

FORGOTTEN LEADERS? THE ROLE AND WORKLOAD OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS IN QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Historically, the deputy principalship in secondary schools has been an under-researched area, despite the significant and on-going changes impacting on schools in recent years. There is no information, certainly for Queensland government schools, about what deputy principals do in terms of their roles and workload nor the underpinning skills and competencies required to undertake these. This paper reports on the findings of a project commissioned by the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association to address this information void. The research, undertaken in December 2001, comprised a literature review and a questionnaire distributed to the deputy principal membership of the association.

Included among a range of significant findings from the study is that despite long work-hours, high pressure and significant changes and an expanding diversity in their roles in recent times, the vast majority of deputy principals are satisfied with their role. Deputy principals also reported differences between the activities in what they saw as a typical week for them and what they envisaged as an ideal week eg. they would like to be more involved in strategic and curriculum leadership and less involved in student and staff issues, and management and administrative matters. The key skills required in the role were seen to be strong interpersonal/people skills, inspiring and visioning change, delegation and empowerment and being a good manager.

Keywords

Educational leadership; secondary schooling

1. INTRODUCTION

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

This report of the study focuses mainly on the responses, collected in December 2001, of a sample of deputy principals from state secondary schools across Queensland.

2. AIMS OF THE STUDY

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

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

The questionnaire research component of the study was guided by a review of the literature as summarised in the following section and discussions with key stakeholders.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

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

a) general literature

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Golanda (1991) considered the assistant principal role in terms of the relationship between the assistant principal and the principal (see also Michel, 1996; Ogilvie, 1977; Panyako and Rorie, 1987). He argued that the essentially supportive and complimentary role of the

assistant principal to the principal in conjunction with the already traditionally assigned and delegated responsibilities determined by the principal insufficiently prepared and equipped the assistant principal for the role of principalship. Harvey (1994) identified the origins of the features of the relationship between the principal and deputy principal as including: the paternalistic nature of principal authority, the principal's determination of the delegated responsibilities, the broad range of disparate tasks for the deputy principal, and the list of responsibilities drawn from the same pool as the principals. He suggested that for the deputy principal the result was 'an ad hoc set of tasks which are not grounded in a clear conceptualisation of the purpose of the role' (p.16).

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

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

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

to by unrealistic expectations of being a member of the team, the effect of which is compounded by a lack of control over work duties, insufficient recognition, limited resources and opportunities and unfulfilled career expectations.

Almost 20 years ago, Bates and Shank (1983) argued that the symbolism of changing the title 'assistant' to 'associate' could accompany a concomitant change in role and relationship whereby an 'associate principal's' role is a synergistic one which shares responsibility with the principal, and participates in all major decisions. They asserted such a relationship could be advantageous in enhancing the associate's self-esteem and image with staff and parents, and in increasing and strengthening leadership and management skills. Panyako and Rorie (1987) argued that such moves, together with strategies to relieve the deputy principal of some of the more clerical, administrative and custodial duties that could aptly be taken over by other personnel within the school could lead to an enhanced status of the deputy principal role.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- in general, there is limited research into the deputy principalship locally and otherwise - there is none undertaken recently in Queensland for state secondary deputies;
- considerable variability is reported in the roles of deputy principals (or assistant principals or deputy heads) in different education systems and across different time periods;
- the role of the deputy principal has become more complex and varied over time;
- principals play an important role in determining the particular activities a deputy principal might undertake;
- there are questions as to how best to prepare deputy principals for the principalship;

- of late, there has been a call for the role to involve a greater leadership focus, with less emphasis on management - the management focus has predominated despite some arguments for change quite some years ago;
- there is a general move towards a more collegiate leadership model for principals and deputy principals
- the last two points reflect a general call for a reconceptualisation of the role, particularly in response to recent changes impacting on schools such as devolution and school-based management.

a. formal statement of position

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. METHODOLOGY

Given the considerable diversity in geographical location of deputy principals across Queensland, it was decided to employ a questionnaire design for data collection to address the aims of the study.

(a) deputy principal instrument

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

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

The final version of the SDPQ comprised:

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

No names of respondents or schools were required on the questionnaire, although participants were invited to indicate contact details if they were willing to take part in possible follow-up interviews and/or focus groups. It was anticipated the questionnaire would take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire was provided to participants electronically via email towards the end of the 2001 school year. A covering explanatory note provided participants with background to, and purposes of the study together with instructions regarding completion and return. (Participants received two follow-up reminders to return the questionnaire.) Participants were provided with three options for response. These were:

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

The vast majority chose the hard copy/manual option for return of the SDPQ.

