveyed in School C, only one parent responded. It might be the case that there is a relationship between limited communication of the Principal and low response rate, but it is impossible to tell from the data. Another interpretation for this could be that many parents were not sufficiently motivated to be involved in school activities, perhaps because they relied more on the Principal's and school executives' abilities in the education of their children. It is also possible that certain groups of stakeholders had more authority and status than others and certain groups were involved in certain decisions and not involved in others.

5.4 Principal's Perception of Stakeholder Status and Power

Findings from this study highlight the point that the statuses of various stakeholders can influence their involvement in certain types of decisions. It seems that stakeholder involvement in decision-making reflects their standing or status in the organization or the school community and could further reinforce their status. In the schools studied here, the Principals clearly played the major role in the decision-making process. Teachers, except for some in School B, were next in order of importance in the process, followed by parents, then students.

This study demonstrates that the Principal's perception of stakeholder status and power could influence the decision-making opportunities provided by the Principal for different stakeholders. In other words, if the Principal wants to share power with others in certain areas, he/she will provide situations and opportunities for those others to be involved in school decisions. It is clear that the personal qualities of the Principal and his/her leadership style, and the personal qualities of stakeholders, their abilities and experience, and their organizational positions, can also influence the Principal's perception of their status. For instance, it seems that an open and inclusive leader with a distributed leadership style²⁰ allows and encourages participation of different stakeholders. Stakeholders with perceived positive personal qualities and relevant

²⁰ Distributed leadership "implies a redistribution of power and re-alignment of authority within the organization. It means creating the conditions in which people work together and learn together, where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals. It implies inter-dependency rather than dependency" (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 1).

experience and abilities, or with higher organizational positions, are also more likely to be involved by the Principal in school governance and decision-making.

The study highlights that although the general pattern in relation to stakeholder status was the same across the studied schools, and that most of the Principals were quite happy about sharing power with certain groups of people, there were also subtle differences among the schools. In School D, the parents appeared to be more involved than in the other three schools and this is possibly attributable more to the fact that this school is a parent-controlled school and parents would be expected to be involved and that the Principal would probably expect parents to be involved. As Justins and Sanber (2002) report, parent control in such schools is primarily implemented by school boards on behalf of other Christian parents in their community. On the other hand, it seems that parents in School C could have lower status in the eyes of the Principal and thus less power than in the other schools. The Principal of School C believed that parents were difficult to consult and that it was difficult to decide where parents could be involved. His/ her leadership style and personal qualities could be contributing factors here.

The Principals' feelings about sharing power and the status of stakeholders and the sorts of decisions that different stakeholders should be involved in were different among the studied schools. Overall, both Principals in Schools A and D included stakeholders in most areas of decision-making to some degree, but the Principals of Schools B and C did not involve all stakeholders to the same extent. The Principal of School B stated that teachers should be involved in some decisions but that other decisions should be made by the School Board or the Principal and teachers merely informed. This reflected the differences in the Principals' attitudes and leadership styles. DuFour and Eaker (1991, cited in Chui et al., 1996) see the Principal's willingness to share power with teachers as an important condition for empowering teachers and Newcombe et al. (1997) report that the Principal's perception of teacher commitment to the organizational goals would also determine the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making. Davis (2000) found that parent and teacher consultation and collaboration in school decision-making create the climate for greatest understanding of a student's potential.

The data here also indicate that the Principals of schools other than School A did not feel students should be involved in planning and budgeting decisions. In fact, except for the Principal of School A, there was commonality among studied Principals in relation

to general student involvement. One possible interpretation for this could be that the different attitude in School A could be related to the Principal's different feeling about student status and capacity to be involved in financial decisions. It might be that the Principal of School A saw student involvement in school governance as positive and helpful, or that his/her inclusiveness and leadership style resulted in greater student involvement. However, the Principal of this school did feel that students needed training to be actively involved. The fact is that if the Principal's perception is that students do not have the expertise and knowledge necessary to participate in key decisions, this could limit their opportunities for involvement.

5.5 School Culture, Context, and Structure

5.5.1 Culture

According to the study by Deal and Peterson (1998), principals are central to shaping a positive school culture. Researchers have noted that principals in successful schools create a school culture that is caring, risk-taking, open, and supportive (Deal & Peterson, 1998; Waters et al., 2003). In fact, leadership is a two-way process and thereby the behaviours of the leaders influence school climate and are also a product of the school environment and interaction with others (Dinham et al., 1995). Researchers (Burrello & Lashley, 1992; DiPaola & Thomas, 2003; National Research Council, 1997) believe that leaders consider themselves as custodians and coaches in the development of a school culture of inclusiveness. Importantly, school culture impacts on school effectiveness. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000a, p. 115) explain, "the contribution of culture to school effectiveness depends on the content of its norms, values, beliefs, assumptions, and the extent to which they are shared, and whether they promote collaborative work."

This study suggests that the Principal's leadership style plays a major role in creating a positive and encouraging climate in the school and, by implication, influences school governance and school effectiveness. Obviously, principals are influenced by school culture and context, but they also shape that culture and context over time. This study indicates that principals are culture builders, but they are also, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by the culture in an interactive relationship between the Principal and the school.

A common finding across the studied schools was the existence of generally positive cultures with varying degrees of inclusiveness. In School A the Principal had to work within more constraints of autonomy than the other Principals and yet the data indicate that despite those constraints the Principal was able to manage the school in a positive way. One reason for this was the development of a collegial culture of distributed leadership. It is quite clear that a positive collegiality takes root when there is an interactive communication between the Principal and stakeholders. School A had an open door policy and it was apparent that the Principal had played a major role in this. Staff seemed genuinely supportive of the Principal and school and there was much evidence of collective vision. The school had experienced teachers with commitment and a feeling of belonging to the school.

School D, with its semi-centralized structure and its religious values, also experienced a positive culture. It is clear that religious values can impact on school culture and that school culture can impact on parental involvement in school decisions.

As mentioned previously, although School C had a relatively positive culture, it was less open and less inclusive than the others. It was apparent that the Principal here played a central directive role and possessed a strong personality. Staff did not seem as supportive of the Principal and it was evident that school vision, governance and decision-making were driven by the Principal. Despite this, however, the school enjoyed a good reputation in its local area and this was confirmed by all relevant stakeholders.

5.5.2 Context

It is established that the context of the school shapes students' classroom experiences (Barr & Dreeben, 1983; Virgilio et al., 1991). Further, a study by Heck (1993) reports a set of influential school context measures such as school size, the type of school, and teacher experience in relation to school achievement. These contextual factors could impact on the Principal's leadership and management and consequently on student achievement. The Principal's management of decision-making in the school could also influence the school context.

It is important to note however, that in this study contextual factors are not as evidently important as in other studies. The studied schools varied in contextual factors such as

size, characteristics of the school community, type of school, socio-economic status of students, physical environment, and parental engagement.

However, these schools operated in a similar context and region. For example, all studied schools were situated in a city and except for School A, all were religious schools, and except for School B, all schools had large student populations. The schools operated within the same curriculum, and similar policies, industrial agreements, associations of parents, and councils of students.

There were, however some subtle contextual differences. For example, Schools A and D were large and well-resourced schools, but School B was a small and low-fee school with two campuses. The physical growth of both Schools B and C was limited by accessibility to space. School C was a single sex school with many families of high socio-economic background; School D was diverse in the socio-economic structure of student population and enjoyed a rich multicultural background. While stakeholders perceived that there were some negative things associated with these differences, overall the Principals were able to manage governance and decision-making despite them. In addition, the resources of each school also reflected students' social backgrounds and could influence their identification with the school and consequent satisfaction.

5.5.3 Structure

The structures of schools can provide different degrees of autonomy to principals in decision-making. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000b, pp. 8-9) explain, "Structure and organization contribute to school effectiveness when they facilitate staff's work, professional learning, and opportunities for collaboration." There were some fundamental differences that distinguish the schools on structural/decision-making grounds. For example, Schools C and B had powerful School Boards while Schools A and D did not. The Principal of School C had considerable autonomy within the school structural framework while the structures of other studied schools did not provide such autonomy to the Principals. Because of structural characteristics, parent bodies had significant influence on school governance and decision-making in School B. In the semi-centralized governance structures of School D and centralized structure of School

A, the Principals had to work within constraints of the Catholic Education Office and the Department of Education and Training respectively in much decision-making.

However, this study indicates that although the governance structures of schools were different, in reality the schools operated somewhat within similar governance and decision-making structures and constraints. Indeed, there were similar structures and similar approaches to decision-making across the studied schools. For instance, these schools were all secondary schools and operated within the NSW Board of Studies framework with similar union and legislative constraints. All schools had parent bodies, staff meetings, and in all studied schools the Principals, at the end of day, were accountable. As a result, structural influence was not highly significant on school effectiveness and student achievement.

A common feature of all four schools was accountability. In each case the Principal was accountable. For example, the Principal in School A was accountable to the Department of Education and in School D the Principal was accountable to the Catholic Education Office, while in School B the Principal was accountable to parents and in School C the Principal was accountable to the Board of Directors. All were accountable to varying degrees, financially to State and Commonwealth governments, and to all stakeholders for school effectiveness.

It is apparent that what is most significant in school governance and decision-making is the leader and how he or she acts in decision-making and sharing power, rather than contextual and structural factors.

5.6 Control/ Management of Decision-Making

The literature indicates that because of the Principal's central position of power, he/she essentially dictates how community involvement might develop in his/her particular school (Cranston, 1994). Of course, although this important role may vary dependent on the type of school, the Principal is still at the locus of decision-making and plays the critical role in management of decision-making within the school (see also Rice & Schneider, 1994).

