



**EVALUATION OF
THE INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**

Final Report

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3 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDC&P	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DoE	Department of Education
ES	Effect size
IPS	Independent Public School
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy
RFT	Request for Tender
SEI	Socio Economic Index
SIRU	School Innovation and Reform Unit
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
WA	Western Australia



4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Program Evaluation (CPE) at the University of Melbourne (UoM), in partnership with Shelby Consulting and Murdoch University was contracted by the Western Australian Department of Education (DoE) to undertake an evaluation of the Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative. Now in its fourth year, the IPS initiative was designed to give greater autonomy to schools, and to reduce bureaucracy within the WA public school system (DoE, 2011). The initiative also aims to facilitate stronger engagement between schools and their community using different accountability processes, while still supporting schools within the public system.

This executive summary provides a high-level summary of the key findings of the evaluation, which was commissioned in September 2011. There were four key evaluation questions:

1. What are the effects of the Independent Public Schools initiative on participating schools?
2. What effect has the initiative had on the public school system overall?
3. Are there any issues that are hampering the efficiency or effectiveness of the Independent Public Schools initiative?
4. What advice can be provided to guide future implementation of the IPS initiative?

4.2 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODS

The evaluation adopted a rigorous evaluation framework to utilise and integrate multiple sources and forms of data, both quantitative and qualitative as well as ensuring a high level of stakeholder engagement. Data was collected across two stages and included information accessed from the Department of Education, a survey of principals,

interviews with key stakeholders and in-depth school site visits.

4.3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

Overall, the story of the implementation of the IPS initiative is a positive one, with the concept of IPS being agreeable to most principals in Western Australia. IPS principals overwhelmingly maintain that even in this early phase of the implementation, the initiative has considerably enhanced the functioning of their school, created the opportunity to access more benefits, and that it will lead to increased outcomes for the whole school community. Expectedly, there are challenges and some dissenting voices particularly around issues such as:

- increased workload, mainly in the transition to becoming IPS; and
- the creation of a set of schools that have advantages over other schools.

The decision to apply to become IPS was a large undertaking for many schools and while many factors come into play, a particularly relevant dynamic is that of “readiness for change.” The rationale for those principals choosing to apply to become IPS primarily relates to their awareness of, and desire for, the perceived benefits of IPS. Principals chose not to apply for a range of reasons, including lack of perceived benefits for their school, satisfaction with the status quo, insufficient capacity for change or philosophical opposition to the concept.

4.3.1 VARYING LEVELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Overall, the implementation of the IPS initiative is on target, although schools are at different points on a continuum of readiness and adoption that is dependent on factors such as:

- priority for change,

- community engagement,
- capabilities of the leadership team,
- the principal's mindset, and
- levels of support from the system and the community.

There are a number of impacts of the IPS initiative that emerged throughout the evaluation. The centrality of the principal as a change agent was clearly demonstrated. In particular, the transition period was critical, as it was the phase at which the principals gathered the necessary resources, information and skills required to commence and implement the initiative. These impacts are discussed, in brief, in the sections that follow.

4.3.2 PRINCIPALS

The mindset of the principal was one of the most critical factors in supporting the adoption of autonomy. In particular, the mindset that is adopted during the transition period is critical, as it is during this phase that the principals gather the necessary resources, information and skills required to commence and implement the initiative.

There is little doubt that in this early phase of the initiative IPS schools are very satisfied with the initiative. IPS principals felt empowered and believed that they were able to empower their teachers and better cater to students' specific needs. They were motivated by both the freedom and responsibility for selecting their staff and receiving their budget as a single figure over which they had control. Principals claimed high levels of change in their role, feeling more accountable and autonomous, and more empowered to make changes and lead their staff in improving the teaching, resources and climate of their schools. With greater autonomy, principals argued that they were also more motivated and invested in the success of their schools, thus encouraging a stronger sense of entrepreneurship and engagement as school leaders: for example, this notion of mindset can be seen in the four areas such as the principal's self-belief, the belief in autonomy, feeling of support and their skills of adopting suitable flexibilities. As would be expected, the principals exhibited different

levels of these attributes - the stronger the attribute, the greater the depth of implementation.

The principals claimed that there were critical success factors to the ongoing success of the IPS, and these included effective principals who are able to perform as education leaders and able to build relationships with teachers and communities. It was felt that support should be tailored to the capabilities of the principal, and their school context; particularly for less experienced and aspiring principals of whom there are expected to be a higher number in future IPS cohorts.

4.3.3 TEACHERS

Another critical element of the model is the role of the teacher. It is clear from the evaluation that principals believe that the IPS initiative has had a positive impact on many teachers, with a number of principals reporting that IPS teachers demonstrate an increased motivation and energy to bring about changes, while being more empowered to initiate innovative practices which support effective teaching and learning. The views of teachers were varied, with some expressing enthusiasm about how becoming an IPS had led to increased collaboration, additional resources, professional development and support tailored to their students' specific needs, while others voiced concerns about the impact of IPS on workload and careers paths.

One benefit of IPS frequently noted was increased school control over staffing, such that they are able to recruit staff appropriate for their school context and needs, and can choose whether or not to accept redeployees. It is noted, however, that this does not mean that redeployees are necessarily of lesser quality but that they may not fit the purposes in the IPS schools.

It does appear that most teachers in IPS felt more professional, accountable and in control of their careers, which has led to a greater feeling of self-worth. At this stage in the implementation of the IPS initiative, however, these findings are more at the level of perception and attitude. It will thus be important to now also monitor what happens inside

IPS classrooms over time, and for principals to use their greater autonomies to fully realise the benefits of these perception changes within the classrooms.

4.3.4 STUDENTS

It is envisaged that IPS will have positive spin-offs for whole school communities, and thus it is important to consider how it has impacted students. In this early phase of the IPS development there is little evidence of changes to student outcomes such as enrolment or student achievement. Given the complexities of the relationship between such outcomes and the degree of school autonomy that is reflected in the literature, this is perhaps not surprising.

Significant increases in student achievement as a consequence of the IPS initiative are likely to take time to be realised, and will emerge from an increased focus on effective teaching practices and broader school-changes, such as the development of positive learning environments. Barrera-Osorio et al. (2008), for example, suggested that, as student learning occurs as a cumulative process, students will only begin to demonstrate learning gains from autonomy reforms after at least five years of exposure. Similarly, changes in student behaviour, enrolment, and attendance are likely to emerge from more innovative school-wide approaches towards behaviour management and teaching, both of which can be enacted under the IPS initiative.

4.3.5 SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Whole school cultural change is also observable in the IPS initiative. Schools in IPS have been more engaged in strategic thinking and where school communities as a whole believed in the vision of IPS that was championed by the principals, this strategic thinking was more evident.

Further, schools in IPS reported increased engagement with their community and accountability via their school board, as well as increases in school profile, and school and community pride, with some parents suggesting the school was more inviting. It was reported that some schools had also increased

their level of collaboration and sharing of resources across schools, to their mutual benefit. The other public schools did not note any particular change with their community and as many suggested, they were relatively satisfied with their current status.

There is little doubt at the school level that the implementation of the IPS initiative has increased the opportunity for change and reform. The consequences of becoming an IPS, however, have led to differing degrees of progress and success in enacting these changes at this stage. Given that schools are at varying levels of readiness to adopt IPS, it would appear that there is no one-size-fits-all model of adoption, and therefore support must be tailored accordingly. Many IPS are approaching their “peak of implementation phase” and now their task is to use the benefits of this implementation to realise the impact on teachers and students. To achieve this, schools need principals who are ready to champion the next change within the classrooms, they need the support of the whole school community, and most importantly, they need the support of an education system that is responsive to the direction and resources to promote these changes in the classroom.

4.3.6 SYSTEM

The implementation of the IPS initiative has, overall, had a positive effect on the public school system by raising its profile and contributing to a sense of renewal and positive reform. The complexity that occurs as a consequence of working towards school change as well as system change, however, cannot be underestimated. While the system has adapted to support this innovation, this process of adaptation is still developing and it will be important to continue to monitor this level of change and support over time. At a whole system level there are demonstrable changes in working conditions. Changed roles and increases to the administrative and managerial responsibilities under autonomy have inevitably altered the workload of school leaders, although most acknowledged that this additional burden would reduce somewhat over time, and point to benefits for IPS school communities.

Within legislative and industrial constraints, the IPS initiative essentially shifts decision-making from central office to schools, and involves central office providing a supportive role to schools. This has necessitated a realignment of roles, culture, systems and resources in the Department. This process has been occurring at different rates and changing priorities appear to have also triggered in-depth reviews of processes and policies, with a view to providing better support to all schools including deployment of staff.

Equity was also a predominant theme, particularly for principals not in the IPS initiative. For example, there was a common view that the optimal placements for regional and indigenous schools need to be a focus for the sector. The evaluation, however, found no evidence to date to suggest that very remote, remote, regional and metro schools were differentially impacted by the IPS initiative. Related to this, concerns were voiced by some principals who did not apply or who were unsuccessful in their application to take up IPS that there is the potential for a 'two – tiered' system to emerge. Significantly, it must be questioned as to whether multiple ways of operating schools will be inherently negative, given the contextual diversity of WA. It is interesting to note that schools that applied to IPS but had not been accepted, suggested that they were seen to have failed to reach a standard, and claimed there were negative impacts on staff morale and community confidence as a result. However, there was no evidence of substantial differences in outcomes between schools that were selected into IPS and those that were not.

Overall, stakeholders were positive about the implementation of the IPS initiative. The need for continued review of central policy and processes, and a more open central culture to better support schools was highlighted as needing to continue and improve, along with a readiness to tackle legislative and industrial barriers in the future.

The theory and direction of the research logic has been validated by the evaluation results. The evaluation provided information to determine the IPS process of change, as well as an opportunity to review and refine the initial model, with a view to future development. While there is the sense that the initiative is some way through its implementation phase, it has yet to realise a fully developed process that can produce long-term gains. There is little doubt that the main elements of the initial logic are core to the implementation of the IPS initiative: the principal and the principal's role in relation to their teachers and school community as suggested by the evaluation's normative model developed early 2012.

The implementation of IPS is ongoing, and there are a number of factors and outcomes that can be considered in the medium and long term. Strengths, such as the motivated, energised, and engaged character of the Western Australian IPS initiative must be capitalised on, and factors which potentially limit the adoption of the innovation must be addressed. The key theme to emerge from the evaluation that needs to be considered is the importance of understanding a school and principal's readiness to adopt the IPS innovation. Considering that there are many levels of autonomy or flexibilities that schools can adopt, schools should be encouraged to opt in according to their level of readiness and support from their communities. Further, the transition process is critical to the successful implementation: most importantly, once the school level outcomes are in place, directing the focus of support to the classroom and teacher empowerment may be beneficial.

There are number of considerations that emerged from the evaluation and many of these ideas focus on targeted professional development for principals, and critically, on teaching and learning. A number of specific elements for future focus include:

- Considering the development of a more structured assessment of a school's and principal's readiness to engage in autonomy, one that allows for self-review and establishing strategic targets.
- Encouraging a direction that moves towards principals building on positive school culture gains to focus on the classroom and empower teachers to have greater impacts on students.
- Enhancing the successful transition program to build another level of support for principals ready to focus on classroom change.
- Providing support for principals to develop a 'mindset' that aids a progressive model of autonomy.
- Considering the importance of community engagement and specific means of targeted development and support (e.g., building partnerships across schools).
- Considering the particular role, placement and importance of redeployees.
- Enhancing capacity around monitoring and evaluation within the sector and the schools, particularly on the effect on school climate, attendance, and achievement outcomes.
- Encouraging schools to set achievement targets based on data, and to engage in continual review of these targets.
- Considering the current evaluation as a baseline from which to build and ensure the evaluative data forms the basis of further progression of the initiative.

Ultimately, this evaluation has found that the IPS initiative, while still in its early phase and not without challenges, has set the scene for school improvement, been embraced by most principals and had a significant impact across a range of areas within schools and the broader system.

5 INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Program Evaluation (CPE) at the University of Melbourne (UoM), in partnership with Shelby Consulting and Murdoch University were contracted by the West Australian Department of Education (DoE) to undertake an evaluation of the Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative. Already in its third year, the IPS initiative has been designed to give greater control to individual schools and school boards, and to reduce bureaucracy within the WA public school system (DoE, 2011).

This report details key findings collected across the three stages of the evaluation including: an analysis of data collected from key stakeholder interviews; an in-depth site visits of sample schools; a Principal survey; and a secondary analysis of existing documents and records. Further, the report organises information under the key evaluation questions and provides conclusions and recommendations for future implementation of the IPS initiative.

6 THE INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL INITIATIVE

6.1 BACKGROUND

The IPS initiative was announced by The Hon Colin Barnett MLA, Premier of WA and The Hon Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA, Minister of Education on 12 August 2009.¹ The development of the initiative was said to signify a new era in education in WA, being one of the most important changes to the state's education system in decades.

The initiative was designed to give schools greater control, and to reduce bureaucracy in the state public education system. Like similar reforms that have been undertaken in other Australian states and internationally, the IPS initiative also aims to improve the operational efficiency and effectiveness of schools and consequently improve student outcomes.

Over 100 schools applied for the first intake, with 34 being chosen to operate as Independent Public Schools from 2010. A second intake of 64 schools was selected to commence operation at the beginning of 2011, and a third intake of 73 schools was selected in 2012, making a total of 171 schools.² Eighty-four schools, from intakes 3.2 and 4 successfully applied and commenced operation in 2013, however, these schools have not been included in all aspects of the evaluation. In general, all IPS intakes had a range of schools (primary schools, secondary schools, district high schools and educational support schools) from metropolitan and regional areas and from varying socio-economic groups. The 515 Other Public Schools in WA have either not applied to become an Independent Public School, or have been unsuccessful in their application/s.

¹ RFT ETT1960/2011, WA Department of Education, Perth.

² WA Department of Education website: www.det.wa.edu.au/independentpublicschools/detcms/portal

Table 1: Breakdown of IPS by Intake, Year, and Geographical Region

Intake	Year	Total	Regional	Metro
1	2010	34	9	25
2	2011	64	16	48
3.1	2012	73	21	52
3.2 ³	2013	36	18	18
4 ⁴	2013	48	24	24
	Total	255	88	167

6.2 BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL

6.2.1 APPLICATIONS

To date, selection as an IPS is achieved through the successful lodging of a 3-page expression of interest by public schools in response to an annual invitation from DoE to do so. The applications must be written by the Principal in collaboration with their community and should demonstrate:

- ‘Capacity of the school to assume greater responsibility for its own affairs;’
- ‘level of local support, including staff support;’
- ‘potential benefits to students and the broader school community.’⁵

Schools are allowed to submit an individual as well as a cluster application.

In January 2013 the Minister for Education announced that every public school will be invited to become independent by undergoing a development program designed to equip them “to meet the high standards of the selection criteria”⁶ and become an Independent Public School from 2015. Schools will be required to successfully complete each stage in the development program to be accepted as an IPS.

6.2.2 TRANSITION

In the year of acceptance into the IPS initiative, the school undertakes a period of planning, training and transition in preparation for implementation. During this transition, the schools are allocated between \$20,000 and \$40,000 in transition funding, depending on the size of the school and the transition travel requirements. Leadership staff and representatives from the school council are given access to a training program, the school may alter its staffing profile and the schools are removed from the central staffing process and can begin their own processes. Any permanent

³ Intake 3.2 was selected with intake 3.1 in 2011 but commenced in 2013

⁴ Intake 4 was selected in 2012 but commenced in 2013

⁵ WA Department of Education *Unlock Your School’s Future: Becoming an Independent Public School in 2012*, Perth, 2012:4.

⁶ WA Department of Education *Unlock Your School’s Future: New opportunities for schools to become Independent Public Schools*, 2013

staff members who are philosophically opposed to the IPS initiative can opt for redeployment to a school that is not IPS.⁷

The School Innovation and Reform Unit (SIRU) provides high level support to IPS during and after the transition program. This includes operational support to IPS through coordination with other business areas in Central office, problem solving, board training, professional learning, communication, policy review and development, advocacy and stakeholder management.

Independent Public Schools continue to have access to all elements of support available to schools through the Department e.g. legal and industrial matters.

6.3 KEY ELEMENTS OF THE IPS MODEL

Descriptions of the IPS model are provided in various Departmental documents, particularly the 2012 prospectus. Relevant elements referred to within this report are described briefly in this section.

6.3.1 LINE MANAGEMENT

Whereas principals of other public schools are accountable to the regional executive directors, principals of IPS sign a *Delivery and Performance Agreement* which becomes the basis of their independent review at the end of three years. Thus, they become directly accountable to the Director General and meet with the Director General in small groups twice a year.

6.3.2 REGIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT

Since IPS are now accountable directly to the Director General, Regional offices no longer provide this function for IPS. Regional offices also have a reduced role in some other areas such as not having to respond to Ministerial briefings. However, Regional offices continue to provide most of the same support in the areas of compliance, complaints management, and critical incident.

6.3.3 AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A number of elements are central to the IPS initiative and are considered compulsory. Other elements are optional. These authorities and responsibilities fall into the categories of curriculum, student support, human resources management, and financial management and procurement.

Providing the requirements of the Curriculum Framework and the national curriculum are met, IPS can choose to offer different curricula and whether or not to use the Department's online resources. They can also choose their allocated days of professional development.

Independent Public Schools are given the option to appoint or contract student support staff (e.g. school psychologists, education assistants and social workers). IPS can also be flexible in the spending of their special needs funding while maintaining the ability to exclude students as permitted under the School Education Act 1999.

⁷ WA Department of Education *Unlock Your School's Future: Becoming an Independent Public School in 2012*, Perth, 2012:7.

Being exempt from the central placement process, IPS must undertake the selection and appointment of staff themselves, and they have the option of making early offers of placements to teachers and psychologists in their final year of training. Payment of salaries continues to be carried out centrally but the school is responsible for electronically entering staffing information on which these payments are based. Within their one-line budget, IPS can choose to determine their staffing profile (administrative, teaching and support staff), approve leave, backfill vacancies, and manage their relief costs.

Independent Public Schools are responsible for financial management and procurement, and building and facilities within their one-line budget. Provided that they meet compliance and reporting requirements, they can choose to manage utilities and retain savings, determine account and financial procedures, award contracts, and employ or contract maintenance and cleaning staff.

Since the commencement of the IPS initiative, all public schools have been given the ability to decide on the timing of some of their professional development days, and the responsibility for electronically entering staffing information. In addition, there have been very important changes to the staff selection processes with the introduction of *Staff Select* in 2012. Other options, such as access to online resources and utilities management, have and continue to be available to other public schools on a case by case basis. The intended options available for IPS are shown in the figure below for 2012.

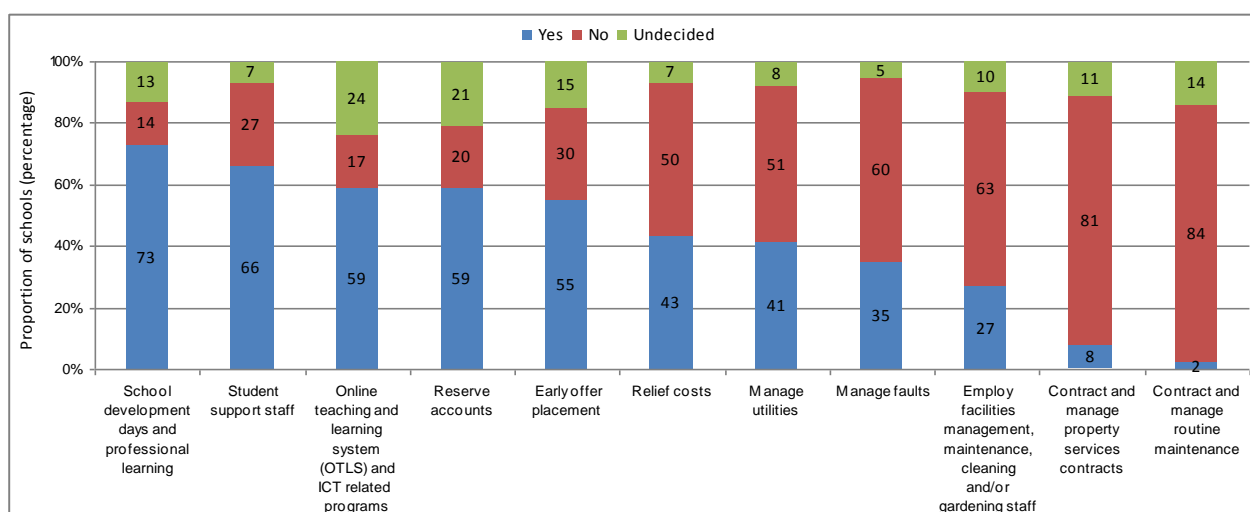


Figure 1: IPS intention to take up flexibilities in 2012 by percentage

6.3.4 OBLIGATIONS

Independent Public Schools retain all the compliance and legal obligations of all public schools including compliance with the *School Education Act 1999*, *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, *Financial Management Act 2006* and *School: Curriculum and Authority Act (1 March 2012)*. They must also provide the data required by the DoE to meet its reporting obligations.

As mentioned above, each Independent Public School negotiates a *Delivery and Performance Agreement* which is signed by the principal, Director General and chair of the school board. This is a brief document which identifies the resources that the school will receive, the support that will be provided, the programs it will be contracted to deliver, and the performance and accountability measures for the school over the life of the agreement (a minimum of three years and up to five years). These are usually based on the resources the school has received in the past, making the arrangements explicit. This also forms the basis of the Principal's Professional Review.⁸ During the transition, the school develops a business plan which operationalises the agreement.

Each year the school undertakes a self-assessment and annual school report similar to all public schools; this is signed by the school board chair and is sent to Central office to be assessed against national reporting requirements. A review, independent of the Department of Education is conducted in the final year of the agreement and this is made available to the public.

In the area of governance, Independent Public Schools' obligations include, maximising community and industry representation on their boards and providing quarterly reports to the school board on the school's performance. If the principal's position becomes vacant, the school board participates in the selection of the replacement.

6.3.5 SCHOOL BOARD

For IPS, the school council becomes known as the school board and takes on the endorsement of the *Delivery and Performance Agreement*, the one-line school budget and business plan and the annual school report. It also participates in reviewing the school's performance via student achievement data, and in processes to determine satisfaction levels of parent, staff and students. It becomes involved in the selection of a new principal if the position becomes vacant. The school board remains under the same governing legislation as the school council, and so retains the same authority.

6.4 IMPORTANT CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

A number of significant changes outlined below have and will continue to be introduced into the WA education landscape concurrent to the implementation of IPS which has impacted on the initiative's implementation.

National curriculum: Preparation for and introduction of the mandated national curriculum has generally overtaken other plans for diversifying the curriculum, for example, the introduction of the International Baccalaureate.

Year 7s in high school: From 2015 all year 7 students in public schools will move from primary to secondary schools. This will have profound implications for infrastructure requirements for secondary schools and in some cases will reduce secondary schools' capacity to provide places for out-of-area students.

Compulsory pre-primary: From 2013 pre-primary has become the first year of compulsory school. Schools have been preparing for this by increasing their capacity since 2012 when it was first announced. Another change in early childhood education that coincided with the implementation of IPS was the increase in minimum instructional hours for students in kindergarten from 11 hours to 15 hours. This change was phased in across districts from 2011, with kindergarten students across all regions eligible for a minimum of 15 hours instruction from 2013.

⁸ WA Department of Education *Unlock Your School's Future: Becoming an Independent Public School in 2012*, Perth, 2012:8.

Half cohort: In 2003 the starting age for primary school students was raised and as a result of this change pre-primary school students born in the second half of the year did not start school until the following year. This created a half-sized cohort that has been working its way through the school system, reducing the number of classes and therefore the number of required teachers for a year for each year level. In 2013, the half cohort reached year 11.

District to regional structure⁹: In 2011 the support model for schools changed from 14 district offices to 8 regions (including two metropolitan regions) and 7 local education offices. Regional offices provide support with the implementation of public school policy, monitor the performance of schools that are not IPS and intervene in underperforming schools. They also provide financial services, and help principals manage complaints and crises. Many of the district support services and staff were moved to schools or to networks, of which there are some 75 across WA, each with up to 20 schools, and each supported by a Network Principal. The professional learning component is usually provided by or through the Professional Learning Institute.

Budget Efficiencies Dividend: Since May 2012 the public sector has been subject to budget cuts; a 2% reduction to the running costs of all agencies was announced in the May budget, followed by \$330 million in September. These cuts have affected the budgets of all departments and in the DoE these effects have been seen particularly in freezes to the filling of vacant positions within central and Regional offices and travel funding.

6.5 INITIATIVE OBJECTIVES

The four core objectives of the Independent Public Schools initiative are:

1. To allow public school principals, staff and school boards greater decision-making autonomy, authority and flexibility in the selection and management of their financial, physical and human resources; overall school direction; education programs; behaviour management; and values/ethos. Greater autonomy is also intended by offering Independent Public Schools the opportunity to develop alternative policies and processes to those previously employed by the Department.
2. To facilitate a stronger engagement between the school and the community and to ensure community input into governance through the establishment of school boards.
3. To create different school accountability processes, with *Delivery and Performance Agreements* established between the Director General and the principals and school boards from each school.
4. To continue to receive the benefits of being part of the public school system, including: professional development, employee support services, regional support, and behaviour centres.¹⁰

⁹ WA Department of Education Education Regions, Perth no date.

¹⁰ The Western Australian Primary Principals' Association Lecture; *Independent Public Schools Education Reform for the 21st Century* on 17th June 2010, Western Australia.

7 EVALUATING THE IPS INITIATIVE

In evaluating the IPS initiative, a staged approach was employed. The first stage involved three steps; engaging stakeholders, clarifying the program and focusing the evaluation design. Key activities that occurred within this stage included conducting a number of meetings and workshops, clarifying the IPS initiative through the development of a program logic and validated through a literature review, and the analysis of existing DoE information on IPS characteristics. Refer to Figure 33 for the program logic and Appendix A for the literature review. The second stage involved two data collection phases as required in the RFT: in-depth site visits to sample IPS, stakeholder interviews, surveys in all Western Australian public schools and the collection of secondary data housed within the Department of Education. The final stage revisits the program logic in light of what is happening in the schools and the Department's central services, and integrates and analyses the evaluation information so that overall recommendations for improvement can be made. This report will summarise information collected across all stages of the evaluation.

7.1 METHODOLOGY

The following section outlines the evaluation methodology utilised, the objectives and questions used, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

7.1.1 FRAMEWORK

The implementation of the evaluation is underpinned by the framework developed by the Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC&P), "Framework for Program Evaluation of Public Health Initiatives" (CDC&P, 1999). This is an adaptation of a standard form of evaluation framework commonly used in educational and social settings; Figure 1 demonstrates this high level framework. The model provides an overarching framework through the application of six steps ('stakeholder engagement'; 'program description'; 'focus the evaluation design'; 'data collection'; 'justify conclusions' and 'ensure use and share lessons learned'). These six steps are applied at various times throughout the evaluation's three-staged approach. The framework is underpinned by a set of standards to maintain the accuracy, reliability and validity of the evaluation. Refer to Appendix B for the explanation of these standards.

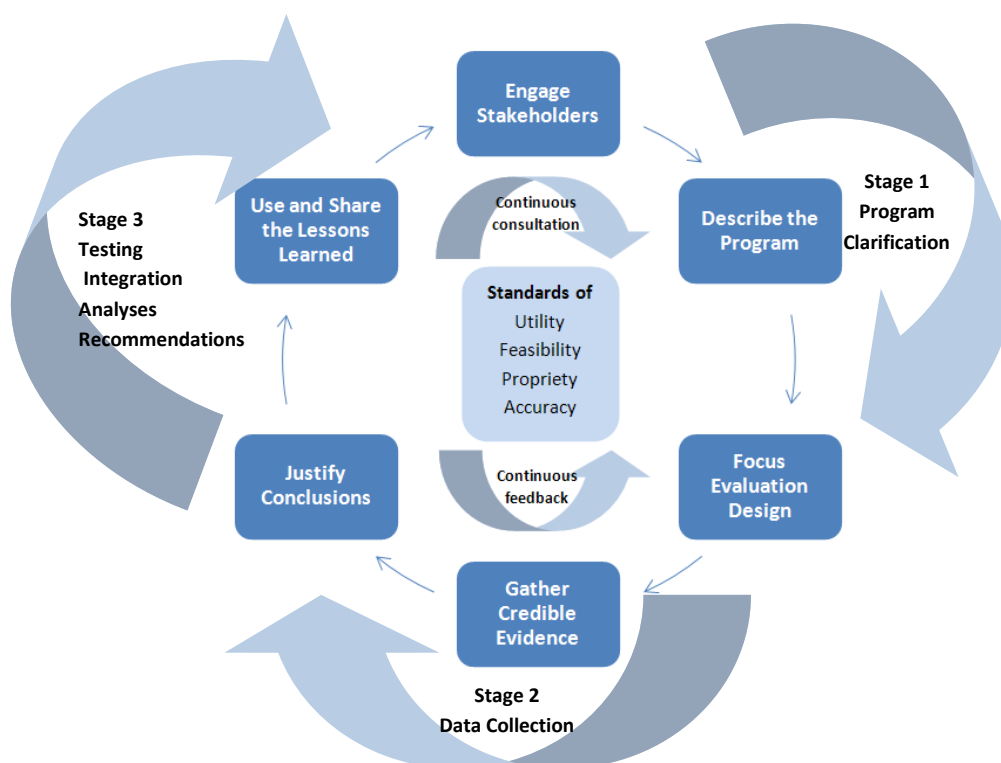


Figure 2: Evaluation Framework

7.1.2 FRAMEWORK

In evaluating the IPS initiative, a mixed-methods methodology was utilised, with respect to data collection and analysis within this framework. Such an approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry, incorporating the strengths of both methods to better address the evaluation questions and strengthen the study design. A mixed methods approach is ‘generative and open, seeking richer, deeper, better understanding of important facets of our infinitely complex social world’ (Green, 2007, p.20). It enables a tailored use of different data collection methods in order to provide the range of perspectives from the key stakeholders in the IPS initiative, as well as, triangulation of these perspectives in addressing the key evaluation questions.

7.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES & QUESTIONS

The WA Department of Education commissioned an evaluation of the IPS initiative to ensure further expansion is based on a credible assessment of its effectiveness. Consequently, the study was conceived with the agreed objectives of examining and reporting on:

- The implementation of the Independent Public Schools initiative and whether there are opportunities for its improvement.
- The impacts of the initiative on the effectiveness and efficiency of Independent Public Schools and public confidence in the broader public school system.
- The extent to which the experience of schools demonstrates that the policy objectives of the initiative are being met.

To guide the collection, analysis and reporting of information on each of these objectives, four key evaluation questions were developed and agreed upon:

1. What are the effects of the Independent Public Schools initiative on participating schools?
2. Are there any issues that are hampering the efficiency or effectiveness of the Independent Public Schools initiative?
3. What effect has the initiative had on the public school system overall?
4. What advice can be provided to guide future implementation of the IPS initiative?

7.3 METHODS OVERVIEW

7.3.1 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Using a mixed-methods strategy, the evaluation study takes a multi-pronged approach to data collection by collecting information appropriate to each evaluation question.

In Stage 1, the information required was sought from:

- In depth discussions with DoE senior staff and school principals to develop a program logic for the implementation of the initiative.
- Program documents sourced from the Department and the schools, such as: guidelines, reports, plans, IPS agreement templates, school applications/submissions, principal business plans, school delivery performance reports etc.
- Interviews with persons who had expertise in the practice and theory of school autonomy.

In Stage 2, information was sought from:

- Secondary data, housed at the Department and at the schools, such as: student academic outcomes; student enrolment trends; student attendance and behaviour; teacher and other staff mobility; financial and budgeting data. Where possible, data was collected about IPS and other public schools over a five year period, beginning prior to the commencement of the IPS initiative and continuing to the end of 2012 in order to enable comparisons between schools.
- Surveys with principals of IPS and other public schools.
- Interviews with key stakeholders with a particular focus on staff in central and Regional offices, and representatives of professional and staff associations.
- In-depth visits to a number of IPS to interview staff and parents.

7.3.1.1 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

Data from 2009-2012 at the school level was provided by the DoE. These data from all 770 WA public schools were collated and merged into one database (SPSS), including demographic information such as school name, region, socioeconomic index (SEI), % Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islanders, postcode, statistical division, local government area code, treasury area code, region, and region descriptor. Various attributes of students such as number of students, number of ATAR, number of students with ATAR scores of 75 and over, and students at attendance risk (regular, indicated, moderate, severe). Further, performance data included median ATAR, the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data for Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 for Numeracy, Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar. Enrolment numbers for each semester for each year, and the WA Society and Environment and Science exam scores along with the status of schools relative to the independent status or not were also included.

7.3.1.2 PRINCIPAL SURVEY

Principals from all public schools in WA were invited to participate in an online survey exploring the following reasons for applying or not applying to become an IPS: feedback on the transition processes into IPS for appropriate schools; satisfaction with the principal role; teaching staff; school operation and departmental support. The development of the survey protocol was based on a comprehensive literature review, the program logic and discussion with stakeholders. Four versions were prepared: for principals from IPS; for principals of schools becoming IPS in 2013; for principals of schools that had unsuccessfully applied to become IPS; and for principals of schools that had never applied. To ensure that the questionnaire was valid and appropriate, feedback on its design and content was sought from program stakeholders and an expert panel. The survey was piloted with principals in order to improve the readability, appropriateness and overall quality. Furthermore, the survey construction and analysis were designed so as to encompass the full range of perspectives on the IPS initiative, from each intake of IPS and all other public schools.

The survey was made live on 30th October 2012 on the Murdoch University survey system and individualised email invitations were sent to principals of every public school in WA. The survey was sent to a total of 772 principals. A reminder was sent out on 5th November 2012, and again on 19th November 2012. On 29th November 2012 a reminder was sent to schools that were not IPS to boost the response rate of that group. Overall, there was a healthy response rate of 590 principals (76%).

7.3.1.3 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Consultations were conducted with the Department's central and Regional office representatives, as well as union and association representatives, regarding the overall effect of the IPS initiative on the public school system and future implementation of the IPS initiative. The metropolitan interviews were carried out face-to-face and regional interviews were carried out via phone with detailed notes taken. In total, 24 interviews were conducted. A total of 22 Central office staff participated in 10 interviews, 10 regional staff participated in 9 interviews, and 13 representatives from staff and parent unions and associations participated in 5 interviews.

7.3.1.4 SITE VISITS

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how schools are adapting to IPS, a small number of schools were selected by the evaluation team from the three IPS cohorts and visits were made to each school to interview principals, staff, parents and members of the school boards. The selection process aimed to identify schools that have shown an innovative approach towards the initiative so that lessons could be learned of how best to adapt to greater autonomy. The 13 schools selected were distributed geographically by IPS cohort and by type of school to maximise the variety of contexts. The table below summarises the geographical distribution of the site-visit schools. Among these there are six primary schools, four secondary schools, one district high school and two education support settings. The distribution of the selected schools by Socio Economic Index was also checked to ensure a range was included. Schools starting in the IPS initiative in 2013 were excluded from the site visit selection, as they would not have had sufficient time to implement the key elements of the initiative.

Table 2: Sample frame based on geographical location

Cohort	Metro sample	Regional sample	Sample total
2010	4	2	6
2011	3	1	4
2012	2	1	3
Total	9	4	13

Site visits were conducted in 13 schools over one or two days. The three 2012 cohort schools were visited in Terms 1 and again in Term 4, the remaining ten 2010 and 2011 cohort schools were visited once during Term 2. At each visit, interviews were conducted with as many of the stakeholder groups as possible and practicable. For example, in some small schools all or most of the teachers were able to provide feedback; in larger schools only a proportion of teachers attended interviews to provide feedback.

During the visits to the selected schools individual and group interviews were conducted with principals, deputy/associate principals, registrars, specialist and teaching staff¹¹, board members and parents. Four different interview schedules were developed for stakeholders groups including principals, deputy/associate principals and registrars; teachers and education assistants; parents; and board members. All interview schedules addressed the core issues surrounding the four key evaluation questions. Notes were taken during the interviews, and then entered into Excel for analysis.

In all, 121 interviews were carried out with a total of 289 participants including 13 principals, approximately 25 deputy principals, 10 registrars, 130 teachers, 45 board members and 55 parents. Exact numbers of each group cannot be distinguished because some groups had a number of different stakeholders and some stakeholders could be placed in more than one group, for example parent and board member.

7.3.2 DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

Information was collected from a range of sources in both quantitative and qualitative formats in accordance with a mixed-methodology design and to provide an appropriate approach to the multiple contexts in this evaluation. It was important to capture a holistic picture of the IPS initiative both as it has been intended and as it has been implemented. This data was analysed at two levels.

¹¹ A very small number of Education Assistants were interviewed but they were not identified as a stakeholder in the evaluation design and not enough were interviewed to report their themes reliably.

The first level of analysis focussed on the collection of data using interviews, focus groups, secondary data, surveys and program documentation. Analysis of this data was undertaken to reduce and manage the categories while also allowing for interesting or unexpected data to be identified.

The key stakeholder and site visit interviews were analysed by coding according to common themes.

For the secondary data, the method of analysis by comparing IPS with other public schools was considered. However this analysis would fail to account for the number of years the IPS have been in operation. Instead, other public schools were compared with IPS depending on the number of years they had been in the program (intake). The table below shows that no schools were in IPS for the 2008 and 2009 data sets, 34 were in IPS in 2010, 98 were in IPS in 2011, and 171 were in IPS in 2012. There are 84 schools due to become IPS schools in 2013 and for the remainder of the analyses these have been excluded – as they are neither IPS nor other public schools.

Table 3: The status of IPS and other public schools by years, and number of years in IPS

Year	Intake & Number of Schools	Number of years in IPS	Cumulative IPS Count
2008			0 IPS
2009			0 IPS
2010	Intake 1: 34 IPS	3 years	34 IPS
2011	Intake 2: 64 IPS	2 years	34 + 64 = 98 IPS
2012	Intake 3.1: 73 IPS	1 year	34 + 64 + 73 = 171 IPS

Given that the schools in the data file constitute the population of all WA schools, and the sample size of students across these schools is large, statistical significance is not the most critical variable (although where appropriate it is provided). Instead, effect-sizes have been created.

Effect-sizes (ES) are commonly used in educational research, and they represent standardised differences between means. On the basis of a synthesis of over 800+ meta-analyses relating to achievement, Hattie (2009) showed that in education .2 or less is a “small” effect, .4 is average, and greater than .6 is large. These approximate descriptions will be used in the subsequent analyses.

