

**Organizational Change for School  
Development: A Study of the Implementation  
of School-Based Decision-Making Groups**

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In an attempt to preserve anonymity, the names of participants and their schools have been changed.

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I wish to dedicate this work to my son Brendon and daughter Jenelle and trust that they will see value in the pursuit of knowledge.

## ABSTRACT

This study analyses, interprets and describes the dynamics of the change process occurring as members of three secondary school communities attempted to implement a Ministry of Education initiative involving the establishment of a school-based decision-making group.

A review of literature on innovation and change, organization theory and school improvement is presented as a basis for the establishment of a conceptual framework for the study. Within this framework, implementation is viewed as the interaction of the innovation with the characteristics of each adopting school. These interactions are viewed as occurring within two change environments. The first, the general change environment, is shared by all schools under study. This environment reflects the broader economic, political and educational pressures prompting change. The second environment is specific to each school. It forms the immediate context within which the implementation process occurs. Before examining the specific nature of the implementation process within each school site, attention is given to the general change environment from which the innovation emerged. This is accompanied by an analysis of the evolutionary nature of the innovation itself as it underwent progressive clarification at Ministry of Education level.

To assess the influence that specific environmental characteristics have on the implementation process, schools with markedly differing setting characteristics were selected for study. An instrument to assess school organizational climate was developed, (SOCQ) and then administered to twenty three secondary schools in the Perth metropolitan area.

The resulting data were analysed and used to select three schools with distinctly different organizational climate characteristics for closer study of the implementation process.

For each school, detailed portrayals of the implementation events were distilled in order to capture the complexities of the change. Cross-case analysis of the casestudy data was then undertaken to draw out particular issues, events and interactions that appeared to be of importance in directing the implementation process within individual schools and across all three sites.

The final chapter addresses the initial set of research questions and presents a series of findings and associated recommendations stemming from this study. Of the range of findings to emerge from the study three appear to be of critical importance for our understanding of the organizational change process. The first finding is that the implementation of a policy innovation is best viewed as a process of "interactive modification" That is, a process whereby the innovation prompts modifications to be made to the adopting system and where the adopting system prompts modifications to be made to the innovation in a complex and dynamic manner. This finding goes beyond the notion of change as "adaptation" or "evolution" to suggest more dynamic and interrelated process of change occurring to both the innovation and the adopting system. The second finding is that adopting system, the school, is best viewed as an open social system influenced by and yet exerting an influence upon the broader change environment in which it exists. Consequently the implementation of change is subject to influence by information, issues, events and interventions stemming from internal and external sources. The reality of the organizational change process is therefore far more complex and dynamic than previous theories and models of change suggest. A third and related finding is that secondary schools appear to be comprised of a number of sub-systems. The extent to which these sub-systems are interdependent or linked appears to influence not only the school's initial response to change but also the schools capacity to undertake meaningful and significant implementation of an innovation. This finding has implications for the design of specific change strategies that focus on improving the degree of sub-system linkage within a school. Such change strategies might occur prior to or run concurrently with other strategies concerned with the implementation of specific organizational changes.

It is hoped that these findings have value for several audiences. First, they should be of particular importance to Ministry and school personnel presently confronted by organizational change. Second, the findings should not only serve to inform those building change theory, but also those educators who might hold responsibility for the implementation of similar policy innovations.



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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

This study examines in detail the processes involved in organizational change in Western Australian government secondary schools. The study focuses on the secondary school community's response to a 1987 Ministry of Education initiative regarding the establishment of School-Based Decision-Making Groups. The formation of such groups serves as the basis of an approach to school-based management which was designed to enable schools to exercise more autonomy over decisions concerning educational policy and school development. The initiative therefore involves a strategy to create self-determining schools.

Over the last two decades there have been initiatives in a number of countries to increase the autonomy of publicly funded schools by devolving responsibility for decision-making and management, from central education authorities back to schools. Political, economic, and educational rationales have been forwarded as justification for those initiatives. Levin (1980) suggests that moves for the devolution of decision-making responsibility and school-based management reflect a world-wide and growing interest in worker control and participative administration of organizations. Watkins (1985), however, argues that the development of school-based decision-making groups, based on participatory and democratic processes, brings a school's decision-making

in line with the political rhetoric of our present society which espouses the ideals of democratic participation. He suggests that the often autocratic and hierarchical nature of decision-making in schools, provides a contrast to, and contradicts the democratic foundations of society.

Other relevant factors influencing this trend towards devolution of educational decision-making may be related directly to prevailing economic and social circumstances (Carnoy & Shearer, 1980). Certainly the existence of rising inflation and declining currency values has meant that school systems in many countries are facing significant reductions in funding. As a consequence, proponents of devolution suggest that a school, provided with a lump sum budget allocation, can allocate resources in a manner more responsive to the particular needs of their student population hence permitting a more efficient use of limited funds. A supporting argument here is that governing bodies, comprised of head teachers, parents and students, would be in the best position to ensure that resources are used to the best advantage for their schools (Beare, 1985).

This decline in funding facing schools appears to be accompanied by a changing community perception regarding the effectiveness of schools to equip students with basic academic skills. Indeed, concerns over basic academic skills have featured prominently in the findings of a number of recent enquiries into education in Australia (for example the 1984 Beazley Report, in Western Australia). One recommendation emerging from these reports has been the suggestion that schools become more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. Accordingly, many state education authorities have embarked on a process of devolving decision-making to the local school level.

Increasingly the case for devolution and school-based management is being argued on the basis of findings from studies of school effectiveness. Many writers advocate that a form of self management provides the best framework for school improvement (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Finn, 1984; van Velzen, Miles, Eckholm & Robins, 1985; Louis, 1986). These writers call for the "strategic independence" of schools from central authorities and stress the need to focus on the school as the basic unit for planning.

Whatever the particular rationale for devolution and school-based management, authorities in many western countries have embarked on organizational change programmes for their public schools. In the United States, both the 1971 Fleischmann Commission Report in New York (Fleischmann Report, 1972) and the 1973 Florida Governors Citizen Commission Report (Florida Governor's Citizen Commission, 1973) contain recommendations for school-based management in education. According to Guthrie (1986), such recommendations were seen as a means of offsetting increased state authority over education by granting greater decision-making responsibility to schools. While comprehensive attempts have been made in California and Florida to implement components of school-based management systems, difficulties associated with school-level change, meant that wide-spread devolution did not occur. There has been however, a renewal of interest in school-based management generated by the influential USA National Governors' Association. In a report entitled "Time for Results", the National Governors' Association (1986) called for the support of school-based management to bring about school improvement.

Mercer, (1985) describes similar moves in Britain to widen the base of participation in educational decision-making. As early as 1975 the Taylor Committee Report (1974), contained proposals to involve head teachers, staff, local authorities, parents, auxiliary staff and students in the process of school-based management. To this end, schools were directed to form school councils which reflected broad community involvement. More recently, the British Conservative party announced it's "Next Moves Forward" manifesto as part of the build-up to the 1987 election. In order to encourage the establishment of school-based management structures, the manifesto proposed to give budgetary control to the governing bodies of all secondary schools that opted out of the traditional controlling relationship with the local education authorities.

Similarly, many countries with large centralized education systems such as France, Sweden, Belgium, and Northern Ireland have proposed reforms that give individual schools more responsibility for change (Fantini & Gitell, 1973; Louis, 1986). In the last two decades throughout Australia there has also been a developing trend towards the devolution of decision-making from the central authorities to schools (Walker, 1985).

Victoria was among the first of the Australian states to initiate administrative decentralization to its regional units. In 1975 the Victorian state government required all government schools to establish school site councils of teachers, parents, and other members of the school community. A variety of models was offered as a guide for the establishment of these councils, with most models providing council members with advisory powers only. Under each of these early models the school Principal retained final authority for decision-making.

The state of New South Wales has also embarked on a similar process of regionalization and the devolution of responsibility for decision-making. In 1979 the NSW Department of Education, released a directive entitled "Managing the School". Under this directive a school executive body (Council), with appropriate staff involvement, was given special responsibility for assisting with the development, implementation, and evaluation of school planning and policies.

The 1980's involved dramatic political change in Australia with substantial commitment to devolution occurring within respective state governments. The general environment reflected economic difficulties resulting in rising inflation, balance of trade problems and a decline in the value of the Australian dollar. There was increasing public concern being expressed in the press regarding the ability of the state education system to respond to the needs of the national economy.

In response to these concerns, reviews of the existing education systems in all Australian states took on renewed impetus. Many of these reviews focused on system restructuring and the devolution of decision-making. New South Wales published Future Directions of Secondary Education (1983); South Australia, Education and Change in South Australia (1982); Queensland, Education 2000: Issues and Options for the future of Education in Queensland: a Discussion Paper (1985); Australian Capital Territory produced The Challenge of Change: A Review of High Schools in the A.C.T. (1982). In Victoria between 1982 and 1984, there were no fewer than six Ministerial papers outlining guiding principles for the devolution of authority and school-based management. These papers suggested strategies for schools to develop new collaborative decision-making processes and establish a School Improvement Plan. The plan encouraged



collaboration between parents, teachers and students and established procedures to ensure a planned process of school evaluation, planning, implementation and re-evaluation. Similar changes were being prompted in Western Australian schools under the Better Schools in Western Australia: a Programme for Improvement ( 1987).

## **1.2 BETTER SCHOOLS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

The state education system in Western Australia is currently undergoing massive changes. These changes not only focus on curriculum-related issues but also on (the) organizational and procedural aspects of educational delivery within the state-wide system. While specific curriculum changes can be linked to the recommendations of the earlier Beazley and McGaw Reports (1984), the recommended organizational changes to the operations of the Ministry of Education, schools and staff can be more directly linked to a comprehensive review of the public sector conducted by the Western Australian Government Functional Review Committee, in 1986 (White Paper: Managing Change in the Public Sector: 1986).

This Functional Review Committee's investigation into the operations of the then Western Australian Education Department reflected the government's commitment to the review of all public sector organizations. Given that the Education Department employed some 22 000 persons associated with over 700 schools and colleges, and received a quarter of the State government budget, it was understandable that an examination of the efficiency of the organization was deemed necessary to make it more cost effective.

In response to the Functional Review, a re-organization of the Education Department's Central Office was undertaken resulting in the creation of

the Ministry of Education. Subsequently Ministry personnel embarked on the preparation of a report (Better Schools in W. A., 1987) which outlined the Ministry's proposed responses to the need for change at all levels within the education system.

The Better Schools Report (1987) contains a rationale for radical change aimed at an improved educational system. The reasons for change are presented in terms of the need for schools to be responsive and adaptive to the needs of both the local community and to government priorities. Coupled with the responsiveness aspect is the notion that schools should be accountable to both the government and the community for the standard of service they provided. Essentially, the report represents a set of initiatives for devolving decision-making from the central Ministry Offices to the school site. As the introductory rationale in the Better Schools report indicates:

Whereas once it was believed that a good system creates good schools, it is now recognized that good schools make a good system. (Better Schools, p 5)

Implicit in this rationale is the belief that the achievement of "Better Schools" is dependent on school level initiatives rather than central office initiatives. Based on such a premise the Better Schools Report presents a framework for the creation of "good schools" through the devolution of responsibilities from central office to schools. The fundamental concept that schools should be self-determining is developed through the proposal that school-based decision-making groups be established in all schools.

The composition of the school-based decision-making group [SBDMG] is intended to represent both the community and staff and to allow appropriate participation by students. Responsibilities of the SBDMG

include the setting of broad school policies and priorities. Such policies need to reflect both Ministry policy and the particular needs of the school. Further, the group is vested with the responsibility for establishing a resource management plan that relates directly to school policies and priorities. In short, a school-based decision-making group will be composed of members which represent the broad interests of the school community and will share responsibility for the generation and review of a school development plan.

While the SBDMG may be viewed as the key strategy for the establishment of self-determining schools, the school development plan may be seen as the critical mechanism for school-based management. Still in an evolutionary state, the development plan serves to aid the curriculum planning and financial and resource management of the school, and provide a focus for the co-operative decision-making by the school staff, community members and central administration. In summary the school development plan directs the educational operations of the school and becomes the mechanism by which the school is made accountable for its operation. Together the School-Based Decision-Making Group and the School Development Plan appear to constitute a strategic management approach that, it is argued, should enable the school to become self-determining.

Strategic management evolved from a growing suspicion among management theorists such as Schendel & Hatten (1972), that the most relevant criterion of organizational effectiveness was not that of efficiency but rather that of adaptability to changes in the environment. Although strategic management emphasizes adaptation to the environment, it does not neglect management of internal affairs. Management is achieved

through a process termed "strategic planning". Strategic planning involves the formulation of basic organizational missions and objectives as well as the development of policies and action programs to achieve such objectives. The adoption of such an approach would mark a fundamental and radical change from most prevailing school decision-making structures and procedures.

Given the vast scope of the Better Schools Programme to mandate community and staff participation in school development decisions, for the purposes of this research it was interesting to hypothesize as to how the Ministry planned to attain these goals. Interestingly, Western Australian education authorities like their Victorian counterparts have adopted an essentially top-down approach in pursuit of their bottom-up objective of devolution. A top-down approach to change is one in which the central authority such as the Ministry of Education directs schools to adopt and implement a policy initiative or programme. A bottom-up approach is one in which members of a school generate a policy or programme in the absence of any external compulsion to do so. Implementing such a fundamental change to the organizational operations of a schools in a top-down manner, seems fraught with problems, especially since the key findings of recent implementation research has emphasized the frequency with which people actively resist or superficially comply when responding to mandates from above (Corwin, 1981).

### **1.3 A RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH FOCUS**

While the Western Australian Ministry policy on school organizational change provided broad policy guidelines within the "Better Schools" document, it did not prescribe the specific form of the change, nor did it

take direct responsibility for affecting change. Rather, it appeared, the intention of the Ministry of Education was that school Principals, staff, and school community representatives should cooperatively develop new structures and procedures that would reflect the unique requirements of the community they serve.

This research study aimed to examine the change processes that emerged as the educational communities of three public secondary schools in Western Australia responded to the Ministry policy on organizational change for school development. Examining in detail the change processes that occur within school settings during implementation has great potential to help educators understand the realities of the change process and what actually changes as a result of Ministry policy initiatives.

#### **1.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE RESEARCH**

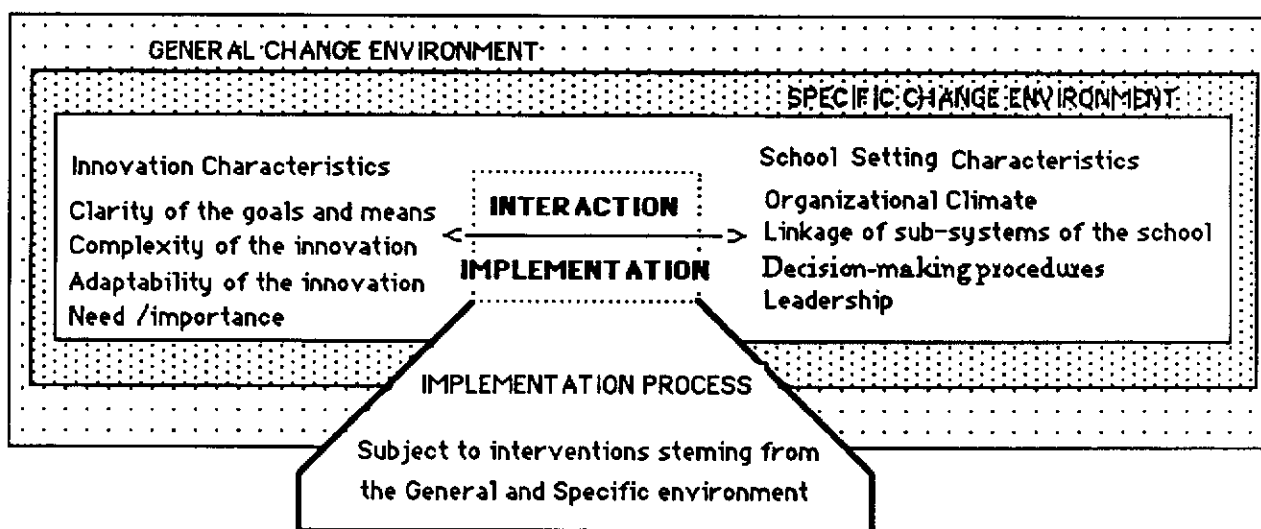
An analysis of recent research on educational and organizational change provided a set of theoretical and practical principles that guided the focus of this research study:

1. School organizations are open social systems that are influenced by, and have an influence on, their environment (Getzels & Guba, 1957; Bidwell, 1965; Litterer, 1969; Berman, 1978; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Crossley, 1984).
2. Educational change is an implementation dominated process - the outcomes of a change effort depend on the way it is carried out (Gross et al., 1971; Charters & Pellegrin, 1973; Elmore, 1978; Berman, 1981; Lucas, 1983).

3. How change is carried out depends on the manner in which the innovation interacts with the adopting system (McLaughlin, 1976; Daft & Becker, 1978; Larsen, 1980; Kilmann, 1981; Larsen & Agarwala-Rogers, 1977; Parish & Arends, 1983 ).
4. For implementation to be effective it is essential for individuals both inside and outside the school to have an understanding of the nature of the adopting organization as well as the change process, and to plan their efforts accordingly. (Fullan, 1972; Whitney, 1979; Finch, 1981; Miles, 1989.)
5. As a social system, the school can be characterized by its prevailing organizational climate, the degree of linkage between its sub-systems, the existing leadership style of its executive staff and the existing decision-making mode of operation. (Hoyle, 1970; Giaquinta, 1973; McLaughlin, 1976; Glaser & Backer, 1977; Louis & Rosenblum, 1978; House, 1979; Berman, 1981; Wilson & Dickson Corbett, 1983; Handy, 1986)
6. The interaction of the innovation with the system involves a change in the nature of both the innovation and the adopting system (McLaughlin, 1976; Glaser & Becker, 1977; Farrar, De Scantis & Cohen, 1980; Berman & Leithwood, 1981; Blakely, Mayer, Roitman, & Gottschalk, 1983).

This research study assumed that the processes of school organizational change involved the interaction of an innovation with a particular school setting. Specific attention was given to the nature of the general environment from which the innovation stemmed; the nature of the innovation (school-based decision-making groups) itself; the nature of

each school's specific environment; the characteristics of the school organization; and the interactions between the innovation and each unique setting. Emerging from the six principles discussed above are a number of key variables for this study. The variables in this complex interaction are represented in Figure 1.



**FIGURE: 1**

### **Interaction Variables in the Organizational Change Process**

Figure 1 represents the interaction of a innovation and the characteristics of the school setting occurring within both a general and specific school environment. The large rectangle represents the general environment for change. It is within this environment that the source of the innovation is located. The smaller rectangle represents the specific environment for change. It is this environment that takes account of the community which the school serves. Nestled within, and subject to, these environments is the school itself. In this view implementation is seen as that process occurring as the innovation interacts with the various characteristics of the school.

## 1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The **General Environment** refers to the social, economic and political circumstances existing in the total education system when the Ministry policy on "Better Schools" was formulated, and prevailed throughout the time of the study. It includes those interactions that occur between school community members and the Ministry of Education, the Western Australian Council of State School Organization (WACSSO) and the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA). This general environment is shared by all the participating schools.

The **Specific Environment** refers to the characteristics of the community within which the individual school is set. This environment includes those interactions that occur between the school and its district personnel, parents, and community members and which relate to organizational change. While the general environment is shared by all schools the specific environment is unique to each individual school.

The **Innovation** refers specifically to that policy statement concerned with the establishment of school-based decision-making groups.

**Implementation of an Innovation** refers to the interaction of the innovation with the school's organizational characteristics. It involves those time-ordered events and actions that occur as the school system moves from one state to another state as a result of change.

The **School Organization** refers to those characteristics of the bounded school setting. It includes the climate of the school; the nature of the school's sub-system linkage; the nature of the leadership within the school; and the administrative decision-making processes operating with



respect to: educational programmes, resource development and community-school relations.

**Sub-System** refers to that group of relationships between individuals concerning specific shared ideas or activities. Three sub-systems constitute the single school system.

The **Pedagogic Sub-System** involves the ideas, relationships and activities of individuals directly concerned with curriculum and pupil instruction.

The **Cultural Sub-System** involves the beliefs, relationships and social activities of all staff within the single school system.

The **Structural Sub-System** involves the ideas and activities of individuals directly concerned with the co-ordination of the operations of the total single school system.

**Sub-System Linkage** refers to the extent to which ideas, beliefs, and activities of the sub-systems within a school are common.

The **School Community** refers to members of the school staff, parents, and other individuals who directly participate in the planning and implementation of the organizational change.

An **Intervention** refers to information delivery or actions taken by individuals or groups external to the school organization that are intended to affect the change process at a particular school. They include information or actions taken by Ministry of Education personnel at Head Office; District office or other schools; by Union officials; by WACSSO officials; by members of community groups; or by parents.

## **1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The specific purpose of this study was to analyze, interpret and describe using case study procedures the processes involved in organizational change at the school level. The research focuses on school community efforts to establish whole-school structures and procedures (decision-making groups) for school development planning. Special attention was given to the processes by which participants adopted and implemented Ministry policy at the school level. By studying the change process within the context of an individual school, it was hoped to learn more about the problems of implementation and change, and to illuminate these for researchers, policy makers and those who take responsibility for change in schools. It was not the intention of the researcher to cause change through participation in the process, but rather to identify, describe, and analyze the change processes engaged and the factors that influenced the change effort.

## **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Defining implementation as the interaction of an innovation with the characteristics of the adopting system, suggested the following research questions:

- Q1. What pattern of interactions characterize the implementation process?**
- Q2. What factors influence a school's capacity to implement the innovation?**
  - Q2.1 What factors influence a school's initial stance towards the innovation?**
  - Q2.2 What factors influence a school's preparedness to implement the innovation?**

**Q3. What specific interactions constitute the implementation process?**

**Q3.1 What strategies are employed to plan for implementation?**

**Q3.2 What factors external to the school influence the implementation events?**

**Q3.3 What factors internal to the school influence the implementation events?**

**Q3.4 What external interventions influence the implementation events?**

**Q4. To what extent is the process of implementation setting specific and to what extent is it common across settings?**

## **1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

This first chapter provides an introductory rationale for this research and posits the guiding principals and questions which directed the research endeavour. Chapters Two, Three, and Four examine relevant literature and research drawn from the fields of educational change, organizational theory and school improvement, respectively. Chapter Five develops issues emerging from the literature to provide a conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter Six focuses on the first stage of the study in which the nature of the policy innovation under study is analyzed in terms of the perceived need for the innovation, its adaptability, clarity and complexity. In addition, the type of support offered to facilitate implementation of the innovation is examined. Chapter Seven examines the evolution of educational policy as members of the Ministry of Education and other stake-holding groups undertook a process of progressive clarification of the initial policy statement. Chapter Eight describes the second stage of the study. This stage involved the selection of case study schools. The development and administration of an instrument to measure the organizational climates of 23 secondary schools is presented. Based on an

analysis of the resulting data, three schools with markedly different climates were selected for closer study of their policy implementation process. Chapter Nine examines the third stage of the study involving a close analysis of the change process at the school level. The chapter describes the case study approach used, focusing specifically on the data collection and analysis techniques employed. Chapters Ten, Eleven and Twelve present case study profiles of each school. Within each profile school characteristics are described and the implementation process is analyzed. Chapter Thirteen examines the critical issues and events across sites to draw together a number of critical issues and events that characterize the implementation process. Finally, Chapter Fourteen offers a series of findings and recommendations about the implementation process and the management of organizational change.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHANGE THEORY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

From the outset it is important for the purposes of clarity to distinguish between the use of the terms *innovation* and *change*. The term innovation is be used to describe a product or policy, whereas change refers to a process which alters behaviour, attitudes, structures, procedures or output of some unit or organization. The review which follows is restricted to that literature which appears most relevant to planned change in educational settings, although in doing so it also draws on the significant findings and theory derived from research in non-educational settings. The purpose of the review is twofold: first, to present a brief historical account of the development of change theory, and second, to extract general themes and propositions which seem appropriate to a study of the implementation of School-Based Decision-Making Groups.

This review is set out in five sections. The first section examines the difficulties in synthesizing fragmented and sometimes contradictory findings derived from a wide range of research studies in the area of educational change. The remaining sections are organized around a number of relevant emerging principles and issues. These are: the concept of change as the adoption of innovations, change as a process, change as

the adaptation of an innovation, the fidelity versus adaptation perspective of change and finally comprehensive perspectives of change.

## **2.2 SYNTHESIZING CONFLICTING FINDINGS**

An initial review of literature on change can be a most confusing task. Studies of educational change have produced a multitude of diverse and often contradictory findings. Berman (1981) suggested five possible reasons for this non-cumulative and often contradictory findings:

1. Studies have different objectives, and these objectives affect research design, focus, sample, and presentation of results.
2. Conception and measurement of independent and dependent variables are seldom the same. What some researchers would record as failure others could record as success.
3. The unit of analysis varies from individual, through school building level to school district level or even system level.
4. Many studies inadvertently confound analysis of process with analysis of variance. Process theory has a pull type causality while variance analysis has a push type causality. It is possible for process analysis to find that a variable (an event ) is important to success and for variance analysis to find that the same variable is not statistically significant over many cases.
5. The variation and inconsistency of research findings may reflect educational reality, not simply inadequate methodology. Empirical studies have exposed how complex educational change is and have consistently challenged the possibility of simple comparable generalizations.

(pp 253-256)

For these kinds of reasons, the integration of findings relevant to this research endeavour was a daunting task. The difficulty however, is somewhat reduced by examination of important and comprehensive reviews of different aspects of change found in the literature. For instance, Havelock (1969) undertook a comprehensive review of the dissemination and knowledge utilization processes in change. Rogers & Shoemaker (1971) reviewed over 1500 articles relating to the diffusion of innovations and channels of communication. While valuable insights into the change process can be gleaned from such reviews, it is important to note that their primary focus was on innovation and change research conducted in non-educational settings. Since 1975, there have been a number of reviews that examine change in schools and other educational settings. Among the most significant were those undertaken by Fullan & Pomfret (1977) and Berman & McLaughlin (1976, 1978). More recently, Crofton (1981) examined the "state of the art" in the literature on change contributing yet more to an understanding of educational innovation and change. The review presented here summarizes this research and integrates it with recent research conclusions.

### **2.3 FOCUS ON INNOVATION AS ADOPTION**

In the 1950's and 1960's innovation was generally seen as a "technologically dominant process". It was assumed that new knowledge would be produced by research, converted into usable form during its development, spread to users during diffusion and finally put into practice during the adoption stage. Such assumptions led to the development of the Research , Development and Diffusion [RD&D] model of Clark and Guba (1965).

Driven by this RD&D model, early studies of planned change began with attempts to understand the process of diffusion and adoption of technical or "hard" innovations such as a hybrid corn or new medical technology. In this research, change was seen as occurring with the adoption of the innovation. From their analysis of 1500 diffusion studies, Rogers & Shoemaker (1971) concluded that adoption of innovations occurred at different rates among individuals. They found individuals could be classified along a continuum from early adoptors through to late adoptors. This focus on the variable rates of individual adoption of an innovation led to a large body of literature concerned with the reasons for acceptance or rejection of change.

In order to ensure adoption, elements of resistance had to be identified, and strategies found to change the attitudes of late adoptors and resisters toward the innovation. The use of the consultant as a change agent to identify and overcome resistance and help facilitate change was the particular focus of Lippitt & Lippitt (1978) and Havelock (1973). Further, "communications theorists" such as Havelock highlighted the need for communication between the developer or designer of the innovation and the user. Communication included more than verbal information and sought to encompass an understanding of the needs, priorities and concerns of both the developer and the user and by so doing eliminate possible resistance and promote change.

Early approaches to educational change borrowed heavily from theories derived from innovation in non-educational settings, and in particular the RD&D model of change. Generally such approaches could best be described as "top-down". Here the innovation, be it product or policy, was generated by individuals or groups external to the organization. The



innovation was then introduced to targeted potential users who accepted the new ideas and attempted to change practice according to the prescription of the innovation.

According to Berman (1981), early approaches to planned educational change were guided by four basic assumptions reflective of the RD&D model. These assumptions were that:

1. School problems were waiting for a technical fix, that is better products and methods would be used if only teachers were made aware of their existence;
2. Innovations were seen as fixed and constant treatments and thus whatever was conceived by the developer would be faithfully introduced and diffused unaltered throughout a school.
3. Adoption was equivalent to implementation hence the major focus was on getting schools to agree to use the innovative practice then leaving them to carry out the agreement.
4. Schools operated as rational bureaucracies (that is, schools had a set of policies and actions geared to attaining their goals). The need for change was determined by the gaps between current conditions and desired performance ascertained through deliberate searches to find changes that would improve goal attainment.

(Berman, 1981, p260)

But were such assumptions warranted? Studies such as those of Goodlad & Klein (1970), Sarason (1971), Smith & Keith (1971), Gross, Giacquinta, & Bernstine (1971), Charters & Pellegrin (1972) and Bredo & Bredo (1975), indicated they were not warranted. These studies indicated that many

educational innovation strategies based on the RD&D model failed to bring about sustained change. Clearly, promoting change was proving a more complicated process than simply providing technically sound information or products to schools and then trusting in their subsequent adoption.

### **2.3.1 Change beyond adoption**

As the research into the processes associated with the adoption of educational innovation continued, it was becoming apparent to many researchers that even the adoption of an innovation did not guarantee change. Research findings revealed that many schools "adopted" innovations in principle only and that they were rarely used in the school or classroom. In other cases, innovations were adopted yet altered to fit with the circumstances of the user or the local school context. Finally, some innovations were adopted and used only to be soon abandoned.

This emerging reality prompted researchers such as Baldrige (1975), Crowin (1975) and Daft & Becker (1978), to explicitly note that they were studying "innovativeness"; that is, the propensity to adopt aspects of an innovation rather than the total change processes. From this point on, the research findings suggested innovation and change was a far more complex process than was portrayed by the RD&D model. Subsequently there was a shift in emphasis from what Heck and Goldstein (1980) termed structured research approaches, emphasizing faithful implementation of innovations, to unstructured approaches emphasizing an understanding of the change process. Researchers such as Berman & McLaughlin (1976, 1978, 1980), Kritek (1976), Zaltman (1977), Brown & McIntyre (1978), and Rice (1978), all examined what happened to the innovation after its adoption. In short, research in this area began to focus on the post adoption or implementation stage of change.

To distinguish between these two stages, Fullan and Pomfret (1977) usefully redefined adoption as the decision to use an innovation, whereas implementation was defined as the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation looks like in practice. Thus adoption was seen as a part of the total change process but not as the final step in that process.

## **2..4 CHANGE AS A THREE-PHASE PROCESS**

By the late seventies most literature suggested that planned educational changes, when successful, pass through similar stages or phases. This was not a new discovery. In fact much earlier, Lewin (1952) and Mann & Neff (1961) had identified the change process as involving the three stages of unfreezing, changing and re-freezing. Based on this earlier work, the three stage or phase models characterizing the change process began to re-emerge.

In the summary of these stages offered below, the term phase is used in preference to stage in an attempt to denote the change as an interrelated set of events and to avoid the concept of the change process as linear sequence of fixed stages. Indeed, Berman (1981) and Lucas (1983) view the change process as a loosely coupled yet time ordered flow of events. What follows is a description of each phase in the change process based on a synthesis of contemporary writings:

1. **The Adoption Phase** is also referred to as the mobilization stage (Berman 1981), the planning stage (Miles, 1978), the proposal generation stage (Daft & Becker, 1978), and the readiness stage (Rosenblume & Louis, 1981). During this phase the system prepares for a change in state in order to use the innovation. Weick (1976 ) suggested this phase is characterized by novelty, complexity and open-endedness. He explains that the

organization usually begins with little understanding of the decision situation it faces, or of the route to its solution.

2.     **The Implementation Phase** concerns the system's attempts to change its state. This is a very complex phase which may involve several sub processes. It is the phase where the innovation interacts with the characteristics of the setting. The phase is comprised of those activities that alter both the innovation and the behaviour of the people within the system.

3.     **The Institutionalization Phase** occurs when the system attempts to stabilize the change in state. It is where the system attempts the incorporation of the innovation as a permanent feature of the system. Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1983 ) state:

institutionalization makes it more difficult for schools to adapt to new realities ... and that attention should be shifted from institutionalizing to fostering a capacity for renewal. (Crandall Eiseman & Louis, 1983 p 44 )

Because the primary focus of research for this thesis is on the implementation phase of the change process, attention was turned to literature specifically concerned with the implementation phase of change.

## **2.5           CHANGE AS ADAPTATION OF AN INNOVATION**

Questions regarding what happened to an innovation after its adoption led to added research emphasizing the implementation phase itself. Stemming from investigations into Federal change agent policies carried out by the Rand Corporation in 1974-75, Berman & McLaughlin (1978) concluded that innovations underwent considerable change during implementation so as to meet the needs of local users. They refer to this process as "mutual adaptation". As well as alteration to the routine

behaviours of teachers, principals and officials, the concept of mutual adaptation involves modification of the characteristics of the innovation so that it is better able to be used in a local setting. Therefore changes occur in both the innovation and the users.

Berman and McLaughlin suggest two further outcomes of such a change process. The first outcome involves changes made to the innovation alone with no corresponding change in individual or organizational behaviour. This outcome they term co-option. The second involves no significant change to either the innovation or the organization. This outcome they term symbolic implementation. Whether the change process reflects symbolic implementation, co-option or mutual adaptation depends on the nature of the interaction of the innovation with the characteristics of the adopting system (school).

Further empirical evidence for the phenomenon of adaptation is found in the research of Shipman (1974) ; Stearns & Norwood (1977); More (1977); Elmore (1978); Rogers (1978); and Emerick (1977). The concept of adaptation has had a considerable impact on thinking about the innovation process. For example Farrar, DeSanctis & Cohen (1980) describe implementation as a complex multilateral process in which negotiation and revision are essential. Rice & Rogers (1980) argue the importance of providing for re-invention [synonymous to adaptation] of any innovation, so that the adoptor can become involved in the change process. This notion of re-invention is further supported by Eveland, Rogers & Kepper (1977) and Larsen & Agarwala-Rogers (1977) who argue that the process of redefining and modifying innovations is a critical part of the change process.

### **2.5.1 Fidelity versus adaptation**

While the view of implementation as adaptation has been influential, it is not without critics. Datta (1980), for instance, questioned the validity of the Rand Change Agent Study and argued that local development was but one strategy for securing educational change. In a large scale empirical investigation, Crandall (1983) found there was a great deal of stability and durability related to the innovations he studied. Further, both Emerick & Peterson (1978) and Loucks (1983) found users could successfully implement innovations faithfully under certain conditions without adaptation. Likewise Huberman & Miles (1984) found that faithful implementation was possible when the innovation was well designed and technically challenging.

The apparent contradiction between the fidelity and adaptation perspectives of change might be resolved by looking the nature of the innovation to be implemented. Researchers such as Emerick & Peterson (1978) were studying innovations that were focused, well designed technically, and had been piloted so that they better matched the behaviours of the users. However, other researchers such as Berman & McLaughlin (1978), were studying diffuse and uncertain types of innovations that prompted translation and adaptation.

The differing nature of innovations led Lucas (1983) to make a clear distinction between "hard" and "soft" innovations. He described the former as usually having explicit (if not fixed) mechanical forms and functions whereas the latter tended to be collections of ideas and as such are more susceptible to interpretation and change. Such "soft" innovations are further described by Rice & Rogers (1980) as comprising a "loose bundle" of components, implying a developmental process of

change, with innovations allowing users to mix-and-match, thus prompting mutual adaptation. Similarly, Wise (1983) described educational change policies as "bundles of potentialities" or predispositions waiting to be defined at the local level. He suggested that implementation should be viewed as a process of policy evolution in which local participation modifies and some times re-formulates the programme. This view of implementation as policy evolution is further supported by both Majone & Wildavsky (1978) and Miles (1987) who argued that the best vision of the change process was that of steady adaptation or evolutionary development. That is, a gradual process whereby the change is modified by emerging conditions of the school in a continual planning process.

Berman (1981) suggested that for most educational changes, innovations are usually problematic or soft and that the outcomes of the change effort depend critically on how it is carried out. He described the dynamics of the implementation process in the following way:

The interaction of an educational innovation with its setting (that is its implementation) generally results in change in the initially conceived innovation.  
(Berman, 1981, p263)

The particular innovation under study in this research project is the "policy" concerning the establishment of school based decision-making groups and as such, is viewed as a soft innovation. Hence the policy is likely to undergo translation and re-definition at the school- level. Consequently, for the purposes of this research, implementation is viewed as a process of adaptation of both policy and the school organization. This process is viewed as similar to that of change as mutual adaptation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978) and change as evolution (Wise, 1983).

## **2.6 HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE**

More recent analyses of literature concerned with planned educational change by Crofton (1981), Parker (1980) and Fullan (1985) view the process of change as far more complex and dynamic and subject to the influence of many factors over a long period of time. This realization has led researchers to consider not only the characteristics of the innovation itself but also the political, economic, organizational, and contextual explanations of the total change process. For instance, Crossley (1984) found political factors warranted special attention. He suggested that change is a politically charged issue and the continuity of an educational policy is highly dependent upon political continuity and stability.

Other researchers such as Sarason (1971), Goodlad (1975), Wolcott (1977), and Huberman (1983) analysed school contextual characteristics when examining change. These broad and narrow contexts for change led Berman (1978) to distinguish between "macro implementation" and "micro implementation". Macro implementation refers to the process by which governmental agencies [Ministry of Education] formulate and execute policies in order to influence local organizations [e.g. schools] to move in some direction. Micro-implementation refers to those changes necessary within a local organization to implement the decision to move in a particular direction.

When examining change from a micro perspective it is possible to emphasize the quality or the quantity of implementation process. Rosenblume and Louis (1981) define quality of implementation as the degree of difference in content behaviour or structure within the organization after the change. Quantity of implementation is defined as



the pervasiveness or the extent of alteration that occurs as a result of the change. When either quality or quantity of implementation is emphasized, the change process is viewed as those events and activities occurring as the system moves from the existing state of routine behaviours to a new state of routine behaviours.

Increasingly, research focusing on micro-implementation viewed change as influenced by the social or cultural characteristics of the setting. From this perspective, change involved alteration to the cultural context, to the beliefs and practices of its members, and to relationships among people within the organization. In short, change can be seen as the creation of a new setting.

There is not real conflict here. The conception of change as mutual adaptation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978) and that of change as evolution, (Farrar, DeSanctis, & Cohen, 1980), can be interpreted from a cultural perspective as their theories maintain it is local forces, setting, and culture that determine the nature of the change process. Indeed, McLaughlin (1976) argues that without changes in the structure and culture of the institutional setting, new practices would simply be more of the same and unlikely to lead to much significant change. This view is also shared by Brown & McIntyre (1982) and Common (1983). Fullan's (1985) review of the literature cites research to support the idea that culture (also known as tone or climate of the school) reinforces and strengthens a school's attempts to implement change. This notion of schools as social or cultural systems finds support in literature on organization theory and will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ORGANIZATION THEORY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter undertakes a review of the literature on organization theory, that is not only relevant to the change process in educational settings, but specifically is relevant to the implementation of innovations concerned with organizational change. The first section provides a brief review of organization theory including the emergence of the systems perspective on organizations. The second section focuses on the special nature of education organizations. Specific attention is given to the notion of schools as loosely coupled systems. This is followed by an examination of sub-system linkage and its relationship to change. The final section examines theory and research findings concerning school organizations as open social systems.

#### **3.2 ORGANIZATION THEORY AND CHANGE.**

It was suggested in Chapter Two that much contemporary research into innovation and change has adopted a holistic perspective which considers contextual explanations of the change process. Increasingly, researchers such as Huberman & Miles (1984), viewed the organizational characteristics of the adopting system as exerting a critical influence on the implementation of innovations. In order to help gain additional insight

and explanations of the nature of organizations, many researchers turned to the field of organization theory. As with research literature in the field of innovation and change, the field of research on organization theory has undergone an evolution since its early foundations at the turn of the century. Three theoretical frameworks have emerged over time, each reflecting contemporary thought at different historical periods. A detailed analysis of these frameworks is beyond the scope of this thesis, however a brief review of each is undertaken in order to establish the view of school organization utilized for this study.

### **3.2.1 Classical Organizational Theory**

What is termed "classical organization" theory emerged at a time when industry was undergoing rapid change. It was from this background that theorists such as Weber (1947), Taylor (1947) and Fayol (1949) sought to define the principles of bureaucratic structure and organizational control that enable organizations to achieve well defined goals. The resulting organization theory viewed organizations as possessing a hierarchy of authority positions with power concentrated at the top. Scientific procedures were used to determine the best ways of performing a task. Rules were written to require workers to perform such tasks in a prescribed manner. In this theory, administrators became engineers whose primary task was to adjust the structure of the organization, to produce more efficient and effective forms. The greatest shortcoming of this classical model was its rigid conception of the organization and the manner in which it viewed the worker as an object- a part of the bureaucratic machine.

### **3.2.2 The Human Relations Approach**

This approach emerged from the famous Hawthorne studies undertaken by Mayo (1945) in the 1920's. Mayo and his associates undertook studies into worker productivity in order to establish any scientific principles that would lead to greater worker efficiency. The most important finding of these studies, however, was that workers could control the production process, independent of the demands of management. This shattered many of the precepts central to classical theory. One in particular was that the needs of the organization coincided with the needs of the worker. As awareness of the basic differences between the needs of the worker and the needs of the organization grew, approaches to management were sought that might assist in reducing conflict between the two groups. In response Follett's (1941) wrote a series of papers on organizational administration which proposed that a concentration on organizational structure should be coupled with an emphasis on employee motivation and group morale.

### **3.2.3 Systems Perspective of Organizations**

Since the end of World War Two, organizational thought has largely been based on work derived from the behavioural sciences. The behavioural science approach focuses on work behaviour in formal organizations, thereby combining both the classical and human relations approaches to organization theory. Based largely on work done by Weber (1947) many present day behavioural scientists tend to view organizations as social systems that interact with, and are dependent upon, their environments.

A system is a set of interdependent elements forming an organized whole. Organizations such as schools are viewed as systems of social interaction, that is, interacting personalities bound together in mutually interdependent relationships. Such a theory emphasizes formal structure

designed to achieve specific organizational goals. The behaviour of individuals in the organization is thus viewed as purposeful, disciplined, and rational and may be explained in terms of reaction to forces within the organization. This rational systems perspective has remained the dominant model for policy makers, organizational theorists, and educational administrators.

Viewing organizations as rational systems has led to a concentration on the adoption of supervisory style by administrators as the key to effective change. This in turn has seen the development of rational management models such as "management by objectives" [MBO], (Kenezevick, 1973) and "performance evaluation and review techniques" [PERT], (Cook, 1966), to facilitate rational decision-making, and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

### **3.3 THE SPECIAL NATURE OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS**

As the research on change began to accumulate, particularly within educational organizations, it became apparent that many schools did not function as rational systems. According to Baldrige & Burnham (1975), research during the 1970's indicated that a school's goals, structures, activities, and outcomes were not tightly and logically connected with clear lines of communication, and that people were not rational actors guided by what is good for the collective welfare of the organization. In short, schools were not rational systems. This led to the adoption of a "natural" social system orientation to the analysis of organizational behaviour. This orientation suggests that the organization is made up of a collection of groups (social system) that collaborate to achieve system goals on some occasions, and on other occasions cooperate to accomplish the goals of their own groups. Such a notion of flexible cooperation between members

of the school organization prompted researchers to examine the internal dynamics of the sub systems of the organization.

### **3.3.1 Schools as Loosely Coupled Systems**

A closer focus on the nature of educational organizations resulted in researchers such as March & Olsen (1976), and Weick (1976) to describe such organizations as "loosely coupled systems". By this they suggested that the organization lacked co-ordination within the various sub-systems that constituted the organization. This was especially so with respect to co-ordination of the technical sub-system, that is the sub-system concerned with teaching and instructional activities. In support, Deal and Celotti (1980) argued that due to such loose coupling, the formal organization and the administration of the school do not significantly affect methods of classroom instruction. That is, teachers in their classrooms function largely independently from the administration of the school.

Although loose coupling theories are relatively new, more than twenty years ago Bidwell (1965) analyzed structural "looseness" in school organizations. He noted that in order to deal with the problem of variability in student abilities on a day-to-day basis, teachers needed to have freedom to make professional judgements:

Teachers tend to resist official authority in the instructional arena and to press for professional discretion. (Bidwell, 1965, p1014)

Similarly Mintzberg noted:

In the professionally bureaucratic setting relations between teachers and administrators are ideally shaped by the notion of professional expertness and excellence and are defined in terms of structural looseness. (Mintzberg, 1979, p349)

This view of loose coupling or linkage between the administration and the classroom is also supported by writers such as Clear (1970), Schmuck (1971), Miles (1971) and Dreeben (1973). Indeed, the autonomy of teachers seems undeniable in schools given the extensive research evidence that there is limited supervision of a teacher's classroom activity (Lortie, 1975), and little teacher accountability for their in-class activities (Cohen, Deal, Meyer, & Scott, 1976).

The view of educational organizations being composed of loosely linked parts or sub-systems has provided a focus for an increasing number of researchers. Research conducted by Glassman (1973), Meyer & Rowan (1978), and more recently by Firestone (1985), indicated that the view of schools as loosely coupled systems is more realistic than the traditional view of a rational-bureaucratic organization. They suggested that such looseness permits the school to survive in a constantly changing pluralistic environment. Each part or level of the system responds relatively independently to its environment. Deal & Celotti (1980) suggested that such independence among sub-systems might explain why the greatest part of organizationally planned change in instruction is never really implemented, and the greatest part of change in instruction is not organizationally planned.

While such looseness might well exist, the demand for uniformity in product (student educational outcomes), and comparability between schools demands that schools do require a routinization of activities. Hoy and Miskel (1987) see schools as possessing two organizational domains. The first domain is a bureaucratic one consisting of the institutional and managerial functions which are tightly linked. The second domain is a professional one concerned with the process of teaching and learning which is loosely linked.

### 3.3.2 Sub-systems of schools

The view that school organizations are comprised of distinct domains has led writers such as Hoy and Miskel (1987) to propose the existence of several sub-systems within the organization. They identify three sub-systems operating in the school:

1. The technical system concerned with teaching and learning.
2. The managerial system concerned with administration, co-ordinating work, motivating teacher effort, developing teacher loyalty and trust, mediating between teachers and students / teachers and parents.
3. The institutional system concerned with connecting the school to its environment.

Each system exercises authority over its respective decision-making arena. Using the term "linkages" rather than coupling to refer to the degree to which such parts of the organization are able to function independently from one another, Wilson and Dickson Corbett (1983) identified three types of linkage: Cultural linkages, structural linkages and interpersonal linkages:

1. Cultural linkages refer to the organizational mechanisms which emphasize the creation or co-ordination of similar behaviour patterns through the development of shared definitions. The establishment of agreed upon school goals promotes cultural linkages;
2. Structural linkages refer to the way by which a school controls member's behaviour. There are two ways:
  - a) rules and their enforcement, the more rules are enforced the greater the linkage;
  - b) limiting the discretion of members over the tasks they perform. Less individual discretion increased linkage.
3. Interpersonal linkages refer to opportunities for staff to interact about their work through discussion, and observation of colleagues performances.



The authors suggest that tighter linkage leads to an increase in implementation of innovations within the school. In support of such a belief, Firestone & Wilson (1985) and Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986) suggested that those responsible for planning change should first ask themselves what related changes in the sub-systems are implied and then strategically plan the change to align the school's sub-systems. The assumption here is that aligned or tightly linked sub-systems increase the likelihood that a change in one sub-system would result in a corresponding and complementary change in the other sub-systems. This notion of sub-system interdependence is also supported by literature that views schools as open systems. It is to open system theory that attention is now turned.

### **3.4 SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS AS OPEN SOCIAL SYSTEMS**

During the last few decades there has been an emerging view of organizations, but particularly schools, as complex open social systems (Katz & Kahn 1966). Under this perspective, the school is seen as an organized whole comprised of a bounded set of sub-systems and activities that interact with each other. As a single social identity, it also exists within an environment. This environment is defined as anything outside the school that affects the attributes of the internal components and is affected by the school itself. This would include the Ministry of Education, the State School Teachers' Union, parent organizations and professional organizations such as School Principals' Associations. Since information and ideas flow between members of the school and these external associations, the boundary between the school and its environment is not closed. However, in an attempt to maintain internal stability, the interactions between school and environment are controlled by structures and procedures to monitor the environment and control information flow

in and out of the system [e.g. planning; school-based decision-making groups]. The system seems to be a dynamic one with stability and flexibility yet with tight and loose structural relationships. The open social system characteristics of the school are represented in Figure 2. Here the sub-systems that comprise the school organization are seen as interacting with each other and elements that comprise the systems specific and general environment.