This study found that principals actually manage school decision-making to varying degrees of formal, conscious control depending on factors discussed above. As

previously mentioned the Principal's personality, leadership style, perception of stakeholder status and attitude to sharing power; school culture, context, and structure all influence decision-making. The influence of decision-making on school context and culture, and particularly on school effectiveness and student achievement, is more difficult to demonstrate in terms of apparent relationship. Some principals try to control decision-making more and some are happier to share and create a more democratic environment in their schools.

In School A the Principal used a team approach and collaborative decision-making; every teacher was a member of at least one team, and parents also participated voluntarily in different teams. The Principal of School D also indicated that there were various committees in different areas of decision-making though most decisions were finally made by the Principal, Assistant Principal, and relevant coordinator. Parents were involved in school decisions and the Principal had to consult with the Catholic Education Office in some matters. In School B, the School Board participated in most decisions and the Principal had to work within the constraint of the School Board. He/she managed to involve teachers and parents in some sorts of decisions within his/her autonomy. On the other hand, in School C the Principal was the main decision-maker in the school and he/she managed most decisions with the delegation of authority for teacher development to one of the Assistant Principals. The school had a treasurer, but the Principal still had the major influence on budgetary decisions.

It appears that although the Principals had similar roles in decision-making within the schools, they played their roles differently, partly because of differences in school governance structures and individual differences. Team approaches in Schools A and D were related to the Principals' distributive leadership styles.

In contrast, the Principal in School C, with a more autocratic leadership style, used more directive decision-making in the school and retained more decision-making authority. Further, the centrality of the Principal's role in School B was a little less apparent than in other schools because the School Board controlled and managed many of the decisions.

5.7 Leadership Style and Approach

This study indicates that the studied Principals typically used one of two broad types of leadership style. The Principals of Schools A and D used more distributed leadership and the Principal of School B, within the constraints of the School Board, also tried to use distributed leadership to some extent; the Principal of School C was a more autocratic leader. There are several possible reasons for these differences, including the personal qualities of the Principals and the degrees of accountability. In decentralized schools principals are accountable to the school community and the School Board and therefore may retain more decision-making authority and use more autocratic leadership. According to the study by Calnin and Davies (2004), principals in independent schools differ from principals in government schools in the key areas of accountability to parents and governors, fiscal responsibility, admissions and enrolments, building and fundraising, and legal and business decisions. It could also be that the greater authority of principals in decentralized governance structures may enable them and be more able to share their authority with others and use more distributed leadership.

This study indicates, however, that decentralized governance structure did not itself seem to be a major influence on decision-making and governance; rather it was the Principal's feeling about sharing power, the statuses of various stakeholders, and the types of decisions that impacted most on school decisions. Some studies (Tschannen-Moran, 2001) suggest that principals who do not trust their teachers will not share authority and responsibility. However, it is not possible to say in this case whether this was a reason for the more autocratic leadership style of the Principal of School C, as reflected in his/her own words:

I am the employer, I have control over all employment decisions, I have control over the budget, and I have major influence on all of the budgetary decisions. Basically I direct where the resources are going to go and I direct where the money goes and also policy direction. I initiate and drive policy direction, changes in educational direction, and introduction of new curriculum.

The research here reveals that Principals in both Schools A and D used a more distributed leadership style, and created very positive cultures and high degrees of

collegiality and that the leadership style of the Principal was important in the extent to which stakeholders were involved in school decisions and relationships with staff (see also Day et al., 2001). Generally speaking, stakeholders in Schools A and D participated more in school decisions than in Schools B and C where stakeholders, or certain types of stakeholders, were not involved adequately in key school decisions. It is worth emphasizing again the importance of leadership style. The Principal of School C employed a more autocratic leadership style and although the Principal of School B used a distributed style, the constraint of the School Board caused a degree of incongruence between what he/she believed and said and what occurred in practice.

The empirical work of Florez et al. (2001) supports the view that the levels of participation in school decision-making are dependent largely on the leadership style of the Principal and it is important that the Principal promote democratic leadership in autonomous schools. Some researchers (Bell et al., 2002; Silins & Mulford, 2002) indicate that when there is collaborative leadership and teachers are involved in issues significant to them, student outcomes are more likely to improve.

5.8 Stakeholder Involvement in Decision-Making

There were some subtle differences among the four schools in relation to stakeholder involvement in school decisions. Teachers had more involvement in Schools A and D than in Schools B and C. Some teachers did not want to be involved in all types of decisions. Of the four Principals, only the Principal of School A believed in the importance of student involvement in financial decisions. Teachers in Schools A and D perceived the school culture as more positive for and encouraging of their involvement in school decisions. These differences might be related to the type of school, the culture of the school, the leadership style of the Principal and his/her attitude to sharing power with different stakeholders.

Across the four schools the findings also indicate that while there were some opportunities for students to be involved, typically only a minority of students were involved and not in the core areas of staffing, curriculum, professional development and school budget. Principals seemed reluctant to allow students more involvement in such core areas, perhaps because of lack of expertise or time and/or confidentiality issues, or the Principals not being comfortable with such student involvement or because of

students having less power and status than other stakeholders. Additionally, not all students want to participate, perhaps because they do not have the appropriate knowledge and expertise, or that the structure and climate of the school discourage such involvement.

A recent study by Fletcher (2005, p. 15) finds, "In spite of the evidence, researchers and advocates still find that students are continuously neglected, sometimes actively denied, any sort of role in their school's improvement programs." The same writer argues that meaningful student involvement engages students as systemic decision-makers in all types of decisions from curricula, calendar year planning, building design, to budgeting, and hiring. Also, according to the study by Lesko and Tsourounis (1998), schools can prepare students for a lifetime of important involvement in their societies and nations via encouraging meaningful student involvement.

Researchers (Smrekar, 1996; Telem, 2003) have found that parental involvement in school activities is vital both for the families and for school performance improvement. Moles (1997) recommends that schools facilitate parental involvement in decision-making at the school. The study by Telem (2003) indicates that the Principal plays a central role in promoting parental involvement. With the exception of School B in this study, however, only a small group of committed parents in each school were involved in school decision-making. There were different opportunities to participate in school decisions, but all interviewed parents believed that they had equal parental involvement opportunities whether they took those opportunities or not.

Limited parental involvement could be related to the governance structure of the school, the leadership style of the Principal and the Principal's feeling about parents' status and power, and school climate. It is possible that limited experience, or trust in the school and the expertise of school members, may contribute to parents' reluctance to be involved in school decisions, or that schools may discourage such involvement, or that some parents may only involve themselves selectively.

Since all four schools here, however, had generally positive climates and in three schools Principals used collaborative leadership styles, the possible reasons for limited parental involvement here appear to be related to the Principal's perception of parents' status and parental constraints of time and work commitments. Researchers have shown

(Brock & Beazley, 1995; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Leitch & Tangri, 1988; Winnail, Geiger, Macrina, Snyder, Petri, & Nagy, 2000) that parental involvement has multiple barriers including limited time, miscommunication between parents and schools, and lack of parent understanding of how to be involved. Also, according to the study by Lauderdale and Bonilla (1998), problems such as both parents working, single-parent households, lack of interest in their child's education, transportation problems, fear or shame, and belief that education should be the teacher's responsibility cause parents not to be involved. Such factors mean that schools and students could not fully access the benefits of the school-family partnership which may reduce the quality of school decision-making. This suggests that schools should find ways to overcome these barriers and to encourage more parent and student involvement in school activities.

The greater parental involvement in School B could be due to structural factors because it was a Christian parent-controlled school where the School Board was an important decision-making body in the school, and parents who participated through their representatives in the Board and Parent Association could have a lot of say in school decisions.

The survey findings here indicate that teachers participated in almost all decisions in Schools A and D, while they were involved more only in curriculum and professional development decision-making in Schools B and C. Some explanations for the different degrees of teacher involvement in different sorts of decisions could be that some teachers selectively engage in school decisions; or that the Principal does not trust teachers to make decisions in the best interest of the school, or considers teachers as a threat to their power and position, or thinks teachers do not have appropriate expertise.

Since teachers in Schools B and C indicated an enthusiasm to be involved in important decisions, lack of interest by teachers or lack of time could not be major reasons for their non-participation, and that major reasons for non-participation of teachers, consistent with the literature, were those related to the Principal and his/her leadership. The study by Tschannen-Moran (2001) indicates that some principals are reluctant to give real influence to teachers and parents, perhaps assuming that they do not have the expertise to make valuable contributions or because they do not trust them to make decisions in the best interest of the school.

From the data it would appear that some teachers do not want to be involved in all types of school decisions, either because of irrelevance to them directly or inadequate preparation or motivation. In fact, involvement of teachers in all school decisions is not necessary or useful, as where, for example, the Principal has to make decisions without consultation. Some teachers in Schools C and D expressed such views. Time is also a constraint on teacher involvement in certain sorts of decision-making, as shown by Newcombe et al. (1997) who also assert that teachers have more interest in decision-making related directly to classroom practice. Nevertheless, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999; Tschannen-Moran, Uline, & Hoy, 1999) recommend that when teachers have a stake and expertise in a decision-making area they should have widespread participation in decision-making.

This study indicates that the cultures of Schools A and D were more encouraging of teacher involvement in school decisions, possibly because the Principals of those schools exercised more collaborative leadership and shared values and collegiality.