Analysis of the principal survey involved descriptive statistics summarising information at the item level to explore all aspects of the survey. An interpretive analysis was conducted to assess relationships and differences between groups. The final phase of the analysis explores higher level factor structures and uses interpretative statistics to illustrate statistical differences. Survey items were inputted into SPSS and a factor analysis was used to explore the psychometric properties of the survey. It was seen as appropriate to explore the properties of the survey in sections, given the varying structure of the survey for different school categories.

An exploratory factor analysis was used in an effort to discover common response themes. Factor analysis is a statistical method that can be used to reduce data sets by finding shared variation or trends. While conducting a factor analysis a group of items, in this survey questions, are grouped together and examined for trends. These factors can be named to communicate information with greater ease. Items which reveal little contribution to a factor are deleted when inferential statistics are being used.

These initial analyses gave rise to additional questions about underlying influences shaping the implementation process. The evaluation team conducted a cluster analysis of the principals of IPS and schools that had not applied to become IPS, to investigate the school characteristics which contribute to perceptions of change, actual change, and decisions to apply. Cluster analysis explores relationships between scale scores and organises principals into groups based on the similarity of how they respond to these scales. Finally, a structural equation model was constructed to

determine the most critical relations between the reasons for applying to IPS and the experience of principal empowerment and benefits of becoming an IPS.

Overall in Western Australia, there were 420 public schools located in metropolitan Perth, 217 in regional areas, 85 in remote areas and 60 in very remote areas. To determine whether region impacted survey dimensions, would suggest the IPS initiative may have differential impacts across the education system, a series of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were conducted. The general purpose of a MANOVA is to determine whether multiple levels of independent variables on their own or in combination with one another have an effect on the dependent variables. This analysis used Intake (IPS intakes 1, 2 and 3 and other public schools) and Region (city, regional, remote, very remote) as dependent variables. The major interest is any interaction between Intake and Region in patterns of principal response, as this would indicate that regions differed relative to any intake across the dimensions of interest. As there were no main or interaction effects, it can be concluded that Region was not a major factor in determining responses to the IPS related dimensions. Further, there were no differences in the assignment to clusters for IPS (chi-square = 7.46, df = 6, p=.280) or to the clusters for the other public schools (chi-square = 9.86, df =9, p=.371). The analysis relating to SEI is contained in the discussion section of the document and has similar results.

Table 4: Regions impacted and IPS

	Region (city, regional, remote, very remote)				Intake (1, 2, 3 and other public schools)			
	Wilks	Mult F.	df	p	Wilks	Mult F.	df	p
Reasons for Applying (IPS only)	0.97	0.47	15, 765	0.954	0.90	0.68	45, 1242	0.951
Reasons for Not applying	0.94	1.34	12, 622	0.191				
Transitions	0.97	0.48	9, 321	0.890	0.90	1.33	12, 350	0.200
Since IPS	0.99	0.30	6, 878	0.936	0.98	0.73	14, 880	0.740
Change dimensions	0.94	1.09	24, 1138	0.345	0.87	0.95	56, 2116	0.573

The second level of analysis triangulated the various data sources mentioned above in order to confirm key findings and identify how the IPS initiative works at the school level and centrally in the Department. In this way, key learnings could be identified and reported to the Department.

Analysis of program documents was also conducted throughout the evaluation using Departmental documents such as guidelines, reports and plans relevant to the implementation of the IPS initiative. The documents were collated and analysed for recurring events and themes identified in the literature review, the core objectives of the IPS initiative and information relating to the evaluation questions.

8 FINDINGS

This section provides a discussion of key findings of the evaluation, structured under the four evaluation questions. The findings have been triangulated from the data sources described in the Methodology section. Unless otherwise stated, all references to principals refer to findings from the online survey of public school principals. These findings are also divided by the relevant principal and school category.

Term	Data Source
IPS	Schools that became IPS from 2010 to 2012. "IPS principals" are the survey respondents from these schools.
Intake	Responses from IPS principals were analysed by intake group. Intake 1 became IPS in 2010, intake 2 in 2011, and intake 3.1 in 2012.
2013 IPS	Schools scheduled to become IPS in 2013. They consist of intake 3.2 (who were selected at the same time as intake 3.1 but were held over for the following year to remain within capacity of the transition support) as well as intake 4 selected to top up the intake. They had commenced the transition at the time the survey was conducted. "Principals from 2013 IPS" are the survey respondents from these schools.
Schools which applied, but were unsuccessful	Public schools that unsuccessfully applied to become IPS. "Principals from schools which applied unsuccessfully" are the survey respondents from these schools.
Schools which never applied	Public schools which never applied to become IPS. "Principals from schools which never applied" are the survey respondents from these schools.
Other public schools	This category comprises schools that applied unsuccessfully and schools which never applied. "Principals from other public schools" are the survey respondents from these schools.

Illustrations and patterns from the case studies are indicated in the text. References to a school indicate the view was consistent across many stakeholders within the school; otherwise the stakeholder group is identified.

Feedback from key stakeholders including staff from Regional offices, Central office, and representatives from school staff associations and unions as well as from parent organisations has been noted as such in the text.

Feedback from IPS site visits include opinions provided by principals and deputy/associate principals, business managers, teachers, parents and board members. Where many of these stakeholders were in agreement it has been noted as feedback from 'the site visit schools'.

Findings from the analysis of departmental and public school data about students, teachers, staff and finances are cited as "secondary data."

8.1 WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE IPS INITIATIVE ON PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS?

8.1.1 REASONS FOR APPLICATION

The reasons selected by survey respondents for applying to become IPS were similar for all schools. Factor analysis revealed that the primary motivation was the opportunity to select staff that matched student needs and the school ethos. Respondents were also attracted by the flexibility and autonomy to make decisions, improve school effectiveness and reputation, and manage their budgets. The support available for IPS and access to related benefits was moderately influential, especially for later intakes of IPS, and the prospect of additional work was not perceived as an important barrier.

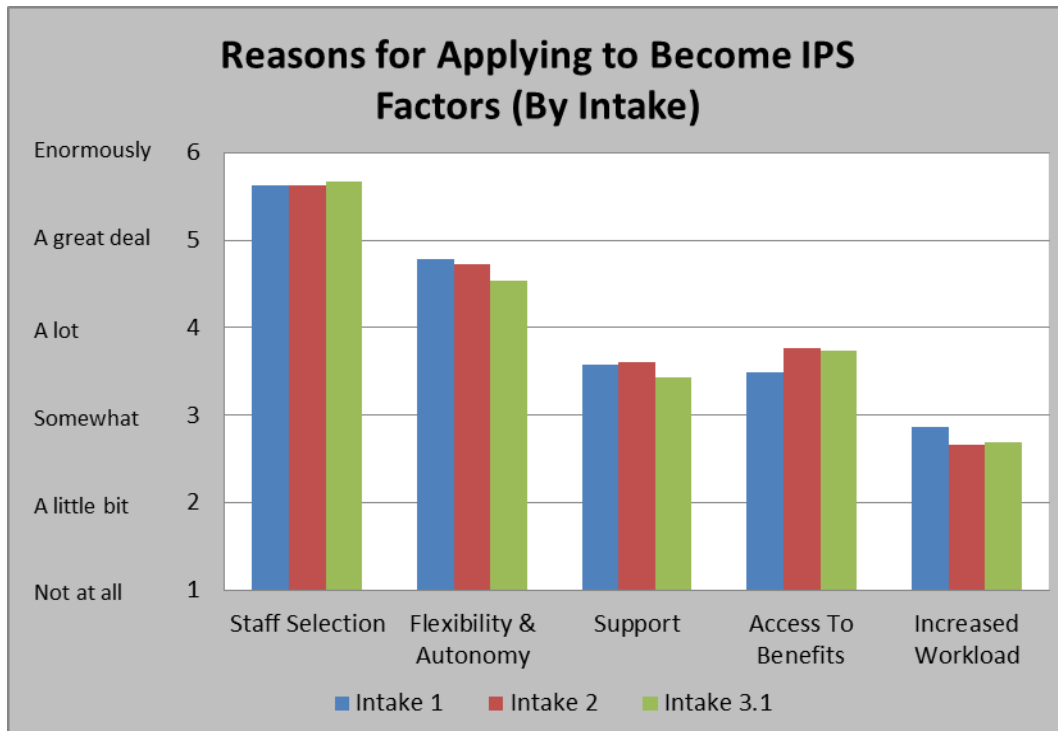


Figure 3: Principal Survey - Reasons for applying to become IPS (factor analysis by intake)

As the initiative has developed, there have been increases in the motivation provided in witnessing other schools becoming IPS (see Figure 4D) and access to IPS training and support (see Figure 4B), with IPS in later intakes more likely to endorse this as a reason for their application. Principals from earlier intakes were slightly more motivated by wanting to be at the forefront of change (see Figure 4A) and increase their authority (see Figure 4C).

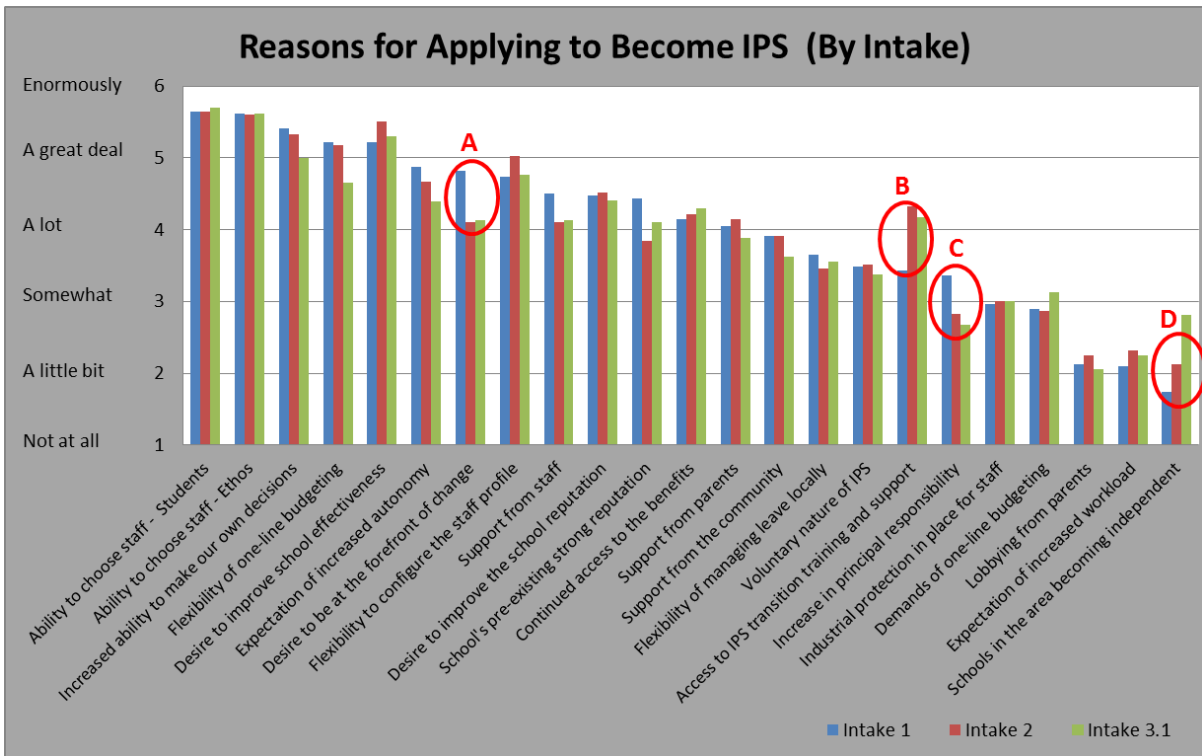


Figure 4: Principal Survey - Reasons for applying to become IPS (item responses by intake)

A cluster analysis was conducted to identify groups of principals who responded similarly about their perceptions of the changes in their school (see section 8.1.2). Three clusters were identified, and principals from cluster 3 schools perceived the greatest benefits; however, there is no marked difference between clusters in their reasons for application, suggesting that there is no clear relationship between reasons for application and perceptions of success.

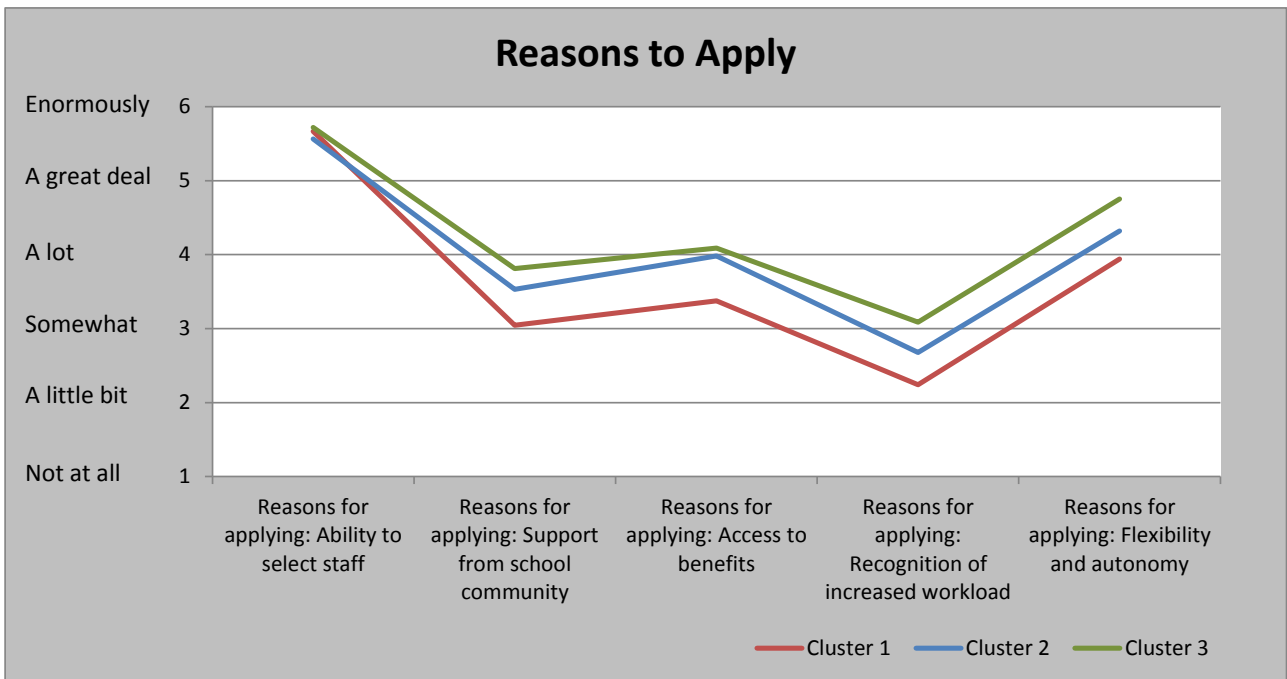


Figure 5: Cluster Analysis - Reasons to Apply

Principals from all public school categories agreed that IPS have an advantage in accessing the most suitable staff for their context and more flexibility in use of their resources, but also a heavier administrative burden (see Figure 6). Examples from some of the site visits illustrated that the choices that schools made were quite specific to their particular goals and approach. Taking an overall view of site visits, it became apparent that flexibility was not only about being able to choose what resources to utilise but that there was also a flexibility to change approaches if the desired changes were not occurring, or if they were and therefore other areas became a priority. Thus, one school chose to decrease class size and put more assistance into classes, while another chose to provide support to struggling students away from their normal classroom. One school increased teacher professional development while another reduced it to achieve what the school identified as a more pressing priority. Some examples of changes are provided below to illustrate some of the variety of approaches taken.

We have more flexibility for staffing and purchasing. We hired extra in the office and extended education assistants' time. The 0.6 has gone to full-time to be used in areas where there are projects. We have more funding to do extra with some kids. (Business manager).

The flexibility to employ staff in a suitable way. Instead of having a teacher doing clerical work at a teachers' salary – get a clerical worker. We can swap a teacher for clerical, reduce teaching staff by a little and top up with the clerical. (Business manager).

Flexibility to react quickly and change resources – also have the ability to select quite specific staff for specific roles. We were able to create a team of non-timetabled teachers who support teachers in the classroom. We have 1.4 teachers, 1.0 team leader, and 2 FTE of education assistant time for supporting literacy and numeracy additional to what we would normally have, funded by savings from relief and a low socio economic grant. We chose this route instead of dropping class size and adding support staff. (IPS principal: site visit)

We went into it not necessarily to improve NAPLAN results but to be able to maintain a consistency of programs. For example, we would have funding for a program and as soon as we had improved results we lost it. (IPS principal: site visit)

Programs have been able to put into place because we can hire staff to support what we want to be able to do for the students. For example, we have a new program for upper school which provides time allocated to education an assistant to spend with weaker student – guided reading – support special needs and weaker students. (Business manager)

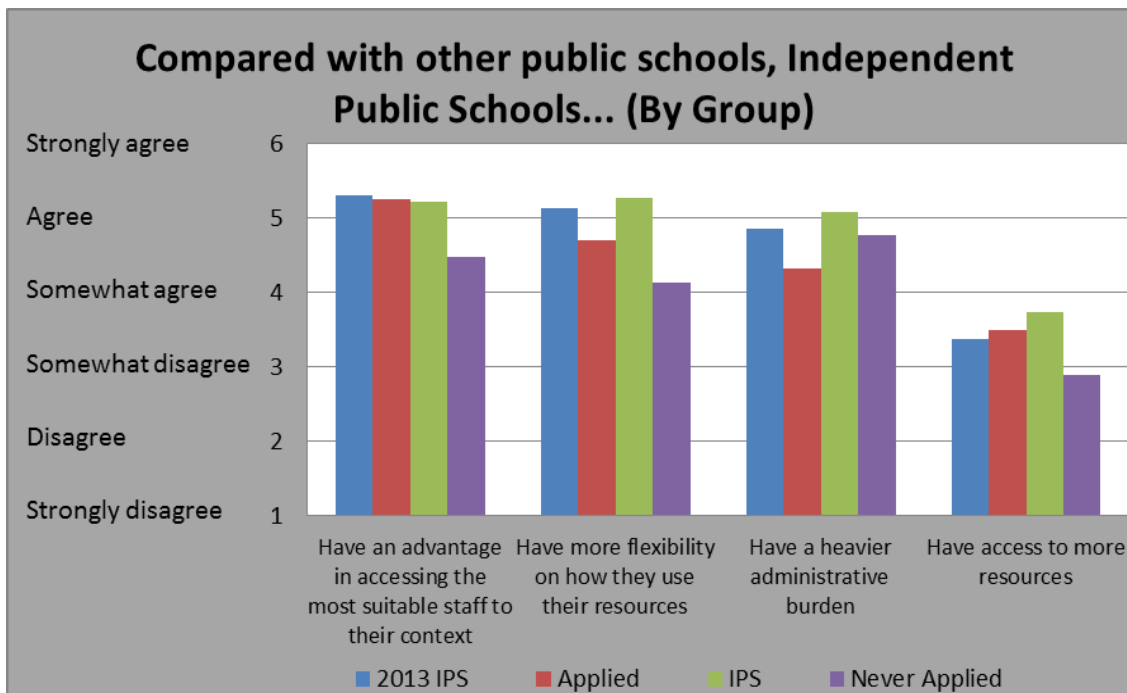


Figure 6 : Principal Survey - Comparisons between IPS and other public schools (item responses by group)

The biggest challenges for IPS were associated with the administrative changes, including learning to manage the new flexibilities, such as the one-line budget and staffing profile, and the increased workload for administrative and leadership staff.

Positive changes have revolved around flexibility of the one line budget and selecting staff who want to be at my school and negative impacts have been the increased workload associated with these. (IPS principal: survey)

Factor analysis of the principal survey showed consistent variations between IPS intake groups in perceptions of change, with principals from the first intake agreeing more strongly that they witnessed improvements in teaching, resources, their leadership roles and community engagement in their schools. These are described further in the following sections. This may be an indication that the IPS from later intakes were still working through some of the challenges of transition, and that change and satisfaction increase as schools become more accustomed to operating as an IPS. Alternatively, it might signal a difference in attitudes between principal cohorts.

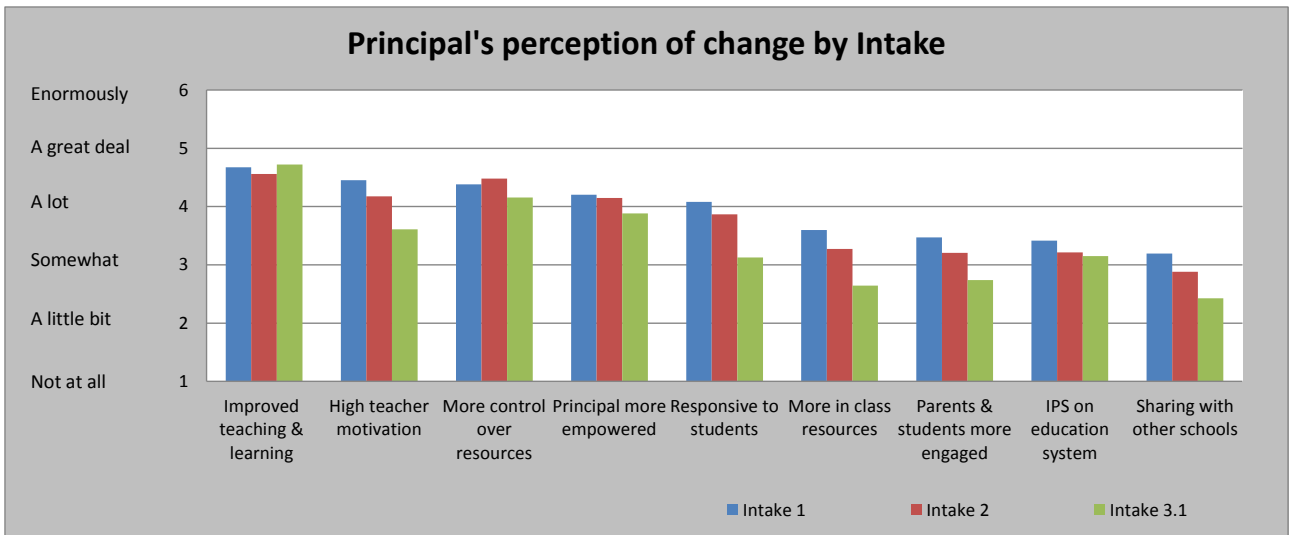


Figure 7: Principal Survey - Perception of change (factor analysis by intake)

Earlier intake IPS have also had more time to utilise their autonomy to pursue their school vision. This is important for judging outcomes, as a comprehensive school vision is a key focus for developing goals that reflect the needs of the school community and form the basis of accountability (Muhammed 2009). Responses from IPS principals in respect of changes to school operation also support the finding that earlier intake IPS may have had more time to focus on school vision, rather than initial administrative changes to support implementation, particularly in the use of resources and responsiveness to student needs.

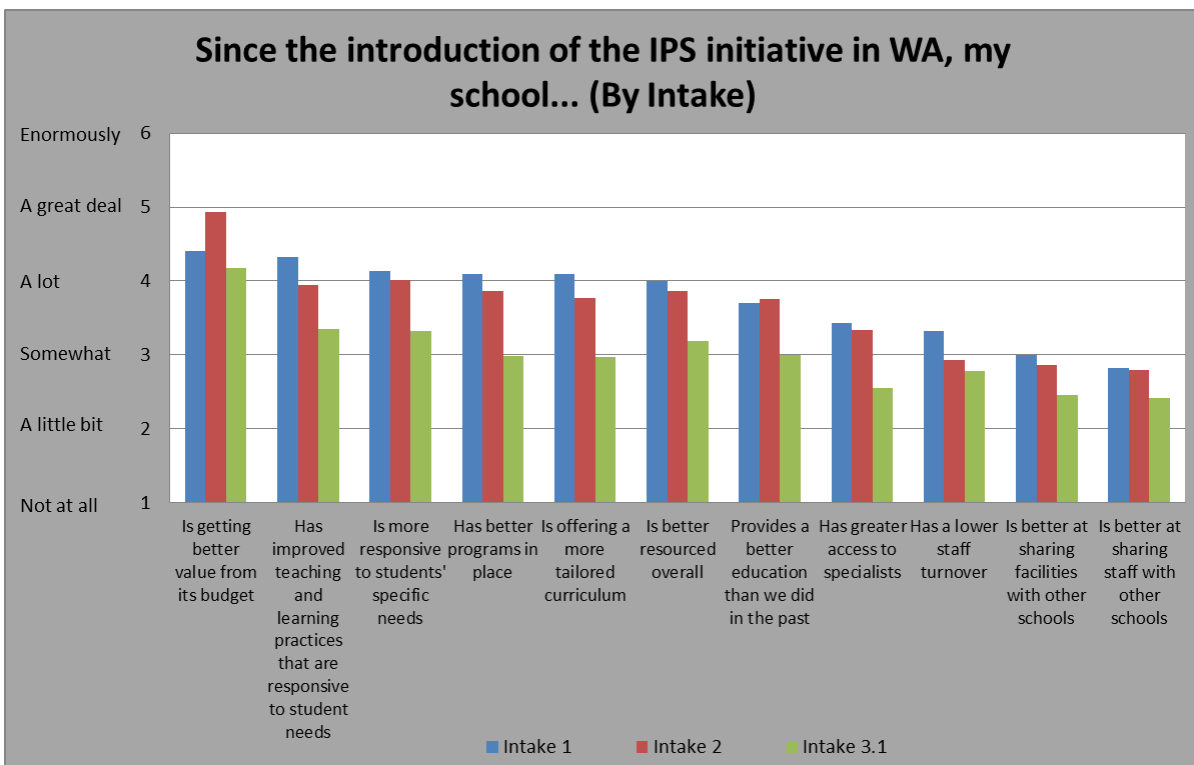


Figure 8: Principal Survey - Changes in school operation (by intake)

A cluster analysis was used to find groups of principals that responded similarly about their perceptions of change, to determine whether there were any common characteristics between schools where the principal perceived their journey as successful. There were three clear clusters (see Appendix E), which differ markedly in how they consider the change process of their IPS experiences. The means across most scales are much higher for Cluster 3 than for Cluster 2 and Cluster 1 - with one exception, they all view the *benefits of IPS on the education system* as quite high (see Figure 9). The clusters were analysed to determine whether demographics variables influenced perception, but there was no influence for SEI, geographic location, or school level (see Appendix E).

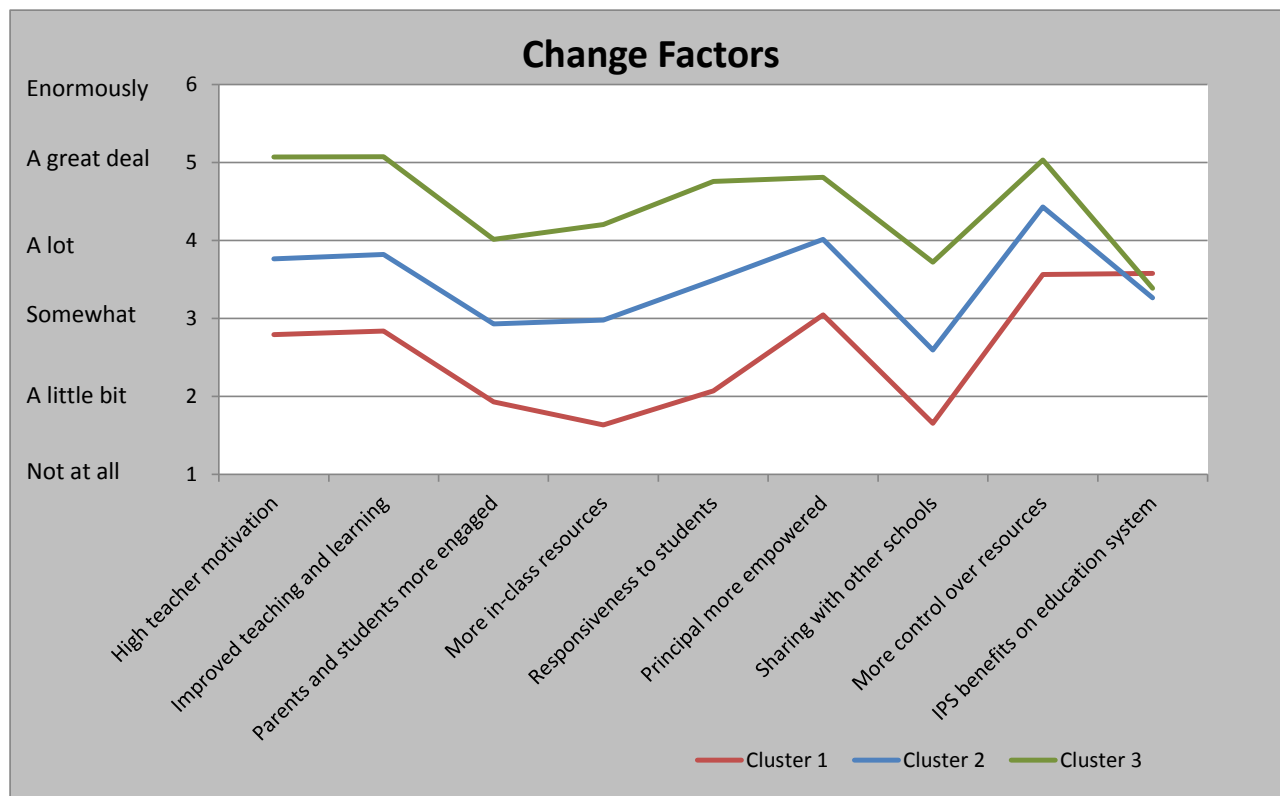


Figure 9: Cluster Analysis - Change Factors

Overall, stakeholders interviewed at IPS visits strongly felt that the IPS initiative had increased their school’s ability to meet their students’ specific needs, enabling them to use human resources to pursue the school vision, for instance by sourcing literacy specialists, psychologists or speech therapists. Stakeholders noted enhancements in school and principal responsibility, accountability and autonomy, as well as increasing school and community pride. School stakeholders were less sure about improvements to student outcomes, but some offered specific improvements as examples as described later. The areas of improvement were variable, as they depended on the focus of the school plan, and hence were not readily susceptible to measurement in aggregate. Overall, however, IPS site visit stakeholders were highly positive about the effects of the initiative on their schools.

8.1.3 PRINCIPALS

Research into the effects of school autonomy has shown that principals can expect large shifts in role, expectations and responsibilities following implementation (Gamage 2006). Consistent with this expectation, IPS principals experienced high levels of change to their roles.

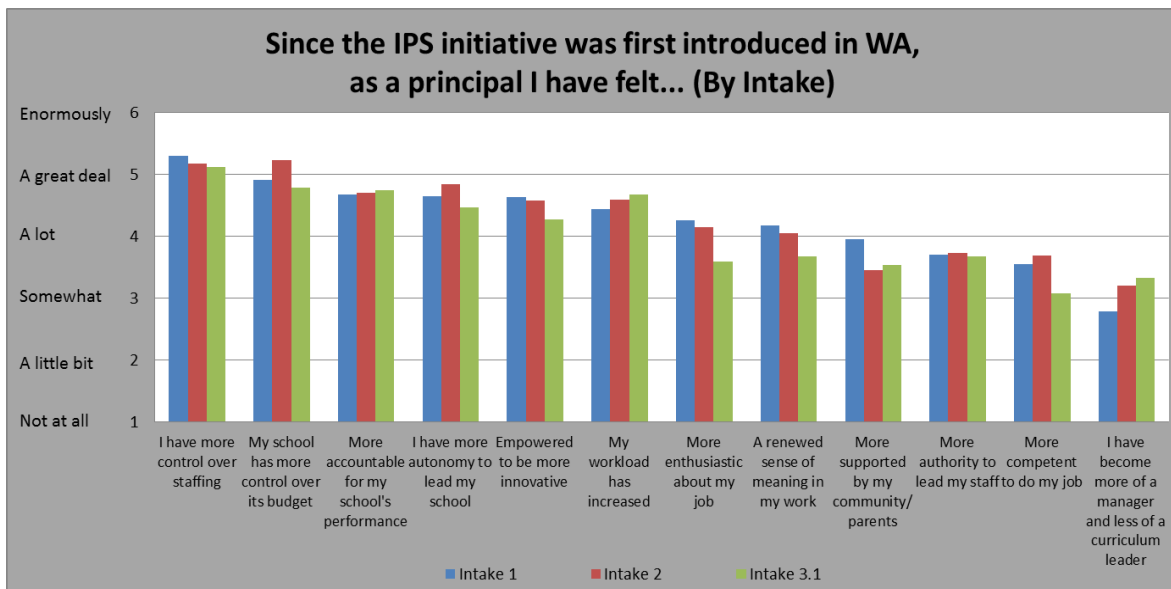


Figure 10: Principal Survey - Changes to principal role (item responses by intake)

The biggest changes reported by IPS principals lay in the increased control over staffing and the budget. This was supported by comments made by principals during site visits.

Staffing, and managing finances is allowing us to get better equipment, extra psychologists and education assistants, and we were given extra support for administration because of the extra work. (IPS principal: site visit)

I enjoy being an IPS school principal – the idea of being able to do what I believe is good – outweighs any overwork – principalship is greatly enhanced by IPS. Being able to have a \$10k idea in the morning and have it okayed by the afternoon. (IPS principal: site visit)

IPS principals also considered themselves to be more accountable, autonomous, and empowered (see Figure 10). For some principals interviewed during site visits, this has entailed a change in mindset, feeling that they were encouraged to embrace innovation in their schools.

Many other things you can do even if you're not Independent Public School, but you feel less shackled, more future oriented. (IPS principal: site visit)

In addition, IPS principals experienced some degree of increase in their authority to lead their staff (see Figure 10). A site visit principal and teacher described this shift in authority from Central office to the principal:

I think that teachers view you as more powerful – the trust relationship has heightened. I asked them “How do you feel about Independent Public School?” They said they trusted me and knew I would do the right thing”. Now they see the principal as the person in control whereas before it was someone in the Central office. (IPS principal: site visit)

Yes – more inclined to follow the directives of the management team than previously. There's now a sense that it's community things now it's for our school not a ministry edict – this is my community as well want to work as well for my community not just for the dept. (Teacher)

There's an underlying fear that ultimately we are responsible to our line manager. In the past we felt the ministry will look after you but now it feels a little less certain. There's a question now if push comes to shove

and you rock the boat would that be held against you? In the past it wouldn't happen but now we don't know.
(Teacher)

IPS principals also found that their workloads have increased, particularly during transition and the first year of operation as an IPS (see Figure 10). This was due to the demands of training, developing the business plan and implementing the new systems, while also assisting other staff, in particular their business managers, with their learning. Some Central office stakeholders believed that some principals had not anticipated the complexity of functions such as a recruitment of staff, and were grappling with the intricacies involved as well as the difficulty of combining the demands of educational leadership and administrative management. However, some commented that managing the new systems became easier by the end of the first year, when the new responsibilities were embedded within their everyday work.

The One-Line budget is very complex, but we are getting better at it as we use it. Juggling the admin workload has presented problems, but again, familiarity with the systems and processes will reduce this as an issue. (IPS principal: survey)

These comments were supported by survey findings that principals from earlier intakes, who were presumably more settled in their roles as IPS leaders, were slightly more satisfied with their workloads and responsibilities (see Figure 10). This increased satisfaction of IPS principals had been noted by Central and Regional Education Office stakeholders who believed that, despite the increased workload, principals of IPS would not wish to return to having less control.

Sure if you talk to principals...they say 'it took us longer to do this' but the big picture is always positive – you never hear them say 'we want to go back'. (Regional education office staff)

Again, this was supported by the overall positive responses of IPS principals during site visits to questions about their satisfaction with their roles.

Doing staff selection requires work and effort but I would prefer that than the strife of getting the wrong teacher, and the work and the paperwork involved with that. (IPS principal: site visit)

Now I enjoy coming to work – I can be proactive. The challenges that you have you are creating yourselves – frustration with bureaucracy is far less. It makes you see with newer eyes, think outside the box, think about a number of solutions and pick the one that best for your context, but you still have the strength of being part of the system: you can have your cake and eat it too. (IPS principal: site visit)

As expected, becoming an IPS does challenge principals. Overall, presumably because these principals are self-selecting to lead their schools in this direction, they are energised and satisfied with the result in spite of the extra workload. This might change if more principals apply because they feel obliged to rather than because they are personally motivated to.

8.1.4 TEACHING STAFF

Ideally, providing schools with the authority to choose staff and determine their staffing profile will allow schools to cater to local needs (Adamowski, et al., 2007; Davis, 2008; Malaklolunthu & Shamsudin, 2011). There were no major differences in the distribution of staffing across all staffing levels for IPS from the first and second intakes, and all other public schools. However, IPS principals perceived substantial change in their control over staffing (see Figure 10), enabling schools to advertise for and select staff while not accepting redeployees deemed unsuitable for their particular school. At site visit schools, a number of teachers, principals and parents told stories illustrating these experiences of flexibility and how the impact of even one enthusiastic new teacher can be quite pronounced, while the effect of a redeployed teacher who does not subscribe to the school's ethos can be similarly high.

Flexibility – being a cluster we are more likely to benefit. For example, we share a music teacher with other primary schools. We have more choices and it's easier to transfer money. (Principal)

We've certainly seen this within our staff. The staff being selected all came with new ideas for the school. We pick the people who are like minded and have the same ideas – they're still inspired to teach. (Parent)

In site visit interviews, teachers generally reported experiencing higher levels of collaboration, a greater sense of autonomy to address students' needs, and feeling more professional, accountable and in control of their careers. The effect of these changes was to increase teachers' feelings of self-worth.

There seems to be more school autonomy and a decrease in the school's reliance on the Department, meaning the school is able to work out the best needs for our school independently, and work to make differences where we need it. (Teacher)

We do individual learning plans, and have more insight with the psych and the support roles in the school. Learning areas are being covered well because we have the good teachers and can pick and choose. There's more communication, more DOTT and collaborations. (Teacher)

Many teachers reported that there had been no change in teaching practice as a result of becoming IPS. Though some of those that said this went on to describe just such changes to work practices.

As a classroom teacher there isn't any big changes that have really had any major impact on us, besides the transfer system for jobs is different. From a teaching point of view I don't feel there is much of an effect on us. (Teacher)

I don't think there has been any change in my teaching practices, except I have more resources. I have more support – school psychology time; curricular support; and there's learning across the classes with other staff who seeks out best practice then teach us how to implement best practice. (Teacher)

No change to my teaching practices. We share expertise across the schools using work shadowing. Early in the year we all came together as a cluster and did team building exercises and through that got to know teachers so now work together better. Teachers from the other schools come and watch the early learning area and get up skilled. (Teacher)

The literature on school autonomy raises the expectation that, similarly to principals, teaching staff may experience increased stress associated with role-changes, new responsibilities and greater accountability (Blackmore 2004). A few teachers at the IPS site visits did express concerns about job security, changes to their roles and, in particular, increases in workload. Union representatives confirmed that some members had raised these issues with them, although these concerns were not shared by all teachers.