(b) study sample

The Secondary Deputy Principal Questionnaire (SDPQ) was emailed to all deputy principal members of the Queensland Secondary Principals Association in early December, 2001. Of the approximate 152 members, 48 completed questionnaires were returned by the end of the 2001 school year. Analysis of the email addresses provided by the association and the identified non-returnees suggest that some of the addresses were incorrect. In all likelihood this negatively impacted to some extent on the return rate. The return rate of approximately 30% does impact on the nature and extent of some of the possible data analyses and does represent a limitation to the study.

5. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

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

a. School characteristics of respondents

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

BAND (2)	8	9	10	11
%	6	38	32	23

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

NUMBER OF OTHER DPs (5)	1	2	3
%	7	72	22

b. Summary of general characteristics of respondents

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

GENDER (6)	MALE		FEMALE	
%	43		57	

YEARS AS A DEPUTY (7)	3 YEARS OR LESS	4 TO 9 YEARS	MORE THAN 9 YEARS
%	36	43	21

YEARS AS A DP AT CURRENT SCHOOL (8)	3 YEARS OR LESS	4 TO 9 YEARS	MORE THAN 9 YEARS
%	57	26	17

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AS A DEPUTY (9)	2 SCHOOLS OR LESS	3 SCHOOLS OR MORE
%	89	11

TEACHING SUBJECT AREA (10)	HOME ECON	SOCIAL SCIENCES /HUMANITIES	ENGLISH	SCIENCE/ MATHS	LANG'S	HEALTH/ PE	OTHER
%	13	21	11	18	7	13	17

HOURS WORKED IN A TYPICAL WEEK (16)	LESS THAN 40 HOURS	40-49 HOURS	50-59 HOURS	60 HOURS OR MORE
%	2	15	60	23

Summary comments:

The majority of respondents were from Bands 9, 10, 11 schools, with two or more deputies. Both male and female deputy principals were well represented in the sample of respondents.

A significant majority of respondents have 9 or less years experience with a little over a third with three or less years experience.

A significant majority of respondents have been deputy principals in their current school for 9 or less years, although this may be influenced by the fact that just over one-third of the sample had only been a deputy for three years or less; that is, they are therefore less likely to have been mobile and had wider school experience in the role.

Almost 90 percent had been a deputy in one or two schools, indicating the majority of the

respondents were perhaps moderately experienced in the role of deputy principal if one considers both number of schools and years in the role.
The substantive curriculum backgrounds of respondents varied, with social sciences/humanities, science/mathematics, home economics and health/physical education dominating.
Over eighty percent reported working 50 or more hours per week, with almost a quarter sixty hours or more.

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

c) Satisfaction with role and future career intentions

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AS A DP (11)	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED nor DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED
%	26	51	11	13

Comments provided in the open-ended items relevant to this item included "role is exciting"; "this is a challenging yet stimulating role".

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

- How well the notion of team among school administration team members was developed;
- The time dedicated to strategic leadership in a typical week;
- The time dedicated to educational/curriculum leadership in a typical week; and,
- The fact that the principal has too much accountability with insufficient authority.

INTENTION TO SEEK PROMOTION (12)	YES	NO	NOT SURE

%	49	21	30
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Reason (s) for not seeking promotion to principal for those responding "no" or "not sure" to previous item are provided in the following table:

REASON FOR NO PROMOTION (13)	% INDICATING THIS REASON
• Satisfied in DP role and see as future career	2
• Role of principal is too demanding with too much responsibility	13
• Lifestyle decision - work/home/family balance more manageable as a DP	28
• Role of DP is closer to teaching-learning context	15
• Role of principal has too much accountability with insufficient authority	23
• Other reasons	8

Other reasons listed included (all mentioned by only ONE respondent):

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

Summary comments:

- Over three-quarters of the respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their role of deputy principal, with only 13 percent indicating they were dissatisfied.

- Almost half indicated an intention to seek promotion to principal, although another third were unsure of their intentions in this regard.
- Reasons provided by the 20 percent indicating they would not be seeking promotion focused mainly on (a) the demands on principals they saw as negatives, such as the role holding too much accountability with insufficient authority as well as the role being too demanding, and (b) this latter point is consistent with another frequently reported reason being a lifestyle decision, based on balancing work/home/family.