5.9 Student Achievement and School Effectiveness

The leadership style and the role in decision-making of the Principal appear to be important in the extent and nature of stakeholder involvement. The relationships among the Principal's leadership, student achievement, and school effectiveness are however, more indirect, both in this study and in the literature. Leithwood et al. (1993) found that the Principal's leadership has strong direct effect on in-school processes and only indirect effects on student outcomes. This result is consistent with the later study of Leithwood and Jantzi (2000a), which shows that effective leaders have a powerful indirect impact on student achievement and school effectiveness.

As Heck et al. (1990, p. 123) note, "Principals do not affect individual students directly as teachers do through classroom instruction, but that activities of the Principal directed at school-level performance have trickle-down effects on teachers and students." This is also consistent with the findings of researchers (Leithwood et al., 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, cited in Griffith, 2003; Heck, 1993) that the Principal's leadership has a direct effect on school conditions such as school goals, planning, structure, climate, and work conditions which in turn show a direct effect on classroom conditions such as instruction, policies, and procedures.

According to the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education in Australia (2003), however, leadership is important in creating positive and innovative learning cultures and the facilitation of quality teaching and learning. Hallinger and Heck (1996b) reviewed 19 studies and reveal that leadership has an indirect impact on student achievement through mediating variables, and 17 out of the 19 studies also indicated positive to mixed effects of the Principal on student achievement. According to Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2001), leadership behaviors of the Principal have a positive, direct effect on the "academic atmosphere" of the school and consequently the academic atmosphere of the school has a direct and positive effect on student achievement. Hallinger and Heck (1996b, cited in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000a) also report, "Studies that inquire only about the direct effects of school leadership on student outcomes tend to report weak or inconclusive outcomes, whereas studies that include mediating and/or moderating variables in their designs tend to report significant effects."

However, Ainley and McKenzie (2000) declare that research evidence on the effect of school governance on student outcomes is not extensive and that the literature on the Principal's role in school effectiveness is inconclusive. However, some research indicates a strong relationship between principals' actions and their indirect influence on school effectiveness in the US. Hallinger and Heck (1996a) report few direct effects of the Principal's leadership on student achievement and that the effect of that leadership on school effectiveness occurs largely through such actions by the Principal as providing a clear school mission and a positive school climate. The study by Gurr et al. (2003) also finds that principals have a key role in the success of schools generally and, especially, in student outcomes. As these and other studies (Keller, 1998; Maehr & Fyans, 1989) vary in their results on this relationship, there is clear need for further research on it.

It appears that not only has the leadership style of the Principal an indirect impact on student achievement and school effectiveness, but that stakeholder involvement in school decisions could also have such an impact. In spite of the fact that the general patterns of stakeholder involvement in the four schools here were the same, there were subtle differences in the extent of stakeholder involvement and stakeholders were not involved equally over the four schools. However, the results indicate that in all studied schools there was general satisfaction with student achievement. This might indicate the

influence of other factors on student achievement such as student socio-economic backgrounds, having experienced and knowledgeable teachers, and importantly, interest and motivation of students themselves to achieve. However, it is established that the involvement of parents in their children's education and school activities could have a positive impact on student achievement. As Osterling (2004, p. 280) claims, "Over the past decade, research has systematically demonstrated that family and community involvement in education of their children is a powerful influence on student achievement."

There is some evidence in the literature of a positive relationship between school governance and student achievement. Urbanski and Erskine (2000) claim that decentralized governance structures promote changes at the classroom level, where teachers and parents in each community and at each school have greater authority and capacity to adapt the teaching and learning methods to address achievement standards as well as the unique needs of their students. Some researchers (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Van de Grift & Houtveen, 1999) claim that school-related effects on student achievement explain a small, but significant amount of the variance in achievement, although Rensler (2000) points out that in spite of little quantitative evidence on the influence of governance structures on student academic achievement, many people appear willing to experiment with changing those structures in the hope that the changes will encourage teachers and students to perform at a higher level.

However, some authors (Drury, 1999; Elmore, 1993, 2000) believe that research on decentralization has indicated for a long time that there is no systematic relationship between the degree of centralization in school systems and their overall performance. According to empirical evidence by Sackney and Dibsiki (1994), the relationship between school-based management and student learning is not clear. Similarly, Lashway (1997) points out that most studies agree that while collaboration improves teacher morale and school climate, there is much less evidence that shared decision-making has a positive influence on student achievement.

According to the results of this study, in some of the schools stakeholder involvement or satisfaction with involvement in decision-making appeared to have an influence on student achievement, but it may have been a correlation rather than a cause-and-effect relationship. The findings of this study are therefore consistent with already established

studies which indicate that the major influences on student achievement are students themselves and teachers. A recent study by Hattie (2003), which is based on an extensive review of literature and a synthesis of over half a million studies, highlights the factors which impact most on student achievement. Based on this study, students account for about 50% of the variance in achievement, teachers account for about 30%, schools 5-10%, and the home accounts for about 5-10% of the variance. Principals impact on student achievement indirectly if they facilitate a positive school climate.

5.10 Summary

Whilst the purpose of this study was the investigation of the relationship between governance, decision-making and selected aspects of school effectiveness, the actual impact of governance on school effectiveness proved difficult to establish. However, the study did provide evidence of the key role of the Principal in school governance and decision-making.

The literature is consistent in reporting that effective leaders exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school including the achievement of students (For example, see Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Mulford & Silins 2003). In Figure 5.1(p. 179), broken lines are used to indicate the difficulty of establishing apparent relationships between governance/decision-making and school effectiveness. This study reinforces earlier findings.

As Figure 5.1 illustrates, several factors influence the Principal's role in school governance and decision-making. The Principal's personal qualities, his/her attitudes to sharing power with other people, and the school context, culture, and structure, all influence the Principal's role in decision-making in the school. The Principal adopts a certain leadership style to consciously manage school decision-making, which impacts directly or indirectly on stakeholder involvement, student achievement, and school effectiveness. Principals are important in establishing a positive or negative school culture and climate, and effective communication, but with regard to school effectiveness, particularly as measured by student achievement, it is hard to establish apparent influence (see Hattie, 2003).

The themes emerging from this discussion lead to a series of conclusions and implications that are presented in the following chapter.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between governance, decision-making, and school effectiveness. Although an apparent relationship between type of governance and school effectiveness was not established, it was found that the Principal plays a greater role in the managing and control of decision-making and stakeholder involvement in the school than do governance structures or arrangements.

This chapter summarises the study findings and draws final conclusions and implications of these findings. Areas for possible future research are also explored. The conclusions and implications are presented under the headings of the specific research questions.

6.2 Governance (Decision-Making) Arrangements and School Effectiveness

The findings from this study indicate that although the schools had different governance structures, from highly centralized governance to relatively decentralized and that this could impact differently on their effectiveness, they also had similar limitations imposed on in-school decision-making by the policies and legislation of the State government, the Board of Studies, and system policy and budget constraints which caused, in practice, the schools' approaches to governance to be similar. The Principal was the locus of decision-making in all studied schools although he/she did not have real control over curriculum and the amount of the budget. In School A the Principal also had only limited control over staffing when compared with the other schools.

Stakeholders were involved in decision-making in different ways across the four schools. In all four schools the Principal had most say in decision-making at the school, then to varying degrees teachers, parents, and then some students. Except for School A, the Principals considered planning and budgeting decisions as an area where students

did not have sufficient expertise to make an important contribution, and even in School A students did not have much input.

A significant factor seems to be how the Principal felt about sharing decision-making power and responsibility in terms of the status of different stakeholders and their potential influence. Additionally, the Principal's personal qualities and leadership style impacted on his/her role in the management of decision-making in the school and the creation of a positive and encouraging school climate. However, the Principals were in turn influenced by the school culture, context, and structure.

Although there was a general perception among respondents across the four schools of the impact of decision-making on school effectiveness, the study could not establish that different governance arrangements influenced school effectiveness and student achievement.

6.2.1 Implications for governance arrangements and school effectiveness

Recent Australian research (see, for example, Armour, 2005; Stewart, 1997) supports the view of the need for Principals' ongoing professional development for effective management. This study indicates that such development programs should include a focus on leadership styles in relation to governance structures, decision-making and the involvement of other stakeholders.

A major finding of this study is that the personal qualities of the Principal impact upon all aspects of his/her work and how he/she feels about sharing power with others. The latter has considerable bearing on the extent of stakeholder involvement in school activities and decision-making. An implication arising from this for education systems and policy makers is that these characteristics could be taken into account in relation to the school context when considering candidates for Principal positions prior to appointment.

This study found that other stakeholders had varying degrees of involvement in school decision-making across the four schools and that it was difficult to establish the impact of their involvement. Consequently, there is a need for further study in this area and particularly on the ways in which varied stakeholder involvement in decision-making impacts on school effectiveness.

Education authorities and policy makers should be aware that for enhanced effectiveness, change in school structure alone is not sufficient because it is only one of the factors involved, and that the relationships among the Principal, school culture and context, and stakeholder involvement are complex and warrant further investigation.

6.3 Governance and Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in each of the studied schools was limited to only a small group of parents. Despite extensive opportunities to be involved, individual barriers such as work and time constraints prevented many parents' active involvement. Although surveyed parents were somewhat divided on the adequacy of their involvement in decision-making, most parents thought that their involvement was adequate. In all studied schools, the important formal avenues for parental involvement were parent organizations under different names and with different functions in government and non-government schools; e.g., Parents & Citizens Association in government schools, Parents & Friends Association in non-government schools, a School Board and a School Council.

Again, the Principal is shown to play a very important role in encouraging parents to become fully participating members of the school community. A principal can provide real opportunities to parents, communicating, creating a welcoming school climate, and including parents' viewpoints in school activities and decision-making.