They've increased the workload with no extra time. Resources have been reduced and expectations are greater. I have no problem with the expectations if there are resources and time. Workload has definitely increased. I'm doing more hours at home. (Teacher)

Last year rather than have relief staff they were collapsing classes, I assume to save money. It's still happening to others, but not to me as I complained. Bad class combinations made it impossible to do your job properly. It has affected morale. (Teacher)

I was able to be selected and stay here with Independent Public School; it gives me good job security. As long as I'm doing my job I have a job. (Teacher)

There is concern about the way that people are employed. Staff have heard that principals think they can hire and fire. There are a lot of disputes about what the principal thinks they can do and what they can actually do under the Award. Registrars are having to pull principals into line. (Union representative)

The increased authority of IPS principals was mentioned by a number of stakeholders during site visits, but was most keenly experienced by those teachers who remained at an IPS in spite of opposition to the model, as an unwelcome increase in their principal's power to demand compliance with activities in the school plan. These teachers, and some union representatives, also made comments about insufficient consultation with staff about the decision to apply to become an IPS. However, despite changes in workload and roles, if the interests of teachers and other staff are met with appropriate support and professional development, they may feel empowered by increased autonomy and opportunities for them to participate in school decision-making processes. Professional development to build the capacity of all staff has been identified as vital for the effectiveness of autonomy initiatives (Dillon 2011), and teachers can benefit from opportunities for professional development where these are offered as a component of school autonomy initiatives (Gamage 2008). The IPS Transition Program, as indicated in the background section 7.2.2, provides for extensive upskilling for the principal and leadership group (deputy or associate principals and the business manager). The provision of professional learning for other staff is not an integral part of the IPS Transition Program. However, IPS principals reported that they thought that their teachers had more professional learning opportunities (see figure 11). This was supported by principals and teachers in site visit schools who described additional professional development at their schools. As part of the move to regional autonomy there has been a push towards the use of local knowledge and resources rather than out-of-the-box professional development. This approach was embraced by some schools and teachers, whereas others interpreted this as a reduction in professional development wrongly ascribed to the IPS initiative. In some IPS, priorities other than professional learning had been ranked more highly and professional learning opportunities had actually been reduced.

We are having common professional development with teachers in the primary and secondary schools, so we are pooling our resources and getting in professional development we couldn't have afforded before. (Principal)

IPS is improving the quality of teaching throughout the school – targeting staff, changing professional development models and structures – changing professional development days. There are key teachers who are supported with what they need to develop and support other staff. We have provided more resources, curriculum leaders are provided with more skilling opportunities and more time to develop more resources. There is a focus on coaching and mentoring models for our staff and staff are responding well to that model. Now we feel more comfortable applying these approaches without having to meet some imposed directive. We're responding in a professional way rather than to some outside rule that's not explained. (Associate principal)

IPS delivers flexibility of funding and putting really quality teachers into a classroom which are supported very clearly in research. In the last couple of years teachers have gone up a whole new level –there's no negativity: everyone is surrounded by people trying things. We're looking at rollout of one-to-one notebooks for students and I'm not sure that I've ever seen such effective change management. Management has been able to send staff to conferences, give them time and resources, and they are supporting each other in managing change. Having an effective staff has ramifications on the staff and the outcomes on students – more than just a good person in front of class. (Teacher)

Overall, teachers at site schools were positive about the effect of IPS initiative on their schools. There appeared to be a minority who were opposed to the initiative because they felt it delivered too much power to the principal and represented the system offloading its responsibilities to the schools without appropriate recompense. Of the rest, many were unsure of the exact nature of its impact on their classroom. It would seem that in general the initiative has had a neutral or positive effect on the classroom.

The additional power to the principal has affected the balance in teacher-principal relationship and this has brought some discomfort to teachers where that relationship has perhaps already been un-harmonious. If teachers at site visits were typical, teachers in general have been directly affected at least as much by changes unrelated to the IPS initiative, such as the introduction of the National Curriculum and changes to their industrial agreement, as they have by their school becoming an IPS.

8.1.5 OTHER STAFF

Apart from principals and deputy or associate principals, the personnel most often identified (by a variety of stakeholders in site visits, as well as union representatives and Regional office staff) as being affected by becoming IPS were the business managers. Business managers' experience of the IPS initiative varied. Generally, they noted that their workloads and levels of responsibility had increased as a result of managing the one-line budget and completing the monitoring and assessment reports. However, they often shared the view of principals that, while the learning process takes time, the changed responsibilities felt like an everyday aspect of their roles once the new systems were in place. However, this seemed to be dependent upon the implementation processes at each school, as there was considerable variation in use of administrative funding, decisions to allocate extra staff to new processes, and the motivation of administrative staff to implement the changes. These factors, along with the overall school ethos, and the officers' experience and skillsets determined how the changes were received by administrative staff.

Increased workload, and the job now requires a greater knowledge of HR and finance; probably need two people to do this job now. (Business manager).

No worse now than before we became an Independent Public School. There's minimal additional work, maybe two hours per month reporting. It's getting easier as they've been sorting out their monitoring system – it has improved over the year. I don't have to enter some data now, but I do have to check it for errors. (Business manager).

The variability is unsurprising given that IPS are given the flexibility to develop in response to circumstances, but the level of support extended to staff is important for the success of IPS operation. In addition, decisions to reform staffing models, while potentially innovative and beneficial for students, have profound impacts for the staff involved. Stakeholder feedback indicated that some administrative and support staff feel excluded from decision-making processes and insecure about their jobs. Gardeners and cleaners were reported to be apprehensive about the possibility of their jobs being outsourced, although this is unlikely as policy for all public schools, including IPS, permits outsourcing only if the school has proven there is no other option. Similarly, education assistants feel that they are more likely to remain on contracts rather than being kept permanently at a single school. This is due to pooling of funding for education assistants, enabling greater education assistant coverage for students, but believed by some stakeholders to be detrimental to continuity and security of employment.

Individual education assistants are being deployed for a wider range of students. This has increased their workload to twice as much – they are asked to take up the challenge of looking after behavioural problems, not students with special needs. Principals' attitude is 'since they're looking after kids they can look after one more'. A principal has even said to me "we'll get education assistants to do the teacher's role". (Union representative)

Principals are offloading work onto the business managers and registrars, who in turn are offloading work onto teachers and other admin staff. This is fairly widespread and consistent across schools and causes conflict from the top down. (Union representative)

However, permanency of staff is not affected if a school becomes an IPS, as all staff are employed by the Department rather than the school. While IPS have flexibility of choice of staff and reprofiling, their staffing allocation still falls

under the Department's staffing formula for all public schools. This gives IPS the flexibility to, for example, increase the work available to a gardener or cleaner, or hire extra people, but not of removing staffing allocation. Staff concerns about job security under IPS therefore may reflect misconceptions of the process but also reflects concerns about losing a particular position in a school. For example, teachers at IPS site visits suggested that high school principals might manipulate the available courses to remove the need for a particular position, and in schools where student numbers were decreasing opinions were expressed by a number of teachers that if they spoke out their position might be the one to go. This was particularly so if they did not hold a permanent position. It is important to consider these views, as perceptions of insecurity, even if inaccurate or representing only the loss of a specific position rather than of a job, could materially affect the success of implementation by undermining staff and community confidence.

Other staff were not a focus of this evaluation; however it is clear that having a skilled, supportive registrar/business manager is key to success as an IPS. In addition, feedback shows that the process of becoming an IPS can be disturbing for other staff at schools, and mechanisms for communicating with and engaging all staff should be considered by schools seeking to become an IPS.

8.1.6 STUDENTS

Student achievement is generally considered a major indicator of school effectiveness. However, student outcomes have not always been a focus of autonomy initiatives, and therefore research linking autonomy with student achievement is relatively limited (Caldwell, 2009; Dillon, 2011; Honig & Rainey, 2011). The studies which are available suggest that student achievement is dependent on a range of factors (Muhammed 2009), and any increase in achievement that is attributable to autonomy initiatives is not likely to emerge in the early years of implementation (Muhammed 2009).

Analysis of the secondary data shows that IPS were generally high-performing before transition, and there has been no substantive increase in student achievement after becoming IPS. The analysis of NAPLAN data comparing students in IPS and other public schools showed that across all domains (Numeracy, Reading, Writing, Spelling, and Punctuation & Grammar) IPS had 0.40 to 0.57 effect-size greater than other public schools prior to becoming IPS, and this increase was maintained in the second and third year (Refer to Appendix C for more detail of the analysis). For year 3, 5, and 9 students at or above the NAPLAN standards, there is an increase in scores for IPS in their first year of operation, and again the increase is maintained in the second and third year of intake. For year 7 students, there was an increase in the scores for IPS in their first and second year of operation (Refer to Appendix D for more detail of the analysis). There were no differences in attendance, suspension, retention or NAPLAN measures between the three clusters of IPS, confirming that variations in levels of change between IPS have not yet influenced student outcomes (see Appendix E).

Some IPS principals commented during site visits that they had instituted special initiatives and had objective data showing changes in student achievement. It is important to note however that these data were not available for analysis. It is possible that small changes occurred which were too dispersed to measure using broad indicators.

Our NAPLAN results – for the first time in 2011 – were at or above predicted or mean scores. Our mean ATAR was higher than all the surrounding schools – all relate to business plan targets. (IPS principal: site visit)

Although differences in students' outcomes may not be immediately apparent, autonomy potentially offers schools the opportunity to address student needs through the design of the strategic plan, and through innovations in teaching and learning practice (Berends et al. 2009). There were little data addressing this question, but IPS principals agreed that their schools were able to improve teaching and learning practices to address student needs, and were offering better programs and a more tailored curriculum.

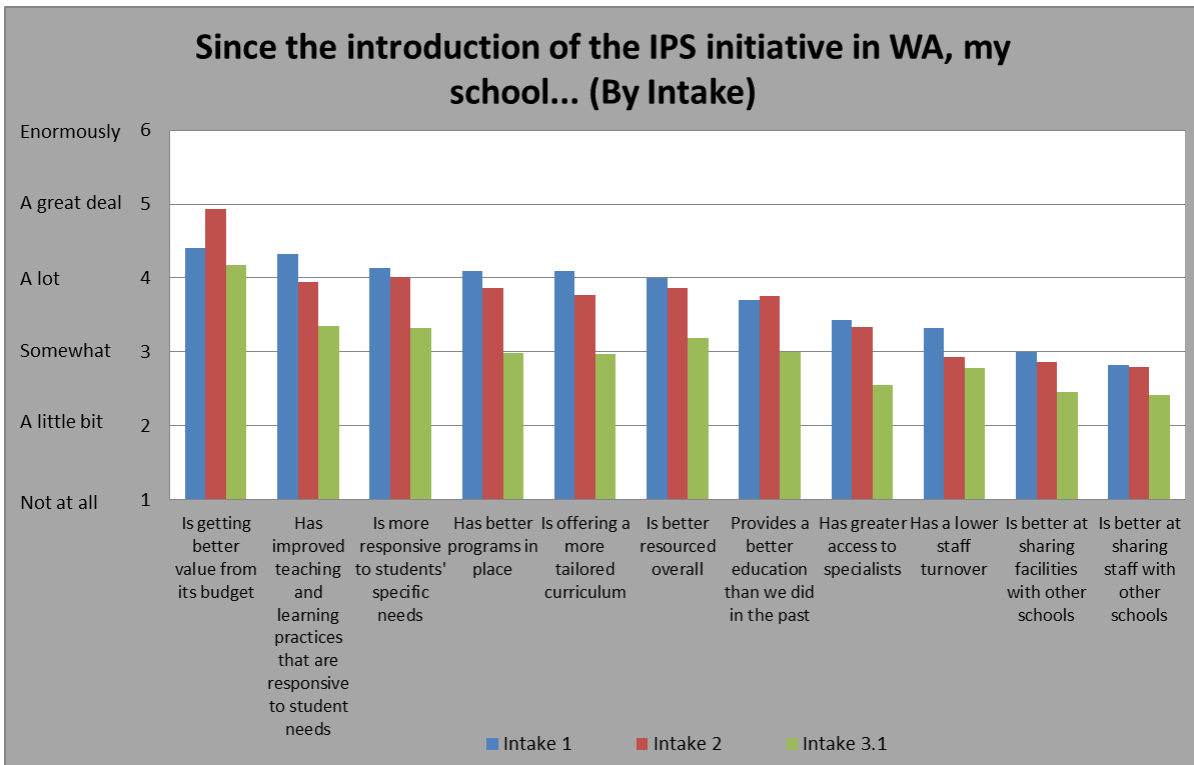


Figure 11: Principal Survey - Changes in school operation (item response by intake)

It is important that learning and teaching outcomes are made the primary concern of IPS implementation, if change is to occur in student achievement (Honig & Rainey, 2011). IPS principal responses suggest that school priorities in developing strategic plans are focused on improving student outcomes through teaching and learning avenues such as teaching skills, specialist programs, and selecting staff to address student needs. However, schools must also be provided with sufficient capacity building opportunity and ongoing departmental support in order to achieve these aims (Caldwell, 2009; Honig & Rainey, 2011).

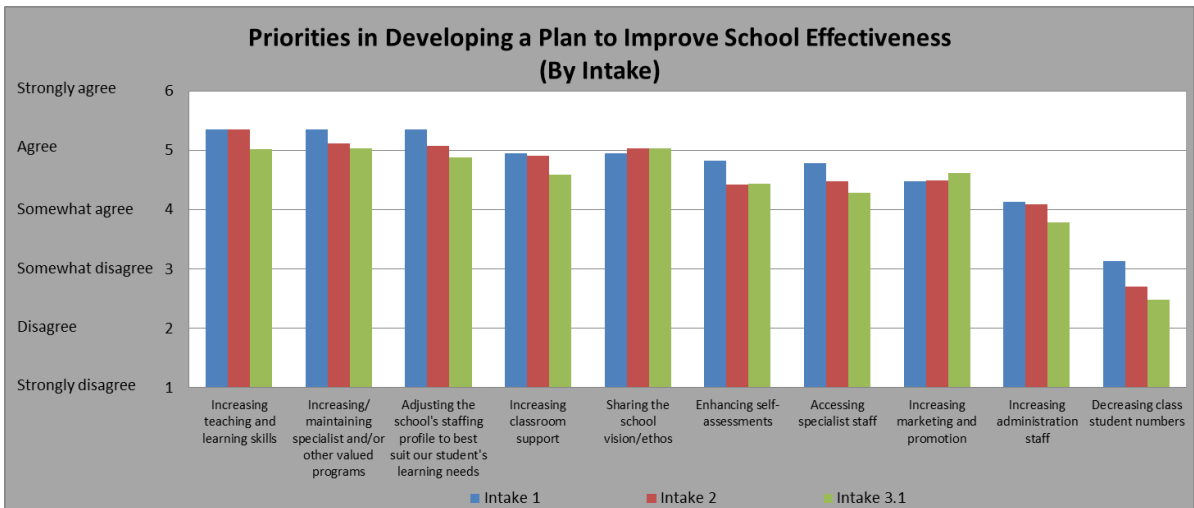


Figure 12: Principal Survey- Priorities in developing a plan to improve school effectiveness (by intake)

Similarly to student achievement data, analysis of available data on student enrolment and behaviour across all public schools showed no change for IPS. There were pre-existing differences in attendance rates between IPS and other public schools which remained unchanged over the three years of implementation. There were increases in enrolment

for the first intake of IPS, but lesser increases for subsequent intakes. There were no differences in suspension, exclusion or retention rates between IPS and other public schools. IPS had lower numbers of moderate and severe students at attendance risk compared to other public schools, both prior to and after becoming IPS.

During site visits, some stakeholders explained that becoming IPS did not affect student behaviour at their school because there were no significant behavioural issues to address at their schools. However, site visits also revealed that, for other schools, improving student behaviour was a focus of becoming IPS. These schools used the process of applying for and gaining IPS status to rebrand and build the school’s image, for instance by changing names and uniforms, as well as taking the opportunity afforded by the Commonwealth “Building the Education Revolution” funding to update their facilities. Some had introduced behaviour management initiatives. Principals, teachers and parents of these schools reported that their students were more engaged and had improved in behaviour and attendance since the introduction of the IPS initiative. Any such changes may be too localised to be reflected in system-wide data.

We changed the structure of our student services. We now have two youth workers working on absenteeism and pastoral care. We started with a 44% attendance rate compared to 48% for the like cohort – now its 62%. That’s an 18% gain in two years under IPS. (IPS principal: site visit)

Uniform compliance went from 70% to 100% over two days because parents thought we had become private. We’re seen in a better light and parents think more of us. (IPS principal: site visit)

Although there is no change in student achievement to date, it would be expected that student outcomes start to show an improvement in time as the changes become embedded in schools. The database constructed for this evaluation provides an excellent base for augmentation and analysis with future data. In addition, as schools report against their internally set targets, an analysis of the types of target and extent to which these are being achieved may be informative.

8.1.7 RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Survey data shows that principals of public schools on the whole believe IPS have more flexibility in the use of resources, but no greater access to resources than other public schools (see Figure 6). However, IPS principals from different clusters differed in their perceptions. Principals from all clusters expressed similar levels of satisfaction the support and resources available prior to the introduction of the IPS initiative (see Table 5), but principals in Cluster 3 (who perceived the highest level of benefits to their school in becoming an IPS) claimed more flexibility, access to more resources, more advantages in accessing suitable staff, and greater levels of support by Central office, for IPS in comparison with other public schools (see Table 6 and Figure 13). It seems that enhancement in the perception of resources and support available to the school maximises the perception of benefits of becoming an IPS.

Table 5: Cluster Analysis - IPS Introduction

When IPS was first introduced in WA, overall, how satisfied were you with	df	F	p
Your teaching staff?	2, 109	0.820	.443
The resources/support your teaching staff had access to prior to the introduction of the IPS initiative in WA?	2, 109	1.030	.361
Your school's engagement with the community (e.g. students, parents, businesses) prior to the introduction of the IPS initiative in WA?	2, 109	1.057	.351
The system support offered from Central office prior to the introduction of	2, 109	1.530	.221

the IPS initiative in WA?			
How your school was able to be run prior to the introduction of the IPS initiative in WA?	2, 109	0.873	.421

Table 6: Cluster Analysis - Compared to other public schools

Overall, compared with other public schools, IPS ...	df	F	p
Have a heavier administrative burden	2, 109	0.078	.925
Have more flexibility on how they use their resources	2, 109	12.409	.000*
Have access to more resources	2, 109	10.880	.000*
Have an advantage in accessing the most suitable staff to their context	2, 109	6.351	.002*
Overall, I have been satisfied with the level of system support offered by the Central office.	2, 109	9.376	.000*
Overall, I have been satisfied with the level of system support offered by the regional education office.	2, 109	1.580	.211

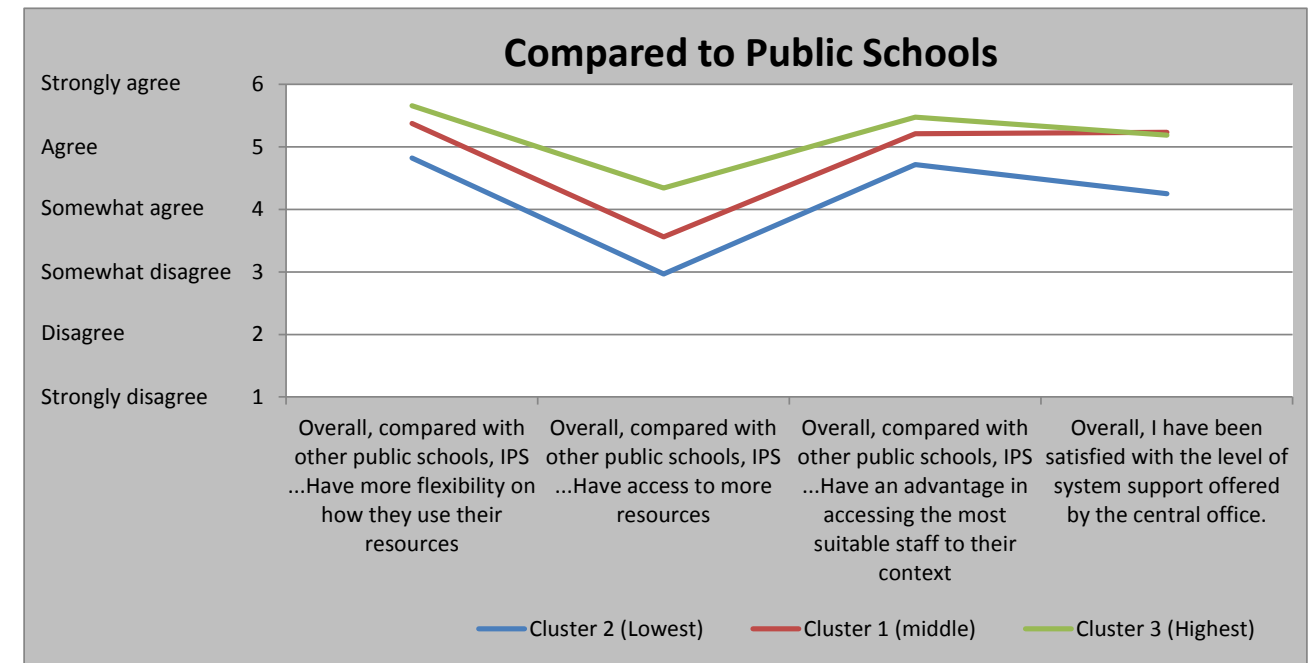


Figure 13: Cluster Analysis - Comparison with other public schools

IPS principals emphasise the increase in control over resources, and ability to get value from their budgets (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). The secondary data show small increases for IPS in categories of funding such as the transition payment to assist with extra administrative training and annual administrative allowance. There were no comprehensive data on how schools used their extra funding or greater budgetary discretion, although allocation of funds appeared to differ across IPS due to variations in school agendas. Survey responses indicated that IPS principals thought their teachers had more resources to support students and pursue professional development (Figure 14), although the perception was stronger for IPS from earlier intakes (Figure 15).

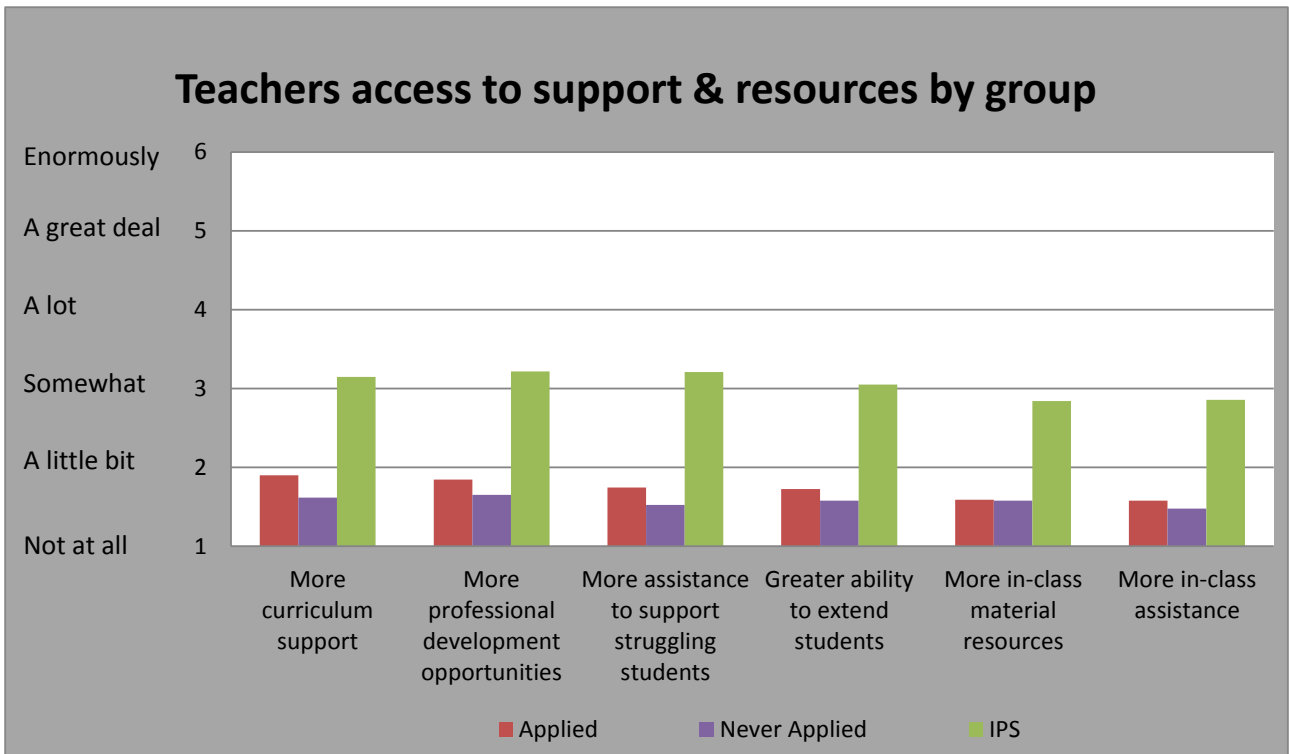


Figure 14: Principal Survey - Teachers access to support & resources (by group)

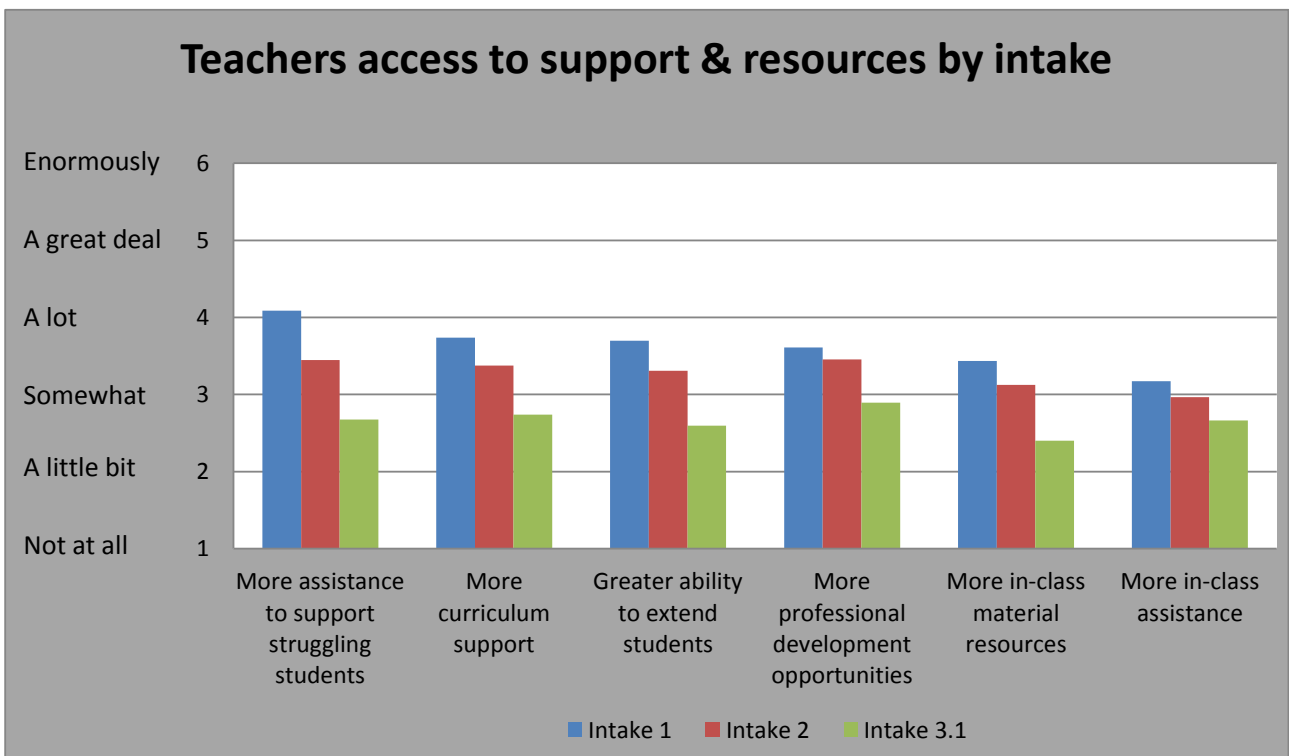


Figure 15: Principal Survey- Teachers access to support & resources (by intake)

This was supported by some of the teachers in IPS site visits, who described additional IT, extra in-class assistance and support and more teaching resources. However, teachers did not always know how classroom resources were budgeted: some not acknowledging resources that had been made possible by being IPS and others wrongly attributing resources provided through Australian Government funding.

A lot wealthier – if you want stuff and prepared to go and get it, we get it. It's there, the money is there. You can see the difference in the classroom – colour photocopiers, booklets – in art we can show colour pictures, and present booklets in colour, and students can create their portfolios in colour. We have interactive white boards, a new microwave – if it works we'll go for more, to update our rooms towards this century. (Teacher)

There's been a bigger workload. Especially implementing connected assessment. We've had more resources – but that might be from the National Partnership funding. We've got a Smart board. Reading and spelling are coming together because we have new resources and they're much easier to teach. Behaviour is a lot better and teaching is more cohesive – staff have had to work together and meet each other in professional development. (Teacher)

As the funding model stays virtually the same for IPS no great change in resourcing should be expected. However, site visits showed principals struggling with and coming to terms both with the responsibility and the freedom that a one-line budget presented. The strong response from principals generally reporting improved control and value for money is a positive indicator of success for the IPS initiative.

8.1.8 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IPS principals agreed that there had been improvements to parent and community engagement since becoming IPS (see Figure 7). In survey comments, they reported a range of engagement activities with community, parents, business, universities and other education providers. Many principals attributed these to pre-existing initiatives and relationships, and management of school priorities, rather than the IPS initiative. Nevertheless, in some of the site visit schools, principals and board members explained that IPS status was explicitly harnessed as a vehicle to increase community engagement. While stakeholders were reluctant to talk for all parents, there was a strong belief that although parents may not understand exactly what IPS meant, that it had raised the school's profile amongst parents and the local community, in some cases also improving parental engagement and teachers' feelings of self-worth in their relationships with the community. This perception is supported by data from a Departmental survey of community members that showed that for parents/carers of children in public primary schools, of those considering sending their children to a private secondary school 58% (n=41) considered IPS a good alternative to private schools compared with only 36% who considered the same for public schools in general. This more positive perception towards IPS was also noted by Regional office staff. Similarly, for the same group 61% thought that IPS have higher quality teachers than public schools in general. Increased parental involvement is desirable as it enables them to understand and commit to the school vision, which may have a positive impact on school effectiveness (Gunnarsson et al. 2009).

We held a community forum as a direct result of the board, away from the school and the outcome was that the board wanted the school to have more involvement with the community – so the community was invited to come along and we asked the question: "How can we make the school a better school for the community into the future?" We have been able to implement some outcomes from that meeting which was facilitated by an outside facilitator. E.g. wanted local career people to talk and be involved, parents to be invited into classrooms more often, town volunteers services to come into the school, more involvement of senior citizens. (IPS principal: site visit)

Parents wanted us to be an IPS even if they don't understand it completely. But they believe we are far freer than we are. (IPS principal: site visit)

There's been more of a sense of community involvement – still a small number but more of a sense of wanting to be involved more of a genuine role that parents can play in the schools. (IPS principal: site visit)

Schools and staff have really grown in their positive feeling of their relationship to community – entirely positive benefit for teachers, schools and community. (Regional office staff)

For the first time in 30 years the market share of public schools grew; there's no causal link but in my judgement the advent of IPS is the reason. In my conversations with parents, they feel they have more choice about where to send their children. (Regional office staff)

Teachers have become more open to parents at the school – more enthusiastic and more accountability. Admin staff have become more positive. Teachers who were negative about IPS have either gone elsewhere or gone over – and become willing to expand their ideas. (Board member and parent)

There is research suggesting that school autonomy enables collaborations which ensure that a wider range of student needs can be addressed than would otherwise be possible, as well facilitating information-sharing, and greater access for communities to complementary services provided through schools (Davis 2008; Simons 2011). In the context of the IPS initiative, there were some examples of schools working together, where schools had sought IPS status as a cluster, or where schools with greater resources have been able to assist others with specialist teachers, extension classes and other resources. For example, one site visit high school was working on increasing its share of students from local primary schools by providing extension opportunities for feeder primary school students.

We have been driving cooperative learning professional development across schools in our network; our feeder schools are involved. It used to be a waste of money as previously wrong model; not now: we're working with all the primary schools; due to connections and networks. IPS has been the driving force. (Board member)

8.1.9 SCHOOL BOARD

The involvement of the community in school decision-making is frequently a desired outcome of autonomy initiatives (Caldwell 2009). This is based on the premise that the local community is best qualified to determine school needs (Gamage and Zajda 2009). In order for communities to engage in decision-making and school governance, it is critical to empower them to participate (World Bank 2007c). Board representation is an important mechanism of involvement, especially as the experience of board members in their fields of expertise has been found to have an impact on school improvement (Gamage 2006). In survey responses, principals from all public school categories agreed that the school board increases the principal's accountability to the community, although there was no formal change in authority under governing legislation. IPS principals believed to some extent that school boards have increased authority, strategic planning capacity, and community engagement in comparison with school councils, but principals of other public schools did not share this view (Figure 16).

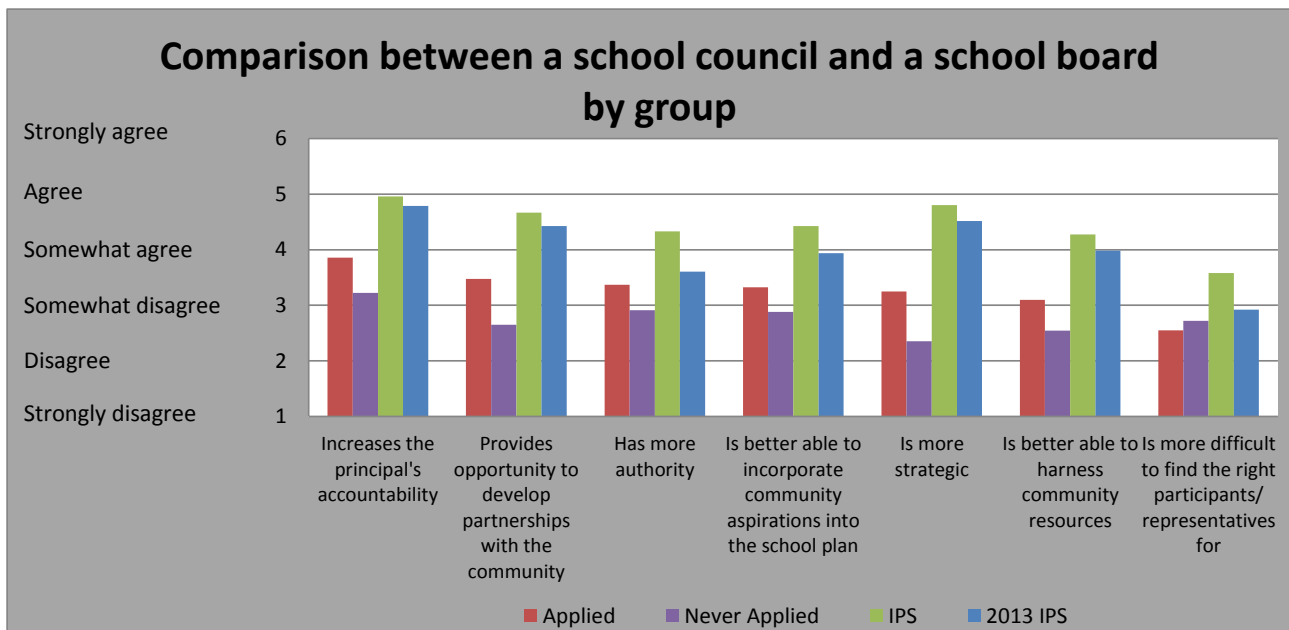


Figure 16: Principal Survey - Comparison between a school council and a school board (by group)

In most site visits, stakeholders described how the transition from school councils to school boards had been smooth; however, in some cases, it had taken time for the board and principal to negotiate the new relationship and roles.

Not much difference, just a continuation of what it's been doing. There's been a smooth transition from council to school board with no conflict. We have very good board members: they know the school and have skills and good ideas, they "think outside the box" and are supportive. (Teacher)

The council already had a lot of involvement and I wasn't sure what more I had to give. The board tried to get involved in management decisions - the challenge has been finding the line, operational or forward thinking. It has been a fantastic and challenging process with some very frank discussion. And the outcome has been a fairly productive working relationship. (Principal)

For some of the site visit schools, becoming independent was an impetus to recruit community members to the Board, resulting in strategic and powerful connections and raising the school's profile. In the best scenarios, high profile recruits to the Board brought valuable skills, networks or resources to the school. Board members were supportive of school initiatives to benefit students, and they reported engaging in robust questioning and discussion before decisions were made, thereby making the school more accountable.

There is a university lecturer on the board who has been able to assist us with education assistants and prac students. We have teachers now who have been prac students here in the past. (Teacher)

The school board gave us an opportunity to reassess the school. The council was a token group with the principal telling us what to do and not very open. Now we are thinking more about overarching issues about the school as a whole, rather than focussing on the little things. It's more professional, and we are always reflecting on the business plan. It provides structure, focus and justification. (Board member)

There's more leadership – there are powerful people, with roles in the community. They are supporting activities, e.g. sewing (donated material); art competition; breakfast club; homework club. (Board member)

We are trying ways where the board can generate income and assist with performance for extra projects and extra technology. And the parents on the school board are a good conduit of the school yard – more

ownership and insight into what we do. They've just organised a parent survey and taken on the analysis which they will be feeding back to the board. (Deputy principal)

In some of the site visits to IPS, communication and engagement between the school and community improved, although schemes for community engagement may have been less ambitious. In the remainder, engagement with the community through the medium of the Board remained largely unchanged. However, in a minority of IPS, parents experienced a reduction in representation, or a sense of marginalisation due to the professionalisation of the Board.