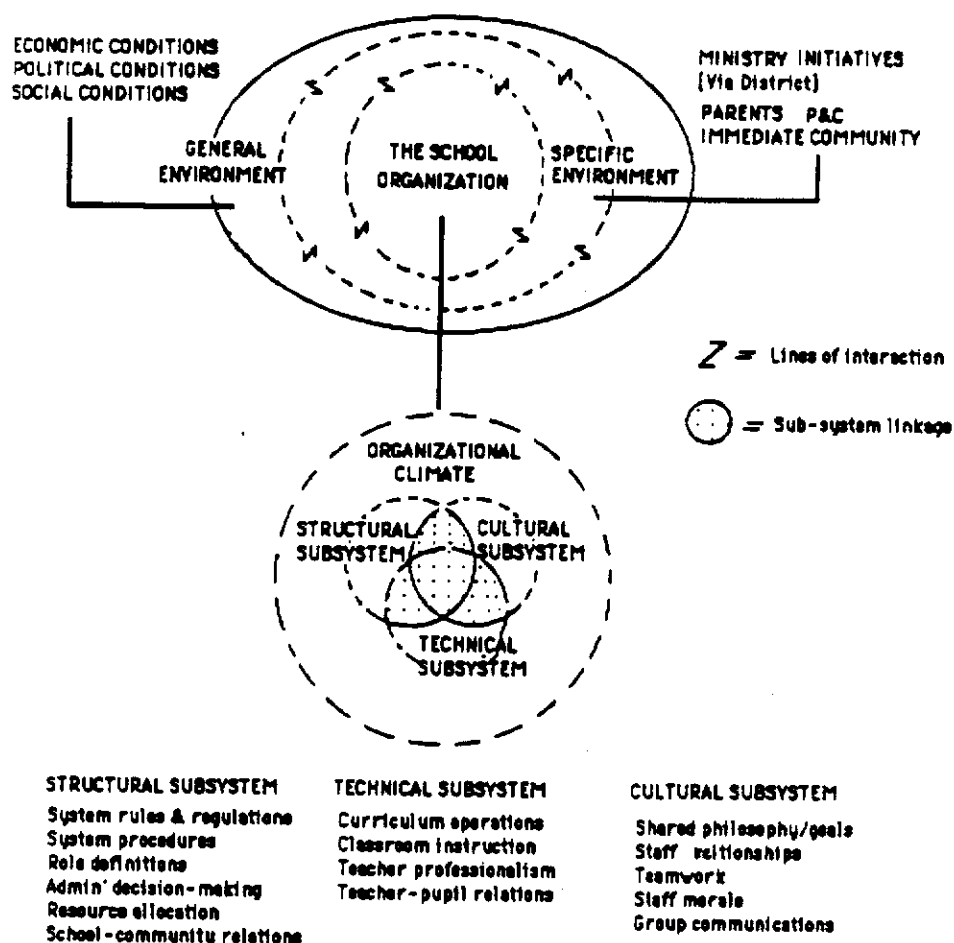


FIGURE: 2

### The School as an Open Social System

The open system model of school organizations, represented in Figure 2, provides a broad framework that accommodates both the rational and the natural features of organizational life. In some schools rational concerns

dominate, while in others natural social relationships predominate. Being open systems the emphasis on rational or natural concerns may change. But in all organizations, both rational and natural elements exist in the system that is open to its environment. The interdependent relationship between the school organization and its environment is critical. To survive, the organization must adapt, and to adapt it must change. For Miles (1964) such a relationship is fundamental to an organization's ability to achieve goals, develop and grow.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

Recent research in educational settings suggests that open system theory offers a sound and a theoretically defensible basis for viewing school organizations. Accordingly, in research conducted for this thesis schools were viewed as open social systems. Nesting within the permeable boundary of the organization were three loosely linked organizational sub-systems. The nature of the linkage of these sub-systems, combined with other characteristics of the organization such as numbers of staff and students, constitute the specific context for the implementation of the innovation under study.

The following chapter reviews the literature which focuses on the development and improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of school organizations. Much of the literature draws on change theory and organization theory. In particular, both rational and natural systems theory appear to have contributed much to development of current strategies for school improvement. In so doing the chapter offers a synthesis of some critical findings salient to this study.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the literature primarily concerned with school development and improvement. Generally, school improvement efforts have tended to concentrate on pedagogic issues (those specifically related to teaching and learning processes), while school development efforts have focused upon school organizational issues such as structural and environmental improvement. School development issues were particularly relevant to this study of change processes. The research has tended to draw on change theory, organizational theory and the interrelationship of both.

There are four sections to this chapter. The first reviews general approaches to school development including some of the particular difficulties faced by secondary schools. The second section examines current organizational strategies for school development. This section is followed by a description of emerging guide-lines for school improvement including existing models for school development. The final section examines participatory decision-making as a strategy for sustained school development. Here attention is also given to group decision-making processes.

## **4.2 APPROACHES TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT**

The foci and scope of school development efforts seem to depend largely on who initiates the change. Major changes more frequently stem from central education initiatives, while impetus for minor changes tend to originate from within individual school communities. This is not to imply that significant and valuable changes cannot and do not emerge from within the school community. Many effective innovations have developed from individuals and groups of teachers. However, lack of time and resources available to individual schools often limit their opportunities for change. Irrespective of the origin or scope of change efforts, the ultimate purpose of school development is to improve the learning environment in order to enable educational goals to be accomplished more effectively. Consequently, school development efforts have taken various forms depending upon the nature of the change and who is initiating the change effort.

In the past in Western Australia, the Ministry of Education was the central generator of curriculum innovation Marsh (1988). A "top-down" approach to change efforts was employed whereby the innovation was selected or developed by Head Office and disseminated to schools which, in turn, were expected to adopt and implement new policy and programmes as directed. To assist with the process, superintendents and consultants were frequently used to organize in-service courses designed to explain the operations of the programme to key staff members prior to monitoring the programme use in schools.

While Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin & Hall (1987) suggested such a top-down approach carries with it the possibility for change to occur more

rapidly, research by Berman & McLaughlin (1976) and Rice & Rogers (1980) revealed it to be fraught with problems. Unless the innovation addresses a priority need at classroom teacher level and is clear, well supported and does not require a fundamental shift in teacher values and practices, then it is likely to be either rejected, subverted, or strongly modified rather than implemented faithfully.

On the other hand, initiatives derived from individual teachers or groups of teachers within a school setting, tended to be more successful. Such locally generated initiatives frequently employ an action-research approach to such school-development. This approach provides a framework for teachers individually or in groups to analyse problems of concern, and to develop plans of action to address these problems. Supporters of action research believe that change is made first by individuals and then carried on by organizations. Provided support and resources were available from the school community, participants gained a sense of ownership and commitment to their own project thereby ensuring its survival. While the action research approach seems to have special value for the participants it seems less likely that much benefit will be gained by those not directly involved in the process. Further, research has shown such a change effort is difficult to maintain when key individuals leave.

These factors have led researchers such as Cope (1981) and Lezotte & Bancroft (1985) to suggest the establishment of organizational structures and procedures that will not only permit whole school participation in school development, but have permanence beyond the tenure of individuals.

#### **4.2.1 Organizational Change for School Development**

Crandall, Eiseman and Louis (1986) indicated that traditionally little attention has been given to organizational dimension of school improvement efforts. However, the trend is changing. Goodlad (1975), Purkey & Smith (1983) and Dickson Corbett & Damico (1986), maintain that the focus for change should be the school organization.

Obviously there is a reciprocal relationship between the classroom and the school but it is probably easier for the school to influence all of its classrooms than it is for a few classrooms to influence the entire school [ particularly at the secondary level]. (Purkey & Smith, 1983, p 440)

Guthrie (1986) suggested that recent moves in the United States towards school-based management stem from a belief in the individual school as the fundamental decision-making unit.

Research literature concerned with school improvement and change has identified a range of characteristics common to the effective school. Austin (1981), Edmonds (1982) and Purkey & Smith (1983) suggested these characteristics include: strong educational leadership; clear goals; joint or collaborative planning; and school-wide staff development. Such characteristics not only provide useful indicators of an effective school but also suggest the type of organizational changes necessary to achieve such effectiveness. What they do not provide, however, is the means by which such characteristics might be attained.

#### **4.2.2 Change in Secondary Schools**

A common finding in the change and school improvement literature is that schools are complex organizations, and that changing them is a complicated, somewhat messy endeavour, requiring skill both in planning and orchestrating change. For Crandall, Eiseman, & Louis (1986) and Purkey & Smith (1983), this appeared particularly true for secondary schools. According to Farrar, Neufeld & Miles (1984) when compared with elementary schools, secondary schools tend to have "poor organizational climate" and poor "co-ordination" [linkage] between classrooms and the school administration. Firestone (1980) suggested that secondary schools possess more teacher autonomy and less goal consensus than elementary schools, two factors that militate against successful change efforts. This is not to suggest that implementing change in secondary schools is not achievable, it is merely more challenging. This study focuses on the secondary school organization as the unit of change.

### **4.3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT**

In order to develop organizational features characteristic of the effective school, researchers such as Fullan, Miles & Taylor (1980) and Brown & McIntyre (1982) have suggested the usefulness of the Organization Development [OD] approach. Organization development may be defined as the process of changing the culture or climate of a school organization by applying knowledge from behavioural science during a period of planned and sustained effort for improving organizational effectiveness. OD is a process that is meant to change the system through a focus on the individual or groups of individuals. The emphasis is on organizational phenomena such as leadership, communication and problem-solving. OD attempts to improve the culture or climate of the organization through increased collaboration and participation by its members in a deliberately



planned way. As an approach to school development, OD clearly attends to many of the salient characteristics identified in the literature on effective schools.

OD can combine a number of processes that focus on either the individual or groups within an organization as well as on the leadership and organizational structure. Thus, team building, quality circle, grid organization development, and survey feedback, all form potential strategies for the establishment of an organizational capacity for sustained development.

A specific review of OD strategies is beyond the scope of this study. It is important to note however, the impact that OD has had on current models for the process of school improvement. This is particularly evident in the Program Development Evaluation [PDE] structure for school improvement (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1987) and the School-Based Improvement [SBI] advocated by Hansen & Marburger (1988). The advocacy of school-based collaborative planning appears common to many current approaches to school improvement.

#### **4.4 EMERGING GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT**

In looking at the history of school reform in the United States, Ralph Tyler (1987) makes a compelling argument for school-based collaborative planning as an essential strategy for school improvement.

Improvement in the educational effectiveness of a given school depends largely on the efforts of the school's personnel and parents. By starting to identify school problems and seeking effective solutions, parents and school personnel can set in motion a significant 'reform movement' that can yield constructive outcomes. (Tyler, 1987, p280)

The participation of teachers, and parents in a collaborative decision-making process is supported by much of the literature on school improvement. Collaboration is defined by Hord (1986) as the development of a model of joint planning, joint implementation, and joint evaluation between individuals or organizations. Hoyt (1978) suggested that the term collaboration implies shared responsibility and authority for basic policy decision-making. The importance attached to the notion of collaboration has not only led to advocacy for fundamental changes in the decision-making procedures of schools, but has prompted calls for school-based management. Finn (1984), suggests effective schools need strategic independence from state and district controls. However, according to Guthrie (1986) and Louis (1986), this should not mean that schools should have total freedom to operate as they wish. Guthrie (1986), maintained that the state should continue to establish broad policies for education and should co-ordinate the efforts of schools to tailor state policies to local circumstances. For Odden & Odden (1984) this means that education authorities must be prepared to see their policy goals implemented differently across schools.

Based on a review of the literature on successful change efforts, Fullan (1985), suggested guide-lines for effective school change:

1. Develop a plan: school is viewed as the unit of change.
2. Involve local facilitators [someone trained for support ].
3. Allocate money and time for teachers to share, observe, plan, act, and evaluate.
4. Decide on scope of projects: only a small number of instructional areas can be addressed at one time.

5. Concentrate on developing the Principal's leadership role.
6. Focus on instruction and link to organizational conditions. The effective school plan will make explicit the relationship between instructional improvements and corresponding organizational value changes.
7. Stress on-going staff development and assistance.  
Two types:
  - a) assistance in plan development and implementation
  - b) technical assistance at the level of the classroom.
8. Ensure information gathering and use during planning and implementation phases.
9. Plan for continuation.
10. Review capacity for future changes.

The majority of the suggestions by Fullan appear to relate directly to the innovation under study in this research project. The Better Schools programme focuses on the creation of a school-based management approach that incorporated Fullan's key notions of school community participation in school development planning.

#### **4.4.1 Models for School Development**

To further assist schools in the development of structures and procedures to aid school improvement, a number of models of school organization have been generated. Some of the models offer thorough and integrated practices to achieve school managed improvement. Guthrie (1986) suggested that the transformation of schools be achieved through: principals who function as chief executive officers; the establishment of school councils comprising staff and parent representatives responsible for

annual planning and performance reports. In similar fashion, the Collaborative School Management Model advocated by Caldwell & Spinks (1988) prescribed specific procedures for school improvement. Their model consists of six phases:

- 1 Goal setting and identification of needs
- 2 Policy-making
- 3 Planning of programmes
- 4 Preparation and approval of programme budgets
- 5 Implementation
- 6 Evaluation

Two separate groups are established, each responsible for different functions. The policy group (e.g. the school-based decision-making group) sets policies and priorities and approves programmes and budgets. The programme teams prepare programme plans and budgets and then implements them. The use of these groups enables all members of the school community to be participants in the process of school development/management.

The Collaborative School Management Model has significance for this study for two reasons. First, the phases of the model correspond neatly with the particular innovation under study. Second, the model formed the basis of Ministry of Education in-service programme for change agents and Principals during the early phase of the study. While the widespread adoption and implementation of the Collaborative School Management Model was not mandated by the Ministry of Education in Western Australia, it seems likely to impact on the way schools respond to those aspects of the "Better Schools" policy dealing with school-based decision-making and school development planning.

#### 4.5 PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING

Much of the literature on both implementation of innovations and organizational theory gives emphasis to participatory decision-making as an effective strategy for affecting change. Bacon (1977), Glenn (1981), Little (1981) and Crofton (1981) all conclude that change attempts are more successful when teachers and administrators work together.

Participatory decision-making may be defined as a process whereby members of the school community [pupils, parents, teachers, and the Principal] are actively involved in, and share responsibility for, decision-making. In research conducted by Belasco & Allutto (1972) and Driscoll (1978), participatory decision-making is generally considered to increase morale and worker satisfaction, and increase organizational effectiveness through cognitive and motivational mechanisms. While such participatory decision-making has been taken as the *sine qua non* of organizational change, evidence to support the view is scarce. In reviewing literature on participatory decision-making, Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986) drew attention to the contradictory nature of research findings on participation. Conway (1984), in a similar literature review, contends that the acceptance of participatory decision-making and its implementation have been based more on faith and logic than on research.

In related research, Charters & Pellegrin (1973) and Smith & Keith (1971) found that the right to participate in decision-making sometimes leads to confusion, frustration, and then ultimately to rejection of the change in the implementation stage. Alternatively Giacquinta (1975) suggested that the interaction process set up by participation, when it works probably does so because it clarifies and allays fears. Reaching similar conclusions Deal,

Intili, Rosaler, & Stackhouse (1977), Little (1981) and Imber & Duke (1984) saw change attempts as more successful when teachers and administrators work together. They maintained that participatory decision-making breaks down barriers between departments and among teachers /administrators, and encourages the kind of intellectual sharing that can lead to consensus and promote feelings of unity and commonality. Further, it builds commitment because it represents an investment of group effort in understanding and applying new ideas.

Clearly participation in educational decision-making can produce either positive or negative consequences. Both Firestone (1977) and Hoy & Miskel (1988) suggested that the question should not be whether teachers, parents and students ought to participate in decision-making, but under what conditions should such participation occur.

Vroom & Yetton (1973) proposed a model to assist administrators in determining such conditions. The model reflects a contingency approach which suggests that participation in decision-making should depend on the nature of the problem and the situation. Two sets of rules are posited to guide both the form and amount of participatory decision-making that might be undertaken. The first set contains three rules designed to promote the quality of decisions. The second set contains four rules designed to enhance the acceptance of decisions by subordinates. Based on these rules, five alternative methods of making decisions are offered. Each option is briefly described as follows:

1. Unilateral. The Principal uses existing information to make the decision alone.
2. The Principal seeks information from subordinates, then makes the decision alone.

3. The Principal consults with relevant subordinates, individually , soliciting ideas and suggestions, then makes the decision.
4. The Principal consults with a group to obtain collective ideas through discussion, then makes the decision, which may or may not reflect the subordinates' influence.
5. Shared. The Principal shares the situation and problem with the group, then the group decides.

Subsequent research by Vroom & Jago (1978) indicated that school Principals who follow the model are more likely to be successful administrators. However, the process can be quite time consuming. To assist Principals in the use of such a contingency approach to decision-making, Caldwell & Spinks (1988a) provided a model that permits more rapid identification of problems that would benefit from participatory decision-making.

The belief that participation in decision-making has a positive impact on the change process has led to the development of several frameworks for school improvement based on participatory or collaborative planning. Such frameworks include the School Based Improvement approach [SBI] (Hansen & Marburger 1988) and the School Improvement Process [SIP] (Casner-Lotto 1988). According to Purkey & Smith (1983), although specific tactics may vary, the general strategy advocated within such frameworks is best characterized as one that promotes collaborative planning, collegial work, and a school atmosphere conducive to experimentation and evaluation. Such collaborative planning not only permits valuable input from representative groups of participants, but allows goals and methods to be re-assessed, refined, and made explicit during the course of implementation. Miller (1980), suggested the

participants ought to be those people affected by the decision-making and implementation. Such participants could include teachers, parents and students.

Since the innovation under study involved the establishment of school-based decision-making groups, itself a strategy for collaborative planning, it seemed essential that further attention be given to reviewing literature on group processes.

#### **4.5.1 Group Decision-Making**

Handy (1976) viewed decision-making groups as powerful organizational tools, provided they are handled properly. He suggested that attention needs to be given to the purpose, size, and group procedures if they are to operate to the maximum advantage of the school. The ideal is to employ different groups for different purposes, even if some membership is common across groups. According to Handy (1986), large groups are best used for disseminating information, although, if the object is decision-making and problem-solving, the group should not exceed nine members.

Small groups however, are not without drawbacks. Sub-groups can emerge within the group resulting in conflict between members which prevents effective action by the group. Likewise strong cohesiveness can produce a state of like-mindedness among participants. This state has been labeled by Janis (1985) as "Groupthink Syndrome". In this case the participants' desire for consensus overrides the objectivity of participants when considering all the options for decision-making. According to Janis (1985), a number of conditions such as high stress from external sources and impartial leadership increase the likelihood of groupthink. Clearly the existence of "groupthink" in a school-based decision-making group



could negate the value of participation and impact on the quality of the decisions made. The emergence of groupthink appears to be a potential problem for any school-based decision-making group that involves participants who might perceive themselves holding a subordinate role in the group. This is likely to be the case for both parent and student representatives in a school group, given the traditional authority of the Principal and senior administrators over school policy decision-making.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY**

The last three chapters have reviewed literature on change theory, organizational theory and school improvement. The review process assumed a historical perspective, focusing on emerging theory and research findings that had particular relevance to the educational change and the implementation of a policy innovation. In the next chapter, issues deemed significant to the specific research for this project have been drawn together to form a conceptual framework for the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **EMERGENT ISSUES UNDERPINNING THIS STUDY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Emerging from the literature on innovation and change, organization theory and school improvement are important concepts and issues that are particularly relevant to this study, which involves the analysis, interpretation and description of the implementation of School-Based Decision-Making Groups. This chapter attempts to draw together these concepts and issues to form the conceptual framework. There are four sections to the chapter. The first section outlines the characteristics of the innovation under study including its clarity, complexity, adaptability and need. The second section examines the characteristics of the adopting unit (the school) including its climate, sub-system linkage, leadership and decision-making structures and procedures. This section also attends to the school's preparedness for change. The third section is concerned with the nature of the implementation process. In this section three sub-processes or implementation phases are examined. The final section presents a summary in the form of a series of diagrams identifying the relationships between all the main variables in the study.

## **5.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INNOVATION**

The innovation under study is a Ministry "policy" and as such is viewed as a soft innovation, that is, one that needs to be translated, redefined, and adapted at the school level. When examining innovation change, researchers such as Berman & McLaughlin (1978) and Fullan (1982) suggested that the clarity, complexity, adaptability and need for the innovation all have an effect on the implementation process.

### **5.2.1 Clarity**

The clarity of the innovation refers to the extent to which those implementing the innovation are clear about the essential features of the change and what they are to do differently.

educators want to know what the innovation is all about, how it works and what it means for them in terms of time, effort and energy. (Crandall Eiseman & Louis, 1986, p41)

The importance of clarity is taken up by Fullan (1982), who suggests that the clarity with which the goals and core components of the innovation are expressed, has influence upon the subsequent success or otherwise of the implementation process.

Unclear and unspecified changes can cause great anxiety and frustration to those sincerely trying to implement them. (Fullan, 1982, p58)

To ensure clarity, Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986) suggested that the core components of an innovation should be clearly identified in advance. However policy innovations, such as the one in this study in this research, tend to lack clarity about goals and rarely specify the means of implementation. For Wise (1983) and Huberman & Miles (1984), the clarity of such soft innovations evolves as participants in the change process interpret the policy within the context of their school.

### **5.2.2 Complexity**

Complexity of the innovation refers to the extent of change and the degree of effort required to implement the change. To describe the same characteristic Huberman & Miles (1984) uses the term "demandingness", that is, the extent to which the innovation requires new organizational arrangements and new behaviours. While complexity creates problems for change, the change effort needs to be substantial and significant rather than trivial if it is to be successful, (Miles, 1989). As Berman (1980) suggests, "little ventured nothing gained" (p23).

### **5.2.3 Adaptability**

Adaptability of the innovation is related to the degree of explicitness of the innovation. Berman (1980) suggested that, while some educational problems are amenable to explicit solutions, others require more complex adaptive resolutions over time. The less explicit the innovation, the more it is open to translation and modification during the implementation process. Where widespread adoption across a variety of settings is intended, highly explicit innovations may be inappropriate. Fullan (1982) suggested the form of the change is often best determined by those with situational knowledge of the adopting school. On the other hand, leaving the innovation unspecified, results in confusion about what to do in order to implement the innovation. Further, non-explicit innovations often provide little or no indicators that serve to maintain the momentum of the change effort.

According to Bereiter & Kurland (1981) participants need to experience some sense of meaning and practicality early in the change process or they will abandon the effort. Clearly there is a dilemma for developers and policy-makers about the degree of explicitness embodied in the

innovation. The innovation under study is intended to be implemented in a variety of different settings and consequently involves adaptative resolutions across settings. However, this is not to imply that the policy is non-explicit. It does contain statements concerning intentions, goals, and functions of the change, but does not prescribe the manner in which schools should respond nor the form the innovation should take.

#### **5.2.4 Need**

Need for the innovation refers to the extent to which the innovation addresses a priority need as perceived by those who are to implement the change. Emrick & Peterson (1978), Rosenblum & Louis (1981) and Fullan (1982) all maintain that the perceived relevance and importance of the innovation significantly impacts on the implementation process. Where the innovation focuses on a specific identified need there is likely to be a more enthusiastic and actively engaged implementation process. As the innovation under study calls for community participation in school level development planning, it seems essential that the perception of the need for change is shared not only by the Principal and staff, but also by parents and community members.

### **5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ADOPTING UNIT / SCHOOL**

When examining the characteristics of the school, the literature indicates that characteristics such as organizational climate, sub-system linkage, leadership and administrative decision-making procedures affect the change process.

#### **5.3.1 Climate**

The school is seen as a social system that is an organization of people bounded together in mutually interdependent relationships. The state of

this social system (its personality, its culture) has been referred to as its organizational climate (Tye, 1974). The importance of climate in influencing a school's change efforts has also been noted by Doak (1970), Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983), Huberman & Miles (1984), Fullan (1985) and Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986) .

### **5.3.2 Sub-system linkage**

According to Miles (1987) climate is associated with the degree of cohesiveness of groups within the school. The notion of group cohesiveness further relates to the concept of sub-system linkage discussed by writers such as Kenzevich (1984) and Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983). It is suggested that within the school organization, there are three loosely linked sub-systems: the Pedagogic sub-system; the Cultural sub-system; and the Structural sub-system. These sub-systems which exist within a school's organizational climate may be tightly or loosely linked. Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983) suggested that tighter linkages enhance successful implementation, a view supported by the research findings of Louis, Rosenblum & Moliter (1981).

### **5.3.3 Administrative Decision-making**

While participatory-decision making is increasingly advocated as the preferred approach for facilitating change and school improvement, it is not necessarily the approach utilized by school Principals. Brady (1984), in a review of the literature, identified a number of methods of decision-making that are employed in schools. When these methods were compared with the classification developed by Likert (1976), four administrative decision-making approaches were identified. These include:

Authoritative	Principal decides unilaterally.
Consultative	Principal decides after consultation with relevant individuals.
Collaborative	Principal in conjunction with appointed or elected individuals makes a democratic decision.
Participatory	Whole staff make decisions by consensus.

Consideration of these decision-making approaches is important for this study because the innovation under examination concerns the establishment of School-Based Decision-Making Groups. It is implied that members of school groups will participate in, and share responsibility for, school development planning. For Principals who utilize a collaborative or participatory decision-making approach the change would require little alteration to the existing mode of decision-making. However, for authoritarian and consultative Principals, the innovation signals a substantial alteration to the existing mode of decision-making.

#### **5.3.4 Leadership**

While leadership for change can be provided by a number of individuals within the school, it is the Principal who is uniquely positioned to fill this role. Indeed, the literature on change and school improvement, indicates the Principal's role is critical to the change process. In an implementation study involving some 80 schools, Hall, Loucks and others concluded:

The single most important hypothesis emanating from these data is that the degree of implementation of the innovation is different in different schools because of the actions and concerns of Principals. (Hall, Hord & Griffin, 1980, p 26)

In a more recent paper on change in educational settings, Miles (1987) stresses the importance of Principal leadership and management skills as key preconditions for change.

To facilitate change the Principal must be committed to the change and actively promote and support such change. Loucks & Zacchei (1983) noted:

What is needed is an administrator who says "We're going to do this together and we're going to get all the help we need. (Loucks & Zacchei, 1983, p30)

According to Berman & McLaughlin (1978) and Emrick & Peterson (1978), it is how the Principal acts that carries the message as to whether a change is to be taken seriously. For Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling (1984), a Principal's actions reflect one of three styles of leadership. These include Responders, Managers and Initiators. A summary of each style is presented as follows:

The **Responder** sees his or her primary role as administrative. Is passive in the change process allowing others to take the lead in decision-making only becoming directly involved if there is a visible problem.

The **Manager** sees his or her primary role as overseeing the implementation process. Such Principals have well organized procedures for routine tasks but do not initiate change beyond what is imposed by authorities.

The **Initiator** seizes the lead and makes it happen, such Principals tend to have firm beliefs about good schooling and work intensely towards these goals.

(after Hall & Rutherford, 1983)



While Hall & Rutherford noted that all three styles could be successful, the Initiator style ensured the highest levels of implementation. Neale, Bailey, & Ross (1981), Leithwood & Montgomery (1982), and Loucks & Zacchei (1983) are more explicit about the characteristics of the effective change leadership. Their characteristics include: giving priority to the innovation; providing intrinsic incentives to implement what Corbett, Dawson, & Firestone (1984) refers to as "psychic rewards". Effective Principals also provide resources and assistance for the change effort and facilitate collaborative and collective decision-making among staff.

### **5.3.1 Preparedness for Change**

Preparedness for change is variously referred to as "prior states of the system" (Miles 1964), "organizational capacity" (McLaughlin 1976), and "past innovation success" (Thayer & Wolf 1984). Essentially each term describes the level of preparedness of the school organization to undergo change. Indicators of preparedness relevant to this study include those characteristics of the school setting discussed above. In particular, attention will be given to the characteristics of leadership, organizational climate, existing decision-making structures and procedures, and the school's relationship with its community. The degree of preparedness for change influences the subsequent process of implementation.

## **5.4 THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The innovation under study is a centrally derived policy which mandates adoption at the school level. Hence the study focuses directly on implementation rather than on the adoption phase of the change process. The implementation process is viewed as the interaction of the innovation with the characteristics of the school setting. Such interaction occurs in three interrelated and complex phases. The first phase is termed

the Initiation Phase; the second is termed the Adaptation Phase, and the third is termed the Operational Phase.

#### **5.4.1 The Initiation Phase**

The initiation phase concerns the school community's initial response to the innovation, and in that respect the phase is similar to the Mobilization Stage described by Berman (1981). During an analysis of this phase attention was given to those initial perceptions members of the school community held about the nature of innovation and what it meant for them. Literature on innovation and change suggests some key aspects to be considered in the initiation phase. These aspects include advocacy for change and the level of assistance and support for change. While some literature on innovation characteristics has already been presented here, little attention has been given to the aspects of advocacy and support for implementation.

##### **5.4.1.1 Advocacy**

When examining advocacy for change, Whitney (1980) and Miles (1989) suggested the need for an active advocate or champion at the district and school level who understands the change and will support it. The importance of advocacy is further stressed in the research of Finch (1981) and Gross & Herriott (1979). These researchers indicate that without strong advocacy for the change, implementation has a minimal chance of success. Advocacy may come from central office personnel, the district superintendent, the Principal, teachers or members the community. The most powerful advocates, however, are often seen as those operating at district and school administrative level. For Crofton (1981), administrative commitment and support at both central office and school level should be shown both concretely and symbolically.

This form of advocacy indicates that the change is valued and promotes the enthusiasm required for successful change. The Principal's leadership role in advocacy has already been discussed in the review of characteristics that constitute the school environment.

#### **5.4.1.2 Resources**

Fullan (1982) indicates that schools do not have a fund of resources [materials, people and time] that can be used for major change efforts. This lack of what Miles (1989) refers to as a school's "organizational slack" suggests the need for resource support from sources external to the school. Further, researchers such as Fullan (1985) and Miles (1989) indicate that to embark on change a school requires adequate resources for front-end training for key participants, release time from normal duties for such participants, and on-going technical assistance.

#### **5.4.2 The Adaptation Phase**

In the adaptation phase, specific action is taken by members of the school community to translate the innovation and restructure the organization through the establishment of new decision-making structures and procedures. It is proposed that this phase will reflect the notion of implementation as mutual adaptation (Berman & McLaughlin 1978), in that, change might occur to both the innovation and the adopting system. This view of implementation seems particularly warranted when the innovation under study is a Ministry policy and hence a "soft" innovation.

When examining this phase of the implementation process, attention will be given to the decision-making process. In particular, analysis will be undertaken about the role of group leadership, the impact of information, assistance offered or sought, emerging issues directing the adaptation

process and external interventions that seem decisive in directing the adaptation process.

#### 5.4.3 The Operational Phase

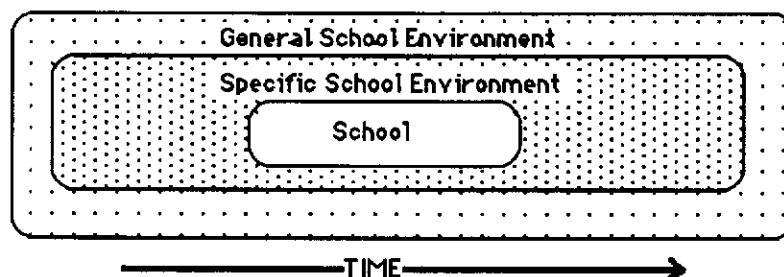
In the operational phase the newly established decision-making structures and procedures begin to operate. While the functions of the decision-making group might have been determined during the adaptation phase, these functions remain subject to possible further modification as the group evolves. Where the function of the group includes responsibility for school development planning, a process of meta planning is likely. That is, participants engage in planning how to plan for school development.

### 5.5 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

To summarize, this study gives consideration to the following issues derived from the literature on change, organizational theory, and school improvement.

#### ISSUE 1

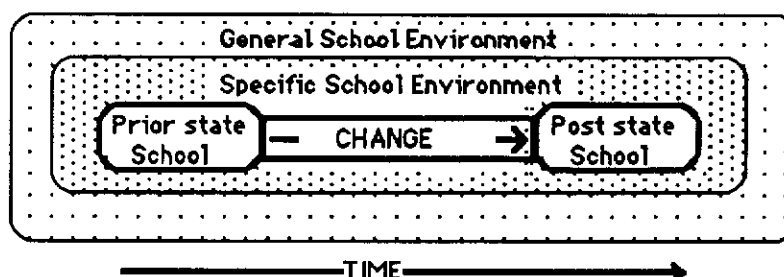
Educational change is viewed as a process, not an event, that takes place within, and is affected by a general and specific environment over time.



**FIGURE 3:**  
**The Change Environment**

## ISSUE 2

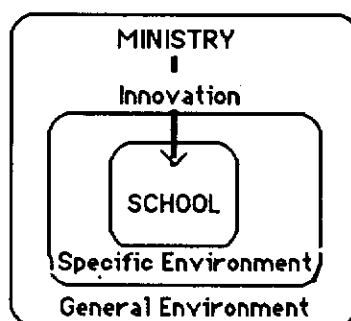
The change process is viewed as those events and activities occurring as the school moves from the existing state of routine behaviours to a new state of routine behaviours. Therefore the focus is on the quality of implementation, that is the degree of difference in behaviour or structure within the organization after the change.



**FIGURE 4:**  
**Organizational Change**

## ISSUE 3

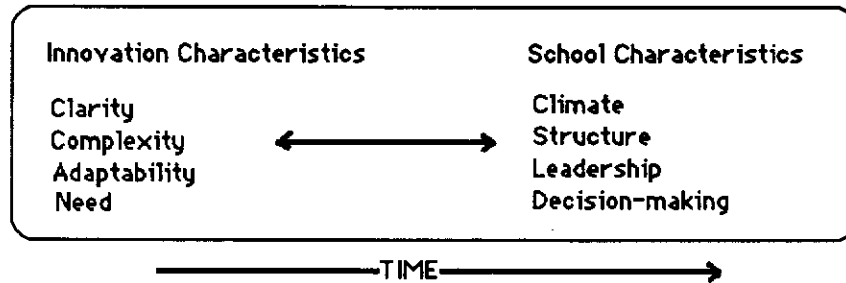
The innovation under study has been generated from a source external to the school setting and is a 'soft' innovation. It consists of a collection of ideas that need to be translated and re-defined at the school level. The characteristics of the innovation deemed salient for this study include its clarity, complexity, adaptability and need.



**FIGURE 5:**  
**The Ministry Policy Innovation**

#### ISSUE 4

The school is viewed as a organizational entity comprised of a complex set of behaviours. Some characteristics of the school deemed important for this study include the organizational climate, the sub-system linkage, leadership, and decision-making procedures. Implementation is viewed as the interaction of an innovation with characteristics of the school setting.



**FIGURE 6:**  
**Implementation as Interaction**

#### ISSUE 5

The interaction of the innovation with characteristics of the setting occur in three phases over time, the initiation phase, the adaptation phase, and the operational phase.

- a) The first phase involves the school's initial response to the innovation. Here perceptions about the innovation are analysed against the existing state of the school organization.
- b) The second phase involves those specific planning events concerned with the translation, modification and restructuring of the organization as the innovation is implemented in the school. During this phase attention is given to the impact of the characteristics of the school and external interventions on the implementation process.

- c) The third and final phase involves the use of the innovation. It is this phase in which operational modifications occur in response to the realities of the school setting.

While examination of the first and second phases in the change process was undertaken according to plan, the impact of state-wide industrial action by the State School Teachers' Union associated with the implementation of the Better Schools Programme prevented an examination of the third phase of the implementation process.

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight focus on the three phases of the research endeavour. Specifically, chapter Six analyses the characteristics of the innovation under study; that is, the policy on school-based decision-making groups. Further, the evolution of the policy is described as the innovation undergoes a process of progressive clarification at the Ministry of Education level. Chapter Seven describes the process of school site selection and focuses on the development and use of an instrument to assess school organizational climate. Chapter Eight presents the first of three school case profiles and analyses the dynamic change process as the school community attempts to implement the policy on school-based decision-making groups. Each chapter begins with a brief description of the methodology and specific research techniques that were employed.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INNOVATION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the nature of the innovation under study, namely the Ministry policy on school-based decision-making groups [SBDMGs] . There are four sections to the chapter. The first offers a brief description of the genesis of the Better Schools initiatives and sets the context for the policy on SBDMGs. The second section describes the approaches employed to analyse the characteristics of the innovation. The third analyses the characteristics of the policy on SBDMGs in terms of the perceived need, adaptability, clarity and complexity. The final section examines the provision of support for school communities to facilitate the implementation of SBDMGs.

#### **6.2 THE CONTEXT FOR THE MINISTRY POLICY ON SBDMG's**

In 1986 the Western Australian Education Department underwent a government directed functional review to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. As a result of this review a document entitled "Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement" [hereafter referred to as Better Schools ] was released in early 1987 (see Appendix C).



A principle central to the document is that schools become 'self-determining'. The document proposes an education system in which broad policies and standards are set by the government, and schools are then given the freedom and responsibility to determine how they will implement these policies and standards in relation to their own unique context and needs. To further explain the rationale for such re-structuring a letter was sent to all school principals from the Director General of Education on the 26th of February 1987. The letter contained six points which largely reinforced the statement of rationale in the Better Schools document itself.

The Better Schools document contained some nine new directives for schools: changes to the school grant; school development planning; school-based decision-making; school staffing entitlement; school staff management; the selection of teachers; school programme administration; and school administrative support. Of the nine directives, school based decision-making and school development planning were given priority by the Ministry for early implementation. In a Ministry document sent to all schools (Better Schools Guidelines for Implementation, 1987), the main goal for the period 1988-89 was for the development of a participatory decision-making processes in schools. This was to be achieved through the establishment of school-based decision-making groups and the preparation of a school development plan, albeit limited in scope. The pivotal role of the school-based decision-making group for the creation of self-determining schools is clearly indicated in the responses during interviews conducted with the following Ministry personnel:

... I think that was the whole promise of "Better Schools" ..self-determining, community owned...and you can't have one without the other. So I would say that, in the conceptualization of what schools would be, it was fundamental that they operate with a School Based Decision-Making Group. (Superintendent T3(a) 248)

... It [the establishment of a school-based decision-making group] is critical. It would be almost impossible to have been serious about self-determining schools without making a major focus of the decision-making that accompanies school development plans. (Manager of School Planning)

In the original Better Schools document, little information was provided about the structure and functions of a school-based decision-making group. Following a brief rationale about the need for collaborative school management and school accountability, the report stated:

A formal decision-making group should be established in each school to represent the community and staff and allow appropriate participation by students. It would be responsible for various matters including:

- setting the broad school policies and priorities;
- taking into account both Ministry policy and the particular needs of the school;
- establishing a resource management plan for the school (including budgeting and guidelines for supervising, construction, maintenance and alterations to buildings and grounds);

- overseeing the expenditure of school funds and the use of school resources and facilities; and
- participating in defining the role of the Principal and advising on the selection and appointment of the Principal.

(Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement, p 11)

Additional statements outlined and clarified the Ministry's responsibility for the employment and payment of staff, and the Principal's responsibilities in exercising authority in professional matters regarding the operation of the school. The statements above constitute the basis of Ministry policy on school-based decision-making. The following sections examine aspects of the policy that might impact on its implementation.

### **6.3 DATA COLLECTION APPROACH**

The first step in examining the characteristics of the Ministry policy statement on school decision-making groups was to review the Ministry document on Better Schools (1987). Original copies of the document were analysed along with extracts detailing the Better Schools Programme that were reproduced in the Western Teacher magazine (March 12, 1987). Semi-structured interviews were held with the three Ministry of Education officials who were either directly involved with the development of Better Schools Policy or had responsibility for overseeing its implementation [see Appendix A].

In addition, similar semi-structured interviews were held with the Principals, Deputy Principals and school staff members identified by either the School Development Officers or the Principals as key persons in

change processes within each school (see Appendix A1 & A2). These interviews served as a valuable data source for verbatim accounts of participant's responses to semi-structured, yet reasonably open questions.

On average five interviews concerning the characteristics of the policy on school-based decision-making groups were conducted for each of the three secondary schools under study. All formal interviews were audio-taped and fully transcribed. Each transcription was coded to indicate tape number, tape side, counter number and person responding:

**T 1 (a) 007 G.D. = Tape one, side A, counter number 007 Graham Dellar.**

These transcription codes were a very useful device for analysis of the interviews.

A copy of each transcript was mailed to the respondents to enable them to check the accuracy of their responses and to make additional clarifying statements should they so desire. ( For a sample see Appendix B.) Both documents and interview transcripts form the main data source for this chapter. Wherever dialogue is quoted it has been derived from a specific transcript. For ease of reading, the codes have been eliminated from all but the initial quote. In addition, samples of documentary data is included in the Appendix.

#### **6.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POLICY ON SBDMGs**

To assess these characteristics, an analysis of the policy statement was undertaken and perceptions of the policy sought through interviews with personnel at Head Office and school level.

#### **6.4.1 Need for the Innovation**

The rationale for change given in the Better Schools Document expresses the belief that fundamental administrative restructuring was required, not only to ensure more efficient and effective use of resources by schools, but also to ensure that schools were more responsive and accountable to the communities which they serve. The interviewees at Head Office and District level shared the view that, while the establishment of school-based decision-making groups might be viewed as politically and economically inspired, it also held potential for improving the educational, rather than just the administrative functions of schools. As the Manager of School Planning stated:

Because it is tied up with the Better Schools Report and the push that this current government and other governments have for greater public accountability, then yes, to a large degree it is a politically mandated exercise. That doesn't mean that it doesn't have an educational worth or outcome attached to it. (Manager)

However, when pressed to specify what such educational benefits might result, none of the interviewees was prepared to venture an opinion. Perhaps such responses are understandable given that the bulk of the Better Schools initiatives appear to be concerned with structural and procedural changes to the organization of both the Ministry and schools. Only passing reference is made to a commitment to excellence, equality, and relevance of the education system, yet implicit in the document is a belief that re-structuring the education system *will* result in improvements to the quality of education.

Personnel at District Office level also viewed the Better Schools proposals as primarily a political and economic document. However, there was a perception that Better Schools also responded to a growing demand among

the community for more involvement in schools. As one District Superintendent put it:

I think there are two questions there; the devolution and making schools self-determining might well be a political move but I do believe that parent involvement in schools has been evolving for a long time. I think that is a social development. (Superintendent)

Implicit in the Better Schools rationale was the view that the establishment of school-based decision-making groups was not only desirable and desired by educationalists and community members alike, but the creation of new and radically alternate structures for school management is a direct response to a demand by the community for the right to participate in school decision-making.

...the shift is coming ...the widespread shift that parents do have a right to participate and even change the direction the school is going. (Superintendent)

That such a community demand has emerged or exists to any significant extent is disputed by people at both Ministry and school level. A Director of Operations was of the opinion that the community knew very little about the Better Schools programme. He felt that parents and community members rarely become involved in educational issues except where it directly related to their child or to the provision of a specific resource or facility at the school. A more considered view of community participation in school decision-making is revealed in the response of the Manager of School Planning:

It is easy to over-estimate and to be very optimistic about the degree to which the community wants to be involved. It is very uneven across the system. I guess the unevenness is represented by such views as "We

don't want to know. It is your job. You do it. You make the decisions!" To the other extreme which is equally worrying and untenable from a school management point of view; where groups in the community want to be directly involved in the day-to-day management of the school. ... I guess the difficulty is that we don't have a long history in this country or this state of this type of representation in public institutions. (Manager)

If there was only a limited expression of need for participation in school decision-making by the community, then perhaps the policy filled a priority need held by Principals and members of the teaching staff. This question, when posed to Ministry personnel, elicited similar responses. Typical was the following:

I think that the arguments supporting these developments only exist in the minds of small pockets of receptive, progressive, forward looking people. I know that's very loaded in a value sense but that is a way of describing the movers and the shakers in schools that always want to be in on innovative programmes. (Manager)

At the district level, a Ministry of Education Superintendent viewed the level of enthusiasm for change as directly related to the amount of prior experience held by Principals and school personnel. That is, actual experience with school-based decision-making appeared to increase the understanding of what such a new administrative structure can offer .

In secondary schools I don't think they do understand ...they find it difficult to know how to go about it; except for those who have gone down the path and have established a School Based Decision-Making Group or a School Council. Such people suddenly recognize what corporate management is all about, and how much better than anticipated it is. That's how you get the enthusiastic involvement. (Superintendent)

Statements suggests that among school communities and staff members the establishment of school-based decision-making groups does not necessarily meet a priority need. However, that does not imply that no need for such school level decision-making exists within the education system. For the Ministry the establishment of such decision-making groups was fundamental to the principles underpinning the policy on self-determining schools. For a Director of Operations, the establishment of school-based decision-making groups reflected a philosophical and ideological view which values decentralized administration and devolved decision-making. He saw the policy as part of re-structuring changes occurring in human service industries throughout the western world and hence more an inevitable change than a political one.

... If you look at what is happening in the rest of the world and see that you haven't changed and the rest of the world has then it is reason to examine what you are doing. If you look at the rest of Australia, we are not out of step ...with our current change. (Director of Operations)

Despite the apparent lack of perceived need for the establishment of school-based decision-making among school staff and community members, there was a perception that such a change had value for schools. Further, the principles of devolution of decision-making being adopted in other sectors of government and in other education systems both in Australia and overseas suggested such a change was inevitable.

#### **6.4.2            Adaptability of the Innovation**

The nature of many "soft" innovations such as school-based decision-making groups is such that the form and functions of the innovation are rarely explicit. Rather, as Wise (1983) suggests, they are collections of ideas



that are open to translation and adaptation by those responsible for implementation. This lack of explicitness permits the innovation to be implemented in a variety of forms that better match individual school contexts. The policy statement on school-based decision-making lacked explicit detail about the desirable number of staff, community, and student representatives; how representatives might be selected; group operating procedures; and specifics about how the group was to develop policy and management plans. For the district superintendent, adaptability was an essential characteristic of the policy on school-based decision-making groups.

Flexibility does underpin it ...more significantly whenever you put it in a legal framework it has to be applicable to all schools...and what's applicable to a metropolitan school might not be applicable to a country school, so it has to have flexibility across the board to ensure that the rules can apply to everybody. Yes, and it was definitely a Ministry policy to have flexibility. (Superintendent)

Schools in Western Australia range in organizational configuration from a one teacher country school through to a metropolitan senior high school with 1200 + students and a staff of over 100. Given this spectrum of organizational complexity, the policy on school-based decision-making needs to be flexible enough to be implemented in all settings.

#### **6.4.3 Clarity of the Innovation**

Clarity refers to the goals and means of the change; that is the extent to which those implementing are clear about the essential features of the change and what they are to do differently. The decision to have a policy that was flexible, and therefore capable of being implemented in a large range of school settings, posed problems. The lack of explicit statements about form and function has, according to the Manager of Curriculum, led

to some confusion about what is the desired goal and what is an acceptable response.

There are no base criteria that are clearly identifiable to people that may be translated by a school principal and others without losing too much in the translation.  
(Manager of Curriculum)

For the Manager the desired option would have been to establish very clear and authoritarian directions for the policy as early as possible. The Director of Operations recognized that many school administrators had requested specific detail about the format and function of school-based decision-making groups. However, he felt that providing such direction would be inconsistent with the notion of self-determining schools.

Director of Operations.

They would also like to know the precise format of a School-based Decision-Making Group. They would like it on form B 83 [a], but I don't think that is the way it works. What we are doing might be making it more difficult to be a teacher or an administrator. But in the end it forces the creation of better administrators.

#### **6.4.4 Complexity of the Innovation**

On the surface, the implementation of a school-based decision-making group seems a straightforward process for any school. However the establishment of such a group represents a fundamental change to authority structures and decision-making procedures at two levels within the education system. Firstly the education system prior to the Better Schools initiative was largely centralized and bureaucratic with most policy decisions being taken by relevant Head Office personnel. Once made, such policy decisions took the form of directives for school staff to implement. Devolution implies that the prime locus for educational policy decisions is the school level and not Head Office. As the Better

Schools Rationale states:

"Whereas once it was believed that a good system creates good schools, it is now recognized that good schools make a good system. Accordingly, the efficiency and effectiveness of the system can be improved only if schools have sufficient control over the quality of education they provide. It is only at the level of the school:

- that the professionalism of teachers can be exercised;
- that meaningful decision about the educational needs of each student can be made; and
- that programmes can be devised which reflect the wishes and circumstances of local schools' communities.

The establishment of self-determining schools fundamentally altered the existing authority relationship between the Head Office of the Ministry of Education and schools within the system. However, because of the history of dependence by school personnel on a central Head Office, many principals and senior staff experienced difficulties in adjusting to new procedures.

Many Principals found it difficult to adjust when devolution and re-structuring came. They complained that they would ring Head Office and couldn't get any answers any more; "No one will tell me what to do, no one will give me permission". It has taken a while for many Principals to learn that no one is going to give answers or permission. The Principals *are* the end of the line as far as a decision goes. They are the ones to give permission and take responsibility.

(Superintendent)

Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, the policy on school-based decision-making groups represents a radical change to the manner in which educational decisions will be made at the school level. Traditionally the authority for many educational decisions was seen as shared between the Principal and Head Office personnel. With the

establishment of a decision-making group such authority would be shared in a collaborative fashion with representatives from the teaching staff, parents, community, and, where appropriate, students. The degree of power-sharing created by such a change might be resisted by many in authority. As one District Superintendent noted:

.. It hasn't been the tradition for the Principal to ask anybody within the school what they think. They are used to working on their own. It was really quite a breakthrough when they started to discuss things with their Deputies or their staff, to find out what was going on. These changes have been evolving but there are lots of Principals that will baulk at this next step of actually discussing things with parents. They feel that educational policy is a professional area and they are the experts and the parents do not have a knowledge base on which to work. But Principals must recognize that parents do have aspirations for their children and they are entitled to those aspirations; and they may wish to see things happen in the school which Principals may not have considered or responded to.

The fundamental changes to authority relations between the Principal and the Ministry as well as between the Principal and the school community, suggests a difficult and potentially conflicted period of adjustment. In summary, the policy concerned with the establishment of school-based decision-making groups, like much of the Better Schools Programme, reflected the philosophy and values of devolved decision-making and self-determining schools. There appears a wide-spread perception that the policy owes its pronouncement to a political decision rather than a grass-roots demand for decentralization and participation. Further, the policy either by design or default, lacks explicitness and clarity. It represents a complex change involving fundamental alteration to authority relationships and decision-making procedures at both system and school level. This lack of explicitness and prescription within the policy statement itself means that it

is susceptible to a variety of interpretations by those with the responsibility for its implementation. Such interpretations might either prompt radical change or alternatively result in no significant change at the school level. If the establishment of SBDMGs is to be successfully accomplished it would seem vital that appropriate support and assistance be provided to schools. The next section examines the Ministry's actions in that regard.

