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1. Wider workforce: Overview

The concept of Wider Workforce used in this paper has some roots in UK school workforce reform that aims to enhance teaching capacity and students' learning outcomes. In this context Wider Workforce primarily refers to the inclusion of teaching assistants in classrooms to help teachers with a variety of ancillary duties, and to allow teachers to make most use of their professional skills.

However, this paper seeks to expand the definition of 'wider workforce' in its broadest terms, to capture the diverse range of human resources, knowledge and expertise that can support students' learning during their school years.

Student learning and development takes place through interaction with a diverse environment of participants and experiences. Schools play an important part in supporting the broad learning, personal and social development of children, and in doing so draw on the time, knowledge and expertise of many people. These people constitute the 'wider workforce' in and around schools, through direct employment, volunteer time, and collaborative use of knowledge and resources.

This paper identifies policy initiatives and case study examples that seek to attract, co-ordinate and integrate a range of specialists in communities of learning, and synergise their expertise to support collaborative learning with students and with each other.

Four primary dimensions of the wider workforce are explored:

- The education community (students, the employed workforce including technical, specialist and administrative staff, feeder/cluster/network schools, pre-school and post-compulsory education providers)
- Family communities (parents, guardians, carers, immediate and extended families)
- Business communities (local, national and international business and industry, independent professionals, experts and subject specialists)
- Wider communities (government, health and social welfare organisations, charitable, not-for-profit and voluntary sectors, social groups, online networks and communities)

This paper seeks to review current policy and practice relating to the deployment, training and development of a wider school workforce, and to stimulate discussion and ideas for new school-led initiatives in this field.

Schools of the future will need to be better connected into their local communities, more flexible, and more responsive to local needs. Partnerships between schools (both government and non-government) and between schools and local businesses and community organisations will be keys to greater local responsiveness, alternative sources of funding and greater sharing and more efficient use of human resources and physical facilities (Business Council of Australia, 2007).

[The Building Schools for the Future process needs to] identify the school as just one of the resources that learners will interact with, and to investigate how the school can be a key resource in fostering relationships with other resources in

a learners' ecology, such as people and other learning locations.....[It needs to] identify the roles that need to be fulfilled by people and technologies within and beyond the school building in order to support the school as a key resource in a learner's evolving ecology of learning resources. (Luckin, 2008).

2. Wider workforce: the developmental context

Many countries, including Australia, have sought to develop visions of 21st century living and learning to help inform educational policy and strategic planning. Educators are being challenged in their thinking about the function of schools in contemporary student learning and development, the skills and resources required to support them, and how these are sourced and integrated within spaces, pedagogies and learning communities. This has inevitable implications for the capacity, capability and composition of the workforce that support student learning.

Common themes emerging from learning futures scenario planning include:

Student-centered provision, personalisation and involvement

Reforms focus on the centrality of individual student development and learning. Workforce redesign is about being proactive in providing the best for all our children and young people in a changing world. Further, young people themselves should significantly influence the organisation and design of schools and their workforce.

Making community connections

Learning takes place beyond the immediate school environment, and the blurring of school boundaries should enable the harnessing of knowledge and inspiration from the wider community. Equally, schools must respond to the changing needs of business and industry, providing opportunities for students to experience, develop and practice the skills that will underpin their future employment and citizenship.

Redefining the role of teachers

Implicit in the preceding themes is an acceptance that current perceptions of what a 'teacher' does is evolving. Engaging students in shaping their own learning, and supporting them with input from diverse community sources will result in teachers acting as professional 'managers of learning' - mentors, guides and facilitators, co-coordinating the input and activities of others.

Integration of technology in learning

Technology is increasingly influential in the organisation of schooling, the creation of learning opportunities and increasing access to knowledge and resources. It also supports connections and collaboration with others, whilst enabling concurrent personalisation of learning for students.

Developing the 'whole' student

The international education community is becoming more sensitive to its role in supporting the holistic development of students. Integrated services and communities support students in developing a sense of their own identity and citizenship, building 'soft' skills such as judgement, caring, ethics, intuition and imagination.

From these themes emerge an expectation about greater and wider collaboration beyond existing professional development networks within schools. Jackson and Temperley (2007) argue that "the school as a unit has become too small and isolated for learning...in a knowledge rich and networked world....change needs are too rapid, knowledge too ubiquitous, contexts of knowledge application are too diverse". They propound the need not just for professional learning

communities within educational networks, but for networked learning communities (NLC). They cite England's National College for School Leadership's NLC program, which has sought to develop "permeability to external learning, from other schools and from the public knowledge base" to generate new knowledge through collaborative learning.

3. Wider workforce: the Victorian policy context

The 2003 Blueprint for Government Schools set a major capacity-building agenda in Victorian schools, driving wide-ranging improvements in resourcing, infrastructure, ICT, curriculum, assessment and reporting and teaching practice (DEECD, 2003). This has included the development of the roles of School Support Officers, allied professionals, and the more recent introduction of secondary teacher assistants. Schools have experienced great benefits as a result through reducing time spent by teachers on administrative tasks, and being able to provide direct, in-class support to students most in need.