Don't feel we have a whole lot of authority – we can say what we would like but the final decision is with the principal. We are consulted but we place our trust in the principal. This is why we don't get many parents in the board. They think there is no point if they can't change the principal, or teachers' permanency. If the principal went totally against what we wanted we couldn't do anything about it. We don't see all the performance data – we trust [the principal] and the teachers. (Board member)

Some people think that the board has more power than it has, and write saying it made the wrong decision. At the end of the day it can't tell us what to do. An out-of-control board can be very bad for the school. (Principal)

Overall, principals and their leadership staff were the most directly affected by their school becoming IPS. On the one hand they were made more accountable, autonomous, and empowered due to the additional control and flexibility provided by the changes to staffing and receiving a one-line budget. At the same time they had a higher workload coming to terms with the changes to the processes and systems involved in administering these flexibilities. For other staff and students at site visit schools the impact seemed to depend on the extent and type of changes made as a result of becoming an IPS. Since 2009, many other changes have occurred concurrently and for many teachers the IPS initiative appears to be just one of these changes. However, principals described changes to many facets of their schools – themselves, their teachers, their students, their board and their school's relationship with their parents and community.

8.1.10 UNDERSTANDING THE FACTOR RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE IPS

A structural equation model was created to identify the most critical relations between the Reasons for Applying, the principal empowerment factors and the benefits for the school and teachers within the IPS. Figure 17 below illustrates the transition factors included systems support, more control over resources, clear expectations and enhanced staffing capability. The reasons for applying included support from the school community, flexibility and autonomy, and recognition of increased workload. Principal empowerment related to principals being more satisfied and believing they are more empowered.

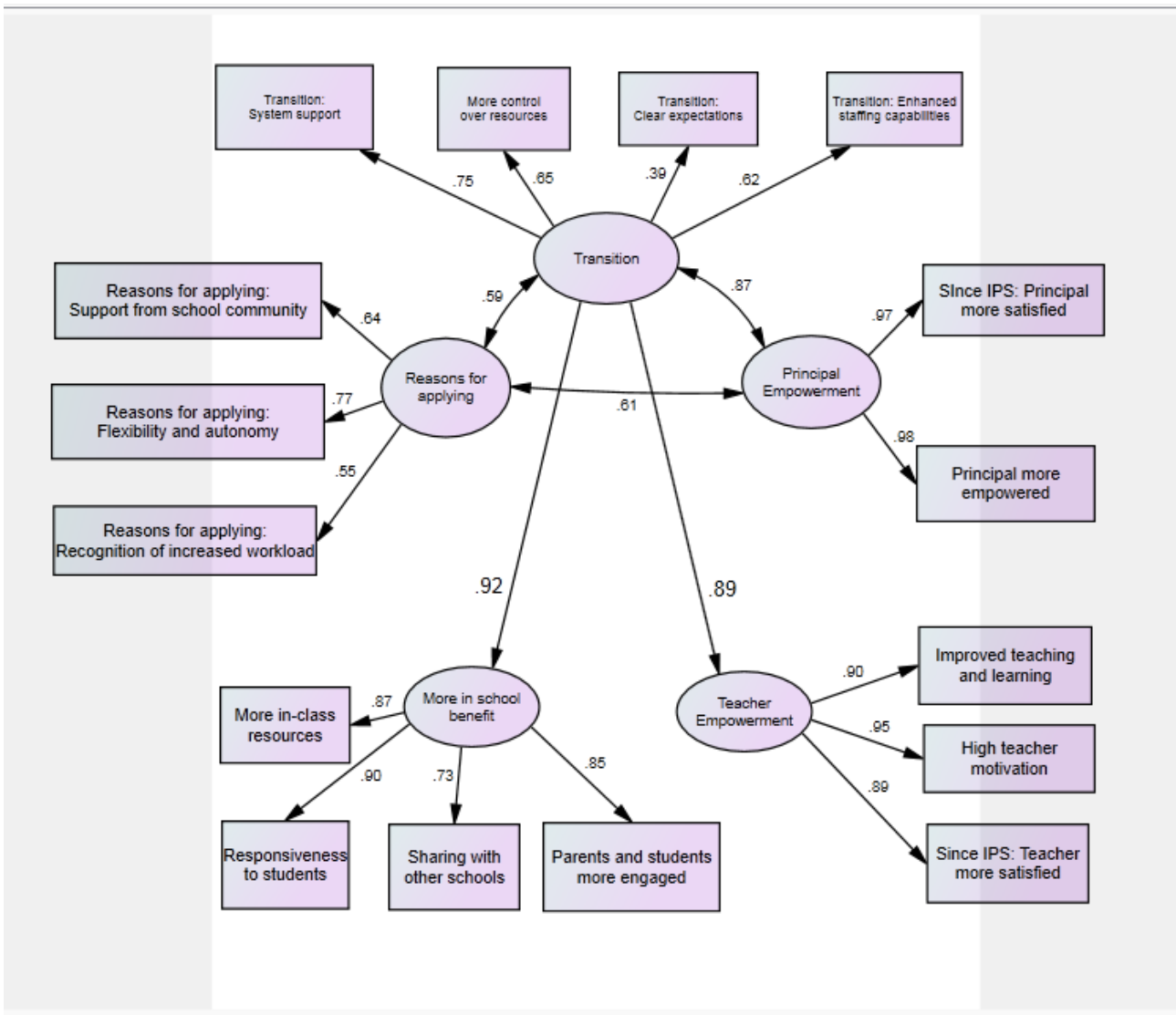


Figure 17: Relationships between the reasons for applying, the principal empowerment factors and the benefits for the school and teachers within the IPS schools.

The two outcomes relate to teacher empowerment and greater in-school benefits. Teacher empowerment includes perceived improvement in teaching and learning, higher teacher motivation and satisfaction. More in-school benefits relate to more in-class resources, greater responsiveness to students, increased sharing with other schools, and parents and students more engaged.

Various structural equation models were tested and the best model showed that only transition related to the two outcomes. The reasons for applying and principal empowerment at best related to the outcomes through the success of the transition process. Clearly, the principals' perceptions of the transition are critical to the success of the IPS model. The weights (.92 and .89) are similar showing that both outcomes were similarly related to the more positive perceptions of the transition process.

8.2 WHAT EFFECT HAS THE INITIATIVE HAD ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OVERALL?

8.2.1 CENTRAL AND REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICES

Devolving centrally-controlled activities to individual schools necessitates concurrent reconceptualisation of the role of governing bodies. Previously, Central office dictated policy for the public education system, but under the IPS initiative, significant decision-making responsibilities have been transferred to schools. There is an important governance issue in sensitively managing this shift, maintaining a secure and reliable system and the providing effective support to IPS (Glatter, Mulford and Shuttleworth 2004). This requires steady investment in the process of change, including continual monitoring of the effectiveness of policies, and the willingness to flexibly adapt to changes in the environment (Barber 2003; Bentley and Wilsdon 2004). This adaptive capacity can be enhanced through accountability for learning from processes of change and innovation, the strategic use of networks enabling the transfer of expertise, and an emphasis on an embedded culture of participative organisational knowledge and learning, rather than fixed organisational models. Data from key stakeholder interviews suggests that the Department is in the process of developing the necessary flexibility. There was strong support for the IPS initiative from the Director General, facilitated by SIRU when required. Both central and Regional offices were directed to provide appropriate support for implementation. The impact of the initiative on these parts of the Department are described below.

8.2.1.1 CENTRAL OFFICE

Unsurprisingly, we found that the IPS initiative significantly changed the roles of Central office. Staff explained how previously they had been instigators of projects and programs, whereas their priority since the implementation of IPS is to service schools. This directional change was supported by the creation of SIRU, who took a strong support role for the first cohort, gradually decreasing their involvement as capacity to service IPS within Central office increased, but to whom any IPS could turn should they encounter a system blockage. SIRU remains tasked with facilitating a resolution of any such issues.

As the number of IPS has increased, with a concomitant increase in queries, Central office stakeholders reported that their workloads and the demand on limited resources have increased, with the result that Central office has needed to review and realign its focus, identifying new ways to deploy staff and support schools. Thus, Central office sections are becoming more focused on providing support and guidance to schools through developing advisory and template documents, supporting the development of local capacity, and management tools.

Having to do more with less – one of the messages we got with IPS was this initiative will not fail. Each business area had to reprioritise and redirect their resources so the component of support they provide doesn't fail to deliver to Independent Public Schools. (Central office staff member)

The more direct Central office contact with schools has resulted in a perception by Central office staff of improved relationships and a better understanding of school needs.

Most important impact has been on how we do our services – it's a model of service delivery: 'tell us your needs and priorities and we will support you'. (Central office staff member)

Our purpose is to build schools' capacity to have autonomy into the future. We'll always be available to assist with schools but now our role is to support schools to help themselves. We have become a bureau or consulting service. (Central office staff member)

Further, principals' pursuit of conditions that they believe would better serve their school, such as the ability to exclude students, take out of area students, or provide classes for younger age groups, have prompted Central office

staff to perform ad hoc reviews of processes and policy to clarify what is legally required and what is discretionary, and identify ways to better address school needs where possible. This has been exciting for some staff, while others found the process more challenging. Stakeholders identified an ongoing need to support staff in adapting to the significant change in culture and service delivery, and to persist with appropriate consultation, review and development of resources.

Longer culture change in central – there’s a tendency for people to respond with ‘no we can’t do that’ rather than ‘we can’t do all of that but...’. (Central office staff member)

They’ve been having to go through the change from guru to support – they’ve become an available service that may or may not be used and they have had to win hearts and minds – some have found that professionally challenging and disempowering. (Central office staff member)

These changes in organisational management at the central level were reflected in principals’ perceptions of changes in service delivery. IPS principals believed that system support had improved since the implementation of the IPS initiative.

Always there... no issues with Central office at any time - always help and support us. (IPS principal: site visit)

My opinion of Central office has mellowed a bit because seen as those away from the chalk face but now all trying to get on the same page – more inclined to ring them now than I would have been – across the board not just the School Innovation and Reform Unit. (IPS principal: site visit)

The site visit and survey data revealed IPS were overall positive about the transition training, the support from the SIRU team, particularly during the early stages of preparing the business plan, and the support provided in relation to finance. Updates each term about the support available from Central office were also helpful.

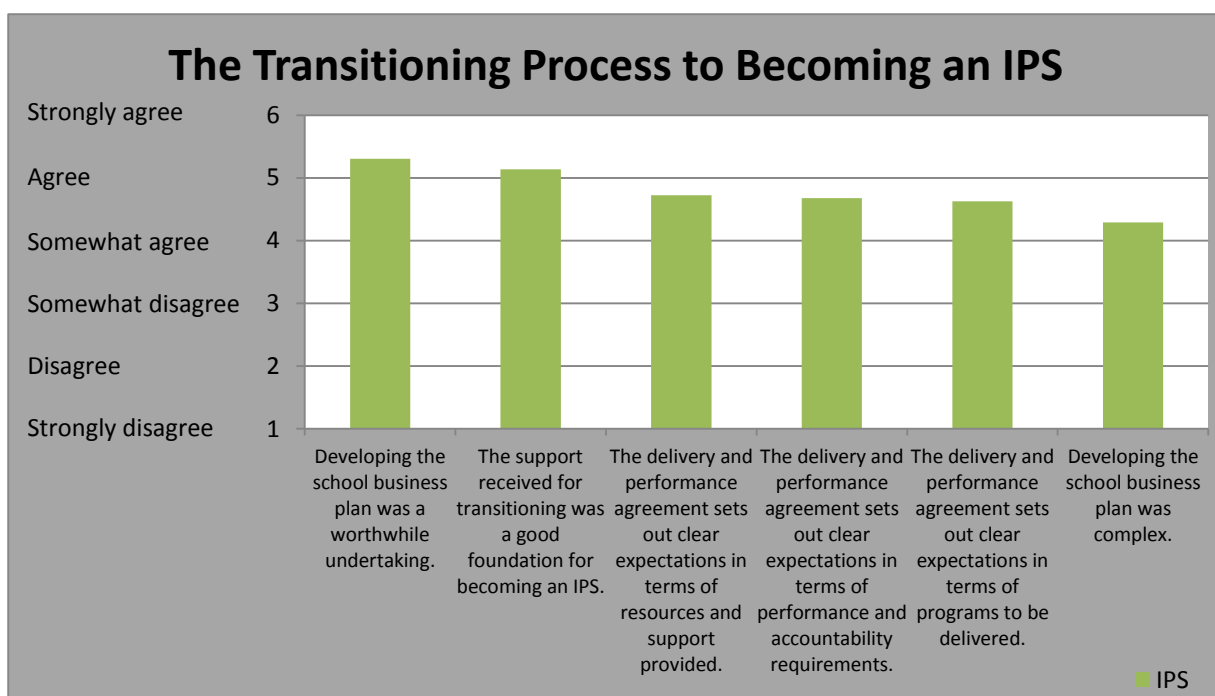


Figure 18: Principal Survey - The transitioning process to becoming an IPS

However, principals from other public schools experienced no improvement, and were only marginally satisfied with the post-IPS initiative support in finance and HR.

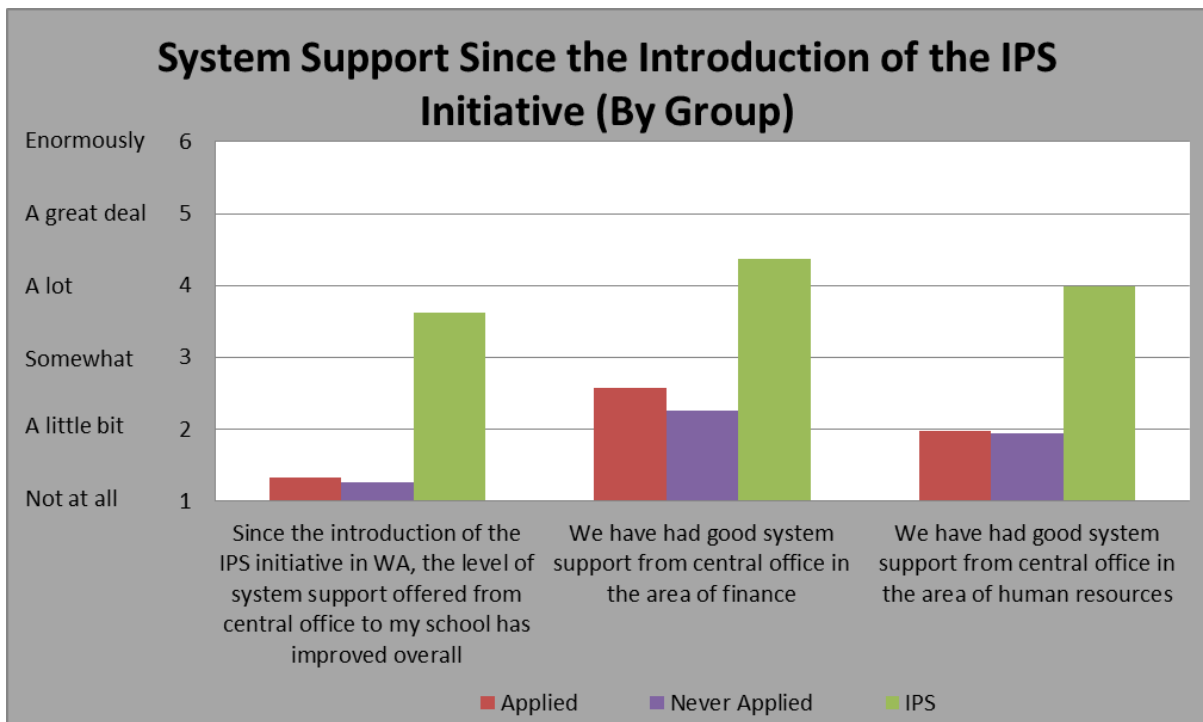


Figure 19: Principal Survey - Satisfaction with Central office support since the IPS initiative (item response means by group)

Central office does appear to have commenced change. From a cultural point of view, the strong directive to support the IPS initiative is maintaining the focus and appears to be bearing fruit. It was obvious that different stakeholders had different reactions to the initiative but it seems that those that started out as enthusiastic supporters have been joined by others who were reluctant to start with but have been converted and that the detractors are in the minority. From a systems and support point of view, the results seem to be patchy as different sections identify the gaps between the resources and support they provide compared with those now required as well as mechanisms to address those gaps. The IPS initiative also appears to have triggered a deep seated review of processes and policies. While there is still a way to go in both respects (culture and practice), it would appear that a tipping point has been reached where the IPS initiative has been generally accepted as the way of the future and what is required is that the impetus to make the appropriate changes be maintained.

8.2.1.2 REGIONAL OFFICE

The restructure of the support model from districts to regions occurred simultaneously with the implementation of the IPS initiative. Most Regional office interviewees were consequently supporting many more schools than they were previously, with fewer staff and a different role, which influenced some of their perspectives on the IPS initiative. Some Regional office staff experienced an increased workload with decreased resources, while others reported similar work levels or even less work as they no longer had to carry out the operational monitoring. The general view was that IPS schools did not require as much support as other public schools, while problem schools tended to need the most support.

Overall, survey respondents from all categories were not satisfied with the support from their regional education office, which probably reflects attitudes towards the structural change from districts to regions. Interestingly, IPS principals tended to be slightly more satisfied than the other groups. Becoming an IPS removes the Regional office from the line management hierarchy for IPS principals, with the consequence that the tenor of the relationship between Regional office and IPS principals has shifted to become more collegiate as described by Regional office staff and principals at IPS site visits. While Regional offices still play a limited administrative role for IPS, they no longer

have the same directive role and IPS can choose the extent to which they engage. Thus, whereas principals used to ring to ask permission, they now ask for advice and support and use Regional offices as sounding boards about proposed initiatives.

For Independent Public Schools we don't have the performance management or line management relationship – so we don't have them all seeking my support but occasionally on some issues they will access me or my staff for advice. (Regional office staff member)

Over time they are showing less dependence. It's more about 'this is what we're doing - what do you think?' rather than 'help me out - what do I do?'. (Regional office staff member)

A lot of principals don't have anything to do with them but I still want my school to be involved in Regional office initiatives. We're too isolated to go it on our own so I value the relationship, but there's a different feel, whether it's because of Independent Public School or regional change. (IPS principal: site visit).

Similarly, Regional office stakeholders invite IPS to participate in any of their support activities, but otherwise leave IPS principals to approach them when required. The level of contact varied between schools, depending on the experience and personality of the principal, school size, and location; hence the quality of relationships with Regional offices reported by principals during site visits ranged from good to distant or non-existent.

We offer whatever support is requested and have a watching brief. With some principals in IPS we have a very strong relationship and that has continued regardless. There are other cases where we don't hear from them at all or we only hear when there's an issue. (Regional office staff member)

They are outstanding – they've helped us with crisis management; organised professional development; they check documents for me and provide feedback, and have helped develop a strong, critical network of principals. (IPS principal: site visit).

Regional education offices have had less to change to make to support IPS. The major change has been in the tenor of the relationship between the principal and the office. There may be processes that need further clarification or streamlining in the future.

8.2.2 OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There is little available research addressing the effects of partial implementation of public school autonomy on schools which do not participate in the initiative. Survey data indicated that principals of other public schools were satisfied with their roles, teaching staff, resources and support for staff, community engagement, system support and school operation prior to the introduction of the IPS initiative. They expressed some concern about the level of system support for schools that were not IPS following the introduction of the IPS initiative, but otherwise believed that the implementation of the IPS initiative had little direct effect on the operation of their own schools. It is important to note that lack of change does not mean that other public schools are less effective than IPS in the factors measured, but instead that they saw fewer changes in these areas since the introduction of the IPS initiative. This was strongly contrasted with the high perception of change in IPS.

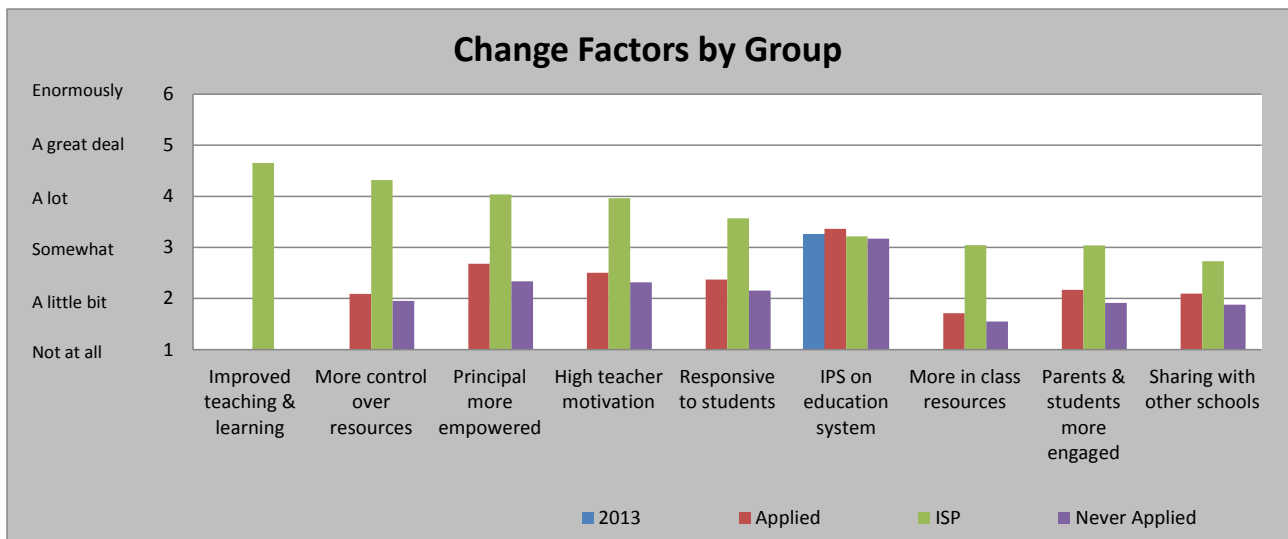


Figure 20: Principal Survey - Perception of change (factors by group)

Principals of Other Public Schools frequently cautioned that any improvements in their schools should be attributed to good management and the development of pre-existing initiatives, rather than the influence of the IPS initiative.

We have established a wide range of quality business partnerships... and continue to grow in this area. Again, this is not as a result of the IPS initiative as we are not an IPS. (Principal: applicant school)

However, when asked to identify the most critical resource or support that would assist their school, the most common response, after the pressing need for additional financial resources, was flexibility with staffing or finances, in particular the capacity to merit selecting teaching staff.

The ability to have a one-line budget as the funds can be used as required to give the students the staffing and resources they need to improve their learning outcomes, e.g., speech therapist...more psych time. (Principal: applicant school)

Being able to select my own staff through a merit select process where I can advertise positions fixed and permanent positions. (Principal: school that never applied)

This suggests that the implementation of the IPS initiative has promulgated an appreciation of the advantages of flexibility in public schools. The responses might also have been influenced by the prevalence of concerns about the effects of not having same staffing control as IPS, such as the allocation of redeployees who may not be seen as the best match for the school's needs.

However, the data showed no major differences in the distribution of staffing levels (that is, the distribution of new and experienced teachers, and Level 3 teachers) for the first or second year IPS intakes and other public schools. Considering the varied responses from IPS site visits about what the staffing flexibility had meant for them, it appears that this was because young motivated graduates were as highly prized as experienced motivated specialists in different contexts. Nevertheless, there was a common perception from a variety of stakeholders at site visit schools as well as Regional office and union and association representatives of an emerging inequality between IPS and other public schools as a result of differences in staffing flexibilities.

I feel sorry for principals who lose their staff. I guess it's good that teachers have to compete. It's the same as other industries where you have to work at what you do. Other teachers have to realise that the school is allocating money where they think it's needed, and that's having an effect on the public school system. We're getting more differentiation between good schools and not so good schools. (Teacher)

For those that aren't Independent Public Schools it's created division and there's an element of resentment. (Regional office staff member).

Some negative talk about a two-tier system but haven't seen that happen. (Regional office staff member)

I've been trying to make it clear to colleagues – they probably felt there is a class system with IPS seen as more important. Just doing what we could for the betterment of our kids – and there are more than two tiers of schools anyway and no equity. (IPS principal: site visit)

The effects of the IPS initiative on the education system was the only change on which survey respondents from all public school categories agreed (see Figure 27). IPS were seen to have an advantage in accessing the most suitable staff, as well as having greater flexibility in how they use their resources. Principals of other public schools claimed that, they were receiving teachers who were less likely to be high-performing or aligned with the school ethos and in some cases were losing good staff to IPS as a result of IPS not having to take redeployees.

I have not been able to select my own staff (teaching and non-teaching) due to the high number of referred teachers that IPS have created but do not have to take. ([30079] Principal Survey – Applicant school)

IPS has had a completely negative effect on the quality of teaching staff in my school. Placement of redeployed staff has been too lengthy to be manageable, resulting in classes without teachers, increased workload for current staff, and the inability to select appropriate staff who are competent to teach in our setting. ([30083] Principal Survey – Applicant school)

There was some concern that this would advantage schools in high SEI areas that are highly sought after by teachers, and residualise staffing pools for disadvantaged, regional and remote schools to the detriment of their students. The importance of obtaining teachers whose skills and ethos were suitable for the school was further emphasised in site visits, as a subtle difference (for instance between a music teacher interested in classical music compared with one interested in community music projects in a low SEI school) could have a very strong result in terms of the teacher's ability and motivation to engage students and community. However, principals and other stakeholders also acknowledge that the introduction of *Schools Select* in 2012 has extended greater staffing flexibilities to all public schools, supporting all public school principals to select and appoint staff best suited to their school and students.

There is a distinction to be drawn between public schools who applied unsuccessfully to become IPS and those who never applied. Factor analysis of survey responses indicated four prominent factors influencing the decision not to apply: principals believed they were *okay as they were*, did not want to experience *increased demands*, did not wish to experience *disruption*, or had *no capacity to change*. The 242 survey respondents from public schools who had not applied were grouped into clusters based on the extent to which the factors listed above influenced their decision. There were no significant differences in location, SEI or educational level between the clusters, and no significant difference in student outcomes including attendance, suspension, retention and NAPLAN scores.

As previously mentioned, results from a cluster analysis of other public schools not part of the initiative showed 4 clusters. Cluster 1 (61 schools) did not seem to be highly influenced by any of the factors, perhaps indicating that their schools had simply not considered becoming part of the IPS initiative. Principals in Cluster 3 (104 schools) also had low scores, however it is likely they were influenced through their satisfaction with current status and expectations of increased demands. Principals from Cluster 2 (64 schools) had higher scores for all factors, but were also most influenced by satisfaction with current status and anticipation of increased demands. Scores for principals in Cluster 4 (16 schools) indicated that their decisions not to apply were a highly motivated by satisfaction with the school's current status, and the expectation of increased demands and disruption (see figure 21).

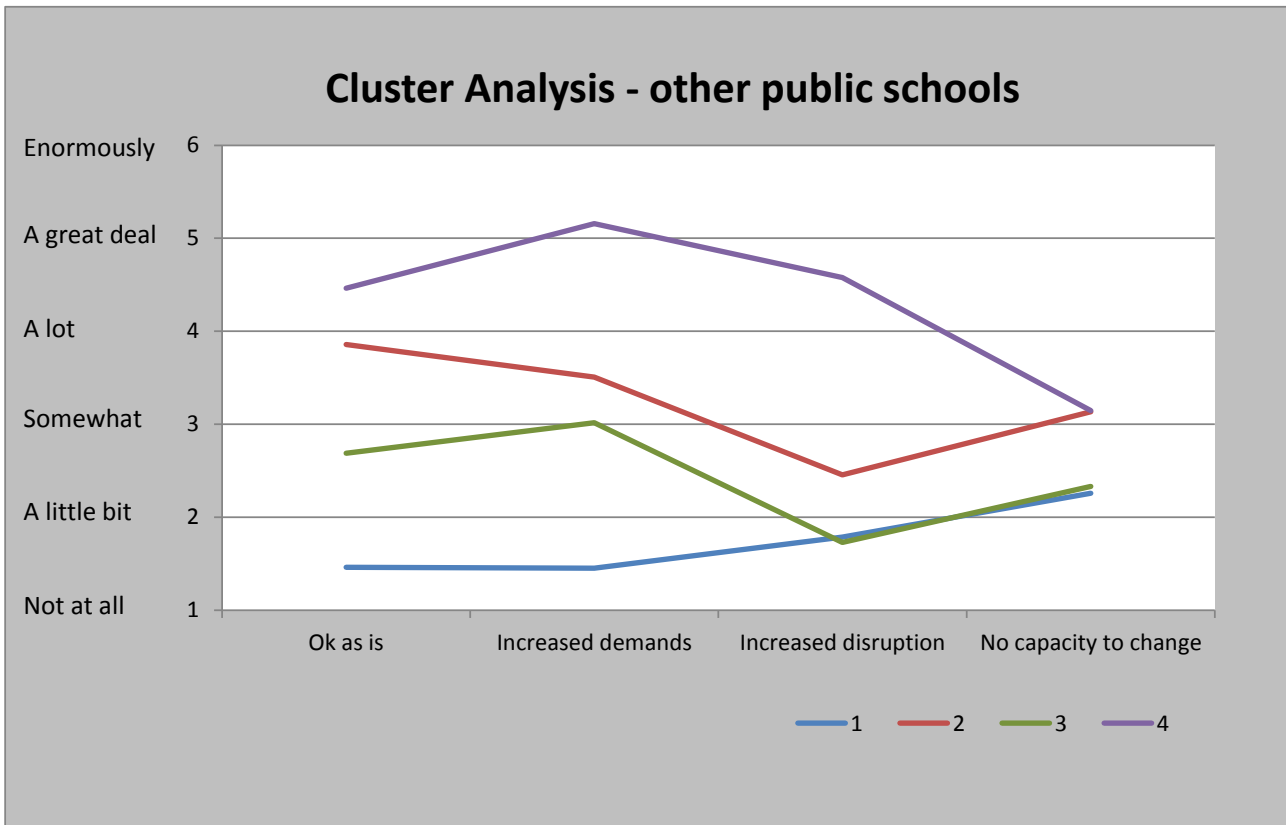


Figure 21: Cluster analysis – other public schools

Cluster 4 can be considered the *most* resistant to becoming an IPS, as these principals had the greatest satisfaction with their school’s current status and the highest perception of disadvantages associated with becoming an IPS. It can be seen in the figure above that factor variations for Clusters 1, 2, and 3 are somewhat alike, whereas Cluster 4 has a distinctively different response pattern. Moreover, the majority of principals were spread between Clusters 1 and 3, with the lowest levels of conviction being in their selected reasons for not applying. This result suggests that the number of principals who were actively resistant to the IPS initiative is a very small percentage of the sample.

Principals from all clusters had similar views on the benefits of IPS status for education, meaning that this was not a major factor separating the clusters (see Figure 22).

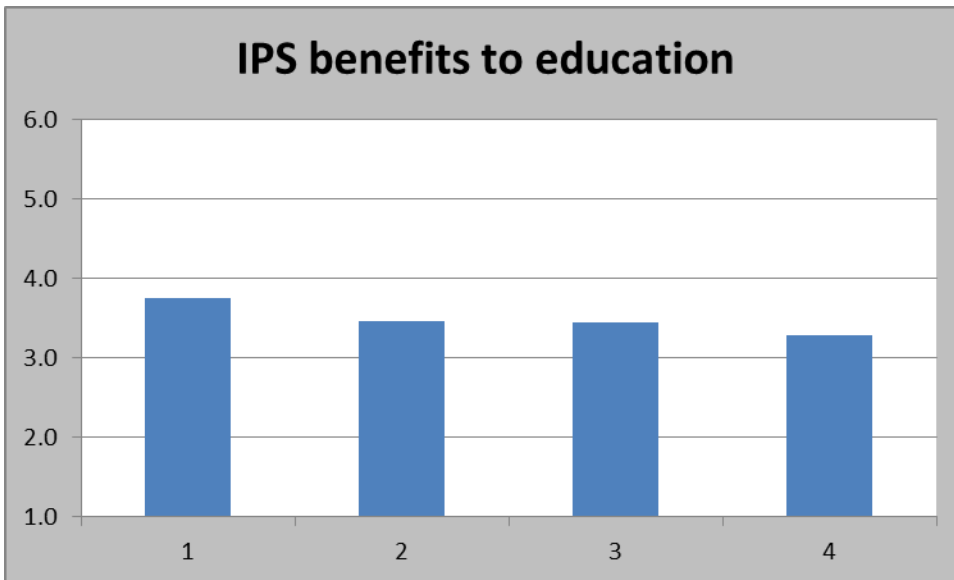


Figure 22: Cluster Analysis - IPS benefits to education

Other cluster analyses were also conducted on the three dimensions (1) possible benefits and attributes of IPS (such as: IPS benefits on education system; responsiveness to students; control over resources; and in-class resources); (2) attributes of schooling (such as teaching and learning; teacher satisfaction, teacher motivation, parent and students engagement; and sharing with other schools); and (3) principal empowerment and satisfaction (such as an empowered principal and a satisfied principal). The analysis showed similar patterns, with cluster 4 consistently having lower means across the 3 dimensions.

Factor analysis results are the most appropriate unit of measure for the cluster analysis. However, individual items, documented throughout the evaluation, were also included to provide greater depth. Within the “OK as we are now” items, the principals in cluster 4 were the most positive about their own situation compared to their peers, except with respect to their scope with their budget. The principals believe that there is enough “autonomy” in their school already and thus there is no need to change, particularly if change will cause disruption and increase work demands (see figure below).

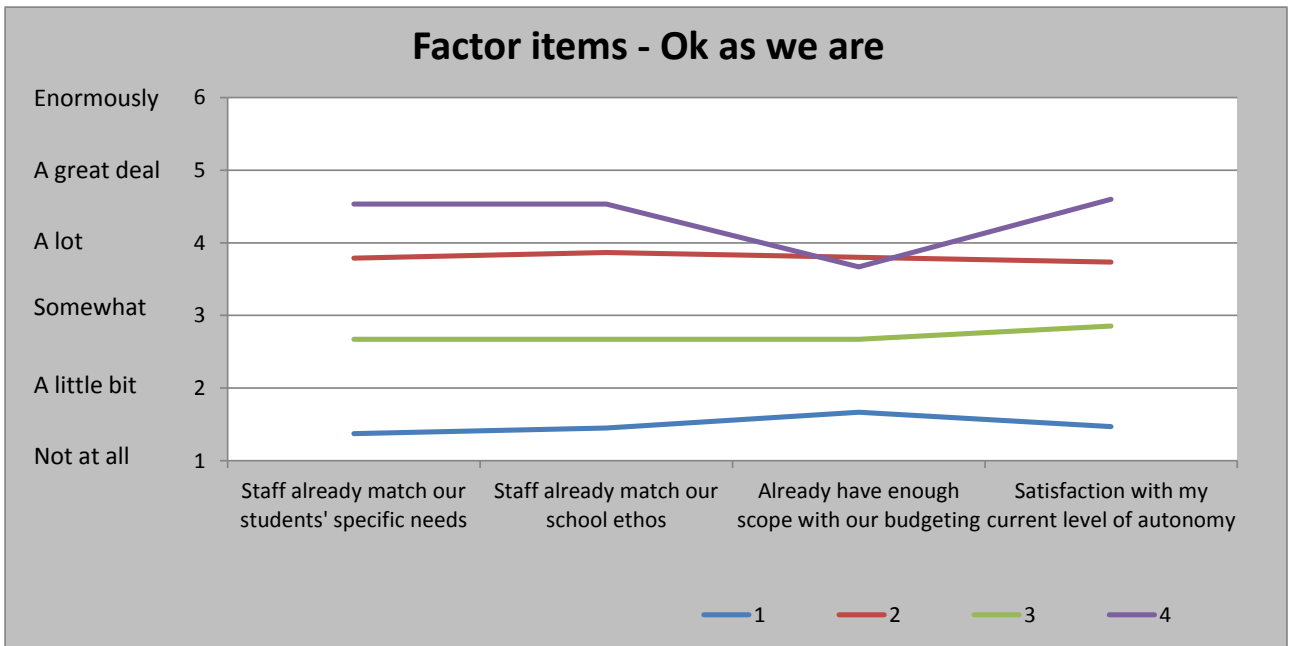


Figure 23: Cluster Analysis – Ok as we are now factor items

As can be seen in Figure 24: and Figure 25, the most resistant cluster also reported the greatest philosophical opposition to the initiative and the most concern over conflict and possible disruption within their schools, consequently indicating that these issues were important in principals deciding not to register as an IPS.