6.3.1 Implications for governance and parental involvement

This study did not set out to measure and thus did not establish an apparent relationship between parental involvement and school effectiveness and student achievement. However, the perceptions of participants were that if parents are involved in school governance and decision-making, it could benefit students and schools. As Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) conclude from their review of relevant studies, although parental involvement has positive effects on student achievement, a strong relationship is not evident because school outcomes are influenced by many factors.

One implication of this study in relation to the impact of school governance on parental involvement is that if principals and school systems provide parental involvement opportunities, encouragement and assistance, they could increase parent involvement in

school governance and decision-making. It is advisable that the Principal recognise the importance of this aspect of his/her role and do as much as possible to facilitate parental involvement.

Another implication of the study for education systems and principals is that it is important to have efficient communication systems with related stakeholders regardless of who is involved and the degree of involvement.

6.4 Governance, Planning and Budgeting

Principals in all four studied schools did not have real control over the amount of the budget which was determined centrally, largely according to student enrolment in the school. However, except in School B where the Board had considerable influence over the spending of the budget, the Principals had considerable direct say in how the budget was spent, although no school was completely autonomous in financial decision-making. All the schools, except for School A, had Business Managers who were accountable to the Principal in Schools C and D, and to the School Board in School B. Although the Principals were monitored in the implementation of the school budget in all four schools, monitoring varied according to the type of school governance.

The Principals played a major role in budgeting and planning decisions in all studied schools, with teachers and parents involved to some extent. Students did not have opportunities to be involved in planning and budgetary decisions. In other words, this study indicates that in different school governance structures, planning and budgeting decision-making processes have much in common and the Principal largely determines who and to what extent will be involved in such decisions.

The findings also reveal that some teachers do not seek to be involved in financial decision-making because they do not have the necessary expertise, skills, time or interest or simply do not see this as part of their job.

6.4.1 Implication for governance, planning and budgeting

Evidence on the impact of governance arrangements on planning and budgeting is inconclusive and further research is needed to reveal the specific impact of these factors on school effectiveness.

6.5 Governance and Teacher Professional Development

This study indicates that all four schools had school professional development programs as well as specific professional development days and the variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs were found to meet teachers' needs. There has been a considerable increase in the professional development budget for public schools. However, the government school had little say over the amount of budget. The problem of providing relief teachers was a particular issue in the government school in allowing teachers to participate fully in formal professional development programs.

All four schools used different approaches to planning and implementation of professional development programs:

- School A had a Professional Learning Team with teachers involved in decision-making on budget allocation, and type and content of professional development programs.
- School B did not have a professional development committee so the Principal and heads of campus had the most significant roles in this decision-making and teachers had important responsibilities in decisions on budget, type, and content of professional development.
- In School C, one of the Assistant Principals was largely responsible for designing, managing, and implementing of professional development programs, with some teacher input.
- School D did not have a formal professional development committee and the Principal, one KLA coordinator, and staff had responsibility for decision-making on professional development.

6.5.1 Implication for governance and teacher professional development

The teachers across the four schools were generally satisfied with the provision of professional development. Given their reluctance, however, to be involved in financial decision-making, for example, perhaps more consideration in teacher professional development could be given to decision-making processes, leadership, and financial management for those who are interested.

6.6 Governance and School Resources/ Facilities

The research findings highlight that Schools A and D were among the best-resourced schools in their region. In all four schools, the Principal had adequate authority to make significant decisions on the school's physical facilities within the limits set by external funding arrangements and, except for those in School C, most respondents also had some opportunities for involvement in these types of decisions.

While there was general satisfaction with resources, in several cases there were problems with geography and financial limitations (School B) and physical limitations (School C). In all four schools, from richest to poorest, there was a perceived need for more resources to do a better job.

6.6.1 Implications for governance and school resources/ facilities

Given the various physical, geographical and/or budgetary limitations imposed on them, schools might explore additional resources of financial and other support and, particularly, alternative, innovative ways of utilising resources (e.g., multiple sessions, sharing facilities).

Another implication from the study for education systems and principals is that spending more money and increasing of resources by schools does not necessarily mean those schools will achieve greater student outcomes. In other words, it is not just more resources which are needed. Rather, leadership and management of resources, efficient use and allocation of resources, and the ability to be resourceful could impact on student and school outcomes.

6.7 Governance, Student Participation and Student Outcomes

Some researchers have shown that there are positive relationships between student participation in decision-making and improvement in their academic and non-academic performance (Fletcher, 2004, 2005; Mulford & Silins, 2003; Mulford & Johns, 2004). This relationship was not evident here. While respondents generally reported student achievement in all four schools was equal to or higher than the district and state averages, respondents in Schools B and C attributed this to their models of education partnership between home and school and related school policies on discipline and

absenteeism. In all the studied schools only a minority of students were involved in very low-level decision-making and it was apparent that they did not understand the complexity of decision-making as much as other stakeholders. Only the Principal of School A believed that students should participate in school budgetary decisions.

In spite of the general perception of respondents across the four schools that governance arrangements, particularly decision-making in key areas (e.g., learning environment, school climate, curriculum offering, school goals, policy, etc.) could impact on student outcomes, this study could not establish such relationships, which is in line with other findings. For instance, Sammons (1995) notes that although many researchers have studied the impact of different governance structures on school effectiveness and student achievement, only a few have found direct relationships.

6.7.1 Implications for governance, student participation and student outcomes

While no apparent relationship could be clearly established here, the indication elsewhere of positive outcomes from student involvement in decision-making suggests that this involvement be increased. It follows, therefore, that it would be reasonable to give students more training in and opportunities for leadership and decision-making. Further, given the reluctance of principals in three Schools (B, C, & D) reported here to encourage such involvement and the centrality of the Principal's role in governance and decision-making, a prerequisite for increased student involvement would be a change in principals' attitudes towards it.

It is also clear that further research is necessary on the impact of governance and leadership on student performance and school effectiveness.

6.8 Major Findings and Implications²¹

The schools studied are very similar in their approaches to governance and decision-making because the Principal is the locus of decision-making in all schools and there are common limitations on their governance. The leadership of the Principal is more important in school decision-making than the structure of the school.

²¹ This is a case study of only four schools and thus these implications are tentative and may not be more widely generalised.

The personal qualities of the Principals are a major influence on their role. For example, their perceptions of stakeholder status, power and potential influence will impact upon the extent and nature of stakeholder involvement in school governance and decision-making. Many principals are reluctant to involve students in key decision-making.

School culture, context, and to a relatively limited degree school structure also impact on the Principal's role in school governance and decision-making and vice versa. As a result of these influences, principals seem to adopt a particular style or approach to consciously managing the decision-making of the school and this is reflected in leadership style and stakeholder involvement in decision-making.

The Principal, through his/her leadership style and approach, and stakeholder involvement, have an indirect impact on student achievement and school effectiveness. Therefore, and because of the centrality of the Principal's role in decision-making – of leadership styles, personal characteristics and attitudes to power-sharing and stakeholder involvement and communication, and resource management – such factors should be considered in the appointment and professional development of principals.

Professional development of teachers should include the areas of decision-making and leadership, and financial management. Continuing professional learning of principals should also include these areas.

Further research is necessary in all areas of school management/ decision-making, particularly budgeting and planning, in relation to the various indicators of school effectiveness. Such indicators should go beyond only student achievement outcomes.

6.9 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the impact of different governance arrangements on school effectiveness in four NSW high schools. While there were significant differences in governance among the schools, there were also similarities, largely because of important common influences and constraints (e.g., the Board of Studies regulations, system policy, similar industrial awards of teacher union and similar organization).

The study could not establish an apparent relationship, in these schools, between structural factors and school effectiveness. It does, however, clearly indicate the

centrality of the Principal's role in school decision-making, and the importance of the Principal's leadership in and perception of that role in relation to others in the management and governance of school, and, indirectly at least, in the school's effectiveness.

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Appendix 1²²
Principal Questionnaire

University of Wollongong
Faculty of Education

**THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS.**

I am a Doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong and seek your assistance with completing of this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is one part of a research study to investigate the impact of governance arrangements (particularly decision-making) on school effectiveness with reference to Parental involvement, Strategic planning and budgeting, Professional development of teachers, and School facilities and resources. (The second part of the research study involves interviews of a small number of respondents).

The survey questionnaire is designed in six parts and each part relates to the aspects listed above. It will take about 30 minutes to complete.

The survey questionnaire has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training, the Wollongong Catholic Education Office, and the Principals of the four schools involved.

- A Government High School
- An Independent Catholic High School
- A Christian Parent-controlled High School
- A Catholic Systemic High School

The information you provide is confidential between you and the Researcher. It will be used strictly by the Researcher for analysis and to compare results between different groups of respondents from the one school without the use of names. No names of respondents are required. It will not be used to compare schools.

All the participants will answer all questions. Please read the information carefully before you proceed to complete each section and return your completed survey questionnaire to:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project.

²² In the interest of space, formatting has been changed to reduce the size of appendices.

A. Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions according to the information in 2003-2004

School

School Type Government/Non-government/Catholic systemic school, etc	Year when School established	Student Enrolment	Student-Teacher Ratios 1) Years 7-10 2) Years 11-12	Percentage of Disabled Students as a Ratio of school population (All types of disability)

Staff

School Staff	Number		Highest Qualification		
	Full-time F	Part-time P	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate
School Executive					
Teachers					
Para-professionals (e.g. Teacher Aide)					
Support staff (e.g. General Assistant/Laboratory Assistant)					

Number of Facilities

Location	Number
Classrooms	
Science Laboratories	
Computer Laboratories	
Number of Computers in Computer Room	
Number of Computers in each Classroom	
Library	

Specialist Rooms (e.g. Dance Studio)	
Gymnasium/Multi Purpose Hall	
Other Teaching spaces Other (Please Nominate)	
Ovals	
Shelter Areas	
Canteen	
Hallways	
Toilet Blocks	
Number of Toilets in each Block	

B. Respondent Information

About you

Please indicate your position in this school

Principal..... ☐

Length of Service as a Principal..... ☐

Deputy Principal..... ☐

Length of Service as a Deputy Principal ☐

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Your Highest Current Level of Education:

(e.g., School Certificate, HSC, Diploma, Bachelor Degree, Masters, Doctorate.)

The questions about the governance arrangements, particularly decision-making processes, and selected aspects of school effectiveness are given below. Please read carefully and provide the most appropriate answer.

PART ONE: THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT (DECISION-MAKING) Of THE SCHOOL

1. All schools have to operate within certain constraints. These constraints can be established by government, the law, school boards, parental wishes, teachers, etc. To what extent are these limits or constraints on decision-making placed on your school? Rate the significance of these limiting bodies.

Not Significant at All Not Very Significant Somewhat Significant Very Significant
1 2 3 4

Limits / Constraints	Your Ratings
1. State government (legislation, common law, and regulation, etc.).
2. Board of Studies (e.g. Curriculum, Policy, Assessment, etc.).
3. System Policies (e.g. DET, Catholic

Ed., Policies, etc.).	
4. Parent Board/ Association
5. Teacher Union/ Industrial Agreement
6. Local community (as distinct from the formal parent structure)
7. Congregational Owners	

2. At which level are the most important decisions made to ensure school effectiveness?

Please rate as applicable. Least Important Important Most Important

1

2

3

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board/Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students
- ☐ District/ Region/ Diocese
- ☐ State

3. What is your perception of the involvement of each group in the decision-making processes in your school? (N. B. Each respondent should complete all spaces).

1 2 3 4

1. Not Participatory at all
2. Almost No Participation
3. Some Participation
4. Very Participatory

	Curriculum Offering	Budget and Resources	Professional Development of Teachers	Resources and School Facilities	Parental Involvement
Principal					
Staff (Teachers and other Staff)					
School community (Including Staff)					
School Community (Excluding Staff)					
Parent Board/Association					
Congregational Owners					
Students					

Please circle your response.

4. I feel my involvement in the school decision-making process is

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1

2

3

4

5. I consider the decision-making processes in the school are generally

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1

2

3

4

6. I believe that decision-making processes can have an important impact on school effectiveness.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

7. The key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level (So that the school has appropriate control).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

8. The Principal has enough authority for performing his/her duties.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

9. The teachers have sufficient autonomy over their work.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

PART TWO: THE IMPACT OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Please circle your response.

1. How adequate is the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

2. To what extent does the Principal encourage parents to become fully participating members of the school community?

Never Rarely Sometimes (as appropriate) Frequently (as appropriate) Always
1 2 3 4 5

3. Please tick the activities of school/parent interaction in your school?

- ☐ Regular Newsletters sent to parents
- ☐ Parents are invited to visit the school for school events
- ☐ Technology contact (e.g. school website)
- ☐ Parental/ Student centre (Drop in centre)
- ☐ Attendance at School Assemblies
- ☐ Teacher/Parent Conferences re student progress
- ☐ Workshops arranged for parents
- ☐ Take-Home Educational information Packets
- ☐ Telephone Hotlines (e.g. for student emergency)
- ☐ School Groups/ Councils
- ☐ Videotapes (educational/parent training or recorded school events, workshops and meeting that parents may have been unable to attend).
- ☐ Planning Meetings
- ☐ Budgeting Meetings
- ☐ Major decision-making Meetings
- ☐ Canteen
- ☐ Parents on Excursions
- ☐ Helping in Classrooms
- ☐ Helping with other Activities e.g. Costume Making
- ☐ Helping with Sport Teams
- ☐ Helping with School Cultural Activities e.g. Bands, etc.
- ☐ Extra (Please specify)

4. What percent age of your parents is actively involved in school activities? (Do not include passive activity e.g., receiving of News letters and school reports etc)

1-10% 11-20% 21-30 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81%+
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. What do you see as the main barriers to full and active parental involvement in the school?.....

...

PART THREE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING.

1. Who is involved in planning and budgeting decision-making in your school?

More than one tick is permitted.

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board /Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students

Please circle your answer

2. How adequate are the opportunities for your involvement in planning and budgeting?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

3. What percentage of teacher salaries in your school does the government fund?

10-20% 30-40% 50-60% 70-80% 90-100%

1 2 3 4 5

4. To what extent does the government fund the operating costs of the school?

Not at all To Some Extent To great Extent Entirely

1 2 3 4

5. Who monitors the implementation of the school budget? (More than one tick is permitted)

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board/Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Bursar
- ☐ District/ Region/ Diocese
- ☐ State

6. The Principal has sufficient authority to manage the school budget.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

PART FOUR: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS.

Please tick the most appropriate answer.

1. Is there a professional development program in addition to the professional development days?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Who is responsible for the budget, type and content of professional development of teachers?

Please rate the significance of the role in relation to the current practice.

Least Important Important Most Important

1 2 3

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ Board of Studies
- ☐ Parent Board/Association
- ☐ State

☐ District/Regional/Diocese

Please circle the appropriate answer.

3. How adequate are professional development programs at your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

4. What percentage of school budget is allocated for professional development programs?

1-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%
1 2 3 4 5

5. Are the funds available for professional development adequate?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

6. The variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs meet my needs.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

7. Did you take part in any professional development activities apart from the School Development Day last year? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Please indicate your satisfaction with the available professional development programs? (Both within the school and external to the school).

Greatly Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Satisfied Highly Satisfied
1 2 3 4

9. To what extent is professional development linked to your school's planning and budgeting?

Not Linked At All Not Linked Sufficiently Sufficiently Linked Very Well linked
1 2 3 4

10. About how many hour(s) per year are provided for professional development for each teacher apart from school development days?

1-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81-90 91-100
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PART FIVE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON RESOURCES AND FACILITIES.

1. In comparison to others, how adequate are the physical facilities in your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

Please elaborate.

2. Are the decision-making arrangements for your school adequate to allow you to have an impact upon the physical facilities of your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

Please elaborate.

PART SIX: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON STUDENT OUTCOME.

1. Do you believe there is any relationship between the decision-making processes in your school and student outcomes (attendance, retention, and examination results)?

a. Attendance Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

b. Retention Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

c. Examination Results Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

Thank you,

Appendix 2
Teacher Questionnaire

University of Wollongong
Faculty of Education

**THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS.**

I am a Doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong and seek your assistance with completing of this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is one part of a research study to investigate the impact of governance arrangements (particularly decision-making) on school effectiveness with reference to Parental involvement, Strategic planning and budgeting, Professional development of teachers, and School facilities and resources. (The second part of the research study involves interviews of a small number of respondents).

The survey questionnaire is designed in six parts and each part relates to the aspects listed above. It will take about 30 minutes to complete.

The survey questionnaire has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training, the Wollongong Catholic Education Office, and the Principals of the four schools involved.

- A Government High School
- An Independent Catholic High School
- A Christian Parent-controlled High School
- A Catholic Systemic High School

The information you provide is confidential between you and the Researcher. It will be used strictly by the Researcher for analysis and to compare results between different groups of respondents from the one school without the use of names. No names of respondents are required. It will not be used to compare schools.

All the participants will answer all questions. Please read the information carefully before you proceed to complete each section and return your completed survey questionnaire to:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project, parents and students

A. Respondent Information

Please indicate your position in this school

Teacher..... ☐

Length of Service as a Teacher.....☐

Head Teacher.....☐

Length of Service as a Head Teacher.....☐

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Your Highest Current Level of Education:

(e.g., School Certificate, HSC, Diploma, Bachelor Degree, Masters, Doctorate.)

The questions about the governance arrangements, particularly decision-making processes, and selected aspects of school effectiveness are given below. Please read carefully and provide the most appropriate answer.

PART ONE: THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT (DECISION-MAKING) Of THE SCHOOL

1. All schools have to operate within certain limits. These limits can be established by government, the law, school boards, parental wishes, teachers, etc. To what extent are these limits or constraints on decision-making placed on your school? Rate the significance of these limiting bodies.

Not Significant at All Not Very Significant Somewhat Significant Very Significant

4

Limits / Constraints	Your Ratings
8. State government (legislation, common law, and regulation, etc.).	
9. Board of Studies (e.g. Curriculum, Policy, Assessment, etc.).	
10. System Policies (e.g. DET, Catholic Ed., Policies, etc.).	
11. Parent Board/ Association	
12. Teacher Union/ Industrial Agreement	
13. Local community (as distinct from the formal parent structure)	
14. Congregational Owners	

2. At which level are the most important decisions made to ensure school effectiveness?

Please rate as applicable.	Least Important	Important	Most Important
	1	2	3

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board/Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students
- ☐ District/ Region/ Diocese
- ☐ State

3. What is your perception of the involvement of each group in the decision-making processes in your school? (N. B. Each respondent should complete all spaces).

$$\begin{array}{cccc} 1 & & 2 & & 3 & & 4 \end{array}$$

5. Not Participatory at all
6. Almost No Participation
7. Participatory but could be better
8. Appropriately Participatory

	Curriculum Offering	Budget and Resources	Professional Development of Teachers	Resources and School Facilities	Parental Involvement
Principal					
Staff (Teachers and other Staff)					
School community (Including Staff)					
School Community (Excluding Staff)					
Parent Board/Association					
Congregational Owners					
Students					

Please circle your response.

