Neo-liberal reforms in NSW public secondary education: what has happened to teachers' work?

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Gillian Considine

Acknowledgements

Abstract

As the neo-liberal public sector reform agenda took hold in the late 1980s an ideology of choice began to dominate education policy in many western countries, including Australia (Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999; Marginson 1997a). This thesis focuses on the specific range of market mechanisms that have been used in the NSW public secondary school system to introduce competition between schools and facilitate parental choice. One of the key characteristics of the reform agenda in NSW has been the diversification and expansion of a differentiated public secondary school system (Esson, Johnston & Vinson 2002). The differentiated system is now characterised by five different types of public secondary schools: 1) comprehensive schools; 2) selective schools; 3) specialist schools; 4) junior campuses; and, 5) senior campuses.

The main aim of this thesis is to explore how teachers' work has changed as a result of this differentiation and to examine the extent to which teachers' work differs between the different types of schools. Through the analysis of original quantitative and qualitative data this thesis demonstrates that school differentiation has dramatically transformed teachers' work in NSW and that the experiences of teachers differ depending on the type of public secondary school

in which they work. In addition, the experiences of teachers provide insights into

the effect of these changes on the secondary system more broadly and on the

experiences of students within the system. The implications of these findings are

discussed with reference to the effect of neo-liberal reforms on educational

equality and on the sustainability of a system that has exacerbated staffing

challenges and issues of teacher retention within particular types of schools.

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List of tables and figures

List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACER	Australian Council of Education Research
acirrt	Australian Centre for Industrial Relations, Research and Training
AEU	Australian Education Union
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AVO	Apprehended Violence Order
DoE	Department of Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DSE	Department of School Education
HAT	Highly Accomplished Teachers
HSC	Higher School Certificate
ICT	Information, communication and technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MEYA	Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Secondary Schools
WWII	World War II

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, while working in a research centre[1] at the University of Sydney I had the privilege of working on a number of projects that stimulated my interest in the effect of neo-liberal public sector reforms on the experiences of teachers in the New South Wales (NSW) public secondary[2] school system. During that time, I worked on a number of commissioned research projects for various teachers' unions examining the changing working conditions and union membership of teachers (Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training [acirrt] 2002; Briggs 2003). I was also on a team that worked collaboratively on a three year project with researchers from an Australian charity that supports disadvantaged children to get the most out of their education (Considine 2001; Considine & Zappalà 2001; Considine & Zappalà 2002; Watson & Considine 2003; Zappalà & Considine 2001; Zappalà, Smyth & Considine 2002).

Much of the work we were conducting at the Centre was focussed on examining the role of public policy in establishing, perpetuating and deepening structural inequalities in the labour market (acirrt 1999; Watson, Buchanan, Campbell &

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[1] The Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (acirrt), which became the Workplace Research Centre in 2004.
[2] The term 'secondary school' is used throughout this thesis to refer to the Year 7 to Year 12 schooling years except when direct quotes or the names of Boards or Certificates require the specific use of the term 'high' or 'high school'.

Briggs 2003). However, the work we were doing on teachers' working conditions and educational disadvantage highlighted for me the extent to which public sector management, labour market and industrial relations policies were influencing outcomes in the education portfolio. Teachers were being affected by neo-liberal labour market reforms that were aimed at reducing costs and improving productivity across the public sector (acirrt 1999; Stilwell 1994). However, these reforms were having a significant effect beyond the intended labour market impacts. In both the public and private education sectors, teachers were being continually distracted from the task of teaching (Briggs 2003). In public education, in particular, the imposition of market mechanisms brought about significant changes to teachers' work (Blackmore, Bigum, Hodgens & Laskey 1996; Helsby 1999) and compromised the quality of education services that were being provided (Briggs 2003; Gewirtz 1997; 2000).

Neo-liberalism

Across the public sector, neo-liberalism became a politically successful strategy (Connell 2006) for forcing market-based reforms into what were perceived to be failing monolithic public sector bureaucracies (Laffin & Painter 1995a). The popularity of neo-liberalism emerged slowly in Australia throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Laffin 1995). During this time the professional-bureaucratic model of

public sector management was increasingly challenged by notions of government accountability and responsiveness (Laffin 1995) and by the perceived value of global competitiveness created by conditions of a free market economy (McMurtry 1998). The tenets of the free market, however, undermine the operation and accessibility of public goods, such as education and health, while differences in individual capacities to navigate markets for public goods further entrenches existing social and economic inequality (McMurtry 1998).

The extent to which market reforms had deepened inequality became apparent through the work we were doing on educational disadvantage. Market-based mechanisms were widening already existing educational gaps and reinforcing the structural inequalities in the education system (Considine & Zappalà 2001; Marginson 1997a; 1997b; Meadmore 2001; Watson & Considine 2003). Moreover, informal discussions with teachers revealed that the expansion of markets in education beyond those created by the private education system were influencing teachers' work as much as, if not more than, the labour market reforms.

The changing environment in public secondary education

From these different but interrelated projects, the topic of this thesis began to emerge. Of particular interest were three issues: 1) the characteristics of neo-

liberal reforms as they pertain to education in NSW; 2) the effect of the reforms on teachers' work; and, 3) the potential effect of these reforms on educational inequality. Both pragmatism and interest dictated that these issues would be examined via an investigation of the effects of neo-liberal reforms on teachers' work in NSW public secondary schools.

As I embarked on this research, some initial commentary was emerging that confirmed the anecdotal accounts I had heard from teachers while conducting research for teachers' unions. Discussions with teachers about the increased diversification of schools in NSW, particularly schools in the public secondary system, were supported by emerging research (Esson, Johnston & Vinson 2002; Whitty, Power & Halpin 1998). In addition, teachers' concerns about this diversification were supported by evidence of the potentially negative effects market reforms would have on equality in education and student experiences (Esson et al. 2002; Junor 1991; McInerney 2001).

The systemic changes that were brought about by the neo-liberal reforms, however, were precipitated by increasing public dissatisfaction over the outcomes being achieved by public schools (Apple 2001; Marginson 1997a). Furthermore, the Australian Government saw education reform as the means to increase labour market effectiveness and, consequently, national productivity

(Dawkins 1988). The diversification of the public secondary school system in NSW and the introduction of market-based reforms were the key mechanisms through which improved education outcomes were to be delivered (Sherington 1995). However, Government attempts to address persistent gaps in educational achievement and outcomes remained concentrated on economic redistributive approaches that targeted specific schools (Graetz 1995). In essence, this approach ignored the effects of structural factors that were contributing to educational inequalities (Power 1992).

The approach of directing additional funding to schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students represented 'targeted welfare' and a dual approach to education provision (Thomson 2007: 85). Those who could negotiate and benefit from the market would be unfettered by 'government interference' while the 'most needy' were provided with 'minimalist...special-purpose social justice programs' (Thomson 2007: 85). The introduction of school-based management (McInerney 2001; Smyth 1993) however, essentially meant that this dual approach shifted the blame for educational inequalities from the state to the individual school and its teachers (Apple 2001; Teese & Polesel 2003).

Research focus – policy and literature

Given the potential significance of these reforms, the absence of research into their effects on the NSW public secondary school system represented a significant gap in the literature. Other areas of education segmentation had, however, been explored. In particular, the distinction between public and private education systems had been examined in terms of differences in educational outcomes (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2001a; Gannicott 1998; Marks, Fleming, Long & McMillan 2000) and the experiences of teachers (Helsby 1999). The research comparing the public and private systems suggested that the increased diversity in the NSW public secondary school system might have substantially altered what happens at the local school level within public secondary schools.

Policy

Understanding the drivers and mechanisms behind this diversity, and examining the specific nature of the neo-liberal agenda in education establishes the historical context for policy analysis (Lingard & Rizvi 2010; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry 1997). Chapter 2 examines the social, economic and political pressures that were exerting influence over education policy development prior to, and with the advent of, neo-liberal reforms in NSW. A number of key post-

war antecedents to these reforms are particularly important in setting the context in which neo-liberalism in education emerged. With the post-war period there was a mass expansion of secondary education (Campbell & Sherington 2006) and a small number of academically selective secondary schools were retained amidst significant debate that called for the abolition of these schools (Hughes 2002). By the late 1970s, parents' concerns over labour market opportunities for their children (Marginson 1997a) and their increasing preference for private education were putting pressure on the government to reform public education (Marginson 1997b). These developments were further influenced by global pressures for wide-sweeping public sector reforms (Laffin & Painter 1995a).

Included in the review of the policy context is a discussion of the debates and outcomes that arose from the series of inquiries into public education that were convened during the early- to mid-1980s. These inquiries examined the organisation and management of the NSW public secondary school system and made recommendations designed to improve educational outcomes for the growing diversity of secondary school students (Blakers 1985; Education Commission of NSW 1986; McGowan, Duncan, Pickard & Whelan 1981; Swan & McKinnon 1984; Winder 1984).

Many of the social-democratic reform processes proposed through these inquiries were later recast amidst pressure for public sector reform. Under a neo-liberal agenda, local school-based decision making shifted from a concept that was associated with community cohesion and self-governance (McGowan et al. 1981) to one that was associated with resource management, competitive markets and parental choice (Willis 1991). The details of the neo-liberal reforms and the extent to which they have reshaped the public secondary school system over the last 20 years are also explored through an analysis of key inquiries and changes in enrolment patterns. The system that has emerged from these reforms is now characterised by five different types of public secondary schools: 1) comprehensive schools; 2) selective schools; 3) specialist schools; 4) junior campuses; and, 5) senior campuses. This differentiation in the public secondary school system represents a distinct shift in the ideology of comprehensive secondary schooling. The democratic principles of catering to all students regardless of ability (Campbell & Sherington 2006) have been replaced by a system that caters to 'consumers' within a market (Marginson 1997a).

Literature

The contemporary struggles in education revolve around the dominant neo-liberal market-based solutions. These 'solutions' have been applied in many

western countries in an effort to achieve the high-skilled economies deemed necessary for global competitiveness (Apple 2004). Under neo-liberal agendas, education policies have been reoriented from a liberal-humanist tradition that characterised education in terms of its intrinsic value to the individual and society, to more instrumental approaches in which education is viewed in terms of the economic benefits it can generate for capitalism (Helsby 1999).

The effects of these neo-liberal reforms on teachers' work and on the teaching profession have been extensively examined in both Australian and international literature. Chapter 3 discusses the major themes that have emerged in the literature from examinations of the changing nature of teachers' work under neo-liberal reforms. This body of research highlights the potential factors that may differentially influence the work of teachers in the various types of public secondary schools in NSW.

The restructuring of organisational arrangements that are endemic to neo-liberal educational reforms (Blackmore et al. 1996) have systemically changed teachers' work (Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid & Shacklock 2000). While social, economic and political pressures were driving education reform, the specific mechanisms through which those reforms were introduced included both centralising processes that were aimed at maintaining control over curriculum and

educational content (Blackmore 1998; Helsby 1999), and decentralising processes that devolved responsibility and accountability to the local school level (Apple 2004; Helsby 1999; Whitty et al. 1998). The details of these processes and how they affect teachers' work are explored.

Market-based mechanisms, however, have also fundamentally changed the way in which parents engage with the education system (Ball, Bowe & Gerwirtz 1994; Brown 1990; Campbell, Proctor & Sherington 2009; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008; Troman 2000; Whitty et al. 1998). With the advent of choice in the education market, parents have a greater level of responsibility for the educational outcomes of their children (Brown 1990; Campbell et al. 2009). As discussed in Chapter 3, this heightened parental involvement has had two specific effects on schools and teachers. Firstly, parents are far more instrumental in their interactions with schools and teachers (Brown 1990; Hargreaves 1994; Troman 2000) leading to increased student mobility (Adler 1997). Secondly, the role of teachers has expanded beyond the traditional tasks associated with educating and instructing (Helsby 1999) to include marketing and promotional activities that are aimed at attracting and retaining students (Ball 1994; Blackmore et al. 1996; Gewirtz 1997).

The significance of this study

The education policy landscape in NSW, as in many western countries, has changed considerably with the advent and expansion of neo-liberal public sector reforms. In NSW, the organisation and management of public secondary schools has been significantly restructured since the late 1980s. The effects of the restructuring, however, have been under-explored and there is an absence of research into the changes that have occurred at the local school level in the NSW public secondary school system.

The restructuring of the NSW public secondary education system and the research into the effect of neo-liberal reforms on teachers' work present many potential avenues for further research. For example, the rhetoric associated with school-based management and notions of participation and autonomy pose a number of questions related to self-governance, devolved authority and community-school cohesion (McInerney 2001). These are important issues that are explored in the policy and literature chapters of this thesis. Of particular concern with regard to the empirical analysis, however, was to narrow the scope of the study to examine how the reforms have altered teachers work as it relates to students and whether or not these changes have been differently influenced by school type. This approach allows for an examination of the school-level effects

of these reforms on teachers' experiences and of the policy-level implications of these effects.

Aims of this project

The key aims of this project are therefore, twofold: 1) to investigate the effect of neo-liberal policy reforms on diversifying the experiences of teachers in the NSW public secondary school system; and, 2) to extrapolate from any differences in teachers' work to the potential effects on educational inequality for students and the functioning of the education system.

The potential changes to teachers' work and the equality of the education system are of key significance in contemporary theoretical and policy-related education debates. Labour market issues and the working conditions in education systems that are contributing to staffing challenges in schools are a significant policy concern for governments across many OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin 2004; Ingersoll 2001; 2004; OECD 2005) including Australia (Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] 2004a).To address these concerns, it is important to understand the systemic and school-level factors that shape the attractiveness of the teaching profession as an occupation and as an ongoing career (OECD 2005).

Similarly, ameliorating inequality in educational opportunities and outcomes is also an ongoing concern in both research and policy. Neo-liberal reforms and globalisation have increased the importance of education as a credential (Campbell 2010; Livingstone 1998; Marginson 1997b). As globalisation has increased economic uncertainty and job insecurity (acirrt 1999), the importance of reducing inequalities in educational opportunity and achievement has gained importance (Connell 1997). Structural factors and the unintended consequences of policy reform that contribute to systematic differences in educational opportunity, therefore, need to be identified and analysed (Livingstone 1998; Power 1992).

Approach taken

A mixed-method research design using both quantitative and qualitative methods was developed to examine the changing nature of teachers' work in public secondary schools in NSW. Detailed in Chapter 4, interviews, focus groups and survey responses from over 1,300 teachers provided a depth and breadth to this study that enabled findings from each approach to be validated through multiple and independent data collection methods.

A comprehensive empirical analysis of each aspect of the research is provided in Chapters 5 to 7. The qualitative results, presented in Chapter 5, detail the range

and differentiation in teachers' experiences across each of the five types of secondary schools. These experiences are described graphically in a model that illustrates how neo-liberal reforms have affected teachers' work. The descriptive findings from the survey analysis are described in Chapter 6 through a series of bivariate cross-tabulations that explore patterns in the experiences of teachers across each of the school types. Finally, Chapter 7 examines in more detail teacher reactions to the changing conditions of work. Logistic regression modeling is used to analyse the factors that predict teacher dissatisfaction, as measured by intentions to quit.

The systematic variations in the experiences of teachers in each of the five different types of public secondary schools in NSW, reviewed in Chapter 8, expose the unintended consequences of the neo-liberal policy reforms. However, the findings from this study also provide an indication of the failure of these reforms to meet the intended outcomes – increased efficiency and effectiveness across the education system. The conclusion discusses the relevance of these findings with regard to the teachers' public secondary school labour market experiences and the implications that these changes to teachers' work have on the broader education system and increased inequality.

Chapter 2 – Secondary education in NSW: beyond a comprehensive secondary school system

This chapter provides an introduction to some of the significant economic, social and political circumstances that have influenced education policy in Australia and, more specifically, in NSW since the 1940s. The period under examination begins with the mass expansion of compulsory secondary education. The developments around the establishment of compulsory secondary education and the modifications that were made to the system from this period set the context in which a more widely differentiated public secondary school system in NSW was developed. Understanding the 'particular social-institutional context' (Sarason 1990: 122) helps to explain the determinants of teachers' work (Mander 2006).

Throughout the expansion of compulsory secondary education a dual public secondary school system, which comprised both comprehensive secondary schools and academically selective secondary schools, was established and retained. The initial policy decisions that enabled the retention of selective schools established the environment in which the degree of segmentation in the public secondary education system was increased under the neo-liberal public sector reform movement of the late 1980s. Of particular interest is the effect that

secondary school diversification and the advent of choice in the public system have had fragmenting the labour market experiences of teachers within this system.

NSW public education system – 1940s to 1960s

In the years immediately following WWII, there was a rapid expansion of the Australian population as a result of the Government sponsored 'white Australia' immigration policy and the increased birth rate (referred to as the 'baby boom') caused by the return of ex-service men. Whilst the 'baby boom' would force an expansion of the state education systems in years to come, the immigration program placed immediate and increasing pressure on the state systems to educate the influx of young school-aged migrants. Following on from the Depression and war years there was also an increasing popular belief in the social and economic advantages provided by education, and in the right to individual advancement through education (Barcan 1988). In addition, there was increasing pressure from the labour market for higher skill levels to meet the demands created by technological advancement (Wyndham Committee 1958). By the 1940s, in response to these rapidly changing social conditions, there were rising student retention rates beyond the minimum leaving age of 14, and increased demand for university places (Barcan 1988).

In the early 1940s, the NSW education system was structured around two types of secondary schools (Hughes 2002). These schools were differentiated by the curriculum and there was little or no variation in level of difficulty with regard to educational instruction within each type of school (Hughes 2002). The first type of school – 'full high schools' – were focused on academic outcomes and provided the five years of schooling required to gain entrance into university. Students seeking admission into the 'full' secondary schools were 'selected' on the basis of the examination process that was conducted at the end of primary school (Hughes 2002). For students not academically inclined the differentiated system provided an alternative to this 'full' secondary school in which students could complete three years of secondary education. As with full secondary schools, these 'intermediate' schools were single sex but they were predominantly located in the working-class suburbs of Sydney. Boys could attend commercial and junior technical schools which offering programs in manual arts and descriptive geometry while girls could attend home science schools to learn domestic arts and commercial subjects (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Hughes 2002). The nature and educational focus of the full secondary schools and the intermediate schools was, intentionally, vastly different.

In 1943, the formal examination for entrance into full secondary schools was abolished and a committee of principals and inspectors was established in each secondary school area. The committee was responsible for deciding which type of secondary school each student was to attend (Campbell & Sherington 2006). However, the information available to these committees was still predominantly based on a student's primary school attainment in English and mathematics, results from intelligence tests, and any significant references from the primary school. Once selected into a type of school, there was little or no opportunity for students to transfer from one type of school to another (Hughes 2002). Essentially, therefore, the educational future of students in the secondary education system was determined solely on the performance of students up to the age of 11 or 12.

During this time, however, student retention rates were rising, social and labour market demand for secondary and higher education was growing, and there was growing diversity amongst the student population as a result of increasing immigration. Under these conditions it soon became evident that the NSW secondary system could not adequately cater for the diversity in student needs (Campbell & Sherington 2006). In addition, there was increasing demand for greater access, for all students, to the 'full education' afforded those who were

demonstrating academic achievement at the end of primary school (Duffield 1990).

In 1944, the NSW Teachers Federation conference proposed and endorsed changes to the secondary education program that would, it believed, meet the changing needs of the student population. The proposed changes would effectively increase the existing program of secondary study by an additional year and would provide a core curriculum to all students in the first four years of study. In essence, an additional year of post-primary study would be added to the existing three year program with a subsequent two years of additional study still required for those wishing to attend university (Barcan 1988; Mitchell 1975). In 1946, the Board of Secondary School Studies proposed a similar scheme but with concerns over the costs of an additional year of schooling, the NSW Cabinet did not approve the proposal (Mitchell 1975). It wasn't until Dr Harold Wyndham was appointed as the Director-General of Education in NSW in 1952, and added 'his weight' to the request from the Teachers Federation for a full inquiry, that the government established the Wyndham Committee in 1953 to examine secondary education (Mitchell 1975: 190).

The Wyndham Committee Inquiry formally began in 1954. Although the terms of reference 'implied' the nature of the recommendations sought (Barcan 1988:

241) the Inquiry was established to not only gather extensive evidence but to also garner public and political support for changes to the secondary education system (Hughes 2002). The subsequent report was finally released in 1958 after a four year period of 'heavy revisions' (Duffield 1990: 37) and it made two significant recommendations that would, if implemented, introduce substantial changes in the secondary education system.