The 2008 Blueprint for a 21st century context seeks to build on the existing initiatives through strategic improvements to system integration, partnerships with parents and communities, and workforce reform (DEECD, 2008).

There is clear evidence that the quality of the workforce is the major factor driving quality in schools. The recent McKinsey investigation (2007) into the characteristics of the top performing education systems internationally put workforce quality at the core of success. The most important resource that an education system possesses is the knowledge and skills of its leaders, teachers and staff working for the benefit of young people.

The issues of workforce development in Victoria reflect those facing other states in Australia and indeed, many countries around the world. Schools face increasing competition in the labour market for talented people. Career structures and working arrangements that are appealing and rewarding must be in place to continue to attract and retain the best people. Staff also need to be able to focus on what they do best and be supported to do their jobs as effectively as possible through a wider workforce approach.

The context in which schools operate in the 21st century is markedly different from the context in which the modern education systems was developed. Concerted efforts have been made to improve the delivery and outcomes of education in a changing context. Although there has been considerable progress, there is scope for improvement. Innovative approaches to policy, practice, provision and delivery are required.

Blueprint “Wider Workforce” Next Practice Field Trials place emphasis on the role of practitioner innovation in developing new models. Innovative practitioners will be invited to collaborate to explore opportunities for teachers to work with other professionals and paraprofessionals to deliver a wider range of learning experiences, while allowing teachers to focus on the areas where they have unique skills. The trials will stimulate thinking and capture current and potential “next practices” in relation to school workforce remodelling.

4. Wider workforce: international policy developments

There have been a variety of international perspectives on organisation of the employed education workforce, building the wider workforce, and greater external collaboration. This section contains a selection of international discussion, research and policy developments that feature wider workforce directions.

OECD

The OECD's Demand-Sensitive Schooling? Evidence and Issues (2006) reflects on the need for greater sensitivity in education to the needs and expectations of society, including discussion of student and parental voice and participation in schooling. The report recognizes that 'demand' is a prominent concept in reform debates in many OECD countries, particularly in enhancing participation and active forms of personalised teaching and learning.

United Kingdom

In the UK, substantial workforce remodeling has been undertaken. This began with a National Workload Agreement, which removed routine clerical and administration tasks from teachers' workloads. The Education Act 2002 set out who in schools could undertake specified tasks associated with teaching and learning. This in turn led to the development of the teaching assistant role, supported by the work of the national workforce remodelling team.

The Every Child Matters (2003) agenda was the government's attempt to tackle the issue of child safety and underlying problems of weak accountability and poor integration of services. The aim is for all schools to become extended schools, acting as hubs for services for children, families and other members of the community. These schools would offer a core of childcare, study support, family and life-long learning, health and social care, and wider community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities. (DfES, 2005).

The UK government's recent policy paper 'Working together - public services on your side', includes plans to intensify personalised learning for students. "By September 2010 every secondary school pupil will have access to a personal tutor...working with a range of specialist support services, personal tutoring will play a key role in ensuring schools understand every child in the round to ensure every child reaches their full potential".

Finland

The Finnish Ministry of Education's Education and Research Development Plan 2003-2008 reflects sensitivity to a changing, globalised environment. The Plan sets out various directions for education that have wider workforce implications, including:

- Wider use of learning in non-formal environments. E.g. Co-operation with libraries will be improved;
- Measures to intensify links between education and working life, and improve teachers' and guidance counsellors' knowledge about entrepreneurship;

- Educational institutions to intensify their contacts with employers and the world of work. Co-operation is needed both in the anticipation of educational needs and in the planning, implementation and evaluation of education.

Participative Student – Co-active School is a project of the Ministry of Education to promote the active role of pupils in the development of communality and welfare in schools. The General Upper Secondary Education Act provides that every school has a student association, and that schools must provide students with the opportunity to participate in the development of education, decision-making on studies 'and other matters that substantially influence the status of the students'.

The 2007 Policy Programme for the Well-Being of Children, Youth and Families 'creates a basis (for) exceeding sectoral boundaries', and includes emphasis on increasing student participation and voice (p5):

"Children and young people are given more opportunities to exert influence and to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities in pre-school education environments, schools, institutes of education and in libraries".

Netherlands

The 2007 Commission on Teacher Retention and Recruitment included wider workforce initiatives in its Action Plan to tackle supply problems. They propose greater innovation in the education process, the reduction of teachers' workload, and greater participation of other categories of school staff, 'agreements with social partners' and 'greater use of (suitably trained) professionals from the field'.

Sweden

Sweden has facilitated greater community participation in the education system through the introduction of a voucher system for exercising of choice of school, alongside freedom for parents, community groups and other interested parties to set up and run schools. This has created a diversity of participants and pedagogical approaches in education.