## **6.5 SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SBDMGs**

The need to maintain direction and momentum for change was recognized by the architects of the Better Schools proposals, and a section outlining proposed support and assistance was included in the document. Within this section the importance of the Principal's commitment and skill is highlighted.

The successful completion of reorganizing the school system will depend heavily on the commitment and capacity of principals to effect changes at school level.  
(Better Schools, p 23 )

To support principals in the management of change the Ministry proposed several initiatives. These included the production of guidelines on the formation of school-based decision-making groups, school development plans and administrative practice. Also proposed was the provision of school development support staff at district level. Further, a time-line for implementation was included to guide school level responses to all nine initiatives that comprise Better Schools. For educational innovations however, what is proposed and what eventuates by way of appropriate assistance and support turn out to be are often quite different. This study examines the realities of assistance and support at the school level, not only to gauge its appropriateness, but to assess its significance for the nature of implementation process within schools.

### 6.5.1 Assistance from District Office Staff

During 1987, in keeping with the philosophy of devolution, the locus of Ministry assistance and support shifted from Head Office to 29 new School District Offices. Each District comprised a District Superintendent and support staff. Among the initial responsibilities of the Superintendent was the advocacy for change coupled with direct consultation with school principals and school community members. When asked who were the main advocates for the establishment of school-based decision-making groups a District Superintendent responded:

The District Superintendent, because it is my job to make sure that Ministry policy is implemented and this is Ministry policy. So yes, sometimes I have to walk on eggshells and ultimately I have to demand from that school a School Development Plan. And when I demand a School Development plan I have to monitor who devised that plan to ensure that it has come through that process of school-based decision-making.

To assist with the implementation at school level each district appointed a School Development Officer [SDO]. The SDO was to work with school principals, staff, and parents to develop structures and procedures that would reflect the uniqueness of the school community and permit Ministry policy to be implemented. It was intended that the relationship established between the SDO and school community members was to be based on the principles of process consultancy. Process consultancy aims at responding to the needs of the school community by assisting members of the school to develop the skills necessary to create an on-going problem solving capacity for the school. While this approach to school level assistance is in keeping with the principles of devolution, it was felt by superintendents and principals involved in this study that many

individuals appointed as SDOs lacked appropriate knowledge and skills and were therefore unable to provide much needed assistance.

As a Principal noted:

...Assistance from anywhere is always appreciated but the assistance is only as good as the people who are offering that assistance. Just because a person has been allocated a job doesn't mean that they are effective. Often they are not familiar with what is occurring within the school at all. Every school is different. Often they can only assist within some framework established by the school itself. All the work has to be done in the school. The officers might come in and facilitate the implementation of the plan but it is very difficult for them to come into the school and operate effectively. In fact I think it is impossible. They don't have enough credibility.

The lack of effective training of School Development Officers, coupled with poorly established role tasks, militated against the SDO's capacity to facilitate the implementation of school-based decision-making groups. As a District Superintendent noted:

That's the other point when you talk about confusion with this issue. The School Development Officers went off and generated their own role, their own tasks ... and you didn't get the same message from every consultant. They were in virgin territory, their role was evolving and their knowledge was evolving. One person would say "this is what you do for a School-Based Decision-Making Group" and another would say "no you don't" and someone else would say "what does the legislation say".

To overcome confusion among the district office personnel and school community members, it was clear that the policy needed to undergo some further clarification and amplification. The dynamic and critical nature of the clarification process are given particular attention in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE EVOLUTION OF POLICY

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines in detail the process of policy evolution as members of the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in the Better Schools proposals attempted to translate and clarify the initial initiatives into more explicit statements of policy. The events of this process constitute a dynamic "General Environment" for school level policy implementation. As such these events represent what Berman (1978) refers to as macro-implementation. In this situation the Ministry of Education and other external agencies formulated discussion documents, policy statements and guidelines that were to have significant impact on the direction of change process as it occurred at the school level.

From the time the Better Schools Programme was first announced until the conclusion of this research, the policy on School-Based Decision-Making Groups [SBDMGs] underwent progressive clarification and refinement. This evolution of policy was largely induced by two factors. First, by the general wording employed in the original policy statement which begged further translation, and second, by the accompanying philosophy of self-determining schools which legitimated an independent interpretation by school communities. As a consequence, this progressive



clarification and refinement of policy was occurring simultaneously at several levels within the education system.

At the head office of the Ministry of Education, project teams were formed to transform Better Schools initiatives into specific statements of policy and to produce guidelines for the implementation of policy. At school level, members of staff and parents' organizations were interpreting Better Schools statements and proposing specific courses of action for their school. Operating at a point between these two levels were School District personnel. Superintendents and School Development Officers were given the task of promoting self-determining schools and encouraging school-community initiatives yet at the same time, trying to restrict unbridled actions that could run ahead of the official Ministry of Education generated policy guidelines and regulations. While this progressive clarification of policy was occurring at different levels it would be incorrect to assume that the process developed independently and in isolation from each level. Indeed, the open nature of the school system ensured that reactions, ideas and assistance stemming from a range of stakeholders flowed from school to Central Office and back to schools again.

What is interesting to note however, is that the flow of information and ideas was not always open, co-ordinated and complete. This led at best to an unnecessary duplication of effort, and at worst to action at the school level which was to be considered inappropriate and illegitimate by the Ministry of Education.

The following section confines itself to the evolution of policy at Ministry level. The aim is to describe those events occurring within the general environment that were to impact on the process of policy implementation at the school level.

## **7.2 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LEVEL REACTION AND RESPONSE**

At the Ministry level, evolution of policy was influenced by the reaction and response of three key associations holding both educational and political stakes in the implementation of the Better Schools proposals. Specifically these associations are the State School Teachers Union of Western Australian [SSTUWA] (representing teachers and school administrators); the Western Australian High School Principals' Association [WAHSPA]); and the Western Australian Council of State School Organizations [ WACSSO], representing parent associations. The responses and reactions of each association were revealed in association newsletters, and other publications, or directly to Ministry personnel with responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Better Schools proposals.

By early 1987, the Ministry of Education had established a working party to formulate policy and establish guidelines for the implementation of various areas of Better Schools. Five task forces were set up to give specific attention to such initiatives as School-Based Decision-Making Groups and School Development Plans. To enable input from key stakeholders each task-force was comprised of Union members, Principals, WACSSO, and Ministry members. It was hoped the collaborative nature of each task-force would ensure increasing commitment of all parties to system restructuring and the philosophy of self-determining schools. From the first meeting, concerns about a number of elements of the Better Schools

proposals were expressed by all groups. WACSSO representatives had been keen to see the establishment of mechanisms for enhanced community participation in schools for some sixty years. However contention surfaced with respect to the structure and function of school-based decision-making groups and the relationship that such groups might have with prevailing administrative decision-making and groups such as P&C associations. For the Manager of Curriculum , the most vocal opposition came from the Union.

... Essentially their [the State School Teachers Union] opposition is a deeply philosophical one. They do not like the notion of the system being devolved in terms of authority of decision-making. I feel that to them indicates a watering down of the commitment of equity of provision. They don't like the notion that there will be tighter and clearer lines of accountability. So these are the basic philosophical objectives that surfaced in the working party. (Manager)

Such fundamental opposition to the Better Schools initiatives from a key organization suggested that the implementation process could be complex and conflicted.

### **7.3 THE TEACHER'S UNION RESPONSE**

At the SSTUWA annual conference in September 1987, delegates and task-force representatives identified those elements of the Better Schools proposals that required clarification before unqualified endorsement could be given. An example of such Union caution could be seen in their response to the establishment of SBDMGs. Despite the Union's long standing advocacy of democratic decision-making and community participation in school management, they expressed concerns about such a group influencing the selection of staff and classroom instruction. Therefore it was formally decided to give only qualified support to the

Better Schools proposals. The Manager of School Planning confirmed union concerns when he stated:

... area of contention, and one that remains so relates to just what is the function of the School-Based Decision-Making Group. What are its powers and how wide are those powers. There is a whole gamut of things here. Its powers over finance, its power to influence the curriculum and curriculum policy, its relationship to the operational management of the school, its capacity to influence the selection of staff and making recommendations about selection of staff. All these things that were inferred in the Better Schools Report as part of the role of the School-Based Decision-Making Group made discussions particularly contentious. (Manager)

Following the 1987 Annual conference of the SSTUWA, the Union's stance on the Better Schools proposals was expressed in a document entitled "Give Teachers and Students a Fair Go: a Rationale for Change" (November, 1987). This document presented the Union's stance on all the key initiatives presented in the Better Schools Report. Issues such as the School Grant, School Staffing Entitlement, and School Staff Management were given comprehensive attention. The document repeated the need for provision of appropriate resources, time, support and in-servicing to enable staff to effectively participate in school-based decision-making. Since the release of this document there has been little change in the Union's official view on the Better Schools programme. However, continuing concern over the effects of restructuring on the working conditions of teachers led to industrial action in June 1989. The dramatic impact of this industrial action on the implementation of SBDMGs and other aspects of the Better Schools proposals will be discussed in following chapters.

#### **7.4 THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION RESPONSE**

The High School Principals response to the Better Schools programme was reflected in an article published in the the Western Australian High School Principals' Association Newsletter [WAHSPA] in July 1987. John Nolan, the President of WAHSPA, expressed concern about the timing of the release of Better Schools. Given that secondary schools were already involved with the implementation of a a major curriculum change (the Unit Curriculum) the Better Schools proposals added to the stress of coping with multiple concurrent changes. Nonetheless, Nolan suggested a pro-active response by Principals through the formation of task forces. Each task force would provide a mechanism for the development of an informed policy stance by the Principals as a group.

The president's reaction to the SBDMG while generally supportive, stressed the need for involving those with necessary skills:

Schools cannot be operated using a group of amateurs, no matter how well intentioned, to make decision that could only properly be made by trained professionals.  
(WAHSPA Newsletter July, 1987, p.14)

Nolan further expressed a view that parents generally lacked the desire or time to actively participate in school-based decision-making, hence schools would be likely to find it difficult to attract necessary support. He suggested that such apathy permits the radical parents to impose their views on the school.

In these circumstances opportunities are rife for the power-hungry or misguided who have a personal dislike for schools to make life difficult for the schools.  
(WAHSPA Newsletter July, 1987, p.15)

Finally, the president expressed concern that SBDMGs might operate in a way that usurped the authority of the Principal. Nolan clearly rejected the notion of power-sharing or collaborative decision-making when he stated:

It must be clearly understood by staff and parents alike that the Principal is the leader of the school and is responsible to the Ministry as well as the community for its efficient and effective functioning. The leadership role is decisive and unique and can not be shared. Neither can it be delegated or abrogated. (WAHSPA Newsletter July, 1987, p.15)

Towards the end of the year reports from each task-force were integrated into a discussion document and then presented to the controlling body. However, fundamental concerns were still being expressed about the proposed structure and functions of SBDMGs. According to a WACCSO representative the report presented by the school-based decision-making task-force did not adequately reflect the minutes of meetings.

The group received the report in a very casual manner. The impression given was that the establishment of school-based decision-making groups was very simple. These groups can be set up in a very short period of time and we needn't concern ourselves about whether they are elected or whether they are effective and make useful decisions.

Despite such expressions of concern, the work of the group was deemed to be complete and the task-forces ceased to function. In their place a project team comprised of Ministry personnel was established to develop specific guidelines for implementation.

The newly formed project team operated out of the Programmes Branch of the Ministry and had responsibility for facilitating the implementation of School-Based Decision-Making Groups and School Development Plans. The main task of this project team was to provide backup support for district officers, prepare support materials to schools and to further flesh out policy guidelines for schools. Unlike the 1987 task-force groups no formal input mechanism existed for representatives from the Union, Principal Associations or WACSSO.

During the early part of the year a number of communiques were sent to schools specifying the structure, functions, and deadlines for the establishment of decision-making groups. According to information provided by a WACSSO representative these communiques prompted a deal of confusion and led to some ill-considered action in schools, which tended hinder the change process. An example of such a communique was the dissemination to schools of a discussion document amplifying the Better School statement on School-Based Decision-Making groups and School Development Plans (October, 1988) (see Appendix C1).

The "School Development Plans and School-Based Decision-Making Groups: "Discussion Document" (October, 1988) consisted of two main sections. The first section re-stated the rationale for participatory decision-making in schools and detailed guidelines on the possible structure and key functions of such groups. It was a clearly expressed expectation that the group be comprised of representatives from all sectors that constituted the school community and that such representation be balanced. Further, it was stated that the group should have clearly defined functions related to the school development plan.

Three proposed functions were presented. The first two functions concerned representation of the needs and aspirations of the students, teachers, and parents, as well as support for the relationship between the school and its community. The third function involved the preparation of the school development plan and attracted a more detailed coverage as the following quotation of the goals in the area indicate:

- To *participate* in the processes of planning:
  - establishing goals and priorities;
  - determining strategies to meet those goals; and
  - developing school policy.
- To *participate* in the processes of reviewing:
  - monitoring the allocation of resources
  - evaluating the effectiveness of learning programmes; and;
  - receiving reports on the implementation of the plan and suggesting adjustments according to new information and feedback.
- To *recommend* to the District Superintendent, through the Principal , that the school development plan be accepted.

(School Development Plans and School-Based Decision-Making Groups: Discussion Document: October 1988, pp 4-5; original italics )

In addition to information about group structure and functions the document offered a range of alternative structures that school communities might consider before implementing the policy. These alternative structures ranged from a fully incorporated "School Council", a SBDMG as a sub-committee P&C through to the less formalized use of public meetings specifically held to discuss school policy or the school development plan. The document however advised against the use of the term "School Council" stating:



The term "School Council" should be reserved for decision-making groups that take up the option of incorporation once appropriate legislation is enacted. Until a group exercise this option it should be known as 'school-based decision-making group' (p. 5)

The description of alternate forms that a School-Based Decision-Making Group might take appeared to do little to overcome the confusion that existed about the appropriate structure of such a group.

#### 7.6 SCHOOL COUNCIL OR SBDMG?

One of the most significant points of continued confusion regarding this policy at the secondary level, concerned the establishment of school councils and school based decision-making groups. Despite a distinction being made between School-Based Decision-Making Groups and School Councils, all three secondary schools involved in case study section of this study preferred to use the term school council when referring to a SBDMG: The Maylup District Superintendent explains this widespread preference:

Interestingly enough they seem more interested in a School Council. The School-Based Decision-Making Group is really a model for the primary sector rather than the secondary. I think there are two reasons for this. In the primary sector parent involvement is much stronger and more formal structures such as a council are not necessary...At the secondary level, in a school of 600-700 students you might get 20 parents at a meeting if you are lucky and you might get two parents to volunteer to do anything anyhow. Once again I think that is historical. Parents haven't been encouraged to participate except come along and man the Bookshop or raise money to put flagstones around the swimming pool. For that reason, secondary schools have operated under a far different system. And they are also larger and more complex beasts anyhow .

The organizational complexity of secondary schools and the associated difficulties they might experience in implementing organizational change, prompted the Ministry to offer a more concrete example of a successful school-based management approach. This was the Collaborative School Management Model (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988).

## **7.7 A MODEL FOR SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT**

In October 1988 the Ministry conducted an in-service programme for School Development Officers and District High School Principals on the Collaborative School Management Model. According to the Manager of School Planning the architects of the model, Brian Caldwell and Tasmanian Secondary School Principal Jim Spinks, were brought to Western Australia:

...in a deliberate attempt to turn up the debate and to give some concrete support from outside the system that school based management works and works elsewhere, and we here are not doing so badly. So it was intended to "gee up" the argument and a morale boosting exercise.

The model consists of the following six phases that are intended to operate in a cycle:

- 1 goal setting and needs identification
- 2 policy-making
- 3 programme planning
- 4 preparation and approval of programme budgets
- 5 implementing programmes
- 6 evaluating

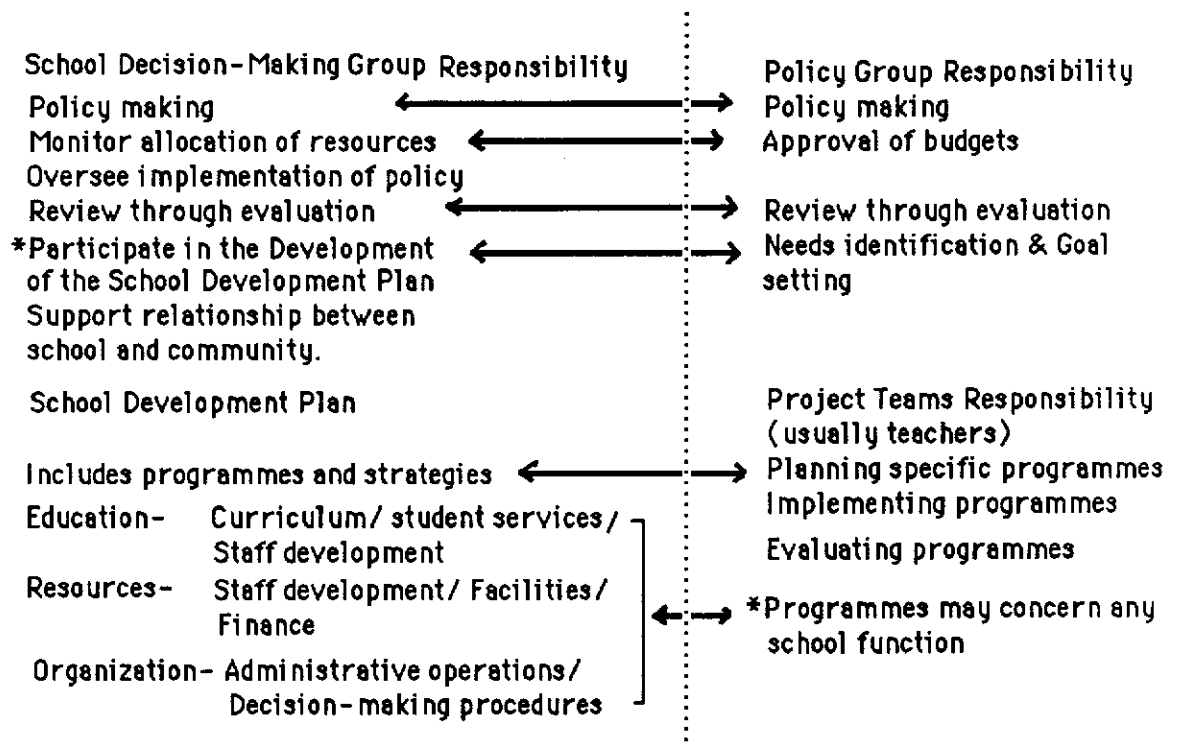
These phases are shared between two groups. One, a policy group comprised of representatives from the staff, parents and students, and the other a programme group, largely comprised of teachers. The policy group holds responsibility for goal setting/needs identification, and policy

making. The programme group plans, budgets and implements programmes in accordance with stated policy. Both groups share responsibility for evaluation activities.

While the widespread adoption and implementation of the Collaborative School Management Model is not mandatory, the links between this model and the contents of the Ministry's discussion paper on self determining schools are strong, as Table: 1 demonstrates.

**MINISTRY GUIDELINES  
(DISCUSSION PAPER)**

**COLLABORATIVE SCHOOLMANAGEMENT  
(AN APPROACH FOR SCHOOLDEVELOPMENT)**



**TABLE : 1**

**Collaborative School Management & Ministry Policy Guidelines**

The arrows connecting aspects of the Ministry Guidelines to the elements of the Collaborative School Management Model indicate the extent to which the model accommodates the Ministry's policy directives for school decision-making groups and school development plans. Despite this strong relationship, according to the Manager of School Planning , it was not the intention of the Ministry to promote the model as the blueprint for organizational change.

... One thing was clear in the minds of the people in here [head office] we didn't want 700 versions of Caldwell and Spinks emerging throughout the system. If that had happened then people would have really missed the point of responsive school management and school planning. Just taking a model and swallowing it whole, goes against the notion that we are not after a faithful replication of a particular model or a particular idea. Rather we are after the adaptation of a general concept. It would be very disappointing if Caldwell and Spinks was around the place as the gospel that needs to be followed. My view is that it isn't. It might be strong in some places but there still seems to be among schools that are taking it seriously, a sense that they need to adapt and twist the thing to suit their own circumstances. (Manager)

The relationship between the Ministry guidelines and the model, was strengthened by an implied endorsement of the model by the Ministry through the in-servicing of Development Officers, Principals and selected staff. Further, in mid-1989, Ministry information regarding school budgeting procedures was distributed to School Principals and Registrars. This information suggested an approach to budgeting and resource allocation that strongly mirrored the Caldwell & Spinks model. It was of little wonder therefore that the Collaborative School Management Model had a marked influence on the response developed by schools.

## 7.8 ENABLING LEGISLATION

No matter how desirable, direct community participation in the educational operations of schools was not legally possible in Western Australia. Indeed, existing legislation specifically excluded parents from direct involvement in all but a nominal sense. The establishment of school-based decision-making groups required amendments to the existing W. A. Government Education Act. Recognizing this, a task-force headed by the Executive Director of Schools was formed. The main objective of this task force was to consider how the existing legislation might be re-framed to enable parents and community representatives to participate in the formulation of educational policy. While a deal of consultation was undertaken by members of the task-force, a number of issues and events impeded progress of the legislation. It was not until the direct involvement of WACSSO that final drafts of the legislation were possible.

Given that WACSSO was consulted regularly and had such an influential role in the drafting process, it is understandable that the vehicle for legislative change involved sections 23 & 27 of the Education Act. These sections were concerned with functions of Parents and Citizens Associations [ P&C] (see Appendix D). Under section 23, the "Objectives of the P&C" section were enlarged to permit the formation of a School-Based Decision-Making Group.

...except as expressly excluded by resolution of the association an association shall in addition to the objects (those already existing) be deemed to have among the objects the object of participation in the formulation of the educational policy and operation of the school in relation to which it is formed to the extent to which it is prescribed by the regulations made for the purpose of this section. (A Bill for an Act to amend the Education Act: 3, December, 1988)

Section 27 of the Act which prevented parents from participating in educational policy formulation was amended to read:

An association shall be deemed to have such functions and powers as are necessary or convenient for the purposes of carrying out the objects conferred on it under this section . But nothing in this act allows an association to exercise any power or authority over the teaching staff of the school. (A Bill for an Act to amend the Education Act: 3, December 1988)

The amended act was enabling to the extent that it provided the possibility for parent and community participation. It did not prescribe such participation, nor did it indicate how or in what way such participation would occur.

With the release of the "Bill to Amend the Education Act" in December 1988 many of the WACSSO concerns about school-based decision-making seemed to dissipate. The legislation having been framed on that section of the Act concerning the operations of the P&C suggested to many that a School-Based Decision-Making Group could be formed as a standing committee of the P&C. Under these circumstances a School-Based Decision-Making Group might assume a predominant status for school/community relations and thus challenge the authority or legitimate continued existence of the main P&C. This view was promoted in the WACSSO News sheet N° 60 1989 (see Appendix E). Amended legislation such as the Education Act is usually accompanied by appropriate changes to regulations covering the Act. It is these regulations that frequently prescribe the changes required to structure, procedures, and behaviour by people employed within the education system. By so doing, the regulations would serve as specific legal guidelines governing the

structure and functions of all school based decision-making groups established.

## **7.9 REGULATIONS AND RENEWED OPPOSITION**

The Ministry team responsible for the enabling legislation was also responsible for the formulation of regulations associated with the amendments to the Education Act. The initial draft regulations were circulated to the relevant groups in April 1989 (see Appendix D1). Opposition to them was immediate and widespread. As a Union Official, stated:

When we examined the draft regulations they were inconsistent with the terms outlined in the discussion document. The regulations indicated compulsion in terms of the formation and composition of the group and that is not what we wanted.

Ministry of Education personnel were also concerned at the degree of prescription suggested. As a member of the legislative committee recounted:

It's the legal mind that says thou shall.... and that was not our [the committee's] intention. We are not prescribing for schools how many members will be on the School-Based Decision-Making Group, and what the composition will be. It is true there will be guidelines, but we are not going to say there must be 10 members. We said, well there might be less than 10 members...we are not going to prescribe like that.

A second version of the draft regulations was produced in June 1989. As far as the Union and WACSSO were concerned there had been no real change to the substance of the regulations and, as a consequence, opposition continued. WACSSO suggested that there were two basic issues that needed to be addressed for the regulations to be accepted by their

Association. The first concerned the need to specify the *election* rather than the *appointment* of group members. The second concerned the inclusion of a requirement within the regulations for members to seek opinions and report back to their constituents.

Another important issue to be resolved concerned the legal responsibility of the school Principal. WACSSO suggested the need to make explicit in the regulations the principle of shared responsibility for decision-making. Further, they suggested that all decision-making groups should have the same core functional requirements, such as responsibility for the school development plan. Additional functions could then be seen as optional and might be taken where group members felt capable of handling further responsibilities. In short, WACSSO maintained that all groups must have the same core rights and responsibilities. The WACSSO representative suggested that this stance was fundamentally shared by the Teachers' Union but was at variance with the present views of the Principals' Association on the structure and function of decision-making groups. WACSSO expressed concern that Ministry of Education re-framing of regulations seemed to accommodate the views of school Principals, but not those of either WACSSO or the Union.

In December 1989, discussion was still occurring regarding the final wording of the regulations. While the Bill amending the Act had been finalized in December 1988, the Act could not become operational until the accompanying regulations had been ratified. Thus many of the organizational changes embarked upon by the schools under study, were carried out on the strength of the Ministry's "moral" authority.



As senior Ministry officer stated:

Schools will go along with the changes because we (Ministry) said so, and it's for the good of the system.

#### 7.10 CHANGING TACK: FROM MEANS TO OUTCOMES

During the process of re-framing the Education Act and drafting the regulations, the direct relationship between the policy on school-based decision-making groups and school development plans became apparent.

As a member of the legislative task-force stated:

Now interestingly enough that was not our first line of thought. It seems obvious now but it took us a long time to come to that. Trying to work out, within this legal framework where we were at. Because when you get down to it, people were saying yes it's the school development plan that's compulsory and the plan has to be formulated by a group. That group is the School-Based Decision-Making Group ...and these are the elements.

In the discussion document disseminated by the Ministry, the development plans were clearly identified as the key function of the School-Based Decision-Making Group. However, determining the prime implementation focus to be the development plan rather than the School-Based Decision-Making Group, seems more a product of pragmatic thinking than a philosophical realization about the fundamental importance of the development plan. As a Director of Operations notes:

... The other important point to make is this is not general information, it is something that is still just within the central office and the group working on it. But most of the difficulty was with the establishment of School-Based Decision-Making Groups. Very little negative feedback has been received on the School Development Plan.

Most respondents saw School Development Plans as desirable, they understood them and didn't see any threats with them. School-Based Decision-Making Groups were an absolute can of worms. You got people arguing about composition of the groups, arguing on equity, concerned about all sort of aspects. That was a clear indication to me to think through the decision-making mechanism much more carefully. We have separated the issues of development planning and decision-making groups. There will be a document coming out in the not too distant future that will talk mostly about School Development Plans and give passing reference to School-Based Decision-Making Groups.

The proposed separation of policy statements concerned with the planning groups from those on the development plan appears a clear response to confusion experienced at both the Head Office and the school level. Clearer statements about the both school development planning and the functions of school-based decision-making groups could serve to clarify issues and defuse conflict. In terms of policy and principle however, the plan remains the product of a School-Based Decision-Making Group.

A new task-force was formed at the Head Office of the Ministry of Education to concentrate on policy and guidelines for the School Development Plan. This task-force worked with the staff of seven secondary school communities that had agreed to take part in a special "Managing Change in Schools Project" This project aimed to pilot a number of organizational changes including school-based decision-making, and school development planning. Based on input from these schools draft guidelines concerning the implementation of school development plans were produced. These draft guidelines were used by several School Development Officers as a

basis for school level workshop sessions conducted during Term Two of 1989. After some further fine tuning, a more extensive document "School Development Plans : Policy and Guidelines" was produced for distribution to all schools in July 1989. This document detailed the new policy and provided indicators about the specific elements to be contained within the plan and clearly indicating that:

All schools must give parents opportunities to participate in the planning process in accordance with Education Act regulations. In this way, the school demonstrates its accountability to the local community. (School Development Plans : Policy and Guidelines: , 1989 )

The expectations of the function of the School-Based Decision-Making Group were outlined on page seven of the same document. The group was to assist with the establishment of priorities and performance indicators for the plan, ensure appropriate resource allocation; endorse the plan; and review priorities within each planning cycle. Limits to the function of the group were indicated by the clear statement that groups were to play no part in guiding the implementation of the plan.

#### **7.11            SUMMARIZING THE EVOLUTION OF POLICY**

The progressive clarification or evolution of the policy seems to be strongly influenced by dynamic interaction and political bargaining between Ministry personnel and representatives from key associations. In turn, the representatives of these associations were lobbied by constituent members of school communities. While the actual interaction remained complex, the pattern of events indicate a process that involved a flow or time ordered sequence represented in Figure 7.

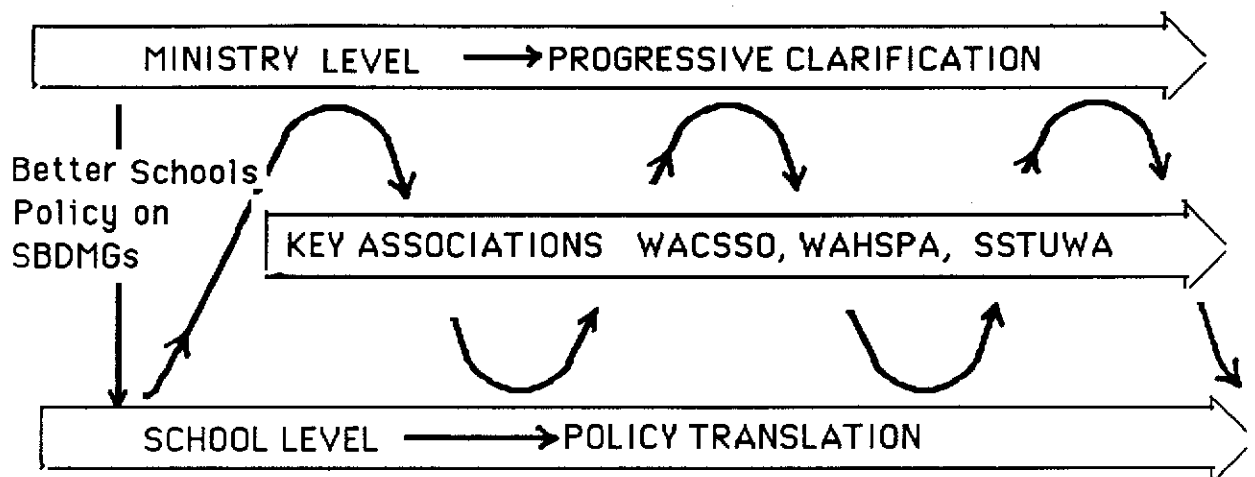


FIGURE: 7

### The Process of Policy Evolution

The wave-like line represents the passage of the Ministry policy on SBDMGs as it undergoes progressive clarification and translation at both school and Ministry level. Intervening between the two levels are a number of key associations that exert influence of the evolution of the Policy.

The Ministry of Education Project Team members devised tentative guideline documents. Feedback from relevant bodies was sought and analyzed. On the basis of feedback each document was reviewed, re-written, and then released as official guidelines for implementation. While it may be argued that such a process seemed to have provided for adequate consultation among all relevant parties, the dominant role assumed by the Ministry of Education in developing and disseminating the guidelines, appeared to run counter to the very notion of the creation of self-

determining schools. Further, this consultative rather than collaborative approach adopted by the Ministry, promoted a type of "political bargaining" among stakeholders that resulted in conflict between parties and disruption to the implementation process. Indeed, assertions of inadequate dialogue between Ministry personnel and both WACSSO and the SSTUWA, resulted in a souring of the sound relationship that had been established in 1988. The SSTUWA in particular expressed a growing concern regarding the impact of the total number of concurrent changes the Ministry was inflicting on its members. By June 1989 the Union had issued a directive to members not to participate in the establishment of SBDMGs. This directive marked the beginning of one of the most protracted industrial disputes ever undertaken by teachers in Western Australia and had a profound impact on the implementation process under examination in this study.

It was against this background of policy evolution and political conflict that individual school communities embarked on their own process of policy translation and implementation. It is this process that forms the basis of the ensuing school case studies. Prior to presenting an analysis of the implementation process at the school level it is necessary to describe the selection of the three case sites. The next chapter presents the case study selection phase of the study.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SCHOOL SITE SELECTION

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of a school's environment in influencing change efforts has been noted by researchers such as Huberman, Levinson, Havelock & Cox (1981), Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983), Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986). In the past research specific attention has been given to the nature of a school's social or cultural characteristics, often referred to as the school's organizational climate.

The term organizational climate refers to the notion of "perceived environmental quality". Tye (1974) interpreted the term to mean that set of factors that give the organization a personality, a spirit, a culture. Just as climate, in the meteorological sense refers to the average weather conditions of a given place over a period of time, the organizational climate of a workplace refers to the average perceptions individuals hold about their work environment. Fullan (1985), in a review of literature on change, cites numerous research studies to support the importance of organizational climate on efforts to implement change in schools.

Prompted by such literature on innovation and change, the relationship between a school's organizational climate and the implementation process

suggested closer research might advance our understanding of how schools change. This research sought to examine the implementation process of the same innovation in several schools with markedly different climates. Through such a focus, more might be learned about the relationship between organizational climate and the change process. Further, such research could help in determining the degree to which implementation process was unique or common across school sites.

The necessary starting point for such research involves determining the organizational climate characteristics of a number of secondary schools. Once these characteristics are identified, schools can then be classified according to their organizational climate, and individual schools identified for closer study. This chapter focuses on the procedures used to assess and then classify schools according to their organizational climate so that specific cases might be selected.

## **8.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Much of the past research on school organizational climate sought to measure individual perceptions through the use of a range of instruments designed for specific types of educational organizations. Such instruments include the High School Characteristics Index [HSCI] (Stern, 1970), College and University Environment Scales [CUES] (Pace, 1969), and the Work Environment Scale [WES] (Moos, 1974). Probably the most widely used instrument for measuring school organizational climate has been the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire [OCDQ] (Halpin & Croft, 1963). Although the [OCDQ] was designed for studies at the elementary school level, it has been used at the secondary level (Ross, Thomas & Slater, 1972). Both the OCDQ and the WES have served as a basis for the development of new instruments deemed more suitable to

secondary school environments. Such is the case for both the Organizational Climate of Secondary Schools [OCSS] (Deer, 1980), and the School-Level Environment Questionnaire [SLEQ] (Rentoul & Fraser, 1983). Based on dimensions and scales developed for the OCSS questionnaire and the SLEQ, a new instrument, the School Organizational Climate Questionnaire [SOCQ] was developed (see Appendix G). The SOCQ was designed for use in secondary schools that might undergo organizational change for school improvement.

### 8.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCQ

Four considerations guided the development of the SOCQ. These included:

1. Consistency with literature concerned with school organizational characteristics, change and school improvement. Doak, (1970), Huberman & Miles, (1984), Fullan, (1985) and Donaldson & Coladarci, (1987) view school organizations as complex and dynamic cultures, cultures that can determine the outcomes of change efforts. Identified in the literature are aspects of the school environment that seem significant for school improvement including: leadership, open communication, peer cohesion, support and participatory decision-making. The dimensions chosen for the SOCQ covered such aspects.
2. Coverage of Moos' general categories. Dimensions chosen provided coverage of the three general categories Moos (1974) identifies for conceptualizing all human environments. These are Relationships Dimensions, Personal Development Dimensions and System Maintenance and System Change Dimensions. These three dimensions reflected the concept of school sub-systems identified by Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983).



3. Consistency with similar instruments developed for use in secondary schools. Dimensions and scales existing in the OCSS Questionnaire (Deer, 1980) and the SLEQ (Rentoul & Fraser, 1983) were identified and used to guide structuring of the SOCQ.

4. Economy of use. Conscious of the time pressures facing the classroom teacher, it was considered important that the instrument was constructed in a way that would require a relatively short time to complete. Thus, to facilitate ease of response and processing, six scales each containing eight items were arranged in cyclic fashion. This arrangement limited item pattern recognition but made scoring easier.

While the dimensions for the SOCQ were derived from existing instruments, each scale underwent extensive modification. It was found that the criteria established above could be satisfied with an instrument containing the following six scales: administrative control; participatory decision-making; innovation from the system maintenance/change dimension; involvement and work pressure from the personal development dimension; and peer cohesion from the personal relationships dimension. These scales formed the basis of two forms of the SOCQ. The first form sought to assess perceptions about the "Actual" organizational climate of the school, while the second sought to assess perceptions about the "Preferred" organizational climate of the school. Because the SOCQ was developed primarily for schools that were about to implement significant innovations or undergo organizational change, the system maintenance /change dimension (Moos, 1974), was given emphasis through the inclusion of three scales to measure this dimension.

Table 2 clarifies the meaning of each SOCQ scale by providing its classification according to Moos' scheme, a scale description and a sample item.

Scale Name	Moos Category	Description	Sample Item
Peer Cohesion	P	Extent to which teachers are friendly towards and supportive of one another.	Teachers take a personal interest in one another. (+)
Professional Involvement	R	Extent to which teachers are concerned and committed to their job.	Teachers put effort into what they do. (+)
Work Pressure	R	Extent to which the press of work dominates the job.	You can take it easy and still get your work done. (-)
Participatory Decision-making	S	Extent to which teachers are encouraged to participate in a school's decision-making process.	The school administration encourages staff to be involved in seeking solutions to school problems. (+)
Administration Control (+).	S	Extent to which the school administration uses rules and procedures to control teachers.	Teachers are expected to set rules in doing their work.
Innovation	S	Extent to which variety, change and new approaches are encouraged in the school.	New approaches to things are rarely tried. (-)

R: Relationship Dimension; P: Personal Development Dimension; S: System Maintenance and System Change Dimension.

Items designed (+) are scored 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively for the responses Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree and Strongly Agree. Items designated (-) are scored in the reverse manner. Omitted or invalid responses are scored 3.

**TABLE 2:**  
**Descriptive Information for Each Scale in the School**  
**Organizational Climate Questionnaire (SOCQ)**

### **8.3.1 Validation of the SOCQ**

Items for each scale were selected from either the SLEQ (Rentoul & Fraser, 1983) or from the OCSS (Deer, 1980; Johnson & Deer 1984). New items were written and included under each scale. Actual and Preferred versions of the items for each scale were listed and cross-checked for consistency of wording. Each set of items was reviewed by a number of researchers who had previously developed or used instruments for assessing school climate. On the basis of these reviews draft versions of the Actual and Preferred forms of the questionnaire were constructed and field tested by a sample of 26 secondary school teachers from 11 different schools. The resulting data was used to further refine the instrument before its administration to the "main school sample" consisting of 234 secondary teachers drawn from 23 participating schools.

Data from this 'main school sample" (Table 3) were subsequently subjected to item analysis in order to identify items whose removal would enhance each scale's internal consistency (the extent to which items in the same scale measure the same dimensions), and discriminant validity (the extent to which a scale measures a unique dimension not covered by the other scales in the instrument). In particular, an attempt was made to improve scale internal consistency by removing items with low item-remainder correlations (i.e., correlations between a certain item and the rest of the scale excluding that item), and to improve discriminant validity by removing any item whose correlation with its a priori assigned scale was lower than its correlation with any of the other five scales in the SOCQ. While reported here, such validation was undertaken not solely for the purposes of this thesis but with the intention of improving the instrument so that it might be used by schools for their own school development purposes.

Scale	Form	Alpha Reliability	Mean Correlation with other Scales
Peer Cohesion	Actual	0.79	0.48
	Preferred	0.75	0.48
Professional Involvement	Actual	0.79	0.48
	Preferred	0.74	0.39
Work Pressure	Actual	0.77	0.17
	Preferred	0.63	0.12
Participatory Decision-making	Actual	0.85	0.41
	Preferred	0.74	0.56
Administrative Control	Actual	0.64	0.19
	Preferred	0.70	0.22
Innovation	Actual	0.90	0.56
	Preferred	0.79	0.52

**TABLE 3:**  
**Internal Consistency (Alpha Reliability Coefficient) and Discriminant**  
**Validity (Mean Correlation of a Scale with the other Scales) for the Target**  
**Sample of School Teachers (N=234)**

These procedures have been applied to this data from the target sample in order to evolve a refined version of each scale. This refined version of the SOCQ still contains 48 items in both the Actual and Preferred forms. Each item has a five-point Likert format with responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Of the 48 items 26 are scored in reverse. The items are arranged in cyclic order so that the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth item in each block assesses involvement, peer cohesion, work pressure, participatory decision-making, administrative control, and innovation respectively. Physically separating the actual and preferred forms with the SOCQ is a

School Background Questionnaire [SBQ]. The SBQ contains a set of items concerning the professional characteristics of the respondent such as teaching experience, length of service at the current school, and current status, as well as evidence about the administrative decision-making processes operating at the school. The inclusion of this questionnaire served two purposes. First, it acts to physically separate the Actual and Preferred forms of the questionnaire, distinguishing each form and hence averting confusion for the respondent. Second, it seeks additional professional information about the respondent that might assist in the interpretation of the data.

#### **8.4 USE OF THE SOCQ**

The initial intention was to develop and use the SOCQ as a means of identifying and selecting a number of school sites with significantly differing school organizational climates for closer case study examination on their implementation of School-Based Decision-Making Groups. However, prior to seeking permission to conduct the research, it was considered that the inclusion of a "preferred" form of the SOCQ, in addition to the "actual form", would provide additional information that might be of interest to the participating schools themselves. Also, during the negotiations to conduct research in each school, a commitment was undertaken to provide the school with a summary report of the data obtained from the staff members involved.

Under the restructuring of the Ministry of Education, approval to conduct research in schools no longer resided with Ministry personnel but needed to be sought through individual school Principals (see Appendix F). Letters of request along with a summary of the proposed research were posted to the 25 secondary school Principals located within the twelve

metropolitan school districts (see Appendix F1). Personal contact was made with each school from which a sample of twenty three secondary schools agreed to participate in this initial stage of the study.

While the actual number of teaching staff varied from school to school, on average, Western Australian senior secondary schools employ approximately seventy teaching staff. For each school, fifteen teachers were selected at random from staffing lists to participate in this initial phase of the study. Given the constraints of resources, money and time, fifteen teachers from each site was considered the minimum number of respondents necessary to permit the organizational climate to be profiled and subsequent case study site selection to be undertaken. Envelopes containing a covering letter explaining the purpose of the instrument, the SOCQ instrument itself, and a prepaid return envelope were issued to all selected staff (see Appendix G for SOCQ). The final response rate for completion of both the Actual and Preferred forms of the SOCQ was seventy four percent.

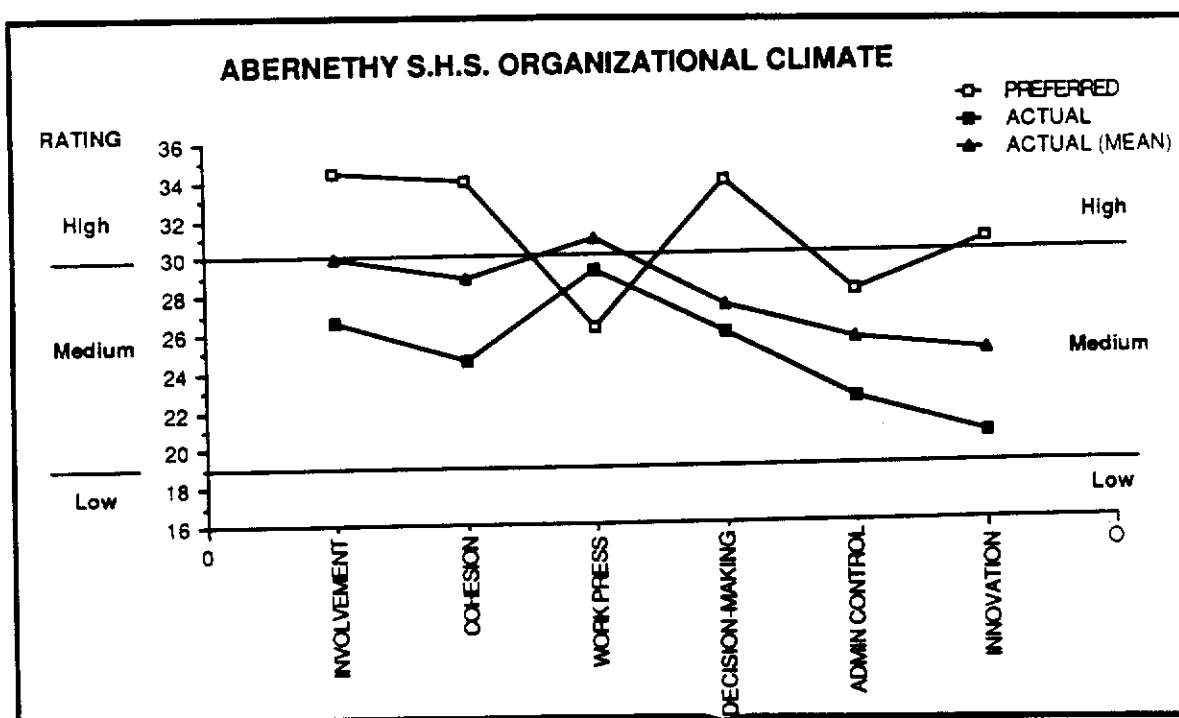
#### **8.4.1 Analysis of the SOCQ Data.**

Data were processed using the data analysis tools contained within the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSSx) (Norusis, 1988). For each school, mean scores for scale on the Actual and Preferred forms were calculated. These scores were then plotted to enable variance between the actual and preferred organizational climate along each scale to be noted. The smaller the discrepancy between the actual and preferred plots, the greater the general satisfaction with the existing situation. Larger discrepancies indicate staff dissatisfaction and it was suggested to the school administration that these discrepancies could serve as targets for school improvement efforts.

### 8.4.2 Classifying Mean Scores

To further assist school personnel with the interpretation of the data, scores were classified as high, medium or low. These ratings were ascribed by firstly calculating the difference between the minimum possible score and the maximum possible score for each scale. On an eight item scale the maximum score is 40 and the minimum score is 8, hence the difference is a score of 32. Scores between the two limits allowed for the allocation of three ranges of scores, classified as low (8-18), medium (19-29) and high (30-40). Plots reflecting low, medium and high score ranges were incorporated within the climate graph. These individual graphs, together with a written analysis of the discrepancy between actual and preferred scores, were contained in a brief summary report. These individual reports were mailed to all participating schools prior to the commencement of the school year. An abridged version of such a report is presented below as a Sample School Report.

#### SAMPLE SCHOOL REPORT



Included in the graph is a third plot line ["ACTUAL METRO MEAN"] which indicates the mean for each scale on the actual form calculated for all twenty three participating Senior High Schools. This plot line allows an assessment to be made about the differences in organizational climate that exist between individual schools and the average metropolitan Senior High School in the sample studied.

SCALE	ACTUAL CLIMATE		PREFERRED CLIMATE	
Involvement	27	Medium	34	High +
Peer Cohesion	25	Medium	34	High +
Work Pressure	29	Medium	26	Medium -
Participatory D-M	25	Medium	33	High +
Admin Control	22	Medium	28	Medium +
Innovation	20	Medium	31	High +

The data shows a variation in the actual and preferred climate indicating a preference for:

More Involvement, Peer Cohesion, Participatory Decision-Making, Administrative Control and Innovation or change;  
Less Work Pressure.

When the school's "Actual" scores are compared with those of the metropolitan average [Actual Metro Mean] Abernethy SHS scored:

Higher for Work Pressure;  
Lower for Involvement, Peer Cohesion, Participatory Decision-Making, Administrative Control and Innovation.