The first of these proposed changes was the abolition of the selection process that segmented students by ability as they moved from primary school into the secondary system. The second proposed change, in line with earlier proposals from the NSW Teachers Federation and the NSW Board of Secondary School Studies, was a proposal to establish a significantly different system of secondary schooling. The argument was made that the comprehensive secondary system should include a four-year course – a junior program – that comprised a common curriculum in core subjects for *all* students (Duffield 1990; Wyndham Committee 1958). This junior program was to be followed by an additional two years – a senior program – for students with university aspirations (Duffield 1990; Wyndham Committee 1958). In addition, the Committee recommended that, at the completion of each of these programs, students sit external examinations (Wyndham Committee 1958). Behind these recommendations was a concern

amongst the Committee members that the validity of early selection of students

into the existing differentiated secondary school system was flawed:

> It is fair to say that the method adopted [for selecting students into the differentiated secondary school system] in 1943… falls short of the standard of effectiveness necessary to justify selection of pupils at the end of the primary school age. Too many pupils admitted to 'selective' high schools prove to be ill-placed and there is a considerable number, excluded at the point of selection who, admitted to non-selective schools, later prove their suitability for academic secondary school studies by qualifying to enter Fourth Year and by proceeding to gain the Leaving Certificate. The irony of the situation is that, in order to do so, many of these pupils obtain admission to the Fourth Year of the very schools they were not allowed to enter in First Year. (Wyndham Committee 1958: 24).

Wyndham's convictions regarding the abolition of the selection process for

pupils moving from primary into secondary education originated in his own

doctoral and post-doctoral research (Hughes 2002). Wyndham's doctoral thesis,

completed at Stanford University, and his subsequent post-doctoral research,

conducted in Australia, was concentrated on ability grouping, intelligence testing

and the education of students of differing abilities (Hughes 2002). With

Wyndham's own research confirming the findings from the Inquiry, the

Wyndham Committee report recommended that all pupils move, without

examination, from primary school into locally situated comprehensive secondary

schools (Wyndham Committee 1958). However, despite the Committee's

opposition to selection through examination process for the *majority* of NSW

primary students, exceptions were made.

Under significant public support and considerable influence from former pupils, the Committee avoided any 'direct attack on selective schools' (Hughes 2002: 139). Thus, the Wyndham Inquiry recommended exemptions for those 'traditional' academic state secondary schools – schools previously referred to as full secondary schools – such as Sydney Boys High and Fort Street. Duffield (1990) argues that this was not surprising given that many of the members of the Wyndham Committee, including Wyndham himself, were in fact former pupils of Fort Street High School.

Major state and national teachers' organisations, including the Australian Council of Education Research (ACER), members of the Convocation of the University of Sydney, and the NSW Parents and Citizens Association supported the Committee's recommendations. Support was also forthcoming from progressive education advocates (Duffield 1990). Nevertheless, the recommendation for an additional year to be added to secondary school and for external examinations to be completed at the end of both the four year and the additional two year program required parliamentary legislation (Barcan 1998). The State Labor Government was reluctant to act on these recommendations (Mitchell 1975) for a number of reasons. Firstly, whilst secondary school enrolments had started increasing in 1949 (Barcan 1988: 238) with the influx of

school-aged migrant children, a substantial increase in demand for secondary

school places was not expected until 1961 (Hughes 2002:164) when the baby-

boomers reached secondary school age. Secondly, there were significant concerns

from the State employer of public servants – the Public Services Board – over the

cost of the additional resources required to develop and implement a common

core curriculum that included an additional year in the junior program *and* that

met the needs of *all* students. Finally, there was strong opposition from within

the NSW Labor Party's own powerful Catholic faction. The Catholic ALP group

argued that the financial cost of a fourth year at the junior level would financially

burden struggling Catholic parents and the already strained Catholic education

system (Hughes 2002).

Due to the opposition, the reluctance of the NSW State Government to act caused

long delays in the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. These

delays, however, finally ended when Ernest Wetherell succeeded Robert Heffron

as the Minister for Education in 1960 (Hughes 2002). Wetherell's political

standing had significant influence, and at the Australian Labor Party (ALP)

Conference of 1961, he garnered support for the adoption of the

recommendations of the Wyndham Committee's report. The *Education Act* of

1961, which soon followed, recognised the right of *all* adolescents, not just those

from the social elite or those who were academically gifted, to a comprehensive

secondary education in NSW (McGowan et al. 1981). Indeed, it has been argued

that the Wyndham Scheme, as it came to be known, was the first attempt made

in NSW to relate secondary schooling to the 'majority of its students' rather than

just those who would go on to attend university (New South Wales Teachers

Federation [NSW Teachers Federation] 1982: 4).

However, the long delay over the implementation of the recommendations had

allowed significant debate over the many issues related to secondary schooling

in NSW to continue. One of these debates centred on the control that universities

had over the curriculum and matriculation standards. Until the enactment of the

Education Act 1961 secondary education had been driven by the demands of the

universities (NSW Teachers Federation 1982). The universities stridently

opposed the new matriculation standards outlined in the Wyndham report and

continued this opposition well after the implementation of the Act. However,

while the implementation of the Act reduced the control of the universities, their

influence was still strong; seven of the 19 representatives on the Board of Senior

School Studies were from the university sector (Hughes 2002: 175). Ultimately,

the Board of Senior School Studies proposed significant alterations to the pattern

of secondary schooling to those recommended in the Wyndham Report (Hughes 2002).

In the interim between the release of the report and the implementation of the *Education Act* debate also continued on the issue of selective schooling. Although the Wyndham report had recommended exemptions for these schools with regard to their use of examination results for entry, there was divided opinion as to the continuance of this practice. Proponents of selective schools, which included the staff, parents of current students, and influential graduates who often held positions of authority within the community, were exerting political pressure for the retention of the existing selective schools (Hughes 2002). As Minister for Education, Ernest Wetherell also publicly voiced concerns over the extent to which the needs of talented students would be cultivated in a system devoid of selective schools and other accelerated learning opportunities (McGowan et al. 1981). Opponents of selective schools, however, argued that the Wyndham Inquiry established an opportunity to abolish selective intakes. Some of these opponents also called for the abolition of ranked individual assessments (Junor 1991). The system preferred by opponents of selective schools was one that fostered the development of avowedly *comprehensive* principles in education – promoting mixed ability grouping in which students of high, medium and low

ability attended the same class. The proponents, however, had the strongest political influence (Hughes 2002) and in reality the exemption of the selective schools from the abolition of examinations at the end of primary school was secured very early in the course of the actual Inquiry and was excluded from any forthcoming legislation (Duffield 1990).

Upon Wyndham's recommendations therefore, ability grouping and the selective school examinations were preserved. Further, with the influence of academics on the Board of Senior School Studies, ultimate control over secondary education and matriculation standards was maintained by the university sector (Hughes 2002). In this regard the distinctions between a liberal academic curriculum for a small group of elite students who would progress to matriculation and the more vocationally oriented education that would remain for the majority of students remained secured (McCulloch 1991). This thesis will argue that this differentiated system of education not only represented a bifurcation of the student body but also a duality in the labour market experiences of public secondary school teachers; one constituted by the small number of selective schools and the other characterised by a burgeoning number of comprehensive schools.

Despite the retention of a differentiated public secondary school system, however, the Wyndham Scheme established a common core curriculum that

provided a general education for all junior students, and local neighbourhood schools were established which students could attend without selection. This marked a distinct shift towards the dominance of a comprehensive education system (Campbell & Sherington 2006). Within this system provision was made within the one type of school for atypical students at each end of the spectrum. For students with high academic ability, both the range and number of opportunity classes for accelerated learning were increased. At the other end of the spectrum, remedial classes were developed for students who were struggling with learning difficulties, and programs were established for students with physical and behavioural disabilities (Hughes 2002). Given the political and bureaucratic challenges associated with implementing these changes, however, it wasn't until 1965, when the Liberal-Country Party coalition was elected in NSW, that implementation of this scheme and the 'comprehensive school experiment' truly began (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 69).

Comprehensive school experiment – 1960s to 1970s

The establishment and expansion of the comprehensive system in NSW differed by location. In regional areas, and in the inner city and northern beaches of Sydney, some purpose-built comprehensive secondary schools were established. However, to meet growing demand in these areas, the majority of

comprehensive secondary schools were established during the 1960s by converting many of the older established intermediate schools into generalist schools. However, in the rapidly expanding Hills district and outer western suburbs of Sydney there were insufficient numbers of established intermediate schools. In these areas new, purpose-built secondary comprehensive secondary schools were constructed to meet burgeoning demand. In the Hills district, between 1963 and 1981, six co-educational comprehensive secondary schools were opened (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 87). Demand was even greater though in the outer western suburbs: between 1959 and 1969, ten new comprehensive secondary schools were built and another eleven schools were established during the 1970s and 1980s (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 88).

During the 1960s in NSW, as in the other Australian states, public secondary schooling began to outgrow the private sector (Marginson 1997a). In NSW, the dominance of private corporate schools over public secondary schools, that had existed until the 1930s was reversed by the 1970s (Campbell & Sherington 2006). Until the 1930s in NSW, 47 private corporate schools had been established compared to 38 public secondary schools. By the 1970s, only 11 more private corporate schools had been established compared to 227 public schools, of which 200 were comprehensive co-educational secondary schools that had been

established since the 1950s (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 90). This represented

an increase in public secondary schooling of almost 600 per cent over a 40 year

period and meant that the vast majority of secondary school teachers in NSW

were teaching in public comprehensive secondary schools. Nevertheless, the

retention of selective schools after the implementation of the Wyndham Scheme

essentially meant the preservation of a system which, combined with the

subsequent resurgence in popularity of the private secondary education system

in the 1980s, would prove deleterious to the effectiveness of the public

comprehensive secondary school system (Hughes 2002: 186). The threats to this

system were, however, made even more challenging by sweeping reforms that

were about to be implemented across the public sector.

Neo-liberal public sector reform – 1970s to 1980s

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was widespread pressure for public sector

reform in most developed countries (Wheelwright 1994). Following World War

II, high levels of economic growth had allowed most OECD countries to increase

public spending and there had been substantial subsequent growth in national

public sector bureaucracies (Marginson 1997a). However, by the end of the 1970s

doubts emerged over the economic efficiency of the traditional professional-

bureaucratic model on which the public sector was based (Laffin 1995). These

doubts were fuelled by two main factors. Firstly, there was widespread

disenchantment with the size and complexity of public bureaucracies, and the

perceived failure of large and expensive bureaucratic departments to meet

community needs. Secondly, funding the public sector through taxation was

perceived to be diverting funds away from the 'more productive' private sector

(Dixson & Kouzmin 1994: 54; Mascarenhas 1993). Amidst these concerns, neo-

liberal economic agendas took hold under conservative political parties. In

Britain these agendas were introduced in 1979 under Margaret Thatcher, and in

the United States they were introduced by Ronald Reagan in 1980 (Mascarenhas

1993). In Australia, however, it was under a traditionally social-democratic/

labour political party, led by Bob Hawke, that a series of neo-liberal policy

reforms were introduced in 1983 (Dixson & Kouzmin 1994). The neo-liberal

policy initiatives of these political parties enabled a public sector reform agenda

to be implemented that was largely based on neo-classical economic theory

(Wheelwright 1994).

The neo-liberal economic doctrine argued that 'a competitive market economy,

subject to certain conditions, will generate equilibrium outcomes in which

resources are efficiently allocated' (Stilwell 1994: 31). Based on this assumption,

neo-liberals argued for the decentralisation of political power, the deregulation

of capital and labour markets (Apple 2001; Stilwell 1994), tariff reductions, and non-redistributive taxation systems (Laffin & Painter 1995b; Stilwell 1994). The main aim of these reforms was to 'roll back the state' through the promotion of 'fundamental values such as freedom of the individual, consumer choice, and greater initiative for the private sector in economic development' (Mascarenhas 1993: 319). These developments, the neo-liberal proponents argued, would bring about substantial resource efficiencies by introducing competition that would weed out economic under-performers (Stilwell 1994). As will be discussed in the next section and elaborated on in the next chapter, this ideology would have profound effects on the education system and the work of teachers.

In Australia, as in Britain, the United States, and New Zealand, neo-liberal reforms predominantly took the form of labour market and wage deregulation, and the erosion of welfare provisions (Carney 1988). The specific aim of these reforms was to provide greater labour market flexibility and instil wage determination so as to manage growing unemployment and economic downturn (Esping-Anderson 1996).

In Australia, changes to the bureaucratic administration of the federal public system began in the mid-1970s with administrative law reforms. However, it wasn't until the election of the Hawke Labor Government that a neo-liberal

approach – in the guise of 'economic rationalism' (Connell 2006: 145) – was used to initiate widespread reforms to public sector management (Dixson & Kouzmin 1994). Economic rationalism was aimed at introducing efficiencies in the public sector by devolving responsibility and accountability down to government department heads (Laffin 1995; Mascarenhas 1993). Whilst these reforms were surprising coming from a political party with roots historically grounded in social-democratic philosophies, they were largely unopposed by the union movement (Ewer et al. 1991). Indeed some of the reforms – such as the introduction of enterprise bargaining – were implemented with the cooperation of the union movement (Carney 1988; Ewer et al. 1991).

As part of the reform agenda, the Australian Federal Government introduced changes to the provision of funding that forced public sector reforms at the state level. Hawke introduced the concept of 'new federalism' (Willis 1991: 3). Under these reforms, general purpose funding and capital grants to the states were reduced and the guarantee of state funding was removed (Laffin & Painter 1995a). The Commonwealth replaced these funding models with block grants allocated to states and territories. These grants were to be used for the development and implementation of reform programs that conformed to the new national guidelines (Willis 1991). With the new funding models and

guidelines the economic performance and financial management practices of the states were 'exposed…to the judgement of the international capital markets' making the states vulnerable to scrutiny (Laffin & Painter 1995a: 4). This exposure altered the credit ratings of the states which in turn 'determined the cost of each state's borrowing program' (Laffin & Painter 1995a: 4). As such, all states had to implement public sector management reforms if they were to retain federal funding and attract international business (Laffin & Painter 1995a).

Social change and the growth of meritocracy

Socially there were also significant changes occurring in Australia that facilitated the implementation of neo-liberal ideas in the economic and political spheres. In the post-war years, the concept of the sovereign, liberal individual emerged and with it came notions of the self-governed and self-determined citizen. The formation of this 'liberal-democratic citizen', it was argued, would be achieved through a universally available education system, and would be supported through other publicly available services such as health, transport, amenities and social security (Marginson 1997a: 15-17).

From the 1950s, the notion of meritocracy had emerged as social mobility increased and notions of aristocratic entitlement were discredited (Lemann 1997).

In the 1960s and 70s, expanded public education systems enabled even greater social mobility, and economic prosperity allowed greater individual choice with regard to consumption patterns; resulting in subsequent improvements in quality of life (Marginson 1997a). Thus, by the 1970s, there was a widespread expectation that children would exceed the educational and occupational achievements of their parents (Sennett & Cobb 1972). For the working-class in particular, higher education levels opened the way for moving out of labouring jobs and into higher skilled and higher paid occupations. As the children of the working-class gained entry into the new burgeoning middle-class, however, this social mobility caused tensions. Whilst the children of the working-class were attaining their parents' aspirations, they were also abandoning collective working-class values and ideals. These tensions were termed a 'paradox of individualism' in which the individual desired to stand out amongst his or her peers (Sennett & Cobb 1972: 159). As upward social mobility increased, the popularity of the concept of meritocracy grew. However, the concept of meritocracy also socialised people into believing that roles in society were determined by individual effort rather than through birth-rights. As such, the notion that the individual was responsibility for his or her own social position and economic attainment was also gaining increased traction (Branson & Miller 1979).

The growth of technology and the geographic mobility of capital also contributed to the burgeoning middle-class. In Australia in the 1970s, as in many other developed countries, the traditional working-class blue-collar stronghold occupations were in serious decline due to two significant factors. On the one hand, technological advances in production were increasing the demand for more skilled occupations and decreasing the demand for unskilled labour (acirrt 1999). On the other hand, increased mobility of capital, and economic globalisation, were forcing much of the lower-skilled manufacturing work off-shore to cheaper labour markets overseas (acirrt 1999). In 1947, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers employed as tradespeople, plant and machine operators and drivers, and labourers made up over half of the paid Australian labour force (A Scott 1991: 12). By the mid-1980s, however, these workers represented only a little over a third of all employees (A Scott 1991: 12). As manual and blue-collar occupations declined the increasing importance of education in gaining entry into the new and expanding managerial, professional, semi-professional and technical occupations became apparent (Sennett & Cobb 1972).

With rapidly changing labour market conditions, the shift to a free-market economy was increasingly seen as a way to allow individuals to fulfil their social

and economic aspirations (McMurtry 1998). Coinciding with these issues of aspiration was a significant fear of skill shortages in OECD countries which saw the emergence of global labour markets (Brown & Tannock 2009). These social pressures, and the continued implementation of neo-liberal public sector reforms, were to have significant implications for the education system, and consequently for the work of teachers. More specifically, with the emergence of the neo-liberal reform agenda, the idea of a 'free' market in the education system in Australia began to gain traction beyond the private sector (Marginson 1997b).

Education funding and increasing choice

Most OECD countries have long held dual education system of private and public institutions but Australia is second only to Spain in the size of the private system (Marginson 1997a). Currently in Australia there are three forms of private schooling. Whilst relatively small in number, the 'elite' private schools are highly sought after bastions of social privilege for the children of affluent families (Anderson 1992; Marginson 1997a). In addition to these schools, and catering to a different target groups are those schools that have been established for particular and specific religious or ethnic communities. These schools comprise the largest sub-sector of private schooling, and within them the systemic Catholic schools enrol the vast majority of private school students. The other form of private

schooling is represented by the small number of 'alternative' schools, including home-schooling, that cater to particular educational notions of community or individual development (Anderson 1992: 225).

In Australia, education is the constitutional responsibility of the states, and up until the 1970s, nearly all the costs of government schools had been borne by the various state and territory governments (Marginson 1997a). However, as early as the 1950s, Federal support for private education began to emerge with the introduction, under Menzies, of tax deductions for private school fees (Marginson 1997a). In the 1960s, the personal cost of private education was rising (Campbell & Sherington 2006), and Commonwealth funding was further extended. Under the first new funding scheme, introduced in 1964, federal funding was provided to both public and private schools for the development of science blocks. In the late 1960s, however, grants for the development of school libraries for private schools were introduced and funding for various Catholic programs was provided through recurrent grants (Marginson 1997a).

In the 1970s, a Labor Government, under Gough Whitlam, was elected to Federal office amidst growing public and political pressure for increased Commonwealth funding for education (Marginson 1997a). Following his election, Whitlam assumed a very proactive policy-making role in education by attaching

conditions to the Commonwealth funding provided to states for public and private education (Meadmore 2001). By 1974, the Whitlam Government had implemented a number of funding changes throughout all levels of education (Marginson 1997a).

In higher and post-secondary schooling Commonwealth funding was expanded through a number of programs (Marginson 1997a). Tertiary fees were abolished, additional adult education program were introduced, English as Second Language, and Migrant Education program were funded, and Special Education program for students with disabilities were developed (Junor 1991).

Funding in the primary and secondary education sectors was also restructured amidst considerable political pressure from the Catholic community to increase funding to private schools (Bessant & Spaull 1976). In 1973, the Whitlam Government commissioned the Karmel report (1973) to investigate state funding in education. The report recommended widespread funding reforms to both private and government schools that would ensure minimum standards were met in all schools (Marginson 1985; Marginson 1997a). Under a 'needs- based' funding formula, recurrent grants were allocated on the basis of the school's level of economic resources relative to established common resource targets – or 'Karmel-targets' as they were later known (Marginson 1997a: 61). The aim of

these targets was to ensure that no student was disadvantaged regardless of the type of school they attended. With the formula and targets in place, funding to private schools was increased (Junor 1991; Marginson 1997a; Willis 1991).

However, the Karmel formula was deficient in its equitable allocation of resources (Marginson 1997a). Whilst the formula recommended the exclusion of the elite private schools from funding, it failed to recognise the considerable assets held by the Catholic private schools (Marginson 1985). The increased funding to private schools was considerable and through the implementation of the formula, funds were not withdrawn from wealthy private schools (Marginson 1997a).