United States of America

President Obama's new US Presidential education agenda includes facilitating local flexibility and freedom for innovative work organisation in schools. It envisions "strategies such as personal academic plans, teaching teams, parent involvement, mentoring, intensive reading and math instruction, and extended learning time."

It also recognises the opportunity to involve non-teaching specialists, by supporting "efforts to help [maths and science] teachers learn from professionals in the field"

The 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) policy agenda focused on the identification, targeting and reconstitution of 'failing' schools. One aspect of the agenda involves private sector organisations taking over failing schools and establishing new charter schools. This is also a feature of the specialist and academy schools programme in the UK.

Under NCLB-related legislation in the US, parents are to be "afforded substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education

of their children." (Title I, Sec. 1001 (12)). NCLB describes ten different forms of parents and/or community involvement. These include advice and recommendation, evaluation and review of plans, consultation, participation and partnerships with schools.

The Department of Education has also published resources to facilitate initiatives that engage parents and community and faith-based groups in education.

Canada – British Columbia

The Ministry of Education has published a Parent and Education Engagement Partnership Project. This explores strategies to enhance and support Aboriginal parents in schools. These include programs advised by the Aboriginal Education Committee, Parent Advisory Committees, and creation of roles such as Home-school liaison officer, and Aboriginal advocate/support workers. It also proposes involving parents as resources and assistants (e.g. Aboriginal crafts) and promoting school as community resource (e.g. seminars for parents).

One policy initiative is the CommunityLINK program, focusing on improving the academic achievement and social functioning of vulnerable students. School districts support family and community involvement, and promote partnerships and an integrated approach to supporting vulnerable students with families, communities and service providers.

New Zealand

The Ministry of Education's curriculum implementation packs for schools include major emphases on educational partnerships with community and parents, seeing education as a shared enterprise.

The Secondary Futures Project generated dialogue between the education sector and the community about the purpose and direction of secondary schooling. The Project identified community connectedness, student-centred learning and the changing role of the teacher as key themes for future schooling.

Australia

The Future of Schooling in Australia paper by the Council for the Australian Federation (2007) recognized that States and Territories must explore "innovative approaches to teaching and personalized learning", which includes "the effective use of non-teaching staff in the school workforce as well as teachers and principals".

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (published by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)) recognises that "Partnerships between students, parents, carers and families, the broader community, business, schools and other education and training providers bring mutual benefits and maximise student engagement and achievement".

The MCEETYA Action Plan 2009-2012 commits to "working with all school sectors to ensure that schools engage young Australians, parents, carers, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community to support students' progress through schooling, and to provide them with rich learning, personal

development and citizenship opportunities". It includes the following agreed actions:

- parental engagement strategies, in line with the national Family-School Partnerships Framework to help school communities build effective partnerships with families to support student learning
- partnerships with higher education providers to build on quality learning and teaching in schools
- partnerships with local community groups and other agencies to ensure that students have access to appropriate pastoral, health and welfare, employment and other services support
- facilitating school-community partnership agreements, especially for low socioeconomic status schools and schools with high numbers of Indigenous students
- partnerships between schools, including shared facilities and joint initiatives, and linkages between targeted schools and high performing schools which can play a mentoring role
- integration of services for students and families, including co-location of services such as early childhood facilities, linking employment services to schools, and referring parents to parenting and family support programs.

5. International case studies on wider workforce initiatives

This section introduces some of the wider workforce initiatives and case studies from the international education community. These include innovative work organisation within the education community (students, teachers, non-teaching staff, networks with other education providers), parents and families, business and industry, and the wider community.

United Kingdom

Education community

“It has been important to develop the teacher as a leader of teams. We have worked to get teachers to understand that what they do or not do has a knock on effect. They have a part to play in the vision and not just in a single cell classroom” (Senior Manager, Meadow Primary School, UK (Gunter, 2007)

UK qualified Teaching Assistants are being used to take on 21 specific ancillary tasks to enable teachers to focus on their professional expertise. From 1997 to 2007 the number of teaching assistants in the UK rose from 61,000 to 163,000 (Finney, 2007). The role of the teaching assistant has evolved over the past decade, from that of a helper to an integral part of the classroom, there to support the teaching and learning process (Groom, 2006).

Evaluations of the role and benefits of teaching assistants in UK schools:

- Increase in students attaining high school English, maths and science qualifications (OFSTED, 2008)
- Quality of lessons with teaching assistants found to be better than those without them (OFSTED, 2002)
- Student behaviour and attentiveness in class improved as a result of Teaching Assistants being involved in lessons (Blatchford, 2007)
- Support staff make significant contributions to academic and social engagement (Cajkler, 2006)
- Reduced overall teacher workload (Gunter et al, 2007; Butt & Lance, 2005)
- Reduced teacher time/energy directed to non-productive activity (Wilson, 2003)
- Greater inclusion and academic engagement of students (Cajkler et al, 2007)
- More time to focus on teaching, planning managing and learning (Wilson, 2002)

A number of schools are pioneering initiatives to increase student voice and participation in learning.