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

d) notion of development of team among administration members

HOW WELL DEVELOPED IS NOTION OF A TEAM (14)	HIGHLY DEVELOPED	SOMEWHAT DEVELOPED & EVOLVING	SOMEWHAT DEVELOPED BUT COULD BE BETTER	NOT WELL DEVELOPED AT ALL
%	57	22	13	9
FACTOR (S) CONTRIBUTING TO DEVELOPMENT OF A TEAM (15)				% INDICATING THIS FACTOR AS VERY IMPORTANT
• Attitudes and skills of the principal				89
• Attitudes and skills of other members of the team				83
• Past practices and culture of the school				28
• Well developed interpersonal relationships among team members				92
• Opportunities to engage in appropriate professional development re teamwork				70

Comments in the open-ended items included " the need for a team and teamwork is vital to success in the deputies role".

Summary comments:

- Almost 80 percent of respondents commented positively regarding the notion of team development among administration members at their school, with almost 60 percent indicating that "team" was h developed.
- The major factors contributing to this situation were the attitudes and skills of the principal and othe members of the team and the existence of well-developed relationships among team members.

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

e) aspects of roles & responsibilities of deputy principal

i. general aspects of the role

NO. HOURS WORKED COMPARED WITH EARLIER (17)	INCREASED	ABOUT SAME	DECREASED
%	50	44	7
PRESSURE IN ROLE OF DEPUTY PRINCIPAL AT THE MOMENT (18)	HIGH	AVERAGE/MEDIUM	LOW
%	81	19	0
PRESSURE IN ROLE COMPARED WITH EARLIER (19)	INCREASED	ABOUT SAME	DECREASED
%	70	23	6
VARIETY AND DIVERSITY IN DP ROLE COMPARED WITH EARLIER (21)	INCREASED	ABOUT SAME	DECREASED
%	78	22	0

A number of deputies commented about the role and workload of deputies being too great in the open-ended items. Some identified negative effects of this, including no time for professional development and no opportunity to take any extended holidays.

ROLES OF OTHER STAFF COMPARED WITH EARLIER (23)	INCREASED IN VARIETY & DIVERSITY (%)	REMAINED SAME (%)	DECREASED IN VARIETY & DIVERSITY (%)
• Principal	78	20	2
• other deputy principals	84	16	0
• heads of department	76	22	2
• teachers	72	24	4

Summary comments:

- Half the respondents indicated the *number of hours* worked in their role as deputy principal had increased, although most of the remainder reported them about the same.
- Eighty percent indicated the *pressure* they felt in the role was high, with 70 percent indicating this pressure had increased in recent years. About a quarter saw the pressure as about the same as earlier.
- The key factors contributing to this *increased pressure* were identified as:
 - behaviour management, and issues related to this such as challenging parents/carers;
 - staffing issues, such as obtaining suitable staff, low morale of some staff;
 - the variety of changes (system and local) impacting on schools and hence on the role of the deputy principal, such as curriculum, accountability, VET, policy issues (eg 2010).
- Almost 80 percent reported the *variety and diversity* of what they did in their role as having increased.
- The major factors contributing to this *increased variety and diversity* were:
 - the nature and extent of school and curriculum changes experienced in recent times (eg.

VET, QSE-2010);

- demands and delegations from central and district office;
 - local issues (eg student enrolment changes);
 - expanded role to deal with, for example, external agencies;
 - expectations of the community and students.
- The majority of deputy principals noted that all professional staff in schools (principals, deputy principals, heads of department, teachers) had experienced an increase in the variety and diversity in their roles compared with earlier.

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

ii. Specific aspects of role

IN A TYPICAL WEEK, TIME DEDICATED TO THESE ACTIVITIES (24)	GREAT DEAL OF TIME (%)	SOME TIME (%)	'TOTAL' (great + some) (%)
• strategic leadership	28	38	66
• educational/curriculum leadership	21	57	79
• management/administration	68	23	91
• student issues	89	11	100
• parent/community issues	36	53	89
• staffing issues	55	38	94
• operational matters	70	26	96
IN AN IDEAL WEEK, TIME DEDICATED	GREAT	SOME TIME	'TOTAL'

TO THESE ACTIVITIES (25)	DEAL OF TIME (%)	(%)	(great + some) (%)
• strategic leadership	75	25	100
• educational/curriculum leadership	83	17	100
• management/administration	13	55	68
• student issues	4	47	51
• parent/community issues	19	62	81
• staffing issues	9	57	66
• operational matters	9	49	58

COMPARISON - ACTUAL AND IDEAL WEEK (24-25)	ACTUAL (%)	IDEAL (%)	DIFFERENCE ACTUAL/IDEAL %
• strategic leadership	66	100	34 *
• educational/curriculum leadership	79	100	21 *
• management/administration	91	68	23 #
• student issues	100	51	49 #
• parent/community issues	89	81	8
• staffing issues	94	66	28 #

• operational matters	96	58	38 #
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* Want to do MORE of this.