Before the federal election of the Whitlam Labor Government, Commonwealth funding to Australian private schools between 1970 and 1972 totalled $173 million (Bessant & Spaull 1976: 121). Under the Whitlam Government, private education funding increased at a greater rate than any other area of public expenditure; rising from 4.4 to 8.5 per cent of Commonwealth outlays (Marginson 1997a: 30). At the end of the Whitlam years, 1974-1975, Federal funding to private education had increased to $800 million (Bessant & Spaull 1976: 121).

Subsequent Federal Governments, under both Liberal and Labor Prime Ministers, increasingly diverted Commonwealth recurrent funds away from state public education systems to private schools (ABS 2001b). In total, in the decade between 1975 and 1985, Federal funding to all private schools grew in real terms by 126 per cent compared to an 8 per cent cut in real terms for funding to state public schools (Junor 1991: 176). Between 1975 and 1983, the conservative Liberal Fraser Government alone had doubled funding to private schools (Marginson 1997a: 48). In doing so, the Fraser Government emphasised the notion of excellence and choice to justify increased private school funding and re-established the superiority of an academic curriculum (ABS 2001b). By the 1980s, over two-thirds of recurrent spending in private schools was funded by governments (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 99) and the personal cost of private education had fallen relative to that of the 1960s (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Marginson 1997a).

The Karmel report also failed, however, to take into consideration the social and cultural advantage available to most students who attended private schools. The restructuring of funding to public and private schools therefore completely failed to address the social determinants of educational inequality (Marginson 1985). In addition, the position of private education was 'materially strengthened and

politically legitimised', empowering, in particular, the Catholic systemic schools but also allowing other Christian denominations to establish their own schools (Marginson 1985: 5).

By the early 1980s, these Federal funding arrangements had 'instigated [a] relative decline in the position of government schools' (Marginson 1985: 6) and encouraged an ideology of choice that subsequently began to dominate educational policy (Marginson 1997a; Nation 2001). In this regard, the Commonwealth essentially funded the emergence of 'choice' in education (Marginson 1997b). While decisions about schooling were still constrained to a certain extent by the social, cultural and economic capital of parents (Ball et al. 1994; Power 1992), increased funding not only allowed private schools to survive but it provided them with sufficient funding to enable them to offer an attractive and affordable alternative to government schooling (ABS 2001b).

At the local level, with increased Federal funding and the absence of any limits to private school expansions, other religious faiths began establishing schools (Marginson 1997a). Greater availability and the perception amongst increasing numbers of parents that private education was superior to public education increased the competitive, or positional, advantage of private education (Marginson 1997b). The rise in popularity and increasing accessibility of private

education, also however, began to expose the public school system to market-based dynamics as competition for student enrolments increased between the public and private systems (Marginson 1997b; Meadmore 2001).

Increased demand for private schooling in the 1980s

The increased dominance attained by public sector education during the 1960s and into the 1970s began to diminish by the late 1970s. Across Australia total enrolments in government schools peaked in 1977 at 78.9 per cent of all students (Marginson 1985:10). While funding arrangements provided financial incentives that assisted the growth in preferences for private education, the increasing positional advantage afforded to private education was also a key factor in its growing popularity. This positional advantage was significantly affected by the demand for higher education that was increasing throughout the 1970s (Marginson 1997b).

With the introduction of quotas into university courses in the mid-1970s, higher levels of performance from secondary school students, particularly in final Year 12 examination marks, was required (Marginson 1997b; Teese 1998). Competition for university courses was played out through increasing scholastic standards in secondary school curriculum. These increasing standards were particularly

pertinent in subjects, such as mathematics and the physical sciences that would

be used by universities to determine entrance into the prestigious professional

courses. Elite private schools began to specialise in 'academic training' by

channelling their most academically able students into combinations of these

high-value subjects that would better place them for university selection. With

the high success rates in these subjects that private school students were

subsequently achieving the elite private schools were able to 'set standards of

attainment for matriculation' (Teese 1998: 412). Channelling also occurred in

selective government schools but the numbers of these schools were small

(Hughes 2002). In contrast, public schools and Catholic schools did not channel

students so academic performance was much more diversified. By the mid-1980s,

the global academic success of the elite private schools, and the elevated

standards created by channelling students within these schools, restricted the

extent to which the public and Catholic students could readily compete in those

subjects that secured university places (Teese 1989; 1998).

The prestige associated with the elite private schools was evident in the social

stratification of student enrolments and the geographic location of these schools

in the predominantly wealthier suburbs (Marginson 1997b). In the early 1980s,

almost two thirds (63%) of students enrolled in independent non-Catholic

private schools had parents who worked in professional occupations (Anderson 1992: 225). In comparison just over a third of students in Catholic systemic schools (34%) and only one in five (21%) students enrolled in government schools had parents who were professionals (Anderson 1992: 225). Furthermore, the social, educational, and labour market advantages afforded to those who had completed schooling in the private sector have been empirically verified and well documented (see Marginson 1997b: 148-53). Students graduating from the elite private schools were vastly over-represented amongst university entrants (Marginson 1997b) and the professional occupations were dominated by students who had attended these schools (Anderson 1992). The superior academic and occupational outcomes of students from private schools and, in particular, from the elite independents, created a high 'positional value' for these schools (Marginson 1997b: 142).

Positional advantage and over-representation in university entrants, however, were not the only benefits afforded to private schools by the high academic achievement of their students. With a firm hold over university positions and over-representation in the professional occupations amongst graduates, private schooling was able to market that which was freely available from Government schools (Marginson 1997b). Nevertheless, for the education market to be

functional it required competition between other institutions against which the value of the exchange could be measured and compared. The education market also required an atmosphere of need, albeit perceived, and the private sector was able to promote education as a commodity that would secure both social and economic advantage (Connell 2006; Marginson 1997b).

Concurrent with the rise in positional advantage and the marketability based on academic standards of private schools, was an emerging trend of insecurity and anxiety amongst parents (Marginson 1997a; 1997b). Parents, and in particular, middle-class parents, were becoming increasingly aware of the growing need for higher education to secure labour market advantage and position; especially in the elite professions (Marginson 1997b). Globalisation had created an atmosphere of high economic vulnerability (Connell 2006), and job security, particularly amongst the lower-skilled occupations, declined (acirrt 1999). Finally, parents – and again predominantly middle-class parents – were increasingly concerned about issues of personal security, and gender and race relations. Private schools actively marketed themselves as solutions to these concerns (Connell 2006). These social conditions paved the way for the market-based reforms within the public secondary school system in NSW that – as this thesis will demonstrate – were to substantially change the nature of work for teachers in this sector.

Rising perceptions of insecurity

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, investment in human capital and equality of opportunity dominated policy discourses in education (Bessant & Spaull 1976). The human capital economists of this time argued that there was a direct causal relationship between education and training, and national economic growth. Put simply, as education levels increased, labour productivity would improve and lead to subsequent growth in the national economy. In the same regard, a direct causal relationship was also attributed to labour productivity and individual earnings (Marginson 1997a; Taylor et al. 1997). But public faith in the ability of mass generalised public education to deliver economic growth began to wane from the mid-1960s (Bennett 1982). Despite mass education, the national economy was in decline, graduate unemployment was high, and the popularity of human capital theorists collapsed (Marginson 1997b).

In the mid- to late-1970s, political pressure and pressure from the business community began to affect education policy. Many of the prevailing social and economic challenges were increasingly being blamed on the perception that the public education system was delivering poor academic outcomes (Marginson 1997a). Of particular importance was the extent to which education was being held responsible for youth unemployment, and despite empirical evidence to the

contrary, popular commentary emerged highlighting declining national literacy and numeracy standards amongst pupils (Marginson 1997a). As attested by the increased take-up of private education and the subsequent growth of different types of public secondary schools, these commentaries fed directly into parental concerns. The concepts of choice and individualism in education, that had been established and encouraged through increased Federal funding to private education, became legitimised (Marginson 1997b).

Increasing parental concerns about potential labour market opportunities for their children saw retention rates begin to rise during the late 1970s (Marginson 1997a). Rising retention rates then called into question a significant component within the Wyndham Scheme. The Wyndham Scheme assumed that the final two years of secondary schooling was an academic extension to the four-year junior program and that this additional two years was aimed solely at those students with university aspirations (Campbell & Sherington 2006). However, it became apparent that increasing numbers of students with no university aspirations were staying on to complete six years of secondary school (Marginson 1997a). By 1975, increased retention rates were also placing considerable financial pressure on state governments as almost all students were staying on at secondary school beyond the compulsory attendance age of 15 (Marginson 1997a).

In the early 1980s, the political and social context was set for the emerging

dominance of neo-liberal ideals and the ascendency of market-based mechanisms

in education and other government agencies. Along with these ideals there was a

re-emergence of new forms of human capital theory (Marginson 1997b). These

revised theories recognised the limitations of the 1960s hypothesis that economic

growth would be attained through an undifferentiated state-financed investment

in education and human capital. 'Second wave' human capital theorists argued

that not all educated labour could be absorbed into the labour market and that

therefore, a 'selective' investment in education was required that placed 'private

initiative and risk taking at the centre of educational management' (Marginson

1997b: 109). In this regard, it was argued that markets were to be the missing link

in the nexus between education and economic growth (Marginson 1997b) and the

social-democratic notions of devolution, that were established by the Karmel

Committee in the early 1970s, became grounded in neo-liberal market-driven

responses (Rizvi 1994; Rizvi & Lingard 2010; Willis 1991).

In the mid-1970s, the Commonwealth Schools Commission championed the

Government's call for markets in public education by arguing for a government

system that more closely resembled the private sector (Schools Commission

1975). It reiterated Karmel's notion of greater community involvement in

education, and as a consequence, there was a relaxing of enrolment policies (Schools Commission 1975; 1978; Marginson 1997b). But by the mid-1980s, devolution was no longer about increasing the capacity of teachers and schools to respond to the needs of students, as Karmel had intended (Willis 1991). Instead, devolution became centred on changing resourcing and improving quality standards and excellence (Knight 1990). The introduction of market mechanisms in government agencies also enabled state governments to reduce funding unhindered by public debate (Marginson 1997b).

By the 1980s, a number of state governments across Australia, including Western Australia, Victoria, and NSW were concerned with the nature of secondary schooling (Winder 1984). With serious youth unemployment, the issues surrounding the transition of students from school to work moved beyond the realm of education and became a broader social policy concern for the first time (Blakers 1985). In NSW, the concerns around secondary schooling, and the paucity of labour market opportunities for youth led to a series of inquiries and reports that marked the beginning of the shift in the organisation and management of secondary education in the state. The extent to which the recommendations of these reports were actually immediately implemented varied considerably. Nevertheless, as will be discussed in the following section,

many of the reports and recommendations were to have a significant influence

on government policy years after their actual release. The proposals contained in

many of these reports were, years later, subsequently adapted to accommodate

the neo-liberal ideals and market-based policy changes.

NSW inquiries into secondary education – early 1980s

McGowan Report - 1981

The first of these inquiries – the McGowan Inquiry – was established by the NSW

Parliament in 1981. The McGowan Committee was to examine the first four years

of secondary schooling and in this regard the terms of reference called for them

to:

> …examine the requirements and the procedures currently governing the award of the School Certificate[3] and to report whether these conditions meet the concerns of the community regarding the education of students in the first four years of secondary schooling. (McGowan et al. 1981: 1).

The findings from the McGowan Inquiry supported the guiding principles

espoused by the 1958 Wyndham Committee, and argued that '…the primary

purpose of secondary education is not to produce university matriculants, but to

give all adolescents the best possible preparation for adult life' (McGowan et al.

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[3] The qualification achieved by students at the completion four years of secondary school – results from the Year 10 final exams.

1981: 34). Nevertheless, the social, political and economic context in the 1980s was vastly different from the conditions that existed when the Wyndham Committee's recommendations were released.

At the time of the Wyndham report, Australia was still enjoying the relative prosperity of the post-war boom. There was rising demand for educated and skilled workers and there was still widespread political and public support for social-democratic ideas of equity and democracy (Watson et al. 2003). In contrast, the social and economic setting of the early 1980s was characterised by high unemployment, the collapse of the youth labour market, public sector cuts, and emerging neo-liberal ideals in public policy that favoured privatisation and an acceptance of inequality (Junor 1982; Watson et al. 2003). The findings from the McGowan Committee highlighted many of these changing social factors. In so doing they argued that, whilst the 'Wyndham *principles'* still held, the '*system'* which was established in 1961 no longer catered for the 'increasingly diverse community concerns' (McGowan et al. 1981: 34-5 emphasis added).

The changing nature of the student population was one of the key factors that called into question the validity of a system that was predominantly oriented and organised towards meeting the needs of students with university aspirations (McGowan et al. 1981). The McGowan Committee highlighted two main factors

contributing to this increased diversity in the student population. Firstly,

retention rates had increased since the 1960s and the completion of Year 12 had

become important to all students, not just the 'significant minority' who aspired

to go onto university (McGowan et al. 1981: 47). They argued that in NSW the

Higher School Certificate[4] had become 'a prerequisite for many positions for

which the School Certificate' had previously been adequate (McGowan et al.

1981: 48). Secondly, multiculturalism had continued and broadened and there

was now a proliferation of students from different ethnic, cultural, religious and

linguistic backgrounds; many of whom needed English language skills. With this

increasing diversity in the student body, the Committee argued that attempting

to impose a single 'proper set' of values across all public schools 'would be

disastrous' (McGowan et al. 1981: 72).

The Committee maintained that the educational needs of a wide variety of

students were not being met. They argued that whilst core compulsory subjects

were perhaps 'desirable' they were 'restrictive' and not 'manifestly necessary' in

the aim of attempting to prepare students to be democratic citizens (McGowan et

al. 1981: 69). They cited 'witnesses' to the Inquiry who had argued that literacy

and numeracy standards amongst school leavers were declining (McGowan et al.

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[4] The qualification achieved by students at the completion of six years of secondary school after sitting the Year 12 final exams.

1981: 32). In particular, they argued that many employers were concerned that literacy levels among school leavers had declined in the last 30 years. The Committee also raised concerns over the significant empirical evidence that showed '…the poor, the Aborigines, the migrants, and the physically and socially handicapped' were not having their educational needs adequately met (McGowan et al. 1981: 73). Finally, the Committee called into question the extent to which the 'very slow learners' and the 'exceptionally talented' were being catered for in a system that was, if anything, 'really only appropriate for the large group of middle-order candidates (McGowan et al. 1981: 74).

Also of significant concern to the Committee was the extent to which education was seen to be failing to meet increasing societal demands and expectations. In this regard, the Committee acknowledged the increasing use by employers of school outcomes and measures of performance as proxy credentials in culling and selecting applicants. The Committee, thus, called into question the adequacy of the examinations held at the end of the junior secondary school – the School Certificate. These exams only included English and Mathematics, and the Committee claimed that this was insufficient information for employers to adequately distinguish between potential job applicants (McGowan et al. 1981). In light of the arguments made, the McGowan Committee recommended

substantial changes to the first four years of secondary schooling (Swan 1983) that both supported Wyndham's guiding principles and attempted to cater for the diverse student body.

The guiding principles of the Wyndham Scheme that were upheld by the McGowan Committee were those related to the general inclusive principles of education that catered to the needs of *all* students. Throughout the Inquiry the McGowan Committee reiterated arguments against any attempts that would permanently categorise students by ability and went further to suggest the abolition of selective schools. However, in the course of the Inquiry, 430 submissions were received on the matter of selective schooling and 409 of them opposed this suggestion: resulting in the subsequent retention of selective schools (NSW Teachers Federation 1982: 103).

To improve the extent to which the needs of the increasingly diverse student population were being met, the Committee endorsed a radical change from the centralised system of curriculum development. A 'school-based curriculum decision making' system was proposed in which teachers would be held responsible for educational outcomes but in which there would also be involvement from the local community (McGowan et al. 1981: 94). Community involvement, it was argued, would be introduced with the establishment of

'school curriculum committees' that would comprise parents and other local citizens (McGowan et al. 1981: 94).

To ensure a greater cohesion between the junior and senior syllabuses the Committee also recommended that the two current administrative boards be amalgamated. To this end they argued that the Secondary Schools Board and the Board of Senior School Studies should be merged into a single Board of Secondary Education. The remit of this single Board would be to develop policies and guidelines regarding school-based curriculum development. The Committee also specifically endorsed the NSW Department of Education (DoE) initiative which had recently devoted resources to discovering and cultivating talented students. These changes, they argued, would allow schools to differentiate themselves based on the curriculum and the services they offered (McGowan et al. 1981).

Finally, the Committee's last recommendation – the abolition of departmentally defined school zones – raised a number of questions regarding the extent to which the Committee was under pressure from the Government to include this recommendation in the final report (Junor 1982; McGowan et al. 1981). School zoning was essentially the practice of directing parents to enrol their children in a designated 'local' school as determined by departmentally defined areas and

the residential address of parents. The question of potential departmental

pressure over the inclusion of this recommendation arose firstly from

McGowan's own acknowledgements in the report. He conceded that their

'competence' in recommending de-zoning was 'doubtful' and acknowledged that

the Department was already reviewing the zoning practice (McGowan et al.

1981: 122). Secondly, critics of the McGowan report have argued that the issue of

zoning was outside the Inquiry's brief. The terms of reference for the Inquiry

stipulated that it was to examine the four years of schooling relevant to the

School Certificate. Questions were therefore raised over how the report could

conclude with a recommendation that would essentially reshape 12 years of

schooling – both primary and secondary public schools (Cross 1982; Junor 1982).

Thirdly, even before the Inquiry, there had been considerable pressure to abolish

the zoning practice because it interfered with the Department's application of the

staffing formula in schools with declining enrolments (O'Brien 1982). Finally, the

abolition of school zones would significantly heighten the effect of the

implementation of a school-based curriculum. The abolition of schools zones

would allow parents to apply to enrol their children in any public school

regardless of location. With this freedom to apply to any school of choice, parents

seeking specific educational experiences for their children would tend toward

schools that were meeting, or could be pressured to meet, their needs. These

conditions, would in effect, establish quasi-market mechanisms in public education (Marginson 1997b). As schools began to differentiate with specifically developed curricula and tailored services, parents would be presented with choices in the type of education their children received and thus a public education market would be established (Marginson 1997b).

The extent to which these changes could alter the nature of the student body within particular schools did not go unnoticed by critics at the time (Junor 1982). Junor (1982) argued that the McGowan Committee sanctioned inequality as it locked schools into specific and extended programs of study that differed significantly from school to school. The potential outcome for students from these changes would be dire as they would enable schools to attract particular types of students at the exclusion of others:

> The practical outcome of the McGowan proposals will be that school leavers are stratified. There will be a new elite, a group lacking qualifications for tertiary or technical study, and a group forced by failure into early dropping-out. (Junor 1982: 28)

In this regard, despite some 'apparently progressive recommendations' (Junor, 1982: 26), the recommendations that would introduce market-based reforms such as de-zoning, school-based curriculum, and the suggestion that 'schools should take realistic account of their existing resources as well as the preferences of their students' (McGowan et al. 1981: 122), marked the 'retreat' of traditional

comprehensive education (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 92). In particular, a school-based curriculum designed to meet local community demands would, if implemented, pave the way for significant reform at the local level. Firstly, the school-based curriculum would allow the number of specialist schools to increase. Secondly, it would create an environment in which the development of a differentiated curriculum could be established. The concern with this form of curriculum development was that it would allow the middle-class greater access to academic courses whilst the schools in working-class areas would be offered more practical courses (Junor 1982). In this regard, the type of education students might be exposed to would be significantly influenced by location and the social and economic characteristics of the local community. Finally, the school-based curriculum could allow job-preparation and local employer demands to define educational relevance (Junor 1982). In an economic, political and social context that was grappling with globalisation and the need for increased competition in global markets (Esping-Anderson 1996) localised initiatives, such as a school-based curriculum, could prove to be inconsistent with principles of rationalisation and nationalised economies (Mascarenhas 1993).

The establishment of quasi-market mechanisms in public education, however, was not, it seems, the intent of the Government in office. Indeed, despite state

pressure to abolish zoning, a departmental review recommending such a course of action, and empirical endorsement supporting de-zoning (Cross 1982), the practice of school zoning was not abolished until 1989 (Esson et al. 2002) following a change of government in 1988. Nevertheless, the heavily qualified inclusion of the issue of de-zoning in the McGowan report would have substantial influence in years to come and bring to fruition the concerns of critics at the time (Cross 1982; Junor 1982).