4. I feel my involvement in the school decision-making process is

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

5. I consider the decision-making processes in the school are generally

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

6. I believe that decision-making processes can have an important impact on school effectiveness.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

7. The key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level (So that the school has appropriate control).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

8. The Principal has enough authority for performing his/her duties.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

9. The teachers have sufficient autonomy over their work.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

PART TWO: THE IMPACT OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Please circle your response.

1. How adequate is the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

2. To what extent does the Principal encourage parents to become fully participating members of the school community?

Never Rarely Sometimes (as appropriate) Frequently (as appropriate) Always
1 2 3 4 5

3. Please tick the activities of school/parent interaction in your school.

☐ Regular Newsletters sent to parents

☐ Parents are invited to visit the school for school events

- ☐ Technology contact (e.g. school website)
- ☐ Parental/ Student centre (Drop in centre)
- ☐ Attendance at School Assemblies
- ☐ Teacher/Parent Conferences re student progress
- ☐ Workshops arranged for parents
- ☐ Take-Home Educational information Packets
- ☐ Telephone Hotlines (e.g. for student emergency)
- ☐ School Groups/ Councils
- ☐ Videotapes (educational/parent training or recorded school events, workshops and meetings that parents may have been unable to attend).
- ☐ Planning Meetings
- ☐ Budgeting Meetings
- ☐ Major decision-making Meetings
- ☐ Canteen
- ☐ Parents on Excursions
- ☐ Helping in Classrooms
- ☐ Helping with other Activities e.g. Costume Making
- ☐ Helping with Sport Teams
- ☐ Helping with School Cultural Activities e.g. Bands, etc.
- ☐ Extra (Please specify)

4. What percent age of your parents is actively involved in school activities? (Do not include passive activity e.g., Receiving of News letters and school reports, etc.).

1-10%	11-20%	21-30	31-40%	41-50%	51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81%+
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

5. What do you see as the main barriers to full and active parental involvement in the school?.....

PART THREE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING.

1. Who is involved in planning and budgeting decision-making in your school?

More than one tick is permitted.

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board /Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students

Please circle your answer

2. How adequate are the opportunities for your involvement in planning and budgeting?

Very Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Very Adequate
1	2	3	4

3. What percentage of teacher salaries in your school does the government fund?

10-20%	30-40%	50-60%	70-80%	90-100%
1	2	3	4	5

4. To what extent does the government fund the operating costs of the school?

Not at all	To Some Extent	To great Extent	Entirely
1	2	3	4

5. Who monitors the implementation of the school budget? (More than one tick is permitted).

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board/Association

6. The variety and quantity of in-school professional development programs meet my needs.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

7. Did you take part in any professional development activities apart from the School Development Day last year? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Please indicate your satisfaction with the available professional development programs? (Both within the school and external to the school).

Greatly Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Satisfied Highly Satisfied

1 2 3 4

9. To what extent is professional development linked to your school's planning and budgeting?

Not Linked At All Not Linked Sufficiently Sufficiently Linked Very Well linked

1 2 3 4

10. About how many hour(s) per year are provided for professional development for each teacher apart from school development days?

1-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81-90 91-100

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PART SIX: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON STUDENT OUTCOMES.

1. Do you believe there is any relationship between the decision-making processes in your school and student outcomes in areas such as attendance, retention, and examination results?

a. Attendance Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

.....
.....

b. Retention Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

.....
.....
.....

c. Examination Results Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

.....
.....
.....

Thank you,

Appendix 3
Parent Questionnaire

University of Wollongong
Faculty of Education

**THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS.**

I am a Doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong and seek your assistance with completing of this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is one part of a research study to investigate the impact of governance arrangements (particularly decision-making) on school effectiveness with reference to Parental involvement, Strategic planning and budgeting, Professional development of teachers, and School facilities and resources. (The second part of the research study involves interviews of a small number of respondents).

The survey questionnaire is designed in five parts and each part relates to the aspects listed above. It will take about 30 minutes to complete.

The survey questionnaire has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training, the Wollongong Catholic Education Office, and the Principals of the four schools involved.

- A Government High School
- An Independent Catholic High School
- A Christian Parent-controlled High School
- A Catholic Systemic High School

The information you provide is confidential between you and the Researcher. It will be used strictly by the Researcher for analysis and to compare results between different groups of respondents from the one school without the use of names. No names of respondents are required. It will not be used to compare schools.

All the participants will answer all questions. Please read the information carefully before you proceed to complete each section and return your completed survey questionnaire to:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project.

A. Respondent Information

About you

Please indicate your position in this school

Parent..... ☐

Parent Occupation:

Are you an active member of the parent Association? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you a member of the executive of a parent association? Yes ☐ No ☐

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Your Highest Current Level of Education:

(e.g., School Certificate, HSC, Diploma, Bachelor Degree, Masters, Doctorate.)

The questions about the governance arrangements, particularly decision-making processes, and selected aspects of school effectiveness are given below. Please read carefully and provide the most appropriate answer.

PART ONE: THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT (DECISION-MAKING) Of THE SCHOOL

1. All schools have to operate within certain constraints. These constraints can be established by government, the law, school boards, parental wishes, teachers etc. To what extent are these limits or constraints on decision-making placed on your school? Rate the significance of these limiting bodies.

Not Significant at All Not Very Significant Somewhat Significant Very Significant

1

2

3

4

Limits / Constraints	Your Ratings
15. State government (legislation, common law, and regulation, etc.).
16. Board of Studies (e.g. Curriculum, Policy, Assessment, etc.).
17. System Policies (e.g. DET, Catholic Ed., Policies, etc.).
18. Parent Board/ Association
19. Teacher Union/ Industrial Agreement
20. Local community (as distinct from the formal parent structure)
21. Congregational Owners	

2. At which level are the most important decisions made to ensure school effectiveness?

Please rate as applicable. Least Important Important Most Important

1

2

3

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board/Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students
- ☐ District/ Region/ Diocese
- ☐ State

3. What is your perception of the involvement of each group in the decision-making processes in your school? (N. B. Each respondent should complete all spaces).

1 2 3 4

9. Not Participatory at all
10. Almost No Participation
11. Some Participation
12. Very Participatory

	Curriculum Offering	Budget and Resources	Professional Development of Teachers	Resources and School Facilities	Parental Involvement
Principal					
Staff (Teachers and other Staff)					
School Community (Including Staff)					
School Community (Excluding Staff)					
Parent Board/Association					
Congregational Owners					
Students					

Please circle your response.

4. I feel my involvement in the school decision-making process is

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

5. I consider the decision-making processes in the school are generally

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

6. I believe that decision-making processes can have an important impact on school effectiveness.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

7. The key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level (So that the school has appropriate control).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

8. The Principal has enough authority for performing his/her duties.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

9. The teachers have sufficient autonomy over their work.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

PART TWO: THE IMPACT OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Please circle your response.

1. How adequate is the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

2. To what extent does the Principal encourage parents to become fully participating members of the school community?

Never Rarely Sometimes (as appropriate) Frequently (as appropriate) Always
1 2 3 4 5

3. Please tick the activities of school/parent interaction in your school?

- ☐ Regular Newsletters sent to parents
- ☐ Parents are invited to visit the school for school events
- ☐ Technology contact (e.g. school website)
- ☐ Parental/ Student centre (Drop in centre)
- ☐ Attendance at School Assemblies
- ☐ Teacher/Parent Conferences re student progress
- ☐ Workshops arranged for parents
- ☐ Take-Home Educational information Packets
- ☐ Telephone Hotlines (e.g. for student emergency)
- ☐ School Groups/ Councils
- ☐ Videotapes (educational/parent training or recorded school events, workshops and meeting that parents may have been unable to attend).
- ☐ Planning Meetings
- ☐ Budgeting Meetings
- ☐ Major decision-making Meetings
- ☐ Canteen
- ☐ Parents on Excursions
- ☐ Helping in Classrooms
- ☐ Helping with other Activities e.g. Costume Making
- ☐ Helping with Sport Teams
- ☐ Helping with School Cultural Activities e.g. Bands, etc.
- ☐ Extra (Please specify)

4. What percent age of your parents is actively involved in school activities? (Do not include passive activity e.g., Receiving of News letters and school reports, etc.).

1-10% 11-20% 21-30 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81%+

5. What do you see as the main barriers to full and active parental involvement in the school?.....

PART THREE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING.

1. Who is involved in planning and budgeting decision-making in your school?

More than one tick is permitted.

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board /Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students

Please circle your answer

2. How adequate are the opportunities for your involvement in planning and budgeting?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

3. What percentage of teacher salaries in your school does the government fund?

10-20% 30-40% 50-60% 70-80% 90-100%
1 2 3 4 5

4. To what extent does the government fund the operating costs of the school?

Not at all To Some Extent To great Extent Entirely
1 2 3 4

5. Who monitors the implementation of the school budget? (More than one tick is permitted).

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board/Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Bursar
- ☐ District/ Region/ Diocese
- ☐ State

6. The Principal has sufficient authority to manage the school budget.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
 1 2 3 4

PART FOUR: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON RESOURCES AND FACILITIES.

1. In comparison to others, how adequate are the physical facilities in your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
 1 2 3 4

Please elaborate.

.....

2. Are the decision-making arrangements for your school adequate to allow you to have an impact upon the physical facilities of your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
 1 2 3 4

Please elaborate.

PART FIVE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON STUDENT OUTCOME.