At Bridgemary Community College 100 students act as school council subject leaders, peer mentors or leading activities such as drama and sport. (Leadbeater, 2008).

Greenford High School has received national recognition for their focus on student voice, with students participation on school council, lesson observation, interviewing teachers, curriculum consultation, and on a Junior Leadership Team.

In Scotland, a major peer learning experiment involves pupils tutoring one another in English and maths in 125 primary schools. Early evaluations show the scheme is improving results in both subjects. But the main impact is on the self-esteem and motivation of the child who is the tutor. (Seith, 2008)

Business community

At Patchwork Community College, business-enhanced learning experiences are embedded into the curriculum. In addition to work experience and industry visits, all students take part in four 'Business Days' annually, engaging in real life decision-making scenarios. The school has a mentoring programme through which local business people regularly mentor identified KS4 students. Additional links include curriculum projects and visits, recruitment workshops, mock interviews, employer events, environmental challenges and sponsorship.

Within the Durham federation of secondary schools, Year 10 students spend three days at school and two days employed in a local business, with learning supported by community trainers (Leadbeater, 2008).

International law firm Linklaters has developed a diverse menu of activities in partnership with all 70 primary, secondary, and high schools in the London Borough of Hackney. Staff volunteers can opt to participate in enterprise events, work experience placements, literacy support initiatives, and various mentoring or professional development programmes for students, teachers, leaders and governing bodies.

Car-makers Jaguar sponsors a Tag Rugby initiative in partnership with Coventry Rugby Football Club. The scheme involves players from the Club that go into local schools to teach children sports skills, team working and discipline.

Art Matters! is a joint initiative established between Ernst & Young and a leading children's charity. The programme aims to help socially disadvantaged and excluded young people to realise their creative potential and enhance their confidence and self-esteem through participation in workshops led by artists, education sessions and gallery tours. Ernst & Young provide media, finance and marketing expertise, and paid volunteering by their employees.

Wider community

The Scottish New Community Schools Initiative features co-located service design and delivery, around education, health and family support services. New 'integration manager' posts have been introduced to support connections between services.

The Bridgemary College workforce reforms (see above) include the creation of a dedicated, multi-disciplinary social support team, including a community police officer based at the school. The team provides one-to-one mentoring for all students, looks after special educational needs, attendance and behaviour issues, and interacts with social services, the police and the courts. The team acts as an 'insulating ring' around the school, absorbing issues that would otherwise disrupt the learning environment (Leadbeater, 2008).

At Cramlington Community High School, teaching staff engage in training and professional development activities each Wednesday afternoon, accredited trainers from the community teach students skills

including gardening, art, drama, dance and fitness. (Leadbeater, 2008).

At Sittingbourne Community College, support officers and gardening experts work with previously disengaged students, combining personal, social and health education (PSHE) and horticulture. Students discover a new passion for learning, whilst mending and tending gardens for senior citizens and growing vegetables for the school canteen (Teachers TV).

The Halesowen Partnership is creating a network of accredited Community Learning Partners, whilst the Armathwaite School has set up a register of people outside the school willing to share their expertise and experience (Leadbeater, 2008).

Our Theatre is a partnership between, Shakespeare's Globe theatre, Southwark schools and Pricewaterhouse Coopers, running a programme of activities focusing on social, political, community and emotional themes explored in a Shakespeare play.

United States of America

Education community

In the US, support staff akin to the UK teaching assistants are widely used to work alongside individual children with particular learning and behavioural needs, reducing teacher input to non-productive interventions (Hipsky, 2005).

US studies recognise the changing roles of para-educators from clerical roles to tutoring and running remedial classes (Daniels & McBride (2001)). U.S. Department of Education data shows that schools have more special education paraprofessionals (76%) than other instructional (42%), library/media center (38%), regular Title I (targeted low-SES funded posts) (36%), and LOTE/bilingual (31%) paraprofessionals.

Through the Powerful Schools, Powerful Leaders program, teaching assistants have achieved accelerated development against national standards in low attaining Prep students, and low grade readers.

The Coca Cola Youth program appoints middle and high school students who are considered at-risk of leaving schools as tutors of elementary students in core subject areas, improving retention rates amongst the 'tutors', and supporting academic outcomes for the recipients.

Project Success engages university partners to provide individualised or small group instruction in basic skills and content areas for at risk Elementary school students. Volunteer tutors include university students enrolled in teacher education, who are supervised by University faculty. whilst classroom teachers assist the tutors in planning for their experiences. (Hadley, 2000).

US research also highlights the benefits of inter-workforce collaboration in professional learning communities. Teaching culture and practice is improved because the learning communities increase collaboration, a focus on student learning, teacher authority or empowerment, and continuous learning (Vescio, 2008).