This issue of de-zoning will be returned to later in this chapter when the increase in selective schools is examined more specifically in the context of the long-term consequences of the McGowan report. In the years immediately following the release of the report, however, the broader recommendations made by the McGowan Committee received the ongoing support of the Department of Education. Subsequent additional discussion papers and more commissioned inquiries brought further proposals for the restructuring of public education in NSW.

The Swan Reports – 1983, 1984

In 1983, a discussion paper, *Future directions of secondary education in New South Wales*, was prepared by the Director-General of the NSW Department of Education, Douglas Swan, in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor of the

University of Wollongong, Dr Ken McKinnon. This report was written for the consideration of the Planning and Development Committee of the NSW Department of Education and for other relevant groups. The focus of this discussion paper was to provide support for McGowan's concerns over the ongoing validity of an organisational approach to secondary schooling that had been adopted following the enactment of the 1961 *Education Act.*

Swan and McKinnon called for a revised approach to secondary education that would provide greater integration between the first four years of education with the subsequent Years 11 and 12. In making this recommendation, they reiterated McGowan's argument, that by the 1980s significant changes in social and economic conditions were making it desirable for students to stay in formal education for longer than the compulsory age of 15 and to complete, not only Year 10, but Years 11 and 12 (Swan 1983).

In supporting McGowan's arguments about the validity of the Wyndham Scheme and a need for a greater integration between junior and senior secondary years, Swan and McKinnon also endorsed McGowan's recommendation for the amalgamation of the Secondary Schools Board with the Board of Senior School Studies. This amalgamation, they argued, would improve the integration between the junior and senior years of secondary school. It was proposed that a

single Board of Secondary Education should be established by the beginning of 1985 and that this Board would assume all the responsibilities previously under the control of the two separate Boards (Swan 1983).

Swan and McKinnon also supported a number of McGowan's recommendations that had the potential to have a significant impact on the nature of secondary public teachers' work. Three proposals were specifically supported that were in response to the 'insufficient provision in Years 7 to 10 for students of above-average ability and for those who aspire to academic achievement' (Swan 1983: 3). Firstly, Swan proposed that, once established, the Board of Secondary Education 'develop policies and guidelines for secondary education' to make it 'possible for a school to select an organisational pattern most appropriate to and most acceptable to local needs' (Swan 1983: 6). Secondly, he proposed the development of strategies, between schools and the Technical and Further Education Colleges, for designing 'co-operative programs for senior secondary students' (Swan 1983: 8). Finally, he called for the fostering of 'community involvement in secondary education at the local level [through] the establishment, wherever possible, of a School/Community Committee in each secondary school' (Swan 1983: 9).

The purpose of these Community Committees would be to advise the school principal on a range of matters related to the management and administration of the school and on issues of the school's curriculum (Swan 1983). These proposed changes essentially distanced the curriculum development from the teaching profession and concentrated it in management and the local community (McInerney 2001). As such, the proposed changes had the potential to extend the subject range of the school into technical areas that were beyond the skills, knowledge and experience of the school's current teaching workforce.

Subsequent to the 1983 discussion paper, a series of consultations were held with major interest groups. A wide range of written submissions were also considered in the subsequent development of a full report – *Future directions of secondary education: A report* (Swan & McKinnon 1984). In the 1984 report, Swan and McKinnon elaborated on the issues raised in the initial discussion paper. Again, they posited numerous arguments for the changing economic and social circumstances that were posing significant challenges in secondary schools. In addition to the challenges McGowan and his colleagues (1981) had raised earlier such as the youth unemployment rate, Swan and McKinnon highlighted the changing means of production and the growth of technological advancement in industry as additional reasons for needing to reform secondary education (Swan

& McKinnon 1984). With these social and economic circumstances, they argued that 'new arrangements [and] new responses' were required to adequately accommodate the diverse needs of students who were continuing on into Years 11 and 12 but who were not, necessarily, inclined toward tertiary education (Swan & McKinnon 1984). They also reiterated the need for co-ordination between the programs and syllabuses that were contained in the first four years of secondary school with the programs and syllabuses contained in the senior years, through the establishment of a statutory Board of Secondary Education (Swan & McKinnon 1984).

Swan and McKinnon, however, did concede the inherent difficulties in redesigning the junior and senior curriculums. Devising programs and courses that not only provided a continuum of education into senior years for the growing diversity in the senior student body but that also ensured all students were extended and challenged was, they acknowledged, 'one of the most fundamental challenges for educational administrators and governments' (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 18). Nevertheless, the principles that Swan and McKinnon espoused for secondary education was still firmly based on the premise that the 'primary orientation [of secondary education]…should be towards the preparation of knowledgeable, skilful and caring persons within a common

cultural framework' (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 9). Schools, it was argued, would 'continue to be seen as key institutions in the pursuit of equality in Australian society' (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 6).

It has been argued that the aim of the Swan and McKinnon (1984) full report was to provide a framework that would structure future policy debates (Winder 1984). However, in setting the tone for any such debates there were apparent inconsistencies. Swan and McKinnon's (1984) proposed philosophy of equality was at odds with some of their recommendations and, indeed, with current practice; particularly with regard to organisational structures and arrangements (Winder 1984). For example, Swan and McKinnon admonished the 'permanent streaming' of students (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 9) yet, the continued existence of selective schools institutionalised just such a practice. Further, they supported the proposed establishment of stand-alone senior secondary schools within the state system that were similar to those already operating in the Catholic system. They also advocated for the 'principle of six years of secondary schooling for all' but qualified this with 'desirable' diversity (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 30). The notion of desirable diversity specifically referred to the establishment and growth of community colleges that would specialise along community defined needs (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 30). Absent from the framework for debate that

they established, however, was the potential impact that such diversity would have on the nature of secondary schooling and the subsequent work of teachers. As has already been discussed, critics of this proposed approach to secondary schooling raised concerns over the extent to which student stratification would emerge if schools were allowed to segment and specialise (Junor 1982).

Similarly, whilst the Swan and McKinnon (1984) discussion paper specifically stated that secondary schools should not be turned into vocational training institutions, there were additional proposals to the contrary. For example, the report also proposed that student interests that fell outside the traditional academic subjects could be used to foster 'essential intellectual skills' through content that could be included in 'economic, social and technological fields' associated with non-academic tertiary education (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 21). To support this particular proposal it was also recommended that 'consultations be held between government authorities and unions' with a view to developing 'the means of utilising in schools the services of persons with appropriately varied expertise' (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 32). This recommendation sought to 'broaden the cross-section of skills within the teaching profession [through an]…interchange of Department of Education and TAFE teachers' (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 32). In addition, the report proposed a realignment of

institutional arrangements between neighbouring TAFE institutions and secondary schools, particularly in regional and urban areas where schools were struggling with declining enrolments. These proposals in particular would significantly expand the workload of teachers in secondary schools if adopted.

The Winder Report - 1984

At the end of 1984, in a report authored by the NSW Deputy Director-General of Education, Robert Winder (1984), the concept of an internationally competitive youth labour market became, for the first time, the focal point of a NSW policy paper on education. This report outlined the international 'climate change' emerging with respect to the appropriateness of secondary education policy following the deregulation of monetary markets and the introduction of international competition (Winder, 1984: 1).

Unlike the Swan and McKinnon (1984) report, Winder provided a more considered argument for a 'co-ordinated six year approach' to secondary schooling and raised concerns over the potential influence of structures that encouraged separate senior colleges to be established (Winder 1984: 13). In particular, he argued that 'focussing attention on a separate senior college [ran] the risk that the critical early secondary years…[could] be relatively truncated or neglected' (Winder 1984: 13). In addition, he was concerned that senior colleges

would create 'an artificial dichotomy between junior and senior schools' in which the problem of maintaining student morale in Years 9 and 10 would be exacerbated by a physical separation from Years 11 and 12 (Winder 1984: 13). In making his argument he highlighted the emerging perception of the superiority of such colleges and their tendency to attract and absorb the more experienced teachers in states where these structures had been adopted (Winder 1984). Winder's contribution to the changing policy debates was, however, to go largely unheeded as Government reports continued to emerge advocating the establishment of a differentiated public secondary education system that encompassed a variety of different types of schools.

Education Commission of NSW reports – 1985 and 1986

In 1980, the Education Commission of NSW was established by the NSW Government with the statutory authority to facilitate community involvement in public education decision making and to act as the major advisory body to the Education Minister on both policy and planning matters. In 1986, the Education Commission released two reports that discussed a much closer integration between education and other youth related policies in an attempt to establish a comprehensive youth policy (Blakers 1985; Education Commission of NSW 1986). Such a policy, it was argued, would take into consideration issues of

education, training, industrial relations, welfare provision, taxation, and community services (Education Commission of NSW 1986). Importantly, the integration of these policies would ensure that consideration would be given to the effects that decision making in one policy area would have on other, related policies areas. The cornerstone of such a comprehensive youth policy was to be education as it was seen to provide the basis from which all other policies should be derived (Blakers 1985).

In the most detailed of these reports, the Education Commission argued that the provision of education across Australia lacked cohesion and co-operation to such an extent that it failed to constitute an actual 'system of education' (Blakers 1985: 35). It was argued that the lack of articulation between different institutional providers of education was detrimental to students for two reasons. Firstly, the extent of the disconnection actually inhibited the progression of students through each of the major stages of – primary, secondary and tertiary – education. Second, the lack of co-operation and cohesion facilitated the streaming of students along traditional occupational and socio-economic patterns. The Commission envisaged schools as being 'the first stage in a continuing process of education' (Blakers 1985: 41). Structural reform, in post-compulsory schooling in particular, would abolish the pre-conceived definitions

of 'worthwhile' talents and capacities that were entrenched in the practices that served to perpetuate social reproduction (Blakers 1985: 41). In this regard, the Education Commission supported the closer integration of junior and secondary schooling proposed by Swan and McKinnon (1984). However, the criticism over the lack of articulation between different education sectors suggests that the Commission was against increasing any fragmentation in the system through the establishment of senior colleges and other more differentiated institutional arrangements. No such arguments, however, were explicitly stated.

An overview of these inquiries

Analysis of the most significant policy reports to emerge in the years immediately preceding the election of the Greiner Government in NSW in 1988 highlights the extent to which the education debates and discussion papers of the early 1980s had paved the way for the sweeping reforms that were to come (Laffin & Painter 1995a). Many of the same issues were repeatedly raised and debated during these inquiries. Of persistent concern was the increasing diversity in the secondary student population and the continued segmentation of public secondary schooling and permanent streaming of some children through the retention of selective schools (Blakers 1985; Education Commission of NSW 1986; McGowan et al. 1981; Swan 1983; Swan & McKinnon 1984; Winder 1984).

Similarly, the solutions recommended to address these concerns generally endorsed an approach that encouraged and supported local decision-making processes and greater community control over school management (McGowan et al. 1981; Swan 1983; Swan & McKinnon 1984; Winder 1984).

The philosophical foundations that underpinned the recommendations from these inquiries were fundamentally based on social-democratic principles. In the context of the issues that were debated, concerns over educational inequality, and the retention of principles that saw the 'pursuit of equality' (Swan & McKinnon 1984: 6) within a system that met the educational needs of all students (McGowan et al. 1981) were specifically endorsed. Nevertheless, it is also apparent that these values and principles were being constantly tested through state-induced political pressures (such as the pressure on the McGowan Inquiry to recommend de-zoning despite this issue being outside the remit of the Terms of Reference; Junor 1982; McGowan et al. 1981). These political pressures were, in turn, driven by societal and economic concerns such as the perceived poor quality of the public education system (Marginson 1997b), rising job insecurity, and the collapse of the youth labour market (Marginson 1997a).

The debates that were raised and discussed in these inquiries, and the proposals that were put forward as solutions, provide important historical context for the

educational reforms that were to follow. As will be discussed below, in the social,

political and economic environment that was emerging by the mid-1980s, the

reforms proposed by these earlier inquiries, were readily recast under a neo-

liberal agenda from a focus on the provision of education as a public good to the

management and control of an education system that was an economic resource

(Willis 1991).

Neo-liberal reforms in NSW education – late 1980s to 2010

In NSW, in 1988, the Liberal-National Party Coalition Government, under

Premier Nick Greiner, won office after 12 years of Labor Government. With the

neo-liberal public sector reform platform firmly established under the Labor

Federal Government, the Greiner Government brought economic rationalism to

NSW. Under the Minister for Education, Dr Terry Metherell, the effects of

introducing economic rationalism in education were extensive (Laffin & Painter

1995a).

Public sector reform in NSW

Greiner won the election on a platform that promised state public sector reform

and those reforms began in earnest shortly after the election (Laffin & Painter

1995a). The Premier's vision was to restructure the public sector from the

traditional professional-bureaucratic model to one that emulated the private sector (Laffin 1995). In line with the public sector reforms that were being implemented across many OECD countries, Greiner looked to separate policy development and implementation from managerial and operational functions (Laffin 1995). The tone of the intended reforms was set by the Commission of Audit's report which highlighted the State's $46 billion deficit (Curren 1988) and drew media attention to the extent of the financial liabilities facing NSW (Laffin & Painter 1995a). The solution, it was argued, was to apply corporate managerial principles to public authority operations and in so doing, reduce the State's debt (Curren 1988; Laffin & Painter 1995a).

In the period leading up to the election, Greiner made his neo-liberal reform agenda clear. The main features of this agenda were: a) the economic reform of the State and, in particular, of the public sector, in the form of administrative rationalisation; b) corporatisation through the decentralisation of bureaucratic administrations and the introduction of a managerialist approach to public administration; c) the abolition of opportunities for political corruption through the creation of new ethical standards which would bind the government and the public sector; and, d) a major restructure of the administrative areas that were

supported, by conservative-populist appeals such as crime prevention and education (Laffin & Painter 1995a; Riordan & Weller 2000).

As with changes in the national public sector under a Federal Labor Government, Greiner's reforms brought about a significant policy shift in NSW. The program of neo-liberal reforms that were implemented by the Greiner Government brought in functional and structural changes that were in accordance with market-liberal ideals. Greiner's approach was to implement changes that had the potential to be unpopular as quickly as possible during his first term (Laffin & Painter 1995a). His aim was to reduce monolithic government departments that were managed by professionally qualified bureaucrats into small, tight, core policy departments headed by managerial experts who supervised decentralised organisations (Laffin & Painter 1995a).

There were five guiding principles behind Greiner's reforms: 1) government departments and agencies were to have clearer objectives; 2) managers were to be given the autonomy and authority for achieving performance targets; 3) performance management and monitoring were to be implemented; 4) management incentives for performance were to be introduced; and, 5) competitive neutrality was to be established between public and private service provision sectors (Laffin 1995).

Under Greiner, and after Greiner's resignation, under the Fahey led Liberal-National State Coalition Government, there were some major policy administrative areas, such as health, that were not significantly affected by economic rationalist reforms (Laffin & Painter 1995b). However, education was certainly not one of those areas. In the late 1980s, the NSW public education system was one of the largest centralised bureaucracies in the western world (MacPherson 1989; Middleton, Brennan, O'Neill & Wotten 1986). It had a paid workforce of approximately 60,000 people, of whom almost 50,000 were teachers, and an annual budget of approximately $2.75 billion (MacPherson 1989: 1). When Greiner came to power in 1988, public sector reform in the education portfolio was swift and decisive (Laffin & Painter 1995b).

The Metherell reforms

Unlike other ministers within the Greiner Government, Dr Terry Metherell, the incoming Minister for Education, had a comprehensive plan for budget reform (Laffin & Painter 1995a). These plans were based on policies he had detailed in numerous 'Fact Sheets' during his time as Shadow Minister for Education (Riordan & Weller 2000: 5) but these plans were also facilitated by reforms that were being implemented at the Federal level.

At the federal level, the Hawke Labor Government had popularised the notion of the 'clever country' (Willis 1991: 4) and in May 1988, a report – *Strengthening Australia's Schools* – from the Labor Federal Minister for Education, John Dawkins (1988), had been released outlining a clear neo-liberal reform agenda for education (Bartlett 1992). Under the federal and state reform agendas, the focus of public sector management changed from being concentrated on the delivery of public goods and services to being driven by the management of scarce resources (Willis 1991). Social goods thus became economic goods (Yeatman 1993) and the management of these goods was transformed accordingly. The main policy imperative inherent in these intended reforms was the achievement of efficiencies by increasing outputs for the same, or reduced, inputs (Knight 1990). Importantly, however, amidst debates about devolving curriculum development to the local level (McGowan et al. 1981) the Dawkins' report argued for the centralisation of a common curriculum framework (Dawkins 1988).

Metherell's reform agenda was 'breath-taking in its scope' (Riordan & Weller 2000: 5). It included a complete review of the Department of Education, the integration of children with special needs into mainstream classrooms, revision of the practice through which school curriculum was developed, legislation to

enable home schooling, and the establishment of local school councils. It also encouraged diversity amongst public schools, and sought to correct the decades of previous neglect in school maintenance (Riordan & Weller 2000) that had been brought about by persistent government funding cuts in per-capita expenditure (Marginson 1997b).

Whilst Metherell had detailed the extent of proposed educational changes in his pre-election Fact Sheets his intention to follow through on *all* of these reforms still surprised senior educationalists and bureaucrats within the Department of Education (Riordan & Weller 2000). To smooth the implementation of the intended reforms, Metherell commissioned two reviews.

The first, commissioned in June 1988, and directed by Dr Brian Scott, involved a complete management review of all aspects of the education portfolio. Scott's brief was that the final report was to include recommendations for decentralising the administration of the Department of Education, changing the structure and organisation of schools so as to increase parental and local community participation, and legislative reform proposals (B Scott 1989: iii).

The second review was commissioned in September of the same year and involved a 14 person committee chaired by the Honourable Sir John Carrick. This

review incorporated a comprehensive process of community consultation and information gathering in a bid to foster community support for reform (Riordan & Weller 2000). Included in the brief for Carrick's review were requirements to re-assess the former Labor Government's *Education and Public Instruction Act 1987* and to provide recommendations for improving the quality of education in NSW schools (New South Wales Department of School Education [NSW DSE] 1990). Given that Metherell had commissioned these reviews himself, it was not surprising that the findings in the subsequent final reports supported new Government policies that were, to a large extent, already being implemented (NSW DSE 1990).

In early 1988, a number of extensive and substantial changes were implemented in the NSW government education system. Some of the changes made to the Department's personnel policies and practices were of direct benefit to teachers. Throughout 1988 and 1989, as a result of the outgoing Labor Government's education policies, 150 additional permanent part-time teaching positions were trialled (NSW DSE 1990). In subsequent years the Greiner Government not only continued but extended this policy to 300 permanent part-time positions following the findings from a review that revealed the high levels of satisfaction these arrangements provided teaching staff (NSW DSE 1990).

In April 1988, before Metherell had even commissioned the first Scott review, he began reallocating resources. In line with the Greiner's pre-election promises, Metherell increased spending on a number of public educational programs including Aboriginal education, rural education, special education and multi-cultural education (Nation 2001). He also increased funding for technology, school maintenance and textbook allowances in government schools. In the private sector, subsidies were also increased from 20 to 25 per cent of the cost of a student in a government school (Sharpe 1992 as cited in Nation 2001: 58).

While this increased funding on special programs was welcomed, the expenditures were funded from the existing budget. Other resource re-allocations therefore had to be realised and these changes reached to the heart of the neo-liberal public sector reforms. Throughout the rest of the education portfolio budget cuts were implemented to fund these programs (Nation 2001). Specifically, in line with the policy imperative to increase efficiencies (Knight 1990) 2,300 teaching positions were eliminated and, consequently, teacher-student ratios were increased (Sharpe 1992 as cited in Nation 2001: 57). In addition, similar proportional cuts were made to the ancillary staffing at schools (Sharpe 1992 as cited in Nation 2001: 57) which meant teachers would have to do more of their own administrative tasks. Furthermore, one of the key terms of

reference for the Scott review, was to examine ways in which cost efficiencies could be implemented in the education system (B Scott 1989); thus further budget cuts were imminent once this review was completed.