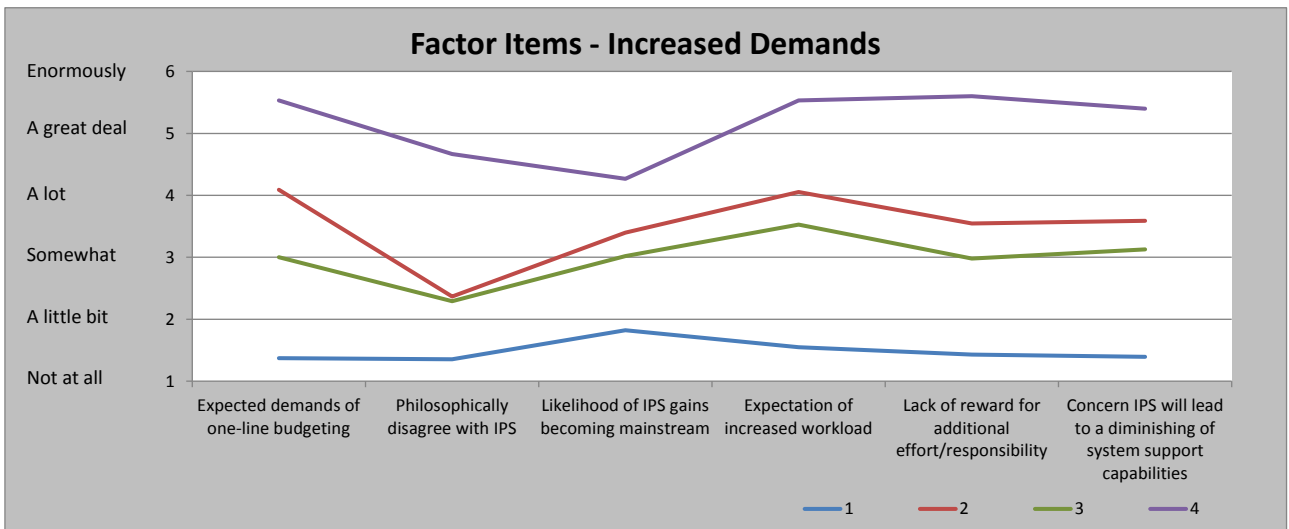


Figure 24: Cluster Analysis – increased demands factor items

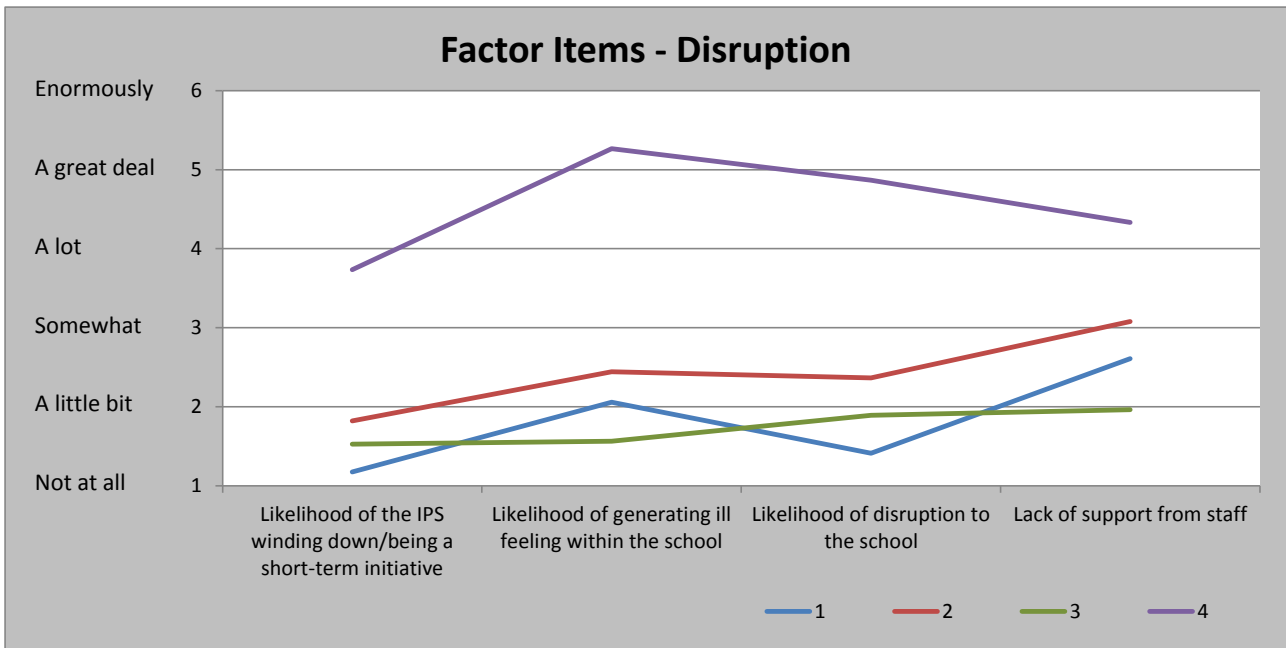


Figure 25: Cluster Analysis – Disruption factor items

The most notable difference in the “no capacity for change” items (figure below) was *school not ready*; the most resistant cluster scored the lowest on this item, indicating that while principals view their school as ready, they did not apply to become an IPS because they were satisfied with current structures and, as we saw before, philosophically opposed to the change.

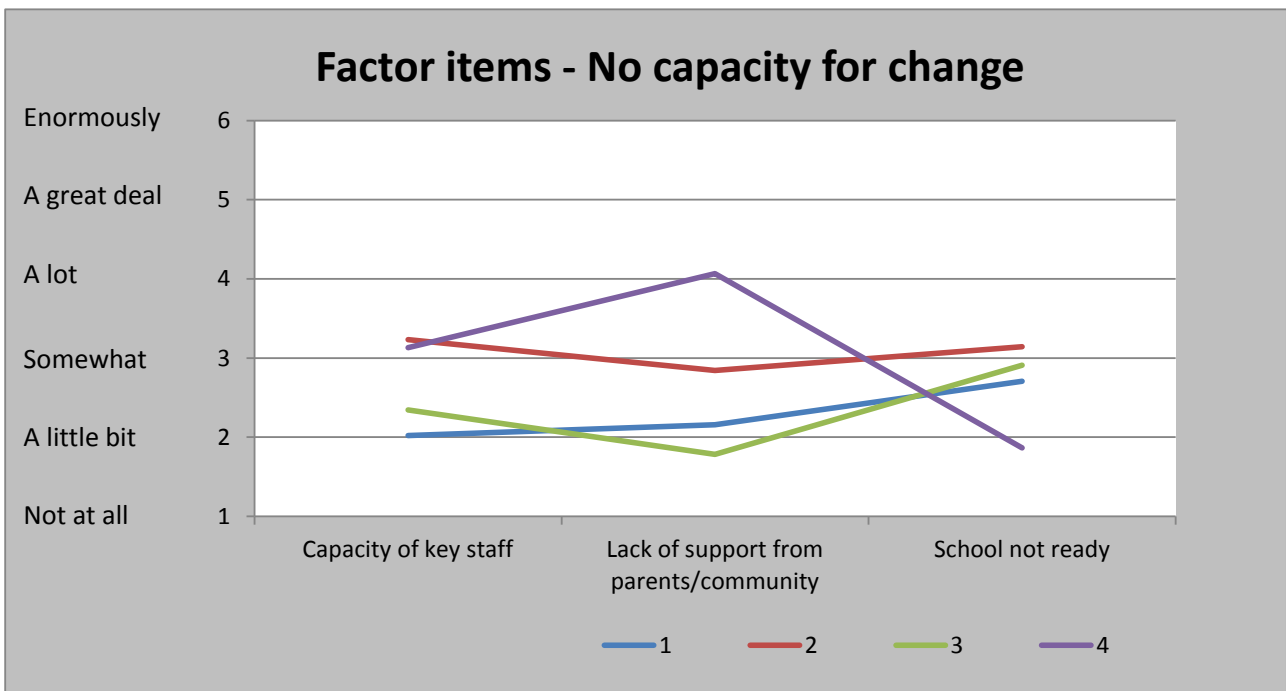


Figure 26: Cluster Analysis – No capacity for change factor items

Overall, principal responses suggested that most public schools who had not applied to become IPS were simply satisfied with their current administrative arrangements, or believed that the disadvantages of the IPS initiative outweighed the benefits in their circumstances. A small group were philosophically opposed to the initiative. In contrast, stakeholders from schools who applied unsuccessfully believed that they would have benefitted from

inclusion in the IPS initiative. These schools were highly disappointed with the selection process which they felt was arbitrary and irregular. However, the schools believed that there was inadequate feedback indicating why certain schools were considered unsuitable to become IPS, or measures schools could implement to improve their eligibility. All stakeholders, including those from IPS, Central office, and Regional office, raised the issue of the damaging effects of unsuccessful applications on school morale. This was identified as the most problematic outcome of the IPS initiative.

Having applied unsuccessfully twice to become an IPS my biggest challenge has been managing the staff and community disappointment at not being granted IPS status. With the system actively promoting IPS as the progressive way to achieve school improvement and our school wishing to take on the added responsibilities they find it difficult to understand why the school is still not an IPS. ([30105] Principal Survey – Applicant school)

Dealing with the community belief that IPS schools are the 'better' state schools. The community somehow feel we have 'failed' in not being given IPS status. ([30058] Principal Survey – Applicant school)

The impact has been disheartening for our staff and our parent community who dearly want us to pursue IPS. The major challenge has been maintaining a positive profile despite our lack of IPS status. ([30073] Principal Survey – Applicant school)

The community perception is that there must be something very wrong with your school. (Regional office staff member)

The first time you don't get it is a bit of a wakeup call – a bit like failing a driving test. There are enough that are not getting it first time that it's okay. But if a school doesn't get it a second time people ask what is wrong with the school. (Regional office staff member)

IPS has had a variable effect on schools. While principals argue that they could achieve many of the flexibilities one way or another without being IPS, the exemption of IPS taking redeployees is a clear distinction. In addition, IPS have an improved status over other public schools as described below. This has been of benefit to public education generally but with the future direction of the initiative it is uncertain if people have been free to develop their own framing of "other public schools." This framing of how IPS and other public schools make up the public education system needs to be carefully considered in the future to reduce the impact of IPS on other public schools and should indeed identify and celebrate their role.

8.2.3 COMMUNITY

Ideally, school autonomy increases the effectiveness of schools and the empowerment of communities through a partnership approach to school decision-making that facilitates the accountability of schools towards communities, as well as the capacity of schools to respond to local needs (Caldwell 2009). As yet, there is no strong data indicating that the IPS initiative has significantly changed the ways that public schools engage with their communities. As autonomy is thought to allow schools to interact with communities in ways that are appropriate to the local context, it is unsurprising that it is difficult to capture indicators of change at a systemic level, particularly during the early years of implementation as described earlier. The site visits illuminated the potential for community engagement at an individual school level and indicated growth in community pride and confidence for IPS.

Conversely, there was considerable concern expressed by survey respondents, key stakeholders and site visit interviewees about the growth of community perception that other public schools were inferior to IPS, although the secondary data shows no substantial change in staffing, student behaviour, attendance or performance between IPS and other public schools. The deleterious effect of this misperception was compounded in many schools by the effects of unsuccessful application to become IPS. With the school and community investing strongly in the process of

applying to become an IPS and with the benefits of IPS strongly marketed as part of that process, rejection can cause a major crisis in confidence in the principal and teachers by the community, and a corresponding diminishing of morale in schools.

The IPS initiative has improved the community’s perception about public schooling in general. Feedback during school site visits indicated that for local communities the reputation of each school overrides the general view but that in principle parents supported additional autonomy for their good principal because they trusted them to use it for the good of students.

8.2.4 EDUCATION SYSTEM

Although there were strong disagreements about the benefits of the IPS initiative for the education system, the majority of principals from both IPS and other public schools shared the view that the IPS initiative gives advantages to certain schools over others. Principals from all categories disagreed with the proposition that WA should not have any IPS, although principals from schools that had never applied to become IPS disagreed to a lesser extent.

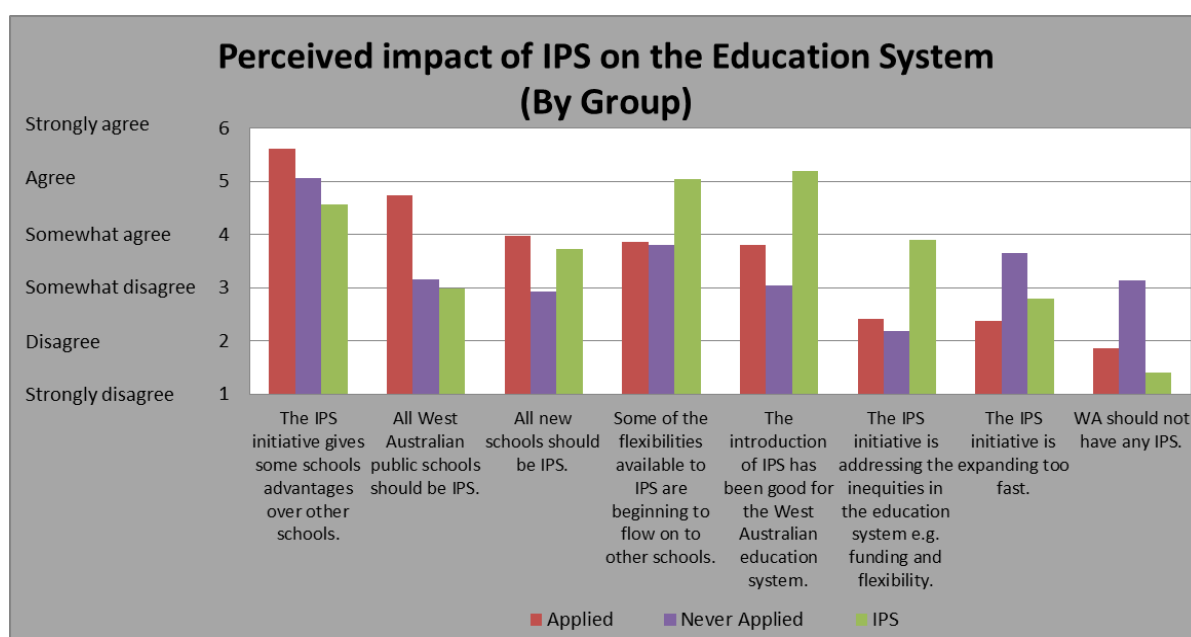


Figure 27: Principal Survey - Perception of impact of the IPS initiative on the education system - by group

Central office stakeholders indicated that the IPS initiative has brought about a sense of renewal within the Department and has led to widespread community appreciation of the IPS initiative subsequently raising confidence in individual schools and in the public system overall. Stakeholders suggested that the public school system has become more competitive with private schools; they also reported that other public schools were benefitting from resultant flexibilities in the system, particularly *Staff Select*. The focus on autonomy and school responsiveness to student needs generated by the IPS initiative has spread a culture of ownership and pride in education through school communities.

However, there were significant and pervasive concerns expressed by survey respondents and interviewees from all stakeholder categories that extending the IPS initiative to selected schools created a ‘two-tiered’ education system, to the disadvantage of schools that were not IPS. Regardless of the actual performance of schools, there was a community perception that selection as an IPS was an indicator of quality, leading to pressure for some schools to become IPS. Some stakeholders believed that this division between schools was unnecessary, as the most important management flexibilities, such as greater control over staffing could have been extended to all schools without the need for the IPS initiative.

While the changes encompassed within the definition of IPS could theoretically have been made without an initiative, and while improvements could always be made to the implementation itself, in practice, the implementation has been carefully managed. The branding of the IPS initiative has provided a strong message to parents, schools, the Department and the wider community about the government's commitment to changing and improving public education. A strong vision is required to commence and sustain change; the IPS has provided that vision for principals, parents and communities to embrace, and the recruitment of enthusiastic personnel to champion the change within schools and central and Regional offices has been instrumental in its successful implementation thus far. The evolutionary changes are a strength of the initiative however, the Department needs to continue to adapt as unexpected consequences arise and it is necessary to identify ways to alleviate them.

8.3 ARE THERE ANY ISSUES THAT ARE HAMPERING THE EFFICIENCY OR EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IPS INITIATIVE?

Barriers to effective implementation for schools arose at each stage of the application, selection, transition and operation process of becoming an IPS. Some of these barriers were process-related or specific to the implementation stage, while others were entrenched in schools or the system, and were operative across different stages. Organisational development to support operational and cultural changes has been a key enabler both for individual schools and the broader public school system.

8.3.1 APPLICATION: MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

IPS principals indicated that their schools were attracted by the possibilities under the IPS initiative of selecting staff matching student needs and school ethos as this increased their ability to make decisions to support students and increase school effectiveness, while also providing increased flexibility in budgeting. The cluster analysis showed that no particular reasons for application were correlated with the principal perception of benefits arising from becoming an IPS, and there was therefore no expectation that schools applying for different reasons differ in their potential to experience beneficial change. However, understanding the different reasons may be helpful in encouraging schools to make the initial application to become an IPS. Early intakes were influenced by a desire to be at the forefront of change and increases in principal authority, but later intakes were more motivated by other schools becoming IPS and access to the IPS initiative transition training and support. This suggests that, as the IPS initiative becomes embedded within the education system, encouraging schools to participate will depend upon offering evidence of existing IPS success and access to training and support.

The reasons given by principals for not applying to become IPS also support this conclusion, as factor (see Figure 28) and cluster analyses indicated that most schools that did not apply simply perceived no benefit for their school in becoming an IPS, or believed that implementing the IPS flexibilities would be too demanding or disruptive. Only a small number of principals expressed active opposition to the concept of the IPS initiative, and cluster analysis indicated that decisions to apply were not influenced by beliefs about the benefits of the IPS initiative for education. Student outcomes, location, SEI and educational level of the school were not correlated with decisions not to apply, and the disparate reasons given by principals for their reasons for not applying also suggest that individual school circumstances were highly influential. In survey comments, principals suggested a range of additional reasons for not applying including small school size, special student body, difficult local conditions, principal inexperience or turnover, focus on other imperatives, and lack of school readiness to support becoming an IPS.

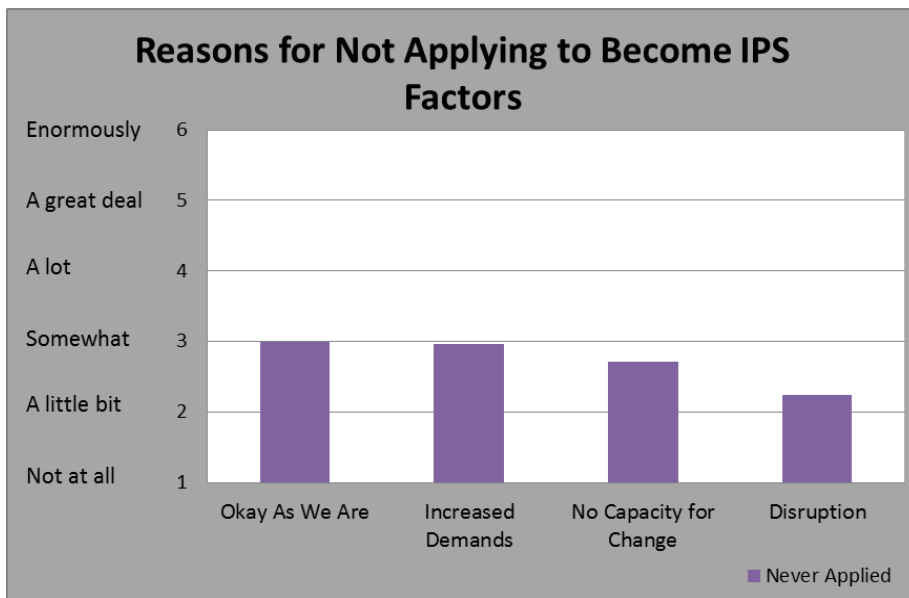


Figure 28: Principal Survey - Reasons for not applying to become IPS – factor analysis

Stakeholders at IPS site visits highlighted the principal’s central role in the decision to apply and noted a number of circumstances such as inexperience, transience, or inability to see benefits for their school reasons of may have held them back from applying. Stakeholders also noted that it would be difficult to become an IPS without sufficient support from staff, parents or the community, and that parent or staff opposition would be a leading factor in the decision not to apply.

The principal needs to be well established and know the staff, context, parents – otherwise if I’d been a new principal I would have had trouble getting the benefit of being Independent Public School. (IPS principal: site visit)

Had a principal who was retiring and didn’t want change – just wanted to see his time out. It’s a lot of work. (Board member/parent)

Maybe the principal doesn’t want it. Or the school council doesn’t want the principal to have extra decision making power. (Board member)

Misinformation. Some think the principal or board can fire teachers. People on fixed term contracts are afraid they’ll be fired. (IPS principal: site visit)

8.3.2 SELECTION: TRANSPARENCY AND SCHOOL CAPACITY

The selection process was criticised by principals (particularly the principals of applicant schools) through survey comments and site-visit interviews. The common experience of unsuccessful applicants was that feedback was inadequate, and the selection criteria and reasons for the rejection of their applications were unclear. In general, principals felt that their unsuccessful application to become an IPS had led to negative consequences for the students and the school community. Regional office staff and principal associations also agreed that the selection process should be more transparent and rigorous to ensure that the schools that are selected have the skills and resources to successfully take on the additional accountability, and the schools that are not ready to become an IPS receive meaningful feedback and support. There was interest in the new selection process to be introduced in 2014, which will provide development opportunities to assist schools that wish to become IPS to meet the rigorous standards for effective operation as an IPS.

Equipping schools to manage administrative responsibilities is an important step as lack of school capacity in this area presents a formidable barrier to the effective implementation of the IPS initiative (Caldwell 2008). Internal barriers to effective operation as an IPS which may be relevant for selection processes include the administrative capacity of the principal, registrar and board. The leadership skills of the principal have been identified as a key factor discussed later in section 8.4.4. The desire of the principal, staff and broader school community to pursue IPS status is also highly important (as identified in 8.3.1), and any internal resistance to change would necessarily limit the ability of the IPS to utilise the available flexibilities. However, it was apparent from site visits and from the reasons provided in the survey by principals who had not applied that there were also external barriers which are not within the individual school's control, and these highlight the continuing need for support for schools to successfully negotiate transition to becoming an IPS. These issues include difficulties in attracting teachers because of location or SEI, decreasing student numbers, or competition from private schools.

There were different opinions among Regional office staff and other stakeholders over which schools were suitable to become IPS; some felt all schools should become IPS, while others suggested all metropolitan schools, all high schools, or all but remote schools. Still others felt that IPS status should be reserved for schools with the profile and interest to make use of the IPS flexibilities. There appears to be a perception amongst principals and other stakeholders that the IPS initiative is not appropriate for small, remote and regional schools, and schools that are experiencing significant problems. The lack of a competent principal and business manager was also felt to contraindicate becoming an IPS. These barriers to schools applying to become IPS, as well as issues such as focus on other priorities, lack of administrative capacity, and resistance from staff or communities, will continue to hinder greater uptake without appropriate support to enable schools to overcome them.

8.3.3 TRANSITION: SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Overall, IPS principals were satisfied with implementation support and transition (mean=5.1). Principals of IPS that perceived the greatest benefits (Cluster 3) also had the highest ratings on the transition variables, and those who perceived the fewest benefits (Cluster 1) had the lowest ratings on the transition variables. Consequently, the transition process should be viewed as important for the perception of benefits of IPS.

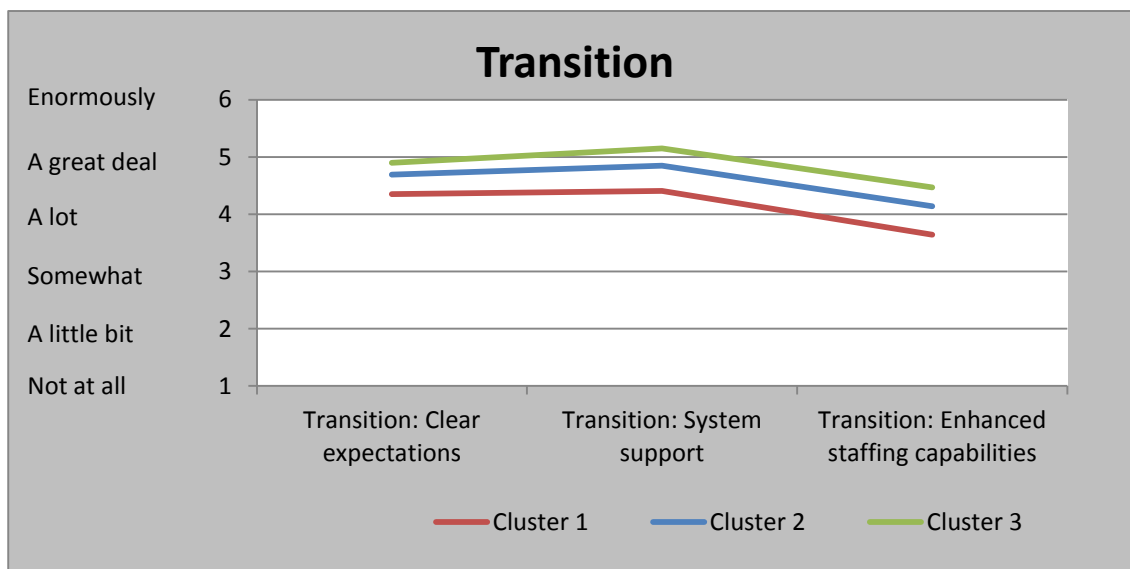


Figure 29: Cluster Analysis - Transition

The structural equation model also showed that principal satisfaction with transition is the only factor related to their satisfaction with the outcomes of teacher empowerment and in-school benefits (see Section 8.1.10).

Principal associations described the transition support and training as 'outstanding'. They believed that training opportunities could be more widely and flexibly available, especially for leadership and administrative staff appointed to an IPS after transition. Some principals also reported that the implementation process was rushed, and that the opportunity for re-profiling should be extended. As noted earlier in section 8.1.3 principals at site visit schools generally gave positive feedback regarding the transition process and training. A small number of site visit principals felt that they waited too long to have their budgets finalised, and that their situation was precarious with respect to funding for staff during the early part of the year. Principals also discussed the benefits of more structured support and networking mechanisms for transitioning schools.

8.3.4 OPERATION: LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

While staffing and financial flexibility, enabling allocation of staff and funding on the basis of local needs and priorities, are considered to be the primary advantages of school autonomy, the introduction of human resource and financial management responsibilities is one of the most significant challenges for principals of IPS (Gamage 2006). Unsurprisingly, the major challenges identified by IPS principals related to these new management responsibilities, including re-profiling, workforce planning, attracting quality staff, managing the one-line budget, working with school boards and developing business plans. The combined effect of these enlarged responsibilities resulted in a prominent issue of workload for school leaders and administrative staff. Where workload becomes too great, or there is insufficient assistance for staff in developing new management skills, the effectiveness of the IPS initiative may be compromised. However, the extra funding associated with transition and operation as an IPS is intended to offset the increased administrative burden, and hence workload pressures may be affected according to whether IPS apply these payments appropriately.

These responsibilities create a significant need for professional development for staff, and consequently this was provided as a component of transition. It was noted by Regional office staff that control over the selection of staff does not necessarily increase school effectiveness if leaders are unable to lead good teaching practice. Specifically it was suggested that principals also need to be able to manage staff performance and encourage them to subscribe to a collective vision for the school. Overall, the role of principal was considered integral to successful transition. Central and regional education office stakeholders reported that some principals had responded positively to the increased accountability and responsibility, showing greater autonomy and confidence in making decisions and embracing innovation, however, it was felt that some principals were not as ready to take on the management of an IPS.

8.3.5 OPERATION: COMMUNITY SUPPORT

As identified earlier in section 8.2.3, community perceptions that schools who do not become IPS are inferior can have an impact on school morale. In particular, community responses to unsuccessful applications to become IPS appears to have been very demoralising for some schools, alongside a belief that not being selected reflects a deficiency in the school.

8.3.6 OPERATION: STAFFING

For many schools, the ability to access and retain quality teaching staff was considered a major challenge. Principals of other public schools used the survey to express concern about the placement of redeployees who were inappropriate for their school context. This was an issue of concern to a broad number of respondents. One view offered by Central office stakeholders was that IPS cannot continue to be exempted from central placement processes. Another comment was that low-performing teachers should be dealt with in individual schools and not moved around the system as a short-term solution. More generally, there was a view that the model would have to be changed without very clear suggestions as to how. Conversely, there were concerns from the unions that redeployed teachers were being unfairly stigmatised as low-performing, and that staffing flexibility allowed principals to replace teachers with

new staff fitting precise criteria, rather than providing professional development opportunities. With respect to staffing, the negative perceptions of the IPS initiative as a 'two-tiered system' (as discussed earlier in section 8.1.5) may hamper its effectiveness, irrespective of the actual distribution of staffing levels, that is the proportion of classroom, senior and level 3 teachers, in public schools, which has changed very little since the introduction of the IPS initiative.

8.3.7 OPERATION: ACCOUNTABILITY

According to the literature, increased accountability is an important factor in the impact of autonomy on school effectiveness (De Grauwe 2005). A strong school vision and set of goals provides clarity in negotiating accountability (Muhammed 2009). Some of the central and Regional office interviewees expressed the view that the school reviews for IPS were insufficiently stringent, focussed on process rather than outcomes or contemporary practice, and that those conducting the reviews were not current practitioners. More generally, there was a concern expressed by staff and parent representative organisations that the more decentralised model might lead to a decline in the monitoring of standards and integrity of education throughout the state.

Supposedly there's more accountability but I would wish for more capacity for the Department to assess what is going on ... It's been good luck not good management that nothing has been breached till now. (Central office staff member)

8.3.8 CULTURAL CHANGE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional office staff expressed concerns that resource and systems capacity of Central office to support any additional IPS would be a constraint on expansion of the initiative. In response to the new imperative, Central office staff reported that they had begun a process of review, restructure and development of resources to transform themselves from an internally focused, autonomous instigator to an outwardly-facing centre for school support. In their survey comments many principals from all categories praised the individual efforts of central and Regional office staff to provide assistance despite resource constraints and restructuring. However, site visit school principals and Central office staff identified some lingering resistance to devolving authority to principals at the central level. This last issue has slowed processes, and highlights the need for cultural change.

We need to change the culture at the school and in Central office – a lot here still don't want to devolve. (Central office staff member).

The involvement of central departments of education as supporters in the implementation process is key to the success of autonomy initiatives, given the experience and expertise in the management of schools at this level (Honig and Rainey 2011). The implementation of the IPS initiative was having a profound effect on the roles within Central office as described in 8.2.1. An important factor in the successful implementation so far has been the championing of the IPS initiative by the Director General and the creation of SIRU to mobilise resources where barriers have been identified. In addition, the six-monthly face-to-face meetings between the Director General and all IPS principals ensures clear and direct communication of issues needing to be addressed and successes that confirm the current directions, as well as bestowing a critical high-level recognition on IPS principals' status and role.

Some Central office staff and principals of IPS site visits gave the opinion that some schools lacked knowledge of the corporate functions covered by Central office and continuing compliance obligations. Central office interviewees cautioned that some schools seemed to be reinventing centralised processes. It was suggested that in some areas it might be more beneficial to keep systems or processes centralised, or ensure that there is appropriate guidance to enable schools to manage their processes consistently and appropriately. In addition, it was acknowledged that accessible information and systems supporting the new information needs of IPS needed to be developed as a

priority. There was concern that Central office resources were being reduced, and that, in moving resources from Central office to regions or schools, specialist expertise which cannot be duplicated may be lost.

*One size fits all has been the problem...now reconfiguring to provide customised response to different schools.
(Central office staff member)*

In addition to these operational changes, becoming independent entails a significant cultural shift for schools. There was little data indicating the extent of cultural change or improvements in school adaptive capacity, but it is possible that appropriate development of the school vision may facilitate the extensive cultural change required by the implementation process (Gamage 2009; Muhammed 2009).

Taking into consideration the scope of change being attempted by the IPS initiative, the issues discussed above are relatively minor. IPS symbolises a change in mindset from schools carrying out a centrally dictated agenda to central and Regional offices supporting principals in charge of their schools within a consistent framework. There are issues that need to be addressed with the application process, with the development of systems, and with making adjustments to the model (particularly for selection and deployment of staff). To date, the implementation of the IPS initiative appears to have been responsive to feedback regarding issues and opportunities and needs to continue to seek and respond to such feedback.

8.4 WHAT ADVICE CAN BE PROVIDED TO GUIDE FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPS INITIATIVE?

8.4.1 TRANSITION

IPS principals thought training opportunities for administrative and leadership staff should be spread flexibly over longer periods of time and remain available as school needs evolve, for instance when new staff enter an IPS. During the site visits some business managers gave the opinion that their classification level should be raised in view of the increased responsibilities of their role in an IPS, this issue was particularly pertinent if the interviewees knew of other comparable schools where this had occurred. In response to suggestions for improvements, interviewees also felt that there should be increased levels of structural support, more resources for rural schools, more communication and feedback, the integration of network facilitation, and mentoring. However, many of these comments stemmed from a desire for further resources in order to improve school effectiveness which was not necessarily related to becoming an IPS. In particular, at IPS site visits, principals, deputy principals and teachers said they had received helpful support while deciding and applying to become an IPS by visiting other IPS, talking to staff at other IPS, accessing information about the IPS initiative on the Department's website, and contact with SIRU to gain information and advice. During the transition period, IPS site visit principals nominated the training provided by the Department as the most helpful support.

8.4.2 SUPPORT

There is a critical need to support the organisational and cultural change associated with the shift of management function to schools (Caldwell 2008; Gamage 2006). Most interviewees from Central office discussed the need to continuously review and improve the support provided to schools in order to align an internally centrally focussed system to a system focussed around the information needs of schools as clients. They suggested the improvement of resources such as standard documents and templates, more customised support, access to better information systems, more professional learning in performance management, streamlining processes and increasing flexibilities for schools. Regional Office staff planned to continue providing support when approached, and to focus on developing school capacity rather than providing principals with answers.

Central office and school based site visit stakeholders indicated that change in departmental culture lags behind devolution of formal autonomy to public schools in some areas. It was suggested that there should be appropriate

ongoing support for staff members facing challenges in adapting to new roles and responsibilities, thus ensuring that schools are provided with optimal support to operate as an IPS.

8.4.3 RESOURCES

Principals from all public schools felt that increased financial resources were the most critical support required to increase school effectiveness. Many principals from schools that were not IPS felt that support had decreased since the introduction of the IPS initiative. In survey comments, principals identified a need for additional financial resources in order to fund staffing increases, professional development, special projects, ICT support, and students with special needs. They also suggested faster turnarounds for the approval of budgets. A number of principals from schools that had not become an IPS suggested that there needed to be a more tailored, differentiated approach to suit the resourcing and support needs of specific schools.

8.4.4 LEADERSHIP

A key issue for the wider implementation of the IPS initiative was the need for strong, capable principals, who are able to perform as administrators and education leaders, and to build relationships with teachers and communities. Regional office staff gave the opinion that some principals had administrative capacity but lacked pedagogical expertise, while others had teaching knowledge but struggled with the administrative requirements. Further, they thought that new, inexperienced principals and transient principals might not be appropriate to lead IPS or would need additional support in order to do so. They made the suggestion that the training modules should be modified to suit regional and remote situations, and for the less capable principals who will be expected to apply and become IPS principals in the future.

8.4.5 FLEXIBILITY

Independent Public School principals advocated for greater autonomy and flexibility for their schools, including the enhancement of capacity to deal with under-performing staff. They also believed that their schools would benefit from increased support, in particular opportunities for networking and mentoring. Other suggested improvements included educating parents about the IPS initiative and making the staff selection process easier. Central office staff suggested that the IPS initiative would be improved by increased flexibility and openness to changing legislation, interpretation of policy, and changes in practices, as well as addressing resourcing, cultural issues and the current staffing model.

8.4.6 COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

The belief that the IPS initiative has created a 'two-tiered' system with significant effects on the distribution of teaching staff in public schools, along with the paucity of evidence that the IPS initiative is improving student outcomes, may have undermined support in some communities. This widespread belief, along with the common stakeholder perception that the community views IPS as more effective than other public schools, suggests the desirability of ensuring that accurate information is disseminated to educate schools and communities about the effects of the IPS initiative on the public education system in WA.

8.4.7 EQUITY

The implementation of autonomy in schools is complex, and dependent on context (World Bank 2007b). There is a need to understand that the results will not be the same for all schools. To some extent, this is a desired outcome of the flexibilities afforded to schools— to enable them to adapt to the local context and to student needs. However, there may be problems if contextual differences become structural inequities and the issue of inequity was a recurring

theme. Principals of IPS site visits, for example, were consistently concerned about potential disadvantages for students in schools that were not able to attract appropriate staff. Some stakeholders felt it was important to address the potential inequities of the current model by extending equal flexibility over staffing and budgets to all comparable schools. There were suggestions that all schools that wished to be IPS should be supported through that process, and there's a lot of interest in the outcomes of the new model which will also importantly better prepare aspiring schools to maximise their use of autonomy and flexibilities in their local contexts. In addition, it was suggested that alternative initiatives or variations to the model should be available to schools, such as rural and remote schools, for which the current IPS model is not appropriate.

8.4.8 OUTCOMES

It will be important to continue to evaluate and clarify the outcomes of the IPS initiative. The data shows that the implementation of the organisational and cultural changes necessary for effective operation as an IPS are in the very early stages at most schools. Once the conditions for independent school operation are more firmly in place, there will be a need to understand the use that IPS make of the flexibilities.

It is worth noting that finding evidence of improved student achievement will be difficult in the early stages of the implementation of autonomy (Honig and Rainey 2011; World Bank 2007b). Improvement in student achievement therefore cannot be the only indicator considered in judging success, especially as student academic performance cannot give an accurate picture of the impacts of the IPS initiative on entire school communities and the public education system. Student achievement, while an important indicator of the success of autonomy initiatives, must be considered along with equity factors, impacts on teaching and learning practice, outcomes for principals, teachers and other school staff, and outcomes for the local and school communities. In addition, since staffing has been identified as such a strong driver and outcome in spite of the existing measures showing no change in distribution of staffing levels, it may be valuable to develop instruments to measure the nature of any change.

In general, the initiative has been well conceived and implemented, with generally positive feedback regarding the support during transition and after. As a wider cohort of schools achieves IPS status, the support systems may need to be broadened and changed to suit. In addition, while improved student outcomes have been clearly identified as an objective and the one-line budget and staffing flexibilities have been clearly linked in stakeholders' minds as necessary steps to obtain better teachers, mechanisms for achieving "better teaching" other than traditional professional development – for example, work shadowing, peer or principal review etc – did not seem to be clearly identified or valued as such. The Department needs to continue to adjust the detail of the flexibilities as feedback is received. As important is continuing to develop the description and image of IPS to emphasise its quest for best practice in pedagogy, and also bringing the "other" schools into the metaphoric fold without letting IPS lose their status.

9 CONCLUSION

Overall, the story of the implementation of the IPS initiative is a positive one. The IPS principals felt, even in this early phase of the implementation, that the initiative had considerably enhanced the functioning of their school, created the opportunity to access more benefits, and would lead to increased outcomes for the whole school community. The implementation of the IPS initiative has created a cultural shift throughout the school system and for many schools the principals claimed that these changes have led to positive impacts on the community perceptions of public schools.

This evaluation has demonstrated that one of the most significant changes in IPS has been in the experiences of IPS principals. The principals involved in IPS felt empowered, and consequently believed they were able to better empower their teachers so that there was a more targeted focus on the specific needs of students. Although this change is unlikely to impact student achievement levels in the short term, it can provide the foundation for longer-term improvement across all student outcomes, including achievement and enrolment in public schools. Essentially, the evaluation found that the IPS is in its early phase, and while it has not been without challenges, the IPS initiative has yet to realise changes in student achievement or attendance at school. However, the initiative has set the scene for school improvement and it is on track to bring about whole system reform.

9.1 THE IDEA

Conceptually, IPS appears to be an acceptable concept to most principals in WA. Of course, there are still dissenting voices, particularly about the increased workload, the creation of a two-tier system, and issues with staffing. The IPS principals were particularly emphatic that while being IPS lead to a greater workload, they saw this workload as leading to positive outcomes in their schools. Those in the program were overwhelmingly supportive of the advantages of IPS, while those principals who chose not to apply did not see the benefits for their school at this point, primarily because they were very satisfied with things as they are and simply did not see a need for change. As indicated from the cluster analysis other public school principals were satisfied with their current school culture (Figure 23), and philosophically disagreed with the notion of IPS (Figure 24). Furthermore, other public school principals felt they had different priorities, or did not have the capacity to embark on such a change. It is also interesting to note that those who applied to take part in the initiative but were unsuccessful had the greatest concerns about the idea and process, particularly and not surprisingly the selection process.