Family community

The Family Friendly Schools Initiative employs research-based family engagement strategies to improve student attainment. The initiative is focussed on four domains of family engagement that, when positively affected, link family engagement to improved achievement: a

welcoming environment for families; effective two-way communication, the degree of engagement, and school support for home learning. Using the engagement initiative, Stonewall Jackson High School went from being one of the lowest performing schools in Virginia to become Time Magazine's School of the Year in 2002, increasing SAT scores by 61%, parent satisfaction levels by 25%, and reducing disparity between minority and non-minority scores by 18%.

Parents and families, regardless of what their backgrounds might happen to be, are the first and best teachers of their children and have a strong intrinsic desire to see their children be successful. To ignore the power of relationships between schools and families is to ensure that the pervasive gaps which exist in student learning will last for yet another generation. Constantino (2007)

The potential benefits of parental partnerships are well attested to. For example, as students begin to see more connections between school and family, they start to exhibit improved attitudes toward education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Epstein, 2002).

Other noted benefits of parent involvement include:

- better student behaviour;
- increased job satisfaction among teachers;
- more positive perceptions between teacher, parents, and students;
- greater student and parent satisfaction with their school; and
- a safer school environment (Chrispeels, 1996; Pape, 1999).

Business community

Minnesota School of Environmental Studies (SES) works in partnership with neighbouring Minnesota Zoo. The school utilises “project based learning with an environmental theme”, with students working with zookeepers and scientific staff on projects that provide significant benefit to the wider community, and data that can be used in scientific research.

The Columbia District Partners in Education program enriches educational programs through involvement of the business community. Partnership activities include: satellite schools located within businesses, career fairs, job shadowing and business tours, classroom presentations, student placements at businesses, banks within schools, staff development for teachers, and electronic mentoring.

IBM has developed the TryScience website in collaboration with the New York Hall of Science, to create resources for schools and online learning opportunities for students and teachers. IBM specialists and technicians also work in schools, providing expertise to support students in exploring learning in the science domain.

At Green Chimneys school, students collaborated with IBM volunteers to create “space probes”, and to build weight-bearing spaghetti bridges. The activities were aligned to New York State educational standards and linked with topics the students were currently studying.

Wider community

The Coalition for Community Schools is an initiative to create community schools that engage the community to improve student learning. Community schools are open to the community all day, every day, and on evenings and weekends. They receive their funding from a number of sources including philanthropy and corporate funders.

An evaluation of the schools has found that the model supports significant improvement in student performance, greater family and community engagement, and improved curriculum innovation and

pedagogy. It also promotes new forms of school leadership that crosses the boundaries of education to engage government, public, private and community-based agencies to implement large-scale, community-wide education reform strategies (Blank, Melaville & Shah 2003; Blank, Berg & Melaville 2006).

“New School” is a partnership involving a university, local elementary schools, families, experts, and community organisations, to design creative and collaborative learning experiences. Students experience community activities and learning with farmers, agricultural experts, nutritionists, food-related producers, and social organisations (Yamazumi, 2008).

The Metropolitan Regional Career & Technical (MET) Center pairs students from its low income, ethnically diverse population with adults in the community who share their career interests. School-based learning is blended with outside influences through an internship program. Instead of grades, students receive quarterly narratives from personal advisors, who describe the student’s academic and personal growth in detail. The Met Center has graduation and attendance rates significantly above the city’s average, and is consistently ranked among the state’s top schools in parent involvement, school climate and quality of instruction.

Other community partnerships include the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), which has led to improved teacher quality in planning, implementing and evaluating art projects.

The wider community also takes on global proportions through the availability of communication networks including the internet. Schools are using communities such as ePals and Global Classrooms for interactive, web-based learning. They support foreign language learning, cultural diversity in class projects, and swapping ideas with schools and teachers from around the globe. US-based case studies testify to improved student engagement and related academic attainment through use of ePals (Korycinski (2001); Enfield LEA).

Canada – British Columbia

Family community

The Canadian Home and School website has resources for parents such as, Parents Assist Learning and Schooling (P.A.L.S.), a training program designed to encourage parents to play active roles in their children’s education.

Another initiative is the Literacy Exchange Project, a network of youth-oriented community groups and individuals. With leadership from the local Home and School Association, the network reviews the changing literacy needs of young people and families, focusing on scientific and technological change.

Netherlands and Scandinavia

Education community

As in the US, in Finland classroom-based support staff are widely used to support individual learning and special needs support (Takala, 2007).

In the Netherlands, the Slash 21 program redefines the role of teachers as tutors, who supervise individualised student learning supported by teaching assistants and an integrated electronic learning environment. The tutor is able to focus on observing and measuring

individuals' progress and intervening as necessary. Teams of tutors and teaching assistants support a group of students for three years, encouraging a close bond between students and staff (van Dielen, 2003).

In Sweden, the Kunskapsskolan school supports students in managing their own learning. Students set their own goals, timetables and tasks within a specific curriculum, but without formal classes. A personal tutor (teacher) monitors appropriateness of and progress towards goals, and advises on successful work methods.