Following the release of the Scott review other budget cuts were made through a major restructuring of the NSW DSE. Operational structures and administrative functions were devolved down to regions, schools, principals, and school councils resulting in the loss of 1,700 public service positions within the Department (Sharpe 1992 as cited in Nation 2001: 57). In essence, these staffing cuts meant the core functions of the Department were reduced to policy development, corporate planning and educational auditing by a small central executive (Willis 1991). The devolution of operational and administrative functions down to the school level – or school-based management as it was referred (Caldwell & Harris 2008; Smyth 1993) – and the effect this was to have on the day-to-day running of government schools, the work of teachers and school diversification will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

At the school level, school-based management was not the only policy reform that was to introduce significant changes that were aligned to quasi-market mechanisms and the introduction of institutional competition in NSW. Whilst a de-zoning policy was recommended by the McGowan report as early as 1981 the

actual implementation of de-zoning was not introduced until 1989 (Esson et al.

2002). Under departmental zoning practices, school choice was restricted to

making a decision between the limited, if any, public choices and the

'unrestricted' private school options[5]. De-zoning therefore, abolished the practice

in which parents, who chose public education, had to enrol their children in a

school within their local residential community as was designated by

departmental boundaries (McGowan et al. 1981).

In 1989, again before the findings from either of the reviews were released, the

Department abolished school boundaries for primary schools in the Sydney

metropolitan area and established procedures through which school boundaries

throughout the entire state would be abolished during 1990 (NSW DSE 1990).

This practice coincided with educational reforms that were being implemented

in other western nations. For example, in England, the *Education Reform Act 1988*

had also introduced 'open enrolments' and abolished catchment area zoning

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[5] In this context, 'unrestricted' private schooling refers to the absence of any government policies that limit access to these schools. Private schools themselves, however, are free to, and in many cases do, place significant restrictions on enrolments that can exclude students from the 'least desirable' backgrounds, thus retaining the elite and/or selectivity and/or religious affiliation of the school (Whitty 1997: 13). Restrictive mechanisms include expensive school fees and selective enrolment intakes. Selective enrolment may be based on social, economic, academic, achievement or religious factors. For example, some elite private schools interview parents and require them to provide references as to their social and/or economic standing. Other schools preferentially enroll students with records of high academic or sporting achievement. Still others restrict enrolments on the basis of religious background and practice. Amongst the most 'desirable' private schools it is common for there to be extensive waiting lists – for example in NSW Year 7 classes in some private schools in NSW can be filled with substantial enrolment deposits taken up to 8 years before the commencement of those classes (Burke 2004). Finally, the geographic location of private schools and the availability of transport for students between home and schooling can be another restrictive factor.

(Whitty 1997: 8; Whitty et al. 1998: 19). When de-zoning took effect in NSW, parents were provided with a much wider range of school options. In line with these parental options, public schools could effectively open their gates to any parent wishing to enrol their child in that school. It was this policy reform that effectively paved the way for other quasi-market mechanisms to be introduced and established a competitive system within the public education system.

Creating choice in public secondary education

The de-zoning of government schools represented a fundamental shift in the philosophical principles on which public education was based (Anderson 1994). As will be discussed in the next chapter, zoning was premised on the assumption that public education did not differ from one public school to the next (Duffield 1990). This assumption was not just challenged, but completely rejected when market-based mechanisms were introduced.

De-zoning and school-based management challenged other fundamental principles on which the education system was based (McInerney 2001). Classes in comprehensive schools were generally streamed based on the academic ability of students. Streaming effectively translated into classroom-based selectivity inside the school as students from middle-class backgrounds tended to rise to the top and take up the majority of positions in the higher achieving classes.

Combined with persistent social and economic class differentiation between schools due to the variations in geographic catchment areas (Mukherjee 1996) the comprehensive ideal of education had never really been achieved despite semblances to the contrary (Connell 2006). Nevertheless, within local geographic areas, zoning practices and centralised administration meant that any differences between schools were largely related to factors that were outside the control of the Department of Education – such as the socio-economic characteristics of the local area.

As has been discussed, up until 1989, educational choice for parents and students was predominantly limited to a decision between the public and the private systems. Throughout the 1980s, amidst parental concerns about the perceived failure of the public education system and with a real decline in the personal cost of private education the popularity of private education increased. The increase in popularity of private schooling created a spiralling effect in which the declining enrolments in the public system gained increasing momentum:

> ...the more affluent, socially powerful and politically and culturally competent middle-class families withdrew from the government system, the harder it was for other families to stay. (Marginson 1997a: 159).

As a result of the increasing popularity of private schools, public schools became a less attractive option for middle-class parents (Marginson 1997a). These

circumstances led to a decline in the quality of comprehensive schools as the more capable and motivated students moved out of the public system and into private schooling (Anderson 1994). As has been discussed, across Australia proportionate enrolments in all public schools, including both primary and secondary schools peaked in 1977 at 78.9 per cent (Marginson 1985: 10). Table 2.1 shows that in NSW in 1977 just over three quarters (76.5%) of all secondary school students were enrolled in public schools (ABS 1978)

In NSW at this time, 76.5 per cent of all secondary school students were enrolled in public schools. By 1989, however, this had declined to 69.8 per cent of all students (ABS 1990). In real terms, the rate of growth in student enrolments in public schools between 1977 and 1989 was 2.4 per cent. In contrast, private school enrolments over the same period grew by 44.9 per cent.

Table 2.1: Changes in public and private secondary school enrolments in NSW, 1977 to 1989

Year	NSW secondary school enrolments			
	public		private	
	count	%	count	%
1977	303,376	76.5	92,965	23.5
1989	310,765	69.8	134,662	30.2
percentage change 1977 - 89	2.4%		44.9%	

Source: derived from figures in ABS (1978: 15; 1990: 6).

Essentially, with the increasing popularity of private schooling, traditional comprehensive secondary schools were becoming the residual alternative

(Anderson 1992; 1994; Campbell 2005; Marginson 1997b; McCollow & Martin 1997) that catered to the 'those families unable to leave, or careless of education' (Marginson 1997a: 160). It was within this environment, in which public schools were increasingly losing enrolments to the private sector, that Metherell argued that he would stop the loss of public school students to the private sector (New South Wales Parents Council [NSW Parents Council] 1988; Sherington 1995). Metherell's intention was to improve the productivity of state schools by breaking down the uniformity of comprehensive schools through the introduction and expansion of different types of schools (New South Wales Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs [NSW MEYA] 1989). His approach, however, was not just to expand on the types of schools but to create further differentiation through a multi-faceted reform agenda. This agenda included the implementation of a range of market mechanisms that introduced and facilitated parental choice in public schooling.

The introduction of market mechanisms began with the partial de-zoning of all secondary schools in NSW from 1989 (Esson et al. 2001). Partial de-zoning meant that parents could now enrol their children in any non-selective public school outside of their designated zone if that school had a vacancy (Esson et al. 2002). Thus, de-zoning allowed a much wider group of people to take advantage of the

positional advantaged afforded to schools in wealthier suburbs. In a neo-liberal market-based education system, in which school alternatives are not equally weighted, choice is not a matter of the absolute, but rather the relative quality of education (Marginson 1997a). Prior to the introduction of choice in the public system, 'good parenting' had become associated with 'private school parenting' as middle-class parents faced peer group pressure to provide their children with the 'best' education and the 'best' opportunities for securing a social and economic advantage (Marginson 1997a: 157-8). Following the introduction of alternatives in schooling, however, 'good' parenting became about actually making some choice; by deliberately examining and weighing up the multitude of options now available and making a calculated decision with regard to the school in which you enrol your child/ren (Campbell et al. 2009).

School-based management and budget devolution under the neo-liberal managerialist principles provided another market-based mechanism that increased school diversification and facilitated parental choice (Caldwell & Spinks 1992). It also added to the changes that were happening at the school level. The managerialist principles were couched in the rhetoric of 'consumer choice' and 'community self-determination' (Yeatman 1993: 7). Under this guise of choice, however, financial inputs from parents and communities played a

much more significant role in funding public schools (Meadmore 2001). In essence therefore, devolved budgets meant that schools that were able to attract more funding from the local community were better resourced. In addition, however, the schools with greater parental and community involvement were more competitive in the new education market (Yeatman 1993) as they could offer programs and extra-curricular activities that differentiated them from other schools (Chitty 1997).

Community self-determination was, however, somewhat of a misnomer in the public secondary school system. As has been discussed, Metherell had deliberately set about to establish different types of public secondary schools across the Sydney metropolitan region and in regional cities (NSW Parents Council 1988). In this regard, it wasn't community self-determination as such that established and expanded the different types of public secondary schools available but departmental policy. Among the four different types of schools established or expanded, two of them – selective and specialist schools – operated contrary to ideals of traditional comprehensiveness (Esson et al. 2002). Unlike the comprehensives and the newly established junior and senior multi-campus colleges, the selective and specialist schools enrolled students on the basis of their performance against specified criteria.

These criteria differentiated these students from the mainstream student body.

For selective schools, the criterion remained academically-focused and was based

on the results of students who chose to sit the selective school exam at the end of

Year 6 (Esson et al. 2002). Specialist schools, on the other hand, were established

to cater to one of a variety of specific areas of student talent and/or interest

including creative and performing arts, technology, languages or sports. Student

selection into specialist schools was based on the student's performance and

ability in the particular specialisation of the school (Esson et al. 2002). This

typically involves the student taking part in auditions for creative and

performing arts schools, demonstrated sporting achievements for sports high

schools, and exam results in language schools (NSW Department of Education

and Training [NSW DET] 2011a).

Fragmenting the comprehensive system

The extent of the growth in these different types of public secondary schools is

shown, relative to the periods of Labor and Liberal State Governments, in Table

2.2 below. In the late 1980s, prior to the introduction of Metherell's reforms,

differentiation in the public secondary school system in NSW was modest. In

total, there were 370 traditional comprehensive secondary schools (ABS 1988)

and only 11 selective secondary schools; which included four agriculture

selective schools (Esson et al. 2002: 124). Between, 1988 and 1994, under a Liberal Government, the number of non-comprehensive public secondary schools[6] had increased to 83 schools (NSW MEYA 1994); representing 22 per cent of all public secondary schools. While most of this growth was accounted for by the increase in the number of specialist schools, the number of academic selective schools also doubled over this period of time.

Under the 1995-2010 Labor Government, differentiation in the public secondary school system was, evidently, still a significant policy imperative. The growth in academic selective schools continued, and by 2010, there were 16 additional selective schools (NSW DET 2011b). The nature of the differentiation, however, had shifted with regard to the other types of non-comprehensive secondary schools. Following reviews of the technology and language specialist schools a number of these schools relinquished their specialist school status (Esson et al. 2002: 124). Despite the opening of two new specialist sports schools in 1997 (NSW DSE 1998), the total number of specialist schools in 2010 had been reduced to 33 (NSW DET 2011b).

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[6] While the enrolment of students in junior and senior campuses are subject to the same enrolment principles, of partial de-zoning, as traditional comprehensive schools, the key area of interest in this thesis is how traditional comprehensive schools differed from the newly established and increasing forms of other public secondary schools. Therefore, when a dichotomous distinction is being made in this thesis between traditional comprehensive high schools and 'other' public secondary schools, junior and senior campuses are included in the public non-comprehensive group of schools.

In 1999, however, the nature and extent of differentiation within the public secondary school system was increased even further (Esson et al. 2002) as global pressure for commitments to notions of equality and comprehensive schooling were seen to obstruction national competitiveness (Brown & Tannock 2009). Along with the existing stand-alone senior colleges, the Labor Government entered into a partnership arrangement with the TAFE (Technical and Further Education) and university sectors to establish a series of collegiate schools, or multi-campus colleges, comprising junior and senior campuses (Esson et al. 2002: 147).

Since the late 1980s, there have been periods of growth and flux in the establishment and reduction of these different types of public secondary school alternatives in NSW (Esson et al. 2002). Nevertheless, the continued policy approach to instil and expand differentiation among public secondary schools has substantially fragmented the traditional comprehensive school system. The figures in Table 2.2 reflect that between 1988 and 2010, the total number of public non-comprehensive secondary schools increased by a massive 955 per cent. In contrast, over the same period of time, the total number of traditional comprehensive schools declined by 24 per cent. In 1988, 97 per cent of all public secondary schools were traditional comprehensive schools. By2010, the

proportion of all public secondary schools that were traditional comprehensive

secondary schools had fallen to 71 per cent.

Table 2.2: Growth in different types of NSW public secondary schools – 1987 to 2010

	State Government					
	Labor (1976-87) 1987		Liberal (1988-94) 1994		Labor (1995-10) 2010	
Type of public secondary school	count	%	count$^{\alpha}$	%	count$^{\pi}$	%
selective	11	3	24	6	44	11
specialist	0	-	55	14	33	8
junior/senior campus*	0	-	4	1	39	10
total public non-comprehensive	11$^{\curlyvee}$	3	83	22	116	29
traditional comprehensive$^{\mu}$	368	97	367	78	282	71
total public secondary schools	379$^{\varepsilon}$	100	450	100	398	100

Notes: * Multi-campus colleges were not established until 1999 (DET 1999). So the figures for 1994 refer to stand alone senior colleges only while the figures for 2010 includes both stand-alone senior campuses and multi-campus colleges that include junior and senior campuses.
$^{\mu}$ Derived by deducting total public non-comprehensive schools from total public secondary schools.
Sources: $^{\curlyvee}$ Esson et al. (2002: 124); $^{\varepsilon}$ ABS (1988: 8); $^{\alpha}$ NSW MEYA (1994: 13-14); $^{\pi}$NSW DET (2011b: 1).

The potential effect of these reforms on the teachers' labour market

Until the neo-liberal reforms of the late 1980s, the secondary school labour

market for teachers was segmented into public and private sectors (Helsby 1999).

The employment conditions in the public and private sector labour markets have

historically been, and continue to be, differentiated according to wages (Jefferson

& Preston 2011), hours, and entitlements (van Gellecum, Baxter & Western 2008).

The work of teachers in each of the sectors also differs by the characteristics of

the student backgrounds. In particular the family backgrounds of the students

enrolled in each of these sectors tend to be characterised by different social values and levels of motivation toward education (Anderson 1992).

Similar distinctions can be made between the social values, motivations and academic abilities of students in traditional comprehensive secondary schools and those in academic selective schools (Hughes 2002). Thus, with regard to educational labour market experiences of teachers, it could be argued that a dual labour market system for public secondary school teachers – distinguished by the characteristics of students in comprehensive versus selective schools – has existed since the advent of mass compulsory secondary education.

Before the reforms of the late 1980s, however, despite the existence of selective schools in the public secondary system, the vast majority of NSW public secondary school teachers were working in the 97 per cent of schools that were traditional comprehensive secondary schools. Any labour market distinctions that might have existed between these different types of schools, therefore, were only applicable to a very small proportion of teachers. With the increasing diversity among public secondary schools, however, any variation between different types of schools in the experiences of teachers has the potential to affect a significantly larger group of people.

With regard to these potential differences in teachers' labour market experiences in the public secondary school system, the effects will be largest in Sydney and other major metropolitan regions. In total, 91 per cent of all non-comprehensive secondary schools have been established in these regions[7]. In 2010, within these major metropolitan regions, approximately 17,700 public secondary school teachers were employed, and of these, approximately 35 per cent (or approximately 6,200 teachers) worked in non-comprehensive public secondary schools[8]. In comparison, before the neo-liberal reforms of the late 1980s, approximately 500 teachers worked in the academic selective schools in NSW[9].

Despite the potential for the increased diversification to represent a significant segmentation in the public secondary teacher labour market experiences, to date, the potential effect of this differentiation has received little attention in the policy

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[7] A list of all public secondary schools and their addresses was collated from information available at the DET NSW (2011b).

[8] There were 25,000 public secondary school teachers in NSW in 2010 (ABS 2011: 29-30). A breakdown of these figures by metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas is not available. Therefore student enrolment numbers were used to calculate the proportion of students in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas (NSW DET 2011c: 8). For the purposes of this thesis, major metropolitan regions include the four Sydney regions as well as the Hunter/Central Coast and Illawarra and South East regions. From these figures, estimates of the number of teachers were derived. In calculating these estimates the assumption of consistent teacher-student ratios has been made (i.e. with 70 per cent of public secondary students enrolled in schools in major metropolitan regions (NSW DET 2011c: 8), it has been assumed that approximately 70 per cent of secondary school teachers (or n = 17,680) work in schools in these major metropolitan regions). To calculate the percentage of teachers who work in non-comprehensive public secondary schools in major metropolitan areas, a similar approach has been used. Of the 282 comprehensive schools in NSW, it has been assumed that 70 per cent of them (n = 197) are in a major metropolitan region. Relative to the known total number of major metropolitan non-comprehensive public secondary schools this equates to approximately 65 per cent of all major metropolitan schools, and teachers within them, being traditional comprehensive high schools.

[9] In 1987, there were 24,471 public secondary school teachers in NSW (ABS 1988: 57). The formulas that were applied to the 2010 data, have been applied here to calculate the 1987 figures.

debates. Similarly, no publicly available empirical investigations have been conducted that examine whether or not teachers' work in these new types of public secondary schools differs at all from the experiences of teachers in traditional secondary comprehensive schools.

Conclusion

In the history of education the concept of a 'golden age' is a myth (Churchill, Williamson & Grady 1997: 152; Power 2006). Education systems are in a continual cycle of change (Helsby 1999) driven by often-competing political, social and economic imperatives. Educational reforms that began with the 'crisis of the welfare state' in the 1970s (Connell 1997: 2), however, have not been as extensive in Australia since mass education was introduced in the late 19th century (Knight 1990). From the 1970s, significant social and economic changes were placing considerable pressures on the education system (Duffield 1990). Perceived poor educational outcomes (Apple 2001; Marginson 1997a), increased student retention rates, increasing technological advances in the labour market, and widening diversity amongst the student population, called into question the extent to which the public education system in NSW sufficiently catered to the increasing array of student needs (Campbell & Sherington 2006).

Historically, change in education systems has been implemented through a range

of 'political and administrative devises' (Hargreaves 1994: 11). In Australia, as in

many developed nations, educational change was instigated through the

introduction of 'free' markets (Helsby 1999; Marginson 1997b). With the retention

of significant government control the quasi-markets that were established were

aimed at introducing competition between schools and at facilitating parental

choice in the schooling options created (Marginson 1997b). In the NSW

secondary public school system the key features associated with the introduction

of quasi- markets were the devolution of some decision-making processes to

local school communities (McInerney 2001), a significant expansion of the types

of schools available, and the abolition of school boundaries through de-zoning

(Esson et al. 2002).

Enrolment figures highlight the extent to which these reforms have diversified

the public secondary school system in NSW. However, the effects of these

reforms on the teachers within this system are less clear. The enrolment figures

suggest a significant diversification of the teaching labour market experiences

but this potential has yet to be explored in the literature. Nevertheless, there has

been extensive Australian and international research on the effects that neo-

liberal reforms have had on the teaching profession more broadly. In the next

chapter some of the key factors associated with extensive changes in teachers

work and working conditions are examined.

Chapter 3 – The effect of policy reform on teachers' work

The previous chapter detailed the economic, societal and political factors that have influenced the educational policy context across many western countries including Australia. As was discussed, the specific policy reforms that have been introduced into education and extended since the 1980s represent a significant shift in the focus, structure and organisation of education in NSW. The focus of this chapter will be on the effect these reforms have had on teachers' work. This chapter turns to the Australian and international literature in which the changes to teachers' work, since the neo-liberal reforms were introduced, have been examined.

In Australia and internationally, the research in this field has been extensive. The intent of this chapter is not to examine all of this research in detail but rather to explore some of the major themes that have emerged with respect to the changing nature of teachers' work in the contemporary context. In particular, this chapter focuses on key systemic and school-level factors related to teachers' experiences of work that have changed as a direct result of the policy reforms discussed in the previous chapter. While there is little specific research that focuses on the experiences of teachers in NSW secondary schools, the extant Australian and international literature highlights the nature and extent of the

changes to teachers' work that have occurred under neo-liberal reform policies.

Many of the areas of change are of particular interest to this study because of the

potential for the changes to manifest differently in the diversified secondary

school structure that has been created in NSW.