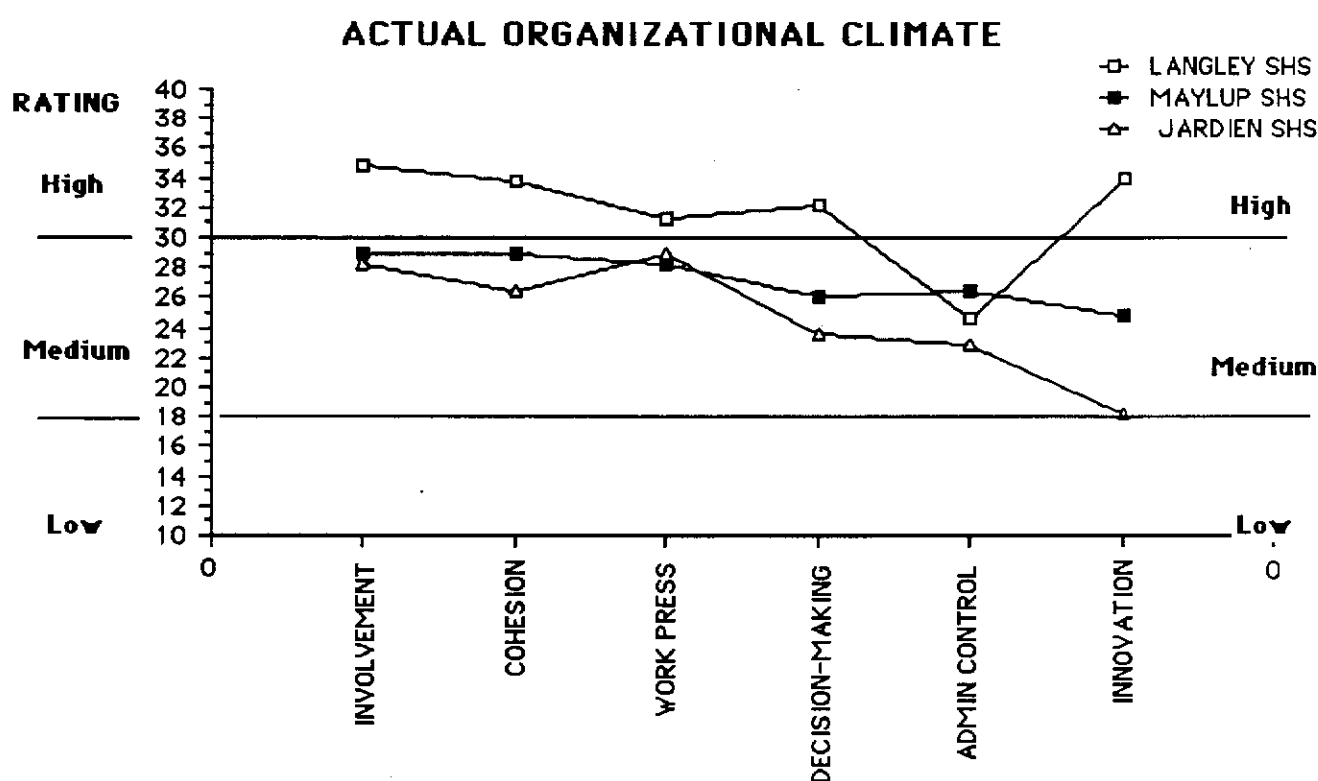
This brief report is intended to serve as a basic indicator of actual and preferred organizational climate of your school at the commencement of the 1989 school year. By re-administering the questionnaire at the end of semester one and or two 1989 your school might obtain valuable information about the effectiveness of any school improvement efforts undertaken.



Employing data from the actual form of the SOCQ only, a cluster analysis was undertaken using the SPSSx (Norusis, 1988). The method used was the average linkage between groups method, often called "Un-weighted Pair-Group method using arithmetic Averages" (UPGMA). This method calculates the squared Euclidean distance for all possible pairs of schools based on the nominated variables of Innovation, Participatory Decision-making, Involvement and Peer Cohesion. The procedure is agglomerative. Initially all cases [schools] are considered separate clusters. As the analysis proceeds clusters are formed by grouping cases into bigger and bigger clusters until all cases are members of a single cluster. By using the sub-command "cluster", contained in the programme it was possible to specify the generation of memberships for a three cluster solutions. Each of the three resulting clusters contained schools with similar scores across each of the nominated scales hence were to be considered similar in organizational climate. To cross-check the validity of each school's allocation to a cluster, a visual review of organizational climate graphs was undertaken. Generally those schools classified as low along the specified scales formed one cluster. Likewise those schools classified as high along the specified scales formed another. The remaining cluster contained schools with medium classifications.

From each of the resultant clusters several schools was chosen at random for possible participation in the second case study phase of the study. Formal contact was made with the Principals of a school representing each cluster. The first school approached in both the high and medium clusters expressed a keenness to continue there involvement and ongoing support for this phase of the research, hence no subsequent school from either of these clusters was approached. This was not the case for schools in the low

cluster and three schools were approached before one agreed to be involved in the case study phase of the research. Once permission to continue research had been obtained the plot profiles of each participating school were examined to ensure the organizational climate of the school was markedly different along the specified scales. To illustrate the variance of climate for the three case study schools the "actual" scores for each scale have been plotted in Figure 9.



**FIGURE: 9**  
**Organizational Climates of the Three Target Schools**

The graph shows the variance that exists between each school with regard to each of the scales of the SOCQ. The variance is particularly apparent between Langley SHS and Jardine SHS, especially along the scales of involvement, peer cohesion, decision-making and innovation. This data

indicates a clear variation between these schools in terms of their existing organizational climates. It was considered that each school would represent a valuable site for a closer study of the implementation of the innovation.

The Principals of these schools were contacted to re-establish approval for the school's participation in the second phase of the study. While the provision of the Summary Climate Reports assisted in establishing the researcher's credibility, the gaining of approval for phase two still required careful re-negotiation with each school principal. Assurances were given to potential participants that anonymity and confidentiality would be strictly maintained.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **CASE STUDY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

Given that the change process is viewed as the interaction of an innovation with the school context, it is axiomatic that this study adopted a broad focus on a large number of variables. Indeed such a holistic approach has been advocated by researchers such as Smith & Fraser (1980), Kirk & Miller (1986), Merriam (1988) and Yin (1989).

The first section of this chapter establishes a rationale for the adoption of a case study approach to the analysis of the change process at the school site level. This next section leads to a closer examination of the strengths of employing a variety of research techniques within the case study approach. Section three defines the boundaries of the cases under study. This followed by a description of the particular data collection techniques employed in this case study phase of the research. After offering an overview of the total data collection effort, the specific data collection techniques employed are linked to the specific research questions. In the sixth section the procedure adopted to collate and analyze the data is described. Finally the limitations of the case study approach for this research are outlined.

The case study is not a specific technique. Rather it is a method of organizing data for the purpose of analysing the life of a social unit. (Franklin & Osborne, 1971, p184)

Indeed, case studies have no standardized methods for data collection and may deal with a large variety of evidence obtained from a number of qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

Although debate still continues as to whether qualitative or quantitative measures are more appropriate for educational research, there is an increasing number of researchers using an eclectic approach, drawing on techniques used in both quantitative and qualitative research. For example, Guba (1981) states that there is no inherent reason why either paradigm [positivistic or the naturalistic ] cannot accommodate, and be contributed to, by either methodology.

The possible use of differing methodologies in educational research is also suggested by Cronbach (1980) when he states that the researcher:

...will be wise not to declare allegiance to either a quantitative-scientific summative methodology or a qualitative-naturalistic-descriptive methodology. (Cronbach et al. 1980, p 144)

The prime consideration in the selection of data collection techniques for this study was the research focus itself rather than an adherence to any one epistemological paradigm. Such an approach is supported by Jennings (1986) who, in promoting the use of a range of research techniques, maintained:

...such methods are not necessarily tied to any one particular paradigm. (Jennings, 1986, p14)

Advantages exist in combining techniques for data collection. As Marsh (1986) concluded, researchers at the school level should select those techniques which most effectively provide the data needed, regardless of categorization. By employing a combination of techniques the researcher not only enables a greater variety of data to be collected, but also permits the cross-checking of evidence, hence providing a means of ensuring the accuracy and credibility of data. This process is often referred to as "triangulation" and is advocated as a technique by Stake (1978), LeCompte & Goetz (1982), Nolan & Short (1983), Kirk & Miller (1986), Wolcott (1988).

In order to gain an adequate understanding of the change process, complex data of different types need to be collected from a number of different sources, hence this multi-instrument approach for the basis of data collection for this research. While the primary data source was derived from interviews of participants involved in the change process, a variety of techniques including non-participant observation, questionnaire surveys, content analysis of printed documents such as policy statements, and observations of planning meetings, were used.

#### **9.4            DEFINING THE CASE**

It is suggested by Milley (1979) that a case study has no real beginning or end because it is an account of a real life situation in which the beginnings and ends are not easily identifiable. However for the purposes of this study, particular boundaries can be established. The implementation of new structures and procedures for school-based decision-making is examined in three senior secondary schools in Perth, Western Australia. The schools chosen were identified by pseudonyms

as Langley Senior High School, Jardine Senior High School, and Maylup Senior High School. While attention was given to events that constitute the general school environment for change, particular attention was focused on the planning and decision making activities at the school level. This focus was adopted in order to highlight the relationship between the innovation and change as both are influenced by the characteristics of the school setting .

In examining change from a school organization perspective this study emphasizes the quality of the implementation process. Rosenblume & Louis (1981) defined quality of implementation as the degree of difference in content behaviour or structure within the organization after the change. In this case the change process is seen as those events and activities occurring as the system moves from the existing state of routine behaviours to a new state of routine behaviours.

## **9.5 SPECIFIC DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

### **9.5.1 Interviews**

Both formal and informal interviews were conducted with all members of the school community who held responsibility for the implementation of the policy on school-based decision-making groups. This included School District Superintendents, School Development Officers, Principals, Deputy Principals, participants of the School-Based Decision-Making Group steering committees.

The interviews were audio-taped and fully transcribed. Each transcription was coded to indicate tape number, tape side counter number and person responding:

**T 1 (a ) 007 G.D. = Tape one, side A, counter number 007 Graham Dellar.**

These interviews served as a valuable data source for verbatim accounts of participants' responses to semi structured yet open questions. A photocopy of each transcript was mailed to the respondents to enable them to check the accuracy of their responses and to make additional clarifying statements should they so desire. The information from interviews served as the methodological core of the research with observations and document review used to check the interview data and to assist in structuring on-going informal interviews.

#### **9.5.2 Questionnaires**

Two questionnaires were used for the collection of data. The first was the SOCQ. This questionnaire sought data on the nature of a school's organizational climate, particularly with regard to participatory decision-making, innovation and change. Details of the administration and statistical analysis of the responses has been reported in Chapter Eight.

The second was a semi-structured questionnaire which contained items grouped under the categories of principal leadership style/administrative decision-making, sub-system linkage, and attitudes towards the innovation [see Appendix H]. This questionnaire was administered to the members of staff including both deputy principals. Care was taken to select respondents from each of the seven teaching areas operating in the school in order to gain information more reflective of the whole staff. Details of each section of this semi-structured questionnaire are offered below.



**a) Principal leadership style**

The items for principal leadership style were derived from work done by Hall & Rutherford (1983), and Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling (1984).

Example:

*Which of the following statements best describes your principal's leadership style :*

- a) He/she sees his/her primary role as that of administrator allowing teachers and others to take the lead for change.*
- b) He/she sees his/her primary role as that of manager of the tasks to be performed by others only initiating change that is required by the Ministry of Education.*
- c) He/she sees his/her primary role as that of facilitator and leader of change efforts seizing the lead and making things happen.*

**b) Administrative decision-making**

The items for administrative decision-making were derived from work done by Likert & Likert (1976), and Brady (1984).

Example:

*When making decisions with regard to curriculum issues the principal usually :*

- a) decides unilaterally*
- b) decides after consultation with relevant individuals*
- c) makes a democratic decision with appointed or elected individuals .*
- d) makes decisions by consensus with the whole staff*

c) **Sub-system Linkage**

To assess the extent of sub-system linkage, dimensions and items were derived from the work done by Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983), and Knezevich (1984). A total of 18 items were used, six for each dimension or sub-system. Respondents were asked to indicate on a three point Likert scale [high, moderate, or low] their perceptions with regard to cultural, structural, and technical linkages that existed within the school.

Description of dimensions.

Cultural Linkage refers to the degree to which organizational mechanisms create and co-ordinate shared goals and behaviour patterns among members of staff.  
A high score = High Cultural Linkage

Structural Linkage refers to the degree to which organizational mechanisms control the behaviour of members of staff.  
A high score = High Structural Linkage.

Pedagogic Linkage refers to the degree to which organizational mechanisms co-ordinate and control the classroom teaching of members of staff.  
A high score = High Pedagogic Linkage

Examples of items used for each dimension:

Cultural Linkage

*Teachers hold a shared sense of purpose*

*(goal sharing) at this school.*

[ H M L ]

*Teachers cooperate on joint activities.*

[ H M L ]

Structural linkage

*Teachers' roles [duties and responsibilities]  
are clearly defined.*

[ H M L ]

*Senior staff supervise teachers closely*

[ H M L ]

Pedagogic Linkage

*Teachers have a great deal of professional freedom.*

[H M L]

*Teachers frequently observe their colleagues teaching.*

[H M L]

Respondents were also asked to comment generally on the extent to which the school administration affected their working life at school.

**d) Attitudes towards the innovation**

Three items constituted the section on attitudes toward the policy innovation and were included to facilitate more open responses towards the innovation and the change process.

Example:

*How important do you think the establishment of School-Based Decision-Making for School Development Planning is for this school?*

Responses for each section of the questionnaire were tallied and rated (see Appendix H1) then used to guide the written description of the school organizational characteristics. Information gained from this instrument was viewed as supporting data for information gained through interviews with members of the school community. As such it served primarily as a device for data triangulation.

**9.5.3 Participant Observation**

Wolcott (1988), in discussing the "participant as observer" role in his study of the elementary school principal, described two essential features. First, the role is one in which the observer is known to all and is present in the system as a scientific observer. Second, the observer participates by his or her presence but at the same time is usually allowed to do what observers do, rather than being expected to perform as others perform Wolcott (1988).

Both Wolcott (1982), Agar (1980), and Spradley (1980), identified the relative advantages and disadvantages accorded the field worker and related them to the degree of the researcher's participation. Wolcott (1988) cautions the field worker of the risks of "going native" but also pointed to the many opportunities for observing and re-coding events in the school as a "privileged observer". The extent of participant observation occurring in this research endeavour varied depending on whether the focus was with principals, parents, or teachers.

When undertaking participant observation in schools, the intention was to observe the daily routine of the school at work. To that end, at the commencement of the school year, one week was spent at each school site. During this time observations were made and informal discussions undertaken with staff and students in an attempt to "get a feel for the school". Participation on these occasions varied from shared morning coffee and lunch with principals and teachers, and engaging in informal conversations in staff rooms, to being a "privileged observer" at faculty meetings and general staff meetings.

As the year progressed, the "privileged observer" role was extended to all formal planning meetings concerned with the implementation of school-based decision-making groups. The frequency of these planning meetings varied from school to school as the Table 5 of dates below illustrates.

	Feb	Mar	Ap	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
Maylup		1, 22		6	17	14 *C	5			14
Jardine	3		5	13	27*C			14		
Langley	28	9, 21	8	26	31*C	25				8

(\*C = cancelled meeting )

**TABLE : 4**  
**Observation Dates of SBDMG Group Planning Meetings**

In addition to attendance at such formal planning sessions, invitations were also extended to attend social functions such as sundowners, and council cheese and wine evenings, a " Cultural event in W. A.". These were valuable opportunities to interact with school personnel outside the formal school setting.

Field notes based observations of planning meetings were made either during or soon after, such events. These notes were organized according to the different forms discussed by Spradley (1980), such as condensed and expanded accounts (see Appendix I). The notes made were as detailed as the situation permitted. To aid future analysis all such field notes were later transcribed on a word processor.

#### **9.5.4 Written Sources of Data**

Another valuable source of data was the copies of documents relating to the establishment of school-based decision-making groups. These included documents issued by the Ministry of Education, as well as material provided by other associations such as the Western Australian Council of State School Organizations [WACSSO]. Other relevant documents

involved those generated within the school. These included minutes of planning meetings and school development planning documents (see Appendix J). The content of all relevant documents was analyzed and used not only to confirm data obtained from other sources, but also to direct additional data collection.

#### 9.5.5 Non-written Sources of Data

Non-written sources of data used included school maps, photographs of displays [development charts affixed to walls in school staff rooms]. Such data contributed much to the researcher's understanding of the events that occurred during the change process (see Appendix J1).

### 9.6 THE TOTAL DATA COLLECTION EFFORT

Table 5 presents a summary of the data collected from each school site over the period from January to November 1989.

Site	Total days on site	Observation of site characteristics	Observation meetings	Interviews (number)	Documents (number)	Pages field note	Pages interview transcripts
Maytup	14	5	6	14	23	36	103
Jardine	13	5	5	18	14	32	116
Langley	16	5	7	17	38	48	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>341</b>

**TABLE: 5**  
**Total Data Collection Effort**

There are no formal universal rules to follow in analyzing, interpreting and evaluating qualitative data. Analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units. (Patton, 1980, p268)

There is a variety of techniques available to qualitative researchers to help them discipline their inquiries while maintaining subjective understanding. While techniques for reducing, sorting and analysing data are highly individualistic in their details, they are often quite similar conceptually. Miles & Huberman (1984) asserted that data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity involving - data reduction, data display, conclusion-drawing / verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data that appear in interview transcripts and field notes, thus organizing the data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified. The second activity is that of data display; this suggests an organized assembly of information that facilitates conclusions to be drawn and some action taken. Finally, Miles & Huberman (1984) recommend conclusion-drawing and verification to assist in analysis of data. This activity involves drawing meaning from displayed and reduced data by noting regularities, patterns, explanations, and propositions. Miles & Huberman (1984), suggest that although a competent researcher tends to hold such conclusions lightly, maintaining openness and skepticism, the conclusions are still there. They may be vague at first, then become increasingly explicit and grounded as the research proceeds.

While the analysis of data for this study was guided by the initial research questions, the three concurrent activities discussed above were present throughout the process. Essentially the analysis procedure consisted of the following eight steps:

- i. A reading of the transcripts and field notes for a general impression, after which summaries were made of each interview and emerging patterns and themes were noted.
- ii. These themes coupled with the initial research questions were used to develop headings and codes ( see Appendix K ). Interview transcripts and all other data were coded accordingly.
- iii. Data from each source was organized under the headings suggested by the codes then checked against the research questions.
- iv. For each research question and theme, data from different sources were recorded under separate columns. Further searches for contradictory or confirmatory data were undertaken before the data was combined. This enabled "triangulation" to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data.
- v. This combined data was re-read and used as a framework to guide the writing of case study profiles and descriptions of the process for each school.
- vi. Draft copies of the case study and process descriptions were sent to the principals and a key participant at each school to seek confirmation of accuracy and reflectiveness.
- vii. The frame work was next used to develop thematic descriptions of the change process across schools.
- viii. Common themes and issues emerging from the descriptions served as a basis for the generation of propositions about the change process and recommendations for action when implementing change.



While this listing of procedure suggests a relatively straightforward set of events, nothing could be further from reality. The vast quantity of data collected and the numerous inter-related themes emerging from that data made analysis an extremely protracted and taxing process.

## **9.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY APPROACH**

While documenting the advantages of the case study approach for this study, mention must be made of its limitations. One limitation of the case study method concerns the concept of generalizability:

...generalizations concern the extent to which whatever relationships are uncovered in a particular situation can be expected to hold true for every situation. The concern for generalizations arises from traditional social science emphases. (Patton, 1980, p279)

It has been argued that the results of a single case study cannot be generalized to other settings. This argument is seen by Spirer (1980), as a criticism that refers only to statistical generalizations. That is, generalizations that are made from a sample to a population, are only acceptable if strict statistical requirements are satisfied.

However, an alternative perspective of "generalization" is held by Adelman, Jenkins, & Kemmis (1976) :

Case study data, paradoxically, is 'strong in reality', but difficult to organize. ... A reader responding to a case study report is consequentially able to employ the ordinary processes of judgement by which people tacitly understand life and social actions around them ... They are 'a step to action'.

Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use for staff or individual self-development, for institutional feedback, for formative evaluation, and

in education policy making. (Adelman et al, 1976, p141)

Stake (1978) asserted that naturalistic generalizations develop within a person as a product of a number of experiences. They seldom take the form of predictions but lead regularly to expectation and action :

Naturalistic generalizations develop within a person as a result of experience. They form from tacit knowledge of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how these things are likely to be later or in other places with which this person is familiar. They seldom take the form of prediction but lead regularly to prediction. (Stake, 1978, p62)

Ultimately it is the reader who must judge as to whether the study has relevance to other cases. Despite their diversity, schools and individual students share many characteristics. The critical processes involved in subject selection are likely to be common to numerous other schools. With regard to this study it is proposed that readers will make generalizations:

- i. About the nature of the change process;
- ii. From the individual case to a class which it purports to portray; that is, from a particular school to others with similar profiles;
- iii. About the class to different classes : that is, about Secondary Schools to District High schools undergoing the organizational change process.
- iv. Across cases;
- v. About current and future Ministry policies
- vi. About current and future school organizational procedures and actions.

If the thoroughness of the study is sufficiently documented and the portrayals of each school case study clear and realistic, then the emergence of naturalistic generalizations similar to those proposed above will be fostered. Every effort has been made to write the account objectively and sensitively and to include appropriate primary data.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **PROFILE OF LANGLEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **10.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the first of three case study profiles of the schools under study. The purpose of each profile is two fold. First, the profile provides a description of the specific school environment and the site characteristics of each school. Second, the profile describes, analyses and interprets the change process that emerged as the innovation interacted with the characteristics of the school setting. The profiles presented in each of the following chapters provide insight into the realities of school level change and in so doing serve as a base for the ensuing cross-case analyses.

Within each profile attention is given to the geographic and contextual features of the community and the school's relationship with that community. Next, attention is focused on the the characteristics of the school organization. Specifically, the physical lay-out, student characteristics, organizational climate, sub-system linkage, leadership and decision-making procedures of the school are described. The profile concludes with an analysis of the key events constituting the implementation of SBDMGs.

The main data source used for each profile has been the transcripts of interviews conducted with members of the school community. Where dialogue is quoted in the profile, it has been derived from coded interview transcripts. Additional data obtained through observations, field-notes, minutes of meetings, and questionnaires have been analyzed to gain further insight into the total change process. Where deemed appropriate such data sources are included in the Appendix.

## 10.2 SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT

Langley Senior High School is located in the outer Perth metropolitan area. It serves the residents of a government housing community and increasing numbers of private home owners who are residing in surrounding estates. Government housing is made available to people who have been assessed by the Department of Social Services to be underprivileged. Estates given over to this type of housing are frequently labeled lower socio-economic communities.

The Principal, the two Deputy Principals and many staff members at Langley describe the surrounding community as one consisting of a large number of single parent families experiencing financial hardship. The Deputy Principal [Barry] states:

T11 (a) 315 We have a large number of parents that have social problems, marital problems, family problems, and of those, a lot of people don't know what is happening with their child's education and don't care. ... Another perception of a significant number of our parents is that we should fix up what they have never been able to fix up with their kids with respect to behaviour. They blame us about things that we inherit.

The appropriateness of this perception of the community, while shared by many of the teaching staff, appears to be questioned by some staff in the light of new housing developments in the area. As Susan [an English teacher] states:

Well I think what has been a problem image wise is the "Langley ghetto" which is a very small part of out intake area now. The high rise flats have a fair number of single parent families and there has been a few disturbances there. But I don't know how true a description it is of it these days but it certainly was true when I first came to the school. Apart from that, you have got Greenborough and Fern Hill and there is nothing wrong with those areas.

#### **10.2.1 The school's relationship with its community**

While the characteristics of the community the school serves might be changing, the degree of parental involvement in the school appears to be limited. There is a small number of parents who give assistance in running the canteen and participating in occasional fund-raising ventures initiated by the school. However, according to several teachers, the Principal and both Deputy Principals, the parents who do volunteer for most of these causes, seem to be drawn from the same very small group. This lack of broad parental involvement has prevented the formation of a Parents and Citizens Association [P&C] to represent the interests of the community. In its place a more informal community contact group has been formed. An examination of past contact group meeting minutes for 1988 coupled with observations of five group meetings in 1989 indicates these meetings attract very few people. As the Principal [Irene] states:

...The community that attends the community contact meetings monthly (and that varies from zero up to 20 at the most) are quite happy to approve of policy, fund raise for various needs and more or less make an individual complaint ...Perhaps their child needed extra help in maths or is being picked on by a particular teacher ... That seems to be the type of complaint I get and they also speak up if there is a teacher who happens to lack control.

This lack of community involvement is further supported by the low number of returns of school surveys sent out to parents, and the minimal attendance at school social events and open nights.

While active involvement in the school seems very limited, teachers are of the view that most parents and community members are proud of the school and support, albeit silently, the programmes and teaching staff at the school. This general support for the school was clearly indicated when a proposal to change the name of the school from Langley to Greenborough resulted in a large community outcry. As Irene, the Principal recounts:

I am told that parents see this school as one of the jewels of Langley and that's why they were very hostile to the idea of changing the name of the school.

### **10.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

#### **10.3.1 The Site**

The school was established in 1974 with a staff of 16 and a student population of 160. As the student population grew, new buildings were added. In 1989 Langley had a student population of over 600 and 59 full time staff members.

The school architecture is designed on the faculty concept, with separate teaching blocks for each subject area. The buildings are set in a large area of relatively flat land with much of the original native vegetation being retained. Each teaching block is connected by broad walk-ways that are edged with well maintained native shrubs and flowers. Large, bright graphic artworks are affixed to several brick walls along commonly used walk-ways. The absence of graffiti and litter is one indicator of the student and staff concern for a pleasant well maintained working environment.

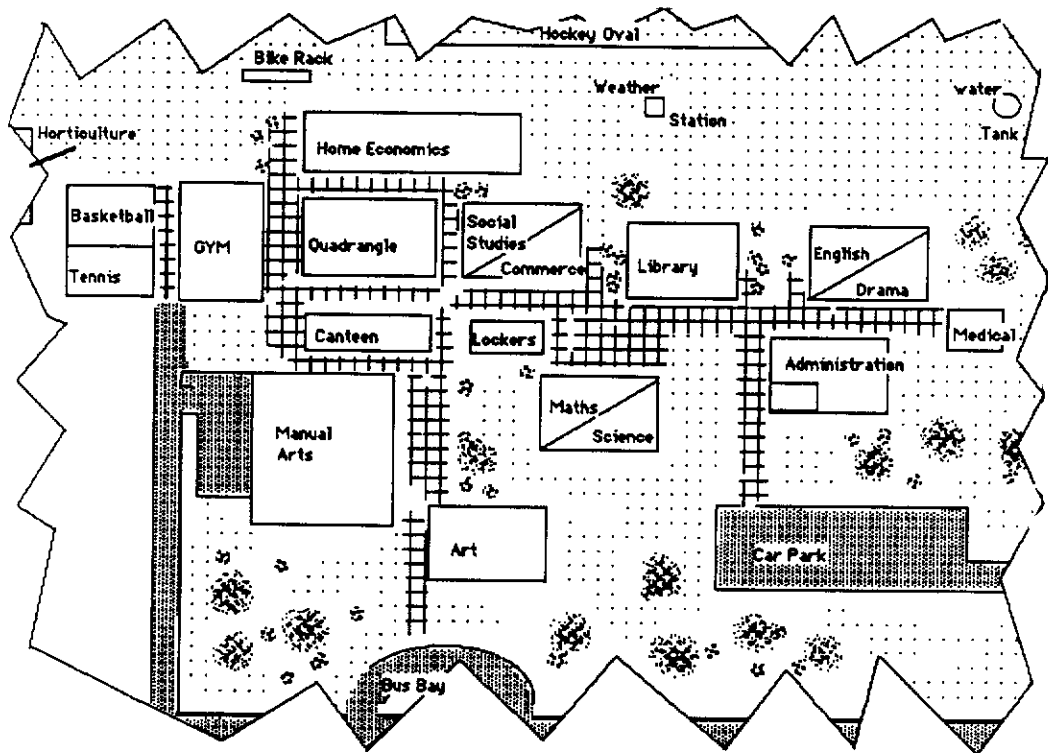


FIGURE: 10

### Ground Plan of the Langley School Site

#### 10.3.2 Student Population Characteristics

The students, while of predominantly Australian-born with a European family background are a mix of racial and ethnic groups including Australian Aboriginal, Chinese and Vietnamese. Observation of students around the buildings and in classrooms over the year indicated most



students wear the school uniform, thus conforming to the dress code established at the beginning of 1989. Further, their movement around the school appears orderly and quiet. In short, students seem generally well behaved.

Staff interviewed across teaching areas, indicated that most students seem vocationally orientated in their studies. Indeed, according to Karen (librarian), 45% of the Year 10 students go on to study non-academic courses in upper school, figures which are confirmed by the school's student records. The Deputy [Barry], maintains that the academic student is disadvantaged at the school.

...It is my personal belief that an academic child is at a disadvantage in a school of this nature.. In the lower school, because of the lack of numbers means that there is a greater range of abilities in the class. Teachers go for the middle level and there is not the same competition not the same level of work. Generally bright kids come out of it fairly well in the end. (Barry)

When asked to comment generally on the character of the students at the school a typical teacher's response was:

They're very likable but a bit rough on the edges. I think they lack a bit of discrimination at times but that is background isn't it? It is what you are taught at home. (Keith)

Many teachers supported the view that the students lack social skill. However there is a widespread perception that students are honest, friendly, and willing to accept reprimands without animosity.

### 10.3.3 School Organizational Climate

The organizational climate of Langley was assessed through the administration of the School Organizational Climate Questionnaire [SOCQ] in November 1988. Administration of this questionnaire towards the end of the school year was undertaken to provide a "snap shot" of the state of the organizational climate before the commencement of the new school year.

Analysis of the resulting data allowed scores to be calculated for both the actual and preferred forms of the questionnaire. These scores were graphed to enable the variance between the actual and preferred to be examined. A small discrepancy between the actual and preferred graph lines indicate general satisfaction with the existing climate. The graph below shows the organizational climate of Langley at the commencement of the 1989 school year.

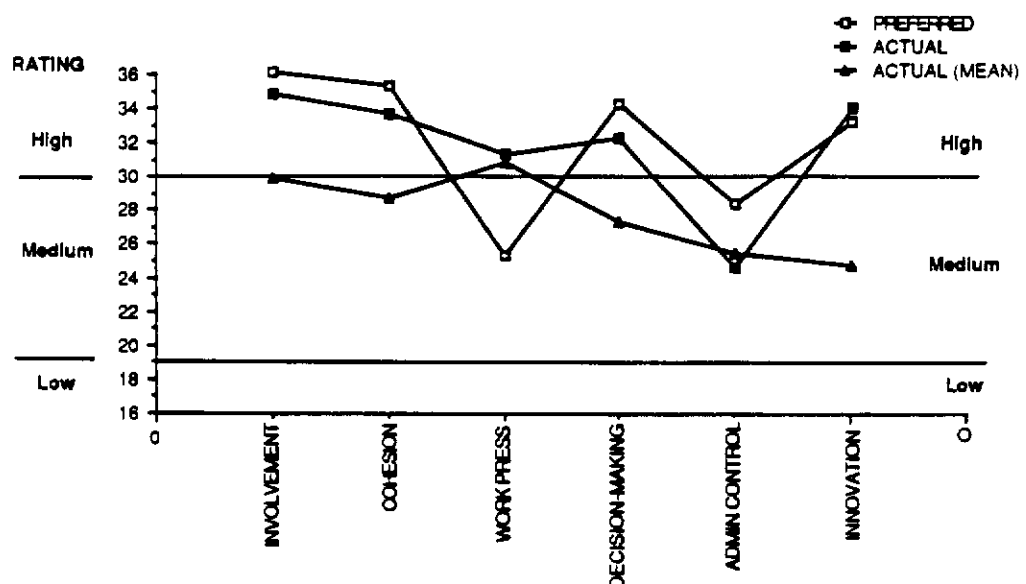


FIGURE: 11

Langley Senior High School Organizational Climate  
(November 1988)

The data indicate the staff were concerned and committed to their jobs and were friendly and supportive of each other. While the scale 'Work Pressure' indicated that staff perceived a high degree of pressure dominating the work environment this was almost identical to the metropolitan mean for work pressure. Staff perceived there was a high degree of participation in decision making at the school, and that the administration exerted only moderate control over their professional conduct. Lastly, data indicated that Langley is perceived to be a highly innovative school, one in which variety, change and new approaches are emphasized. When the actual and preferred scores are compared along the scale, the data indicate that staff would prefer an increase in the amount of administrative control operating at the school and understandably a decrease in the amount of work pressure being experienced. On all other scales the small discrepancy between actual and preferred scores indicates a high degree of satisfaction among teachers with their work environment and a sound organizational climate.

It is recognized that reliance on such data alone is inappropriate. To gain a more thorough insight into the school's organizational climate observations and informal interviews were conducted during term one 1989. Such data largely supports the climate profile obtained through the SOCQ. As one staff member commented :

Most people who say that they are coming to teach at Langley are accorded great sympathy but that's wrong because the school is great. Honestly it is the best school I have worked at. (Allan)

The relaxed, friendly and good humoured atmosphere in the staff room combined with the industrious hum of classrooms suggests a dedicated and cohesive staff.

#### 10.3.4 School Sub-system Linkage

Sub-system linkage refers to the extent to which cultural, structural and pedagogic sub-systems within a school operate separately from each other. For example, a loosely linked pedagogic sub-system would operate in a way which isolated it from the structural and cultural systems of the school. Therefore a change in the administrative or *structural sub-system* would not result in a corresponding change in the classroom teaching or *pedagogic system*.

In order to assess the degree of sub-system linkage, a series of items were included in a semi-structured interview. This interview was conducted with staff drawn from all main teaching areas of the school. By doing so data reflective of the whole school linkage could be obtained [see Appendix J].

Responses indicate that the staff have a shared sense of purpose, with high group spirit and loyalty to the school. In short the cultural linkage is high. Responses also indicate that teachers have clearly defined duties, responsibilities, and policies are communicated clearly. While staff are encouraged to voice their opinions, decisions are rarely made without reference to senior members of staff. When decisions are made, teachers are expected to act on them. In short, structural linkage is moderate to high.

Finally, the responses indicate that teachers have frequent opportunities to interact professionally. However, while regular meetings are held to discuss teaching methods and strategies, often these sessions are given over to the dissemination of information. Further, limited observation of colleague teaching occurs and teachers still retain a degree of autonomy over how they will teach. In short pedagogic linkage is moderate.

In order to check the validity of the data on sub-system linkages, responses to similar items drawn from the scales of involvement , peer cohesion, administrative control and participatory decision-making of the SOCQ were examined. The SOCQ data supported high cultural linkage and moderate pedagogical linkage but, indicated a moderate, rather than moderate to high structural linkage.

#### **10.3.5 Administrative Decision-Making Procedures.**

For the purposes of this study, the decision-making procedures concerned with administrative organization, curriculum issues, and resource development were the prime focus. In order to gain insight into the manner in which decisions for each area were made prior to the implementation of the policy on SBDMGs, data were collected through interviews with the Principal, Deputy Principals and randomly selected members of staff.

Before discussing the administrative decision-making procedures in operation at Langley it is helpful to briefly examine the prevailing authority structures at the secondary school level. In Western Australian secondary schools, the Principal is vested with authority for the administration and co-ordination of the day to day operations of the school. Traditionally the Principal has involved the Deputy Principals and senior staff in specific administrative tasks and decision-making. This mode of sharing the administrative decision-making is supported by data obtained from the SOCQ. The predominant decision-making process across the 23 participating secondary schools was one where:

The Principal, with the advice of Deputy Principals and the senior staff, decides on most issues concerning the school.

At Langley Senior High School such a decision-making body continued to operate during 1988-89. Weekly meetings were held at which information from the Ministry was disseminated by the Principal and discussed by participants. As a teacher representative states:

Irene [Principal] is very meticulous about distributing everything that comes in from the Ministry to senior staff. (Jean)

This forum also enables issues emerging from within the school to be discussed. Senior staff representing particular teaching areas discuss concerns perceived by their teachers at the meeting, and relay information back to their respective teaching areas. Through this mechanism staff have an input into the decision-making process.

While the decision-making body of Principal, Deputy Principals and senior staff appears to be the main locus of many school level decisions, the Principal and Deputy Principals have specific decision-making tasks associated with their authority positions in the school.

The Principal's role is to liaise with Ministry personnel at district or Head Office level and to promote the school by enhancing school community relationships. The Deputy Principals hold a shared responsibility for the development and co-ordination of a timetable, organizing the provision of relief teachers with the assistance of the school registrar, providing support and pastoral care to staff, and disciplining students. Senior staff have responsibility for the co-ordination of teaching and the implementation of curriculum programmes within their respective subject areas. Decisions relating to curriculum issues that affected the whole school [not subject-

area specific ] are shared by the Principal Deputy Principals and senior staff. These include courses of study and programmes on offer at the school, and student welfare [pastoral care].

Decisions about the implementation and assessment of units of study in particular teaching areas, while co-ordinated by the respective senior teachers, are shared by teaching staff. Weekly faculty or subject area meetings are intended forums for the discussion of matters of teaching and assessment, resource requirements and usage, as well as relevant pedagogical issues. These weekly faculty meetings also serve as a mechanism for classroom teachers to have input about issues that might be raised at senior staff meetings, and as a forum to communicate Ministry and the school administration proposals and decisions back to classroom teachers.

#### **10.3.6 Administrative Leadership**

The Principal's style of leadership was indicated from first contact with the researcher, when the request to conduct research at the school elicited a positive yet cautious response. While Irene [Principal] stated that she was very interested in the intended research, she indicated the proposal *had* to be considered by senior staff, before approval could be granted. Once such approval was obtained a formal yet friendly communique was promptly sent. Indeed throughout the data collection phase the Principal always ensured that I was formally and continually informed whenever a "Community Contact" meeting, School Development meeting, School Council meeting, or major social event was to occur.

This formality and receptiveness was especially evident at all Community Contact or School Council Meetings. The Principal always ensured that

those attending (including staff and students) had agendas, name tags, and copies of any document to be discussed. Minutes of each meeting were meticulously kept. Further, impressive luncheons, or light dinners were also provided either during or after the meetings.

Irene is a tall and striking woman, always immaculately dressed. Her stature, and forthright personality combine to give her a commanding presence and suggest a competent and efficient administrative leader. Parents along with staff drawn from the main teaching areas, were asked to describe the Principal's leadership style. Many of the staff perceived her to be a leader and facilitator of change, a person with high expectations who was determined to make things happen. This is not to imply that the Principal is seen as domineering or autocratic, as the following response from a teacher indicates:

Well it doesn't work that way here. She [ Principal] doesn't choose to assert absolute authority and doesn't feel the need to. (Sue)

Indeed, staff and parents alike see the Principal as promoting a collaborative approach. She is viewed as an enthusiastic committed leader who gives support and recognition to members of staff, and one who strives to make decisions by consensus.

#### **10.4 PREPAREDNESS FOR CHANGE**

In addition to a traditional structure for administrative decision-making, Langley has developed a multitude of other decision-making groups. As the Deputy Principal indicated:



In 1988 there was the development of a whole range of committees. Irene was quite ill at that time and I was acting Principal. This will give you an idea there was: the behaviour management review committee; the buildings and grounds committee; the canteen committee; caring and welfare committee; finance committee; whole school committee; literacy committee; PSP committee; public relations committee; media committee; school council steering committee; school uniform committee; social committee; unit curriculum committee; and year centre committee. There would be as many committees this year. (Barry)

These committees involved a variety of staff, parent and student representatives. Each committee held special responsibility for specific areas of school life. Emergent decision-making responsibilities include:

School curriculum, such as the unit curriculum offerings, literacy programme, the enterprise scheme, and post compulsory schooling projects including the agricultural studies programmes.

Resources development, such as staff professional development, budget allocations for new programmes and buildings and grounds.

Student issues such as pastoral care, discipline and uniforms.

School community relations including the media promotion of the school public relations and community contact.

Of the committees existing in 1988, the school development committee is of particular importance to this study, as its operation parallels the policy on SBDMGs. However, rather than being formed in direct response to the policy initiative, the school development committee evolved from a federal education initiative undertaken in 1984. The Langley school development committee was formed to co-ordinate school generated initiatives that might attract Federal Government funding through the

Participation and Equity Program [PEP], and later the Priority Schools Program [PSP]. Both PEP & PSP aimed to reduce the effects of social and cultural factors which in the past prevented many young Australians from completing full secondary education. Schools in low socio-economic communities, such as Langley, were targeted for school improvement funding ranging from \$20 000 to \$40 000 per year.

The school development committee at Langley is comprised of the Principal, Deputy Principals, senior staff, the librarian, other staff members, and parent representatives. Its prime function is to develop and review the long term goals of the school and to make those goals explicit in the form of a development plan. Over the last four years the schools involvement with PEP/ PSP has not only fostered the development of skills associated with school-based curriculum development and implementation, but, more importantly, generated a climate in which staff are actively and enthusiastically involved in whole school improvement endeavours. As one teacher commented:

The reaction to new ideas .. I would say that this school would react to new ideas much more favourably and positively than many other schools would. I would say that ever since the days of the school starting Enterprise Education there were people always ready to have a go. (Steve)

Such positive responses to new ideas has seen the staff at Langley implement many innovative programmes including: an "Enterprise Scheme" [aimed at courses directly related to employment opportunities]; the early adoption and implementation of Unit Curriculum, and the establishment of courses in agriculture and horticulture accompanied by the acquisition of an area of farming land adjacent to the school.

The Principal, Deputy Principal and several teachers felt the staff involvement with PEP / PSP, clearly generated a high degree of enthusiasm and a preparedness to take on innovative ideas. However, such unqualified endorsement was not given by the the co-ordinator of the school development committee. As the Co-ordinator reflects:

I think that people are politely interested. Sometimes they can get really enthusiastic. You take the technology high school submission, now while we didn't get that... but the input and energy for that was just unbelievable as it was for Unit Curriculum and Post Compulsory Schooling. For Post Compulsory Schooling it was a total school response. Twelve people got together on a weekend and sorted out a submission that reflected total school needs in that area. So that sort of energy is unreal. With this school development the staff happily do all little tasks that they are set, they will discuss things and write things down but I don't know just how interested and committed they are really. (Karen)

The number of innovative programmes already under way at the school, coupled with more recent policy innovations appears to be impacting on the level of enthusiasm and energy among staff. As the Deputy Principal notes:

There are certain staff members who ...would have that energy but there are a lot of staff members, who to be quite frank, want to do their job and want to do it properly. They don't want to be inundated with all the extras that are coming on to them, especially from committees. (Barry)

While the proliferation of committees would suggest that the school had established a collaborative approach to decision-making, many staff, including the Principal and Deputy Principals, were of the opinion that senior staff along with the Principal and the Deputies remained the key decision-making body. As a teacher of Mathematics stated:

There is opportunity for a lot of input but in the end it is the senior staff, Deputies, and the Principal who make the decisions. (Bob)

Langley has, through its involvement with PSP, developed both a capacity for, and a preparedness to undertake innovative programmes designed to improve the school's responsiveness to the needs and interests of the community it serves. Organizationally, the school has established a school development committee that generates broad school plans and co-ordinates a range of improvement efforts. The structure and functions of the school development committee are markedly similar to that promulgated by the Better Schools Programme, which suggests that the process of organizational change is likely to be less traumatic for Langley than schools without such a committee.

The following section analyses and describes the complex and dynamic process of change as it has unfolded within the school over the period of the study. It commences with an analysis of the school community's initial perception of the policy relating to school based decision making. Next, events and interactions constituting the implementation process are analysed against the specific characteristics of the school setting. Finally, an overview of the implementation process is offered in the form of an event chart.

### **10.5 THE INITIATION PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The school community's initial response to the innovation has been organized around five specific issues. These are advocacy for change; assistance and support for the change; importance of the change; perceived organizational fit; and anticipated problems in implementing the change.

Care was taken to obtain the views of administrative staff, teachers and parents alike so that a more accurate whole school view could be presented.

#### **10.5.1 Advocacy for Change**

The Principal saw the main advocacy for change stemming from Ministry Head Office personnel, in particular from the executive director of education and the executive director of schools.

... I suppose because most of the written communication is from Max Angus one would assume that it is Dr Angus in conjunction with Dr Loudon and the Minister. (Irene)

Even though the District Superintendent and District staff hold responsibility to support the implementation process, they were perceived by the Principal and other members of the administration as following Head Office direction rather than being key advocates in the process. Within the school, the Principal was of the view that she was the only person who had been pushing for the establishment of a School-Based Decision-Making Group. However, the staff and parents saw advocacy shared between the Principal and the Co-ordinator of the existing Development Committee.

#### **10.5.2 Support & Assistance for change**

Initial support and assistance for implementation was limited. While the Principal had participated in a number of Ministry in-service sessions designed to develop relevant knowledge and skills, no such in-servicing had been undertaken for Deputy Principals, staff and parents at the school. At Langley, the Co-ordinator of the Development Committee [Karen] had also participated in a Ministry run workshop on the Caldwell and Spinks model

of Collaborative School Management. Subsequent communication of information to staff and parents was thus undertaken by both the Principal and the Co-ordinator of the Development Committee. Further, additional information about the structure and function of SBDMGs operating in other secondary schools was provided by the District School Development Officer.

### **10.5.3 Importance of the Change**

The Principal's initial response to the establishment of a SBDMG was most positive.

My initial reaction purely from the administrative point of view was that it was a good way of getting together various representatives from the school community to promote policy decision-making for the school. (Irene)

She considered that the school would run far more smoothly when people previously denied input could make a contribution to the life of the school.

Given such a view it was little wonder that Irene was so anxious and committed to the successful establishment of a SBDMG. Such enthusiasm was not shared by other members of the administration. While they saw the change as a key strategy for the creation of self-determining schools they were more cynical about its educational and administrative value. As the Deputy Principal Barry states:

... In many ways I think that it is just paying lip service in that it is something to keep the community happy. I perceive very often that we have community members come along, some like to be asked for their opinion...they sit in there but they have nothing to contribute ...they go along with everything, every decision made.

Despite those reservations, both deputies saw the change as inevitable particularly given Irene's commitment to it. Generally the staff at the school saw the change as important and were keen to participate. Such a response reflects the tradition of staff involvement in a range of committees and innovative programmes established in the school.

Unlike the staff at Langley, parents expressed very little interest in directly participating in a SBDMG. Indeed since the school's foundation there had been minimal parental involvement with school affairs. As the Principal stated:

... The community that this school serves largely considers that the teachers are the experts and they should know what needs to be done without consulting with us. (Irene)

#### **10.5.4 Complexity and Organizational Fit**

Since 1985 Langley has been involved with the Priority Schools Programme. Under this programme the school had established a Development Committee to co-ordinate proposals for special educational programme funding. The existence of this committee coupled with staff expertise in whole-school development procedures suggested a SBDMG would fit well into the school organization. As both the Principal and Co-ordinator of the Development Committee state:

... This school, in particular I suppose, is well suited to participatory decision making because it had been a PSP school. (Irene)

Better Schools in relation to the committee in this school doesn't really make much difference. We were virtually doing the sorts of things anyway. (Robin)

### **10.5.5 Anticipated Problems**

One of the most pressing concerns in implementing Ministry policy on school-based decision-making groups was gaining sufficient parental participation. Despite raising the issue of the formation of a SBDMG at several Community Contact meetings attendance remained poor. The Principal was so concerned that she had considered abandoning the idea in favour of an "in house" group.

Another potential problem cited was the possible conflict between the new SBDMG and existing decision-making groups at the school. While the history of a collaborative approach to decision-making and the existence of a development council suggested the SBDMG would fit more easily into the organization, there was equal potential for conflict. As the School Development Officer pointed out:

Yes I had to look at the operations of two key decision-making groups in the school. One was the Development Committee and the other was the senior staff group. It was very important that when establishing a new decision-making group in the school its function needs to be clearly defined . Because you don't want the senior staff group [frequently the policy group] to over lap or be alienated by the new group. So the first thing to do was to examine the roles of the existing groups and what it was that they might transfer to a school-based decision-making group.

### **10.6 THE ADAPTATION PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Subsequent to the release of the Better Schools Programme in January 1987, members of each school community under study embarked on a process of organizational change. While implementation of Ministry policy on SBDMGs was mandatory, the general wording of Better School



initiatives coupled with the accompanying philosophy of self-determining schools legitimated independent and autonomous action by school communities. This is not to suggest that the school responses were shaped entirely by characteristics unique to its setting. Indeed schools are open social systems and as such, influenced by information flows from a variety of external educational and non-educational agencies and groups. In order to describe the dynamics of the change process, a descriptive account is offered for the *Langley profile only*. In the subsequent profiles the implementation process is presented by way of an event chart.

#### **10.6.1 Implementation Interaction Events and Issues**

In the latter part of 1988 the District School Development Officer [SDO] contacted the Principal of Langley Senior High School to discuss the Ministry policy on school-based decision-making and what it might mean for the school. A small steering committee consisting of two staff, one parent representative, the Principal, and the school development officer was formed to develop guide-lines for the establishment and operations of a SBDMG. During its first two meetings this group examined Ministry information, especially the original Better Schools Programme document, and materials developed by Mary Deschamp through the Community Participation Support Unit. (see Appendix O)

For the Principal, these functions were cause for some concern:

...I have had experience with very assertive P&C's who wanted to control curriculum and staff and were very critical of the administration. Because of the nature of Langley and its community I was rather anxious to have a body that was prepared to act as a supporting body only. (Irene)

The concern about the role of the SBDMG was shared by both Deputy Principals and other members of the school administration. With such concerns aired the two staff representatives on the committee were given the task of developing draft operating guide-lines for a SBDMG.

In October 1988 the Ministry released a discussion document on the structure and function of SBDMGs. Among the functions outlined in the Ministry document was the SBDMG's participation in the formation of a school development plan, and the monitoring of the allocation of resources within the school. These were clear indications that a SBDMG could assume a critical and dominant role in the operations of the school. During several steering committee meetings the SDO reminded members of the committee that the Ministry document offered suggestions and ought not be interpreted as Ministry requirements. He further stressed the need for Langley Senior High School to develop a structure that was best suited to its situation. The resulting draft guide-lines produced for the steering committee limited the SBDMG function to one of support for the existing administrative decision making group (see Appendix P).

The objectives include:

1. The promotion of moral, physical, social and educational welfare of the students by cooperation with the Ministry, the staff, students, and parents, and the local community.
2. Make recommendations on school policy which recognized that the Principal retains responsibility for the management of the school.

According to Irene, it was the two teachers who drafted the guide-lines that determined that the SBDMG would have no actual power.

The draft version was made available to parents for comment and then reviewed by the full steering committee. The final version of these guidelines was accepted by the steering committee in November 1988.