Wider community

In Sweden, 'whole-day' schools incorporate childcare services and support the learning, development and welfare of the whole child. They are staffed by teams of professional workers, comprising a range of specialised interests and expertise. The 'rektor' (Principal or Head) may have a non-teaching professional background, and has responsibility for a cluster of different services, from family daycare to pre-schools, schools and clubs for teenagers (Cohen, Moss and Wallace, 2004).

New Zealand

Family community

The New Zealand Parent-Teacher Association has produced the Give Me Five program to help families and teachers develop effective partnerships to support children's learning.

A review of the New Zealand home-school partnership: literacy programme (2007) found that:

- eighty percent of schools reported parental involvement had a positive impact on children's opportunity to learn;
- three quarters of schools reported that it had a positive impact on student's engagement, attitudes, confidence and literacy achievement;
- need to help teachers appreciate the importance home literacy experiences and better incorporate them into classroom program and practices (Brooking & Roberts 2007)

Australia

Family community

Federal government research has demonstrated that partnerships between families and schools can:

- contribute to the building of social capital in the community;
- positively alter school culture; and
- stimulate self-growth among parents.

It also notes that much of the successful parental partnership work in Australia is taking place in response to hardships experienced in places of extreme disadvantage. "The good this does for students, families, the community and the school suggests that places of social, economic and geographic disadvantage might be considered priority areas for the spread of the partnership concept" (DEST, 2006).

Business community

The Business Council of Australia recognises the need for Australian schools to develop greater connections and partnerships with their communities, not just with industry. "Schools of the future will need to be better connected into their local communities, more flexible, and

more responsive to local needs. Partnerships between schools (both government and non-government) and between schools and local businesses and community organisations will be keys to greater local responsiveness, alternative sources of funding and greater sharing and more efficient use of human resources and physical facilities” (BCA, 2007).

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN)’s Partners in Learning program matches senior business executives with leaders of schools facing significant challenges in their student population, resource allocation and community engagement. Partners share expertise through regular one-to-one meetings, discussing topics including leadership, delegation and accountability, strategic planning, change management, target setting and action planning, financial budgeting and expenditure, and human resource management. This gives business partners a greater understanding of issues facing schools and how business can support positive change. The benefits for educators include new solutions to the challenges of schools and new networks with other industry professionals (Australian Business and Community Network (2005)).

Schools First is an initiative of National Australia Bank in partnership with Australia Cares, The Foundation for Young Australians and the Australian Council for Educational Research. The initiative is intended to build stronger partnerships between schools and their local communities across Australia. In particular, it aims to:

- support the development of successful school-community partnerships focused on positive outcomes for students, as well as for teachers, parents and community members
- assist schools in raising student attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- develop and strengthen local school networks
- create employment and training opportunities
- build capacity within local communities
- document best practice models
- develop sustainable partnerships with business to develop students’ skill levels.

Wider community

Opportunities exist for schools to build capacity and better meet individual student needs through building relationships with charitable, voluntary and faith-based organisations in their communities. Kids Hope is a mentoring program built on a long-term partnership between local churches and primary schools, where a trained adult from the church spends one hour each week with a vulnerable child. This helps schools to address the welfare needs of children, and reduces the burden on teachers struggling to give sufficient time and attention on an individual basis (World Vision, 2008).

Ian Thorpe’s Fountain for youth is a charitable organisation set up to raise awareness and funds to improve children’s health and education. With the support of Northern Territory schools, Fountain for youth is introducing Literacy Backpacks to promote reading by Indigenous children and their families. The backpack idea was pioneered in native American communities in the United States as a way of helping parents become positive role models to stimulate their children’s interest in reading. Teachers, students and parents pack the Literacy Backpacks with reading material that is of interest to all members of the family, including books, magazines and Indigenous newspapers, audio books and videos of school texts. The project has expanded

significantly since its inception; the goal is to deliver the Backpack project to as many as 1,300 children in remote communities.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program for Year 3 to 6 children operates in schools across Australia, including 27 Victorian schools. The program combines active, hands-on learning with improved nutritional and social outcomes for children. Children design, build and maintain an organic vegetable garden on the school grounds, and prepare and share meals created from their produce in a kitchen classroom. They work in small groups under the supervision of specialist staff and their class teacher. The program also builds school-community networks through the wide range of people and organisations that donate time or resources to its operation.

Victoria

School structures need to (...) foster the formation of learning partnerships and of links to the family, the local community and the wider world; and to turn the school into a community-oriented learning hub (Pendergast et al, 2005)

Education community

Victoria's SSO and Secondary Teaching Assistant (STA) roles reflect international developments, particularly focused on reducing teacher administration and increasing pastoral and special needs support. Schools participating in the STA program report that the employment of the STA has taken an administrative load off teachers, and given them more time to spend with students in and outside the classroom, in targeting their attention to the needs of individual students, in planning lessons and curriculum development, and in working collaboratively with other teachers to improve teaching and learning practices.