The first section of this chapter begins with the effect that systemic changes have

had on teachers' work. This section focuses on the effects of centralising and

standardising the curriculum framework, particularly as these developments

relate to issues of teacher autonomy and control. The second section of this

chapter explores the school-level factors that have influenced and altered

teachers' work. In this section, the mechanisms of school-based management and

the influence of market-based competition on teachers' work are examined more

broadly. Expanding on these themes, this section also explores the interaction of

these mechanisms with parental expectations, student mobility and principal

leadership. Each of these mechanisms and interacting influences are creating

significant time constraints for teachers and the pressure teachers are under is

increasingly manifested in work-related stress. In each of the major themes that

are explored throughout this chapter, the issue of work intensification or chronic

work overload emerges. Related to this work intensification, the ongoing debates

into whether or not teachers' work is being deskilled and proletarianised, or expanded and enlarged are discussed.

The third section of this chapter briefly examines the issue of teacher retention and how this is influenced by the changing nature of teachers' work. The final section discusses the aim of this research study and provides further rationale for focussing on the changing nature of teachers' work in NSW public secondary schools.

Systemic change - markets in education through school-based management

As was the case with broader public sector reforms, neo-liberal reforms in education were premised on organisational change management principles. In Australia, case studies have shown that, in education, as in business management, these principles included an emphasis on re-engineering planning processes and restructuring organisational arrangements (e.g. Blackmore et al. 1996). The re-engineering processes called for the introduction of market mechanisms. However, in education systems, it is also argued that there is a need to retain a high degree of state regulation to ensure the content, quality and the cost of education remains under government control (Whitty 1997). As such, rather than 'free' markets, neo-liberal reforms led to the establishment of a quasi-

market environment in western education systems (Smyth et al. 2000: 40). In the

quasi-market environment, the government retains significant control, and

remains a significant funder of the education system (Whitty 1997; Whitty et al.

1998). But empirical evidence has shown that the changes brought about by the

introduction of a quasi-market system in education in Australia have

substantially altered teachers' work (Smyth et al. 2000). At the school level, an

examination of education systems in the UK, USA and in Australian states such

as NSW demonstrates there are two fundamental changes. First, new schools are

able to enter the system and essentially set-up in competition to the existing

schools (Whitty et al. 1998). Second, to operationalise the quasi-market system,

mechanisms had to be put in place that would allow schools to differentiate

themselves from, and therefore compete with, each other.

Across many countries, it has been argued that the ability of schools to

differentiate themselves has been encouraged by the devolution of school

management from centralised bureaucratic control to the local school level (e.g.

Apple 2004; Helsby 1999; Whitty et al. 1998). The devolution agenda was

intended as a solution to the perceived inefficiencies and inflexibilities of

contemporary government (Stilwell 1994). In Australia, the devolution of school

management from the centralised bureaucracy to the local level through school-

based management (Caldwell & Harris 2008; Caldwell & Spinks 1992; Smyth 1993) aims to provide school principals with flexibility across a range of areas (McInerney 2001; Smyth 1993). The principles of school-based management are intended to provide schools, and their principals, flexibility, control and authority over a range of management practices within a centralised framework. These practices include human resource and finance management, purchasing responsibilities, and decision-making authority over the curriculum as well as approaches to teaching and learning (Caldwell & Spinks 2002). The introduction of these management principles at the local level is a key factor in facilitating the school diversification. In this regard, school-based management is intended to furnish public schools and their principals with the ability to diversify and thus to compete with the offerings of private schools (Meadmore 2001). Importantly, however, by enabling each school to develop a niche approach to education provision these practices are also intended to create differentiation between public sector schools (Meadmore 2001). One of the fundamental aims of enabling differentiation amongst public schools is to facilitate and enhance parental choice (Marginson 1997b; Whitty 1997; Whitty et al. 1998) by increasing and extending market segmentation into public sector schools (Marginson 1997b).

The introduction of school-based management, however, marked a fundamental change in the principles of school organisation (Smyth 1993; 1995). In place of a system that centrally regulated resourcing and focussed on the provision of education, school-based management has shifted the ethos of schooling to an entrepreneurial, 'competitive market-driven approach' (Smyth 1995: 172). The rhetoric around school-based management relates to increased school autonomy, the 'loosening of bureaucratic controls and the freedom to make decisions at the grassroots level' (McInerney 2001: 1). In practice, however, the reality of school-based management has been shown to increase the pressures that school staff were already facing (Lingard, Knight & Porter 1995: 84).

Essentially, it has been argued that school-based management has assisted in making education a commodity that 'must meet the needs and expectations of the consumer' (Smyth et al. 2000: 39-40). As a commodity, schools and the outputs of teachers have become products in a market place (Ball 1994; Helsby 1999). This process of marketisation places contradictory demands on teachers and principals and has been shown to create significant role conflict in both the UK (e.g. Ball 1994) and Australia (e.g. Blackmore et al. 1996). On the one hand, there is the traditional role of teacher as educator and instructor. In contrast, however, a new role has emerged as a result of the underpinning principles of

school-based management. This new role relates to having to operate within a market-based system. For teachers this has included an expansion of work to encompass a range of externally-focussed activities that promote a positive school image to the education consumer market (Ball 1994; Blackmore et al. 1996). Teachers increasingly have to devote time and attention to the development of marketing related materials and to engaging with parents and the community from a 'sales and consumer-based perspective' (Blackmore et al. 1996: 201). An extensive qualitative study in the UK highlights that for both teachers and principals, the additional tasks, associated with this role as marketer and promoter, add to the workload that is already expected of educators and instructors (e.g. Helsby 1999).

Aside from the additional tasks, however, teachers' work has also changed and been restructured as a result of the complex interplay, and contradictory pressures created, between the market mechanisms and school-based management on the one hand, and the retention of centralised control on the other (e.g. Helsby 1999). In essence, the market mechanisms and school-based management reforms represent decentralisation (Helsby 1999). However, in the UK (e.g. Helsby 1999) and in Australia (e.g. Blackmore 1998) it has been shown that these reforms are instituted in a system that still requires the retention of

centralised controls to ensure that the regulation of educational content and quality is maintained. Empirical evidence also demonstrates the extensive influence of school-based management and market reforms on parents and teachers. With school-based management the responsibility for the educational outcomes of students are effectively transferred from the broader education system, to the individual school level, and to teachers (e.g. Gewirtz 1997). In a market-based system the educational outcomes that are achieved by these self-managed schools are now increasingly important as they are a significant metric used by parents to make decisions about school options (e.g. Brown 1990; Whitty et al. 1998; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). In different ways, however, marketisation and the retention of some centralised controls, have served to reduce teacher autonomy as teachers have been increasingly constrained by performance measurement and the intensification of work (e.g. Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; McInerney 2001; Meadmore 2001; Whitty 1997; Whitty et al. 1998).

Centralised curriculum and assessment

In many countries, such as England, New Zealand (Helsby 1999; Whitty 1997) Australia, Canada, Finland, Sweden (Helsby 1999), and the United States (Apple & Jungck 1990) the main mechanism through which the content and quality of

education is regulated is through some form of centralised or nationalised curriculum standards (Apple & Jungck 1990; Helsby 1999; Whitty 1997). A centralised curriculum guarantees that educational instruction is standardised (Apple 1986; McInerney 2011; Reid 2005), expected educational outcomes are specified (Helsby & McCulloch 1996), dominant cultural ideologies and values are 'implicitly...taught' (Apple 1990: 84; Reid 2005), and efficiencies in resource allocation are delivered through economies of scale (Reid 2005). While in England the National Curriculum is highly prescriptive, in Australia, as in Canada, and New Zealand there is a 'framework' approach that defines national curriculum standards but allows 'scope for local control' (Helsby 1999: 46). In Australia, localised control is constitutionally vested in each state and territory. Nevertheless, since the late 1980s, successive Federal Government's from both sides of politics have orchestrated significant involvement in curriculum development. Various funding arrangements and 'soft' policies have induced states and territories to participate in federal reforms through the promise of resources (Harris-Hart 2010: 300-12).

For teachers, the process of centralising the curriculum has removed them from the practice of curriculum development (Helsby & McCulloch 1996). As the school curriculum is 'central to the organisation of teachers' work', the way the

curriculum is 'organised, and the social practices that surround it, have profound consequences for teachers' (Connell 1985: 87). Whereas teachers were once entrusted as professionals who were intrinsically involved in the development of the curriculum, the pedagogical decision-making capacity they once enjoyed has been marginalised in the new neo-liberal environment (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Helsby 1999). Distrust of the profession has grown and teachers have become viewed 'as low-level functionaries, in need of instruction, regulation and control' (Helsby 1999: 12).

As the public distrust of teachers has increased, the definition of teacher professionalism has come into question (Whitty et al. 1998) and there has been a fundamental shift in the public's perception of the role that teachers should play. A significant body of research has shown that the exclusion of teachers from direct involvement in curriculum development has placed significant limitations on teacher autonomy (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; McInerney 2001; Meadmore 2001; Skerret & Hargrave 2008; Whitty 1997). Teachers no longer have the academic freedom to develop lessons best suited to the student population (Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). Rather, their autonomy is now limited by prescriptive pedagogical instruction that is dictated through

centralised curriculum frameworks regarding what should be taught (e.g. Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Helsby 1999; Helsby & McCulloch 1996).

In addition to the centralised curriculum, centralised and nationalised standards for testing and assessment are used to determine the content and mechanisms through which student outcomes will be measured (Apple & Jungck 1990; Helsby 1999; Helsby & McCulloch 1996). These centralised 'curriculum packages' (Clements 1996: 76) include guidelines, policies, mandated texts and materials, and standardised tests and assessments, (e.g. Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999; McInerney 2001; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008; Smyth 2001) that have brought about significant changes to teachers' work in two fundamental ways. The first of these changes relates to the performance management of teachers and schools, while the second relates to the extent to which these centralised packages have become a mechanism through which the education market operates.

At an operational level, the standardised curriculum packages ensure that teachers are measuring student outcomes (Day, Stobart, Sammons & Kington 2006) and following the prescribed curriculum (McInerney 2001). From a management perspective, these tools can also be used to explicitly measure and compare the educational outcomes that specific teachers and/or schools are

achieving with their students (Connell 2006). As such, these metrics provide a mechanism through which governments can monitor and compare both school and teacher outputs (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006; Whitty et al. 1998). In essence, therefore, the standardised curriculum packages facilitate the performance measurement regime intended under the neo-liberal public sector reform agenda.

As has been discussed, however, these metrics also become essential to the operationalisation of a market-based education system (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). The results from these tests create the basis from which parents, as 'consumers' (Brown 1990: 74; Power & Frandji 2010: 386), can appraise the education market and make 'informed choices' (Whitty et al. 1988: 80) about school preferences (Brown 1990; Whitty et al. 1998; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). Publicised league tables, in which schools are rank ordered by aggregated student results (Apple 2004; Power & Frandji 2010), further facilitate the extent to which parents can make comparisons between schools (Day 2002).

To operate effectively in this new environment, schools and teachers have become be 'instrumental' in defining and achieving targets, and monitoring their own performance (e.g. Gewirtz 1997: 222). This performance vigilance ensures teachers' efforts are specifically directed at increasing student grades and at

improving the school's overall performance on league tables (Gewirtz 1997: 222). The negative effects of this type of vigilance on teachers' work is discussed in more detail in the following section, but evidence shows that the impact of this 'high stakes testing' on schools is significant (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006: 31). Student results on these tests are used to calculate school positions on league tables, and at the school level this necessitates the setting of performance outcome targets (Gewirtz 1997). In a market-based system, the culmination of these performance pressures has increased the accountability and responsibility of teachers (e.g. Hargreaves & Goodson 2006) as the pressures for individual schools to not just perform, but to out-perform their competitors, increases.

Both the performance management aspect afforded these curriculum packages and the extent to which the results from these 'high stakes tests' (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006: 31) are used to determine market position have constrained teaching practices (e.g. Helsby 1999), limit pedagogical innovation (e.g. Hargreaves 1988) and discourage the extent to which teachers diversify lessons to suit different students' needs (e.g. Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). The changes to teachers' work brought about by these centralised controls have intensified teachers' work and constrained their autonomy (Gewirtz 1997; McInerney 2001; Meadmore 2001).

Teacher autonomy and control

The contemporary organisation, and thus control, of teachers' work commonly features forms of deliberate labour market segmentation (Reid 2003). This segmentation includes organising teachers work by the grouping of students by age and into individual classrooms that are headed by a single teacher (Hargreaves 2004; Reid 2003). In secondary schools, teachers' work is further organised by subject specialisation and the timetabling of subject lessons (Hargreaves 1994; Reid 2003). This organisational framework facilitates the delivery of the centralised curriculum (Smyth 1995) but also specifically concentrates the work of teachers into these areas of specialisations. In the contemporary NSW secondary education system teachers' work is also organised through the differentiation of public secondary schools into selective, specialist, and traditional comprehensive schools, and junior and senior campuses.

These forms of specialisation combined with the state control over the curriculum politicise the very nature of education and the organisation of teachers' work (Riordan & Weller 2000; Smyth et al. 2000). Historically, the centralised curriculum was borne out of the neo-conservative ideals that aim to retain 'mainstream' middle-class values (Brown 1990: 73). In a seminal Australian study it has been shown that these middle-class values are inherent in

the hegemonic nature of a curriculum that is underpinned by university-based disciplines and that privileges socially and economically dominant groups (Connell 1985; Connell, Ashenden, Kessler & Dowsett 1982).

The political and historical context of teaching, however, provides an important motivation for controlling teachers' work (Smyth et al. 2000). The political nature of education, and consequently the politics of teaching, means that there are a number of significant and powerful groups that have a vested interest in influencing and/or determining curriculum content, and in defining the prescribed outcomes that are achieved by the education system (Riordan & Weller 2000; Smyth et al. 2000). As was discussed in the previous chapter, universities (Hughes 2002; NSW Teachers Federation 1982) and the business sector (Marginson 1997a) are two such powerful and influential groups; both of whom place significant pressure on the state to ensure that the outcomes they desire are achieved (Reid 2003). Often, however, the demands of these key stakeholders are in direct competition with each other and so the state has adopted the role, through the centralised curriculum, of defining the content and outcomes to be achieved (Reid 2003). To ensure that the curriculum is delivered along the prescribed guidelines and policies, the state also has to ensure that teachers' work is organised and controlled in a manner that meets those

objectives (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999; McInerney 2001; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008; Reid 2003; Smyth 2001; Smyth et al. 2000).

A large longitudinal ethnographic study of schools in the USA and Canada illustrates how teachers have responded differently to the increased accountability and pressure that has been generated by the external scrutiny from parents and government over the curriculum implementation and educational outcomes being achieved (e.g. Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). Some new and inexperienced teachers have welcomed a prescriptive approach to the curriculum framework because it increases their confidence that the materials they are teaching will achieve the outcomes that are desired by the state. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, have used their professional judgement and discretion to modify their work and develop units of study that are more specifically tailored to meet the interests and needs of students (e.g. Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). Prescribed learning outcomes can also encourage teachers to strategically plan lessons and actively engage students, parents and colleagues in the planning process associated with developing lessons and determining educational outcome (Hargreaves 1994). Time-poor teachers, who find their lesson preparation time being constantly squeezed by other demands, have used

curriculum packages to their own advantage by relying on the prescribed materials to free up time to spend on other tasks (e.g. Apple & Jungck 1990). It has also been argued that when used progressively, the centralised curriculum packages can lead to enhanced quality and equitability of classroom lessons and an improvement in teaching practices (Sloan 2006).

Nevertheless, there are also potentially negative effects of standardised curriculum packages. For some teachers market pressures have compelled them to narrow their focus of instruction and concentrate, predominantly or solely, on the outcomes that will be measured in the standardised examination and assessment tools (e.g. Helsby 1999). Teachers, who feel the pressures of external scrutiny, can be negatively influenced by factors that are both internal and external to the individual (Gewirtz 1997). The extent to which student outcomes are regarded as a reflection on the individual teacher's own competence and quality of instruction has also pressured teachers to concentrate on the measureable aspects of the curriculum (e.g. Day et al. 2006; Gewirtz 1997). Exam directed instruction can increase the likelihood of higher student results. Thus for teachers who are concerned that their own performance is increasingly being evaluated by the results that are achieved by their students (Hargreaves 1994), a directed approach to instruction casts them in a more favourable light. In

addition, however, external influences, such as students and parents who are acutely aware of the importance of examination results and academic achievement, can pressure teachers to limit lessons to only include content that will be formally examined (Hargreaves 1988).

In essence, standardised curriculum packages and the testing that is incorporated into them represent economic and management oriented practices that intensify teachers' work (Apple 1986; Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran 2006). Research shows that centralised curriculum packages that include defined regulations and procedures that direct teachers' work (e.g. Ballet et al. 2006) have resulted in a proliferation of associated reporting and administrative tasks (e.g. Bartlett 2004; Burchielli 2006). These additional managerially defined and imposed tasks, and the procedures that are associated with them, have not only increased teachers' working hours (e.g. Apple & Jungck 1990) and expanded workloads (e.g. Burchielli 2006), but have constrained teacher autonomy and control by dictating what and how materials will be taught (e.g. Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999; McInerney 2001; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008; Smyth 2001).

The effect of the loss of autonomy and control, and the extent to which these management practices have deskilled or proletarianised teachers' work and

compromised their professional identity, has been widely debated (Hargreaves 1994; Reid 2003; Smyth et al. 2000). These debates are not surprising, however, given the different ways in which both experienced and inexperienced teachers have responded to the competing challenges created by market pressures, tightened managerial controls, and performance management practices (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990).

It has been argued that the provision of externally imposed prescriptive texts, materials and procedures that specify how the curriculum should be delivered, has fragmented teachers work (e.g. Smyth 2001). Further, this fragmentation has led to a deskilling and the proletarianisation of teachers' work (e.g. Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Harris 1990). Proponents of the deskilling argument assert that the loss of autonomy and control over the curriculum has meant that the skills associated with conceptualising and planning both educational content and the associated assessment strategies have atrophied (e.g. Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990).

For other theorists, a centralised curriculum does not automatically lead to a reduction in the autonomy of teachers, as not all countries with a centralised curriculum impose a highly prescriptive approach (e.g. Helsby 1999). When the approach to the curriculum and/or assessment process is highly prescriptive

however, the discretion in teachers' classroom work is constrained; resulting in a sense of deprofessionalisation (e.g. Helsby 1999). Still other theorists have argued that with the new market-based education system, and with significant changes in the demographic profile of students as a result of policies aimed at increasing retention rates, teachers' work is more complex than ever before (e.g. Bartlett 2004; Hargreaves 1994; Helsby 1999; Smyth et al. 2000). Marketisation and school-based management have extended the role of teachers and required them to reskill in a broader range of competencies (e.g. Hargreaves 1994; Helsby 1999; Smyth et al. 2000).

As control is one of the core concepts of labour process theory it is not surprising that many theorists have used and developed the ideas of Braverman (1974) to examine changes in teachers' work. For many of these theorists, the existence of control mechanisms have led them to assume that teachers' are being exploited and that their work is being deskilled and intensified (Smyth et al. 2000: 52). However, while there are mechanisms that control teachers' work – not least of which is the curriculum – these controls do not necessarily mean that teachers' work has been proletarianised (Reid 2003; Smyth et al. 2000). Indeed, the focus on the mechanisms by which teachers' work is controlled, and the effect of this control on their work, has detracted from a true understanding of what is

happening to teachers' work (Reid 2003). Rather than trying to understand how teachers' work is controlled it is more important to understand why teachers' work is being controlled. This approach then locates any analysis of teachers' work in a historical and political context and within the existing 'structures and practices of education systems' (Reid 2003: 571).

Reid's approach to applying labour process theory is in accord with that of Thompson and Smith (2001; 2009a; 2009b) who argue that the value of labour process theory lies in the ability to use the theory's core conceptual tools to contextualize the changing nature of work. The importance of this premise is that it expands the empirical site of the analysis of work beyond the immediate workplace and considers how control issues, skill formation, divisions of labour, and worker agency or responses to control are influenced by the broader political economy (Thompson & Smith 2009b).

For all workers, there are control mechanisms that are implemented by management to ensure that the work that is required is actually completed and that the costs of production are reduced (Thompson & Smith 2001; 2009a; 2009b). For the state, the main costs associated with the provision of education are labour costs. Thus, for the state to achieve improved efficiencies, labour costs need to be reduced (Reid 2003; Smyth et al. 2000). In education, fiscal efficiencies can be

achieved by either devaluing teachers work or by increasing the intensity of the work (Reid 2003; Smyth et al. 2000). Labour costs associated with the teaching workforce in Britain have, for example, been reduced through the introduction of para-professionals who support a smaller number of qualified teachers (Stevenson 2007). In essence, this approach devalues and deskills teachers' work (Reid 2003). Labour costs can also, however, be reduced by reorganising teachers' work and asking them to increase their efforts by doing more with fewer resources, such as increasing class sizes or expanding contact time (Smyth et al. 2000).