In December 1988 a Bill for amendments to the Education Act was passed by parliament. The amended sections not only enabled the establishment of a SBDMG that could include parent and community representatives but also enlarged the functions of such a group. A SBDMG could have among its objects the participation in the formulation of educational policy and operations of the school. Specific functions included the establishment of goals and priorities, determine strategies to meet those goals developing school policy; participation in the process of monitoring and reviewing the allocation of resources; evaluate the effectiveness of learning programmes; and receive reports on the implementation of the plan. This legislation, when read in conjunction with the previously published Discussion Document, indicated the functions of a SBDMG to be more central and critical to the establishment of self-determining yet accountable schools than was first thought. Despite the evolving clarity of policy on SBDMGs no alteration to the steering committee guide-lines was undertaken.

For the Principal of Langley, the establishment of a SBDMG with significant decision-making functions posed several problems. Chief among them were firstly, the anticipated difficulty in obtaining parental participation, and secondly, the potential for conflict between the SBDMG and existing decision-making groups operating within the school. As planning for implementation proceeded both these issues were to dominate the change process.

## **Event 1                      Gaining parental participation**

The traditional lack of parental involvement in school decision-making issues had meant that no P&C had been formed at Langley. In its place functioned an informal community contact group. However, even this group attracted little involvement from parents. This posed a real problem as the Principal indicated:

... it will be easy enough to get staff on it. It will be easy enough to get student representation and I have already got general community representation. It is just parent representation that concerns me. (Irene)

During the second semester of 1988 the issue of a school-based decision-making group was placed on the agenda of several Community Contact Meetings. Unfortunately each of the meetings was so poorly attended that the Principal was considering abandoning the idea and continuing to operate with the existing committee structures.

With the commencement of the 1989 school year, a fresh attempt was made to generate parental interest in the formation of a SBDMG. Irene arranged with the director of Western Australian Council of State School Organizations [WACSSO] to be a guest speaker at the first Community Contact Meeting for the year. WACSSO represents all P&C associations throughout the state government education system. It was anticipated that having a guest speaker would swell attendance and permit the issue of parent participation in school based decision making to be adequately discussed.

Thirteen parents were present at this meeting when the Principal distributed the operating guide-lines for a Langley SBDMG. Limited

discussion of the guide-lines was undertaken. Irene suggested that the purpose of a council was to support the school goals. Its main work was identified as goal setting, resource allocation and participating in the development of a school plan. The rest of the meeting was given over to the guest speaker's discussion about the formation of a P&C and the relationship of a P&C to a SBDMG. While several questions were fielded by parents concerning the need for a P&C, arguments offered by the speaker seemed poorly received. When the speaker had departed Irene re-stated the Ministry's policy on the establishment of SBDMGs in schools and stressed the need for parental involvement in such a group.

There was a general indication that parents favoured the formation of a SBDMG but not a P&C. In order to give parents time to consider the formation of a P&C, a SBDMG and the continuance of the community contact group, all decisions were to be deferred to the next meeting on March 21st.

In the intervening period, anticipating the formation of a SBDMG, the school ran advertisements in the local press notifying the community of a special meeting for the formation of a SBDMG and calling for the nomination of parent representatives. Despite these efforts no expressions of interest were forthcoming. It was agreed, therefore to accept nominations from the parents present at the meeting.

At the March meeting, after some encouragement from the Principal, three parents accepted nomination and were elected unopposed. Irene informed the meeting that nominations for staff representatives had been carried out. Further, the meeting was informed that three community representatives had been approached to sit on the SBDMG. Accordingly

the principal proposed a special meeting be held of all elected representatives to determining office bearers, the name of the SBDMG, and operating procedure for the group.

**Event 2**                      Conflict with existing decision-making bodies.

The second issue dominating the implementation process concerned conflict between the SBDMG and the existing decision-making bodies, particularly the school development committee. Traditionally, in secondary schools, the Principal shares the decision-making process with the Deputy Principals and the senior staff of the school. This senior administration group meets weekly to discuss the range of policy and administrative issues and to co-ordinate the operations of the school. Because of the composition of this group and the frequency with which it meets, senior staff was seen by administrative staff and classroom teachers alike as the prime decision-making body of the school.

In addition to the senior staff group there existed a School Development Committee. This committee was established in 1985 to write proposals for programmes that might attract funding through the Federal Priority Schools Programme [PSP]. Since its formation a number of sub-committees had been formed to focus on specific programmes. As a consequence the existing Development Committee served to co-ordinate the activities of these sub-committees and to determine policy priorities for whole school action. In many respects the structure and function of the Development Committee mirrors those functions suggested in the Ministry discussion document. Not only does the Development Committee include parent and classroom teacher representatives but it also takes responsibility for the formulation of a Development Plan.

Potential conflict between the Development Committee and senior staff was unlikely since the Principal, deputies and senior staff were members of both decision making groups. Indeed, frequently the one group considers development planning and administrative matters at the one sitting. As Irene recounts:

We usually try to extend the Development Committee meeting into a senior staff meeting.

With the enactment of enabling legislation and the emergence of a more specific guide-lines for the structure and function of SBDMGs, concern about the continuance of existing decision-making groups escalated. The Deputy Principal (male) stated there was complete confusion as to whether the existing Development Committee would continue operations or whether its functions would be taken over by a new SBDMG.

### **Event 3                      Conflict Resolution**

In an attempt to help resolve such confusion the Chairperson of the Development Committee invited the District School Development Officer to their initial meeting for 1989. His task was to help clarify the functions of the Development Committee and to identify functions that might be transferred to a SBDMG.

The SDO focused discussions by posing two questions :

Why have a school Development Committee?  
What are the purposes/objectives of the  
Development Committee?

As the discussion about rationale and functions progressed the SDO tabled each point on a Chalk Board (see Appendix Q). Development Committee members were asked to consider what functions might be fulfilled by other

groups such as the senior staff or the proposed SBDMG. There was support for the Deputy Female's suggestion that since most members of the development committee also attend senior staff meetings that they absorb the functions of the Development Committee. However, opponents of this suggestion point out that the senior staff group could not include representatives from staff, students, parents or community members and therefore would not satisfy the Ministry policy on SBDMGs. The Principal stressed the management function of the senior staff and urged that such function be kept separate from the policy making function of the Development Committee.

... This is where confusion occurs regarding the type of decision-making that goes on at senior staff meetings and the type that goes on at the school-based decision-making group. Senior staff meetings are used as a means of communicating information from the Ministry and from myself to senior staff that I wish to be relayed to their teachers. The school-based decision-making group receives reports from other smaller committees and recommends where a smaller sub group is needed to make the decisions. (Irene)

The suggestion that the proposed SBDMG take on the function of the Development Committee prompted quick opposition from the Principal, both Deputy Principals, and Co-ordinator of the Development Committee. All envisaged the SBDMG as a ratifying body lending support to the development planning function of smaller task forces or sub committees. As the Principal stated:

The council [SBDMG] may not be more than a supporting body. I still have the right of veto over those issues that may emerge from an empowered council. (Irene)



However, the proposed formation of a new decision-making body which would operate in addition to the existing structures also prompted objections especially from both Deputy Principals.

given the current general disruption to school life I don't want to see any duplication of functions. (Helen)

...can't we trim this down. There are too many committees. ...There has got to be one body. The other one is superfluous. Is one the real decision-making group. What is the other? just a rubber stamp or what? (Barry)

The SDO supported the need to continue with the number of committees and suggested that if the SBDMG operating as a council decided to take on the objectives outlined for the Development Committee, then the committee would need to surrender its functions. In response to this suggestion a representative of the staff moved that the Development Committee dissolve. While there seemed general agreement for this and action, the Principal suggested that until the SBDMG determined their function, the Development Committee should continue to operate.

#### Event 4                      Determining Operating Procedures of the Council

Four weeks after reaching this impasse over the function of the SBDMG the first meeting of the new decision-making body was held. Items on the agenda included the election of office bearers, determining the name of the SBDMG, and the operating procedure for the group. The only person to be nominated for the position of Chairperson was the Principal. Having accepted nomination, the Principal was duly appointed. With minimal deliberation, it was agreed that the group be known as the School Council. Further, a flexible operating procedure was accepted by the group. The Chairperson was to be responsible for the preparation of an agenda and the

conduct of the meetings, minutes were to be recorded and copies distributed to all representatives one week prior to the next meeting. It was agreed the Council should meet twice a term, and dates and times for the following meetings were discussed. The issue of the specific functions of the council was not raised and as a consequence no clear delineation of responsibility between the council and the development committee was achieved.

#### **Event 5                      Functions of the Development Committee**

Accordingly, the next meeting of the Development Committee continued to focus on school development planning issues. In particular, attention was given to a draft Ministry policy document on development planning. This document was of particular interest to the Development Committee because it posed an alteration to the prevailing planning process and format. Previous development plans were based on broad statements of goals with little specific information about resources or strategies. The SBDMG policy document posited a far more detailed and structured plan, with a statement of mission, summary of goals and performance indicators.

As Karen, (Co-ordinator) stated:

You have to sort out your performance indicators.  
That is the big thing, and then set up your  
management information system.

The discussion of these suggested guide-lines did not go smoothly. Increasing dissatisfaction with both the notion of a SBDMG and School Development Plans was apparent in the cynical and somewhat negative responses of several committee members, especially both Deputy Principals.

As the Principal recounts:

At the meeting we tried to have a workshop on development planning and it wasn't very successful. Just between you and me the deputies seemed to be very negative about it. They think the whole thing is a token gesture by the Ministry to involve parents and community members in school planning and that it is not intended to be of critical and fundamental importance. (Irene)

#### **Event 6                      Teachers' Union intervention**

This growing cynicism towards Ministry guide-lines on school development planning reflected an increasing concern by the executive of the State School Teacher's Union about the impact of Better Schools on the working conditions of its members. Of particular concern was the increased work load associated with school-based decision-making at a time when numerous concurrent changes were being implemented. The Union's position was made clear in a letter posted to all schools on June the 6th 1989.

School-based decision-making is yet another imposition upon schools, initiated by the Ministry of Education without proper consultation with the Union and without any consideration of financial compensation for the extra time required by teachers and administrators involved in its implementation. (Bateman, 1989, p.1)

Consequently, the State School Teacher's Union directed its members to cease participation in the establishment of school-based decision making groups or the process of school development planning (see Appendix R). Despite this directive, both the School Council and the Development Committee at Langley planned to continue to meet albeit in a restricted form.

**Event 7****The first meeting of Langley High School Council**

On June 26th the first full School Council Meeting took place. After a preliminary discussion of the agenda the Principal presented a report on current developments stemming from the Better Schools Programme.

The Principal suggested the "Key Issue" confronting all schools in 1990 would be that of the School Development Plan. Irene described the organizational change taking place in schools in the eastern states of Australia, stressing that all education systems were moving towards a devolved decision-making approach which involves the formulation of a Development Plan. The Principal outlined the features of a development plan, including statements of policy, strategies, performance indicators, timelines for implementation, and statements of resource allocation. Mention was also made that in W. A. these plans would be used to monitor schools, thus forming part of an on-going accountability procedure. While this information was presented by the Principal, no discussion was made about the Council's role in the formulation or ratification of school development plans.

The rest of the meeting was spent considering issues such as the school motto, school uniform policy, and promotion of the school. Only one formal motion was put and carried concerning Council support for the wearing of school uniforms. Decisions concerning the school motto and school publicity were deferred to the next meeting. Due to an escalation of state-wide industrial action the July, School Council meeting was cancelled.

**Event 8****A Special Meeting of the Development Committee**

Despite industrial action, concern about the 1990 school budget had led to two Development Committee meetings in August. These meetings were

prompted by the arrival of budget preparation guide-lines from the Ministry. These guide-lines strongly resembled the Caldwell and Spinks model of "Collaborative School Management" and linked school grant money directly to the school development plan. At these meetings the Coordinator discussed the implications which the new budget procedure held for the committee's planning process, stressing the Development Plan and its Budget component would form the basis of future school audits by the superintendent.

**Event 9**                      The second meeting of Langley High School Council

The second Council meeting was held on the 30th of August. During the first part of this meeting the Chairperson presented background information on the continuing industrial action. A letter from the Executive Director of Education listing current innovations in schools was distributed. The letter indicated to parents the increased work load facing school administrators and teachers alike due to the number of concurrent educational changes taking place [see Appendix S]. Further, it was suggested by the Chairperson that the Ministry anticipated a fundamental and unwelcome role change for Principals, whereby they were to become corporate managers, concentrating on planning and administration rather than educational issues. This address by the Principal was followed with a statement of the Union's position by the school union representative. He indicated that many of the organizational and administrative changes contained within the Better Schools Programme were not welcomed by classroom teachers.

Teachers just want to teach not to attend meetings.  
(Bob)

The remainder of the meeting was spent examining a range of school issues including some negative publicity about the school, the proposal of a new school motto, and funding requirements for a proposed student bicycle pathway and computing network.

**Event 10**                      Calls for the clarification of the role of the Council

While some 17 weeks had passed since the initial council meeting there had been little attempt by members of the council to define their function. Further, the role of the Development Committee and its relationship to the Council had not been raised, nor had the issue of community participation in the formulation of the School Development Plan. Some frustration over the lack of clearly defined function emerged among the participants. The sessions were seen by the staff and parent representatives as little more than Principal dominated information dissemination sessions.

The school council meetings tend to be very much an information giving exercise. Very few decisions are made. (Helen)

For two of the parent representatives and all the staff representatives the information had already been presented at Development Committee meetings, and community contact meetings and the repetition was becoming annoying. The Co-ordinator of the Development Committee also expressed concern that the Council had not clarified its role.

I think that they have to designate their role and function....They have to sift out of what is going on... those things that they are prepared and capable of taking on. I don't think that it would be reasonable to take on all the functions and tasks currently undertaken by the Development Committee, but they have to be effectively involved and in charge. (Karen)

The Co-ordinator suggested the SDO ought to be called in to help members define their function.

The SDO is a good facilitator. He could do what he did at the Development Committee meeting and help clarify roles. (Karen)

Whether such concerns were expressed directly to Irene or not is difficult to know. Nonetheless the role of the School Council was placed on the agenda for its September meeting.

#### Event 11                      The Council defines its function

The September meeting commenced in a more business-like manner. Again the Principal as Chairperson directed events. After acceptance of the minutes of the last Council meeting the Chairperson moved quickly to an examination of the function of Council. Ideas were called for, and resulted in a number of suggestions ranging from fund raising through to the management of school resources. One community representative called for an examination of the function of the councils of other schools. This suggestion drew no comment. The other community representative suggested council functioned to support the efforts of the administration. The Principal keenly supported this, stating that it is the type of role she had hoped the council would undertake. A reiteration was called for so that such a role could be more formally stated. The community representative restated:

That the council should not act as a decision making body, rather its function should be one of stewardship. Acting in support of the Principal and the administration of the school. (Thomas)

It was moved that Tom's statement of role be accepted by Council. With no further discussion the motion was accepted unanimously. Almost as an after-thought Irene reminded the Council that under a newly introduced process of school auditing, a report about school efficiency and effectiveness would need to be ratified by Council and presented to the District Superintendent. With no requests for further clarification of the audit report function the Principal move on to the next item on the agenda.

After the meeting the Principal was asked about her reactions to the supportive role the Council had sought for itself.

... I have had experience with very assertive P&C's who wanted to control curriculum and staff and were very critical of the administration. Because of the nature of Langley and its community I was rather anxious to have a body that was prepared to act as a supporting body only, therefore I am rather pleased with the way it has turned out rather than something that could have created difficulties. ... So I thought by forming a School Council as a more formal body, the council could replace the community contact evening and represent the community, parents, teachers, and students. Whereas the school based decision-making group was the Development Committee. This committee is essentially staff controlled, with two token parents attending yet never opening their mouths. (Irene)

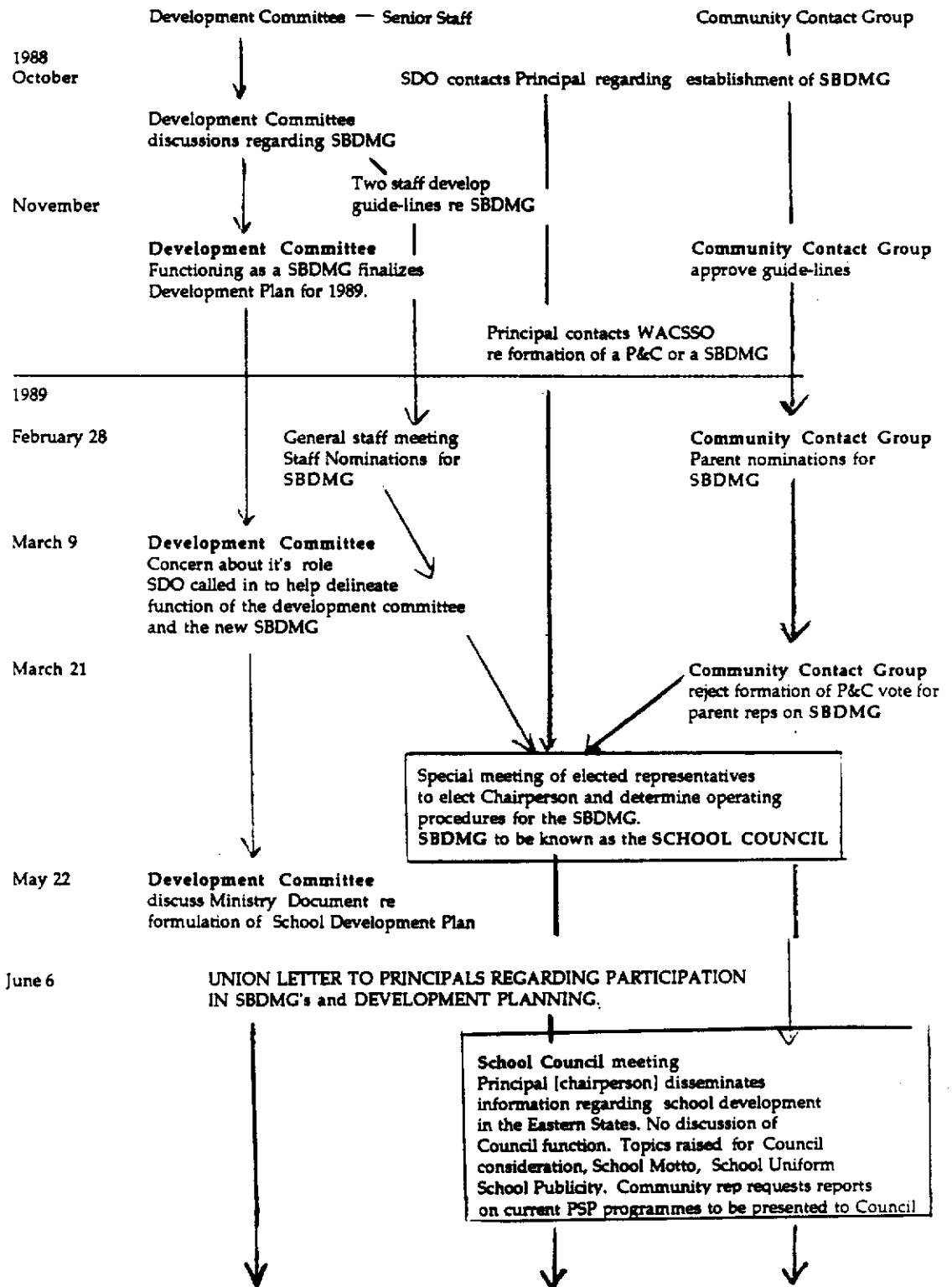
The critical events emerging from the description of implementation process are summarized in the following event chart. The chart shows concurrent flow of events facing all the decision-making groups of the school.

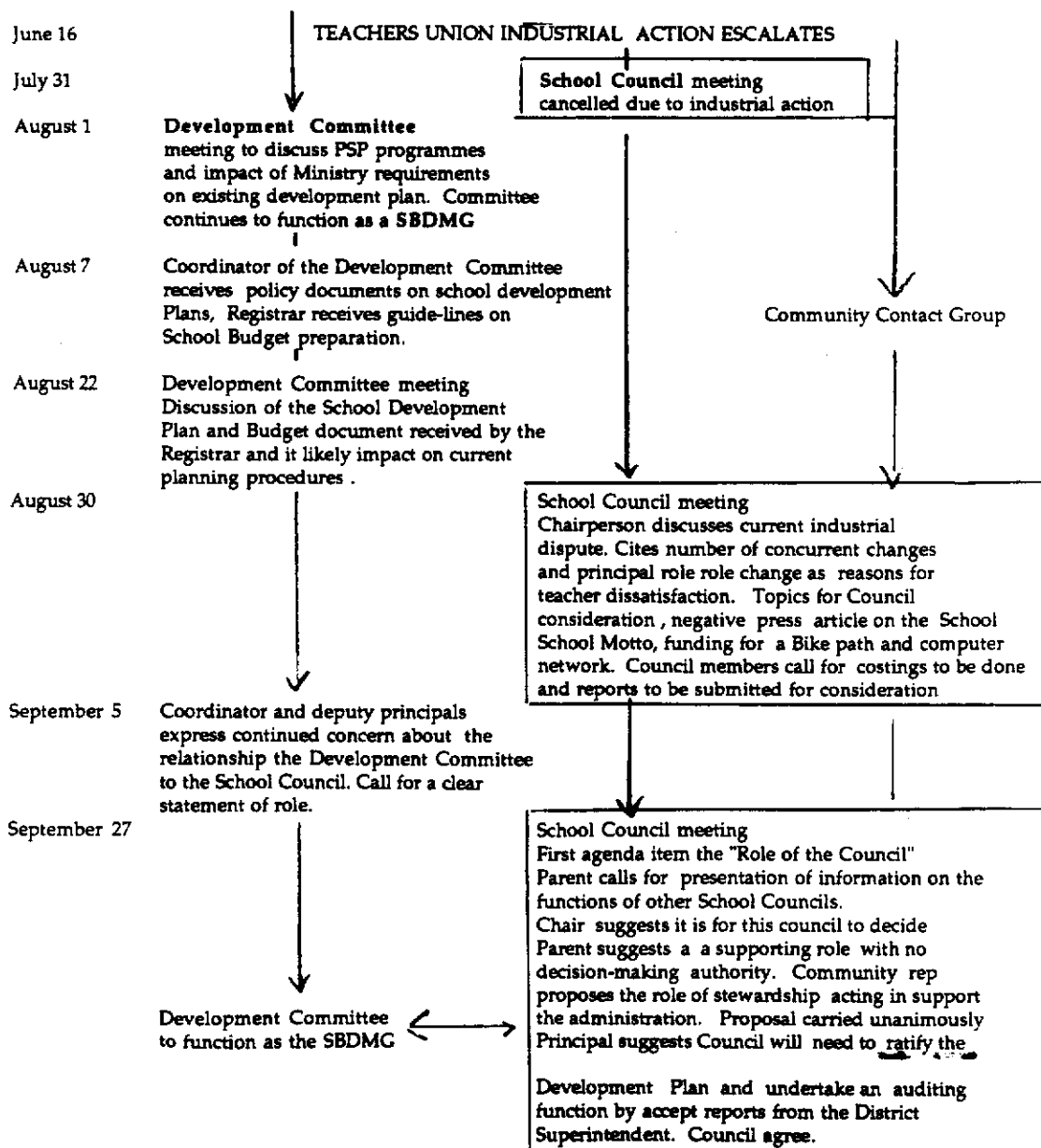


**TABLE : 6**

**The Implementation Process at Langley SHS**

**EVENT CHART  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL-BASED DECISION-MAKING GROUP  
1988-1989**





During the implementation of the Ministry policy on SBDMGs , members of the Langley school community did more than establish a School Council. The process of implementation forced a re-assessment of the functions of both the existing decision-making bodies of the school, particularly the development committee.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **PROFILE OF JARDINE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **11.1 SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT**

Jardine is a harbour site school located within the urban precinct of Perth's sister city, Fremantle. It serves a diverse community that is primarily comprised of people residing in the older suburban districts of Fremantle City. Traditionally, the Fremantle community has been considered working class. Most residents were employed by the Fremantle Port Authority as wharf workers or worked in any of the numerous light industries associated with the export or import of products through the port. Additionally, a thriving fishing industry continues to provide employment for Australians and increasing numbers of Italian, Greek and Portuguese immigrants. Over the last decade, the community has undergone a subtle change in character. The population has been aging and as a consequence the school has experienced a gradual decline in student enrollments. Another noteworthy change has occurred in the culture of the community. In the 1980's many affluent, educated people were attracted by the cosmopolitan nature of Fremantle. The city's historic buildings, and the advantages of inner city living have enticed many people into the area and its surrounding suburbs. Old terrace housing and the compact workers' bungalows have been revamped and

restored to serve as homes for these new "urban elite". As the Principal [Patrick] notes:

T4 (a) 171 ...Fremantle is unique in that it does have different type of population than the normal sort of suburb. There are a large number of what might be termed alternative lifestyle people. This group is made up, in the main of highly educated and academic people. They just happen to be unconventional and in some respects non-conformist. (Patrick)

While the influx of relatively affluent and educated people has altered the nature of working class Fremantle, according to the Deputy Principal and several teachers, there remains a large number of people on welfare and students from broken homes [single parent families] and an ageing population.

In an attempt to reverse a decline in student numbers caused by the ageing of the local community, the school has established an exclusive "Theatre Arts" programme. This programme attracts large numbers of students that reside out-side the Fremantle area. As a consequence around 60% of the students enrolled at the school now come from suburbs all over the greater Perth Metropolitan area.

#### **11.1.1 School Relationship with its Community.**

According to the district Superintendent of Education, Jardine Senior High School is seen by the community as a strongly academic and prestigious school. Indeed there are many applications for student enrollment that come from other city suburbs as well as rural regions. As the Deputy Principal Male [Mervin] states:

I take calls from people coming from country areas, and they say that they have heard that Jardine has a good reputation [academic], how can I get my child

into the school? Usually we have a hundred or so students on a waiting list to get enrollment.

Many parents see the academic emphasis of the school as most desirable, as the Deputy Principal Female [Trudy] indicated:

They see the education programme as a means of getting their children to a tertiary institution. They emphasise this from the moment they walk in through the doors of the school until the time their child leaves. And any attempt made by the school to cut down on the old core areas [traditional subject disciplines] immediately causes alarm.... Our whole school programme reflects the expectations of the community that their children end up with a tertiary qualification.

Given such a perception it is understandable that community support for the school is most evident on issues concerning the academic progress of students. Open nights and teacher/parent contact evenings held following the distribution of student reports are always well attended. Apart from such events, parents and other members of the community have little involvement with the school.

As Mervin reflects:

Well the school seems to be fairly insular from the local community and it is very difficult to get people from outside the school to participate in its activities.

In support, a Social Studies teacher stated:

In terms of direct feedback from parents there is little there. You virtually have to grab parents and bring them in. They seem to allow the school to do its thing. (Harry)

A few parents are actively involved in limited school issues through membership of the long established Parents and Citizens Association [P&C]. This association has responsibility for running the school canteen and

organizing fund-raising activities for the school. According to both the Deputy Principals and senior teachers, the P&C is a strong body exerting a deal of influence over the capacity of the school to raise monies and allocate funds raised. The lack of broad community representativeness of the P&C, and the independent way it operates in raising and allocating funds is viewed with some concern by both the Principal and the Deputy Principals:

There is a minority group within the P&C that do the work. What tends to happen is that P&C members speak to staff. Staff then organize the fund-raising event and as a result we can raise \$10.000 -12.000 something like that but we don't get full representation of parents, it is a small group say 20-30 people only. (Trudy)

Broader community involvement with the school is limited to business participation in a work experience programme, occasional donations by business to specific school projects and school student participation in cultural events organized by the local city council.

## **11.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **11.2.1 The Site**

Jardine Senior High School was opened in 1956 and was one of the first of the large government secondary school to be established in the state. In 1989 the school had a student population of just over 1000 students and a staff of 78 . The school occupies a large expanse of evaluated ground with magnificent views to harbour, river and ocean. The building design is typical of many of the schools of that era. Rows of classrooms on two levels form a parameter around two open quadrangles. The larger quadrangle doubles as student recreation area and an informal assembly area. A very large area of playing fields flank the northern boundary of the school. Areas of garden are confined to the entrance of the school, save for several tall

gum trees growing in the quadrangles. The school hall and canteen area are located well away from the main teaching areas. With the addition of a large Theatre Arts building, the school has well established facilities. Unfortunately, many of the original buildings are not well maintained. However, the degenerating condition of the classrooms is more a testament to lack of adequate maintenance funding by the Ministry of Education, rather than misuse by students. Several staff were of the opinion that the Ministry was considering the sale of the school site to realize the enormous real estate value of the land the school occupied. Such views were not only fueled by the limited expenditure on building maintenance but also by the rumour that a new university is to be established in the area and there has been interest expressed in acquiring the school site from the Ministry.

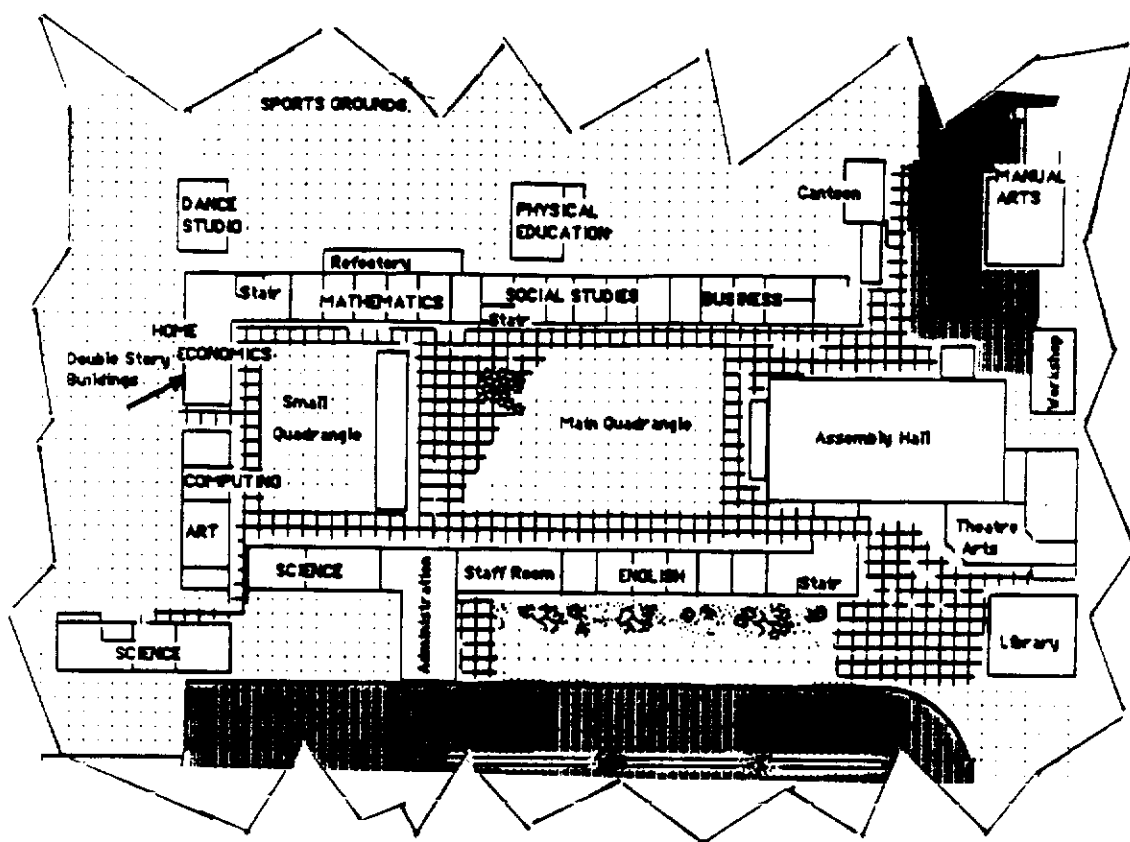


FIGURE : 12

Ground Plan of the Jardine School Site

### 11.2.2

#### Student Population Characteristics.

The students, while predominantly Australian-born European, comprise a mix of ethnic groups particularly Portuguese with a small number of Vietnamese. From observations, few students wear a school uniform, and while student behaviour inside classrooms seemed reasonable [no behavioural problems noted during site visits] there was a sense of boisterousness in the school yard. Further, litter around the grounds indicated that a sense of pride in a clean environment was not shared by many students.

Staff interviewed across teaching areas indicate that most students are concerned with academic achievement. Indeed a large percentage of students tend to continue with the study of academic courses in upper school. According to Mervin [Deputy Principal] of the 250 Year 8 students, approximately 220 go on to study at tertiary entrance level, [a figure confirmed by school records]. For Trudy, Deputy Principal Female, the school programmes and a focus on academic achievement has led to a diminished individual responsibility by students for their success.

Well I think they feel too secure; that this school will get them their TEE. It seems ingrained in them that once they get here they are going to get TEE, you don't have to make too much effort because the school programme is going to lead you there so it doesn't matter. I get worried that there is too much complacency amongst students ...just leave it to the school. (Trudy)

This view however, is not shared by many classroom teachers who see the students as taking responsibility and applying themselves without the need for teachers to be constantly 'hassling' them .

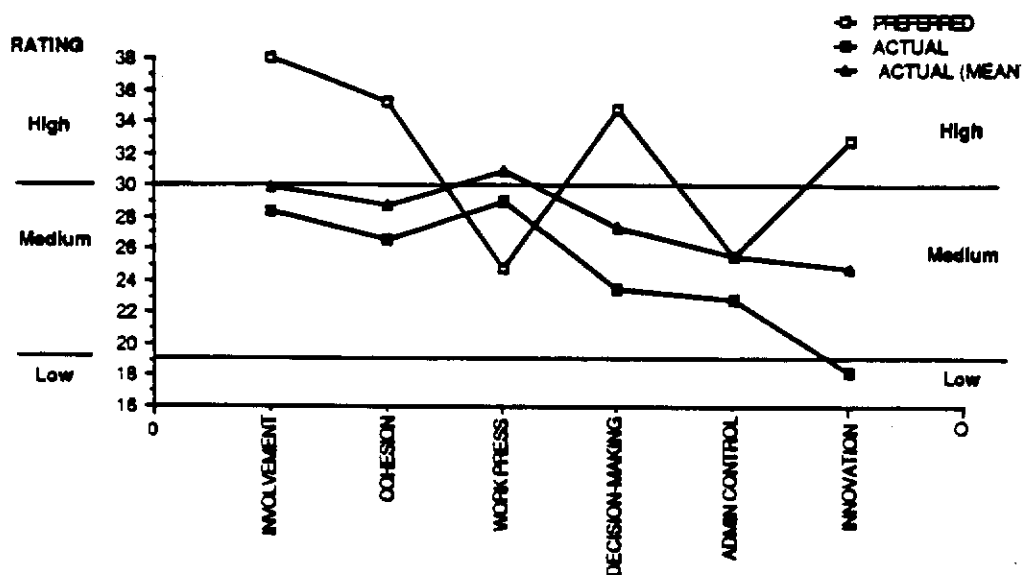


When asked to comment generally on the character of the students at the school a typical response was:

It is a mixed bag. They range across the spectrum again but in terms of their behavioural characteristics most of them 90% plus are very very acceptable children. They don't have many social hang-ups, even the ones from single family backgrounds are well adjusted, opinionated and good kids. (Grant)

### 11.2.3 School Organizational Climate

The data obtained from the SOCQ indicate that the staff were concerned and committed to their jobs and moderately friendly and supportive of each other. The scale "Work Pressure" indicated that staff perceived a moderate degree of pressure dominating the work environment but this score was marginally lower than the metropolitan mean for work pressure. Staff perceived that there was moderate degree of participation in decision-making at the school and that the administration exerted limited control over their professional conduct. Lastly, the data indicated a low score for the innovation scale suggesting little emphasis was placed on adopting new approaches or changing existing practices within the school. The following graph shows the school organizational climate for Jardine at the commencement of the 1989 school year.



**FIGURE: 13**  
**Jardine Senior High School Organizational Climate**  
**(November 1988)**

When the actual and preferred scores were compared along each scale a large discrepancy was apparent. This discrepancy indicated a preference for far more involvement, peer cohesion, participatory decision-making and innovation. The large discrepancy further suggested a high degree of dissatisfaction with the work environment and that an unsound organizational climate prevailed.

#### **11.2.4 School Sub-system Linkage**

Responses to the questionnaire items on school linkage indicate that while staff share a professional concern for sound academic performance from students, there is a limited sense of a whole school spirit and loyalty. Many teachers spent free time and lunch breaks in their own teaching

departments and as a consequence there was little mixing among staff. This questionnaire data is supported by both observation field notes, and interview transcripts. As one senior master noted:

Well in the normal school day situation they mix well but it is fairly fractured in terms of general relations between [not in terms of poisoned relations] but the contact between several different departments is not strong. For example one could say that the social studies department removes itself from the staff-room at lunchtimes ....so contact tends to be a little disjointed in that way. There is no animosity, no unpleasantness but people are a little more isolated as groups. (John)

In short the cultural linkage in the school is low.

Teachers indicate they operate independently from their school administration. There is limited emphasis on following policies and regulations in the school, and limited supervision of teachers by senior staff. Further, teachers feel free to question administrative decisions and do not feel bound by any such decisions. This suggests that structural linkage is low. Again data from other sources supported the existence of weak structural linkage. As the following teachers noted:

Jardine is a school that operates almost independently from any top down direction from the administration. I feel a definite lack of pressure to live up to certain expectations. There are those expectations but it is just assumed that you will do it. (Teacher 1)

Well I'd say that the type of expectations that you referred to were certainly not explicitly declared and in many cases it was not an issue implicitly either. Those kinds of things tended to be overlooked. (Teacher 2)

...It is a school where almost everything is left to run by itself, there is very little overall co-ordinated leadership from the top. (Teacher 3)

The questionnaire responses indicate that few formal opportunities existed for teachers to interact professionally. Indeed, many subject teaching areas have abandoned weekly subject meetings scheduled to discuss pedagogical and administrative issues. There was limited shared responsibility for programming and lesson planning and very infrequent observation of colleagues teaching. Further, respondents indicated total autonomy with respect to in-class issues and teaching style. In short Pedagogical linkage is low.

A significant factor affecting the organizational characteristics of Jardine Senior High School is the length of residency of many staff. As the Deputy Principal points out:

This school has been running for thirty two years on a departmental line and everyone is fairly well entrenched. Some of the senior staff have been at this school directing their departments for 22-23 years.  
(Mervin)

It would seem this length of service at the school has created for many staff, a sense of security, stability, self-reliance and independence. However, it would seem that this situation has also created some problems, as one teacher noted:

Because the senior staff have been here so long they are so familiar with how things have always been they assume that any new staff coming in will also know how things operate, so they just leave it [little effort spent in explaining how things are done at JSHS].  
(Harley)

#### **11.2.5 Administrative Decision-Making Procedures**

The decision-making procedures in existence at the commencement of the 1989 school year had, according to staff, been in operation for many years. The main decision-making group consisted of the Principal, the Deputy

Principals, and senior members of staff. Infrequently, general staff meetings were held to permit involvement of classroom teachers. However, according to many staff, real decision-making, if it occurred at all, rested with the Principal and the Deputy Principals, particularly the Deputy Principal Female.

The history of decision-making ...[laughter]. Until this year we would have a staff meeting and we would talk about something, and we would often defer making a decision until the next staff meeting. So everyone would go away and promptly forget about the issue. Then you would come back and have to vote, and someone would say something and then it would go to the senior staff meeting. It would end up that nothing would get done anyway. That was the impression that most staff had about school decision-making. Decisions were put off being made, that they weren't made. Decisions that could be made at a general staff meeting could be thrown out the very next week at a senior staff meeting. So there was a feeling that 'what is the point of discussing anything or making a decision' because most of the time nothing ever comes of it anyway. (Candy)

Lending support this this view, a senior member of staff states:

Well It seemed to me that when I came back to the school in 1984 that it was pretty ad-hoc. For example there would be decisions that appeared to have been made at senior staff meetings and those decisions were either abandoned or put into effect as the senior administration saw fit. Part of the problem was that the senior staff group grew. It was comprised not just of the senior staff but all of the year co-ordinators and special group co-ordinators [the dance and theatre people] and the effect was to make it a big sprawling kind of a group. Decisions were made at these meetings and sometimes they were followed through and other times they were followed through for a while and allowed to lapse. It was very aimless, you weren't sure where the decisions were being made.....This is a guesstimate but I would say that if you added all decisions up, most of them were made in the sub-set arena by the Principal and the Deputy Female. (Harry)

With the arrival of the new Principal, changes have been made to the membership of the senior staff meetings. All Year co-ordinators, special group co-ordinators and representatives from other areas who are not designated subject area heads, no longer attend or participate in the senior staff meetings.

I think this year people are waiting to see what happens with the new Principal. Most people...I am most impressed by the fact that senior staff meetings have been cut down; not the frequency of the meeting but the number of people who attend ..so you have the actual senior staff [heads of subject areas]. I am also impressed that we get the minutes promptly after the meetings and it seems that these meetings are much more business like, not so unwieldy, that a decision is made about something. (John)

While the Principal, Deputy Principals and senior staff together constituted the administrative decision-making group, authority and responsibility for particular decisions is divided among members of this group. Decisions concerning finance and annual budget requirements, communications with the community, press and Ministry remain the prerogative of the Principal. Decisions concerning teacher relief, student enrollments, student discipline and absenteeism are shared between the Deputy Principals.

The total school activities in any term or semester are co-ordinated by a timetable managed by the Deputy Principals. According to teachers interviewed, while decisions about the design of this timetable primarily reside with the Deputy Principals these decisions are generally made in consultation with senior staff. For issues relating specifically to the curriculum [ programming, resources, assessment and such like] the senior staff or department heads exercise authority. Decisions regarding the

agendas of general staff meetings and possible programmes for the professional development of staff are made by a steering committee. This committee is comprised of seven elected representatives, all classroom teachers.

We have had a committee at this school for the last couple of years. They get feedback from staff themselves as to what areas of professional development to look at. On the basis of that they go ahead and organize something for staff meetings on student free days. They might get guest speakers in and so on. (Harley)

#### 11.2.6 Administrative Leadership

The initial contact with the Principal was prompted by his request for more information about Jardine's organizational climate. Patrick had been appointed as Principal after the administration of SOCQ questionnaire in November 1988 and hence knew little about the purpose of the research. He had read the accompanying report and found it useful in providing some insight into the character of the school he was to lead, and wished to discuss the research further.

As incoming Principal, Patrick recognized the problems confronting many new senior administrators. He spent some time describing the dilemma and suggesting two possible approaches he might adopt.

I don't know whether to take a "boots and all" approach to this role or to play it easy and get more of a feel for the place.  
(Patrick)

He explained that the staff seemed anti-change, and that he had been informed there were individuals who had obstructed change efforts undertaken by the previous administration. He described a small group of people who had been at the school for some time and had *"their own*

*agendas*". Patrick felt power struggles were occurring between some members of the senior staff and what he termed the "*senior administration*" [Principal and Deputy Principals]. One individual he identified as posing a derisive threat had been given extra responsibilities in order to " *get him on side*". However, Patrick was still not too sure whether this action might not cause resentment among other senior staff members and result in the creation of a new group to undermine his authority.

This understandable pre-occupation with establishing his leadership role within the school meant that for most of the first semester his attention was given to in-school issues he considered warranted priority. This is not to imply that Patrick did not hold long-term goals for the school. He expressed the view that he wanted to make Jardine Senior High a show school, one that might attract community and Ministry of Education interest. He recounted the long history of Jardine Senior High School and expressed a personal desire to create a school that was more akin to those of the private school system.

Patrick is a tall and powerfully built man whose stature, personality and speech indicate a leader with determination to make things happen for his school. Staff drawn from the main teaching areas were asked to describe the Principal's leadership style. Many staff perceive Patrick to be a leader and facilitator of change efforts. However, several staff indicated that Patrick's leadership had changed during the course of the first term to reflect a more managerial style. Generally, the staff viewed Patrick as an enthusiastic leader. One who is highly committed and gives recognition and praise to others. However, many perceived the Principal as only moderately supportive and one whose directions to staff lacked clarity.



### 11.3 PREPAREDNESS FOR CHANGE

With the exception of the Theatre Arts / Performing Arts Programme, Jardine Senior High School has not taken on board many innovative programmes. As the new Principal remarked:

Well this institution has been very conservative to change, particularly curriculum change. In fact I think that it would be fair comment to say that the unit curriculum exists in this school in name only. The recommendations of the Beazley Report (1984) have certainly not been implemented here.

The traditional and conservative nature of the school has meant adherence to an academic programme and daily teaching procedures that have largely remained unaltered since the 1970's. When asked if the school was one open to new ideas and change, a typical teacher's response was:

Oh no! No it has been very much the other way. Every thing is done the way it has always been done...very much that way. (Candy)

The belief that the main task of the school is to prepare students for tertiary education has, according to members of both the administration and many teachers, resulted in a cautious and somewhat negative response to any proposed change. As the Deputy Principal states:

There is a deal of resistance. Over the years the school has been organized into subject departments and each operates more or less independently. So if you want change you have to somehow get around this difficulty. This is why I think we need to alter the Senior Master system to change the school system. They protect their department and their job and will resist change which will effect their positions. (Mervin)

The preservation of what one subject department head referred to as a stable *state* should not be taken as an indicator of total school resistance to change. Several staff members suggested that the lack of change, particularly with respect to curriculum issues, is the cause of a deal of frustration. For such staff, hope is placed on the capacity of the new Principal to stimulate change and ensure that new initiatives can be undertaken. It is indicated by several long-serving teachers and senior staff that the school possesses individuals with enough skill, enthusiasm and energy to undertake change. However, both the Principal and Deputy Principals feel the key to successful implementation of any innovation is to win over the senior staff. As the Principal suggests:

Yes .. As with any change there will be a lot of people that will just sit back and accept what ever happens. The important thing is to win over the senior teachers of the school because without their support it is not going to work. (Patrick)

#### **11.4 THE INITIATION PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **11.4.1 Advocacy for change**

The administrative staff at Jardine SHS saw Ministry personnel as the key advocates for the implementation of SBDMGs. When asked if they could identify any particular advocate within the Ministry, the principal and both Deputy Principals cited the Executive Director of Schools. As the Deputy Principal Trudy states:

Well I think Max Angus especially. Probably backed up by Warren Loudon; who has not really said a great deal about it. Max has been the one who has spoken to us at conferences and has come out the the school. There is quite a strong push from him. (Trudy)

Little promotion was seen as stemming from the District Superintendent or District office staff. Indeed all members of the school administration stated that there had been very limited direct contact with members of their District Office. The only assistance cited concerned Trudy's contact with the District Superintendent during second semester 1988. At this meeting preliminary discussion ensued about the establishment of a SBDMG and the drafting of a school development plan. Among many senior staff and classroom teachers there was a common view that the main advocate for change was the Principal. As Raymond, a senior staff member, states:

Well at the moment most of it is coming from the initiatives that the present Principal is trying to create. There has been some hard information that has flowed to the schools but I think that most of it comes from a point the Principal is making to the staff in general. (Raymond)

Likewise Betty, an Art teacher, states:

I think that this new Principal has said a few things about how he would like to see the school go on this and that he does want staff to participate on various committees and that he would like everyone involved on some sort of committee. (Betty)

#### **11.4.2 Support and Assistance for Change**

Both the Principal and members of the senior staff were openly critical of the limited amount of Ministry support and assistance for change. While a number of in-service workshops had been offered to Principals little had been done to prepare and support staff and community members in the implementation of SBDMGs. For the Principal, this lack of adequate initial support was considered a major obstacle to effective implementation.

The resources haven't been forthcoming. They [Ministry] have tried to increase the resources to in-service Principals. A lot of money has gone into that.

But there is not much point in the Principal being informed and it not getting past the Principal into the school. I have a suspicion that this is largely what has been happening. Principals are full bottle on what is going on in relation to this change. But it stops there. After all, schools have only four pupil-free days a year and those days are really required for basic organizational matters of the school, especially with Unit Curriculum and other issues. Therefore there is not sufficient time to deal with fundamental changes and philosophy associated with the approach that is needed for the establishment of a School Based Decision-Making Group. It is a real battle. I find that is necessary to get together with individuals and talk about these issues. (Patrick)

Staff who were interviewed indicated that issues associated with SBDMGs and development planning had only been superficially discussed at a general staff meeting held during Term Four in 1988.

There had been something mentioned towards the end of the year before, but I can't remember. There was a staff meeting, the very last staff meeting of the year, where we had to work out what we wanted a SBDMG to be responsible for. (Raymond)

What information they had, seemed to have come from colleagues in other schools.

#### 11.4.3 Importance of the Change

The Principal viewed the change as inevitable, reflecting a world-wide trend towards the devolution of decision-making in schools. Such a trend reflected fundamental change in society, particularly Australian society, where the community was demanding more say in educational issues.

With these new concepts about education for a school to have an effective environment it has to adopt democratic process and participatory decision-making. If the school doesn't I think it will alienate itself from society and the community it serves. (Patrick)

Consequently the Principal saw several advantages in establishing a SBDMG. The first concerned the advantage of generating more active participation among staff in the life of the school.

I think that it is a good move for the school because it will enable cross fertilization of ideas between departments and this will rejuvenate the school.  
(Patrick)

A second advantage concerned the benefits of shared responsibility for administrative decision-making, particularly for the Principal.

The advantage of a school based decision-making group being involved in development planning is that it can move the responsibility for decisions away from the chief executive to other groups in the organization. For a start the principal can say, well it is not my plan it is the councils plan or the staff's plan", or some such thing. (Patrick)

The positive views of the change were not shared by other members of the administration, particularly both Deputy Principals. They saw the change as unnecessary and disruptive. As Trudy [Deputy Principal female] states:

To me this is seen as just one more interruption  
I think that staff feel that they don't really need to involve themselves in this. Provided that the place runs smoothly they are quite happy for us to make decisions up here without being involved. (Trudy)

Responses from many staff members across teaching areas suggested most staff viewed the change as inevitable. However many staff expressed disinterest in becoming directly involved with the change. As one member of the senior staff put it:

Well I think that there is an element of "Oh! here we go again" ...One has to say I think that there is an element of apathy about it. Some people have other priorities and so on but I do think that when it

becomes a reality there will be a different attitude taken towards it. But I do think that at the moment there is a suspicion that it is the Ministry shunting it's responsibility onto schools and not being terribly interested in what such a SBDMG might do . (Robert)

This lack of enthusiasm among staff was seen by the Deputy Principal male as a direct consequence of the change overload being experienced due to the number of concurrent changes emanating from the Ministry.