Organisational change theory provides a way of understanding the implications of such reform and the organisations involved. Heward et al.'s (2007) change theory depicts a continuum based on the concept of driving and resisting forces that together influence an organisation's level of change. The theory is based on the notion that every organisation will be in different states of 'readiness to change'. There are both driving and resisting forces which act on organisations and influence their 'readiness to change' (see Figure 30). Some organisations will have the necessary infrastructure to be part of the innovation. As in the case of the first cohort of IPS, it was the high achieving, affluent, and city based schools that were most willing to tackle reform and hence had a high level of readiness for change. However, there will be other schools that will not be as ready at this stage.

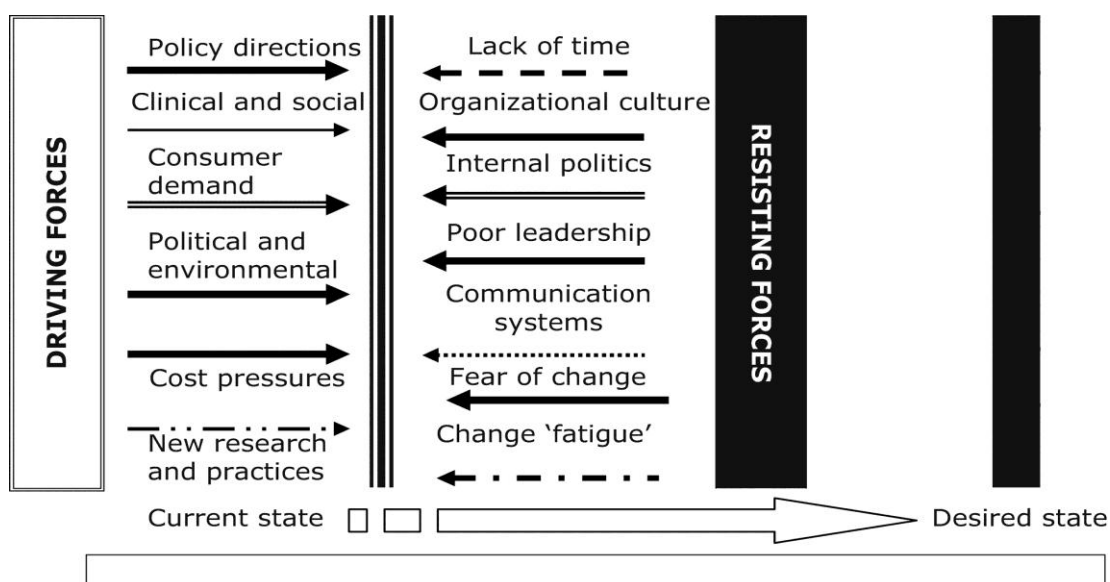


Figure 30: Driving and resisting forces influencing change (adapted from Heward, Hutchins & Keleher, 2007)

Finding the balance within these forces can determine how schools are most ready to adopt reform. This notion of readiness for change fits very well with Rogers's (1962) diffusion of innovation theory, which seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate innovation spreads or has uptake. This theory states that individuals will be in different stages along the diffusion curve (see Figure 31). The stage that they are in is dependent on a range of factors, with four main factors influencing diffusion, namely: innovation, information channels, time, and social system (Rogers, 1962). This theory is concomitant with organisational change theory – but is more individually-focused and explains individual diversity in terms of time taken to utilise innovative technologies. This theory clearly highlights the 'readiness to change' phenomenon where an individual who is a 'laggard' or the type of person who takes a long time to adopt an innovation would also have a low 'readiness to change' (Rogers, 1962). The innovation diffusion curve provides a pictorial representation of the diversity in uptake of new innovations. Organisations could also be placed on this curve, where early adopters would be those with a high 'readiness to change' and strong driving forces, and 'laggards' would be those with a low 'readiness to change' and strong resisting forces.

9.2 THE IMPLEMENTATION

Overall, the evaluation data provides a map of the level of implementation of the IPS initiative thus far, and posits an explanation for the direction the IPS initiative is moving in. While most aspects of the implementation appear on target, a number of questions arise including what level or depth of adoption of autonomy it is reasonable to expect principals to engage in and what level of benefit would be expected as a consequence of the initiative reforms thus far. In addition, it is important to consider what characteristics can support a high degree of adoption of autonomy over the continuing implementation of the initiative.

Through the principals' survey it was established that schools within the IPS initiative have varying levels of uptake, they perceive varying levels of school change attributable to the IPS initiative, and can articulate varying benefits of engagement. Moreover, these schools move at different paces when implementing innovation and reform. As discussed the survey identified three clusters of high, moderate and minimum perceptions of engagement, although it was noted that these clusters of schools did not necessarily align with the length of time the schools had been engaged in the initiative. This may suggest that schools come into the program with varying levels of readiness; that is, the capacity and willingness to engage. Different priorities, desire for change and context differences will influence this readiness process. Rogers's theory of rate of diffusion suggests that the adoption of innovations is best represented by an s-curve on a graph. The theory suggests that adoption commences gradually in the beginning,

moving into a period of rapid growth that will then taper off, become stable, and eventually decline (Rogers, 1962). Figure 31 below provides a high level illustration of Rogers’ theory in relation to the IPS initiative.

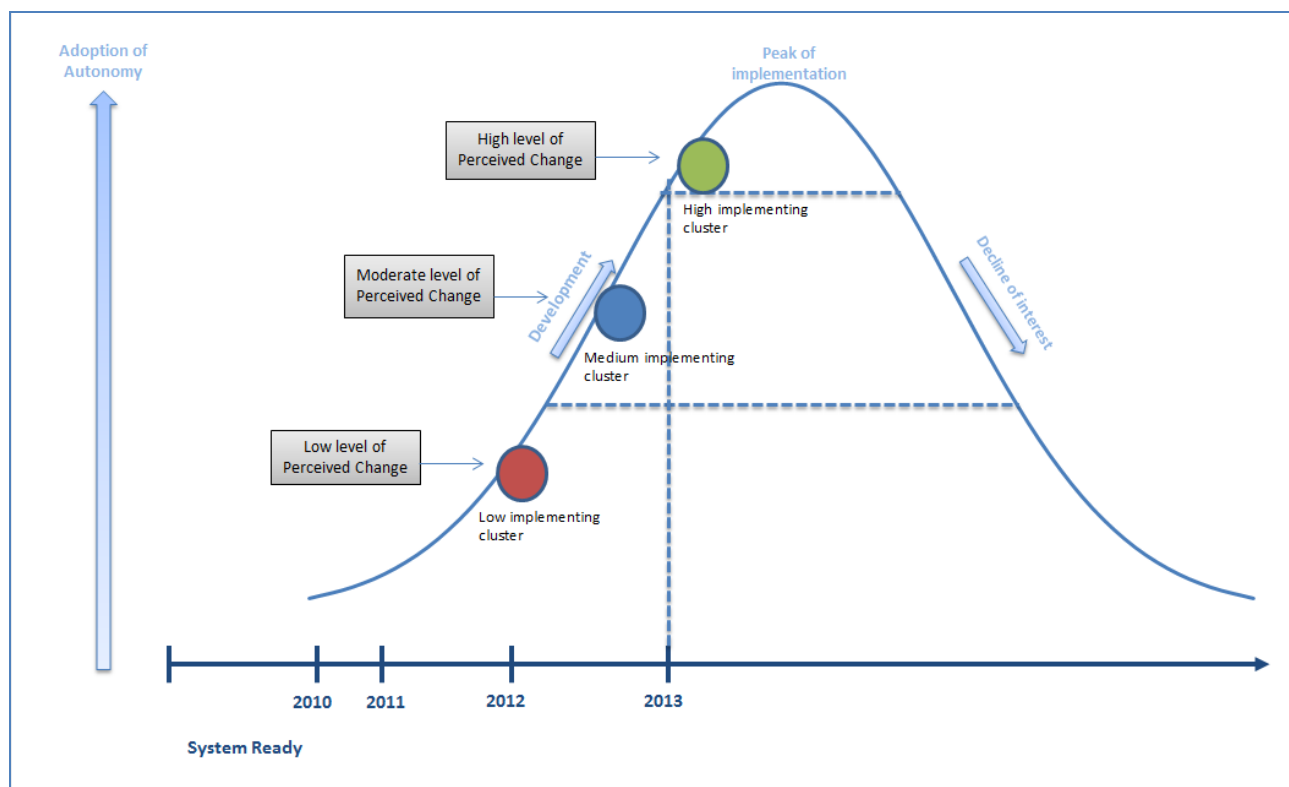


Figure 31: The IPS initiative’s life course development

At this early stage of reform the clusters may reflect that schools could enter the initiative with varying capacity to fully adopt the reform and consequently that schools may need to focus on other elements within their school (e.g., increasing parent engagement) before they take on more levels of autonomy or flexibilities. This means that the program overall has varying degrees of implementation across the cohorts and clusters of schools.

Understanding the process of the implementation for this reform is important on a whole state and an individual school level. Determining the influencing factors that serve to hinder or support adoption will support the provision of targeted resourcing and continuing enhancement of the implementation model and importantly, will allow for timelines to be set to track success. .

It appears that there is no one-size-fits-all model of adoption, given the varying stages of development the schools are experiencing. Moreover a generic model in terms of levels of support provided to schools may not be the most appropriate approach if schools are at varying levels of readiness to adopt. While factors such as SES, remoteness, level of adoption or impact do not seem to make a difference in terms of those who choose to join the IPS initiative, it will be important to monitor contributing contextual factors as traditionally it is these factors that have determined priorities of reform in schools. These contextual factors are likely to be particularly important as the initiative becomes more pervasive and mature.

Successful operationalisation of a theory of change relies on a plan for implementation. There are many useful models that guide and explain successful implementation. Michael Barber’s Deliverology model, for example has been very successful in previous education settings (Barber, 2008, 2013). Barber et al. (2011) suggest that change will occur when clear priorities are established, focus is placed on concrete measures of progress, data is used to determine what is working or not and all activities are reorganised around the achievement of these goals. While

there are many processes involved in this method, fundamentally there are five components: developing a foundation for delivery; understanding the challenge of delivery; planning; driving; and identifying and esteeming success from change. These are detailed further in Appendix F.

These processes of change are powerful, but they are “destination free”. The destination in the current case is very much related to having major and positive impacts on student learning in our schools, by way of the greater flexibilities and autonomy now available to the IPS principals.

This change model provides a valuable lens through which to understand implementation and guide schools to understand the process of change required. This model of change might also aid further professional development to ensure increased implementation uptake at a school level. For the IPS initiative, it is evident that at a whole state level a process of implementation has been established and many of Barber’s premises are obvious; for example, there is a specific group, in this case SIRU, that has been established to develop a foundation for delivery and provide support during the transition phase. Its task has been to develop, promote and monitor the initiative to support change and alleviate any problems where feasible during this critical transition phase. In examining the reform at a system level, through the lens of Barber’s model, it is clear that there is still some way to go for the IPS initiative to achieve its vision of reform. For instance, there is still a need to focus on the high-level reform within Central office and change its means of operation, such that it can respond to requests from the IPS schools and provide appropriate support and resources accordingly. An acknowledgement of Central office’s role and input thus far is important, as well as the continuing need to sustain and further develop systems of change. While elements of Barber’s 5 premises are observable in the overall plan for the IPS initiative, the elements are not as evident in the implementation at the individual school level. The information provided from the site visits demonstrated variable approaches to change within schools. The purpose of any change model is to maximise fidelity, dosage and degree of implementation towards specified and desired outcomes. Barber’s model provides a useful mechanism for further exploration of school level implementation for this initiative with a view to the above.

9.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

While it is clear that schools are implementing the initiative at different rates and to varying degrees, it is important to understand what factors are influencing this variability in implementation. Figure 32 below depicts the core elements that need to be in place in order to bring about the level of implementation required to achieve the objectives of the IPS initiative. A continuum of the depth of adoption of autonomy is illustrated in the figure, which aligns with the specific elements of influence on the process of autonomy adoption. These elements of influence fall into two categories: firstly the principal’s ‘mindset’, and secondly ‘engagement’ by the system and community. With any innovation, but particularly those related to a school setting, there are a multitude of elements that come into play, however the central element in this innovation is the principal. In terms of the implementation of the IPS initiative, there are a number of critical factors that relate to the principal as a change agent, most important of these being the principal’s mindset and the support for the principal at key points (e.g., the engagement of the school group and system, and support of and degree of implementation during the transition process). The figure illustrates the change process, including the contextual factors, and the driving and resisting forces which act on schools to determine their level of readiness to adopt the initiative, and subsequently influence the implementation of the initiative, and the extent to which the desired outcomes are achieved. It is clear from the evaluation that these contextual factors acting on individual schools need to be addressed at an early stage, as they play an important role in the success of IPS implementation. These contextual factors include schools priorities, its readiness to change and adopt, its context the school, capacity and the principal’s belief in the notion of autonomy.

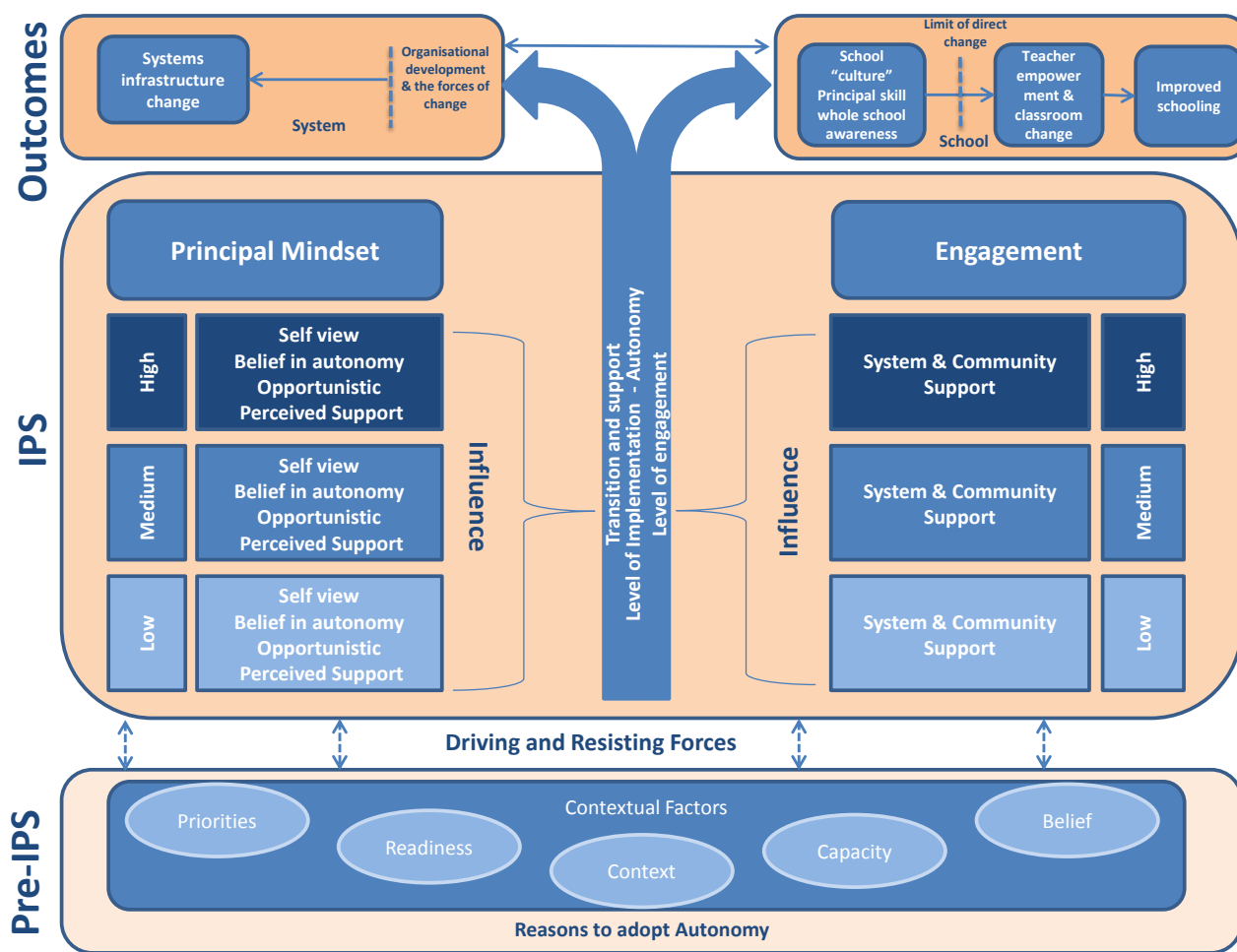


Figure 32: Elements that impact on implementation and outcomes

The various elements depicted in the diagram above are described further in the sections that follow.

Level of implementation

As previously described, the data has identified three clear clusters of IPS, suggesting that schools coming into the IPS initiative are at varying levels of readiness to adopt the innovation. This is particularly the case in regard to the principal’s mindset and engagement with the system and community support - all of which impact on their ability to implement the IPS initiative successfully in their school.

Transition

It is known that schools adopt reforms at varying paces and often require different levels of support or stimuli hence, the transition phase for IPS is significant. The transition phase is the point at which all principals gather the necessary resources, information and skills required to commence the initiative, and bring them all together to establish the foundation for implementation. However it is important to recognise that each principal is entering the innovation with differing levels of readiness to adopt.

In addition to the variation in readiness across the principals, the wider school community’s readiness needs to be taken into account. Readiness is determined by willingness and capacity to be engaged, and in the context of the IPS initiative it relates primarily to the principal, but is also influenced by the level of buy-in from the whole school. The analysis of the survey data illustrates that this readiness is variable amongst the principal group and across school communities.

Principal's mindset

As noted in Figure 32 above, this evaluation has illustrated four elements that emerged which relate to the principals' understanding of their role. First, their individual psychological resources, which can be explained by factors such as confidence, skill, motivation to implement and their self-view as principal of their school. In essence, this is about the principal's mindset as to whether they are confident in their capacity to be the champion of the initiative.

There is a corpus of academic literature that identifies a connection between the mindset of principals and cultural change in schools; further linking this cultural change to the success of the school as a whole (Gamage, 2006; Hallinger & Heck, 1999). In their overview of research in this area, Hallinger and Heck (1999) found that school leaders have an indirect impact via their influence on teachers, and it is the school and classroom practices that have a direct impact on student learning. Hallinger and Heck (1999) further suggest that school leaders are culturally and socially situated, and thus they are influenced by the sociocultural and political contexts in which they operate. In the case of the IPS initiative, it is important to consider the actions of principals within the context of the public school system as a whole. School autonomy creates opportunities for school principals to utilise transformational and instructional capacities, if implemented within a supportive structure in which their core responsibilities to improve teaching and learning are clearly defined (Pont et al., 2008). The influence of these factors means that the impact of contextual leadership practices on learning outcomes is more important than the delineation of precise models; effective school leadership requires aspects of transformational leadership supported by a solid instructional core (Leithwood, 2012). Ultimately, the role of the principal is to create the conditions for effective learning and to develop a collaborative impact among the teachers in their school using their leadership tools and skills, and in doing so, they are setting the scene for improved teaching and learning. (Leithwood et al. 2004).

The next characteristic that contributes to the principal's mindset is the belief that more autonomy will bring greater benefits to their school, and this involves a sense of empowerment. The strength of the principal's belief in autonomy is directly proportional to the probability of their engagement and perception of change. Principals who are somewhat opportunistic or have the creativity and willingness to take on innovation can lead to a greater likelihood of implementing changes such as the IPS initiative, which contributes to the degree of implementation of IPS. It is important to note that this quality is one that many principals have and may use regardless of their involvement in the IPS initiative. Principals who do possess these characteristics are likely to engage with any initiative that they perceive brings benefit to their school, as they are able to recognise the potential for change and/or benefit for their school, which is an important leadership quality.

The final defining characteristic that is fundamental to the principal's mindset is the perception of support or engagement with the initiative by the school community and the sector. This factor will determine the degree of autonomy that can be adopted and will delineate how opportunities to achieve classroom impact can be enacted. If the principal has little support, time that has been allocated to the implementation stage must be invested in championing the idea, gaining support and garnering those who will engage in change as opposed to implementing the actual initiative. Thus those principals who can then persuade their teachers that the initiative is significant and has the potential to benefit the school are likely to be more successful in achieving a greater level of autonomy.

The perception of sectoral support is clearly a critical component of this initiative. Along with this sector support the principals also need and value the support of the school community at large. Parental engagement is critical when it comes to the school board and their reactions and support for the IPS initiative changes. Moreover, the principals need to be confident that they have the backing of their community and the sector, and have the knowledge and confidence that the parents will engage with the school as it moves to a more complete state of implementation; without this, the role of the principal is a challenging and isolated one, and as noted above, this can detract from the process of implementation as time needs to be invested in consulting and collaborating with the community to secure their support.

The most critical level of perceived support that the principal needs for maximal implementation is that of the teachers. The engagement of teachers suggests it may be feasible to bring about whole school change and achieve increased learning outcomes. To date, over half of the IPS principals claim that the IPS initiative has led to improved teaching and learning practices; there is now an opportunity for the other IPS principals to work collaboratively to empower their teachers to take the opportunity IPS affords to improve teaching and learning, and to ensure that these changes lead to enhanced student learning and achievement. To empower teachers, a level of engagement in the idea is necessary; this establishes the necessary foundation for translation of the initiative in the classroom, which in turn will increase the implementation of the initiative. This strong multi-level engagement around a plan for school improvement is critical for a maximal degree of implementation of the initiative.

The theory of change for IPS initiative leads to a number of outcomes. The top of the diagram (Figure 32) suggests a trajectory that includes a number of specific outcomes. At this stage of the IPS development there has been no evidence to indicate changes in enrolments or student achievement. That there are no changes even in those IPS schools that have been in process three years is somewhat concerning even though it could be argued that change in classrooms and thence the effect of these changes on students may take longer than three years. After three years, it is clear that principals and their perceptions of teachers' level of satisfaction is higher, hence the next direction for the IPS initiative could be to support initiatives to use the autonomy to improve what occurs in classrooms, and hence impact on student outcomes.

Student outcomes

As indicated above, the evaluation suggests that there has been limited change in outcomes for students, including achievement, enrolment, attendance, and exclusions and suspensions. Given the complexities of the relationship between such outcomes and the degree of school autonomy that is reflected in the literature, this is perhaps not surprising. Theoretically, school autonomy over staffing and budgets in highly-developed countries with strong public institutions and well-functioning schools can be expected to have positive effects on student achievement (Hanushek et al. 2012), however in practice, evaluations of school-based management in the USA have found that fundamental changes in school dynamics, such as parental involvement or changes in teaching practice occur within approximately five years, with changes in more indirectly linked indicators, such as student achievement not evident until about eight years after the initiative commences (Barrera-Osoria et al., 2009). Barrera-Osoria et al. suggest that, as student learning occurs as a cumulative process, students will only begin to demonstrate learning gains from autonomy reforms after at least five years of exposure (2009).

Significant increases in student achievement as a consequence of the IPS initiative are likely to take time to be realised, and will emerge from a focus on more effective teaching practices and broader school-changes such as the development of positive learning environments. Similarly, changes in student behaviour, enrolment, and attendance are likely to emerge from more innovative school-wide approaches towards behaviour management and marketing, both of which appear to be considered more possible under the IPS initiative.

Teacher outcomes

It is clear from the evaluation that principals believe that the IPS initiative has had a positive impact on many teachers. In the survey, principals reported that teachers demonstrated an increased motivation and energy to bring about changes. With this greater level of motivation, they claimed that teachers felt more empowered and more able to initiate innovative practices to support effective teaching and learning, including the provision of more focused resources for the classroom. Much educational research, as outlined in the project's literature review, supports the understanding that motivation is an essential factor in effective teaching. Over time, this increased motivation is likely to have significant positive impacts on teaching and learning practices. Motivated teachers become more enthusiastic about reflecting on and improving their practice and impact; thus empowering teachers to be willing to implement new ideas in the classroom, and this can be expected to have significant benefits for students.

At this stage in the implementation of the IPS initiative, the changes described are more at the level of perception and attitude. Given this understanding, the evaluation team would recommend that it is now time to focus on what happens inside classrooms in IPS to fully realise the benefits of these perception changes. That is, given the changes in mindset, it may be more helpful to focus on changes in collaboration amongst teachers to focus on their impact collectively, and how teachers work to understand and implement enhancements to their classroom practices. Rather than focusing on the actions of individual teachers, understanding broader cultural changes amongst IPS teachers in WA may be more useful.

School outcomes

At the school level, the implementation of the IPS initiative has increased the opportunity for change and reform, however, IPS demonstrate differing degrees of progress and success in this. School cultural change is evident in many IPS; schools are in general, more engaged in strategic thinking, and principals are more inclined to believe in the vision of their schools and become champions for change. Clearly the essential success factor of the implementation of IPS in schools has been readiness for whole school change, such that differing degrees of readiness are likely to account in part for the varying degrees of success of schools implementing the IPS initiative.

The evaluation findings reinforce the notion that the role of the principal is central to success in school reform, but also demonstrate that there are significant impacts on principals implementing initiatives offering greater autonomy to schools. Many principals have demonstrated a change in mindset, as noted above, and indicate that they have experienced greater authority and control under the IPS initiative.

The evaluation findings also emphasise the increased responsibility and accountability that are consequences of greater autonomy, and a greater emphasis on informed decision-making and change in school leadership processes. Indeed, many principals identified a sense of creativity arising from greater possibilities to take opportunities. All of these factors could support positive longer-term impacts on teaching and learning, as well as support other initiatives in school management, because principals are better-placed to understand the unique contexts of their schools, and can become more effective in identifying innovative practices that are appropriate to their settings. With greater autonomy, principals have shown that they are also more motivated and invested in the success of their schools, thus encouraging a stronger sense of entrepreneurship and engagement as school leaders, for example large benefits were claimed by more efficiently targeting available resources to address local needs.

Systemic outcomes

The implementation of the IPS initiative has, overall, had a positive effect on the public school system. It has raised the profile of public schools and contributed to a sense of renewal and positive reform. However, there have been some negative effects, particularly due to the existence of both IPS and other public schools in the same system. There has been negative media attention on the status of other public schools, however most other public school principals do not appear to share this negative view and tend to be satisfied with their current state of practice.

In some cases, there remains an issue of an 'us and them' mentality amongst schools that have applied to become an IPS but have been unsuccessful. In terms of the selection of schools, it appears that schools that had higher average achievement scores were selected earlier, a trend which is relatively common in school autonomy initiatives, where schools with cohorts of higher achieving students are more successful in being selected for these initiatives.

The complexity that occurs as a consequence of working towards school change as well as system change cannot be underestimated in this venture. There is little doubt that the system has had to adapt to support this innovation and this process of adaptation is still developing. This change appears to be occurring at a slow pace and there are pockets of change mediated through action and need, as Central office adapts to being asked for support rather than focusing on how initiatives are enacted in schools. This phenomenon of an innovation introducing change to the host system is not uncommon. In this case, given the significant influence of system change on the initiative and the

parallel influence of the system on the initiative itself, monitoring this level of change and support most definitely needs to be considered.

As has been stated frequently throughout this discussion, and will be reiterated here, there is a continuum apparent in the IPS initiative with IPS reaching varying degrees of autonomy. Some schools have travelled further along the path to autonomy than others, if they have experienced greater success in implementing IPS. Across the system, working conditions and roles have changed under the IPS initiative. Increases to the administrative and managerial responsibilities under autonomy will almost inevitably alter the workload of school leaders. This is not necessarily a negative finding as most groups, while they acknowledge the issue of working conditions, they see the benefit of working harder to ensure the success of the initiative. It is also possible that workloads have increased during the early stages of the implementation of the IPS initiative because school and Department staff face a period of readjustment and a significant learning curve. For example, conceptualising time as a resource and prioritising the most essential elements of change are critical factors for such reform (Jensen et al., 2012). Over time, staff will adjust to the new processes and responsibilities and may find their workloads reducing as a result. Other factors may also ease workload in the longer term, such as the sharing of resources amongst cluster schools. More successful schools have already begun to manage resources more strategically, as well as provide support to schools with fewer resources or those facing the challenges associated with operating in lower socioeconomic areas.

The issue also fits with schools selecting to be a part of the IPS initiative and the uptake in the level of flexibilities; as described schools have competing priorities and the decision to distribute load and energy appropriate to priorities is essential. Determining the balance between the driving and resisting forces so as to respond to the local context and available resources is essential for school leaders. However, it could also be pointed out that flexibility, by definition, enables schools to be more responsive to local conditions, meaning that different schools will target different areas requiring change or improvement. By giving ownership of reform to the stakeholders on the frontline of the intervention, flexibility may also contribute to the maintenance of behavioural and cultural change (Jensen et al. 2012).

Staffing is a dominant theme considered by both IPS and other public schools in all contexts. In 2011, a performance audit of the teacher placement system in public schools, conducted by the Western Australian Auditor General, described the challenge of managing a workforce of 22,000 teachers from almost 800 public schools dispersed across a large and diverse geographical area, with over one-third of teachers working in non-metropolitan areas. The IPS initiative and School Select were intended to enhance the ability of schools to recruit teachers suited to their local needs. However, the Auditor General identified the risks of changed staffing procedures for schools which are not competitive in attracting suitable teachers. The audit acknowledged the need, in the development of reforms, to balance the needs of hard to staff schools with those of schools who are able to benefit from merit selection, while ensuring that teacher placement processes lead to the best possible delivery of education programs to students.

The complexity of managing these competing needs and risks must be at the forefront of the IPS initiative, thus monitoring and paying attention to the sector need is critical. One such risk is that of redeployees. IPS have the responsibility to conduct recruitment processes to find staff for their schools, and are no longer required to participate in the annual bulk run of central placements, or to accept redeployees, who are moved into the placement pool after their permanent positions cease due to school closures or decreases in enrolment. The Auditor General found that the increase in IPS would mean that fewer positions were available for redeployees. However, other public schools are required to consider redeployees for advertised positions if using School Select, and may have redeployees placed with them by Central office as a result of DoE's legal obligation to find positions for these teachers. The Auditor General recommended that the DoE develop plans to assist schools and staff that were negatively affected by these changes (Murphy, 2011). There is no evidence that these redeployees are necessarily any better or worse than any other teacher, although there have been some claims that redeployees that move into other public schools are not optimum. Caution is needed until there is evidence for this claim.

Similarly, it was a common view that regional and remote placements need to be a focus for the sector, to ensure the IPS initiative does not disadvantage these areas. The Western Australian public school system is one of the most geographically dispersed education districts in the world where one-third of public schools are in non-metropolitan locations, and remoteness is one of the main factors causing a school to experience difficulty in attracting and retaining staff (Murphy, 2011). Managing the perception of this risk will be imperative for IPS going forward. However, the evaluation team found no evidence to believe that very remote, remote, country and city schools were differentially impacted by the IPS initiative.

Discussions with the varied stakeholders drew attention to varied perceptions of the impact of IPS on the system, in particular the risk that a different model of staffing and resourcing would contribute to a 'two-tiered' system. The perception that the IPS initiative may lead to inequities between schools appears to stem from the grouping of the first cohort, that on average could be described as high achieving, more affluent, and city based schools. While this is certainly true for many schools in the first cohort, the most defining characteristic is their desire for innovation.

This begs the question as to whether it may not be inherently problematic that schools within the same system are managed differently under different conditions. Mourshed et al. (2010) suggested that within an environment of institutional stability and existing education quality, contextual variations in school operation may be desirable, as reforms gain impetus from the values and expertise of frontline educators. The result is a multi-layered education framework in which a variety of models are available to support the development of schools in ways specific to the needs of their student body, with no "one size fits all" model for continuing school improvement. Hence, offering schools a choice of operational models need not lead to systematic inequity, if all schools receive sufficient support to pursue strategies that are genuinely suitable for their circumstances.

Community outcomes

The literature identified a range of potential opportunities that result from increasing school autonomy and relate to a greater involvement of communities in schools. Principals in IPS noted changes in the relationships between schools and communities, in many cases suggesting there was increased community involvement and engagement with the school. There is a high level of awareness of the IPS initiative across the state, and in some cases the initiative has improved schools' standing in the community and increased the community's pride in the school (as reported by the principals). There is, however, more work to be done in some schools to forge stronger links with communities. It is possible that schools that have been less successful in forging links with their communities will benefit in future from the experiences of more successful schools, further highlighting the importance of information and resource-sharing across school clusters.

9.4 RE-VISITING THE PROGRAM LOGIC

The figure below depicts the program logic developed during the clarification stage of the evaluation, subsequently validated by the literature review. This section revisits the program logic and discusses its validity in light of the information collected by the evaluation. The normative logic model, provided in Figure 33 describes two phases of the IPS initiative in a school, namely the induction and implementation phase. Although the school is the primary unit of analysis, the logic also describes the roles for the school principal and the roles of expected contributions by other agencies, such as the Department of Education.

The evaluation provides information that allows for the determination of the progress of the IPS theory of change. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to review and refine the initial constructs and consider the next iteration of the logic model or theory of change. The figure highlights those constructs that have been identified as themes emerging from the evaluation data.

The theory and direction of the logic has been validated by the evaluation results. There is the sense that the initiative is some way through its setup phase however it is yet to realise a fully developed process that can produce long-term

gains. There is little doubt that the main elements of the initial logic are core to the implementation of the IPS initiative, namely the principal, and second the principal's role in relation to their teachers and school community.

One area that was not predicted within the program theory was the significant input of the induction process in the transition phase. The transition was a significant element in the implementation process and provided principals with the knowledge of the infrastructure necessary to move through the process of implementation. In addition, it was demonstrated that principals used this information in a variety of ways and contexts to bring about change in their role while setting up, documenting and focusing on action. The logic predicts that principals will experience increased autonomy, creativity, risk-taking as well as responsibility, which will in turn impact on the school community in a variety of ways. The evaluation ratified and subsequently strengthened our understanding of this process, by demonstrating that a principal's mindset is core to the success of the IPS initiative in schools. Furthermore the ideas of creativity, entrepreneurship, risk-taking as well as accountability and responsibility are embodied in this mindset through the principal's confidence, belief and support structures. The logic outlines the importance of external support, and the evaluation confirmed that system and community support were integral to success. The importance of an actively supportive system was continually highlighted in the evaluation and appears to have greater relevance than first envisaged.

This nominative logic highlights a strong accountability and reporting system although in this initial phase of the IPS initiative evaluation this was not nominated as a specific element essential to the implementation. However, to ensure ongoing development, it is suggested that monitoring and evaluation should be emphasised as an integral part of the IPS induction process and professional development, so that a strong evidence base is accrued and subsequently feedback becomes a focus which drives an explicit improvement agenda in the school and classroom.

The outcomes that are mapped by the logic suggest school improvement through student achievement, resourcing and community engagement, which will in turn lead to positive long term impacts directed towards school culture, staff well-being, student enrolments and outcomes, and public image. The perception of increases in school culture and resource efficiency were highlighted as outcomes that IPS has contributed to; similarly, community involvement and an increased public image of the school system were noted as emerging trends. Other predicted outcomes are yet to be realised, and as suggested this may be a consequence of readiness to engage and the degree of implementation at the time of the evaluation. Nevertheless, it is important to explore the outcomes that have been mapped. The story of IPS thus far suggests that bringing about change in student achievement, may be outside the realm of direct influence of this stage of IPS, due to the fact that to increase student achievement, the focus must be on the classroom (Hattie, 2008). Similarly, increasing student enrolment is a complex issue that depends upon contextual and demographic factors as well as marketing and image. All of the outcome components within the logic are both complex and complicated variables and require mapping to understand the contribution that IPS can make. Hence the logic now needs to be revisited to guide the next phase of implementation.

Many of the IPS are approaching their "peak of implementation phase" and now their task is to use the benefits of this implementation to realise the impact on teachers and students. This process is most likely to happen through changes within the classrooms as the IPS have engendered positive attitudes in becoming an IPS, they can now look to within-class enhancements. IPS have the opportunity to focus on the student needs, teaching and learning, and school climate to invite students to attend and learn. To do this schools need principals who are ready to champion the next of change, they need support of the whole school community and most importantly the support of an education system that provides the direction and resources to promote this change in the classroom.

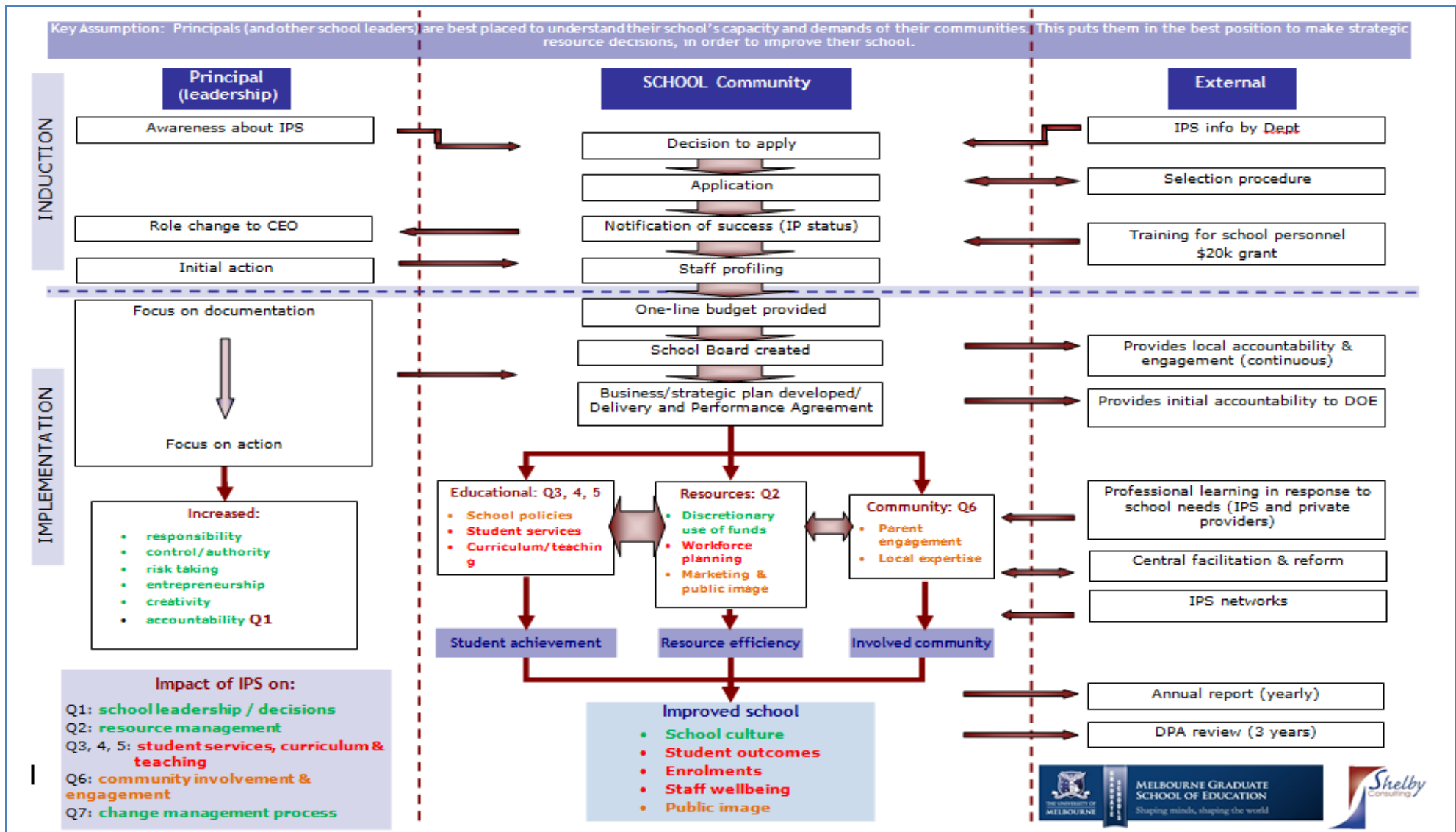


Figure 33: The Program Logic for the IPS Initiative

It is recommended that in revisiting the logic, the evaluation information is used to explore future enhancement and directions – for example a new phase of professional development that capitalises on the success of the transition process to support principals to focus on using the various flexibilities to target classroom change. Program logics are dynamic and fluid documents that guide the planning and the action to promote change.