Such a reorganisation of teachers' work is facilitated by the centralised curriculum and school-based management. The centralisation of the curriculum directs teachers' time away from having to develop lesson content and materials to merely having to execute pre-defined competencies and objectives (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Ballet et al. 2006). School-based management, on the other hand, enables school principal to reorganise and direct this 'freed-up' teacher time into other efforts.

School-level change – teachers' work and school-based management

While school-based management represented a systemic change in the way in which resource allocation was managed and the level at which decisions could be made (McInerney 2001; Smyth 1993; 1995), the main intention of this approach was to bring about change at the local level (Caldwell & Spinks 1992).

As has been discussed, school-based management was intended to reduce the overall magnitude of the education bill by transferring tasks and responsibilities to the school level (Smyth 1995). Under the neo-liberal reform agenda this devolution agenda aimed to introduce competition that would improve overall efficiencies across government agencies (Stillwell 1994). In the education system this translated into an intention to improve the overall performance of the system through three specific mechanisms. These mechanisms are briefly described here but are discussed in more detail in the following sections. First, competition would eventually weed out any underperformers and make the system more cost effective through better resource allocation (Chubb & Moe 1992; Stilwell 1994). Second, improved allocation of resources would reduce overall education costs; particularly with regard to labour costs (Reid 2003). Finally, the increased efficiency in an education system that has only retained high performing teachers and schools, would, it was argued, translate into the more effective and efficient

development of the future labour power of students (Apple 2001; Reid 2003). Overall, the outcomes achieved by the introduction of these mechanisms would increase the nation's prospective productive capacity (Stilwell 1994).

Despite stated intentions, however, school-based management gave schools, through their principals, some budgetary and management responsibilities (McInerney 2001; Smyth 1993; 1995). More importantly, however, school-based management was also been a deliberate strategy to reduce costs by providing insufficient funds with which to properly resource classrooms and activities (Helsby 1999). This cost-saving strategy meant that schools and their staff were forced into developing entrepreneurial behaviours that would increase sources of funds at the local level (Chitty 1997). In and of themselves, these funding shortfalls created differences between schools. Schools have increasingly had to ask parents and business sponsors for funding for basic materials as well as additional resources for non-essential activities that enhance the curriculum (Chitty 1997). Responsibility for developing and managing financially related activities now rests firmly with principals and teachers in their new roles as marketers and promoters of the school (e.g. Helsby 1999). These new demands and the associated tasks have been shown to significantly intensify the work of teachers (e.g. Hargreaves 1994; Robertson 1996; Smyth et al. 2000).

In the new market-driven education system the role of the principal has fundamentally changed from 'educational and instructional leadership' (Ball 1999: 6) to budget and resource management (Apple 2004; Ball 1999). The work of principals has expanded to include tasks related to resourcing, budgeting, marketing and external public relations (e.g. Helsby 1999). Importantly, however, with school-based management, principals have to increasingly report on the school's performance across the prescribed curriculum (e.g. Whitty et al. 1998). These pressures create competition between principals who work in the same local area (e.g. Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999). Whereas principals might once have shared knowledge and information more freely with their colleagues at other schools, with school-based management, this has changed (e.g. Helsby 1999). Competition has introduced a level of reluctance, amongst principals, to share any materials, resources, or practices that might provide a commercial advantage to the school's relative position within the local education system (e.g. Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999). But the market-driven system not only changed the work of principals, it also significantly expanded the role of teachers and had a profound effect on the intensity of their work (e.g. Helsby 1999).

Empirical studies have shown that for teachers, the role expansion and work intensification were predominantly related to the centralised curriculum and

standardised testing (e.g. Helsby 1999). Although the curriculum was developed

externally, teachers still had to translate the pre-packaged materials into specific

classroom lessons and they had to develop and maintain extremely detailed

records of student achievements (e.g. Apple 1986; Helsby 1999). In combination,

the requirements of the centralised curriculum and the assessment framework

that accompanies it have led to a proliferation of administrative and technical

tasks associated with lesson planning, student assessment and recording student

achievements (e.g. Apple 1986). The conduct of these tasks has significantly

extended the working hours of teachers beyond the standard week (e.g.

International Labour Organisation [ILO] 1991). These tasks, however, are often

contradictory and create tensions between the different tasks that are now

characteristic of teachers' work (e.g. Hargreaves & Goodson 2006). On the one

hand, teachers are required to develop detailed individual portfolios of each

student's progress, but they also have to teach to standardised tests. Similarly,

interdisciplinary initiatives are encouraged to provide a market-edge in the

competition stakes, but the curriculum dictates subject-specific standards (e.g.

Hargreaves & Goodson 2006).

The expanding role and contradictory demands of teachers' work has led to

chronic work overload (e.g. Hargreaves 1994) that is characteristic of high levels

of work intensification (e.g. Gewirtz 1997; McInerney 2001; Meadmore 2001). But other factors related to budgetary constraints and school-based efforts to economise on resources have also eroded teachers' time (e.g. Robertson 1996). The school-based management system coerces principals into implementing flexibility practices that reduce school expenses. The simplest of these flexibility practices has been an increase in class sizes and it has not been uncommon for teachers to be asked to take up to 40 students in a single class (e.g. Larson 1980: 167). Other practices include asking teachers to work outside their subject area of expertise so as to increase the subjects that can be offered without changing the staffing profile of the school (e.g. Mander 2006).

There are other factors, however, that also result in teachers taking on additional tasks and activities. Empirical evidence has also demonstrated that for many teachers, a strong sense of professionalism has induced them to take on additional tasks and activities both within and outside of school hours (e.g. Hargreaves 1994; Helsby 1999; Robertson 1996). In this regard, teacher commitment and an 'almost merciless enthusiasm' for their professional identify can drive teachers to fulfil the ever increasing expectations and expansions of their role (e.g. Hargreaves 1994: 126).

The changes in the role of teachers have been argued to reflect a 'qualitatively different regime of control in schools' (Gewirtz 1997: 222). Trying to develop and maintain a competitive edge through the achievement of performance goals and objectives in an environment that is characterised by budget constraints presents a clear challenge for teachers and principals (Blackmore et al. 1996; Robertson 1996). Under these conditions, role conflict among teachers is high as they become torn between meeting the 'educational, social and emotional needs of students' and investing time and effort into managing the public image of the school (Blackmore et al. 1996: 201). These conflicting and competing tensions for teachers however, are reinforced by public demand that associates the choice that is offered, as a result of these conflicting roles, with ideals of 'democracy, freedom...and morality' (Apple 2001: 10).

Market-based reforms at the school level

Aside from the savings in overall education expenditure that school-based management was intended to introduce, competition between schools was also intended to reap fiscal benefits. In this regard, it was argued that the state would financially benefit as the competitive forces of supply and demand (Stilwell 1994) drove out underperforming schools (Apple 2004; Chubb & Moe 1992; Whitty 1997). The policy intention was that poorly performing schools would lose

students as parents became increasingly dissatisfied with the outcomes these schools were achieving (Brown 1990; Wolfe 2003). As student enrolments declined, per-capita funding models would ensure that these schools received less state funding (Gewirtz 1997). With reduced funding, these schools would ultimately be forced to shut down (Brown 1990). The resources that had been ineffectively used by these schools would then be diverted to schools that could retain student numbers through better performance. Ultimately, it was argued, these measures would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system (Brown 1990; Gewirtz 1997).

While market reforms were introduced to ensure that underperforming schools were driven out of the system, the extent to which these claims would be realised has been questioned (e.g. Apple 2004; Chubb & Moe 1992; Whitty 1997). Nevertheless, there is little doubt that market reforms have placed more pressure on teachers (Helsby 1999).

Parental expectation and influence

The public education system that has emerged from these neo-liberal reforms bares much closer resemblance to the private education system in which there is a high degree of parental choice and competition (Brown 1990). In the UK, prior to de-zoning through the abolition of departmentally defined catchment areas or

zones, it has been argued that schools had a 'captive market' of students (e.g.

Edwards & Whitty 1992: 102). With this captive market, schools were relatively

free from 'having to demonstrate either quality or distinctiveness' in the

activities and offerings they provided students (Edwards & Whitty 1992: 102).

This freedom based on a social-democratic vision of education in which there

was an underlying premise that all comprehensive schools provided the *same*

education (Duffield 1990).

Within this social-democratic approach, differences in educational outcomes

were attributed to individual merit that was related to ability, aptitude, and

effort (Brown 1990). With the advent of the education market and the abolition of

school zones however, all parents – theoretically – have greater choice in the

schooling of their children (Ball et al. 1994). The theory, however, is not always

readily translatable into practice. Researchers in both the UK and Australia have

argued that the education market-place requires a degree of cultural, social and

economic capital to navigate the system, and the extent to which parents have

the capacity to explore and exploit the options that are available differs widely

from parent to parent (e.g. Ball et al. 1994; Marginson 1997a; Power 1992).

Middle-class parents are much more likely to have the time and resources to

navigate the education market place (Apple 2004; Marginson 1997a; 1997b;

Power 1992; Power, Edwards, Whitty & Wigfall 2003) and they are more likely to be fearful of not making the right choice (Campbell et al. 2009). The market-based education system, therefore, works to the advantage of middle-class parents.

The pressure on these middle-class parents to make the 'right' choice has increased with the introduction of the quasi-market system (Campbell et al. 2009). In this system, parents must accept a level of responsibility for the educational outcomes of their children (Brown 1990) because they now play a fundamental role in choosing the education their child/ren will receive. As education has increasingly become an essential labour market credential, decision making about schooling has gained even greater importance (Campbell 2010; Livingstone 1988; Marginson 1997b). By participating in the decision making process around schooling parents are not just choosing an education, but are determining the skills and knowledge that will contribute to the future productive capacity of potential workers (Livingstone 1988; Reid 2003).

It is therefore, increasingly incumbent on 'responsible' parents to make a 'good' choice (Campbell et al. 2009: 4) and, as has been discussed, there is ever increasing demand on schools to capture, collate, disseminate and market the information from which parents can make such a choice. Within this system,

however, the role of parents has also shifted. In the new education market place, parents, as consumers (Brown 1990; Power & Frandji 2010), influence the work of teachers and principals in a variety of ways (Helsby 1999).

Teachers' work is increasingly extending beyond the classroom (Hargreaves 1994) as the list of tasks associated with attracting, retaining and appeasing motivated parents grows (Gewirtz 1997). At the local level, UK studies have shown that teachers have to take on responsibilities for marketing the school image and for the development of promotional materials (e.g. Ball 1999; Helsby 1999). These materials can include the creation of formal publications, direction and involvement in school events (e.g. Ball 1999). In an Australian study, the marketing related responsibilities have translated into teachers having to be involved in and advertising and public relations campaigns that try to attract parents and, thereby, maximise a school's enrolments (Campbell 2010).

With regard to retaining and appeasing parents however, there are other pressures. In Australia, studies have shown that parents are increasingly aware of the extent to which education qualifications and achievements have become a credential in the labour market and a pre-requisite for further study (Brown 1990; Campbell 2010; Junor 1991; Marginson 1997b). As such, parents are actively engaging teachers to demand more individualised attention is paid to their

child's needs (e.g. Blackmore & Hutchison 2010; Campbell 2010; Campbell et al. 2009). In this regard, middle-class parents have become increasingly instrumental in approaching their child's education (Brown 1990). This instrumentality has resulted in parents exercising a range of consumer-related behaviours that sees the choice of school as an 'investment in education' (e.g. Brown 1990: 70).

Whereas teacher obligations to meet with parents used to be restricted to perfunctory parent-teacher nights, parent-teacher interactions now extend to include much more frequent and personalised consultations and the provision of more in-depth information on report cards (e.g. Hargreaves 1994). Since the introduction of choice, parents are also now much more likely to be critical of teachers and less trusting in their relationships with teachers (Troman 2000). Similarly, parents are far more likely to feel they have to intervene in their child's education if the desired outcomes are not being achieved (Campbell 2010). If parents feel their concerns and demands are not being adequately met, as market-based consumers, they can withdraw support altogether and change schools. With per-capita funding this places significant pressure on schools to meet parental demands. Cumulatively, these factors make teachers' direct accountability to parents greater than ever before (Troman 2000).

In describing these new emerging relationships between teachers and parents, Brown (1990: 66) argues that notions of 'parentocracy' now dominate the educational agenda. In place of meritocracy, parentocracy refers to the inequalities that now arise in an education system in which a child's education is 'increasingly dependent upon the parent's capacity to choose between schools, rather than on the pupils' '*ability* and *efforts*' (Brown 1990: 66, original emphasis). Ultimately, however, parental satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one school over another is manifested in student mobility (Vickers 2004). Mobility has been shown to be significantly related to the cultural, social and economic capital of parents and, therefore, concentrated in certain types of students (Adler 1997; Wolfe 2003).

Student mobility and changing student characteristics

Throughout the 1980s, significant social and economic changes in many western nations brought about a fundamental shift in the characteristics of the student body in secondary schools (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006). Student retention rates into the senior years of secondary school were deliberately increased through policy reforms (Marginson 1997a). As a result of these reforms there has been a significant increase in the number of less-academically able students remaining at school into the senior years (Marginson 1997a). In Australia, by 1992, retention

to Year 12 had reached 77 per cent – more than double the retention rate seen in 1982 – and retention to Year 10 was universal (e.g. Marginson 1997a: 182-4). Significant policy changes aimed at reversing discriminatory practices and increasing diversity in schools have also meant an increased number of special needs students have been enrolled in mainstream education systems (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006). But as the academic capability of students has changed, teachers, and particularly new and inexperienced teachers, have struggled to adapt and maintain the relevance of the standardised curriculum (e.g. Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008).

As was discussed in the previous chapter, in Australia the changing composition of the student body in public schools, was further influenced by Federal Government funding which essentially subsidised private education (Bessant & Spaull 1976; Campbell & Sherington 2006; Junor 1991; Marginson 1997a). These subsidies made private education more affordable so the number of parents choosing private education for their children increased (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Marginson 1997a). The subsequent decline in the proportion of students in public sector education (Campbell et al. 2009; Marginson 1997a) became even more acute at the secondary school level as parents were more likely to publicly

school their children during primary school but move them into private

education at the commencement of secondary school (Anderson 1994).

The per-capita funding model that was implemented with school-based

management (Gewirtz 1997; Whitty 1997) made the attraction and retention of

student numbers vital to maintaining budget (Smyth 1995). In local areas where

the supply of places exceeds demand, this model creates heightened competition

for students (Marginson 1997a). In all schools, but in particular in those with low

demand that are under-subscribed, the activities that teachers and principals

focus on to attract and retain students must differentiate their school from its

competitors (Gewirtz 1997). Extra-curricular activities have become a particular

focus of differentiation and a significant additional responsibility of teachers

(Gewirtz 1997). The range of potential extra-curricular activities that teachers

may have to develop or provide include additional subject-related activities such

as excursions or extra classes in mathematics, ICT (information, communication

and technology) as well as additional non-subject related activities such as the

organisation and supervision of sporting games, debating competitions, drama

performances and chess clubs. Increasingly, these non-subject related extra-

curricular activities are extending beyond the school to include adventure type

activities and activities related to civic involvement (Power, Taylor, Rees & Jones 2009).

While these activities can significantly affect the workload of teachers (ILO 1991) they also alter the competitive advantage that schools can attain in the education market-place. Importantly, however, school-based management led to under-funding at the local school level (Helsby 1999). The extent to which schools can offer these kinds of extra-curricular activities, therefore, is limited by the capacity of parents within the school to fund their child/ren's involvement (Chitty 1997). This suggests that for schools with wealthier parents who make greater financial contributions there is greater pressure on teachers and schools to offer such extra-curricular expansion.

In Australia and England, another means for extending the curriculum offerings has been developed through the inclusion and expansion of the vocational education and training (VET) system in secondary schools (Helsby 1999; Polesel 2008). These programs are particularly relevant in schools that have less-academically inclined students or disadvantaged students (Helsby 1999; Teese & Polesel 2003; Polesel & Keating 2011). In Australia, the Vocational Education and Training in Secondary Schools (VETiS) program has grown rapidly from the mid-1990s (Dalton & Smith 2004). Recent enrolment estimates indicate that

approximately half of all post-compulsory secondary school students are involved in some form of vocational study (MCEETYA 2004b). Not surprisingly, given the extent of these programs, this has brought significant changes to the work of teachers who are involved with these programs (Dalton & Smith 2004).

For the teachers involved in delivering VET programs their pedagogical approach has had to shift significantly from traditional approaches to teaching and assessing students. The framework for these programs sits outside of the traditional academic curriculum and, is instead, based on industry-focussed training packages that are associated with the adult learning principles of competency-based instruction and assessment (Dalton & Smith 2004). To teach these programs, teachers are required to complete additional qualifications (MCEETYA 2004b; Spark 1999). But the actual structure of these programs is also foreign to the traditional approach to school-based teaching in which the focus is on a single teacher working, in essence, in isolation from other professionals. In the VET program, teachers are required to work in partnership with a wide range of external stakeholders including training providers, business and industry partners and community groups (MCEETYA 2004b).

The challenge for schools and teachers is that while all of these additional activities can greatly enhance the differentiation of a school from its competitors,

the activities may actually have little effect on the extent to which they contribute to attracting and retaining students (Campbell et al. 2009). Research has shown that a range of complex factors contribute to school choice and student mobility (Adler 1997; Campbell et al. 2009; Campbell 2010; Vickers 2004). In general parents are likely to prefer a school that is proximate to either the home or parental work. However, the disparities between the various types of schools that are available have increased the willingness of parents to make their children travel significant distances for the better schools (Campbell at al. 2009). In a recent study conducted in western Sydney, the effect of parental choices and student mobility has been shown to have a significant effect on the student composition of local schools and on the desirability of those schools (Vickers 2004). Parents have even resorted to corrupt behaviours and 'aggressive use of influential contacts' to secure places in highly sought after schools (Campbell 2010: 305).

Once students are enrolled in schools, however, issues such as exam results, retention rates into senior years and parental concerns about social problems are related to student mobility between schools, particularly at the secondary school level (Adler 1997). Schools struggle with enrolments if they are seen to have poor peer groups that have reputations for disruptive or delinquent behaviour or if

they have run-down premises and inadequate resources (Campbell et al. 2009).

Parents' perceptions of the school and of the behaviour and preferences of other parents are a crucial factor in determining the popularity of a school. Parents opt out of schools if they think other parents are doing so and once a school begins to lose students it becomes extremely difficult to stop the outflow of students and reverse any negative perceptions held by parents (Adler 1997; Wolfe 2003). For the teachers who work in schools that are losing students, UK studies have shown that the per-student funding model means that they struggle with insufficient resources, including textbooks and other essential equipment (e.g. Gewirtz 1997; Whitty 1997). While in Australia it has been argued that the interaction between teachers and parents, and the extent to which teachers are seen to be meeting the demands of parents and students, is therefore critical to the ongoing financial viability of a school (Smyth 1995).

In popular schools, where there is high demand for available student places there are different market-related pressures. To maintain a competitive edge, popular schools need to be quite discriminating with regard to student enrolments. Many popular schools have been able to place a greater focus on enrolling students who are less burdensome from a resourcing perspective and who enhance the reputation of the school through higher academic achievement (Edwards &

Whitty 1992; Gewirtz 1997). In the quasi-market environment the freedom that was once the sole privilege of private schools – to choose the students they would enrol – is now being enjoyed by those public schools that are in high demand. High demand, however, can come at a cost with many popular schools taking on additional students because of the funding incentives; leaving teachers then having to manage overcrowding (e.g. Gewirtz 1997).

These high-demand public schools are becoming much more adept at marketing to specific target audiences and at excluding undesirable students (Campbell et al. 2009; Vickers 2004). In this regard, it has been argued that 'cream-skimming' of the most desirable students has become a major issue in public education (e.g. Whitty 1997: 14). In the most extreme empirical examples from the UK, schools have been shown to profiled students and identified the student characteristics that are most likely to lead to success and those that are likely to be resource intensive (e.g. Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe 1995). For the discerning school that has the capacity to discriminate enrolments, Asian female students are the most desirable students while special-needs and disadvantaged students are the least desirable (e.g. Gewirtz et al. 1995).