Want to do LESS of this.

FACTORS OR BARRIERS PREVENTING IDEAL/PREFERRED ACTIVITIES (26)	MAJOR INFLUENCE (%)
• too many demands on time to do any more	87
• lack of necessary skills	2
• responsibilities set and prioritised by principal	23
• influence of flow-on effect of changes in principals' roles & responsibilities	36
• other	27

Others identified included: day-to-day management dominating; characteristics of the position such as poor remuneration, local school issues (eg. staff and other resourcing issues). Those in schools where they were the only deputy indicated that it was extremely difficult being the only such officer and that the situation made their roles different from what it might be in other school locations where there was more than one deputy.

<p><u>Summary comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the deputy principal in a <i>typical week</i> was reported as being dominated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ student and staffing issues; and , ▪ operational management and administration matters. Strategic leadership (66%) and educational/curriculum leadership (79%) both had less prominence. • The role of the deputy principal in an <i>ideal week</i> would see this situation effectively reversed ie. comprising a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ significant focus on strategic and educational/curriculum leadership; and, ▪ less focus on student, staff and operational matters. • Deputy principals indicated that the many demands on their time and matters associated with the principal (eg expectations of the principal) were the key factors in creating barriers to their adopting their preferred roles. They did not see a lack of

skills acting as a barrier.

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

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

SKILLS, COMPETENCIES IMPORTANT TO ROLE AS DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (27)	VERY IMPORTANT (%)	IMPORTANT (%)	'TOTAL' (very import + important) (%)
• inspiring, visioning change for school	83	17	100
• demonstrating strong interpersonal, people skills	98	2	100
• capacity to delegate, empower others	75	25	100
• managing uncertainty for self and others	49	47	96
• managing change for self and others	64	34	98
• capacity to develop networks	66	30	96
• effective and efficient manager, administrator	72	28	100

Summary comments:

- Deputy principals identified strong interpersonal/people skills (very important option 98%) as the key skill in undertaking their role.
- The capacity to delegate/empower (75% very important), being an effective and efficient manager/administrator (72% very important) and being able to inspire and vision change (83% very important) were also highly rated.
- When asked (in an open-ended item) to identify the particular skills and competencies they saw as their strengths for the role of deputy principal, similar capacities to those as above were noted. For example, open-ended comments about their strengths for the role identified the following:
 - Interpersonal skills (overwhelmingly the most frequently mentioned);
 - Being a good administrator and doing a good job;
 - Leadership capacities.

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

g) professional development

Summary comments (from open-ended item):

- The TWO most frequently mentioned professional development "areas" indicated were:
 - leadership skills (including change management, team building); and,
 - financial management.
- Desirable strategies for professional development identified by respondents included:
 - acting in the roles of principal;
 - work shadowing;
 - opportunities to share best practice; and,
 - mentoring.

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

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Among the main findings of this study into the roles and workloads of deputy principals in Queensland government schools are:

- the vast majority are working more than 50 hours a week, almost a quarter more than 60 hours;
- the vast majority are satisfied with their role as deputy principal, a quarter are very satisfied;
- about a half intend to seek promotion to the principalship - lifestyle decisions and observations (negative) about the principal's role are deterrents to seeking promotion;
- most respondents report high pressure in the role, with this and hours work increasing in recent times;
- the variety and diversity of the role has also increased in recent times;
- the majority of respondents report being satisfied in the role and indicate that the development of the notion of team among the administration is high;
- there is a difference between the activities in what deputy principals see as a typical week and what they envisage as an ideal week - they would like to be more involved in strategic and curriculum leadership and less involved in student and staff issues, and management and administrative matters. Competing demands on their time and matters associated with the principal are the main factors impacting on the dissonance of typical and ideal.
- the key skills required in the role are strong interpersonal/people skills, inspiring and visioning change, delegation and empowerment and being a good manager.
- two key professional development areas are: financial management and leadership skills.

There is little doubt that deputy principals in secondary schools play key leadership and management roles. As change continues to impact on schools, these roles also change. This research has started a journey of better understanding the deputy principal role and the changes to it in recent times. The necessary skills and competencies required of the deputy principalship have also been identified. These findings have implications for both policy and practice, providing useful information for recruitment and selection for the deputy principalship for the future as well as for professional development of those currently in the position.

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