9.5 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The implementation of the IPS initiative is ongoing, and there are a number of factors and outcomes that can be considered in the medium and long term. In terms of the literature, the experiences of schools and the Department under the IPS initiative reflect progress towards the potential benefits of greater autonomy. There have been positive effects for schools, communities, and the system as a whole. Principals have demonstrated a change in mindset that bodes well for the future success of the IPS initiative, and this change of mindset should be further promoted into the next stages of implementation. The level of principal engagement and motivation is a very significant factor in ensuring the success of school reform and it is perhaps appropriate to now convert this change in mindset towards enhancing student outcomes. This evaluation has also reflected the importance of the transition period, also identified in the literature. Transition processes and support also need to be a focus for future development in the initiative and a shift in focus towards the impacts the initiative has had within the classroom, on both teaching and learning, would be valuable in years to come. The variable implementation of the IPS initiative could well be influenced by a more impactful transition phase. Part of this focus will involve examining how to convert benefits from the IPS initiative into changes in student achievement, attendance, behaviour, and enrolments, as well as the variations in teaching practices and innovation and the experiences of teachers.

The literature review for this evaluation highlighted the complexity of school autonomy initiatives. Such initiatives take many forms, and we have already noted the value of seeing autonomy as a continuum. During the initial stages of the implementation of the IPS initiative covered by this evaluation, we have seen a specifically Western Australian autonomy begin to emerge. Although there have been some negative factors, the character of WA's autonomy is largely proving to be positive, with greater motivation and innovation increasingly supported in schools. Many of the negative issues – such as the 'us and them' mentality emerging from the staggered implementation of the IPS initiative – may become less significant over time. Similarly, increased workloads may not be as great an issue once school and Department staff have become comfortable with new policies and procedures. It is clear that IPS principals considered the implementation to be a high workload, but they appeared positive about the benefits of this implementation. The positive factors, such as the change in mindset of principals, increased motivation of teachers, increased opportunity for creativity, and in some cases the greater involvement and increased status of schools in communities demonstrate something of the motivated, energised, and engaged character of WA autonomy – a character that should certainly be supported and reinforced in the ongoing implementation of the IPS initiative.

The common themes that emerge from the evaluation are establishing an understanding of a school and principal's readiness to adopt the IPS innovation. Taking into consideration that there are many levels of autonomy or flexibilities that schools can adopt, schools can be encouraged to opt in according to their level readiness and context. Similarly, support needs to be targeted to their specific needs, and thus be targeted towards progression. Autonomy allows the schools to choose the direction and pace at which they need to move. The one-size-fits-all approach has little place within this reform. In considering these themes, there were several 'big ideas' that emerged from amongst the multitude of evaluative suggestions for future progress; these ideas focus on staffing, professional development for principals, community engagement, and critically, a focus on teaching and learning. Most importantly the theme of 'where to next?' emerges. As suggested, building on the program logic to articulate this phase is critical to ensure progression. Within this, a number of specific elements could be considered, as described below:

- Consider developing a more structured assessment of a school's and principal's readiness to engage in autonomy, one that allows for self-review and establishing strategic targets.
- Utilise the successful transition program to build the next support structure.
- Encourage a direction that moves towards principals building on their positive school culture gains to focus on the classroom and empowering teachers.
- Provide support for principals to develop a 'mindset' that aids a progressive model of autonomy.
- Consider the importance of community engagement and specific means of targeted development and support, for example in building partnerships.
- In considering the next steps, turn some focus to staffing, in particular groups like redeployees.
- Enhancing capacity around monitoring and evaluation within the sector and the schools should be an imperative. Encouraging schools to set targets based on data, and to engage in continual review of targets and feedback will ensure a notion of collective impact that will lead to further progression.
- Thus, consider the evaluation as a baseline from which to build and ensure the evaluative data forms the basis of further progression of the initiative.

As suggested at the beginning of this discussion, the story of the early implementation of the IPS initiative is a positive one, while not without challenge. The IPS initiative appears to be on the cusp of change that is demonstrable at a classroom level. Many of the IPS are approaching their "peak of implementation phase" and now their task is to use the benefits of this implementation to realise the impact on teachers and students. This is most likely to happen by way of changes within the classrooms; as the IPS have engendered positive attitudes in becoming an IPS, they can now look to within-class enhancements. IPS have the opportunity to focus on the student needs, teaching and learning, and fostering a school climate that invites students to attend and learn. To do this, schools need principals who are ready to champion the next change, they need support of the whole school community, and most importantly the support of an education system that provides the direction and resources to promote this change in the classroom.

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11.1 APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a summary of the literature review conducted to validate the program logic. It is organized under the following subsections:

1. What is autonomy
2. Methodology
3. Implementing SBM
4. Barriers and enablers in Implementation
5. Outcomes of School Economy
6. Relationship between literature and program logic

11.1.1 WHAT IS SCHOOL AUTONOMY?

School autonomy is complex, both in theory and in practice. The literature provides many terms to describe initiatives giving public schools increased responsibility over decision-making, reflecting the difficulty in defining such programs and their underpinning policies. The literature refers to school autonomy alongside devolution, decentralisation, and school-based management (hereafter SBM). To a degree, the use of these terms follows historical trends, with SBM the most commonly used term in recent works (see, for example Caldwell, 2005; The World Bank, 2007c; Gamage & Zajda (eds) 2009). However, the terms do refer to different elements or methods of autonomy, and conflicting interpretations appear across different sources, identifying, for example, contradictory ideas of decentralised schools as both lacking real authority and having authority over decision-making (WAPPA, 2010; and Caldwell, 2005 respectively). Such confusion over the terminology of autonomy and school-based management is unhelpful and perhaps unnecessary – it is likely more helpful to view any definition as flexible, in order to accommodate differing levels and types of responsibility and independence. We can therefore refer to autonomy, as Caldwell (2005; 2009) suggests, as

“a broadly defined set of processes where decision-making responsibility on significant matters is systematically and consistently shifted to schools and school communities, within centrally-managed frameworks.”

It is worth noting that this definition supports the idea that schools often do not have full autonomy over decision-making. Caldwell (2009) reports that less than half of school decision-making is carried out with full authority, and this variation in degrees of authority contributes to the need for a flexible definition. Essentially, as McInerney (2001) highlights, school-based management can mean

different things to different people. As this review highlights, the reality of autonomy is far more varied and more complex than any simple definition would suggest.

Part of the complexity of autonomy arises from the plethora of contexts it has been implemented in. Increasing school responsibility for decision-making is a growing trend worldwide, having appeared in various forms in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America (Gamage & Zajda, 2009). There is a risk – as critics such as Smyth (2008; 2011) identify – of blindly accepting that what appears to be an almost inevitable global movement will always have positive outcomes. This certainly has not been the case with previous educational change initiatives, and the literature highlights that the multitude of factors involved in autonomous school management and the many elements of implementation significantly impact on outcomes. Worth noting is that school autonomy is not universal. There remain centralised education systems, and there have been movements towards increasing centralisation of decision-making in some regions (OECD, 2004, cited in Caldwell, 2009). Neither is it the case that schools in public systems are granted complete authority over decision-making. Full autonomy is rare – most often, schools make decisions within the boundaries of a centrally determined framework (Caldwell, 2009).

The varied realities of school autonomy and the impact of context on its outcomes further support the need for a flexible definition. In fact, a more rigid definition would contradict what is stated as one of the key motivating factors for increasing autonomy – the opportunity to provide for the differentiation and greater freedom of schools (Caldwell, 2005). Decentralisation can also be driven by a perceived need to reduce the costs and size of bureaucracies, a desire to empower the community, the potential to increase professionalism by providing teachers with decision-making responsibilities, and responding to local needs (Caldwell, 2009). The motivating forces underlying autonomy initiatives may impact on the structures autonomy take, which vary significantly between, and sometimes within, systems. Systems of SBM, or autonomy, can therefore be viewed along a continuum, recognising that schools may have different levels of autonomy. Autonomy in different areas of school management must also be considered. Schools may have varying degrees of responsibility in staff recruitment, staffing profile, financial management, management of facilities and maintenance, curriculum, and other elements of school administration. Stakeholders, including school leadership, teachers, parents, students and members of the local community may have different levels and types of control (The World Bank, 2007c; Gamage & Zajda, 2009). Ultimately, systems of school autonomy will differ according to setting and system, and must be continually refined and adapted according to local needs.

The Western Australia Department of Education is implementing an extensive program of autonomy in its public schools, continuing a trend towards increasingly independent Australian public schools. Because Australia's school systems are managed by States and some other States have already embraced SBM, several examples exist to inform the Western Australian experience. Research on school autonomy initiatives clearly points to the need for further evaluation of the impacts of increased decision-making authority on schools.

This review examines both national and international research on SBM and/or autonomy. It addresses the factors involved in the implementation of autonomy measures, covering several key areas of school-based management, and identifies potential barriers to, and enablers of, policies of autonomy in government schools. It also addresses the potential outcomes of increased autonomy, both positive and negative, providing a foundation for indicators of the success of the Independent Public Schools Initiative (IPSI).

Searches were conducted of relevant databases (including Academic Search Complete, ERIC, and Education Research Complete) through the University of Melbourne's Discovery search tool, as well as the University's library catalogue. Key words in initial searches included the general terms 'school autonomy', 'school-based management', 'decentralisation', and 'devolution'. Later searches were narrowed to include the specific elements of autonomy outlined in this paper, including leadership under autonomy, communities and schools, budgeting, equity, and student achievement, and to focus on Australian contexts. The review focuses on recent research, given that significant change has occurred since the initial stages of the movement towards autonomy, and the changing global context for education.

11.1.3 IMPLEMENTING SBM

Implementing any extensive change in school systems takes time and requires commitment – both centrally and at the school level. The IPS Initiative is being implemented in stages, with groups of schools brought in over several years, in order to ensure 'sound change management processes' (Department of Education, 2011). This move has been criticised (WAPPA, 2010), however the literature highlights the complexity of factors involved in the implementation of increased autonomy and the significant change experienced by schools and the central departments that manage them.

Caldwell (2008) provides a useful summary of the forms of 'capital' required for schools to be successful under autonomy initiatives. These include:

- Intellectual capital, in the form of the knowledge and skill of school staff and governors;
- Social capital, which lies in the formal and informal partnerships and networks between schools, parents, the local community, and the private sector;
- Spiritual capital, the moral purpose, values, beliefs and attitudes of the school; and
- Financial capital or a school's monetary resources.

The factors outlined below highlight some of the ways these forms of capital can be developed in autonomous schools, helping to ensure the success of school-based decision-making.

11.1.3.1 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Caldwell notes that the common ground for school-based management initiatives is that an increase in responsibility at school-level remains within "a centrally-determined framework that ensures that a sense of system is sustained" (Caldwell, 2005). However, the nature of the system is altered by the transition to school autonomy. The shift in balance between schools and education authorities

results in altered governance structures at a systemic level, although the central body retains a strong governance role. This means that management and organisational changes are just as necessary in Central offices as they are in individual schools. Although most research into autonomy initiatives focuses primarily on issues and processes for schools, research into flexibility and adaptability in the provision of public services suggests pertinent considerations for organisational change at the central level.

Central office can be a barrier to autonomy, as suggested by Honig and Rainey (2011), if they lack the political will to transfer authority to schools. They can also, however, be willing supporters of the change, but encounter systemic barriers (Honig & Rainey, 2011). Honig and Rainey's (2011) examples demonstrate the need for central staff to be empowered and aware of their roles in implementing autonomy – and, as highlighted previously under professional development, they have very significant roles to play in supporting school staff with new responsibilities.

Barber (2003) stresses that reconceptualising public education necessitates a concurrent re-conceptualisation of the role of governing bodies. There are two strands of change: firstly, the operational changes associated with the shift of management functions to the schools, such as budgeting and human resource management. Glatter, Mulford and Shuttleworth (2004) distinguish between the operational power to deliver education services, devolved to schools under decentralisation, and the criteria power of determining educational purposes and frameworks which more commonly remains with the central agency. This distinction helps to understand the nature of the organisational adaptations required at central level. Where operational power is devolved, there is less need for extensive operational capacities at a central level, although the capacity to support the exercise of operational power by schools may still be required. Centralised governance and strategising capacities associated with criteria power will remain important, but will not necessarily change due to the altered fields of governance over school management. The character of operations within the education department is therefore altered, and this operational change must be understood and sensitively managed in order to ensure effective governance and provision of support under the altered education regime.

The second branch of organisational change, however, is more extensive than this internal shift of function, it entails a dramatic change in organisational capacity due to the changes in the dynamic of the education system. Bentley and Wilsdon (2004) describe the governance dilemma of maintaining a secure and reliable system while also providing for choice, flexibility, and discretion at a local level. They suggest that part of the difficulty of negotiating this tension arises from an impoverished understanding of organisational possibilities. Shifting the level at which decisions are made, they argue, should not be the only focus of successful public service reform. There is also a need to develop the “adaptive capacity” of organisations as elements of the system. Adaptive capacity is the ability of an organisation to respond flexibly to changes in its environment without overt direction, whilst maintaining system stability. This capacity depends upon the recognition that a public good, such as education, is created by the dynamic interaction between different levels of the system, and between users and providers who share responsibility for defining and creating value. Bentley and Wilson suggest a number of assumptions supporting the development of adaptive systems, including accountability for learning from processes of change and innovation, transparent governance, richer

analytical frameworks, and participation by design, which involves the development of public service through participative processes. Adaptive capacity is also strengthened through the strategic use of networks enabling the transfer of expertise, and an emphasis on an embedded culture of organisational knowledge and learning, rather than cementing particular organisational models. In addition, Barber (2003) identifies a need for steady investment in and commitment to the process of change, which encompasses continual monitoring of the effectiveness of policies, and willingness to make alterations as the need for them is perceived. The development of these adaptive capacities of central education agencies may allow them to provide more effective support for school autonomy, and also to more readily develop in response to the progress of the autonomy initiative.

11.1.3.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Increasing autonomy at the school level creates important changes in the roles of school staff, members of the school community involved in governing the school and Central office staff. Those with new responsibilities are unlikely to have the skills they need to make responsible decisions for their schools, so a need for extensive professional development is required (Dillon, 2011). In most cases, it is the role of the principal that undergoes the most extensive change (Gamage, 2006), as principals face increased or altered responsibilities in financial management and staff management, and new processes for decision-making and accountability. Professional development for principals of autonomous schools must address accountability to different stakeholders, communication, collaboration, marketing the school, competing with other local schools, management of human, material and financial resources, management of information technology, strategic planning, and conflict resolution (Gamage, 2006). Some of these new tasks may be challenging for principals, who, as Department of Education and Training (2004) research found, are often attracted to the role for its 'caring' responsibilities. Principals may resent the intrusion of bureaucratic processes into what has previously been a caring role – a factor that should be considered in the implementation of autonomy. The impact of autonomy on the work of school leaders is also one of the issues of concern identified by Caldwell (2008).

Blackmore's (2004) research into autonomy in Victorian government schools found a range of challenges in implementing the new style of leadership required. There was considerable change in the relationship between principals and teachers in autonomous schools – principals became 'managers' with new authority, and significant tension was created by the lack of consultation with principals or schools and teacher unions. This Victorian case study highlights the value of ensuring teachers' and principals' voices are heard, and the importance of engaging with education unions. It may be that some of the challenges of changing roles can be overcome with consultation and empowerment of those whose responsibilities must change. The need for professional development also extends to other members of the school community involved in decision-making. Caldwell (2009) highlights the importance of capacity building at a local level through the provision of professional learning tailored to new role expectations and context, in what he describes as a new professionalism in education. Increasingly, education professionals are expected to adhere to a more clinical model resembling that of the medical profession, with evidence-based teaching and learning, team-based and outcome-driven (Caldwell, 2009). Training may also help to ensure the responsible management of finances and the avoidance of corruption (Levacic, et al., 2004).

The American autonomy initiatives described by Honig and Rainey (2011) – which had positive impacts on student attendance and graduations, though less clear impacts on student achievement – offered investment in capacity building in participating schools, anticipating the significant need for professional development to fulfil the requirements of schools’ new roles. Honig and Rainey (2011) also suggest that the involvement of central departments of education as supporters in the implementation process is a key feature of recent initiatives – acknowledging, perhaps, that central staff have more experience and expertise in the management of schools. He concludes that schools cannot simply be handed responsibility for making important decisions about the management of the school, and that professional development needs must be considered on an ongoing basis, with attention to local contexts.

11.1.3.3 COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Enhanced community involvement is frequently a goal of SBM and thus a factor in the implementation of autonomy initiatives. As a motivating factor for many earlier incarnations of school autonomy (Honig & Rainey, 2011), community involvement is based upon the philosophy that those best qualified to determine the needs of schools and how to meet them are located at or near the school (The World Bank, 2007c; Gamage & Zajda, 2009). The ACT’s move to increased autonomy in the 1970s, for example, was largely motivated by the perceived need to involve communities and parents in the management of schools (Gamage, 2008). Honig and Rainey (2011) argue that this focus on the governance of schools meant that significant amounts of principals’ and sometimes teachers’ time and resources were expended on the running of councils, leaving little room for the improvement of their teaching practice, and resulting in a corresponding lack of impact on student achievement.

While the most common goal of autonomy has shifted to improved teaching and learning (Caldwell, 2009) – and student achievement as an indicator – community involvement remains a central element in the implementation of autonomy, as well as an outcome. Involving the local community can provide important support for autonomous schools, and Honig and Rainey (2011) highlight the potential for conflict where community support is absent – schools risk running into opposition if parent and others in the local area have no relationship with or interest in the school. Though gaining community involvement is important, it can also present challenges – membership of school councils or boards is usually voluntary, and there must be incentive for community members to participate. Gamage (2006) suggests that this challenge supports the need for school boards and their members to have genuine authority. A criticism of systems of autonomy presented by Eacott (2011) relates to a perceived tendency for such initiatives to act as ‘Trojan horses’ for governments – claiming to support school-based decision-making, while maintaining ultimate control. Systems of autonomy must provide genuine authority to schools, and, if they are to achieve community empowerment, must provide authentic decision-making opportunity for local stakeholders.

While there are questions about the type and level of authority boards should have, for example in the recruitment of staff and school leaders, community members must feel empowered through valued roles in decision-making (Gamage, 1996). The composition of school boards also varies across contexts and initiatives, and is often centrally determined (Gamage, 1996; 2008), but there is

limited evidence in the literature of the impact of differing proportions of teachers, school support staff, parents, students and community members on the effectiveness of school autonomy.

11.1.3.4 SCHOOL VISION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Systemic reform implies significant change for schools. The cultural change experienced by schools can be challenging for staff, and the change in roles experienced by teachers and principals does not only relate to the new skills they require, but the nature of their positions in the school community. Increased accountability, discussed in more detail in the next section of this review, means that teachers and principals are more responsible for the learning outcomes of students – students, and their families, become something akin to consumers, and additional stress can be placed on teachers to be effective (Blackmore, 2004). This change is not inherently negative, though it can have negative impacts on teachers' wellbeing, as has been the case in Victoria (Blackmore, 2004). This shift to a more consumer-driven culture in schools, if managed carefully, can motivate teachers and serve to reinforce effective teaching, as well as drawing attention to teaching practices that are not effective (The World Bank, 2007c). What is perhaps most important here is the process of consulting and empowering teachers highlighted by Blackmore (2004).

Another aspect of managing change in schools relates to the strategic planning that is an important part of the principal's altered role under autonomy (Gamage, 2006). The development of a clear school vision and achievable goals is an important initial task for schools implementing more autonomous decision-making processes. School leaders must address key questions for the future of the school, such as what the school's educational philosophy should be, and what its place within the local region should be (Gamage, 2009). A clear vision and goals play an essential role in supporting cultural change. Alongside providing key outcomes for school staff to work towards, the vision and goals can also support the involvement and interests of the school community, and provide a basis for accountability, if developed with community involvement (Cheng, 1996; Muhammad, 2009). The process of developing agreed goals for the school in consultation with community means that community needs will be considered, and community stakeholders will feel empowered and invested in the success of the school – Gamage (2009) argues that school vision should reflect school communities' aspirations for their school. Schools must also ensure that goals and vision are communicated to community stakeholders, in order to be accountable for their articulated goals, and so that stakeholders are aware of the limits of this vision and principals can avoid the pressure of trying to do everything (Cheng, 1996; Farkas, et al., 2001; Muhammad, 2009).

11.1.3.5 ACCOUNTABILITY

With increased freedom to make decisions about the running of schools, school staff can expect to be held responsible for those decisions. More autonomy in schools is usually accompanied by new measures for accountability, reflecting the cultural change described in the previous section. Autonomous schools are more directly accountable to parents, students, teachers, the local community, and government departments of education. This increased accountability is often considered an important factor in the impact of autonomy on school effectiveness (De Grauwe, 2005) – schools allowed to make decisions without being held accountable for them are less likely to

be successful. PISA (2011), for example, found that students in schools with higher degrees of autonomy but a low degree of accountability scored significantly lower in reading tests than schools with high autonomy and accountability.

Increasingly, student achievement is a key focus of accountability measures for autonomous government schools. Learning and teaching outcomes have not always been the focus of school-based management initiatives, as discussed above, but student achievement data is now available in Australia to all stakeholders, or indeed to anyone, as is the case with Australia's My School database. The additional pressure of accountability to the school community can rest heavily on the principal's shoulders, and he or she may be accountable to stakeholders with diverse and sometimes conflicting needs and desires (Davis, 2008). This factor is closely tied to the need to develop a clear vision and goals for schools – as described above, knowing what to focus on both helps principals to avoid spreading resources too thinly, and helps to ensure that the expectations of stakeholders are reasonable (Cheng, 1996; Farkas, et al., 2001; Muhammad, 2009). Accountability measures are of course essential in autonomous schools, however they must exist alongside clear and achievable expectations and goals.

11.1.3.6 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING

Schools may have differing levels of responsibility for financial management and budgeting under school-based decision-making. The logic of allowing schools to determine their own distribution of resources is obvious – schools with higher financial autonomy are able to base decisions about the allocation of funding, as schools with higher levels of financial autonomy are able to base decisions on local needs and priorities (Gunnarsson, et al., 2009). Financial management in schools is however challenging in several ways.

As Levacic, et al. (2004) suggest, school leaders may not have the experience, or the temperament to engage in the financial responsibilities required of them under autonomy. Managing finances and budgets must therefore be a focus for professional development. The literature also suggests that accountability may support sound financial management practices – both by reducing the opportunities for corruption and fraud, and by inviting examination of the effectiveness of resource allocation (Levacic, et al., 2004). In Victoria, for example, resource allocation is tracked through a standardised information system for the perusal of the school council, who confirm that resources are managed effectively (Levacic, et al., 2004). Principals and school boards may also require the support of central education departments to develop budgets and allocate resources during the implementation of financial autonomy in their schools.

Financial management may also have an effect – positive or negative – on equity within and between schools. Levacic, et al., (2004) suggest that formula funding may include equity considerations. Such funding is based on a formula that usually refers to the number and age of students at a school, with equity considerations including location (for example, rural schools may need additional funding for transport), social disadvantage, and learning needs. Nir (2007) also supports the idea that educational systems should adopt needs-based approaches to funding in order to achieve equity, but such approaches can be problematic in their methods of determining

need. Equity is a commonly cited factor related to financial management in schools, with the literature highlighting the complexity of distributing and managing funds, with sometimes contradictory ideas about the impacts of financial autonomy. In the Victorian setting, for example, Furhman and Johnson (1994) argue that public schools were initially funded adequately and equitably under increased autonomy, with facilities and resources equalised across the state. Later analysis of the Victoria experience is less positive however, with Blackmore (2004) arguing that autonomy in Victorian schools only exacerbated place-based disadvantage.

According to PISA (2011) data, there is no clear relationship between financial autonomy and student achievement, as the relationship between the performance of schools and their level of financial autonomy is positive in some countries and negative in others. PISA does, however, highlight an apparent link between autonomy in resource allocation, public student achievement data (an accountability measure), and improved student performance. The evidence suggests that, when managed carefully and combined with accountability, financial autonomy can contribute to school effectiveness.

11.1.3.7 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Alongside differing levels of autonomy in resource allocation, autonomous government schools have widely differing levels of authority over human resource management, including responsibility in recruiting and firing staff, determining staffing profile, and managing professional development needs and opportunities. Ideally, providing schools with the authority to choose staff and determine staffing profile will allow schools to better cater to local needs, as Davis (2008) suggests. For example principals and school boards can identify the types of support required for students with additional needs or disabilities.

The suggestion that having autonomy over the recruitment and firing of teachers may contribute to the effectiveness of school autonomy initiatives is supported by several sources (Adamowski, et al., 2007; Davis, 2008; Malaklolunthu & Shamsudin, 2011). Principals themselves reflect that being able to hire or reward good teachers and fire ineffective ones better enable them to manage their schools (Adamowski, et al., 2007). Moving further along the continuum of autonomy, Podgursky (2006) argued that regulatory freedom in charter and private schools allowed pay to be more market and performance-based, permitting such schools to recruit teachers with higher credentials. Conversely, having little control over staffing appears to create significant obstacles in building effective schools, and in the success of autonomy measures (Malaklolunthu & Shamsudin, 2011).

A further benefit of allowing principals and boards to determine staffing profile is that it may encourage partnerships with other schools and education or service providers in the local community (Davis, 2008). Working alone, individual schools may struggle to cater for a broad range of local needs, but in partnerships different schools or partner organisations can provide for specific needs. Such collaborative approaches are often highlighted as a hoped-for outcome of effective implementation of autonomy, as outlined later in this review, and could help to fulfil the need for expertise in many different areas in autonomous schools. It is clearly highlighted in the literature that the professional development needs of staff in schools moving to increased autonomy are

considerable – the addition of human resource management responsibilities in itself creates a significant need for specific expertise within the school (Gamage, 2006). Working in partnership with other schools to share knowledge and experience may support the more effective implementation of autonomy.

11.1.3.8 CURRICULUM

Arguably, curriculum is a less significant area of concern in school-based management; simply because it is less commonly a part of devolution packages (Bandur, 2011). More often, curriculum remains the responsibility of central education departments; however, schools have responsibility for interpreting the curriculum for the classroom. As a result, the literature does not provide extensive evidence of the effect of school management and governance on the quality of curriculum provision (Dimmock & Wildy, 1992). Nonetheless, there are curriculum factors to consider in implementing school-based management.

In Australia, State curricula generally guide teaching and learning in government schools, in much the same way the Australian Curriculum will from 2013. There is nonetheless a degree of flexibility afforded to schools and teachers. In Victoria, for example, while state curriculum has continued to guide teaching during the introduction and continued implementation of increased autonomy, schools are able to choose from different topics and areas of study and cater to their own interests and resources (Furhman & Johnson, 1994). While Australian government schools do not have a high degree of freedom in curriculum development, the management and implementation of the curriculum still present significant opportunities and challenges. However, according to Caldwell (1990, cited in Dimmock & Wildy, 1992), some evidence suggests that administrative and managerial restructuring do not have an impact on the curriculum. In Dimmock and Wildy's (1992) research, for example, a lack of linkage between departments allowed few opportunities for a whole school approach to curriculum, and yet the school was successful in terms of student achievement, indicating that the management of curriculum did not impact heavily on teaching and learning. Dimmock and Wildy do, however, support the idea that proactive management of the curriculum by school leaders is the ideal in autonomous schools, and acknowledge that their own research was limited in scope. Further research is needed on the impact of autonomy on the management of curriculum in schools.

11.1.4 BARRIERS AND ENABLERS IN IMPLEMENTATION

This section highlights some of the key barriers and enablers in the implementation of autonomy. Several factors clearly contribute to positive or negative outcomes of autonomy, and are relevant to the Western Australian context. The involvement of local school communities, addressing professional development needs, the careful management of change, and the ongoing evaluation of the initiative are all factors to be considered in implementing the Independent Public Schools initiative.

11.1.4.1 LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

Local involvement, or the involvement of the local school community, is often a key goal of autonomy initiatives; however, it is also a significant factor supporting the success of such initiatives. Important benefits of involving local communities in school decision-making include:

- the value of community members' expertise and experience in diverse areas, which may support the capacity building needs of school boards;
- involving the local community with genuine decision-making roles will empower community members, and give them a sense of ownership and investment in the success of the school; and
- community members can provide valuable information about local needs, and help to ensure that schools are catering to those needs.

There is also potential for community to present a barrier to the effective implementation of autonomy initiatives, though most often this potential is fulfilled by a lack of genuine involvement, or opportunity for involvement. Barriers include:

- the possibility that communities with no involvement in the governance of schools may oppose developments in the school; and
- community members must be willing volunteers on school boards in order for their involvement to be assured – this requires the incentive provided by genuine authority in decision-making.

11.1.4.2 CAPACITY BUILDING

Lacking the skills needed to manage school-based decision-making is a key barrier to the effective implementation of autonomy. It cannot be assumed that schools will have within their staff all the necessary expertise in areas of new or altered responsibility. The four forms of capital described by Caldwell (2008) – intellectual, social, spiritual and financial capital – may all be developed under the effective implementation of autonomy, and have related capacity building needs, as described below.

- *Intellectual capital* requires structured professional development opportunities for school staff and others with decision-making responsibility. It can also be provided by partnerships or collaborative approaches with local community organisations, other schools, or partnership with industry. Members of the board may also have existing skill sets relevant to school's new roles.
- Developing *social capital* is assisted by collaborative links within and outside school communities. Schools can be encouraged and supported to develop such partnerships, and this again may take place through members of the school board.
- *Spiritual capital* is supported by the development of school visions and goals that reflect the shared values and beliefs of schools. Schools can be supported to develop inclusive spiritual capital, and care must be taken that forms of *spiritual capital* do not alienate members of the school community.

- *Financial capital* must be linked to equity considerations, and also relates to the need for professional development, to ensure all schools are able to effectively manage finances and budgets to support the needs of students.

Capacity building can take place through a combination of formal professional development opportunities and informal collaboration. Schools will face similar obstacles and similar needs to one another in the process of implementation of autonomy, and working together to overcome those barriers will provide significant benefits.

11.1.4.3 CULTURAL CHANGE

The cultural change required under autonomy reforms is significant, and can present a barrier to effective implementation. Change management processes must ensure a sense of empowerment is enabled in school staff and boards, in order to support positive motivation for change. One of the key concerns highlighted in Blackmore's (2004) depiction of Victoria's school-based management system was the lack of consultation with teachers and teacher unions. It is clearly important that school staff feel a sense of ownership in autonomy initiatives, and they must be motivated to address the challenges presented by new or altered responsibilities and accountabilities, and significant professional development needs. Factors that may enable cultural change include:

- inclusive approaches to develop schools' visions and goals, including involvement of the community, teachers, parents, students, and education department staff as appropriate to contexts;
- professional development to support strategic planning;
- an acknowledgement of the roles of central education department staff in supporting change, including understanding the challenges faced by department staff; and
- implementing accountability procedures that create clear and achievable expectations, and ensuring that these expectations are communicated to all stakeholders to whom teachers and schools will be accountable.

There may be considerable resistance to cultural change from different stakeholders, and for different reasons. The factors above highlight the need to consider and involve all groups of stakeholders in the process of implementing autonomy. Also important is the communication of expected outcomes of autonomy.

11.1.4.4 EVALUATION

The clear message of literature on the implementation of autonomy is that it is complex and often dependent on context. Factors in implementation and areas or degrees of autonomy are diverse, and they can combine in different ways to produce both positive and negative outcomes. As a result, there is a need for ongoing evaluation and refinement of autonomy initiatives in order to ensure they work for specific contexts. The evaluation of the IPS initiative will assist to identify the impacts of the types and degrees of authority given to IP schools within the specific context of the WA public

school system. The following section examines some of the potential outcomes of autonomy initiatives that have been identified in previous research.

11.1.5 OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL AUTONOMY

Outcomes of school autonomy initiatives are a key focus of much of the literature. All SBM initiatives always have goals and hoped-for outcomes when conceived, but these goals are not always achieved, and negative outcomes do occur. There is insufficient evidence available to support any claim that increased school autonomy leads to more effective schools, and there are concerns about its impacts on school quality, equity, relationships between teachers and principals, and financial and administrative transparency (De Grauwe, 2005). We cannot assume that all outcomes of autonomy will be positive, but the following research provides an understanding of the issues to be avoided.

A World Bank (2007b) report highlights some of the difficulties in determining the impacts of school autonomy initiatives, as while outcomes may be the result of reform, they may also depend on contextual or other factors.

11.1.5.1 INNOVATION

Increasing school autonomy is sometimes presented as an opportunity to encourage innovative practices in government schools, and autonomy reform is in itself innovative in many cases. Given their responsibilities to develop strategic plans and visions, schools are able to distinguish themselves according to their own philosophies and values, and have the freedom to develop innovative practices in governance, school structure, pedagogy and in the formation of roles and responsibilities of teachers and principals (Berends, et al., 2009). Innovation does not appear, however, to be the major focus of most autonomy initiatives, and there is a corresponding lack of evidence about the impact of autonomy on innovation in existing research. For example, the World Bank's (2007a) review of evidence found that the effects of autonomy on teacher effort, which may be linked to innovative teaching practices, were unclear.

There is, however, some doubt as to whether or not increasing school autonomy encourages innovation in teaching. Eacott's (2011) concerns about autonomy acting as a Trojan horse, outlined above, were based upon issues identified in a NSW research project that interviewed primary school principals new to increased school autonomy. Findings revealed that autonomy sometimes restricted innovation, making principals unwilling to risk losing market share. Increasing school choice, and the cultural change related to autonomy – or the shift to seeing students and parents as clients and consumers – may mean that schools become more homogenous in order to be competitive. While competition could be positive, in that it may encourage innovative practices and a focus on effective teaching, it could also, as Eacott (2011) suggests, render innovation too risky. The literature does not provide advice about how this can be overcome.

11.1.5.2 COMMUNITY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

As described above, community and parental involvement in the management of schools is a central tenet of many autonomy initiatives. Such initiatives also include community involvement as a desired outcome of autonomy and a measure of its success (Honig & Rainey, 2011). Ideally, school-based management creates a genuine partnership approach to decision-making, with school professionals, parents, and community stakeholders all having opportunities to contribute (Gamage, 2006). Much of the literature on school-based management in Australia implies a general acceptance that community and parental involvement are positive outcomes, particularly because involving parents and communities can ensure that they understand the goals and strategies of the school. In a study on Latin American schools, for example, Gunnarsson et al. (2009) found that while autonomous decision-making did not necessarily make schools successful, the resulting parental involvement did have a positive impact on school effectiveness.

Empowerment of members of the school community can also be an outcome of their involvement in decision-making processes and of acknowledging their position as important stakeholders to whom the school administration is accountable. A local and school community that feels empowered in school decision-making processes has a positive impact on school effectiveness, as genuine opportunities to participate in decision-making strengthens professional motivation and mean that individuals are more invested in the outcomes of their decisions (The World Bank, 2007c). Furhman and Johnson (1994) further suggest that empowering the local community through increased autonomy in Victorian schools made them more democratic, with unique identities and values based on local needs. Empowering the local community can also impact on the culture of a school in several ways. Stakeholders themselves can influence a school's goals and vision, and a clear vision also encourages and supports the involvement of community members (Cheng, 1996; Muhammad, 2009). Community involvement also contributes to the need for accountability, and to an extent determines the forms accountability takes (Cheng, 1996; Muhammad, 2009).

In most cases, including in the IPS initiative, community and parental involvement takes place within the forum of the school board or council. According to Gamage (2006), governing bodies have an important impact on school improvement, and Australia contexts – including Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia and the Northern Territory – have demonstrated that schools benefit from board members' knowledge and experience in other fields. This factor can, however, impact on equity, as expertise often varies by area – for example, more middle class areas may have more board members with expertise in finance or law, while working class neighbourhoods may not have access to that knowledge, perpetuating place-based disadvantage, as has been the case in Victoria (Furhman & Johnson, 1994). This factor again highlights the need for capacity building and attention to equity factors in school autonomy.

11.1.5.3 PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Collaboration within local communities is discussed as an outcome of autonomy in some cases, and, in general, the literature is positive about the impacts of collaboration and between-school partnerships. Under the IPS initiative, partnerships have been formed – WAPPA (2010) provided an anecdotal example of collaboration between several rural schools and one metropolitan school, resulting in benefits for those involved. Increasingly, partnership is considered a strong support for

school effectiveness under increased autonomy. Davis (2008) has described the benefits of working in collaboration to support a wider range of student needs than would otherwise be possible, and schools in Western Australia also currently work with health professionals, disability services, police and welfare agencies in the local area to support students with additional needs. Such support is of particular value to disadvantaged and at-risk students and families (Simons, 2011).