Staff see the policy on School Based Decision-Making and School Development planning as just one more Ministry initiative to contend with at a time when there are too many concurrent changes occurring. (Mervin)

While many staff viewed the change as one of little importance, according to the Principal, parents and community members were quite enthusiastic about it.

But by speaking with parents I can see that they are in favour of it. The parents who have come in to see me are very enthusiastic about the school becoming more a community school ...Parents having the chance of increasing their participation in the school. (Patrick)

However, the Deputy Principal, Trudy, maintained that the existing P&C functioned in a manner with allowed sufficient parent input and that in her opinion there was little need for the establishment of new structures.

We have a very cooperative P&C so when we need funds they will help us and when they need something they come to us for help and we provide it. (Trudy)

#### **11.4.4 Complexity and Organizational Fit**

It was the perception of the members of the administration that establishment of a SBDMG would result in a fundamental and radical

change to existing decision-making procedures, particularly because of the loosely linked pedagogic sub-system of the school and the corresponding lack of any collaborative approach to decision-making. As the Principal stated:

I think I may have mentioned before that older schools like Jardine are very faculty-orientated. They have a long history of operating like that. The incumbent Senior Masters and Mistresses have been here for a long time and this means that to establish a participatory decision-making process will require a complete re-organization of the way the school is operating. (Patrick)

The Principal viewed such a re-organization as a very complex process, one that would necessitate dramatic changes to the relationships the members of the school held with one another. Further, since the existing P&C had functioned mainly as a fund-raising body, parental participation in the policy formulation of the school would mark a dramatic change in the relationship the school held with its community.

#### **11.4.5 Anticipated Problems**

For the Principal, the main problem in establishing a SBDMG concerned overcoming resistance among staff, particularly senior staff who were not convinced of the need for their active participation in school administrative issues.

In this school there is going to be a lot of resistance (and rightly so I think) to any move to influence directly the curriculum in any subject area. There may even be resistance to any move that changes the composition of the curriculum; that is the amount of time spent on particular subjects. (Patrick)

The Principal saw the causes of resistance stemming not only from the conservative and traditional nature of the existing subject dominated organizational structure, but also from a lack of understanding of the philosophy underpinning the change.

...That is something that is very obvious and it is one of the problems . They [the staff] have to be informed. They don't understand the importance of the corporate model of management. They don't understand the basis of the decision to go this way. They don't understand how it is intended to operate.  
(Patrick)

Both Deputy Principals expressed concern about the proposed structure and function of a SBDMG. However, the arguments offered were themselves contradictory. For example Trudy suggested that an SBDMG might not be truly representative of the whole school community.

I am terribly frightened that with a small group there is no real whole-school representation and students will miss out. I don't think that students will get an equal vote, despite that fact that they are there. I think that you can intimidate students. It could be done behind the scenes very easily. They could be lobbied and you will not get a fair representation.  
(Trudy)

At the same time, Trudy expressed concern that a SBDMG containing representatives of students and parents would result in such representatives determining school policy and affecting the operations of the school.

Also Parents and student members could combine like a block to outvote staff as well. Further the right of appeal seems to go to the district superintendent and the Principal didn't have any say. The superintendent could come back to the Principal and say "re-write your constitution or re-write your school development plan", and the Principal might not have



been in agreement with the plan when it was first produced and that seems to be a weakness with the approach. Members are not appointed they are elected, voted in so the Principal loses virtually all control. (Trudy)

Several staff interviewed also saw potential problems emerging. Among them was concern that the SBDMG would be perceived as a threat to the existing P&C and result in conflict between the school and P&C members. Further concerns were expressed about the lack of teacher support for, and participation in, a SBDMG. And finally, many staff saw an empowered SBDMG exercising an unwelcome influence over the curriculum and teaching issues. Such concerns are expressed in the following response from a senior member of staff.

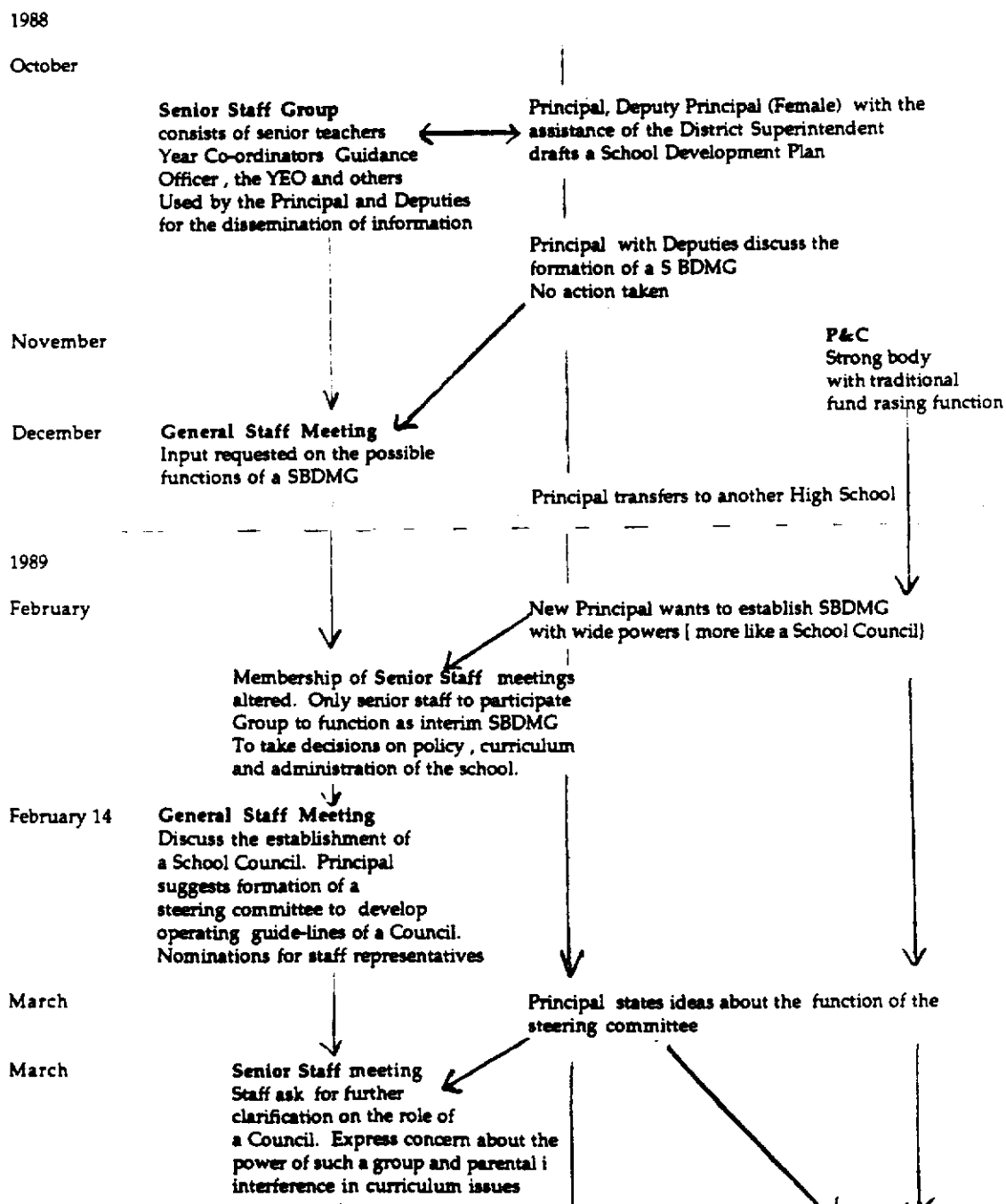
Yes I see problems with it ...I hope that staff will get involved ..that worries me. I'm certain that there will be some problems with the P&C simply in terms of persuading them to see that it might not be the monster that destroys everything that they have ever done. ...Beyond that I can't see too many more problems, although there are always things lurking in the background ...the sort of things that people warn you about such as the question of a SBDMG involvement in the area of curriculum [that's become an issue]. Is the SBDMG going to start banning books and that sort of thing? Beyond those fairly limited worries I don't think there will be too many problems. (Robert)

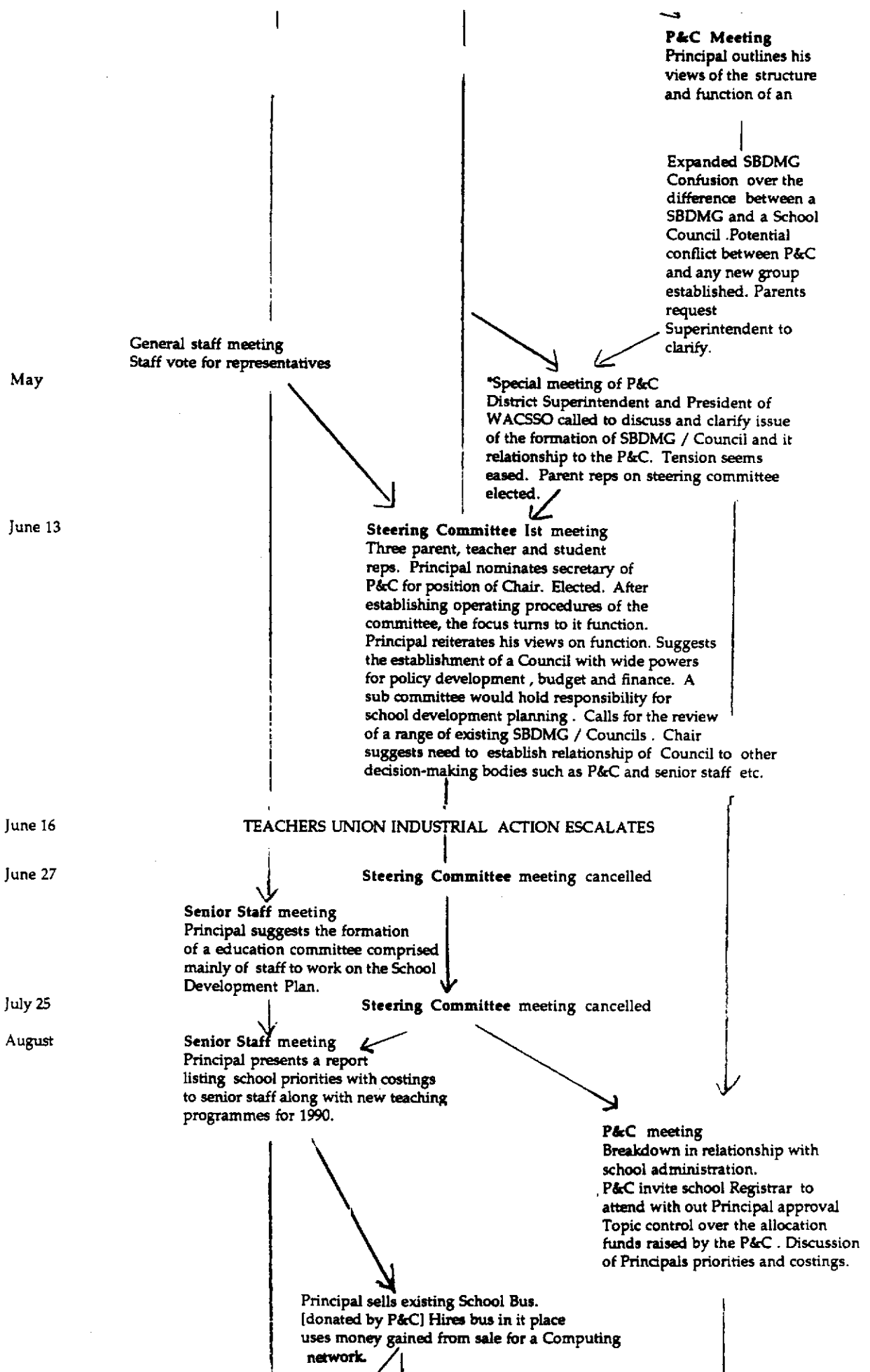
## **11.5 THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

Prior to the commencement of the 1989 school year, only superficial consideration had been given to the establishment of a SBDMG. The main reasons offered for such little progress were the lack of any legislative framework for their establishment together with imminent departure of the existing Principal. As a consequence, attention was turned to more

immediate school concerns such as curriculum offerings for the 1989 school year. With the arrival of the new Principal [Patrick], the establishment of a SBDMG was given more priority. The following event chart describes the critical issues and events that emerged as the school community embarked on the implementation process.

**TABLE : 7**  
**The Implementation Process at Jardine**  
**EVENT CHART**  
**IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL-BASED DECISION-MAKING GROUP**





## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **PROFILE OF MAYLUP SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **12.1 SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT**

Maylup Senior High School is located in a northern suburb of Perth close to the banks of the Swan river with sweeping views of the city skyline. The community the school serves is geographically quite large, taking in the four residential areas and parts of the light industrial area of McCoy. Each area differs somewhat in nature. Maylup [the suburb in which the school is sited] is a long established, solid middle class area with many people semi-retired or retired. School enrolments from this suburb have been declining since the late 1960's as the community has aged. In 1989 most students came from surrounding suburbs some distance away. In fact there are three suburbs adjacent to Maylup that now constitute the school's community. The largest provider of students is the suburb of Wallaroo. Wallaroo is a government housing suburb and shares the characteristics of similar housing estates. There are many single parent families, and many people dependent on social security payments such as supporting mothers' benefits or unemployment benefits. Riverwood is an affluent river side suburb which provides only a small number of students to the school. Most parents from this suburb prefer to send their children to private schools rather than to Maylup. The last suburb comprising the Maylup school community is that of Karridale. Karridale is a new middle

class suburb located on the outskirts of Maylup's student intake area. Most students from this suburb would normally attend Lakeview Senior High School. However, there is a growing perception by many parents in Karridale that Maylup Senior High is a "better" school than Lakeview. When asked in what sense was Maylup viewed as "better" the Deputy Principal [Lee-anne] replied:

Academically good and no problems. That might be because other schools in the area have their ups and downs and we don't appear to be having any.

According to Lee-anne, the existence of such a perception has led many Karridale parents to request application for enrolment at Maylup.

Their parents on the whole want their children to come here rather than Lakeview. However, I think that the strict enforcement of intake boundaries is likely to occur in 1990 .. So I suspect that we will not be able to admit as many student from Karridale next year. (Lee-anne)

#### **12.1.1 The School's Relationship with its Community**

This view of Maylup as a sound academic school has only recently emerged. During the seventies, the large student population and many consequent discipline problems led to a somewhat tarnished image for the school. As Phillip, the Principal, noted:

... The history of Maylup is such that it had gone down hill (without casting any aspersions on my predecessors) I think Maylup did suffer a bad name say six years ago.

The District Superintendent in support stated:

... I'm told that in the past it didn't have a very good reputation, but at the moment it is a very good school..as I said it's the best kept secret in Perth.

According to both Deputy Principals the school is now placing emphasis on academic achievement and discipline. They suggest such an emphasis is what the community is demanding from the school.

... We are running a fairly traditional programme and I think that with the quiet acceptance of the community that is a good way to go. (Paul)

According to many staff, support for the school's academic emphasis seems greater among parents from Maylup, Riverwood and Karridale. As Ken, a Science teacher, stated:

Maylup itself is a reasonably affluent community. It is made up of older people whose youngest child is now attending school. They, and parents from Karridale seem to value academic achievement. On the other hand there is Wallaroo. Wallaroo is a state housing commission area and there are a lot of single parent families most with little interest in schooling. Generally there is not very much parental involvement in the life of the school. Even our parent nights are poorly attended. (Ken)

While silent support for the school might exist, there is an apparent lack of widespread parental involvement in the life of the school. Poor attendance at parent-teacher nights is a common complaint among teachers. Further, records of minutes from the official parent body, the P&C, indicates minimal participation by parents in that forum. The extent of community involvement in the school is clearly indicated by the Deputy Principal:

Well they don't really [involve themselves]. The P&C has always had a poor following. There are one or two parents who come in and assist with the canteen and do a little bit of work in the Library; but the Library has always been a strange sort of an area so some of the parents say they don't want to work in the Library and leave. There are one or two parents who coach the odd team after school which is tremendous of them but it is not a hub of activity. (Paul)

Carol, a long serving member of staff, maintains that such limited involvement is characteristic of many metropolitan secondary school communities. She suggests that most parents prefer to leave educational decisions to school administrators and teachers.

They have the attitude ..well you are the experts so you make the decisions. (Carol)

Conversely, Mike a social studies teacher, believes that there are many parents who would like more involvement with the school. But the school administration has done little to encourage parental participation.

## **12.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **12.2.1 The Site**

Maylup Senior High School was opened in 1961 as one of the second wave of large government secondary schools. Its student population peaked at around 1 200 in the late 1960's but since that time student numbers have declined to the present enrollment of around 650. With the inclusion of new school programmes, and the growth of bordering housing estates, there is some indication of a possible increase in student numbers in 1990. Students and staff of Maylup Senior High are in the unique position of enjoying facilities which were provided for double the student numbers. The school is located on six hectares of elevated land overlooking both the Swan River and Perth City. The building design is similar to that of Jardine Senior High School and all other schools built in the early 1960's. Blocks of classrooms are built on two levels and are arranged to form two large rectangles. Broad verandahs face two large grassed quadrangles that serve as student recreation areas and assembly areas. Well kept gardens, border wide pathways that connect different teaching areas of the school. Large trees planted in the quadrangles and on the approaches to the school

provide ample shade in summer. The central quadrangle has been enclosed to form a refectory for student use in winter. In addition to classrooms, a library, gymnasium, swimming pool, and pre-vocational centre are provided. All buildings and facilities are well maintained with no evidence of degeneration or abuse by students. Large playing fields and tennis courts are situated on the south east parameter.

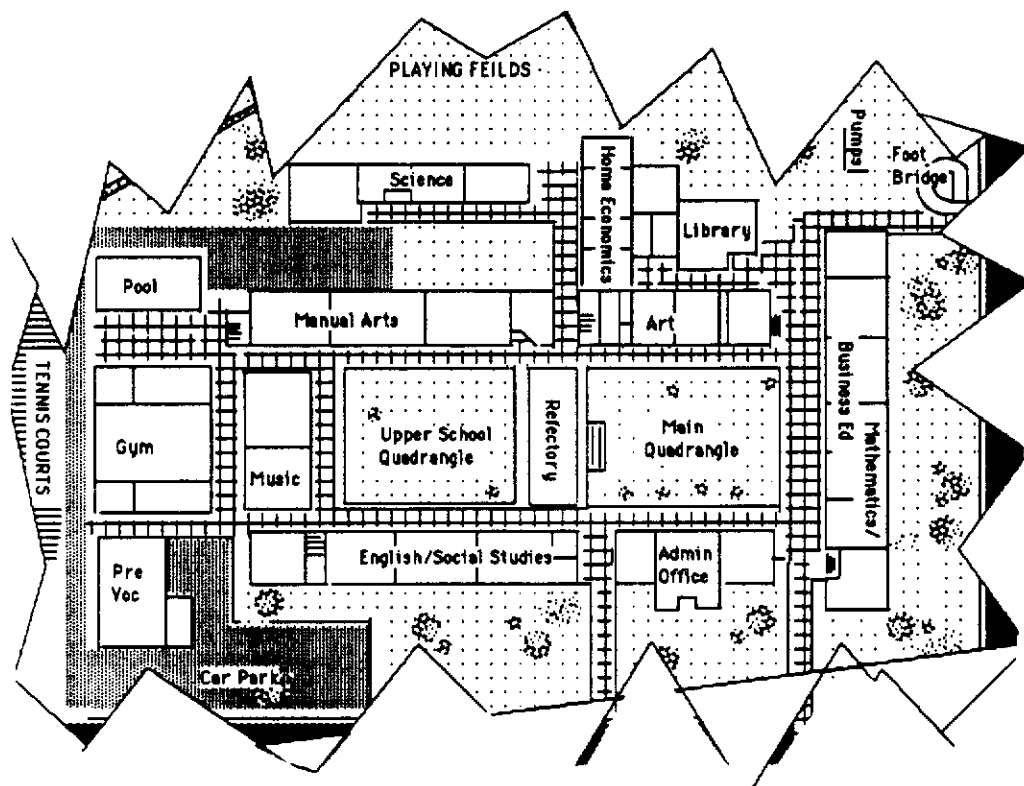


FIGURE : 14

Ground Plan of the Maylup School Site



### 12.2.2 Student Population Characteristics

The students attending Maylup are predominantly Australian-born European with small numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Chinese students. From on-site observations, over half the students wear school uniform while the remainder are in neat and clean attire. Behaviour, both in class and around the school yard, is orderly indicating most students have a responsible attitude toward school. The Deputy Principal recognizes that students seem well behaved, however he feels that there is a lack of enthusiasm and vitality about school life.

... I always liken this school to Charlie Carters [Supermarket], you come in with your shopping list, you pick up what you want, you go to the till pay the money and you leave. There is no sort of personal commitment no sort of character or personality to the school. The kids come and, go to lessons, have their lunch, some might train with something after school but there isn't much. There is no piano going on after school, there is not a great deal going on after school and not a great deal of commitment by teachers after school. Yet there are some who do stay back and do some coaching. (Paul)

Staff interviewed across teaching areas indicate that most students are average in their application and achievement. Indeed, according to school records less than 20% of students go on to tertiary studies: The view of Keith, a mathematics teacher, is representative of most staff:

Most of the kids seem to like school but they are not strong academically. I would label them as average to underachievers. (Keith)

Teachers hold differing views about the general character of the students. While most students are considered well behaved several teachers noted differences between students from the various intake areas, as the following statements indicate:

The students differ in attitude and behaviour. The ones from Maylup and Riverwood tend to be hyper arrogant. They think they are better than they really are. I have more time for the kids from Wallaroo, they are more open and down to earth. (Jenny)

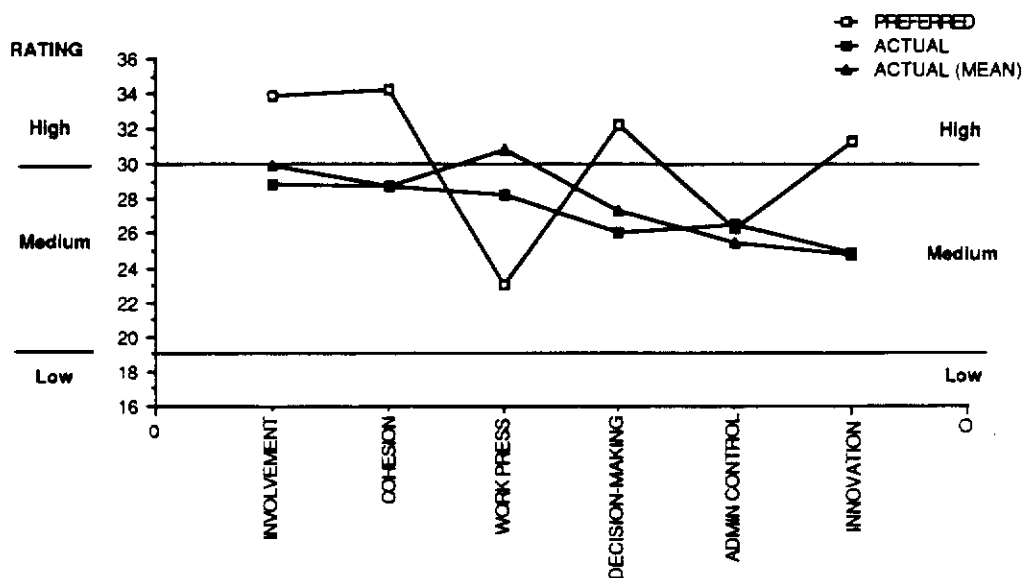
The Deputy Principal Female views the students from Wallaroo differently .

..The Kids from Wallaroo have got problems, a lot of social problems, which are really quite severe. We don't get too many behavioural problems but a few of the students from Wallaroo have caused problems. (Lee-anne)

The general consensus among the staff was that students were average ability, average achievers, sensible, and generally posed few management problems.

### **12.2.3 School Organizational Climate**

The data obtained from the SOCQ indicate that the staff at Maylup were moderately committed to their jobs, and friendly and supportive of each other. Further, the staff perceived a moderate degree of participation in decision-making and moderate emphasis on innovation and change. While scores were moderate along all six dimensions, the data shows a variation in the actual and preferred climate. There was preference for more participatory decision-making, innovation, involvement, and peer cohesion. When the school's actual scores were compared with the average for all schools surveyed, Maylup scored slightly lower or the same on all dimensions.



**FIGURE : 15**

**Maylup Senior High School Organizational Climate  
(November 1988)**

**12.2.4 School Sub-system Linkage**

Responses to the questionnaire items on school linkage indicate that while staff are proud of the school there is only a moderate sense of shared purpose. In short, the cultural linkage is moderate. Teachers indicate there is moderate emphasis on following policies and regulations within the school. Most staff feel their roles are reasonably well defined and there is reasonable communication between the administration and the classroom teacher. Generally the staff felt that structural linkage was moderate. Teachers indicate that the school administration has some influence over their professional conduct. Through weekly subject area meetings, the head of the teaching area informs teachers about current

school administrative thinking on a range of educational issues. Apart from these meetings there appeared minimal interference in the manner in which teachers planned or operated in the classroom. In short pedagogical linkage is moderate.

#### 12.2.5 Administrative Decision-making procedures

The decision-making group operating at the commencement of 1989 comprised the Principal working with both Deputy Principals. On some prior occasions senior staff had provided input into the decision-making process. This limited participation of classroom teachers and senior staff has, according to the Deputy Principal, been in existence from the late 1960's.

No ...no very much the contrary, most of our staff and particularly the senior staff were here during the Wilson Era when the school was run by him [I don't really know the man but we have had a lot of trouble overcoming that stigma. Wilson's philosophy was, *"This is the way it is going to happen and if you don't like the way it is going to happen then the transfer papers are on the desk"*. I have been here six or seven years now and the staff are only just freeing themselves from that and only because we are getting Senior Staff in from other schools. People here wouldn't say anything here at senior staff meetings, wouldn't contribute or commit themselves, and there are still a few here who are very hesitant and will back around what they want to say, and you never really get out of them what they are thinking.....Very cautious input from them. (Paul)

Since Jim Wilson's departure there has been some increase in the general participation of staff, but according to the Deputy Principal, no conscious effort has been undertaken to actively involve more teachers in the administrative and policy decision-making arenas.

Well they.... the procedure was I think that if they wanted to involve themselves they can and we will listen to them...but we will not go out and ask them what they want because that sows the seeds for people who really didn't want anything to start pushing a bit. So very much in the past the Principal would come up with an idea and he would present it in a subtle way to senior staff or anyone and it would sort of be a fait accompli. He would in a gentlemanly fashion put this out and usually because he was so convincing people were happy enough for it to run anyway. (Paul)

In 1987 a staff association was established to co-ordinate general staff meetings and to facilitate teacher involvement in decision-making. While this seemed a positive step, according to many teachers the staff association has done little to increase the influence teachers have over school administrative and policy decisions. While the Principal and the Deputies believe there is ample opportunity for staff involvement in policy making, the teachers interviewed feel that their influence over policy decisions was minimal. As one teacher put it:

The Principal canvases opinions sure but in the end he makes up his own mind. It is the Principal here who decides on policy. (Jeff)

Some teachers interviewed felt that the Principal tended to consult with Peter Jenkins [ a mathematics teacher] prior to policy decision-making. Peter has a history of advocating innovative programmes and is the current key mover for several innovations being considered by the school community.

As with many other secondary schools, the Principal along with both Deputy Principals at Maylup share responsibility for administration, finance, and the day to day operations of the school. Generally, curriculum issues fall within the domain of the Subject Area Head. Each Subject Area

Head, with input from classroom teachers, makes decisions about curriculum programming, implementation and evaluation of curriculum issues. On occasions, past Principals have pushed for a particular subject, such as music or languages, to be included in the school curriculum. More recently a number of new courses and programmes have been introduced, such as Aeronautics and the Secondary Education and Challenge Programme (SEAC). It is hoped that by offering such courses the decline in student enrolments might be reversed.

The day to day operations of the school are co-ordinated by the Deputy Principals. It is their role to maintain communications between administration, senior staff, and the classroom teacher. According to several staff members, the Deputy Principal's administrative role is, in reality, performed by a particular member of the clerical staff. That person's length of service at the school coupled with her managerial skills enabled her to administer the school.

The discipline of students is a role shared between both Deputies. However, in the latter part of 1988, the Deputy Principal Male has concentrated on timetable construction leaving all discipline issues to Leeanne [ Deputy Principal Female] and Senior Staff.

#### **12.2.6 Administrative leadership**

As with the Principal at Jardine Senior High School , Phillip Lawrence had been appointed Principal subsequent to the administration of the the SOCQ in November 1988. However, his reaction to the accompanying report was not as enthusiastic as had been Patrick's. In early February Phillip was contacted in order to gain feedback about the usefulness, or

otherwise, of the SOCQ report. While the Principal explained that he had been too busy to have read it, none the less, he expressed a preparedness to discuss the report and Maylup's continued involvement in the research. He spoke about his previous school and the successful implementation of "Better Schools" attempted under his stewardship. He was keen to illustrate the structure and operations of this model and began to sketch out the type of decision-making group he intended to establish at Maylup. He indicated some concern that Maylup had not responded to the Better Schools initiative when many other secondary school had established structures and procedures as early as 1987. He indicated that definite steps needed to be taken to bring Maylup into line with other secondary schools, and that he would force change to happen if necessary.

Well ... as I have said I have already trodden on a few toes ...I think Senior Masters are going to find that they are not the only ones that have something to offer with regard the planning of the school's direction... Up to now as I understand it the Senior Masters have a big part to play in making decisions .... they are going to feel the crunch...The staff, the ordinary staff member, is going to find himself more involved in making input. (Phillip)

It would seem that for Phillip a "boots and all" approach was the preferred option under his Principalship. Perhaps such an attitude can be partly explained by the fact that this was to be Phillip's final school before retirement and that he wanted to ensure that suitable and enduring structures might be established, his "swan song" so to speak.

Phillip is a stocky man whose interesting face and slow but measured speech indicates a confidence that evolved from years of experience as an

administrator. Phillip sees himself as a pragmatic person, open and accessible to all, the sort of benevolent autocrat whose task is to guide change. This view is evidenced by Phillip's response when asked if as incoming Principal he faced any resistance from staff.

I haven't found any difficulty ..with that ...maybe its because I have an open door policy. I have told the staff they can come in and see me during lunch time; I make myself available. I have had no difficulty with staff approaching me...I think the answer to that is the staff are pretty open themselves. They come up and speak their mind. (Phillip)

Most staff perceive Phillip to be a manager of tasks performed by others, only initiating change that is required by the Ministry. Further, they see Phillip as only moderately enthusiastic, supportive of his staff, but reasonably committed to his job. Many staff would like the Principal to provide clearer direction, especially with regard to those Ministry policy initiatives confronting the school. Most teachers interviewed felt that while Phillip seemed to be promoting collaborative decision-making, he generally made decisions totally by himself or only after consultation with relevant staff. As the Principal himself states:

I usually go around looking for input into decisions but it isn't in my nature to waste time. I go and consult people either individually or at meetings and then I make a decision within the day if possible ...I don't like wasting time. (Phillip)

### **12.3 PREPAREDNESS FOR CHANGE**

While Maylup is not described by many as an extremely innovative school. The incoming Principal holds a positive view of the responsiveness of the school to new ideas.



Yes, yes! It has the impaired hearing programme(section) here which draws students from a large area north of the river. We have SEAC extension programmes for talented students but that programme is small compared to the one we are getting next year . We are becoming the intake school for the area for academically talented, exceptional type students. Students will come to this school from Year Eight and proceed through to Year 12. This will I hope help raise the status of Maylup and have a spin off for other students in the school. Another thing we have is Aeronautics, although that is not doing so well at the moment but is still in operation. (Phillip)

However, according to longer serving residents of the school staff, such programmes represent a desperate attempt by the Ministry of Education to stem the decline in student numbers rather than the product of a vital and innovative school community. As the Deputy Principal stated:

No..no they [the Ministry] see Maylup as a school with a declining population . They try and keep our numbers going by giving us special things; we have a partial hearing group and next year we are getting a gifted group in Year Eight... So I don't know how they see us. They don't come out here. I've never seen anyone from the Ministry. It is not a gung- ho school. They know there is a school here sitting on some real good real estate. (Phillip)

Observational data coupled with staff interviews indicated that generally staff did not appear to be overly keen to take on some of the more recent policy innovations. According to several senior staff, and both Deputy Principals, the staff do not react well to innovations. As the Principal noted:

... Nobody likes new ideas when they have been in a secure position for a long time ( I know the feeling). I have already put forward a few new ideas which are being put into place and the reaction has been OK. There has been no hostility but I feel there has been some resistance. (Phillip)

Several senior staff and both Deputy Principals felt that teacher resistance to innovations and change is understandable given the number of changes introduced over the last few years. For Lee-anne, staff at Maylup see their primary task as teaching and instruction. Too many changes distract from this vital task.

No ...no I don't know if you can point this ..that people here have been lacking energy or professionalism, but we have gone through massive changes over the last few years and they are really fed up. To me the teacher wants to get into the classroom and teach his or her subject and not get interrupted just get on with the job. And they're hoping to get back to that I am sure. (Paul)

The character of the school is summed up in this final quote from a long serving teacher:

We are a very quiet little place, our kids don't disrupt houses around the place, we don't have a school band, a choir or kids marching in the streets, we don't have a lot of academic success worthy of news media coverage, we are just travelling along. (Jeff)

## **12.4 THE INITIATION PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **12.4.1 Advocacy for Change**

The Principal and both Deputy Principals saw advocacy for change residing in the head office of the Ministry of Education. No specific individual was readily cited as a key advocate. However there was a general belief that the executive director of schools was the prime mover for the establishment of SBDMGs. As the Deputy Principal Lee-anne states:

It is probably Max Angus .... He is into devolution.

While head office personnel were seen as playing a direct role in promoting the change little advocacy was seen emanating from the District

Office. For Paul, the relevance of the District Superintendent and District support staff to any secondary school issue was suspect.

Our district has been devoid of secondary people for a long long time. Their understanding of the impact of such a change on the High School would be limited. The present District Superintendent has been along time removed from teaching and her area was child care. The person before that was a primary person. There are a number of staff at District Office with primary backgrounds... I can't see any great push or initiative coming from the District. (Paul)

Within the school the main advocates for change were seen to be the Principal and Peter Jenkins, the Chairperson of the steering committee. It was Peter who was generally credited with generating both staff and parent interest in the establishment of a SBDMG during the latter part of 1988.

#### **12.4.2 Support & Assistance for Change**

For the staff at Maylup SHS, initial support and assistance for change was very limited. While information regarding the Better Schools Programme had been sent to the school, there had been no school-wide dissemination of this information. In 1988, the only existing member of staff to receive any in-servicing was the Deputy Principal, Paul. During the second semester in 1988 he had attended a workshop run by the District Superintendent. This workshop focused on a range of issues including school-based decision-making structures and procedures.

There was an in-service that the past Superintendent held. He presented a number of models of how a School Council should be put together and how it should work. But it was fairly broad... not very useful. (Paul)

The incoming Principal however, had the benefit of previously participating in the establishment of a SBDMG at his last school posting.

This experience was further expanded by his attendance at Ministry inservice seminars focusing on the Better Schools Programme.

Despite this experience the Principal remained critical about the lack of explicit information and support emanating from the Ministry of Education.

We haven't [had assistance] in that the Ministry has said "this is it, go ahead and do it"! ...So we haven't been given definite guide-lines and in a way that's a pity because we were re-inventing the wheel so to speak. (Phillip)

#### **12.4.3 Importance of the Change**

The Principal viewed the change as an important one for all schools. One he believed was long overdue. However, he was reticent about the speed at which such a significant change could be implemented.

I think it was something I wanted to see happen in my school even before the current push for it...I am for innovativeness. I would like to see the school take steps in that direction over here but I don't aim to do it over night. (Phillip)

Both Deputy Principals supported the Principal's view. Indeed, they saw the establishment of a SBDMG as critical strategy for the establishment of a self-determining school. As Lee-anne states:

I think it is the corner stone of the whole thing with the devolution of responsibility for decision-making, where schools are answerable and really we haven't got too many teeth to be answerable with. This sort of "outside body" [SBDMG] is a body the school will lean on very heavily. (Lee-anne)

While senior members of school administration seemed in agreement about the fundamental importance of the change, such a view was not so evident among members of the teaching staff, and particularly the senior staff. According to the Deputy Principal, Lee-anne, the senior staff expressed a deal of concern about the possible interference in school operations that might stem from an empowered SBDMG. They were especially concerned that they might lose responsibility for decisions over curriculum issues. Responses obtained from interviews with classroom teachers indicated that while many teachers saw the change as inevitable there were issues of a more immediate practical nature that dominated their working lives, issues such as lesson preparation and student discipline.

It's not all that important to me. I'm more concerned with classroom issues like discipline. Generally it is not important. There is a small group of committed people but most staff have a different agenda - surviving. (Lee-anne)

#### **12.4.4 Complexity and Organizational Fit**

The existing administrative decision making procedures at Maylup exhibited very limited opportunity for the participation of parents or teachers in the process. Indeed, even though senior staff were consulted on a regular basis, decisions were usually made by the Principal acting in concert with one or both Deputy Principals. In short, there was little history of collaborative decision-making at the school. As a consequence it seemed likely that significant changes would need to occur if a truly participatory decision-making body was to be established. The degree of re-structuring, however, would depend on the actual decision-making role assumed by the SBDMG. Accordingly, views about the likely impact of the change on existing decision-making procedures varied according to the vision participants held about the SBDMG.

The Principal saw substantial changes occurring with respect to the roles of administration and teaching staff alike, as the following two responses indicate:

Well most of the staff will have to become more involved. I see changes in roles of even us (the Principal and the Deputies). We will have to become more conscious of another body that we have to consult with. Naturally there will still have to be snap decisions made but at the back of our minds we will always have to bear in mind that there is another body that we will have to consult. After all if you lay down the rules you have to abide by them. You can't play on a football team unless you are prepared to abide by the rules of the game.

...I think Senior Masters are going to find that they are not the only ones that have something to offer with regard the planning of the schools direction.. Up to now as I understand it the Senior Masters have a big part to play in making decisions .... they are going to feel the crunch.....The staff the ordinary staff member is going to find himself more involved in making input. (Phillip)

Both Deputy Principals held the view that a SBDMG would have little impact on the existing decision-making procedures, and on the operations of the school. They saw the SBDMG as a supporting body, a body that could be used by the administration to deflect criticism away from individuals.

I don't think there will be great change in that respect but I would like to think that the Board [SBDMG] will be something we could lean on for support, that things would not be so lonely at the top. We [senior administration] could probably take a lot of the 'personalization' out of the job by saying that the Board [SBDMG] has directed me to say such and such or do so and so and that is that. (Paul)

#### 12.4.5 Anticipated Problems

Two particular issues of concern about implementation were expressed at Maylup. The first involved the lack of explicit information and guide-lines about the structure and function of SBDMG. As the Principal stated:

...We still haven't got any definite guide-lines ..  
I have not seen any... What exactly are the parameters  
of the School Based Decision-Making Group?  
Who exactly holds the can at the end of the day if  
something goes wrong? ...At the moment it is still the  
Principal. (Phillip)

The second issue concerned the perception by senior administration that parents and community members were not knowledgeable or skilled enough to make a positive contribution to the development of school policy and the operations of the school. As the Principal states:

Well the obvious weakness is that with all the  
goodwill in the world you bring in people from  
outside your school and you ask them to participate in  
decision-making and find that they don't have the  
background. They haven't got the knowledge.. Parents  
might want to come along and join a group, but they  
feel out of their depth especially when talking to  
teachers so that's a weakness. (Phillip)

The Principal's suggested solution to this problem was to establish a SBDMG that operated as a supervising body only. Real decision-making would be the responsibility of a smaller group, a "working group" comprised mainly of teachers, a solution he intended to present to the steering committee as the preferred model for Maylup SHS.

TABLE : 8

The Implementation Process at Maylup

EVENT CHART  
IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL-BASED DECISION-MAKING GROUP  
1988-1989

1988

September

Acting Principal + Deputy Principal  
Decision-making group

Senior staff meetings  
used for the dissemination  
of information No d-m function

Acting Principal attends District inservice re  
formation of SBDMG's

General Staff meeting to  
elect representatives & co-ordinator of  
Steering Committee

Coordinator works on  
draft a constitution  
for a SBDMG to be called  
The Maylup School Board

October 11

Acting Principal  
with Coordinator Post Compulsory  
design needs survey re school development

P&C  
Operating a a  
Fund raising  
Group

November 8

Needs survey administered to parents  
students and staff. Commissioned  
report requested.

1989

February

New Principal  
Expresses support for establishment  
of a SBDMG. Brings model from  
Previous school.

Principal alters function of  
senior staff to include discipline

March 1

Principal + Deputies  
continue as key d-m  
group

Steering Committee meeting  
Principal tables a model for  
school decision-making  
opposes name School Board in favour  
of Council. Delineates the function  
of Council and SBDMG. Introduces  
a Framework for School Development  
Planning. Draft constitution presented for  
discussion.

March 9

Task force formed by Principal  
members of staff only.  
Discuss function [see appendix]



March 22

Senior staff meetings  
used for the dissemination  
of information

Steering Committee meeting  
Chairperson raises issue of a  
School Council relationship to  
existing decision-making groups  
such as the P&C. Principal stresses  
need for one policy decision-making  
group. Also stresses his responsibility  
as Principal. Wording of constitution  
reviewed. Principal reports on the  
formation of a task force & calls for  
parental participation.

Task force with the Principal  
draft a school organizational  
model.

P&C meeting  
Agree to amend  
their constitution  
to fit in with  
School Council.

April 6

Principal + Deputies  
meet regularly to  
make decisions re  
operation of the school

Steering committee meeting  
Draft constitution reviewed and  
amendments made in accordance  
with the Education Act amendment  
Bill. Principal expresses concern about  
draft regulations. Hopes for speedy  
formation of Maylup Council.

May 12

Staff Association & Student Council  
elect School Council representative

May 17

Steering Committee meeting  
Draft constitution reviewed and  
ratified. Elected members named.  
Council presented with organizational  
model, and a list of areas for possible  
policy development.

May 29

Principal sends letters to  
two parents re membership of  
task force.

May 31

Task force coordination writes to  
District Superintendent re 1990  
priorities for school development Plan

June 6

UNION LETTER TO PRINCIPALS REGARDING PARTICIPATION  
IN SBDMG's and DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.

June 12

Principal posts agenda for  
1st council meeting. Main Items  
election of office bearers, acceptance  
of reports & priorities for school development

June 14

School Council meeting  
cancelled due to industrial action

July 5

Senior Staff meetings  
used for the dissemination  
of information

Social gathering of community  
and parent representatives of the  
School Council. Principal and  
Union rep explain industrial action.

November 14

Principal + Deputies  
focus on operation of the  
school and organizational  
matters for 1990

Parent Forum  
Parent reps of the Council  
+ P&C officials attend  
meeting to consider  
finance for 1990.

## **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

### **CROSS SITE ANALYSIS**

#### **13.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a cross-site analysis of the events and issues that emerged as each school attempted to establish a School-Based Decision-Making Group. Generally, the implementation process appeared to be comprised of a number of interrelated sub-processes or phases (the initiation phase, the adaptation phase and the operational phase). It is these phases that serve as an organizing framework for the analysis. Data indicated that the first two phases (initiation and adaptation), appeared influenced by the characteristics of the innovation as well as the characteristics of the school setting. Additionally, the adaptation phase was particularly subject to interventions stemming from the general school environment, the most influential of which was that orchestrated by the State School Teachers' Union. The following sections analyse these first two phases in the implementation process.

#### **13.1 FACTORS AFFECTING THE INITIATION PHASE**

This phase of the implementation process was similar to the readiness stage described by Rosenblum & Louis (1981). The degree of readiness or "preparedness" of the school to undergo change varied not only among members within each school community, but also between the schools.

The variation among staff and parents preparedness for change appeared related to the differential access to information concerning the establishment of SBDMGs among participants. Variation between schools seemed related to specific setting characteristics of the school itself. Taken together, the perceptions about the innovation and the existing characteristics of the school setting, indicated a school's disposition to action rather than a cause of implementation. Generally, this phase was characterized by what Weick (1976) described as a period of uncertainty and openendedness. While some members of each school community, in particular the Principals, had a sound knowledge of the nature of the change, other members including staff and parents had little understanding of the decisions they faced, nor the possible solutions they might employ to implement the innovation.

#### **13.1.1 The Role of the Principal**

Most Ministry information concerning the Better Schools Programme was disseminated within the school community via the school Principal. It is understandable therefore, that the Principals were best informed about the substance of proposed changes. In addition, Principals gained information through Ministry in-servicing and WAHSPA meetings focusing on specific aspects such as SBDMGs and school development planning. As a consequence, all three Principals had a sound understanding of the Ministry's stated philosophy of self-determining schools. While the Principals saw the change as one which was primarily politically and economically inspired, they also saw the educational value in self-determining schools. All three Principals were largely in agreement with this philosophy. Further, each Principal had formed ideas about the possible structure and function of the SBDMG to be established. For the

Principals of Maylup and Jardine, experience with the establishment of a SBDMG at their previous schools had equipped them with clear and quite firm views about the appropriate structure and functions of SBDMGs.

Despite their agreement with the philosophy of self determining schools, all Principals indicated concern about the establishment of SBDMGs. Of particular concern was the efficiency of a participatory approach to the decision-making procedures of the school. The Principals of both Maylup and Langley perceived participatory decision-making to be potentially time consuming, complex and hence inefficient. Both Principals expressed a preference for a more authoritarian approach, yet they could see that the opportunity for input from staff and community members had value to the school. Further, all three Principals expressed some concern about the impact that a SBDMG might have on their authority. Accordingly, they expressed an intention to develop structures that preserved or enhanced their role as Principal.

### **13.1.2 The Role of Community Members**

Deputy Principals, staff and parents' perceptions about the policy on SBDMGs seemed to vary according to what information had been disseminated by the Principal or had been obtained through other sources. At Langley for instance, there had been open discussion among staff and parents about the Better Schools Programme and specific aspects such as the establishment of a SBDMG, while at Maylup and Jardine, very limited discussions had taken place with staff and even less with parents.

For the staff at Maylup and Jardine, the only official document disseminated was a Ministry of Education re-print of the initial Better Schools Programme in the March 1987 edition of the WA Education News. Due to a lack of clarity in the wording of the Better Schools Programme it seemed inevitable that staff perceptions of the policy on SBDMGs would be confused. From the responses of staff interviewed at Maylup and Jardine, it was apparent that many staff members viewed the change as a purely political and economic cost-cutting exercise. Further, a deal of confusion existed about the intended structure and function of SBDMGs. For example, many staff viewed the SBDMG as an all powerful body that would exercise authority over the selection and tenure of the Principal and the hiring and firing of staff. This perception was prompted by two statements contained within the Better Schools Report.

This statement concerning the selection of teachers stated that:

In order that schools may become properly self-determining, it will be necessary that they have the authority and responsibility to select their own teaching staff. (Better Schools Report, p 9)

Under a subsequent heading of SBDMGs the specific function of such a group was given as:

... participating in defining the role of the Principal and advising on selection and appointment of the Principal. (Better Schools Report, p 11)

While an assurance was offered by the Ministry that employment and payment of staff would remain the responsibility of the Ministry, many staff interpreted the statements as vesting unacceptable authority in the SBDMG.

Staff also expressed concern about the possible intrusion that an empowered SBDMG might make into the curriculum decision-making arena (pedagogic sub-system). There was a perception among staff members that it was inappropriate for non-educationalists parents and community members to be making policy in this area as well as determining the operations of the school.

### **13.1.3 Clarity of the Innovation**

Concerns about the substance of the innovation were accompanied by concerns about the lack of sufficient guide-lines and support for its implementation of the policy on SBDMGs. The Principals of all three schools felt the initial statement concerning the establishment of SBDMGs lacked sufficient clarity and specificity. For the Principal of Jardine, this lack of specificity was viewed positively since it enabled the establishment of a SBDMG that could assume more critical and powerful functions than those implied in the Better Schools Report. However, the Principals of Langley and Maylup Senior High Schools expressed a preference for clear guide-lines as to the structure and functions of SBDMGs. They were particularly concerned about the lack of any legislative frame-work governing the establishment of SBDMGs. Without such guide-lines and legislative frame-work in place they felt it could be possible that the SBDMG established at the school might not conform in both structure and function to eventual Ministry regulations. Their concern over the lack of specific guide-lines also reflected a history of dependence by state schools on the Ministry of Education to direct and prescribe changes for schools. Such concern also suggests that the philosophy of self-determination for schools had not been fully understood by those at the school level.

PERCEPTIONS	SCHOOL		
<b>Advocacy for change</b>	Langley SHS	Maylup SHS	Jardine SHS
External	Ministry Personnel	Ministry Personnel	Ministry Personnel
Internal	Principal	Principal/Chair Steering Committee	Principal

**TABLE 9**  
**Advocacy for Change**

Table 9, indicates that all three schools saw the main advocacy for change stemming from the Central Office of the Ministry of Education rather than from the school community. In short, the change was perceived as "top down" rather than school-based. At both Jardine and Langley, the Principal was seen as the main within-school advocate for change. At Maylup this role was shared by the Principal and a member of the staff. In all schools the Principal expressed a commitment to, and support for, the establishment of SBDMGs.