Dandenong North Primary School invests heavily in employing additional staff to support withdrawal groups amongst its culturally diverse student population. This enables small groups of students to receive additional support, particularly with English language skills. A number of SSOs are undertaking teacher training concurrently, and are viewed as high quality potential teachers given their understanding of the school community and real desire to make a difference to the children's lives.

Brimbank College's CORE Plus program facilitates the sharing of resources between primary and secondary schools in the St Albans area. Schools cooperate to provide a wider range of VCE subjects, including music programs and VET programs. Students move between schools to attend classes, and flexible, after hours timetabling increases student access to specialists and resources offered across the schools.

Brimbank's Music and Arts community program involves the school's music teachers providing tuition to a number of feeder primary schools, followed by an annual junior performing arts show. Brimbank's secondary teachers are learning about the primary model of education from the interaction with primary teachers, and are extending the primary model into secondary schooling.

Business community

Victorian government research has found that the involvement of the corporate and philanthropic sectors in education has proven benefits for the educational outcomes of students, and for the capacity of schools to improve those outcomes. These benefits include additional

human and knowledge resources through mentoring and skill development programs for school leaders, and initiatives to support teacher learning. Due to the growth and refinement of social responsibility practice, the research suggests a climate in which such involvement is growing (DEECD 2009).

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) engage industries and employers to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of young people, particularly those at risk of making poor transitions out of compulsory schooling. There are 31 LLENs covering Victoria, involving around 6,500 individuals and organisations.

Initiatives include:

- Youth Mentoring Assisted Pathways Program (YMAP) (Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley LLEN). Volunteer mentors (including university students, community individuals and employees) support young people in visiting training providers and industry of interest, and understanding what employers want.
- The Inspiring Young People program (Baw Baw Latrobe LLEN with Equipsuper) which links young people with experienced people within the community, highlighting opportunities that are available in Gippsland.
- Freight 3PL (formerly Freight Train): 60 school-based apprenticeships for young people in the northern suburbs, learning employability skills within the Transport and Logistics skill shortage area.
- The HEAT (Hospitality Education and Training) pre-employment program, facilitated by the Inner Eastern LLEN, and involving restaurants including The Metropol and Amello, a Victorian State Winner in the 2007 Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships.
- Project 729 in Manufacturing, facilitated by the Smart Geelong Region LLEN, focussing on supporting pathways into careers in the broad manufacturing industries sector.

Soundhouse is a strategic partnership with the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development. It provides education and training, specialising in bringing interactive digital technology into the curriculum. Soundhouse provides student courses and teacher professional learning programs, "enhancing the richness, diversity and capability of the communities it serves". Philanthropic projects include a Special Access Kit, designed to enable people with disabilities and impairments access the world of music creation and performance.

Wider community

Akin to the Swedish 'whole-school' ethos, Yuille Park Community School (Ballarat) seeks to support whole child development, transition and retention through co-location with other provider services, including a maternal and child health centre, toy library, day care centre, kindergarten and adult and community education centre.

Co-location allows for sharing of facilities and administrative resources such as reception areas, and encourages the development of strong partnerships between the school and community service providers. The intention is that co-location will facilitate early identification of learning strengths and difficulties, design of effective interventions and provision of seamless transitions from preschool to primary school.

The Broadmeadows Regeneration project has involved 17 schools merging into four, in response to falling enrolments, high levels of disadvantage, and sub-standard accommodation. The project received corporate support from engineering, banking, building and

telecommunications companies in developing new buildings and facilities, which are shared with the local community. The mergers enabled a team teaching approach to deliver a greater range of subjects and improvements in literacy and numeracy.

The Creative Pathways to Literacy initiative (now SparkL) involved the formation of professional partnerships with creative practitioners to provide children with new learning experiences that spark motivation, engagement and striving for excellence. Teachers at Albanvale PS made links between the practitioner's disciplinary approaches (dance, drama, opera, visual/spatial design) and the regular curriculum. These partnerships enabled the introduction of rich 'provocations' in the form of new disciplinary learning, and led to a strengthening of the children's literacy learning and practices.

Margaret Wright, Principal, describes the value of the partnership:

Creative practitioners think differently, work differently and look at children differently, which has enabled us to view our own practices and assumptions about learning and learners through different eyes. Creative practitioners have also brought new skills that we wouldn't normally be able to access. Importantly, programs such as Creative Pathways provide opportunities to enhance the professionalism of teachers. It stimulated professional dialogue around both current and new practices and identification of where the links lie. (Ref – email from Mark Landy)

Other programmes supporting wider student learning opportunities include the Fitzroy Computer Clubhouse. This is a partnership approach that provides a creative and safe after-school learning environment where young people from under-served communities work with adult mentors to develop creativity, skills, and build confidence in themselves through the use of technology.

Technology also provides an opportunity for students to learn through supporting their local community. Sherborne Primary School has taken students to the local elderly citizen's home to teach the residents IT skills. Others have spent two months working with a group of intellectually disabled children, teaching IT and learning themselves from being in such a different environment (Watson, 2006).