1. Do you believe there is any relationship between the decision-making processes in your school and student outcomes in areas such as attendance, retention, and examination results?

a. Attendance Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

.....

b. Retention Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

.....

c. Examination Results Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

.....

Thank you,

Appendix 4
Student Questionnaire

University of Wollongong
Faculty of Education

**THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON
SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS.**

I am a Doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong and seek your assistance with completing of this questionnaire.

This questionnaire is one part of a research study to investigate the impact of governance arrangements (particularly decision-making) on school effectiveness with reference to Parental involvement, Strategic planning and budgeting, Professional development of teachers, and School facilities and resources. (The second part of the research study involves interviews of a small number of respondents).

The survey questionnaire is designed in five parts and each part relates to the aspects listed above. It will take about 30 minutes to complete.

The survey questionnaire has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong, the New South Wales Department of Education and Training, the Wollongong Catholic Education Office, and the Principals of the four schools involved.

- A Government High School
- An Independent Catholic High School
- A Christian Parent-controlled High School
- A Catholic Systemic High School

The information you provide is confidential between you and the Researcher. It will be used strictly by the Researcher for analysis and to compare results between different groups of respondents from the one school without the use of names. No names of respondents are required. It will not be used to compare schools.

All the participants will answer all questions. Please read the information carefully before you proceed to complete each section and return your completed survey questionnaire to:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS:

- 1. Governance:** Governance refers to the various authority structures, decision-making processes and lines of accountability and responsibility that pertain to any organization. For the purpose of this study the focus is more on school decision-making processes.
- 2. Retention:** The extent to which students continue their study in the same school during the next year.

A. Respondent Information

About you

Please indicate your position in this school

Student..... ☐
 Class: Year 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐
 Are you a student leader (e.g. Captain, Student Council Member)? Yes ☐ No ☐
 Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

The questions about the governance arrangements, particularly decision-making processes, and selected aspects of school effectiveness are given below. Please read carefully and provide the most appropriate answer.

PART ONE: THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT (DECISION-MAKING) Of THE SCHOOL

1. All schools have to operate within certain limits. These limits can be established by government, the law, school boards, parental wishes, teachers, etc. To what extent are these limits or constraints on decision-making placed on your school? Rate the significance of these limiting bodies.

Not Significant at All Not Very Significant Somewhat Significant Very Significant

1	2	3	4
Limits / Constraints	Your Ratings		
22. State government (legislation, common law, and regulation, etc.).		
23. Board of Studies (e.g. Curriculum, Policy, Assessment, etc.).		
24. System Policies (e.g. DET, Catholic Ed., Policies, etc.).		
25. Parent Board/ Association		
26. Teacher Union/ Industrial Agreement		
27. Local community (as distinct from the formal parent structure)		
28. Congregational Owners		

2. At which level are the most important decisions made to ensure school effectiveness?

Please rate as applicable. Least Important Important Most Important

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Principal | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff (Teachers and other Staff) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Community (Including Staff) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Community (Excluding Staff) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Board/ Association | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congregational Owners | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District/ Region/ Diocese | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State | | | |

3. What is your perception of the involvement of each group in the decision-making processes in your school? (N. B. Each respondent should complete all spaces).

1 2 3 4

13. Not Participatory at all
14. Almost No Participation
15. Some Participation
16. Very Participatory

	Curriculum Offering	Budget and Resources	Professional Development of Teachers	Resources and School Facilities	Parental Involvement
Principal					
Staff (Teachers and other Staff)					
School community (Including Staff)					
School Community (Excluding Staff)					
Parent Board/Association					
Congregational Owners					
Students					

Please circle your response.

4. I feel my involvement in the school decision-making process is

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

5. I consider the decision-making processes in the school are generally

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

6. I believe that decision-making processes can have an important impact on school effectiveness.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

7. The key decision-making functions have been concentrated at the school level (So that the school has appropriate control).

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

8. The Principal has enough authority for performing his/her duties.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

9. The teachers have sufficient autonomy over their work.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4

PART TWO: THE IMPACT OF THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Please circle your response.

1. How adequate is the level of parental involvement in the school decision-making?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate

1 2 3 4

2. To what extent does the Principal encourage parents to become fully participating members of the school community?

Never Rarely Sometimes (as appropriate) Frequently (as appropriate) Always
1 2 3 4 5

3. Please tick the activities of school/parent interaction in your school?

- ☐ Regular Newsletters sent to parents
- ☐ Parents are invited to visit the school for school events
- ☐ Technology contact (e.g. school website)
- ☐ Parental/ Student centre (Drop in centre)
- ☐ Attendance at School Assemblies
- ☐ Teacher/Parent Conferences re student progress
- ☐ Workshops arranged for parents
- ☐ Take-Home Educational information Packets
- ☐ Telephone Hotlines (e.g. for student emergency)
- ☐ School Groups/ Councils
- ☐ Videotapes (educational/parent training or recorded school events, workshops and meetings that parents may have been unable to attend).
- ☐ Planning Meetings
- ☐ Budgeting Meetings
- ☐ Major decision-making Meetings
- ☐ Canteen
- ☐ Parents on Excursions
- ☐ Helping in Classrooms
- ☐ Helping with other Activities e.g. Costume Making
- ☐ Helping with Sport Teams
- ☐ Helping with School Cultural Activities e.g. Bands, etc.
- ☐ Extra (Please specify)

4. What percent age of your parents is actively involved in school activities? (Do not include passive activity e.g., receiving of News letters and school reports, etc.).

1-10% 11-20% 21-30 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81%+

5. What do you see as the main barriers to full and active parental involvement in the school?.....

PART THREE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING.

1. Who is involved in planning and budgeting decision-making in your school?

More than one tick is permitted.

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Including Staff)
- ☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
- ☐ Parent Board /Association
- ☐ Congregational Owners
- ☐ Students

Please circle your answer

2. How adequate are the opportunities for your involvement in planning and budgeting?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

3. What percentage of teacher salaries in your school does the government fund?

10-20% 30-40% 50-60% 70-80% 90-100%
1 2 3 4 5

4. To what extent does the government fund the operating costs of the school?

Not at all To Some Extent To great Extent Entirely
1 2 3 4

5. Who monitors the implementation of the school budget? (More than one tick is permitted).

- ☐ Principal
☐ Staff (Teachers and other Staff)
☐ School Community (Including Staff)
☐ School Community (Excluding Staff)
☐ Parent Board/Association
☐ Congregational Owners
☐ Bursar
☐ District/ Region/ Diocese
☐ State

6. The Principal has sufficient authority to manage the school budget.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4

PART FOUR: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON RESOURCES AND FACILITIES.

1. In comparison to others, how adequate are the physical facilities in your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

Please elaborate.

2. Are the decision-making arrangements for your school adequate to allow you to have an impact upon the physical facilities of your school?

Very Inadequate Inadequate Adequate Very Adequate
1 2 3 4

Please elaborate.

PART FIVE: THE IMPACT OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (DECISION-MAKING) ON STUDENT OUTCOMES.

1. Do you believe there is any relationship between the decision-making processes in your school and student outcomes in areas such as attendance, retention, and examination results?

a. Attendance Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

b. Retention Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

c. Examination Results Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain.

Thank you,

Appendix 5

The Letter of the University of Wollongong/ Illawarra Area Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 6

The Department of Education and Training Permission Letter

Appendix 7

The Catholic Education Office Diocese of Wollongong Permission Letter

Appendix 8

Participant Information Sheet for Research Project

To Whom It May Concern

This research project is being conducted as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree, supervised

1. Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness

2. Aim of the research

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance (particularly decision-making) impacts upon the effectiveness of the school with reference to:

- Parental involvement
- Strategic planning and budgeting
- Professional development of teachers
- School facilities and resources.

3. Name of the researcher: Behnaz Mohajeran

4. Participants: *Questionnaire:* 1 principal, all teachers, 20 parents, and 20 students in each school.

Interview: 1 principal, 2 teachers, 2 parents, and 2 students in each school.

5. Period of research: From July 2003 to February 2006

6. Research Procedures: (1) Questionnaires for all participants

(2) Interviews for all participations

(3) Review school documents

7. Instruments: Tape recorder

8. Special Consideration for classroom teaching:

The investigation will be conducted without disturbing participants' studies or teachers' duties.

9. Ethical considerations for participants:

All participants are informed that the participation can be withdrawn at any phase of the research on participant's or respective parent's wish.

If you would like to discuss this research further, please contact

Any question concerning the Research Ethics will be answered by the University of Wollongong, Research Officer,

Date

Appendix 9

Principal Information Sheet on Research

Information Sheet on Research – Principals

I am a postgraduate student in the University of Wollongong. In my research, I intend to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance (particularly decision-making) impacts on school effective with reference to parental involvement, professional development of teachers, planning and budgeting, resources and facilities.

I wish to request your participation in this research as Principal of a High School. First you will be given a questionnaire. Then, based of analysis of questionnaires, you will have an interview. During the answering to interview questions, your voice will be recorded. On both occasions, your name or school name or any other personal information will not be collected along with the data collection. Therefore, this data collection does not affect you any way.

All efforts will be made to cause minimal disruption to your normal routine during the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from the research at any time.

All the information I gather is confidential. Any information pertaining to your identity will not be accessible to any second party. The data will be used only for the purpose of research.

If you have any questions, please ring me on

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 10
Teacher Information Sheet on Research

Information Sheet on Research –Teachers

I am a postgraduate student in the University of Wollongong. In my research, I intend to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance (particularly decision-making) impacts on school effectiveness with reference to parental involvement, professional development of teachers, planning and budgeting, resources and facilities.