PERCEPTIONS	SCHOOL		
<b>The Innovation</b>	Langley SHS	Maylup SHS	Jardine SHS
Importance	High	Moderate	Moderate
Adaptability	High	High	High
Clarity	Moderate	Moderate/low	Moderate/low
Complexity	Moderate/low	Moderate	High
Initial support	Limited	Limited	Very Limited
Assistance	SDO/Teacher	SDO/Teacher	NIL

**TABLE : 10**  
**Initial Perceptions of the Innovation**

Initial responses by school administrators and staff to the policy on SBDMGs varied across school sites. At Langley the change was perceived as highly important, while at the other two sites only moderate importance was attached to the change. At all three sites the innovation was viewed as lacking clarity and therefore subject to adaptation by the participants in the change process. Perceptions about the complexity of the change seem influenced by the existing decision-making procedures operating in the school. For instance, at Langley, where there was a history of school community collaboration in decision-making, the change was perceived as relatively simple and straight forward. However, at Jardine no decision-making tradition existed, therefore the change was perceived as a very complex one.

All three schools indicated a dissatisfaction with the level of initial support offered by the Ministry. In particular, concern was expressed about the lack of in-servicing for staff and parents about the philosophy underpinning Better Schools. Further concerns were expressed about the amount of time and resources available to the school to engage in the implementations process.

### **13.3 SCHOOL SETTING CHARACTERISTICS**

It was apparent that receptivity of initial responses by members of each school community appeared to be strongly influenced by the existing characteristics of the school setting. Of particular influence was the school organizational climate, the degree of sub-system linkage, the existing decision-making procedures, the schools relationship to the community and the nature of leadership within the school. All such characteristics seemed to influence school staff perceptions about the organizational fit of



the innovation; that is, how well the notion of a SBDMG would mesh with the existing structures and procedures of the school.

### **13.3.1 Organizational Climate**

The most receptive initial stance towards the establishment of a SBDMG appeared at Langley, the school with the most favourable organizational climate. This school's climate was characterized by high staff involvement and cohesion, coupled with an emphasis on participatory decision-making, innovation and change. Generally staff at Langley responded enthusiastically to the innovation and were keen to be involved with its implementation. The favourable climate seemed to foster a preparedness among staff, not only to support the implementation, but to expend time and energy to ensure the change occurred.

At Maylup the organizational climate was less favourable than that of Langley. While staff were reasonably involved and cohesive, there existed less emphasis on participatory decision-making, innovation and change. Accordingly, enthusiasm for the establishment of a SBDMG was not as apparent among staff as it was at Langley. The school with the most unfavorable organizational climate was Jardine. While staff at this school appeared professionally involved there was very little emphasis on participatory decision-making or on innovation and change. For most staff members, the pressures on them related to the implementation of other innovations which were dominating their work environment. Consequently, little awareness or support for the establishment of a SBDMG was expressed.

### **13.3.2 Sub-system Linkage**

A high degree of linkage between the sub-systems of the school augured well for a positive initial perception of the innovation by members of a school's staff. For example, at Langley where sub-system linkage was high, there was a shared sense of purpose between the administration and the staff, together with a perception that the establishment of a SBDMG would bring changes to the whole-school organization.

Where linkage was low, as was the case of Jardine, the establishment of a SBDMG tended to be perceived as involving a change to the structural sub-system alone and therefore was of little significance to the cultural and pedagogic sub-systems of the school. For some staff at both Jardine and Maylup, concern was expressed that the innovation might reduce the autonomy of the pedagogic sub-system by exerting influence over curriculum and instruction issues. Further, there was some concern about the SBDMG serving as a mechanism to make teachers more accountable at the school and Ministry level. Staff with such concerns either rejected the innovation outright or sought to participate in the implementation process with the aim to restrict the intrusiveness of the change.

### **13.3.3 Administrative Decision-Making**

The existence of some form of participatory decision-making structure and procedures at the school appears strongly associated with a positive initial stance towards the innovation. This was most evident at Langley where the existence of a School Development Committee and a series of smaller sub-committees, permitted a broad level of staff and community participation in the school decision-making process. Staff and parents already involved in such committees viewed the establishment of a SBDMG as a rationalization of existing structures and procedures. For

them, the innovation implied little fundamental organizational change and therefore posed little demand on them as participants in the change process.

At both Maylup and Jardine, there was little history of a collaborative approach to decision-making. The decision-making structures and procedures at these schools differed markedly to those existing at Langley. Maylup and Jardine operated within very traditional decision-making structures. At these schools participation in decision-making was restricted to heads of teaching areas and other senior members of the administration. It should be noted however, that at Jardine, recent developments in decision-making procedures had seen the expansion of the decision-making group to include other senior members of staff. Despite such changes, there was a perception among school staff that minimal decision-making occurred within this group; rather decision-making still resided with the Principal and both Deputy Principals.

The lack of a prior collaborative approach to decision-making at both Maylup and Jardine meant the establishment of a SBDMG would involve a radical departure from the existing decision-making procedures; one that would necessitate the establishment of new relationships between members of the administration, staff and parents. Consequently the Principals at both schools saw its implementation as a complex and possibly conflicting procedure. Despite such an apparently poor organizational fit between the innovation and the school, there was a perception among members of the school administration that the establishment of a SBDMG was an important innovation for the school. At Maylup for example, the Principal viewed the innovation as a desirable departure from existing structures and procedures; one that could benefit

the school by raising its public profile. Similarly, the Principal at Jardine saw the innovation as a means to revitalize the school and hence was an important and valuable organizational change for the school.

#### **13.3.4 The School and its Community.**

Each school held a discernibly different relationship with its community. Of the three schools, Langley appeared to have the weakest relationship with its parent body. There was a perception among the staff of this school that there existed a good deal of community support for the school, however there was little direct parental involvement in the life of the school. While it was not anticipated that there would be any opposition to the principle of forming a SBDMG, the lack of parental involvement with the school did suggest problems might be experienced in gaining sufficient parental representation on a SBDMG.

By contrast, Jardine had a strong parent body that had established a powerful role in the generation of funds and the allocation of those funds within the school. This history of direct involvement in the operation of the school resulted in many members of the P&C opposing the creation of a new decision-making body. Such members feared that the SBDMG would assume total responsibility for many of their key functions and thus reduce their authority. At Maylup, while a satisfactory relationship existed between the school and its community, the P&C had become a rather ineffectual body. It had a small representation of parents and met infrequently. The executive of the P&C appeared to be receptive to the notion of a SBDMG and was prepared to surrender responsibilities to ensure the SBDMG could function as the main school decision-making body.

### **13.3.5 Administrative Leadership**

Leadership, particularly the Principal leadership style, seemed to have a pronounced impact on the school's receptivity towards the innovation. In the case of Langley, the Principal, Irene was a very dynamic and entrepreneurial leader, one who actively promoted collaboration and participatory decision-making. Her positive stance towards the change did much to generate enthusiasm among both staff and community members. Her support of the change was evident to staff and parents alike. However she held concerns about the impact that an empowered SBDMG might have on her authority as Principal and was therefore determined to delimit the functions of any group established.

At both Maylup and Jardine, both Principals were new to their schools. While these Principals brought with them skills and experience associated with the establishment of SBDMGs in previous schools, they differed in leadership style. Patrick, the Principal of Jardine, adopted a similar leadership style to that of Irene. He was strongly committed to the establishment of a SBDMG and was clearly an initiator and facilitator of change. Patrick almost assumed an evangelical approach to change. He was openly prepared to bring about the establishment of a SBDMG that was more empowered than that implied in the Better Schools Programme.

In contrast, Phillip the new Principal at Maylup, adopted a more managerial style of leadership. His prior experience with the implementation of a SBDMG meant he had developed firm ideas about the desirable structure and functions of such a group. Unlike Patrick, Phillip had entered a school that had already begun to plan for the implementation of a SBDMG. Consequently he saw his task as one of maintaining the momentum for change while seeking to influence the process according to his vision. As

with the Principal at Langley, Phillip was concerned to ensure that whatever the character of group became established at Maylup, the ultimate power over decision-making would remain with the Principal.

With the exception of Maylup, it was the Principal who mobilized staff and community participation in the implementation process. In all three schools, it was the Principal who provided continuing support for the change process. At both Langley and Maylup the Principals collaborated in this process with informal leaders drawn from the school staff, while at Jardine the Principal operated unassisted by any one particular member of staff.

School setting variables that affected the initiation phase have been summarized in Table 11 .

SETTING CHARACTERISTICS	SCHOOL		
	Langley SHS	Maylup SHS	Jardine SHS
Organizational Climate Rating	High	Medium	Medium/low
Sub-system linkage	High	Moderate	Low
Administrative D-M leadership/Principal	Collaborative Initiator/manager	Consultative Responder/manag	Consultative Initiator
Parents/School Involvement	Weak	Moderate	Moderate/strong
<b>Organizational Fit</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low</b>
Anticipated Problems 1	Obtaining parental involvement	Parental skills	Obtaining sufficient staff support
2	Conflict with Dev Comm'	Lack of guidelines	Conflict with P&C

TABLE : 11  
School Setting Characteristics and Initiation

Table 11 indicates that sound organizational climate, high sub-system linkage and a history of collaboration in decision-making, promote a more receptive initial stance to change. For Jardine where the climate was poor, sub-system linkage low, and no history of collaboration in decision-making, it was anticipated that the change would not only be a poor fit with the existing organization, but that there would be problems with both staff and parental support for such change. Initial perceptions about the innovation appeared related to the type of subsequent action undertaken by the schools during the adaptation stage. Where school staff perceived the innovation to be important and have "good fit" with the characteristics of the school setting, there appeared positive commitment to implementation. Where school staff perceived the innovation to be a "poor fit" with particular local characteristics of the school, the necessity for change was often questioned. Further, as the difficulties and complexity of the change were identified, there was general reluctance to commence implementation phase.

#### **13.4 FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADAPTATION PHASE**

In this phase, a small group usually termed a steering committee was formed at all three school sites. These steering committees comprised representatives from the total school community. These representatives had the task of preparing guide-lines to define both the structure and functions of the SBDMG. In order to develop such guide-lines, the steering committee members undertook to translate the Ministry policy on SBDMGs within the specific context of the school. Hence it was during this phase that a process of "interactive modification" occurred. Knowledge about the particular and often unique characteristics of the school setting prompted decisions to be made about what was a desirable and appropriate interpretation of the policy on SBDMGs for the school. Further, the policy

prompted specific changes to the existing decision-making structures and procedures to accommodate the innovation.

While events in this process have been charted for each school it is valuable to analyse such adaptation in more detail. Of particular importance was the extent to which characteristics unique to a particular school influenced decisions taken about both structure and functions of the SBDMG. Of equal importance was the extent to which external interventions impacted on the adaptation process.

Drawing on data derived from observations of steering committee meetings, minutes of such meetings and the analysis of documents considered by participants in the adaptation process, the cross-site analysis was undertaken. The analysis offered here not only examines group processes, but also the impact of information, assistance and interventions that appeared influential or decisive to the adaptation process.

#### **13.4.1 Planning Group Processes**

At all three schools the steering committees comprised the Principal, staff and parent representatives. For both Langley and Jardine the key member of the steering committee appeared to be the Principal. At Maylup there were two key members. One was a classroom teacher who had been elected Chairperson of the steering committee, the other was the Principal. Across all three schools, the role of each key player was remarkably similar. They organized the agenda for each meeting, co-ordinated meeting procedures and, most importantly, distributed information regarding Ministry policy on SBDMGs. However, it should not be inferred that all key players dominated the adaptation process to the extent that they determined the course of events. Indeed, the degree of domination varied across the sites.



For example, at Maylup the Chairperson of the steering committee assumed individual responsibility for drafting guide-lines (in this case a constitution (see Appendix M1). He expressed the view that once drafted, other members of the steering committee could modify it by adding or deleting aspects. However, through his initial input, a basic control over the direction of the guide lines would remain with the Chairperson. With the arrival of the new Principal in 1989, new ideas about the structure and function of the SBDMG were introduced to the steering committee. These ideas were based on the model of the decision-making group operating at the Principal's previous school (see Appendix P) The Principal urged the adoption of the model not only citing its proven success, but also the disadvantages involved of having to "re-invent the wheel". The Principal reminded the steering committee of the Ministry expectation that SBDMGs should be operational by term one 1989. This meant that there was insufficient time remaining to develop and design a unique model for Maylup.

During subsequent meetings of the steering committee discussions revolved around the extent to which the emerging constitution could reflect the Principal's model. While the Principal appeared to allow the Chairperson to set the focus of discussions, both the minutes and field notes taken revealed that on several key issues the Principal's views prevailed. Firstly, the Principal insisted that the SBDMG be the only policy decision-making body and that all other bodies including the P&C be subservient to it. Secondly, the Principal insisted that the central authority of the office of "Principal" be recognized and maintained in statements of the function of the SBDMG. And finally, that a "Taskforce" comprised mainly of staff be established to make the critical decisions concerning school development. Plans emerging from this "Taskforce" would be presented to the SBDMG for ratification.

While the influence of the Principal within the steering committee was clearly evident, there were other members of the group who also influenced the decisions taken. In particular, the Chairperson, the existing president of the P&C and a parent representative, appeared to be familiar not only with formal meeting procedure but also with the formulation of a constitution. Indeed, all three representatives contributed much with regard to the framing of the objectives of the constitution. Of particular significance was their successful re-working of the group's objectives to include participation in the formulation and ratification of educational policy, as well as the monitoring and review of the school development plan. These additional objectives represented a considerable expansion of the decision-making power of the group from the largely supportive functions initially suggested in the Principal's model. The president of the Maylup P&C in support of an empowered SBDMG, expressed a willingness to push for amendments to the constitution of the P&C to ensure that it was subservient to the new SBDMG. Any possible objections from the Principal appeared stymied by the Chairperson's use of the enabling legislation to press for such functions.

At Langley there were two distinct planning phases for the establishment of a SBDMG. In the first phase, the Principal of Langley called for the formation of a steering committee. The resulting committee consisted of the Principal, the SDO, two members of staff and one parent. As convener, and by virtue of her positional authority, the Principal assumed an important and influential role within this committee. During the initial meetings the Principal expressed concern about two issues that appeared to influence the direction of decisions taken. The first concerned the anticipated difficulty of generating sufficient parental interest to permit

adequate community representation on a SBDMG. The second concerned the potential interference that an empowered SBDMG might have on the operations of the school and upon the authority of the Principal. Further, given the existence of a committee dealing with school development issues, the Principal felt that any new group ought to take on a school/community support role rather than deal with educational policy issues.

Outside of the meetings, the Principal spent time sharing her concerns and discussing the issues of structure and function of the proposed SBDMG with the School Development Officer and the two staff representatives. These two staff representatives were given the brief to develop guide-lines for the establishment of the decision-making group. Given the existence of shared concern, it came as no surprise that the resulting guide-lines suggested the group should function in close cooperation with the school administration in promoting and supporting the school. Included in the statement of function was the recognition that the Principal retained responsibility for the management of the school. Apart from making recommendations about school policy, the decision-making authority of the group appeared strictly limited.

Despite the existence of such guide-lines, the function of the proposed SBDMG was not fixed. In the second phase of steering committee planning, emerging Ministry documents, in particular the draft enabling legislation, suggested a more critical role be assumed by such a group in development planning. Such a role was clearly not accommodated within the steering committee guide-lines. Further, the new functions contained in such Ministry documents seemed to replicate the existing functions of the Langley school development committee.

This emerging emphasis of the critical role of the SBDMG prompted a reassessment of the planning direction the steering committee was taking. Obviously concerned, the Principal sought assistance from the SDO to help clarify Ministry intentions and to delineate the functions of the SBDMG and the existing development committee. The SDO suggested that since the functions of the existing development committee seemed to mirror those suggested for the SBDMG, there were only two possible alternatives for Langley. The first was for the existing development committee to be reconstituted as the SBDMG. The second was for the proposed SBDMG to take over all the functions of the development committee and allow it to disband. The Principal expressed a preference for the first alternative, viewing the SBDMG as a council operating as a formal parent and community group.

During the ensuing planning meetings the Principal sought to influence the eventual functions of the SBDMG by limiting discussion about such issues. The steering committee was not informed about the possibility of their assuming responsibility for policy generation, development planning, monitoring and review. Further, through control of the agenda, the meetings served as a forum for the dissemination of information about domestic issues, rather than engaging in any specific decision-making. When asked about the extent to which parent representatives participated in the generation of policy and development planning, the Principal responded:

No, no, not at all... they are just there. They are there so we can say that parents have been involved in the meetings.

This token participation of parents in the steering committee was evident throughout the planning meetings. As the Deputy Principal observed:

I don't think our parents or community members influence the planning process at all.

At Jardine the new Principal entered a school with a particular vision for the school. He expressed a desire to "revitalize" the school by undertaking a radical re-organization of the existing decision-making procedures. Of fundamental importance to such a re-organization was the creation of a SBDMG that had broad powers over school policy, resources and budgeting and that it would co-ordinate a number of proposed sub-committees. Much of the basis of this vision was derived from the Principal's experience with the establishment of a SBDMG at his previous school. Indeed the Principal brought with him a model for a school council that represented what he believed to be a successful and therefore desirable model for Jardine (see Appendix P1). However, he did not propose to fully replicate this model; rather, he was anxious for representatives of the school community to consider his model in light of the unique requirements of Jardine.

Because the Jardine school community had given very little prior consideration to the formation of a SBDMG, the Principal saw his role as the key promoter and facilitator of change. Accordingly, he encouraged members of the steering committee to consider establishing a SBDMG that could exercise considerable powers over both school policy development and school finances. In so doing, the Principal indicated a preparedness to reduce his autonomy and share authority for decision-making with all the representatives on the SBDMG.

The steering committee comprised of representatives drawn from the staff, the student body and parents. As previously noted it was one of the parent representatives, who exerted a tremendous influence over the planning process. The P&C at Jardine was a powerful body with a history of strong involvement in fund raising and subsequent allocation of resources within the school. The executive of this body viewed the Principal's model of a school council as posing a direct threat to the operations of the P&C. Consequently, the P&C representative openly opposed the establishment of any SBDMG that didn't emerge as a sub-committee of the P&C.

The power struggle both inside and outside of the steering committee led not only to a division within this planning group, but ultimately to open hostility between the P&C and the school administration. After several tense preliminary meetings, overt planning was abandoned altogether and new strategies emerged that took the issue into the broader arena.

At each school, in all steering committee meetings, a key person maintained a position of authority and a significant influence over the adaptation process. This was particularly so at both Langley and Maylup where clear indications of what Janis (1985) termed "group think" arose during the sequence of planning meetings. At Langley for instance, every suggestion put by the Principal was overtly supported by the participants. At Maylup, while contributions to the planning process were forwarded by the Principal, among teachers and parents, there was very limited debate or dissension. Only at Jardine did open debate and conflict occur between the key person and parent representatives.

#### **13.4.2 Assistance**

The amount of assistance sought by steering committees during the adaptation phase varied considerably from site to site. At Langley a strong relationship existed between the school and the District School Development Officer. The SDO served three functions for the steering committee. Firstly, he provided information from a variety of sources including other schools. Secondly, he acted as a sounding board for ideas and helped facilitate discussions about the form and function of the SBDMG. And thirdly, he served to communicate and clarify emerging Ministry policy with regard to school development planning. Members of the steering committee considered the assistance offered by the SDO to be most valuable. As the co-ordinator of the school development committee at Langley stated:

The SDO has been involved at all levels.. I think he has performed above and beyond the expectation of his role. He is an excellent facilitator.

While the Principal also considered the SDO assistance to be effective, the Deputy Principals were more measured in their appraisal.

Sure he has reflected the Ministry priorities for us and that has been helpful but I don't think he is all that effective. I don't think he has the expertise either . He was a classroom teacher last year.

At Maylup the SDO played a less direct role in the planning process. The only assistance sought concerned the provision of information about Ministry priorities for development planning. As such, the assistance was offered by the SDO to the Chairperson of the steering committee, not to the group itself. A letter requesting clarification of Ministry policy was also sent to the District superintendent (see Appendix Q).

At Jardine no assistance was sought from the SDO. The Principal expressed little faith in the capacity of a SDO to render worthwhile assistance.

The Officers might come in and facilitate the implementation of the plan but it is very difficult for them to come into the school and operate effectively. In fact I think it is impossible. They don't have enough credibility.

While assistance from the SDO was not sought, assistance from the District Superintendent was. Prompted by the concerns expressed by the Jardine P&C about the establishment of a SBDMG, the Principal and the P&C executive called on the Superintendent to help clarify the Ministry's position on the function of SBDMGs. The Superintendent discussed the philosophy underpinning Better Schools and explained how the amended legislation would enable the establishment of a SBDMG. Such intervention appeared to allay the fears held by the Jardine P&C about the role of a SBDMG and its impact on the P&C. As a consequence a more cooperative relationship between the school and the P&C emerged.

#### **13.4.3 Information**

Since the brief of each steering committee involved the development of guide-lines concerning the structure and function of a SBDMG, it was important to analyse the type of information used when determining such guide-lines. Generally, information sought and used was of three types.

The first type involved "official" documents disseminated by the Ministry of Education that related specifically to the structure and functions of SBDMGs. Included here are the Better Schools Discussion Document on SBDMGs and Development Plans, The Bill for the Amendment of the

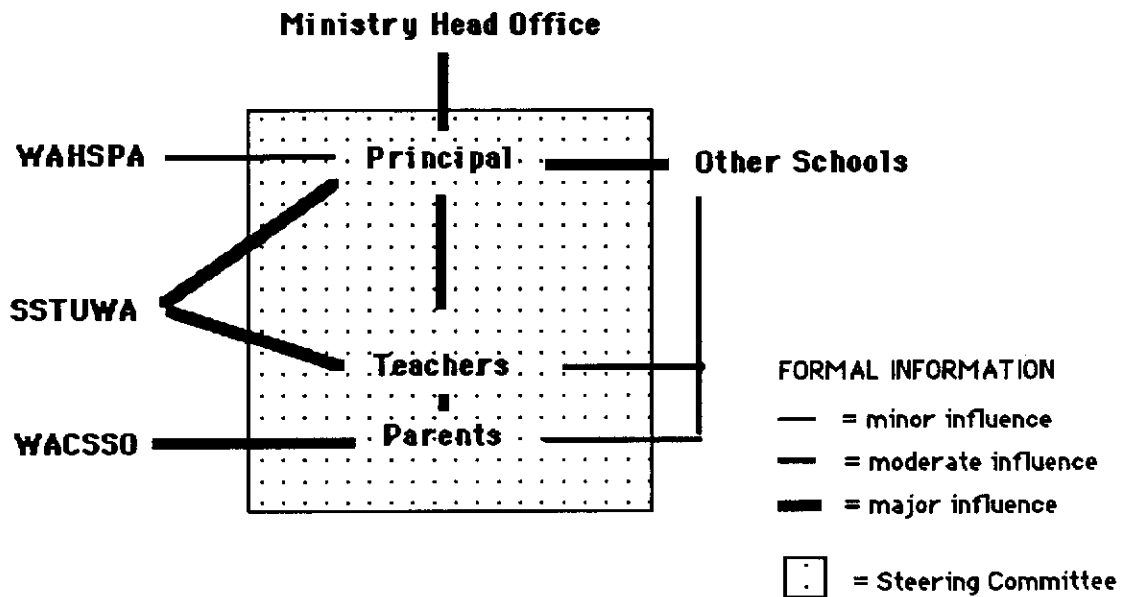


Education Act, draft copies of the Regulations accompanying the Bill, and finally the Policy and Guide-lines for School Development Plans (see Appendix C2).

The second type of information involved documents and ideas stemming from organizations other than the Ministry. Included here are information from WACSSO, WAHSPA, SSTUWA, other schools and other states. Such information took various forms, such as written documents, diagrams of models and verbal information about the structure and functions of SBDMGs.

The third type concerned information about the existing characteristics of the school setting. This information was often not made explicit within the steering committee. It was the type of information that was acquired through an association with the school either as a parent or a member of staff. In each steering committee there were participants who had more than five years of direct association with the school and had acquired a knowledge about both the operations of the school and the nature of the community it the school served. Such tacit information served to shape perceptions not only about what was desirable for the school but also what was possible within the given environment. In addition, some information about the characteristics of the school setting was made explicit through verbal descriptions by participants or through data derived from surveys conducted by the school (see Appendix R for an example of survey data).

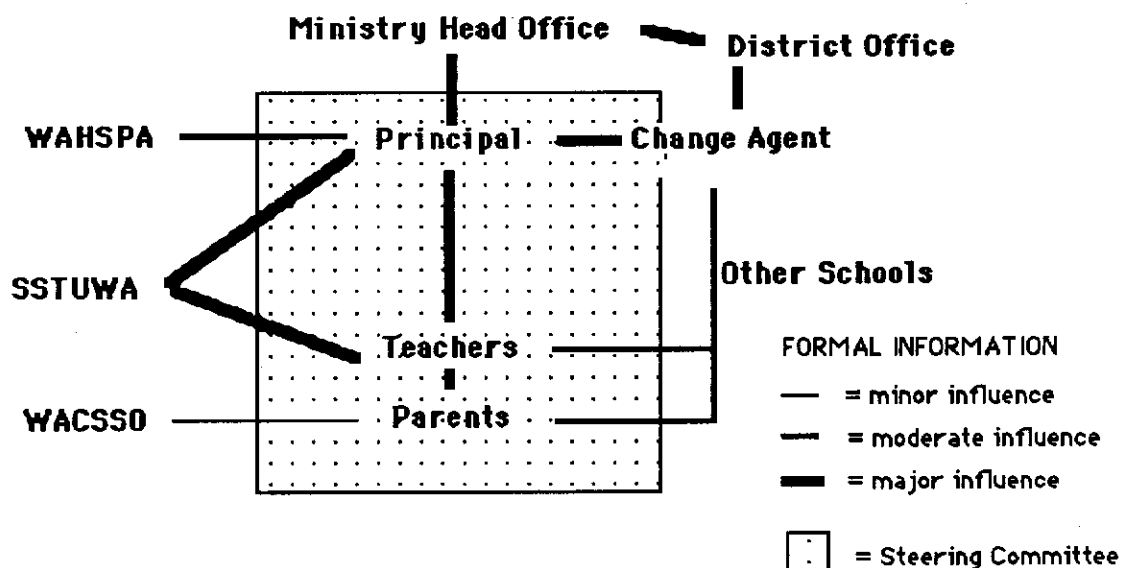
The flow of information stemming from the first two sources has been mapped for each site. The relative importance of each type of information with regard to the implementation process is indicated by the thickness of the flow lines.



**FIGURE 17**  
**Information Flow Jardine SHS**

For Jardine, official documents relating to the structure and functions of the SBDMG, coupled with information derived from past experience, served to direct the Principal's stance on the type of group to be established. At the first meeting of the steering committee the Principal presented a "model" detailing the possible structure of a SBDMG. The Principal envisaged that the SBDMG would hold responsibility not only for the development of school policy but also for the financial management of the school. Such an empowered SBDMG would assume many of the functions of the existing P&C so that that body would only continue in so far as it represented a forum for parents. Since the Principal was new to the school, his views about the nature of SBDMG were based on limited information about the existing characteristics of the school setting. As a consequence it was not immediately apparent to the Principal that the establishment of a SBDMG could create conflict and division between the school and the existing P&C decision-making body.

For parent representatives, information disseminated from WACSSO appeared the most influential. Such information, coupled with the enabling legislation, offered support for the creation of a SBDMG that functioned as a standing committee of the existing P&C. An SBDMG established in this way would ensure that the P&C would retain its power base and limit the impact this new group might otherwise make on the existing operations of the P&C.



**FIGURE 18**  
**Information Flow Langley SHS**

For Langley, official documents coupled with information stemming from the District Office via the co-ordinator of the existing school development committee, were the major external influences affecting the adaptation process. Initial information included a range of models for SBDMGs developed by the Ministry and other PSP schools. From the commencement of the adaptation process, a sub-group of the steering committee (two staff members, the Principal and the SDO) examined

relevant Ministry documents in the light of their knowledge and perceptions about the nature of the community the school served. Information about what other schools had done was also used to determine what was desirable and what was possible to establish at Langley. The two staff members responsible for the development of guide-lines sorted through and adapted features to fit the existing structures of their environments. Of particular importance to this sub-group was the perceived difficulty of obtaining sufficient parental participation to enable a SBDMG to function. While restricting the functions of the SBDMG to a advisory and supportive role only, the sub-group produced initial guide-lines that conformed to the Ministry's suggestions about composition.

With the dissemination of more specific statements concerning the functions of SBDMGs from the Ministry, attention focused on the issue of amending the guide-lines of the proposed SBDMG (termed the School Council) to align them with Ministry suggestions. Alternatively attention was given to expanding the functions of the existing school development committee so that this body operated as the SBDMG. These more recent Ministry documents on SBDMGs and School Development were not as fully disseminated to the steering committee as was the initial information. The Discussion Document, draft copies of Ministry policy guide-lines and the Collaborative School Management Model, were only tabled and discussed with the existing decision-making groups of the school, particularly the school development committee. As this adaptation process continued it became apparent to the Principal and members of the School Development committee that delineation of the functions of the proposed school council and the Development committee was essential if

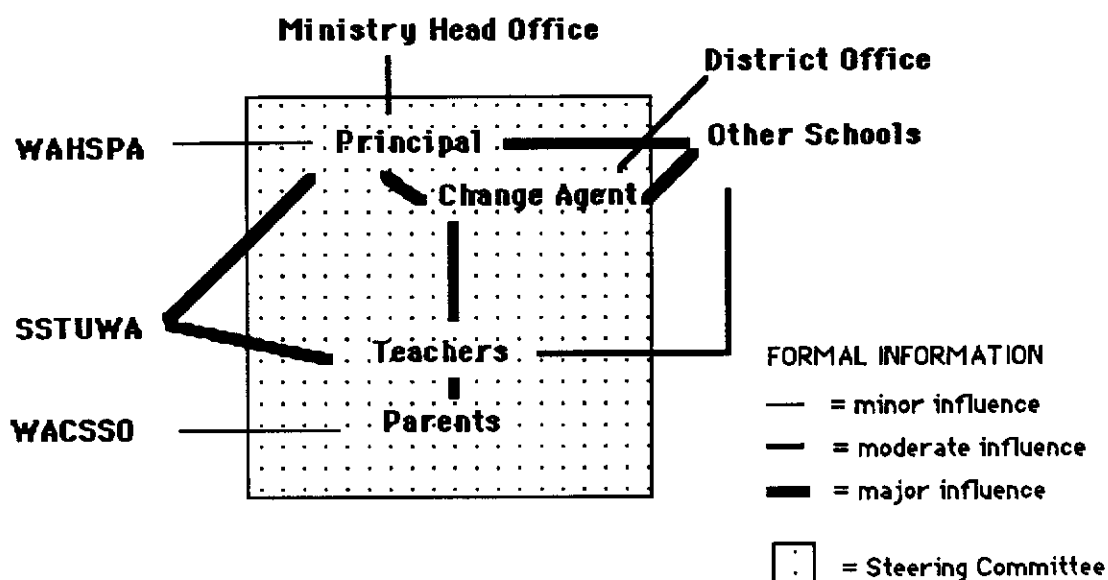
unnecessary duplication in roles was to be avoided. For both the Principal and members of the development committee, the preferred option appeared to be to allow the existing Development Committee to take on the functions of a SBDMG and allow the council to function as a ratifying body. Hence, even after the establishment of a school council, little attention was placed on clarifying the functions of the group. Indeed, as more specific guide-lines were produced by the Ministry, the less such information was disseminated to the council. It was the development committee that received the full briefing and deliberated over the functions of development planning and resource management.

For the development committee the most influential information was obtained from the draft document on Development Planning guide-lines and the Caldwell and Spinks (1988) material. For the co-ordinator of the development committee, the Caldwell and Spinks model appeared to match the type of Ministry documents relating to development planning and resource management.

As the co-ordinator speculated:

I suspect that what we are going to be told to do by the Ministry will reflect pretty much some of the stuff that constitutes the Caldwell and Spinks Model.

In addition to the documents and models obtained from outside the school, further information concerned with development planning was also obtained through the use of survey instruments issued to staff.



**FIGURE 19**  
**Information Flow Maylup SHS**

For Maylup, the information of most influence in the adaptation process stemmed from other schools, rather than from the Ministry. After some initial translation of the Better Schools Programme, the acting Principal and the Chairperson of the committee were of the view that the notion of self-determining schools offered Maylup an opportunity to raise the public profile of the school. They thought would best be achieved through the establishment of a properly constituted SBDMG to be known as the Maylup School Board. The Chairperson of the steering committee was given the responsibility of drafting such a constitution. Subsequently the Chairperson obtained a copy of the constitution of an Independent school's council and used this as a basis for the Maylup School Board.

At the commencement of 1989, the incoming school Principal brought to the steering committee a blueprint for the structure and functions of a school council. This "model" was derived from the SBDMG that had been

established at his previous school. It differed from the structure suggested by the draft constitution in that it consisted of two separate groups. However, members of the steering committee did not perceive the model to be a significant deviation from what was initially intended. Attention soon returned to refining the draft constitution.

As the adaptation process continued, information concerning the amendments to the Education Act prompted the Chairperson of the steering committee to suggest an alteration to the objectives of the draft constitution. By so doing, the functions of the school board could include "the participation in the formulation of educational policy and operations of the school". Such objectives were a significant expansion of function from the initial one that focused on the promotion of school-community cooperation.

While steering committee meetings were continuing, the Principal formed a fledgling "Taskforce". This group consisted of one parent, the Principal, the Chairperson of the steering committee and five other teachers. Its brief was the generation of a school development plan. While the Principal had received information in the form of discussion documents and policy guide-lines on development plans, this information was not disseminated to the taskforce. As a consequence the Chairperson sought information through the School Development Officer and wrote directly to the District Superintendent. One key concern was the problem of designing a school development plan that would meet Ministry priorities and hence attract adequate funding. While information from an extensive needs survey conducted among members of the school community was available to the taskforce, it was not given attention when drafting the school development plan.

For each school, information stemming from the Ministry appeared to increasingly restrict the extent to which the respective steering committees could make decisions about the form and functions of the SBDMG. Indeed, the very notion of self-determining schools seemed to be forgotten as emerging Ministry documents began to delimit the school-based initiatives by further specifying the focus and the outcomes of school development planning. As the Co-ordinator of the development committee at Langley noted:

Well, according to the Ministry you have to have a school development plan for everything what ever funding it is. Now that is Ministry policy and this is what they are saying loud and clear; accountability will be in terms of the school development plan. So I don't think there is going to be too much choice in the matter quite honestly.

For Principals of both Langley and Maylup, the nature of the information indicated that the Ministry was more concerned with the establishment of self-managing schools than self-determining schools. That is, the change concentrated the establishment of a "corporate management" approach. Under this approach emphasis was placed on Principals as managers involved in strategic planning and resource management, rather than a school community determining educational policy and direction for the school. As the Principal of Langley noted:

Yes it is top down and when your try to reverse it and make it down up as I have with the school uniform issue I am smartly put in my box.

At Jardine the top-down approach of the Ministry to the implementation of Better Schools has led to an apparent reluctance on behalf of both



Deputy Principals and many other members of staff to begin implementation. As Jardine's Deputy Principal noted:

All these changes upset teachers because they start on one track and now the Ministry is saying that they have to do something different ...It seems that on any whim a new change comes in.

### 13.5 CONFLICT

During the adaptation phase several issues particular to each school setting appeared to influence the implementation process. Among the most apparent was firstly the basic resistance to change among members of existing decision-making groups, and secondly a growing lack of general support for the change among members of the school staff. At both Langley and Jardine the issue exerting most influence on the adaptation phase concerned the impact of the SBDMG on the functions of existing decision-making bodies.

At Langley there existed a development committee with role functions similar to those proposed for the SBDMG. This committee had for some three years held responsibility for generating a school development plan. Its members, particularly the co-ordinator of the committee, had amassed a deal of skill and expertise in such planning and a commitment to the notion of participatory decision-making. However, the establishment of a school council seemed to suggest the development committee's demise. Therefore it was predictable that members of this development committee expressed a preference for retaining their function and delimiting the functions of the school council. Opposition to the transfer of the development planning function to the SBDMG was most evident during a meeting facilitated by the SDO. In attempting to delineate the functions of the two groups it became apparent that many members, particularly the

Principal, one Deputy Principal and the co-ordinator of the development committee, were keen to maintain the central planning and decision-making function of the committee. A key argument forwarded, was that the existing development committee was essentially comprised of senior staff. It was these members that were considered in the best position to represent the staff and that they had the time and the expertise to make such decisions. The Principal favoured the development committee becoming the SBDMG because it would be essentially staff controlled with only token parent representation.

At Jardine the proposed functions of a school council were perceived by the executive of the P&C as a direct threat to their power. The P&C had a long history of involvement in the school. It controlled the school canteen and raised money through a variety of activities. Further, it frequently allocated funds directly to individuals within the school, often bypassing direct consultation with the Principal or other members of the Administration. The Principal's proposed school council would be vested with the responsibility over all budget and resource allocations. While this represented an opportunity for parent representatives on such a council to greatly expand their participation in financial and educational matters, it also held a cost. Under the model, the P&C would become a subservient body to the council and would need to divest itself of its powers over the allocation of funds. While the P&C would continue to meet and make recommendations to the council, it would be the council that would make decisions. The initial response by the executive of the P&C could best be described as was one of guarded resistance.

The President indicated that the P&C had wanted to see the establishment of a school council for many years. However, they believed that the most

appropriate way to establish such a body was through the P&C. The reasons forwarded were drawn from those in a "Facts Sheet" produced by the Western Australian council of State School Organizations (WACSSO) (see Appendix E). This body, representing all P&C's, stressed the only legal way to establish such a decision-making group was through the existing P&C.

Additional arguments offered by the Jardine P&C executive included the difficulties in attracting parents to additional meetings of a school council, and the suggestion that parents did not wish to participate in school development planning or school budget issues. The President of the P&C suggested that Jardine was not a typical school in that there were a lot of ethnic parents who would not attend because they were intimidated by the school.

Despite such P&C concerns, the majority of parents at the meeting agreed to the formation of a smaller group to develop guide-lines for the establishment of a school council. The first meeting of this group took place some eight weeks after the initial proposal for the establishment of a school council had taken place. In the intervening period a special P&C meeting had been called. At this meeting the District Superintendent and the President of WACSSO attempted to clarify issues raised by the P&C president and secretary. As a consequence there appeared to be a reduction in the overt opposition to the notion of a council by members of the P&C.

In an attempt to secure greater P&C support for the change, the Principal diplomatically nominated the secretary of the P&C as Chairperson of the steering group. The brief of the group was quickly established with input from all members. During the discussions about a review of existing

models the Principal re-stated his view about the central and critical role the council should have. The Principal suggested that a series of sub-committees be established to develop specific policies for the school. Each sub-committee would report on their deliberations to the council. In this way the council would hold responsibility for directing the work of subcommittees and ratifying policy. The Chairperson stressed that any model adopted would need to have an acceptable fit with the other decision-making groups that existed within the school, especially the P&C. Further, the Chairperson suggested there were advantages in ensuring any council emerged as a sub-committee of Jardien's P&C; chief among them being the legal protection the P&C has by being an incorporated body.

#### **13.5.1 The Role of the Teachers' Union**

Unfortunately, one week after the initial meeting of the steering group, a letter from the State School Teachers Union was sent to all schools directing members to cease participation in the implementation of both SBDMGs and Development Planning (see Appendix O). Consequently the Principal of Jardine abandoned all subsequent meetings of the steering group. During the industrial dispute, there was a marked deterioration in the relationship between the school administration at Jardine and the P&C. Two particular events appear to have fuelled such a deterioration. The first concerned the P&C desire to purchase a new school bus for the school. The Principal, citing a list of school priorities indicated that such money would best be spent on the establishment of a computer network. When the P&C objected, the Principal moved to hire a bus instead, maintaining that the P&C ought not be the body to determine the allocation of funds. The second concerned a stop work meeting associated with the on-going industrial action which disrupted the school day for many children. Both issues resulted in the executive of the P&C releasing a

letter critical of the actions of the school administration. Clearly the type of co-operation necessary for the parent and community participation in the establishment of a SBDMG no longer existed. Consequently the Principal resolved to undertake the necessary development planning in collaboration with staff only.

### **13.5.2 Change Overload**

As the year progressed there appeared a growing disinterest in the establishment of a SBDMG among the teaching staff in general and members of the administration in all three schools. The possible causes of such disinterest were not difficult to identify.

During the last three years all school communities were being pressed by the Ministry to implement a large number of concurrent changes. Such changes included new curriculums in lower and upper secondary school, lower school moderation, Post Compulsory Education Proposals, Performance Management, Monitoring Standards in Education Project, the School Grant (school funding), School Development Plans, and School-Based Decision-Making Groups. Understandably all these changes placed a tremendous pressure, not only on the school administration, but also on teaching staff. As energy was drained, staff enthusiasm and support for change declined. Consequently many staff began to perceive the establishment of a SBDMG and school development planning as too demanding of their time and too disruptive to their teaching.

As the Deputy Principal at Jardine stated:

Staff see the policy on SBDMG and school development planning as just one more Ministry initiative to contend with. And this at a time when there are too many concurrent changes occurring.

Similarly two staff members at Maylup noted:

I was initially pleased because I appreciated the information and the opportunity for involvement. I wanted to be a part of it, but now I feel the exercise is not worth my effort. Are the Ministry really serious?

I think most of us here feel that it is all coming at once and occurring too quickly. I know I am fed up.

The Deputy Principal at Langley maintained:

All this is happening and you get the education of the kids constantly and increasingly disrupted: to their disadvantage.

The Chairperson of the development committee reflected:

I don't think the majority of people care much quite honestly. I think what teaching is about is face to face classroom teaching. I feel sorry for schools that are trying to implement these organizational changes when they are also trying to implement unit curriculum. I think now, with all these stresses, morale is really low.

While staff at each of the schools indicated a growing dissatisfaction with the number and rate of change, the Ministry continued to prompt their implementation. Within such a climate, it was the Principals who were faced with the challenging task of maintaining the momentum of change while ensuring any disruption to teaching was kept to a minimum.

### **13.6 EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS**

From its genesis the Better Schools programme suggested powerful and fundamental changes to the existing nature of schools. Given the nature and scope of such changes it seemed essential that the Ministry work in collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure maximum support was available. Unfortunately such collaboration was not evident. Indeed, the

initial working parties comprised of representatives from the Union and WACSSO were soon abandoned in favour of taskforces comprised of Ministry personnel. The Ministry was now working without the active participation of other key interest groups ( SSTUWA & WACSSO). Ministry personnel translated the initial statements into increasingly prescriptive guide-lines and by so doing appeared to be abandoning the very principle of self-determination for schools.

Isolated from the activities of the Ministry, the WACSSO and the SSTUWA were forced into a relationship based more on negotiation than participation. In response, each key organization began to prepare and distribute documents that reflected their own interpretation of Better Schools. Such documents offered conflicting information to members of individual school communities. As a consequence, even innovative schools such as Langley were unsure of the direction they ought to take.

The SSTUWA had for some months been engaged in negotiations with regard to a salary increase for its members. The executive maintained that not only had restructuring associated with Better Schools been undertaken without due consultation, but the changes had dramatically impacted on the working conditions of teachers. Consequently the Union was seeking a fifteen percent salary package increase for its members. The Ministry argued that such a figure was outside the current wage fixing guide-lines and therefore could not be granted. The Union's response was made clear in a letter posted to all schools on June the 6th in which members were directed not to participate in the implementation of either SBDMGs or Development Plans.

Over the ensuing weeks the dispute saw a series of claims and counter claims from both Union and the Ministry on a range of issues related to teacher working conditions, salary scales and teacher morale. Under the Union's threat of strike action a number of compulsory Industrial Relations Commission conferences were held between the Union and Ministry. Unfortunately these conferences failed to avert strike action. By Late July a number of rolling stop-work meetings were held throughout the state. The major papers carried numerous articles and full page advertisements proclaiming both the Ministry and Union stance on the issue (see Appendix S for samples of press clippings). Increasingly many of the articles focused on the disruption union action was causing to the education of students. In mid-September the Ministry offered a six percent salary restructuring proposal. Accompanying this offer was the threat that should industrial action continue the government would make application to de-register the Union. In response the Union President threatened the total closure of schools.

Amid continuing rolling strikes the Union held it's annual conference. The four hundred delegates indicated support for continued industrial action. However it was resolved to put the issue to all members. Towards the end of October members cast their votes and by a slim majority it was agreed to accept the Ministry's restructuring offer.

The protracted industrial action had a profound and overriding impact on the implementation of SBDMGs at all three schools. At Jardine for example, the union directive on non-participation came just as the steering committee was to consider the possible structure and function of a SBDMG. The Principal, already confronted by a hostile P&C executive, was now confronted with the prospect of no active staff participation or



support. Therefore he had no alternative but to abandon all formal steering committee meetings. At Maylup, the steering committee had reached agreement on the draft constitution and was about to hold its first full school council meeting when the Union directive was issued. While some staff expressed a desire to continue with meetings, reluctantly the Principal cancelled all further council and Taskforce meetings for 1989. Only at Langley did the fledgling school council continue to operate. However, without staff representatives the council served only as a community contact group. The school development committee, having been formed as a part of PSP, had a more legitimate reasons for continuing to meet. However, while two such meetings were called, they served only as a forum for disseminating information about budget resourcing and the development planning process.

Of all the interventions stemming from sources external to the school, the Union's industrial action demonstrates not only the highly political nature of the change effort under study but confirms the truly "open-system" nature of the school organization, for events external to the school ultimately determined the type of implementation action possible within each school.

## **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **14.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study was to analyse, interpret and describe the processes involved as three secondary schools attempted to implement a policy innovation which stemmed from the Head Office of the Ministry of Education. This chapter presents a number of critical findings about the implementation of organizational change derived from the three school case study data. In addition to, and associated with these findings, a number of recommendations have been included. It is acknowledged that the findings are context bound and therefore do not represent generalizations about the policy implementation process throughout the Western Australian Government school system. However, data do suggest that, given similar school setting characteristics, the findings and associated recommendations presented here have value to those involved in the implementation of School-Based Decision-Making Groups, whether they are located at the Ministry Central Office, the District Office or at the school level.

This final chapter has been organized around the initial set of research questions. For each research question a summary of the findings based on the data is presented. In addition, the findings also address issues that

subsequently emerged through the data collection and analysis phase of the research. Where supported by the data and deemed appropriate, a recommendation for action is offered to those responsible for the implementation of such organizational change.

#### **14.2 CHANGE AS INTERACTIVE MODIFICATION**

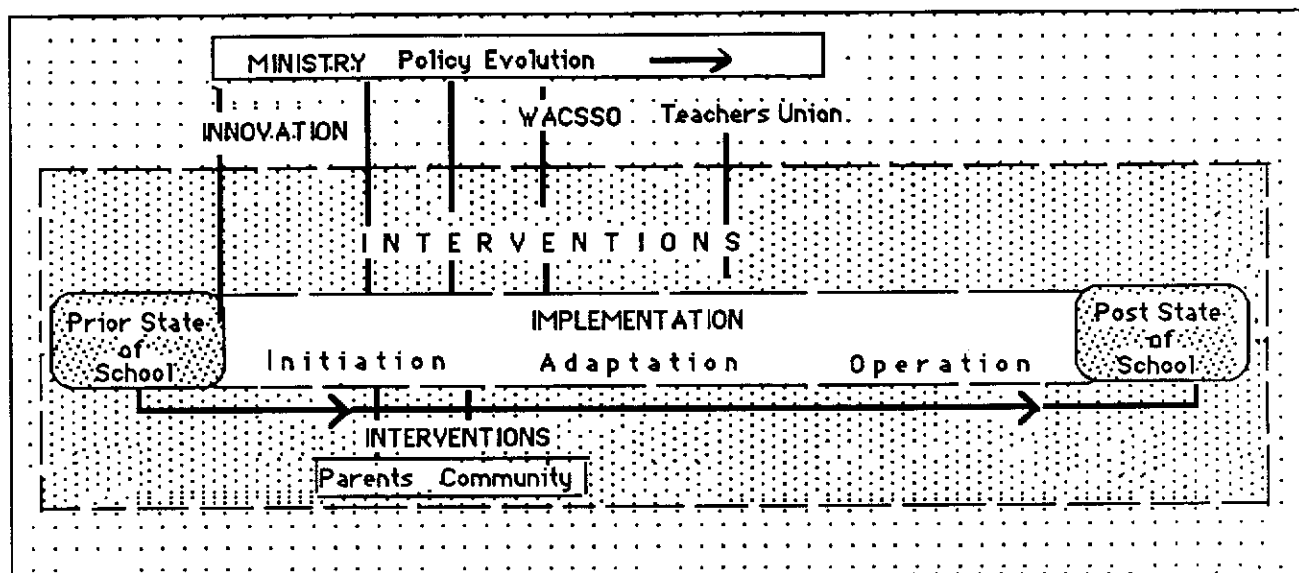
For each of the schools under study, the implementation process may best be described as one of "interactive modification". That is, a process of interaction whereby the innovation prompts modifications to be made to the adopting system and where the adopting system prompts modifications to be made to the innovation. This concept of "interactive modification" finds support in the views of change proposed by researchers Larsen & Agarwala-Rogers (1977), Berman & McLaughlin (1978), Wise (1983), and Miles (1987). These researchers use the terms of "adaptation" and "evolution" to describe an implementation process, where the innovation undergoes change as it adapts to, or evolves within, the adopting environment.