Communities also benefit from partnerships with schools. School-community partnerships provide access to complementary services that support learning and teaching, including for parents and other members of the community (Simons, 2011). Communities can further benefit from sharing schools' resources, both physical and human, and in working with local communities, schools become both employers and consumers of local goods and services (Kilpatrick, et al., 2001; Lane & Dorfman, 1997, cited in Simons, 2011). Partnership is of course linked to community involvement, and is another method of involving diverse groups in the school, and giving a sense of ownership and investment to local businesses and organisations. In Victoria, Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) were developed to support the state government's commitment to creating strong partnerships between schools, industry, local government and the community (Simons, 2011). LLENs play a key role in supporting schools in disadvantaged areas, and students at risk of disengaging from school, work and community. Autonomy allows schools the opportunity to seek out partnerships with local organisations, and may also provide an incentive for schools that would otherwise find it difficult to meet the needs of diverse student populations (Davis, 2008).

11.1.5.4 EQUITY

Equity in the literature about school autonomy often refers to the ways it impacts on students and schools in areas of different socio-economic status (SES). What most commentators are concerned with is the ability of school-based decision-making to overcome place-based disadvantage, or to create positive outcomes – with particular focus on higher student achievement – for low performing schools in low SES areas. The impacts of autonomy on equity between schools and within school systems can be difficult to determine. Allowing schools more control over decision-making may have no impact on equity, if the allocation of budgets is not based on careful consideration of equity factors and student and school needs. Some criticism of autonomy and decentralisation presents particularly negative findings of the impact of autonomy on equity (Smyth, 2011). According to Blackmore (2004) and Smyth (2011), autonomy created and exacerbated the place-based disadvantage that is often cited as cause for concern in Victorian schools today. The two most disadvantaged Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the Melbourne metropolitan area to the SEIFA index – Greater Dandenong and Brimbank (Brimbank City Council, 2012) – also have significantly higher rates of disengagement amongst 15-19 year olds than of the region as a whole, at 20.3% and 18.2% respectively, compared to 13.7% for the Melbourne metropolitan region as a whole (Community Indicators Victoria, n.d.). Blackmore (2004) argues that this inequity was exacerbated by increasing parental choice, rezoning, and then funding schools according to enrolments. Given the opportunity, many parents chose to send their children to higher performing schools outside of their local area, and low-performing local schools therefore experienced a decrease in enrolments. Under funding formulas that are based on enrolments, low performing schools attract fewer students and receive less funding, limiting the possibility of recovery or

improvement for these schools. Support for considering equity factors, including student needs, the location and transport requirements of schools, and the socio-economic status (SES) of students and their families, has been highlighted previously in this paper (Levacic, et al., 2004; Nir, 2007).

Contrary to the example described above, Woessmann, et al. (2009) found that the benefits of increased accountability, autonomy and choice were often higher for children from low SES backgrounds – their research found no instances where autonomy had a negative impact on equity. Proponents of school autonomy argue that it has significant benefits for low-performing schools – which are often those in areas of disadvantage – as it provides them with the flexibility to respond to specific local needs (Dillon, 2011). The evidence suggests that the impacts of autonomy on equity are dependent on many other factors, including the frameworks for autonomy and the context they are implemented in. Smyth (2011), for example, acknowledges that his major criticisms on equity refer to autonomous systems that are ‘consumerist’ and ‘marketised’ (p.108). Caldwell (2009) identifies the value of allowing schools the opportunity to develop social capital through networks with local organisations, businesses, and members of the school community. The impacts of autonomy on equity can clearly either be positive or negative – Blackmore (2004), though critical of the Victorian approach, argues that equity can and should be a key consideration in developing the policies and frameworks of autonomy, as well as an indicator of success. Given that autonomy may widen the gaps between low-performing, low SES schools and higher performing, higher SES schools, it is important to consider tailoring approaches to resource allocation to the meet the needs of schools.

11.1.5.5 OUTCOMES FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

Teachers experience both positive and negative effects of autonomy, depending on the policies and goals of school decision-making and the support available for school communities as they develop the skills to manage their schools. Increased autonomy significantly changes the role of teachers, as they become providers of services to students, who, along with their parents, are consumers or clients (Blackmore, 2004). The corresponding need for higher levels of accountability to students and families can place additional pressure on teachers, who must also be accountable to the local community, school leaders, school boards and education authorities (Blackmore, 2004). However, others argue that this increased accountability can be a positive factor for teachers, as it motivates them to improve their teaching practice on an ongoing basis and thus contributes to positive learning and teaching outcomes (Dimmock & Wildy, 1992).

Additional stress for principals and school staff can also come from dealing with new roles and responsibilities in their schools, and the corresponding demand for new skills and knowledge (Gamage & Zajda, 2009). There can be considerable change in the relationship between teachers and school leaders, as principals become managers and may initially struggle to negotiate professional relationships in a time of change. This was the case, according to Blackmore (2004), in Victoria, where significant issues resulted in the restructuring of principals’ and teachers’ roles in the school board. Schools and education departments must find the right balance between decentralisation and centralisation, and balance the authority of different stakeholders in the school community, if autonomy is to contribute to school effectiveness.

The Victorian example demonstrates the importance of including teachers in consultation during the implementation of autonomy initiatives. In Victoria, initial implementation required the input of teachers and teacher unions, they were later disempowered and managers made more influential (Furhman & Johnson, 1994). Frequent restructuring – Levacic, et al. (2004) describe Victorian educational reform as ‘relentless’ – also meant that Victorian teachers experienced decreased job security during the implementation of autonomy (Blackmore, 2004). Overall, the size of the teaching profession was significantly reduced during the initial stages of autonomy in Victoria (Smyth, 2011). In the ACT however, teachers benefited from greater opportunity for professional development (Gamage, 2008). We can conclude that teachers benefit from increased autonomy where their interests are considered and they feel empowered in the process, and where there are sufficient opportunities for them to gain the necessary skills to participate effectively in school decision-making.

11.1.5.6 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student achievement is perhaps the most commonly considered indicator of school effectiveness today, and is increasingly the major goal of autonomy initiatives. Relatively few studies link higher autonomy with improved learning outcomes, perhaps because teaching and learning outcomes have not always been the main goal of autonomy initiatives (Caldwell, 2009; Dillon, 2011; Honig & Rainey, 2011). Betts and Tang’s (2011) recently published analysis of literature on charter schools – an example of highly autonomous school management – found no conclusive evidence of links between student achievement and autonomy. Instead, some schools’ results improved, and others remained the same or worsened. Other recent research has begun to identify some links between varied degrees and types of autonomy on student achievement, but there is no clear agreement as to whether school-based management leads to higher achievement. Woessmann, et al. (2009), for example, analysed the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003 database in order to determine whether or not policies of autonomy increased student achievement. Their findings were positive, indicating that school autonomy, accountability and parental choice policies worked in combination to increase student achievement in both cognitive and non-cognitive skills (Woessmann, et al, 2009). This study also found that students performed better in schools with autonomy over staffing, but worse in schools with autonomy in areas where there was a possibility for opportunistic behaviour, such as in budgeting. PISA (2011) suggests that an ‘intelligent’ combination of autonomy and accountability can be associated with better student performance – PISA data identified a link between autonomy over curriculum and assessment and student performance, and a further link between the publication of student achievement data, autonomy over resource allocation, and improved student performance.

It is likely that student achievement outcomes depend on more than simply the devolution of management (Muhammad, 2009). Perhaps, as some research has suggested, it is important that learning and teaching outcomes are made the primary concern of programs of autonomy, both in their implementation and measured outcomes, with schools provided with sufficient capacity building opportunity and ongoing departmental support in order to achieve these aims (Caldwell, 2009; Honig & Rainey, 2011). Or, as Honig and Rainey (2011) suggest, a focus on teaching and

learning during the implementation of increased autonomy may be the method by which improvement in student achievement is made.

It is worth noting that finding evidence of improved student achievement will be difficult in the early stages of the implementation of autonomy. Honig and Rainey (2011) suggest that we may not see results in standardised test scores in the early years of autonomy, though their research found improvements in 'leading indicators', such as attendance and graduation rates. According to a World Bank (2007b) review of the literature, American research found that changes in test scores were only apparent after eight years of implementation. Evaluations of school-based management reforms should aim to address both short- and long-term outcomes, as negative impacts may be part of the process for dealing with change, and could be overcome in time (The World Bank, 2007a). Improvement in student achievement therefore cannot be the only indicator considered in the success of autonomy initiatives – firstly because such improvements may take many years to manifest, and secondly because student academic performance cannot give an accurate picture of the impacts of autonomy on entire school communities and systems. In spite of the problems in the Victorian context outlined above for example, Gamage (2008) argues that the State's system is a 'world leader' in school-based management, as it is one of the most devolved systems resulting in improved student achievement. As described earlier in this paper, however, there have been other issues created and exacerbated by autonomy in Victoria, and we cannot assume that it is a successful system based on student achievement alone. Furthermore, judging the effectiveness of schools on data related to a narrow view of student learning, or data that refers only to specific, academic skills, is problematic (Eacott, 2011). Student achievement, while an important indicator of the success of autonomy initiatives, must be considered along with a wide range of dimensions such as equity, outcomes for teaching and other school staff, and outcomes for the local and school communities.

11.2 APPENDIX B: THE CDC EVALUATION STANDARDS

There are a set of 30 standards that assess the quality of evaluation activities, determining whether a set of evaluative activities are well-designed and working to their potential. These standards, adopted from the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, answer the question, "Will an evaluation be effective?" The 30 standards are organized into four groups detailed in table below:

Standard	Description
Utility	Ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users.
Feasibility	Ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic and frugal.
Propriety	Ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.
Accuracy	Ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated.

11.3 APPENDIX C: NAPLAN ANALYSIS

There are five domains within the NAPLAN testing – Numeracy, Reading, Writing, Spelling, and Punctuation & Grammar. It can be seen that the IPS in the years prior to commencing (green) outsourced the mean from other public schools (black) across all domains (see Table 22). For Numeracy, the difference IPS and other public schools prior to starting is .48 effect size across years 3, 5, 7, and 9, and this difference is maintained across the three years of intake. The same patterns occur for all five NAPLAN domains.

Table 7: Means for each NAPLAN domain by years according to intake, and effect-sizes comparing years by IPS intake and other public schools

Numeracy	NAPLAN means				ES comparing other public schools and IPS				
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Average
other public schools	372	459	526	560					
IPS prior to starting	387	474	543	583	0.40	0.40	0.48	.63	0.48
IPS in 1 st year	390	482	547	588	0.49	0.62	0.59	.77	0.62
IPS in 2 nd year	391	481	541	582	0.52	0.59	0.42	.60	0.54
IPS in 3 rd year	380	473	534	599	0.23	0.37	0.21	1.07	0.47

Reading	NAPLAN means				ES comparing other public schools and IPS				
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Average
other public schools	379	460	520	527					
IPS prior to starting	398	481	535	575	0.52	0.58	0.42	1.32	0.71
IPS in 1 st year	403	484	543	577	0.67	0.66	0.62	1.38	0.83
IPS in 2 nd year	404	480	537	572	0.70	0.56	0.47	1.24	0.74

IPS in 3 rd year	401	483	526	586
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0.62	0.65	0.17	1.63	0.77
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Writing	NAPLAN means			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
other public schools	383	452	508	500
IPS prior to starting	404	478	531	569
IPS in 1 st year	412	476	532	566
IPS in 2 nd year	415	480	531	563
IPS in 3 rd year	411	474	527	578

ES comparing other public schools and IPS				
Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Average
0.57	0.71	0.64	1.89	0.95
0.78	0.67	0.67	1.81	0.98
0.87	0.77	0.65	1.74	1.01
0.77	0.60	0.53	2.13	1.01

Spelling	NAPLAN means			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
other public schools	373	459	517	525
IPS prior to starting	390	478	533	571
IPS in 1 st year	398	483	541	578
IPS in 2 nd year	403	481	537	573
IPS in 3 rd year	391	482	536	590

ES comparing other public schools and IPS				
Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Average
0.48	0.53	0.43	1.25	0.67
0.68	0.65	0.65	1.46	0.86
0.84	0.59	0.57	1.30	0.82
0.48	0.62	0.53	1.77	0.85

Punctuation & Grammar	NAPLAN means			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
other public schools	378	461	510	516
IPS prior to starting	397	488	526	568

ES comparing other public schools and IPS				
Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Average
0.52	0.73	0.44	1.42	0.78

IPS in 1 st year	408	492	536	575	0.84	0.85	0.73	1.62	1.01
IPS in 2 nd year	411	487	533	567	0.92	0.69	0.63	1.42	0.92
IPS in 3 rd year	396	473	538	589	0.50	0.32	0.77	2.00	0.90

Table 23 shows the differences between the effect-sizes from the three years of intake compared to the pre IPS and other public schools differences. For example, the difference between the averages of the first three years of intake for Numeracy at Year 3 compared to the pre IPS and other public schools differences is zero (shown red in table). Overall, there is no systematic evidence that becoming an IPS school changed the average NAPLAN means with the possible exception of Spelling.

Table 8: Average NAPLAN effect-size across all year levels for pre IPS compared to other public schools.

	Y3	Y5	Y7	Y9	Average
Numeracy	0.00	0.13	-0.06	0.18	0.06
Reading	0.13	0.04	0.01	0.09	0.07
Writing	0.24	-0.04	-0.03	0.00	0.04
Spelling	0.20	0.11	0.14	0.26	0.18
Punct & Gram	0.22	-0.11	0.27	0.25	0.16

11.4 APPENDIX D: AT AND ABOVE NAPLAN STANDARDS

Another typical use of NAPLAN is to ascertain the number or percentage of students at and above the NAPLAN standards. The NAPLAN reporting scales are divided into ten bands to cover the full range of student achievement observed in the tests, mapping the increasing complexity of the skills assessed by NAPLAN (see Figure 34). Six of these bands are utilised for analysis and reporting student performance at each year level:

- Year 3 reports show Bands 1 to 6;
- Year 5 reports show Bands 3 to 8;
- Year 7 reports show Bands 4 to 9;
- Year 9 reports show Bands 5 to 10.

For each year level and for each domain in literacy and numeracy the National Minimum Standard is defined and located on the common underlying scale. For Year 3, Band 2 is the National Minimum Standard, for Year 5, Band 4 is the National Minimum Standard, for Year 7, Band 5 is the National Minimum Standard and for Year 9, Band 6 is the National Minimum Standard. Students with results in the band representing the National Minimum Standard have typically demonstrated the basic elements of reading, language conventions, writing and numeracy for that year level.

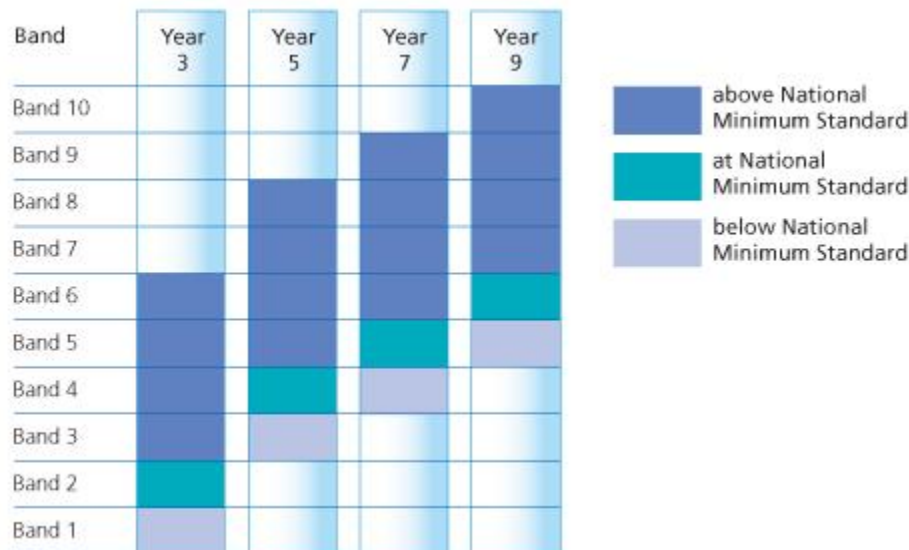


Figure 34: NAPLAN reporting scales showing the band at which the various National Standards are set

11.4.1 YEAR 3

Table 9 presents the percentage of Year 3 students *at or above* the NAPLAN standards. As can be seen, there is an increase in the percentage scores for IPS in their first year of operation (ES = .46

compared to a pre IPS and other difference of .19), illustrated in Table 10, these effect-sizes remain positive in the 2nd and 3rd year of intake although there is less gain (.28 and .18, respectively) but the important conclusion is that the IPS continue to have more students at or above the NAPLAN standards compared to other public schools.

Table 9: Means & standard deviations of Year 3 students in other public schools & IPS at or above NAPLAN standards by domain

Year 3 NAPLAN At and Above								
Year 3	other public schools (N=371)		1st year in IPS		2nd year in IPS		3rd Year in IPS	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Numeracy	90	12	93	8	91	10	90	11
Reading	88	12	92	8	90	9	90	9
Writing	90	13	96	6	95	7	95	8
Spelling	88	14	93	8	90	11	90	11
Punctuation & Grammar	84	16	90	8	88	10	85	12

Table 10: Means & standard deviations for the other public schools & IPS; effect-sizes, t-tests for comparisons between achievement of NAPLAN standards for Year 3 students

	M	SD	ES	t-test	df	p
other public schools	87.89	13.21				
IPS prior	89.95	8.48	0.19	1.02	389	>.05
IPS in 1st year	92.67	7.61	0.46	3.42	408	>.05
IPS in 2nd year	91.05	9.19	0.28	0.95	377	>.05
IPS in 3rd year	90.02	10.05	0.18	0.77	383	>.05

11.4.2 YEAR 5

Table 11 shows the percentage of Year 5 students at or above the NAPLAN standards. There is a very small increase in the % scores for IPS in their first, second, and third year of operation. The effect-size in Table 12 again shows a more critical first year intake effect, then maintaining this difference in the second and third year.

Table 11: Means & standard deviations of Year 5 students in other public schools & IPS at or above NAPLAN standards by domain

Year 5 NAPLAN At and Above								
Year 5	other public schools (N=371)		1st year in IPS		2nd year in IPS		3rd Year in IPS	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Numeracy	88	13	92	9	92	8	89	9
Reading	83	15	87	11	86	11	86	11
Writing	86	14	90	10	91	9	90	7
Spelling	86	14	91	9	91	9	93	6
PG	83	15	89	10	88	10	86	10

Table 12: Means & standard deviations for the other public schools & IPS; effect sizes, t-tests for comparisons between achievement of NAPLAN standards for Year 5 students

	M	SD		ES	t-test	df	p
other public schools	85.12	14.48	IPS prior vs. other public schools	0.30	1.64	389	>.05
IPS prior	88.55	8.75	IPS 1st yr. vs. other public schools	0.39	2.76	408	>.05
IPS in 1st year	89.90	9.73	IPS 2nd yr. vs. other public schools	0.38	1.30	377	>.05
IPS in 2nd year	89.64	9.56	IPS 3rd yr. vs. other public schools	0.34	1.61	383	>.05
IPS in 3rd year	89.13	8.89					

11.4.3 YEAR 7

Table 13 presents the percentage of Year 7 students at or above the NAPLAN standards. There is an increase in the percentage scores for IPS in their first and second year of operation and a decrease in the third year.

Table 13: Means & standard deviations of Year 7 students in other public schools & IPS at or above NAPLAN standards by domain

Year 7 NAPLAN At and Above				
Year 7	other public schools (N=371)	1st year in IPS	2nd year in IPS	3rd Year in IPS

	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Numeracy	93	10	94	7	93	8	94	8
Reading	90	12	94	8	94	7	89	11
Writing	88	13	92	8	92	8	90	11
Spelling	88	12	91	8	91	8	89	9
PG	86	14	90	8	90	10	92	9

Table 14: Means & standard deviations for the other public schools & IPS; effect sizes, t-tests for comparisons between achievement of NAPLAN standards for Year 7 students

	M	SD	ES	t-test	df	p
other public schools	88.83	12.15	0.14	0.75	389	>.05
IPS prior	90.31	8.37	0.35	2.48	408	>.05
IPS in 1st year	92.37	8.00	0.34	1.16	377	>.05
IPS in 2nd year	92.28	8.23	0.17	0.72	383	>.05
IPS in 3rd year	90.68	9.40				

11.4.4 YEAR 9

Table 15 shows the percentage of Year 9 students at or above the NAPLAN standards. There is an increase in the percentage scores for IPS in their first, second, and third year of operation.

Table 15: Means & standard deviations of Year 9 students in other public schools & IPS at or above NAPLAN standards by domain

		Year 9 NAPLAN At and Above							
		other public schools (N=371)		1st year in IPS		2nd year in IPS		3rd Year in IPS	
Year 9		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Numeracy		86	13	93	6	95	5	93	9
Reading		81	15	91	7	89	14	92	10

Writing	74	15	84	11	83	10	82	12
Spelling	78	15	89	7	91	8	89	14
PG	76	15	89	9	91	9	89	11

Table 16: Means & standard deviations for the other public schools & IPS; effect sizes, t-tests for comparisons between achievement of NAPLAN standards for Year 9 students

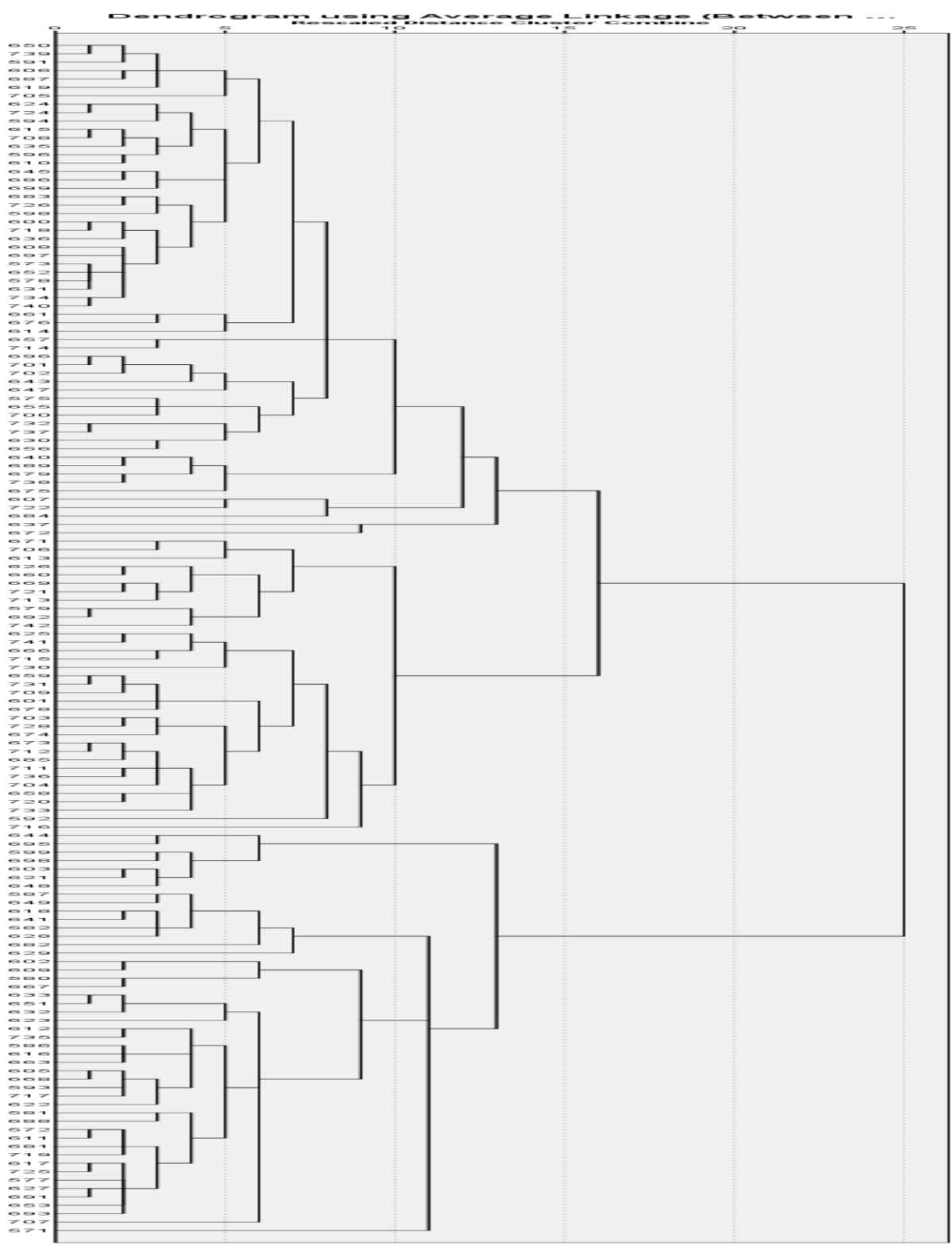
	M	SD		ES	t-test	df	p
other public schools	79.34	14.74	IPS prior vs. other public schools	0.63	3.66	389	>.05
IPS prior	86.62	8.22	IPS 1st yr. vs. other public schools	0.87	6.58	408	>.05
IPS in 1st year	89.30	8.15	IPS 2nd yr. vs. other public schools	0.86	3.08	377	>.05
IPS in 2nd year	89.62	9.19	IPS 3rd yr. vs. other public schools	0.74	3.13	383	>.05
IPS in 3rd year	88.96	11.15					

Across the five subjects the percentage *at and above* the NAPLAN standards in the other public schools is 85.30% for all domains. For IPS schools prior to entry it is 88.86%, and the increase for IPS schools is small (an average of 1.6% more students *at and above*) in the three years of intake.

Table 17: Percentages of students at and above the NAPLAN standards – differences between IPS and other public schools

	Yr 3	Yr 5	Yr 7	Yr 9	Average
other public schools	88	85	89	79	85.30
IPS prior	90	89	90	87	88.86
IPS in 1st year	93	90	92	89	91.06
IPS in 2nd year	91	90	92	90	90.65
IPS in 3rd year	90	89	91	89	89.70

11.5 APPENDIX E: CLUSTER ANALYSIS



11.5.1 INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

There was no clear relation between membership in these three Clusters and demographic variables. As seen in Table 18 there were slightly more Intake 1 in Cluster 3 (high), more Intake 3.1 in Cluster 1 (lowest), and a mix of intakes in Cluster 2 (middle).

Table 18: Cluster Analysis – Number of schools in each Intake

Cluster	Intake 1	Intake 2	Intake 3.1
1 (lowest)	3 (14%)	8 (15%)	23 (38%)
2 (middle)	7 (32%)	23 (42%)	26 (43%)
3 (highest)	12 (55%)	24 (44%)	12 (20%)

There are slightly more Southwest + Wheatbelt schools in Cluster 1 (lowest), more Goldfields, Kimberley, Midwest and Pilbara in Cluster 1 (lowest), and slightly more Metro schools in Cluster 3 (highest). But there is no clear pattern (see Table 19).

Table 19: Cluster Analysis – Region

Cluster	North and South (Metro)	Southwest + Wheatbelt (Non-metro)	Goldfields, Kimberley, Midwest, Pilbara (Non-metro)
1 (lowest)	28 (27%)	1 (19%)	4 (33%)
2 (middle)	37 (36%)	13 (62%)	6 (44%)
3 (highest)	38 (37%)	7 (18%)	3 (22%)

Table 20 shows a similar distribution of the three socio-economic levels across the three clusters.

Table 20: Cluster Analysis - SEI

Cluster	Low SEI	Medium SEI	High SEI
1 (lowest)	5 (18%)	11 (24%)	18 (28%)
2 (middle)	12 (43%)	22 (48%)	22 (34%)
3 (highest)	11 (39%)	13 (28%)	24 (38%)

There is also no relation between the clusters relating to the level of schooling as shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Cluster Analysis - Schooling Level

	1 (lowest)	2 (middle)	3 (highest)
Primary	40 (62%)	21 (62%)	52 (71%)
Secondary	6 (9%)	5 (15%)	8 (11%)
District HS	2 (3%)	2 (6%)	2 (3%)
Senior HS	9 (14%)	5 (15%)	8 (11%)
Special	8 (12%)	1 (3%)	3 (4%)

11.5.2 STUDENT OUTCOMES

There are no differences in Cluster membership and Attendance, Suspension or Retention rates as shown by Table 22.

Table 22: Cluster Analysis - Attendance, Suspension or Retention

	Wilks	Mult. F	df	p
Attendance	0.85	1.53	10, 190	0.102
Suspension days	0.88	1.02	10, 150	0.428
Retention rates (Yr 8 to 12)	0.48	1.76	10, 40	0.100

There are no marked differences in the NAPLAN measures as shown by Table 23, Table 24 and Table 25.

Table 23: Cluster Analysis - NAPLAN achievement levels

NAPLAN achievement levels		Wilks	Mult. F	df	p
Year 3	Numeracy	0.88	1.17	10,172	0.313
	Reading	0.92	0.69	10, 172	0.734
	Writing	0.93	0.61	10, 172	0.807
Year 5	Numeracy	0.16	1.51	10 174	0.141
	Reading	0.08	0.76	10, 174	0.664
	Writing	0.16	1.51	10, 174	0.140
Year 7	Numeracy	0.86	1.29	10, 172	0.240
	Reading	0.88	1.09	10, 170	0.371
	Writing	0.89	1.01	10, 170	0.438
Year 9	Numeracy	0.69	0.87	10, 42	0.567
	Reading	0.72	0.74	10, 42	0.687
	Writing	0.88	0.28	10, 42	0.983

Table 24: Cluster Analysis - Relative NAPLAN growth

Relative NAPLAN growth		Wilks	Mult. F	df	p
Year 3	Numeracy	0.81	1.84	10, 164	0.057
	Reading	0.86	1.28	10, 162	0.244
	Writing	0.82	1.76	10, 164	0.071
Year 5	Numeracy	0.88	1.01	10, 158	0.440
	Reading	0.91	0.82	10, 158	0.607
	Writing	0.81	1.77	10, 162	0.071
Year 7	Numeracy	0.87	1.08	10, 148	0.379
	Reading	0.85	1.30	10, 150	0.237
	Writing	0.90	0.90	10, 158	0.538
Year 9	Numeracy	0.68	0.45	10, 34	0.912
	Reading	0.57	1.12	10, 34	0.351
	Writing	0.82	0.28	10, 36	0.950

Table 25: Cluster Analysis - NAPLAN at and above standard

NAPLAN At and Above standard		Wilks	Mult. F	df	p
Year 3	Numeracy	0.87	0.90	10,120	0.538
	Reading	0.90	0.71	10,130	0.720
	Writing	0.78	1.19	10,90	0.310
Year 5	Numeracy	0.79	1.61	10,132	0.107
	Reading	0.84	1.20	10,128	0.295
	Writing	0.83	1.18	10, 120	0.308
Year 7	Numeracy	0.87	0.76	10, 108	0.664
	Reading	0.84	1.08	10, 114	0.386
	Writing	0.87	0.89	10, 118	0.546
Year 9	Numeracy	0.84	0.35	10, 38	0.961
	Reading	0.81	0.41	10, 36	0.933
	Writing	0.70	0.73	10, 38	0.689

11.5.3 DECISIONS NOT TO APPLY

As can be seen in Table 26, clusters based on factors for decisions not to apply were not related to the region within the state, suggesting that that location of schools did not affect decisions to not become an IPS. This trend was also seen when examining major cities, regional and remote locations (see Table 27).

Table 26: Cluster Analysis – State Region

	North and South (Metro)	Southwest + Wheatbelt (non-Metro)	Goldfields, Kimberley, Midwest, Pilbara (Non-Metro)
(Least resistant to IPS) 1	30 (23%)	15 (27%)	16 (28%)
2	63 (49%)	18 (33%)	23 (40%)
3	25 (19%)	19 (35%)	17 (29%)
(Most resistant to IPS) 4	11 (9%)	3 (5%)	2 (3%)

Table 27: Cluster Analysis – School Region

	Major Cities	Regional	Remote	Very Remote
(Least resistant to IPS) 1	23 (20%)	21 (31%)	8 (29%)	9 (29%)
2	56 (49%)	24 (35%)	13 (46%)	11 (36%)
3	25 (22%)	21 (31%)	6 (21%)	9 (29%)
(Most resistant to IPS) 4	11 (10%)	2 (3%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)

Furthermore, there were no difference between clusters on socio economics (Table 28) and level of schooling (Table 29). Indicating that these factors do not explain why some school are more or less resistant to becoming an IPS.

Table 28: Cluster Analysis – Socio economics

	Lowest SES	Middle SES	High SES
(Least resistant to IPS) 1	26 (27%)	22 (27%)	13 (20%)
2	42 (44%)	28 (35%)	34 (52%)
3	22 (23%)	23 (28%)	16 (25%)
(Most resistant to IPS) 4	6 (6%)	8 (10%)	2 (3%)

Table 29: Cluster Analysis – Level of Schooling

	Primary	Secondary	Senior HS	Special	District HS
(Least resistant to IPS) 1	43 (25%)	4 (31%)	5 (39%)	0 (0%)	9 (41%)
2	74 (43%)	4 (31%)	3 (23%)	15 (71%)	8 (37%)
3	46 (27%)	5 (39%)	3 (23%)	4 (19%)	3 (14%)
(Most resistant to IPS) 4	10 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	2 (10%)	2 (9%)

Furthermore, there were no differences in attendance, suspension or retention rates (Table 30) relating to the four clusters nor any differences on NAPLAN scores (Table 31) or NAPLAN relative growth (Table 32).

Table 30: Cluster Analysis – Attendance, Suspension and Retention Rates

	Wilks	Mult.F	df	p
Attendance	0.943	0.83	15, 569	0.647
Suspension (days)	0.918	0.69	15, 329	0.798
Retention rates (Yr 8 to 12)	0.716	0.69	15, 80	0.787

Table 31: Cluster Analysis – NAPLAN Scores

		Wilks	Mult.F	df	p
Year 3	Numeracy	0.91	1.26	15, 508	0.223
	Reading	0.91	1.13	15, 506	0.327
	Writing	0.95	0.57	15, 503	0.897
Year 5	Numeracy	0.95	0.63	15, 513	0.851
	Reading	0.94	0.76	15, 516	0.72
	Writing	0.94	0.80	15, 513	0.682
Year 7	Numeracy	0.91	1.05	15, 478	0.399
	Reading	0.93	0.89	15, 475	0.572
	Writing	0.94	0.78	15, 478	0.705
Year 9	Numeracy	0.62	1.15	15, 92	0.324
	Reading	0.63	1.13	15, 92	0.339
	Writing	0.67	0.99	15, 94	0.472

Table 32: Cluster Analysis – NAPLAN Relative Growth

		Wilks	Mult.F	df	p
Year 3	Numeracy	0.88	1.17	15, 373	0.294
	Reading	0.89	1.12	15, 373	0.338
	Writing	0.89	1.02	15, 370	0.430
Year 5	Numeracy	0.89	0.94	15, 323	0.523
	Reading	0.82	1.6	15, 329	0.072
	Writing	0.87	1.15	15, 340	0.307
Year 7	Numeracy	0.87	0.93	15, 271	0.534
	Reading	0.91	0.66	15, 271	0.827
	Writing	0.93	0.47	15, 282	0.953
Year 9	Numeracy	0.45	0.81	15, 36	0.659
	Reading	0.56	0.62	15, 39	0.841
	Writing	0.32	1.135	15, 39	0.221

Component 1: Develop a foundation for delivery. This requires three steps:

1. Defining and clarify aspirations which in this case is knowing and valuing the impact the school has on the learning of the students. This involves being clear on the success criteria from any intervention (such as levels of progress, retention in the school system, convincing parents to enrol in public schools, achievement outcomes).
2. Building the delivery unit. This is not about accountability methods or external imperatives but about a commitment to action to achieve the aspiration. The unit is not necessarily the teachers or school leaders but a small group within each school (but can be shared across schools) responsible to ensuring delivery. Barber recommends the unit be small, reside outside the school hierarchy (as they must influence them as well), and have time and sufficient resources to ensure delivery.
3. Establishing a guiding coalition so as to remove barriers to change, have influence to support the unit's work at crucial moments, and can provide counsel and advice - aiming to helping ensuring maximum probability of success. The coalition is essential for developing the trust that is so important in school change.

Component 2: Understand the delivery challenge.

1. Evaluate past and present performance. What is the evidence most indicative of performance (or whatever other outcomes); how dependable and credible is this evidence to the teachers, school leaders, students, and parents (and whomever else); what are the target indicators; what are the correlates of these target indicators, and the indicators of unintended consequences. Does the school share a program logic of how learning occurs in this school?
2. Understand drivers of performance and relevant systems activities. Do all in the school understand the drivers of student learning, are they drivers that have some control over, are there mindsets that inhibit the impact we need to have on learning (e.g., "Give me bright students and I can achieve", "But it is all about poverty and the home", "If they do not come to class prepared that is not my fault", "We know 'group x' are underachievers and do not value education"). Or do the teachers in the school see themselves as change agents, which all students can learn, that they can have marked positive impacts on all students, that they are tasked primarily with knowing their impact on students.

Component 3: Plan for delivery

1. Determine the reform strategy. Strategy is primarily the role of the school leaders, and the role of the delivery leader is to inform this strategy. There is no magic formula, programs, or quick ways to have systematic, genuine, and identifiable impacts on student learning. It requires all in the school wanting to have this impact, adopting theories of change that allow the best ways of getting there, building capacity, capability, and culture, and evaluating strategies
2. Set targets and trajectories. Setting challenging and defensible targets is critical for all levels in the school – from the front office, school leaders, teachers, and students. This involves targets at each student level and work forward, and avoiding the notion of 'averaging'. The flaw of the average is that change can affects only

some students and many others are left behind. Decide on the trajectories to attain these targets, and then devise systems to evaluate the success in this trajectory.

3. Produce delivery plans. The planning is everything, it is a work in progress, and it requires revision, rework, and realistic support. This is where school leadership comes to the fore.

Component 4: Drive delivery

1. Establish routines to drive and monitor performance. This is where effort exceeds expectations by having all being aware of their roles in the plan to the targets, planning stock takes and being transparent in reporting progress or otherwise in a timely manner, being aware of the challenges, and creating the trust in the culture of the methods to attain the mission.
2. Solve problems early and rigorously. Accepting that the problem is real to the person with the problem is important, and then there is a need to reassess the priority and severity, and evaluate the criticalness for solving the problem relative to the delivery of the target.
3. Sustain and continually build momentum. The momentum is very much a product of the quality of the routines, the willingness to problem solve, and the evidence of success along the trajectory. There is a need to persist during distractions, manage those who resist change, challenge the status quo, and most important celebrate success.

Component 5: Develop, identify and esteem success.

1. Throughout the year, there needs to be systems in place to identify where each student, teacher, school leader is on their trajectory to the targets and pause to reflect, change, esteem, and problem solve. This can help develop a culture of improvement not blame, is the true meaning of continuous learning, and create a cohesive group of educators, students and families committed to supporting and valuing learning in a school.