I wish to request your participation in this research as a High School Year Twelve Teacher. First you will be given a questionnaire. Then, based on analysis of questionnaires, you will have an interview. Your interview will be tape-recorded. On both occasions, your name or school name or any other personal information will not be collected along with the data collection. Therefore, this data collection does not affect you in any way.

All efforts will be made to cause minimal disruption to your normal routine during the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from the research at any time.

All the information I gather is confidential. Any information pertaining to your identity will not be accessible to any second party. The data will be used only for the purpose of research.

If you have any questions, please ring me on .

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 11
Parent Information Sheet on Research

Information Sheet on Research – Parents

I am a postgraduate student in the University of Wollongong. In my research, I intend to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance (particularly decision-making) impacts on school effectiveness with reference to parental involvement, professional development of teachers, planning and budgeting, resources and facilities.

I wish to request your participation in this research as parents of High School Year Twelve students. First you will be given a questionnaire. Then, based on analysis of questionnaires, you will have an interview. Your interview will be tape-recorded. On both occasions, your name or school name or any other personal information will not be collected along with the data collection. Therefore, this data collection does not affect you in any way.

All efforts will be made to cause minimal disruption to your normal routine during the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from the research at any time.

All the information I gather is confidential. Any information pertaining to your identity will not be accessible to any second party in any way. The data will be used only for the purpose of research.

If you have any questions, please ring me on

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 12

Student Information Sheet on Research

Information Sheet on Research – Student Participants

I am a postgraduate student in the University of Wollongong. In my research, I intend to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance (particularly decision-making) impacts on school effectiveness with reference to parental involvement, professional development of teachers, planning and budgeting, resources and facilities.

I wish to request your participation in this research as a High School Year Twelve student. First you will be given a questionnaire. Then, based on analysis of questionnaires, you will have an interview. Your interview will be tape-recorded. On both occasions, your name or school name or any other personal information will not be collected along with the data collection. Therefore, this data collection does not affect you in any way.

All efforts will be made to cause minimal disruption to your normal routine during the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from the research at any time.

All the information I gather is confidential. Any information pertaining to your identity will not be accessible to any second party. The data will be used only for the purpose of research.

If you have any questions, please ring me on

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 13
Consent Form

University of Wollongong

Consent Form

Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness.

This research project is being conducted as a part of Doctor of Philosophy degree supervised by the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong.

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which the form of school governance (particularly decision-making) impacts upon the effectiveness of the school with reference to parental involvement, planning and budgeting, professional development of teachers, school facilities and resources.

Data will be collected through questionnaires, interviews and review of school key documents.

The participation in this research is voluntary. Participants are free to discontinue their participation in the research at any time. Their withdrawal of consent will not affect their relationship with the Department of Education or the University of Wollongong.

If participants would like to discuss this research further please contact

4 or if there are any enquiries regarding the

conduct of the research please contact the Secretary of the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee on

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 14
Consent Form of Principal

Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness

I, _____
(Participant's name) consent to participate in the research conducted by _____ as it has
been described to me in the information sheet. I understand that the data collected will be used
for the study's purpose only and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Signed

_____ Date _____

Appendix 15

Consent Form of Teacher

Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness

I, _____
(Participant's name) consent to participate in the research conducted by _____ as it has been described to me in the information sheet. I understand that the data collected will be used for the study's purpose only and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Signed

_____ Date _____

Appendix 16

Consent Form of Parent

Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness

I, _____
(Participant's name) consent to participate in the research conducted by as it has
been described to me in the information sheet. I understand that the data collected will be used
for the study's purpose only and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Signed

_____ Date _____

Appendix 17

Consent Form for Parent of Student

Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness

I, the parent/ guardian of ----- (Participant's name) consent to participate my child in the research conducted by as it has been described to me in the information sheet. I understand that the data collected will be used for the study's purpose and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Parent's/ guardian's Name:

Parent's/ guardian's Signature:

Date: ----/-----/-----

Appendix 18

Consent Form of Student

Research Title:

The Impact of Governance Arrangements (Decision-Making) on School Effectiveness

I, _____
(Participant's name) consent to participate in the research conducted by _____ as it has
been described to me in the information sheet. I understand that the data collected will be used
for the study's purpose only and I consent for the data to be used in that manner.

Signed

_____ Date _____

Appendix 19

Sample Interviews Questions for Principal

1. Do you think you have enough autonomy for decision-making at the school level?
Please tell me how?
2. Do you think as principal you need more authority to manage the school budget?
3. From your point of view, how could your greater involvement in decision-making improve school facilities?
4. According to the results of the survey in your school you have not enough physical facilities? Can you tell me why? What sort of facilities?
5. What decision-making arrangements exist in your school for the participation of teachers, parents, and students in the school decision-making? How about students?
6. Do you think every parent has the same opportunities for participating in the school-decision-making? Yes: In what ways?
7. Do you think the budget for teacher professional development in your school is enough? Why Yes or Why Not?
8. If some individual teachers request some professional development programs inside or outside of the school, how do you treat this request?
9. Do you have a professional development community?
10. Who plays the most important role in decision-making about the professional development programs?
11. Please explain the relationship between professional development and school planning and budgeting? Please clarify further.
12. Teacher participation in professional development programs is voluntary or compulsory?
13. Who allocates budget to encourage parent participation in school activities?
14. How is budgetary information available to the school community? Please give me an example?
15. If parents ask for financial information from you provide it?
16. How do you choose members of the planning and budgeting committees? Please explain further.
17. Please tell me what process is used for decision-making in planning and budgeting at the school level? What you mean by department.
18. How much do your students know of the process of decision-making in the school?
19. What are the constraints of student involvement in planning and budgeting decisions?
20. Why do they not have involvement? What is the limitation?

21. How could unsatisfactory decision-making impact upon school effectiveness? Could you give me an example?
22. Would you give me some additional information in regard to what you believe has been the impact of decision-making on
 - a. Student attendance?
 - b. Retention?
 - c. Examination Results?
23. Do you have any hard data regarding attendance?
24. Could you please give me numbers with regard to the attendance, retention, and examination results in your school?
25. How about examination results?
26. Is there any information you would like to add?

Appendix 20
Sample Interviews Questions for Teacher

1. Do you think your principal has enough autonomy for decision-making of the school level?
2. Would you like to participate more in the school decision-making?
3. Why do you think you should have more say in the school decision-making?
4. From your point of view, how could your greater involvement in decision-making improve school facilities?
5. According to the results of the survey in your school you have not enough physical facilities? Can you tell me why?
6. What decision-making arrangements exist in your school for the participation of teachers, parents, and students in school decision-making?
7. Do you think the budget of teacher professional development in your school is enough? Why Yes or Why Not?
8. Who plays the most important role in the arrangement of professional development programs?
9. Please explain the relationship between professional development and school planning and budgeting? Please clarify?
10. Who allocates budget to encourage parent participation in school activities?
11. How is budgetary information available to the school community? Please give me an example?
12. How does the school choose members of the planning and budgeting committees? Please explain further?
13. Do you think voluntary membership is enough?
14. Please tell me what process is used for decision-making in planning and budgeting at the school level?
15. What are the constraints of teacher involvement in planning and budgeting decisions?
16. How could unsatisfactory decision-making impact upon school effectiveness?
17. Would you give me some additional information in regard to what you believe has been the impact of decision-making on
 - a. Student attendance?
 - b. Retention?
 - c. Examination Results?
18. Do you have any hard data regarding attendance?
19. Is there any information you would like to add?

Appendix 21
Sample Interviews Questions for Parent

1. Would you like to participate in the school decision-making?
2. From your point of view, how could your greater involvement in decision-making improve school facilities?
3. What decision-making arrangements exist in your school for the participation of teachers, parents, and students in the school decision-making? Please clarify?
4. How about the P&F?
5. How about decision-making arrangements for the staff?
6. How about decision-making arrangements for students?
7. Do you think every parent has the same opportunities for participating in the school-decision-making? Yes: In what ways? Can you explain further?
8. Who allocates budget to encourage parent participation in the school activities?
9. How is budgetary information available for the school community? Please give me an example?
10. How does the school choose members of the planning and budgeting committees? Please explain more?
11. Please tell me what process is used for decision-making in planning and budgeting at the school level?
12. What are the constraints on parent involvement in planning and budgeting decisions?
13. Do you think student participation in the school decision-making can be useful for the school? Yes: Please tell me why and in what way?
14. How could unsatisfactory decision-making impact upon school effectiveness?
15. Would you give me some additional information in regard to what you believe has been the impact of decision-making on
 - a. School attendance?
 - b. Retention?
 - c. Examination Results?
16. Do you have any hard data regarding attendance?
17. Is there any information you would like to add?

Appendix 22
Sample Interviews Questions for Student

1. Do you think students should have much say in the school decisions?
2. From your point of view, how could your greater involvement in decision-making improve school facilities? Please explain further?
3. What decision-making arrangements exist in your school for the participation of teachers, parents, and students in the school decision-making? Is this sufficient?
4. Who allocates budget to encourage parent participation in the school activities?
5. How is such information available for the school community? Please give me an example?
6. Please tell me what process is used for decision-making in planning and budgeting at the school level?
7. How does the school choose members of the planning and budgeting committees? Please explain further?
8. What are the constraints on student involvement in planning and budgeting decisions?
9. Do you think every parent has the same opportunities for participating in the school decision-making? In what ways?
10. How could unsatisfactory decision-making impact upon school effectiveness?
11. Would you give me some additional information in regard to what you believe has been the impact of decision-making on
 - a. School attendance?
 - b. Retention?
 - c. Examination Results?
12. Is there any information you would like to add?