The term "interactive modification" suggests a process very similar to that of adaptation or evolution however, it differs in a fundamental and critical way. The terms adaptation and evolution suggest a reactive process of change primarily to the innovation, interactive modification suggests a more dynamic and interrelated process of change occurring to both the innovation and the adopting system.

The term "interactive modification" is considered a more appropriate descriptor of the change process analysed in this study because it gives emphasis to the two dominant characteristics of that process.

It stresses the interactions between the characteristics of the innovation and those of the adopting system and allows for such interaction to prompt modifications or changes to both the innovation and the adopting system. While data indicates a process of interactive modification was common across sites, the outcomes of this process varied from school to school. Langley Senior High School, for instance, established a new School Council and modified the existing functions of the development committee to enable it to operate as a School-Based Decision-Making Group (SBDMG). At the other extreme, Jardine Senior High School was unsuccessful in establishing either a council or a fully operational SBDMG and was forced to place a moratorium on such changes until the beginning of the 1990 school year. Maylup Senior High School, the third school site, succeeded in establishing a School Council that could function as a SBDMG, but due to industrial action the school was unable to hold even one full council meeting during 1989.

While the characteristics of outcomes of the implementation process varied from school to school, the general features of the change process were remarkably similar. Figure 19 illustrates the common variables across the three school sites.



□ GENERAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT      □ SPECIFIC SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

FIGURE: 19

### The Change Process

The general school environment, as represented above, forms the broad political and educational context for change and is shared by all schools within the state education system. This general school environment is comprised of such bodies as the Ministry of Education, Western Australian Council of State School Organizations (WACSSO) and the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australian (SSTUWA). It is from this environment that the innovation stemmed, along with related clarifying documents and directives that were concerned with the implementation of the innovation. The large internal rectangle represents the specific environment of each school site. This specific school environment reflects the characteristics of the community which the school serves and includes all aspects of the relationship that exists between the school and its community. Nestled within this specific environment is the school

itself. The organizational and social characteristics of the school prior to implementation is represented on the left of the figure under the heading of "prior state of the school". The outcomes of the implementation process are represented on the right of the figure as "post state of the school" In a general sense, change is viewed as that process whereby the school moves from its existing state to an altered state.

The implementation process is represented by those series of events occurring as the innovation interacts with the characteristics of the school site. This process is itself comprised of a number of complex and interrelated phases; the initiation phase, the adaptation phase and the operational phase. The third of these three phases, the operational phase, was not examined within this study. However, it is anticipated that during this phase, the innovation and the school organization would continue to undergo modification as the innovation began its functional life.

The change process represented in Figure 19 suggests a somewhat linear sequence of events, similar to that suggested by Lucas (1983). However, in reality the process was more loosely ordered and more complex. Indeed, the perceptions and decisions emerging in both the initiation and adaptation phase, were subject to reappraisals as events unfolded. Despite the complexities of the change process, subsequent analysis revealed characteristics and events that were deemed important in determining the nature and direction of change.

### **14.3 FACTORS AFFECTING A SCHOOL'S CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE**

The innovation under study was part of a larger initiative, the Better Schools Programme, which originated from the Ministry of Education and was disseminated to all government schools within the state education system. From its initial pronouncement, the Better Schools Programme was clearly a "top down" initiative aimed at creating fundamental change to the existing decision-making structures and procedures within the education system. A central theme of the Better Schools Programme was the creation of "self-determining" schools. The Programme sought to devolve the responsibility for decision-making from the Head Office of the Ministry of Education to individual schools. The rationale for the creation of "self-determining schools" appeared to be based on the principals of managerial efficiency and on the promotion of a more democratic and responsive education system. Whatever the rationale offered for embarking on such a fundamental organizational change, unless such a change is perceived as important and desirable by those with the direct responsibility for its implementation, then intended change seems less likely to occur.

#### **14.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 2.1:**

**What factors influence a school's initial stance towards the innovation?**

##### **FACTOR 1: Shared Philosophy of Change**

The first finding of this study on this question concerns the extent to which members of the individual school communities supported the philosophy of self-determining schools and hence shared the need for such a change. Data indicated that Principals were best informed about the philosophy underpinning the Better Schools Programme, while Deputy Principals, staff

members and parents were less informed. Such lack of shared understanding among all the key stakeholders in the change process appears to be the result of a Ministry dissemination strategy that targeted the Principal alone.

The important role of the school Principal in facilitating change has been highlighted by many researchers (Chapman & Low-Boyd, 1986; Hall, Rutherford, Hord & Huling, 1984; Fullan, 1982). In recognition of this importance, the architects of the Better Schools Programme employed a number of in-service programmes designed to enable Principals to develop an understanding of, and a commitment to the programme. Unfortunately a similar attempt to inform staff and other members of the school community was not directly undertaken by the Ministry of Education. It was apparently an expectation of the Ministry that principals would undertake to inform staff and parents of the principles underpinning this change programme.

As the Executive Director of Schools stated:

The Ministry of Education doesn't want schools to dive in head first if they don't yet have some kind of structure for staff and parents to review the programme. I would expect principals to spend the first half of this year talking the issues through with staff during their regular staff meetings and with parents at P&C meetings or other meetings convened for this purpose. (Education News, 1988, p1)

A common response from the Principals in this study was that such a function was far too demanding of their time and energy. The Principals indicated that in addition to the dissemination of such information about the philosophy of Better Schools Programme, they were also expected to generate enthusiasm, facilitate implementation, maintain the momentum of change and undergo a fundamental shift in their role from educational



leader to corporate manager. Of critical concern appeared to be the difficulties in discussing elements of the Better Schools Programme, such as school-based decision-making groups and school development plans, when the actual form and substance of these initiatives was still in its evolutionary state. Further, and just as important, whatever teacher-free time there was available for such a task tended to be given over to more immediate school concerns, particularly the implementation of other innovations, for example, the Unit Curriculum initiative.

Data indicated that only limited discussion about the purposes or substance of the intended changes took place. Staff and parents indicated that the knowledge they held about the Better Schools Programme was derived largely from a cursory reading of the Better Schools document or from hearsay. As a consequence neither staff or parents shared the Principal's understanding of the philosophy of the Better Schools programme. In the absence of such shared understanding there emerged a degree of cynicism about the change and resistance to its implementation by school staff. Many staff suspected that there was a hidden agenda to the changes. Across the three schools in this study many staff held the view that the Better Schools Programme was a politically and economically inspired change programme. The benefits, especially the educational benefits for students, staff and the school as a whole, appear not to have been effectively communicated by the Ministry of Education or the Principal.

The strategy of using the Principal for the dissemination of such information appears to be inappropriate for three reasons. First, because the statements of initiatives contained within the Better Schools Programme lack clarity, it is possible that the Principal would translate the initiatives and then present to the staff and community members an interpretation

that is in sympathy with their preferred outcomes. By so doing, biased or distorted communication can occur which would tend to reduce a shared understanding of the philosophy. Second, such an approach replicates and reinforces the top-down approach to change and can be met with as much resentment and resistance from staff as would a directive issued from the Minister of Education. Third, such a strategy appears to contradict the very philosophy of devolved decision-making which advocates the participation of staff and community members in the management of schools.

#### **RECOMMENDATION :**

*The first recommendation involves the open sharing of the philosophy of the Better Schools Programme with all persons who have responsibility for the implementation of related policy. In addition to the Principals, all senior school administrators, staff members, parents and community members alike, need to develop a shared understanding about the purposes of such a fundamental change. That is, stakeholders need to be knowledgeable about the philosophy and efficacy of the change. Such knowledge should provide a context for implementation and an understanding of the implications of the change.*

*There are a variety of strategies that could be employed to promote such a shared understanding and the suggestion is that several strategies should be employed. For example, direct letters to all staff and active members of Parent organizations. In conjunction with such direct communications, the in-service programmes offered to Principals could also be offered to Deputy Principals and Senior Teachers in the school. Further, small group seminar sessions could be undertaken with groups of staff and parents whereby the Ministry's goals may be examined and clarified in the context of the particular school.*

## **FACTOR 2:           Concerns about the Better Schools Programme**

While the Principals appeared to support the philosophy of self-determining schools they still held concerns about particular aspects of the Better Schools Programme such as the establishment of SBDMGs. The Principals of each school under study expressed specific concerns about the implementation of SBDMGs and the establishment of participatory decision-making procedures. All Principals felt such an approach could be time consuming, complex and inefficient. Further, there was concern expressed that the introduction of participatory decision-making processes would necessitate the Principal, Deputy Principals, teachers, parent and community members adopting different roles and accepting new responsibilities. In short, the innovation required a major re-distribution of decision-making authority within the school.

The Principals of Langley and Maylup Senior High Schools expressed the view that parents and community members had limited interest in participating in school development policy issues. They also maintained that teachers were primarily concerned with the task of classroom instruction and held limited interest in matters concerned with school policy and administration. Therefore, while there was expressed agreement with other elements of the Better Schools Programme, such as the school grant, they questioned the need to introduce a fundamental change to the existing decision-making procedures at their schools. As a consequence, these Principals were determined, where possible, to influence the type of structure and function of the SBDMG that might be established so as to put a limit on the degree of participation by staff and parents. It should be pointed out that the Principal at Jardine Senior High School appeared less concerned about the transformation of existing decision-making procedures. Indeed, he viewed it as an essential strategy for revitalizing the school.

### **FACTOR 3:            Characteristics of the Innovation**

Initial concern about the establishment of SBDMGs appeared to result from the lack of clarity in the wording of the initial Ministry of Education statement about the initiative. While data indicated the existence of general support among teachers for the establishment of closer relationships between the school and its community, there was concern about what specific roles a SBDMG might take. There was evidence at each school of opposition to the direct participation of the community in curriculum decisions, the hiring and firing of staff and the daily operations of the school. The following statement by a senior teacher at Jardine Senior High School is typical of such concerns about the function of a SBDMG:

We are the professionals. Parent can't understand curriculum issues... it is the teachers who should decided what will be taught and how it will be presented. We will run the school and involve parents in the areas where we consider their involvement will help.

The lack of clarity with the wording of many of the Better School initiatives was admitted by one Ministry Manager who stated:

There are no base criteria that were clearly identified to Principals and participants. It is likely therefore that it [Better School initiatives] will lose much in translation.

In short, there was no specific description of the essential features of SBDMGs. The concerns by Principals and staff indicated not only a lack of clarity about the perception of the essential purposes of SBDMGs, but also a lack of specificity about how such a policy might be implemented. As Crandall, Eiseman & Louis (1986) suggest, those with a responsibility to implement the change need clear indications about how existing structures

and procedures must be altered. Interview data with Principals in this study suggests that such concerns were not solely based on lack of knowledge about how to proceed with the establishment of a SBDMG, but also on a fear that the structure and functions of any SBDMG established, might not ultimately be acceptable to the Ministry and might therefore need to be dismantled. To ensure that energy and time was not wasted on such a school generated initiative, school administrators requested more specific Ministry guide-lines.

#### **RECOMMENDATION :**

*While it seems necessary for the innovation to be "soft"; that is, worded in such a manner that will permit it to be adapted to fit a variety of educational settings, it appears that such "softness" heightens confusion and anxiety among members of school communities about the purposes and possible impacts of such a change. Implementation would be better served if the central or core components of the innovation were made explicit. For example the SBDMG could be described as a body that is to be comprised of equal number of representatives drawn from the teaching staff and parents. The SBDMG must function in a way that permits staff and parent members to have input into the formulation of school development plans and the ratification of such plans. Such a statement of core components could then be accompanied by a clear statement legitimating school community initiatives that would extend the structure and function of the SBDMG.*

*For example, a secondary school SBDMG could have four representatives from the staff , parents, community members and students. A SBDMG could then be responsible for the formulation of development plans, resource allocation, annual budgeting, the monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school development plan.*

#### **14.4 FACTORS AFFECTING A SCHOOL'S PREPAREDNESS FOR CHANGE**

Thus far this chapter has focused on general perceptions about the innovation across schools. However, the level of readiness or preparedness to implement SBDMGs varied markedly between the three schools. For example, the data indicated that Langley SHS was most prepared to undertake the changes while Jardine SHS was the least prepared to do so. This variation appears to have been influenced by the special characteristics of the school as an organization. Data gathered about the setting characteristics of each school and the subsequent implementation events has enabled the identification of a number of factors which in combination indicate a high preparedness to undertake change. These factors include the existence of a good organizational climate, strong sub-system linkage, administrative decision-making based on collaboration, an open relationship between the school and its community, and Principal leadership.

##### **FACTOR 1: Organizational Climate**

A favourable organizational climate reflects a high degree of professional involvement among staff, strong peer cohesion, the existence of participatory decision-making throughout the school and a high level of support for innovation and change. This is perhaps best exemplified by Langley SHS. Data supports the assertions of Huberman & Miles (1984) and Fullan (1985) that good organizational climate is related to the extent of a school's receptivity to an innovation and subsequently the school's capacity to engage in the implementation process.

When examining the relationship between the organizational climate of a school and the innovation under study, an implementation dilemma became apparent. The innovation is an organizational change which has the potential to dramatically improve the organizational climate of a school. Therefore the need for such a change appears strongest where a poor organizational climate exists, as in the case of Jardine SHS. However, for the implementation of such an organizational change to be a successful one, there needs to be a sound organizational climate. That is, where the need for change is strongest, the preparedness and capacity to affect such change appears weakest. This dilemma might well be resolved through the use of change strategies that focus on improving elements of the organizational climate prior to implementation of an innovation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION :**

*It is a recommendation that a school's "organizational climate" be assessed to determine its readiness to undertake organizational change. The use of an instrument such as the SOCQ can be used to provide valuable information about the "state" of the organization to those responsible for implementing change. For instance, evidence of poor organizational climate might help to convince school community members of the need to embark on significant organizational change.*

*Further, where the organizational climate is poor, particular strategies aimed at improving elements of the climate might be undertaken before the school embarks on the implementation of a major change such as the Better Schools Programme.*

## **FACTOR 2: Sub-system Linkage**

Data tends to confirm the view that the school organization is comprised of a number of distinct sub-systems. The extent to which these sub-systems are interdependent or linked, varies across school sites. Indeed, sub-system linkage appears related to, yet distinct from the notion of organizational climate. Sub-system linkage appears to involve the extent to which the sub-systems of the school operate as an interdependent and co-ordinated whole. Where sub-system linkage is weak, as in the case of Jardine SHS, the sub-systems tend to operate largely independently of each other. In this school, teachers viewed the establishment of a SBDMG as an administrative innovation belonging to the structural sub-system and therefore of little significance to them. Consequently minimal interest was shown in participating in the implementation of SBDMGs.

At Langley SHS, strong sub-system linkage was apparent. In this case there existed a "whole-school" perspective among the teachers and administrators alike. Such a perspective was in sympathy with the philosophy underpinning both SBDMGs and School Development Planning. The positive response to the innovation and subsequent implementation action taken by the staff at Langley SHS, lends support the assertion by Louis, Rosenblum & Moliter (1981) and Wilson & Dickson Corbett (1983), that the higher the sub-system linkage the increased likelihood of meaningful implementation. The organizational changes associated with the Better Schools Programme appear to have the capacity to enhance sub-system linkage. However, as with organizational climate, the existence of weak sub-system linkages within a school suggests preparedness to undertake implementation will be reduced.



## **RECOMMENDATION :**

*At secondary school level the organizational character of the school is strongly affected by the existence of separate subject departments. This organizational feature tends to foster strong "department allegiance" among teachers. This pedagogical sub-system thus becomes more weakly linked with the structural and cultural sub-systems of the school. In such situations teachers view their subject department as the base for formal and informal influence over decision-making. That is, authority becomes a territorial issue.*

*The introduction of participatory decision-making through a SBDMG threatens the autonomy of the pedagogical sub-system. Strategies designed for the implementation of innovations should take account of the existing sub-system linkage of the school. Linkage may be enhanced by targeting the subject department level and providing a number of opportunities for intra-department and whole-school co-operation to be developed. Principals, senior administrators and teachers require skills to move from individual subject orientated thinking to collective, whole-school thinking; to move from isolated decision-making patterns to group decision-making. In short, members of the school community must begin to see their roles as school-referenced.*

## **FACTOR 3 :                      Administrative Decision-Making**

The existence of a collaborative approach to administrative decision-making appears strongly related to a positive receptiveness towards the implementation of SBDMGs. Collaborative decision-making involves the Principal and the appointed or elected representatives from the school community making decisions in a democratic way. A history of such participation in decision-making not only reinforces a perception that such collaboration is desirable, but also equips members of the school

community with the necessary skills in order that they can effectively contribute to the school-based decision-making process. Such was the case at Langley SHS, where the school had established an involvement with the Priority Schools Programme which resulted in the adoption of a collaborative approach to administrative decision-making. Where limited history of collaboration in decision-making existed, as was the case at Jardine SHS, the introduction of participation through a SBDMG marked a fundamental change to the existing decision-making procedures.

While such an innovation might be welcomed by many it might also be perceived as a threat to other members of the school community. Individuals in traditional decision-making positions in the school can experience a fear of losing power as they move from a traditional hierarchical, decision-making model to a collaborative model. Unaccustomed to sharing authority for decision-making, Principals, Deputy Principals and even the executive of the P&C, understandably baulk at embracing an innovation that they perceive would reduce their authority position. Alternatively, where broader participation in decision-making has been experienced as in the case of Langley SHS, the introduction of a SBDMG posed little perceived threat to members of the school community. In short, prior experience with a participatory form of decision-making increased the preparedness of a school to implement SBDMGs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*The implementation of SBDMGs requires a fundamental change to existing authority relationships within the school. To facilitate such a change it seems necessary that change strategies focus on attitudinal change and skill development combined with the establishment of new roles and relationships.*

*Principals, administrators, staff and members of the school community need to develop knowledge and skills to enable them to engage in open and collaborative decision-making. Such skilling will necessarily involve the acceptance of fundamental changes to the roles of those with existing authority.*

**FACTOR 4:        Open relationship with the school community**

An open relationship with the community is one where parents and other community members are actively involved in the life of the school. In this situation the school administration and staff encourage parent input into a range of decisions affecting the school. For all three schools the openness of such relationships varied considerably. At Langley SHS for example, the administration had for a number of years continually sought to increase the extent of parental participation in the life of the school. While no formal Parents and Citizens Association existed at this school, parents were represented on a number of school committees concerned with a variety of educational issues such as the school uniform committee and the school development committee.

By comparison, at Jardine SHS, there existed a large formal Parents and Citizens Association with a long history of involvement in the life of the school. Such involvement was however, narrow and limited to fund-raising and operating the school canteen. Previous administrations had done little to broaden such functions or to invite more direct participation in decision-making at the school. Given that the policy on SBDMGs involved parent and community participation in school decision-making, the existence of a current parent/school partnership suggests it would be easier for the school to build or adapt such a relationship in order to implement a SBDMG.

**FACTOR 5:****Leadership**

Leadership, particularly the Principal leadership, appears to be an important factor influencing the schools preparedness to implement change. The data from this research suggests that the level of Principal commitment to the innovation affects not only their own initial stance towards the change, but the subsequent implementation action he or she is prepared to allow within the school. While all Principals indicated a degree of commitment to the establishment of SBDMGs, the level of that commitment varied between Principals. Several factors might explain such variance.

Firstly, where the notion of participatory decision-making approach to school development matched the Principals actual or preferred "leadership style" (Hall & Rutherford, 1983), there was stronger preparedness to undertake implementation. Of the three Principals under study, the Principal of Jardine SHS most clearly exhibited an "initiator" style of leadership. That is, he appeared to be a dynamic, entrepreneurial leader, determined to make change happen. He indicated a personal preference for a participatory approach to decision-making and consequently viewed the establishment of a SBDMG as an opportunity to make fundamental and far reaching changes to the school. To a lesser extent, the Principal of Langley SHS also exhibited an initiator style. While she was supportive of the innovation, she was concerned not to initiate change beyond the guide-lines suggested by the Ministry of Education. The Principal of Maylup SHS exhibited a more managerial leadership style. He saw his role as managing the implementation process rather than initiating it. His stated preference for a "consultative" rather than a participatory form of decision-making indicated he was likely to be less committed to the implementation of SBDMGs.

Secondly, as Miles, (1987) noted, the existence of relevant knowledge and skill associated with the change appeared to affect the Principal's preparedness and capacity to implement change. In the cases of Jardine SHS and Maylup SHS, the Principals had prior experience with the successful implementation of SBDMGs. This experience had not only equipped them with the relevant knowledge and skills but also provided a potential blueprint for a SBDMG that they appeared keen to replicate in their new schools. At Langley SHS, the Principal had on-going experience with a form of participatory decision-making that was markedly similar to that embodied in the Better Schools Programme on SBDMGs. However, she expressed concern that a SBDMG might unnecessarily duplicate the functions of the existing decision-making structures and thereby create conflict among participants. Consequently this Principal was less enthusiastic in her promotion of the change.

Thirdly, it was a Ministry of Education expectation that all three Principals would "ensure" the implementation of SBDMGs. In short, Principals were to act as Ministry agents for change. Indeed, in all schools, the Principal viewed themselves as the key advocate and facilitator of the change. Whether they held a personal conviction about the desirability of establishing a SBDMG or not, they were expected to demonstrate support and to facilitate the implementation process. At both Maylup SHS and Langley SHS the Principal shared the advocacy and change facilitator roles with a key member of staff. These informal leaders did much to promote the change among staff members at their schools. Consequently, the innovation was viewed as less Ministry and Principal directed. This in turn appeared to foster staff support for the change and increase the school's preparedness to implement the innovation.

Despite the existence of differing leadership "styles", knowledge, skills and personal conviction about the establishment of SBDMGs, all Principals assumed a positive stance towards the innovation. By so doing the Principals demonstrated a degree commitment to, and support for, the establishment of SBDMGs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Development of knowledge and skills related to Principal leadership must be addressed as part of a fundamental and essential strategy to ensure the implementation of SBDMGs. It is a recommendation that any professional development programmes offered to Principals focus on at least two specific areas. Firstly, on developing collaborative skills such as consensus building, conflict resolution, communication, commitment building and team building skills. Secondly, on developing decision-making skills in specific areas such as strategic planning, priority setting, resource utilization, and the design of accountability evaluation plans.*

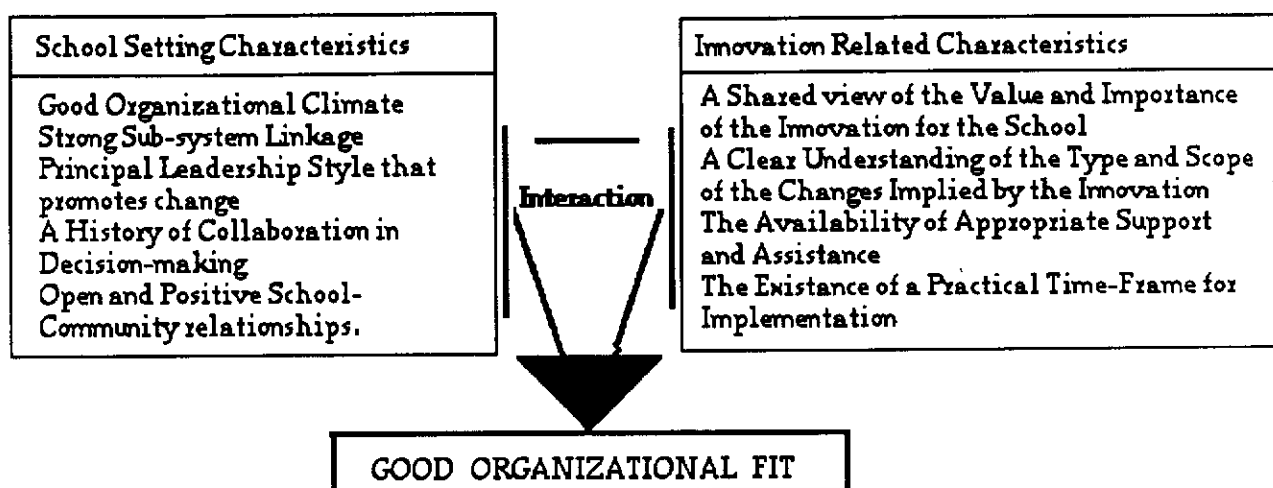
##### **14.4.1 The Assessment of Organizational Fit**

In analysing a school's initial response to the innovation, data indicates that a complex process of evaluation of the innovation was undertaken. It appears that the Principal, staff and other members of the school community used their knowledge about the existing characteristics of the school to make judgements about how well the establishment of a SBDMG would fit with the existing school organization. This initial evaluation of "organizational fit" appears more than just a simple cost-benefit type analysis of implementing the innovation. Judgements seem to have been less rational and influenced by a large number of related yet more

problematic considerations. Issues such as the possibility for disruption to the existing authority relationships within the school, the impact of implementation of classroom processes, the impact on the school's relationship with parent groups and the school's capacity to resource and sustain the implementation process, all appeared to have played a important role in each school's determination of organizational fit.

A degree of uncertainty about the organizational fit of the innovation appeared across all sites. Data indicated Principals and staff were critical about several aspects associated with the innovation itself. First, Principals and staff were critical about the lack of clear statements about the innovation and its operational implications for the school. Second, there was concern about the lack of resources to support implementation. Such resources included time. Time for staff to address the change process, time to collect ideas, time for training in new skills and release time for staff to participate in the implementation planning process. This concern about resources such as time appeared directly related to what Miles (1989) referred to as "organizational slack". Given that Principals and staff were already grappling with a number of concurrent changes it was understandable that little resource surplus (organizational slack) existed to devote to the implementation of SBDMGs. Concern was also expressed about the appropriateness of District-Level assistance available to guide implementation.

A perception of good organizational fit appears to be the product of the interaction of existing school setting characteristics with a set of innovation related characteristics. This is shown diagrammatically in Figure 20.



**Figure 20**  
**Organizational Fit**

The better the perception of "organizational fit", the more prepared a school was to undertake implementation. Indeed, for schools such as Langley SHS where there was a perception of good organizational fit, early planning for implementation was undertaken. Alternatively, at Jardine SHS where organizational fit appeared poor, planning for implementation was delayed by some six months.

#### **14.5            SPECIFIC INTERACTIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The formal planning events concerned with the establishment of a SBDMG constituted the adaptation phase of the implementation process. This phase involved the translation of the innovation within the context of the school. It was during this phase that decisions were made to modify the innovation to match the existing organizational characteristics of the school, and to modify the organizational characteristics of the school to implement the innovation. In short, it was the phase in which interactive modification to the innovation and the school was most apparent.



There appear two possible reasons for the lack of open parental participation. First, data suggest that parent representatives felt the decisions concerning structure and function of a SBDMG resided with educational professionals not with the parents. This was particularly evident at Langley SHS where parents openly deferred to the Principal and staff representatives when considering the operational guide-lines of the SBDMG. Second, the Principal and key staff appeared to lack the consensus building and collaborative skills necessary to foster parent participation. The result at both Langley SHS and Maylup SHS was the emergence of what Janis (1985) terms the process of "group think". In this process there emerges among participants a desire to maintain group cohesion and consensus consequently all critical argument is forgotten. Janis cites several symptoms of "group think" among participants including: limited effort to get information and advice from specialists; limited generation and discussion of alternative solutions and failure of participants to examine the consequences of any expounded preferred solution. At Langley SHS and Maylup SHS such group think was evidenced by the lack of critical deliberation and the frequency with which parents supported the suggestions ventured by the Principal and staff members.

During the planning process, key members of the group focused not only on the Better Schools statement about SBDMGs, but also on what Fullan (1982) referred to as "situational knowledge". That is, knowledge about the characteristics of their school and its community. Against such knowledge participants attempted to determine what were the desirable characteristics of a SBDMG for their particular school. For example, at Langley SHS a lack of parental participation in the life of the school, combined with concern about the demise of the existing school development committee, led to the generation of guide-lines that would see the SBDMG operate as a school

community forum rather than a policy decision-making group. The focus here was on modifying the innovation while making minimal change to the existing organization of the school.

At Maylup SHS, little concern existed about obtaining sufficient parental participation or about the potential for conflict a SBDMG might pose to established decision-making groups. The key consideration of the steering committee was the public image of the school. Emphasis was placed on changes to the existing organization of the school so that it more closely resembled a private school. Subsequently, guide-lines were developed that would see the SBDMG operate as a legally incorporated School Board with members participating directly in the development of educational policy. Incorporation would permit the School Board to function as a body corporate, relieving the Principal or any one member of the Board of legal responsibility for its decisions. The existence of such a School Board would mark a fundamental departure from the administrative arrangements currently existing in government schools.

#### **14.5.2 External Factors Affecting Implementation**

##### **FACTOR 1: Ministry pressure for implementation**

The implied freedom for individual schools to translate and adapt the policy on SBDMGs (that is, to be self-determining) was soon curtailed by the issuing of more prescriptive Ministry of Education guide-lines on implementation. In the latter half of 1988 a variety of documents concerning the implementation of the Better Schools Programme were disseminated to schools. These documents were designed to clarify for school community members, the Ministry's position on, and recommendations about, such issues as the establishment of SBDMGs.

The confusion resulting from the often contradictory information about SBDMGs and School Development Plans prompted the respective Principals of each of the schools under study to refrain from any further implementation planning during 1988.

With the commencement of the 1989 school year, the Ministry of Education increased pressure on schools for the establishment of SBDMGs and School Development Plans. Through the dissemination of Ministry discussion-documents and drafts of enabling legislation, it became apparent to the Principals at each school that the Ministry intended the SBDMG play a critical role in the process of school development planning. Further, District Superintendents and School Development Officers constantly reminded schools about the Ministry implementation time-line which proposed all schools have a SBDMG in place by the end of semester one 1989. At all three schools under study, the new Ministry documents and had created a sense of urgency among Principals to make a concerted effort to establish SBDMGs that would fulfil the Ministry requirements. Accordingly, the Principals arranged for steering committee meetings to recommence planning the implementation of SBDMGs.

For schools such as Langley SHS and Maylup SHS, that had already begun to frame their own guide-lines, the emergence of new discussion documents and statements forced the steering committee members to review, re-interpret, adapt and re-develop those guide-lines. Rather than clarify the policy for participants, the new discussion documents and enabling legislation created frustration and served to heighten the confusion at the school level. Despite the rhetoric of devolved decision-making, the very notion of "self-determining schools" appeared to be illusory. For Principals and other members of the steering committees,

the Ministry of Education appeared to be delimiting and pre-determining the nature and extent of change occurring at the school level. The Principals at all three schools indicated that, in reality, the Better Schools Programme aimed at the creation of self-managing schools rather than self-determining schools. Principals were being encouraged to become corporate managers and schools were being required to establish mechanisms that would enable them to be more efficient and accountable organizations. Under such changes the authority to make critical educational policy would remain with the Ministry of Education and not in reality be devolved to schools.

**FACTOR 2: External Assistance**

External assistance in form of the School Development Officer (SDO) was available to the Principals and members of the steering committees at each of the three schools. However, only Langley SHS sought and received such assistance in any substantial way. At Langley SHS, the SDO had developed a sound working relationship with members of the school on issues related to their existing Priority Schools Programme. Having previously established his professional credibility he was invited to play a fundamental role in disseminating relevant information and facilitating the implementation process of a School-Based Decision-Making Group. At both Maylup SHS and Jardine SHS, no prior working relationship existed between the SDO and the school. While assistance in translating Ministry policy and facilitating implementation appeared to be desired at these schools, the mechanism to provide such assistance appeared poorly established. Indeed, the Principals and senior staff at both Jardine SHS and Maylup SHS expressed little confidence in the SDO's capacity to offer meaningful and practical assistance. At these schools the SDO was viewed as a seconded "classroom teacher", possessing limited expertise at facilitating change.

Such a perception appeared fostered by informal information that the role of the SDO was still evolving and that they had received very limited training at the District Office. It appeared that the effectiveness of any assistance provided by an SDO depended on the "natural" talents of role occupants. Consequently, the Principals and steering committee members at Jardine SHS and Maylup SHS made limited use of such District level assistance.

## RECOMMENDATION

*It is a recommendation the role of the SDO be clarified. Once clarified, professional development programmes should be established at District level to equip people with the knowledge, skills and competencies required for their role. Such training should focus on the role of the SDO as an: Information Provider; Resource Linker and Process Helper. Particular attention should be given to the development of skills involved with facilitating change and assisting school communities to develop their own capacity to undertake school improvement initiatives.*

### 14.5.3 Internal Factors Affecting Implementation

The dissemination of increasingly prescriptive Ministry documents about SBDMGs and School Development Plans, coupled with perceived pressure to hasten the implementation of SBDMGs, greatly influenced the actions of the steering committees. In all three schools, less attention was given to establishing a SBDMG appropriate to the particular setting characteristics of the school and more to the elements of the innovation itself. The steering group discussions focused on interpreting Ministry of Education documents to determine what structure and function was being "required" of them and how such a decision-making group might be best "installed" in the school.

**FACTOR 1:        The role of the Principal**

As the implementation planning process progressed each Principal took on an increasingly dominant role. Each Principal attempted to influence the deliberation of the steering committees to ensure that the outcomes would reflect their preferences for a SBDMG. The mechanisms by which such influence was attempted varied across schools. However, at all three schools the Principals set the agenda of steering committee meetings, organized meeting procedures, introduced preferred models of an SBDMG and controlled the flow of information to the group.

It is possible to speculate about likely reasons for the Principal's actions. The Principals might have been motivated by a desire to preserve the autonomy of the school from unwelcome Ministry prescription. Alternatively, the Principals might have acted to prevent the establishment of a SBDMG that would result in the undesired alteration to their authority or to that of existing administrative decision-making bodies. Speculation aside, data indicates that at Langley SHS the Principal's actions stemmed from her desire to establish a SBDMG that was appropriate to the special needs of the Langley school community. She sought to establish a SBDMG that would minimize disruption to existing decision-making groups and maintain the sense of collaboration that already existed among staff and parents at the school. At Maylup SHS and Jardine SHS, the incoming Principals lacked an opportunity to adequately assess the unique characteristics of their new schools, therefore it would seem unlikely that these Principals acted to established a SBDMG that matched the particular needs of the school community. In fact at Maylup SHS, the Principal clearly indicated his desire to replicate in structure and function the type of SBDMG he had established in his previous school. In

a similar but more determined fashion, the Principal of Jardine SHS openly promoted his vision about the structure and function of the SBDMG. Guided by their desire to shape the outcomes of the steering committee planning process, the Principals at all three schools paid little attention to the establishment or maintenance of collaborative group processes.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*The quality and appropriateness of the outcomes of planning decisions undertaken by a steering committee depend on the quality of the decision-making group processes. It would seem essential therefore that the Principal assume an open and collaborative approach to decision-making within the planning group. It is a recommendation that the Principal should ensure that:*

*The steering committee is comprised of representatives selected from each stakeholding group within the school community;*

*Open and collaborative deliberations occurs between participants;*

*Information and assistance relevant to the implementation of SBDMGs is sought and provided to all members of the steering committee;*

*Alternative courses of action are clearly examined to enable decisions to be made between viable alternatives.*

#### **FACTOR 2: Information and Communication**

The importance of information in planning for implementation and the manner in which such information was communicated to members of the steering committee, played a critical role in determining the implementation events at all three schools. Information concerning the

the establishment of SBDMGs stemmed from a number of sources and took different forms. Such information ranged from the "official" Ministry documents, through to statements issued from organizations such as the Western Australian Council of State School Organizations, (representing parent organizations), and the Teachers' Union. In addition, models of SBDMGs and development planning procedures also flowed into schools from other schools and interstate.

The carrier or communicator of the information appeared to influence the manner in which the members of the steering committee responded to the information. All official Ministry information were disseminated to the school and members of the steering committees via the Principal. This dissemination procedure permitted the Principals to screen and selectively communicate ideas to members of the steering committee. All Principals, but especially those at Maylup SHS and Langley SHS, used the "authority" of such Ministry information to direct the planning process. When staff or parents forwarded ideas about possible functions of the SBDMG that were contrary to those held by the Principal, the Principal would counter and limit such ideas with a general reference to "stated Ministry intentions".

The Principals at both Maylup SHS and Jardine SHS relied heavily on information about SBDMGs obtained from their previous schools. Such information in the form of "preferred models" were promoted and discussed in detail within the steering committee. Lack of consideration of alternative models or information related to SBDMGs did not appear an issue at Langley SHS or at Maylup SHS, where participants appeared to readily accept suggestions proposed by the Principal. However, in light of the Principal dominance of these steering committees, the existence of effective participatory decision-making is questionable.



At Jardine SHS, parent members of the steering committee sought alternative information about the possible structure and functions of a SBDMG. This alternative information, especially that obtained from WACSSO, was used by parent members of the steering committee to support their views about the structure and function of a SBDMG and to oppose the Principal's model. Subsequent meetings became conflicted rather than collaborative, and lead to hostility and intransigence among members.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*While a range of alternative information sources about possible structures and functions of a SBDMG has potential to cause differences of opinion among steering committee members, it also holds benefits. Under a participatory decision-making approach the quality of decision outcomes often depends upon the consideration of viable alternatives. Information about such alternatives must be accessible to all members. That is, information must be available to all and in a form that is useful to the decision-makers.*

*It is a recommendation that the information flow to these steering committees needs to be multi-directional. A communication network should be established that facilitates information sharing from Ministry to school, within schools, from school to school, school to community and back again.*

#### **FACTOR 3: Conflict**

An important issue influencing the implementation process involved the impact a SBDMG posed to existing decision-making groups within the school. As information about the possible functions of the SBDMG became known, concern grew among members of the steering committees

about the possible loss of decision-making authority of existing groups such as the P&C and senior staff bodies. At Langley SHS, members of the existing School Development Committee reacted strongly to the suggestion that the SBDMG take on their role of school development planning. At Jardine SHS, members of the steering committee, especially parents, feared their support for the Principals "model" would result in the demise of the school's P&C. Subsequently, parent members sought information from WACSSO about alternatives to the proposed SBDMG. This information was used to oppose the adoption of the Principal's "model" and to preserve the decision-making authority exercised by the existing P&C. Where the perceived threat to existing decision-making authority was greatest, so too was the openness of the conflict between members of the steering committee.

#### RECOMMENDATION :

*The implementation of any change would seem to involve some degree of disruption to the status quo. Where the proposed change involves a fundamental alteration to existing decision -making structures and procedure, conflict would seem inevitable. It is important that those with responsibility for implementation view conflicts as a normal part of the change process and not a cue to abandon implementation efforts. To minimize the degree of conflict three strategies are suggested.*

*Firstly, the impact the change could have on the school as an organization must be assessed. To do this information should be sought with regard to the existing formal and informal authority relationships of the school organization. Secondly, potential conflicts prompted by implementation of the innovation should be identified. Thirdly, once alerted to the potential*

*conflicts, implementors should identify strategies that could be employed to resolve such conflicts and persist with the change effort.*

**FACTOR 4:        Maintaining support for implementation.**

As the implementation planning process continued, issues emerging both from the steering committee and external to it, appeared to have a noticeable effect on level of school community support for the innovation. While general parental support continued at Langley SHS and Maylup SHS, at Jardine SHS, confusion about the role of a SBDMG and its relationship to the existing P&C, led parents to engage in open and public confrontation with the school administration.

For many of the teaching staff initial support for the principle of participatory decision-making began to wane. Emerging guide-lines about the structure and function of SBDMGs indicated the necessity of increased teacher participation in the school development planning process. By mid-1989, many teachers at all three schools were expressing the view that their primary and most important role was concerned with classroom teaching, not participating in administrative decision-making. It was argued that committee meetings would take teachers out of classrooms, affect the time they had for preparation and marking, and disrupt the education of students.

Informal interviews across the three schools indicated a growing concern among teachers that main purpose of the organizational changes was the installation of accountability mechanisms in schools. It was feared that such mechanisms could reduce the professional autonomy of teachers. In addition, teachers indicated that there were too many concurrent changes confronting them and that they had been provided with limited or totally

inadequate support to enable adequate implementation to be undertaken. To be required to participate in the implementation of yet another change was viewed by many teachers as the "last straw". As Firestone and Corbett (1988) suggested, teachers saw participation in SBDMGs and School Development Planning as a cost rather than a benefit. For schools such as Jardine SHS and Maylup SHS, the perception of change-related disruption had reached a point where many staff were openly promoting the outright rejection of any further change and a re-focussing on classroom and instruction issues.

Even the Principals seemed to have become less enthusiastic about the change. Not only were Principals faced with the growing discontent among school community members, but they were also being confronted by a fundamental change to their role from one of "educational leader" to "corporate manager". This was a role change they did not appear to welcome. Clearly Principals were facing a real dilemma. Given the deteriorating organizational climate of all three schools, persisting with implementation plans was likely to threaten the stability of these school's overall educational operations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

*Central Education Authorities need to recognize the difficulty faced by Principals in implementing far-reaching, fundamental organizational change while maintaining the operations of the school.*

*There appears limitations to the number of changes that can be successfully implemented at any given time. Where the change is complex, the school should concentrate on implementing one change at a time. By so doing , material resources, assistance and change*

*efforts can be focused. Most importantly, time must be available for parents and staff to address the change process. As implementation planning is undertaken, all stakeholding groups within the school community need to be kept fully informed about issues discussed and decisions taken by the planning body. Such communication could help break a sense of isolation often felt by teachers and parents alike and may promote a commitment to the change.*

#### **14.5.4 External Interventions Affecting Implementation**

The critical external intervention affecting the implementation process was the industrial action taken by the SSTUWA during the latter part of 1989. This action was to effectively bring to a halt the implementation of SBDMGs at two of the schools and severely limit the process at the remaining school. There appears several factors that prompted the Union to impose a ban on the implementation of SBDMGs and School Development Planning.

The first factor involves union concern over what it saw as inadequate consultation between the Ministry and the Union about the key aspects of the Better Schools Programme. While the Union was represented on early working parties associated with aspects of the Better Schools Programme, they took a contrary stance on several aspects of the Programme. At the end of 1987 the working parties were terminated, to be replaced by Ministry taskforces. Isolated from a direct collaboration in the planning for implementation, the Union was forced to adopt a relationship based more on negotiation than participation.

The second factor, involves the Union's concern about the impact implementation of the Better Schools Programme was having on the

working conditions of its members. In response, the Union sought compensation via a fifteen percent salary package increase application for its members. When the package was rejected by the Ministry of Education the union issued a directive to all members to cease participation in the implementation of both SBDMGs and School Development Plans.

At both Maylup SHS and Jardine SHS this industrial action brought to a halt all formal implementation planning. Steering committee meetings were abandoned until the following year. At Langley SHS the newly formed School Council continued to meet but without staff representatives. Consequently little discussion about school policy issues or development plans was undertaken. The impact of such industrial action on the implementation process in all three schools demonstrates how susceptible the implementation process in government schools can be to external political interventions.

#### **RECOMMENDATION :**

*There is a need for collaboration among all stakeholding groups when planning for the introduction of a major organizational change. The lack of such collaboration between the Central Education Authority, the Teachers Union, Parent and Community Associations and Professional Associations, can result in divergence of ideas with respect to policy innovations such as SBDMGs and their implementation. Acting in isolation, each association or group can develop their own response to the innovation. This in turn can result in conflicting information about the policy innovation being disseminated to school communities. Such contradictory information in turn tends to heightened confusion and conflict at the school level.*

*It is a recommendation that a consensus be sought between stakeholding groups about the core features of such a change. Representatives from the Central Education Authority, the Union, Parents and Citizens Associations and other relevant groups need to participate in a series of focused discussions to determine a unified approach to implementation. The achievement of a consensus among such stakeholding groups could alleviate the likelihood of political bargaining among interest groups, and facilitate the dissemination of common and consistent information about the organizational changes.*

#### **14.6 SCHOOL CONTEXT AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

Any change, be it a product or policy, is not introduced into a vacuum. Indeed, the data derived from the three case studies confirms that view of Crossley (1984) and Huberman & Miles (1984) that schools are clearly open social systems. As social systems, schools are comprised of a complex pattern of relationships. It is the nature of these relationships that forms the context in which implementation takes place. As open social systems, schools are not only exposed to ideas and information stemming from the general and specific change environments, but is also affected by political and ideological turbulence occurring within those environments.

All three case study schools shared the same general change environment. Consequently, the implementation processes occurring at each school was subject to influence by similar information and interventions stemming from this environment. That is, all three schools received copies of the Better Schools Programme and subsequent Ministry documents relating specifically to the establishment of SBDMGs. Further, at each school, the process of implementation was affected by the industrial action embarked

on by the SSTUWA. To this extent there was some commonalty in the implementation process across the three school sites. However, the manner in which such information and interventions influenced implementation events was discernibly different from school to school. Specifically, the unique characteristics of each school setting influenced nature of both the initiation and adaptation phase of the implementation process. To highlight the similarities and differences between schools, Figure 21 maps the implementation process against key events.

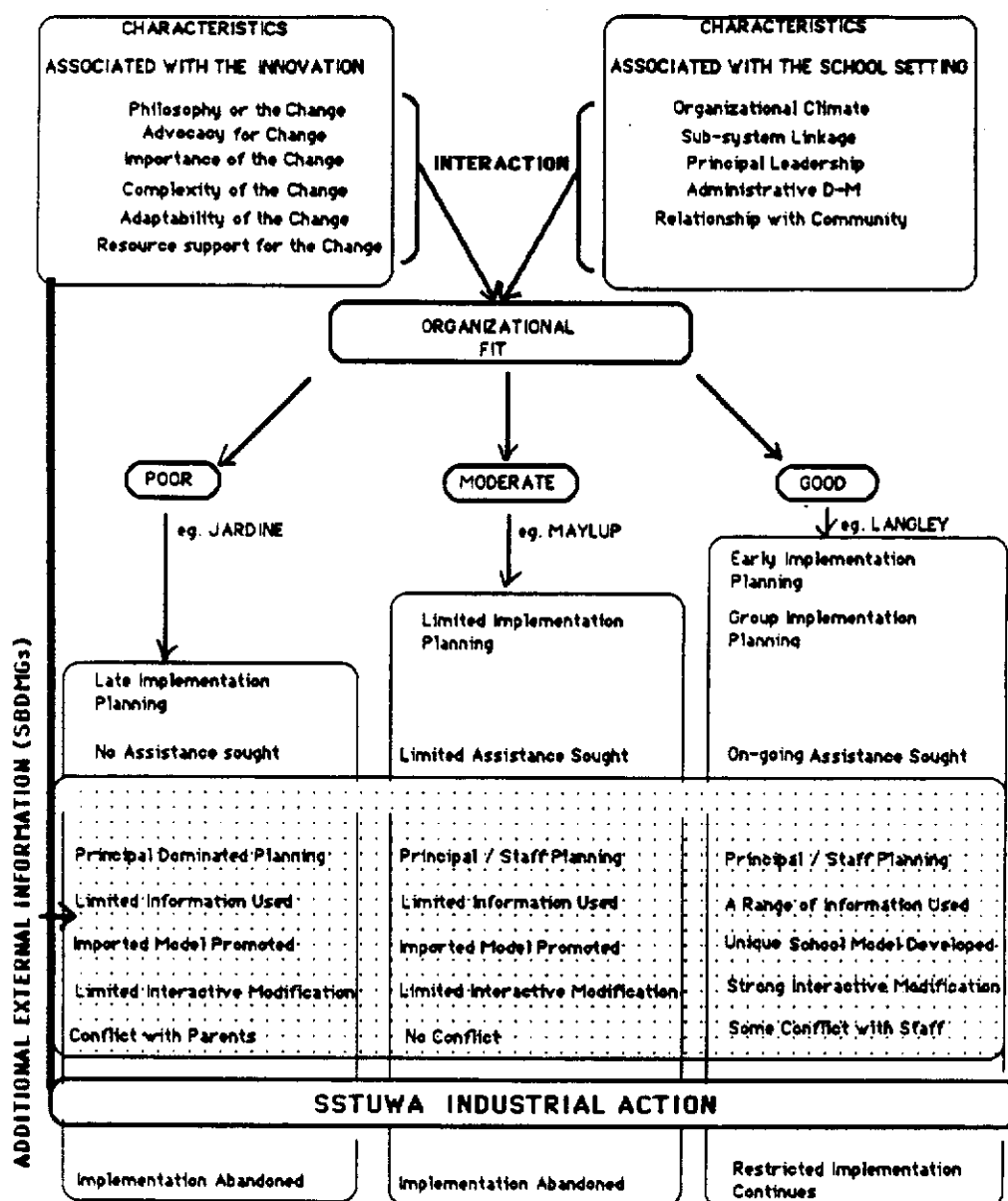


FIGURE 21

### Mapping the Implementation Process



Figure 21 illustrates the interaction between the characteristics of the innovation and those of the school organization, as well as the influence of each on subsequent implementation events. Such interactions permit the initial assessments of the innovation's "organizational fit". This goodness of fit appears to affect, not only the schools preparedness to proceed with the implementation process, but also its capacity to do so. Figure 21 also indicates that schools are "open social systems" and subject to information and interventions stemming from such bodies as the Ministry of Education and the State School Teachers Union (the general change environment). While such information and interventions impact on the change events, it appears school setting characteristics strongly influence the implementation process. The unique nature of a school's organizational characteristics appear to influence the change strategies employed, the range of information and assistance used, and must importantly, the degree to which members of the organization will persevere with the implementation process.

#### **14.7 SUMMARY**

In conclusion, data derived from all three school sites indicate that in addition to the characteristics of the innovation, it is the nature of the context in which change occurs that exerts the most pronounced influence on the implementation process. The factors which constituted the general change environment, and more importantly the characteristics of each school setting, affected specific implementation action undertaken as each school community attempted to implement the policy on School-Based Decision-Making Groups. To gain an understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the implementation process, it seems essential to view change as context dependent. At both Ministry and school level, close attention needs to be given to the nature of the school

as an organization as well as the characteristics of its environment. Through such an approach to change, appropriate support and strategies might be developed that better facilitate the type of organizational transformation that is intended to promote school development and create our "Better Schools".

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