6. Conclusions, questions and issues

A number of key themes emerge from a scan of initiatives, the motivations behind them, and the benefits being perceived and realised:

- Creating capacity to support individual students' learning and development;
- Increasing student engagement with, and ownership of, of their learning;
- Broader focus on holistic developmental outcomes, and the need to work collaboratively to support the 'whole child';
- Learning opportunities for all parties engaged in the collaborative learning environment (communities of practice);
- Greater specialisation within the school workforce, and capacity-building through engagement of specialists and experts from the wider community

International experiences point to the development of a new role for teachers as learning managers, co-coordinating instruction and learning support given by others who comprise multi-source, multi-disciplinary teams of specialists, and linking students with others in the community who hold subject matter expertise and life experience. Several researchers concluded that teacher education needs to reflect the changing role of teachers as Learning Managers, in charge of co-coordinating a greater range of participants in the learning environment (Moran & Abbott, 2002; Wilson & Bedford, 2008; Calder & Grieve (2004).

One well-travelled researcher observed:

A future workforce that is comprised of different "types" of teachers is a possible prediction. For example, teachers who focus on curriculum management; core skills/subject teachers; foundation subject teachers; pastoral care teachers. I have worked as visiting researcher in Lithuania, Poland, America, Cyprus, China and Hong Kong. I have not yet found another system [outside the UK] that employs teaching assistants who "teach" in the classroom (Cook-Jones, 2006).

This is echoed by the UK Specialist Schools and Academies Trust:

It seems likely that the teaching profession will follow the model of the world of medicine; over the next decade, the roles of non-teaching adults will be developed and teachers will concentrate on the work that uses their highly skilled professional abilities (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust).

There is also a challenge for schools to initiate, resource and drive new partnering initiatives with others in the community who can contribute to the learning environment. This will take time, expertise and energy:

In nearly all cases, the original impetus for the partnership projects....came from the school....There are cases all through this study where the school has driven the project: identified a problem, proposed a solution, and implemented it while at the same time engendering a sense of partnership, in some cases where no such sense ever existed before. (DEECD, 2008b)

Schools will be reliant upon the creativity and efforts of its employed workforce to forge successful initiatives including the wider workforce. Therefore Principals and leadership teams will need to create a supportive, trusting and creative culture within their schools. "Next

practices - emergent innovations that could open up new ways of working - are much more likely to come from thoughtful, experienced, self-confident practitioners trying to find new and more effective solutions to intractable problems” (Leadbeater, 2006).

Cultural change will take time and effort, and changes to roles, responsibilities and work organisation will require active championing and open communication. “Some members of the senior management team have found it challenging to see senior Teaching Assistants taking on these responsibilities. The Head has to work with them to prove the value and success of the extended role”. (Katherines Primary School, Harlow, UK)

Creativity and innovation must be focused on contextual needs. School, cluster and network-led innovation are vital if the wider workforce is going to contribute meaningfully to the particular challenges and needs faced at a local level. “You can't just pick up what another school's done. There's no recipe. What you might do will be different to us because of your community, your students, your location” (Assistant Principal, quoted on New Zealand Curriculum website)

Lastly, it is incumbent upon schools to retain the focus of all wider workforce initiatives on supporting individual student learning and development, and striving to access and co-ordinate the best possible knowledge and expertise to achieve student-centred outcomes, which will have broader community benefits:

Future school curricula should begin with an analysis of the kinds of learning likely to be required for the future, make clear what students are expected to learn, promote higher order skills and deep understandings of subject matter and provide flexibility to enable teachers to respond to individual needs and local contexts. Flexible modes of delivery, including online learning, will offer further opportunities to make education and training more responsive to the needs, interests and aspirations of individual learners (BCA, 2007).

“The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them, changes both the maker and the destination.” John Schaar

“Trapped in a world of measured incrementalism, we may be missing the huge leaps forward that are on offer here. The only barrier to quite remarkable progress may simply be our ambition. It certainly isn't these learners' ambitions”.
Professor Stephen Heppell

7. Questions for schools

What skills and resources are needed in your particular settings, and how are they currently met?

What are the particular needs of your school/cluster/network that the existing workforce does not have the capacity (time, skills, resources) to meet?

What options or opportunities might exist to meet these needs through alternative people resources?

How can teachers, acting as 'designers' and 'managers' of learning, employ their particular skills to lead a wider network of contributors?

How can the wider workforce be utilised in rural and remote settings, and what resources and expertise might be needed to facilitate this?

A mapping of the wider workforce in national healthcare provision found that the ancillary, volunteer and partnership-based workforce that supported the patient experience was larger than the employed workforce. How can schools think broadly and creatively about who to engage in supporting learning?

How do we ensure that wider workforce innovation is directed at achieving the best outcomes for students?

How do we create a climate for the education workforce to innovate and be creative within a system which is internally consistent and self-sustaining?

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