These profiling practices have the potential to lead to a lack of diversity in the student body in particular schools. In these instances, rather than standardising

and improving educational quality through market forces, school choice and the emerging ability for schools to adopt selective practices with regard to student enrolments reinforces the traditional educational hierarchies that are associated with differences in cultural and ethnic origin and socio-economic background (Campbell et al. 2009; Edwards & Whitty 1992). Schools that engage in cream-skimming by relying on stereotyped characteristics to select students pose the greatest threat to equality in the education quasi-market place (Le Grand & Bartlett 1993). These practices lead to greater social segregation of students and widening educational inequalities in terms of student outcomes (Gewirtz 2000). The effect of discriminatory selection practices of the most able students is that some schools must then become the 'safety net' for the undesirable students (Campbell 2010: 288).

Student behavioural problems

Public perceptions about particular schools are also significantly influenced by the popular media. Media portrayals of some schools, particularly some secondary schools, as dangerous places can be particularly damaging (Potts 2006). In Australia, teachers are prescribed a duty of care to ensure that students are protected from dangerous situations, including protection from student-to-student violence (Potts 2006) and from bullying and harassment (Hopkins 2000).

Social and economic changes, however, have not just led to changes in the nature of the student body due to the increased retention rates of less academically able students. Societal and economic changes related to increased unemployment, widening inequality, family breakdown and family dysfunction has led to an increase in serious behavioural problems among school students (Levin & Riffel 2000).

An Australian study of more than 500 secondary school teachers has shown that among these serious behavioural problems has been a rise in student related violence (e.g. Punch & Tuettemann 1990). The increase in extent to which teachers are being exposed to incidents of violence and abuse from students (Punch & Tuettemann 1990) has significantly changed the role that teachers must play with regard to the care and welfare of students (Levin & Riffel 2000). Not surprisingly stress reactions to this violence are common among both teachers (e.g. Robertson 1996) and students (e.g. Levin & Riffel 2000).

However, the behavioural problems that are cited as being the most problematic by the majority of teachers are far less threatening. In both the UK (e.g. Houghton, Wheldall & Merrett 1988) and Australia (e.g. Little 2005), studies have shown that more teachers report that the behavioural problems that are associated with maintaining order and control in the classroom are the most

disruptive. It is these, much more frequently-occurring behavioural problems that are more likely to disrupt work-flow and interrupt the conduct of lessons (e.g. Houghton et al. 1988; Little 2005).

Societal changes have also led to the introduction of other additional administrative tasks for teachers. Over and above the administrative duties related to the centralised curriculum and standardised performance measures, is the burgeoning paperwork that is associated with the constant changes to legislative and regulatory statutory provisions (Stewart & Knott 2002). In Australia, workplace health and safety, the associated prescribed duty of care, anti-discrimination legislation and the Freedom of Information Act, all consume additional time as teachers develop and implement appropriate procedures at the school level (Stewart & Knott 2002).

Time constraints and stress

One of the most significant effects of all of these changes to the characteristics of the student population and of the market-based neo-liberal reforms has been the extent to which teachers are increasingly squeezed by time constraints (Hargreaves 1994; Kyriacou 2001). Teachers are increasingly reporting that they do not have the time to devote sufficient effort and energy to appropriately plan

and complete the myriad teaching and ancillary tasks now required (e.g. Hargreaves 1994).

Chronic work overload, and the effects it has on the health and wellbeing of teachers, has long been a concern in the teaching profession (Kyriacou 2001) but the restructuring of education systems has increased the frustration, conflict and disillusionment felt by many teachers (e.g. Nias 1996). The intensification of work that has occurred with the neo-liberal reforms has altered relationships between teachers and parents, school authorities and their colleagues, which has negatively influenced teachers' emotional experience of work (Nias 1996). These changing relationships have been attributed to the lack of public trust in teachers that emerged when education was being blamed for the perceived decline in educational standards and the poor economic performance of countries during the 1970s and 1980s (Troman 2000). Further, it has been argued that this distrust is related to the undervaluing of the teaching profession (Smithers & Robinson 2002) and to the increased accountability measures and prevalence of performance monitoring against standardised outcomes that now takes place in education (Troman 2000).

Principals and leadership at the local level

The numerous factors that are contributing to the chronic work intensification of teachers and the multi-faceted manner in which teachers must respond to these pressures has heightened the importance of the skills and expertise of school principals (Glasman & Heck 1992). Principals play a crucial leadership role in positively influencing staff behaviour and, consequently, student behaviour (Astor, Benbenishty & Estrada 2009). Detailed case studies have shown that successful leadership from the principal can instil a positive and supportive school climate that has been shown to be effective in significantly reducing student violence (e.g. Astor et al. 2009) and in improving the educational outcomes achieved by students (e.g. Hargreaves 2009). The role of the principal, therefore, is particularly important in ameliorating the stressful aspects of teachers' work and in ensuring teachers work effectively (e.g. Russell, Altmaier and Van Velzen 1987; Troman 2000) and in retaining teaching staff (e.g. Borman & Dowling 2008).

Given all of these responsibilities, principals must have extensive people-management skills to be able to develop and lead a team which demonstrates support for the 'ethos of their particular school community' (Meadmore 2001: 118). While leadership skills that relate to education and instruction have always

been essential in defining the 'culture, organisation and ethos' of schools, the

relative autonomy of principals that was a feature of the education system prior

to the 1980s has changed (Grace 2000: 232). In the competitive quasi-market

based education system however, the skills and experience of the principal are

also critical for developing and sustaining high performance in schools

(Hargreaves 2009). In this new education environment, the state has changed its

expectations of principals (Ball 1994). Prior to these reforms the role of the

principal was generally regarded as that of middle-management. In the new

environment of school-based management and market-based competition this

role has now been redefined and principals are expected to be 'key actors' in

driving the educational reform process (Ball 1994: 59). The dominance of a

management ethos and of market-based competition means that principals now

require a range of new skills including:

> ...expert attention to budget control and forecasting...public relations
> and market research...measurement of performance indicators and
> quality control and...human resource management (Grace 2000: 234).

The principal's new role is now more akin to that of a 'chief executive officer'

who is responsible and accountable to a management board (Glasman & Heck

1992: 14). In this new role, principals have much greater responsibilities for

school improvement plans and for managing the school's budget and staff

accordingly (Glasman & Heck 1992; Helsby 1999).

Despite the need for principals to have high-level leadership and management skills, the training and professional development for principals is often either insufficient (Day and Bakioglu 1996) or ineffective and irrelevant (G Scott 2003). Systematic approaches by education departments to leadership development and succession planning are needed to maintain momentum and focus in high-performing schools and to turn around schools that are struggling (Hargreaves 2009). But such systematic approaches are rarely undertaken and succession planning is generally poorly organised and managed (Hargreaves 2009).

Teacher reactions to change

The issue of teacher shortages has been a major policy concern for decades (Hanushek et al. 2004). With aging teaching workforces across many OECD countries (OECD 2002) including Australia (MCEETYA 2004a) policy strategies and approaches must work to not only develop and retain the existing workforce but also to replace those teachers who will be retiring (OECD 2002). This is particularly important in countries like Australia where over a quarter of the teaching workforce are reported to have considered leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement (OECD 2005). In NSW, of particular import to this thesis is the extent to which increased school diversification has affected teacher's intentions to remain in the teaching profession.

Although the determinants of teacher labour supply are not well understood (Hanushek et al. 2004) it is known that the political, economic, societal, systemic and school-level factors discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, contribute to shaping the attractiveness of the teaching profession (OECD 2002). Indeed, research has shown that problems associated with suitably staffing schools are not related to an overall lack of qualified professionals but rather a shortage of teachers who are prepared to work in existing education systems (Hanushek et al. 1994; 2004; Ingersoll 2001; 2004). It should be possible therefore, for government policy efforts to ameliorate school staffing challenges (Borman & Dowling 2008).

Factors related to teacher attrition

In Australia, as in many other OECD countries, attrition in the teaching profession is higher amongst early career teachers (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006; OECD 2005). Teachers who are new to the profession are also more likely to be negatively influenced by the 'cynicism and embitterment' that older colleagues harbour over the reform process and changes to working conditions (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006: 26). As a result, schools and education systems lose many incoming teachers before these new graduates have had a chance to develop the experience and competence necessary to become effective teachers (OECD 2005).

A study by the OECD (2005) has shown that there are other school-level factors however, that influence teacher attrition. Schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students have higher attrition rates; resulting in the students with the greatest educational needs often have the least qualified teachers. Teacher turnover is also higher amongst secondary school teachers than primary school teachers. Importantly, the reasons teachers give for leaving the profession are typically linked to working conditions that arise from both systemic and school-level factors such as work intensification, the nature and rate of reform initiatives, stress and poor pupil behaviour (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley 2006; OECD 2005).

Not all teacher attrition, however, is detrimental (Ingersoll 2004) and turnover that leads to teacher mobility between schools can lead to improved transfer of skills and knowledge across the education system (OECD 2005). Nevertheless, the current extent of teacher turnover is creating significant staffing problems for many schools (Hanushek et al. 1999; Ingersoll 2004) and this is negatively affecting student learning and outcomes (White & Smith 2005). Developing effective strategies and approaches that ameliorate these issues are essential if continuous improvements to educational outcomes are to be achieved (OECD 2005). In the public secondary school system in NSW, the development of

effective strategies for reducing teacher turnover in schools will require a more detailed understanding of the effects of increased diversification within the sector. In particular, a significant gap to be addressed by this thesis is the lack of research in NSW that has examined the effect of this diversification on teachers' experiences of work, their mobility between schools and between the public and private sectors, or on teacher intentions to remain within the profession.

Conclusion

The introduction of neo-liberal reforms in education has significantly changed the nature of teachers' work in a variety of ways (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; McInerney 2001; Meadmore 2001; Whitty 1997; Whitty et al. 1998). In a competitive market-driven education system, schools have had to become far more business-focussed (Blackmore et al. 1996) and school principals and teachers have had to adapt to this new environment. However, working in a system of both centralised and decentralised mechanisms of control is particularly challenging (Helsby 1999).

The exclusion of teachers from curriculum design, through the development and dissemination of prescriptive centralised curriculum packages and assessment tools, has profoundly influenced the extent to which teachers can exercise

autonomy and control over educational instruction and outcomes (Apple &

Jungck 1990; Connell 1985; 1987; Helsby 1999; Helsby & McCulloch 1996;

Gewirtz 1997; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). In contrast, however, teachers and

principals are now vested with much greater accountability and responsibility

for educational outcomes (Helsby 1999). Through the devolution of school

management to the local level (Caldwell & Spinks 1992) the systemic factors that

contribute to educational inequality are recast as the failings of individual

schools and their teachers (Gewirtz 1997).

School-based management has also placed contradictory demands on teachers

that lead to chronic work overload (Gewirtz 1997; Hargreaves 1994; McInerney

2001; Meadmore 2001). The traditional role of educator and instructor is now

only one component of a teachers' role (Ball et al. 1994; Blackmore 1998). Local

budgetary constraints (Helsby 1999; Robertson 1996) have further increased the

tasks required of teachers (Hargreaves 1994; Helsby 1999; Mander 2006) as they

adopt marketing related roles to positively promote the activities of the school

(Ball 1994; Blackmore et al. 1996). The competitive environment that has been

created through the advent of parental choice also requires schools and their

teachers to become far more instrumental (Gewirtz 1997). In this system,

differentiation from competitors and developing and maintaining a market niche

become a central component of many teachers' workloads (Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999).

The extension of teachers work beyond the classroom to market the school Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999) has become a necessary strategy for ensuring parents and their children are attracted and retained within the school (Gewirtz 1997). But school-based practices that are associated with these efforts are leading to greater segregation of students (Campbell et al. 2009; Edwards & Whitty 1992) and further widening educational inequalities (Le Grand & Bartlett 1993).

The significance of this project

These changes to education and teachers' work have generally been examined across all schools; with some distinctions between the primary, or elementary school, and the secondary school levels. With the exception of a significant longitudinal qualitative study – the *Change Over Time?* project (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006) – little attention has been paid to the specific influence of policy reform on teachers' work in different types of schools within either the primary or secondary school level.

Whether or not policy reform has differentially affected teachers who work in the different types of schools is particularly pertinent in NSW. As discussed in the

previous chapter, the policy reforms that began in the 1980s led to the introduction and/or expansion of a variety of different types of public secondary schools. The policy reforms that were concurrently introduced with the increased diversification of schools were specifically aimed at introducing market-based mechanisms that offered greater choice to parents in the types of schools their children could attend. The limited research that has examined these different types of public secondary schools in NSW has focussed on the history of school reform (Campbell 2003), the diversity of secondary education in NSW (Campbell & Sherington 2006), the debates that arose from the implementation of these reforms (Esson et al. 2002), or the reactions and decision-making processes of parents within the differentiated secondary school system (Campbell et al. 2009). To date, no research has examined how the expansion of different types of public secondary schools in NSW might have affected the experiences of the teachers who work within them.

There is a need for critical empirical analyses into the effects that major educational policy changes have had at the local school level (Power 1992; Taylor et al. 1997). Conversely, when examining the experiences of teachers, any adequate study of teachers' work needs to also take into consideration the immediate environment in which teachers work and the societal context in which

that immediate environment exists (Gewirtz 1997). The following chapter

describes the methodological approach taken to address this gap in the research

and to explore the changing nature of teachers' work in public secondary schools

in NSW.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

The aim of this study is to examine and compare the experiences of teachers in each of the different types of public secondary schools in NSW.[10] The specific teacher experiences that are of interest are those that are likely to differ between the various types of public secondary school. In this regard, particular attention was devoted to the school-level changes that were discussed in Chapter 3, such as parental expectations, student mobility, the nature and extent of work intensification and principal leadership. The broader context for these likely influencing factors includes the systemic changes that have affected teacher autonomy and control across the education system and the societal factors that have brought about significant policy reforms in the education sector since the 1980s.

As discussed in Chapter 2, these systemic changes are contributing to teacher turnover at the school-level (OECD 2005) and from a policy perspective teacher shortages have become a major concern (Hanushek et al. 2004). The participants in this study were predominantly teachers who were currently working in the public secondary school system in NSW. As such, while actual resignations could not be examined, examining the experiences and attitudes of employed

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[10] The design, methodology and instruments used in this study were approved by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (See Appendix A).

teachers provided an opportunity to examine teachers' intentions to quit. While

contemplating resignation does not necessarily result in actual quitting

(Lachman & Diamant 1987), 'quit intentions' are a significant predictor of

employee turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner 2000: 483). Of interest in this

study, therefore, was whether or not any differences in teachers' experiences

were related to variations in teachers' job dissatisfaction as measured by

intentions to quit. Three aspects of quit intentions were examined: 1) intention to

resign from the school; 2) intention to resign from the teaching profession; and, 3)

intentions to resign from the public sector education system (Hanushek et al.

2004).

Research design

The mixed-methods research design has been posited as a 'third research

paradigm' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004: 14). This pluralistic approach to

methodological design aims to provide more robust research outcomes by

combining the insights offered through both qualitative and quantitative

approaches (Green, Caracelli & Graham 1989; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). In

essence, the mixed-method approach aims to improve the accuracy of analysis

and interpretation by combining data collected from qualitative and quantitative

approaches to explore the same dimensions of a research problem (Day,

Sammons & Gu 2008; Gage 1989). Through a mixed-method approach, the research questions are able to be explored and the findings validated through multiple and independent data collection approaches (Day et al. 2008; Gage 1989; Jick 1979). A total of 77 teachers and four union officials took part in the qualitative phase of the study and 1,237 teachers provided responses in the quantitative phase.

Another advantage of combining research techniques to examine complex social situations is that the sequencing of different methodologies can assist in clearly defining the critical issues for exploration and analysis (Buchanan 1999; Seiber 1973). The particular approach to sequencing the mixed-method approach used in this study is to use qualitative methodologies – focus groups, key informant interviews and participant interviews – to provide insights which then informed the subsequent survey design and quantitative analysis.

Strengths and limitations

Each methodological approach has its strengths and limitations. A mixed-method design provides a pragmatic approach for both maximising the benefits and over-coming the constraints inherent in a single methodological approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Nevertheless it is instructive when analysing and interpreting research findings to understand the key advantages and

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disadvantages of both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms and of the specific tools being put to use in any research design.

The positivist philosophical foundation of quantitative methodologies argues that researchers need to remain detached and uninvolved in the object of study so as to reliably test their stated hypotheses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Purists of the qualitative approach, however support an interpretivist paradigm, in which the researcher is trying to understand multiple constructed subjective realities (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). As is the case with this thesis, when examining an unexplored area of research, a mixed-method design is particularly powerful. The qualitative research typically uses an inductive approach to guide the initial framing of the research problem and allows detailed exploration of the dynamics of the situation. In contrast, the typically deductive nature of the quantitative approach supports the exploratory stages of the research by allowing hypotheses to be generated and tested (Mutha 2007). Similarly, the specific data collection tools used in qualitative and quantitative approaches are integrated in a mixed-method design to validate each phase of data collection so as to gain a deeper and richer understanding of the issue being investigated (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Mutha 2007).

In qualitative approaches, interviews are the 'primary means of assessing the experiences…subjective views…and accounts of events' (Whipp 1998: 54). Interviews allow for a deeper and richer exploration of issues and, in semi-structured interviews the interviewee can reflect on responses and clarification can be gained. Due to the expense of one-on-one interviews however, focus groups have been increasingly employed to complement data collected through individual interviews (Morgan 1994). This approach broadens the pool of participants and expedites data collection while providing the additional benefit of allowing the interaction between participants to enhance the exploration of the topics of interest (Morgan 1994).

While both qualitative techniques are valuable means of exploring issues that are difficult to quantify the skills and biases of the interviewer can heavily influence the reliability and validity of the data collected (Strauss & Whitfield 1998). In this regard, survey techniques offer greater transparency with how the research was conducted (Strauss & Whitfield 1998). The rigor of survey techniques and the capacity to standardise metrics enable the magnitude of the particular phenomenon of interest to be established (Whitfield 1998) and for a broader range of topics to be covered (Strauss & Whitfield 1998). In a mixed-method

design, the potential for key relationships to be misunderstood, are cross-validated against the qualitative data collected (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004).

Grounded theory

As has been discussed earlier in this thesis, little is known about the experiences of teachers in the different types of public secondary school in NSW and indeed, whether or not the experiences of teachers differ by school type. The study therefore took a 'grounded theory' approach to examining teachers' work (Glaser 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Grounded theory is an inductive approach that begins with an initial systematic study of the phenomenon of interest so as to develop theoretical concepts and generate hypotheses (Glaser 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967). A grounded theory approach is associated with theory-building research (Layder 1993) that aims to generate categories for analysis rather than imposing a pre-existing analytical framework on data collection (Glaser 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Thus, while the literature provided essential context and background to the factors that are affecting teachers and their work, it was the categories that were discussed by the respondents themselves in the qualitative phase of the research,

rather than any pre-conceived hypothesis testing, that became the focus of

empirical examination (Glaser 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Conceptualising schools and regions

Initially, the different types of public secondary schools in NSW were

conceptualised dichotomously. That is, the experiences of teachers in traditional

comprehensive public secondary schools were to be compared with the

experiences of teachers in all other types of public secondary schools. The public

secondary schools that are not traditional comprehensive schools are referred to

as *non-comprehensive* public secondary schools.

As will be discussed in more detail below however, the initial stages of the

qualitative fieldwork led to a revision of this approach. Ultimately, where

possible, the experiences of teachers in each of the following different types of

public secondary schools were specifically examined and compared:

- Comprehensive schools;

- Selective schools (including partially selective schools);

- Specialist schools;

- Junior colleges; and,

- Senior colleges.

In contrast, the initial approach to examining the effect of geographic region on teachers' experiences of work started from a broad perspective to enable both metropolitan and non-metropolitan influences to be examined and compared. As discussed in Chapter 2, the vast majority of non-comprehensive public secondary schools are located in major metropolitan regions.[11] Thus in the initial stages of the study, teachers from three metropolitan areas were included in the study but, to obtain a non-metropolitan perspective, teachers from a major regional centre and teachers from a rural centre were also included. As discussed in more detail below however, following the first stage of the study, the geographic areas of interest were considerably narrowed to only include teachers from western and south-western Sydney.

Stages 1 to 4: Qualitative research design

All data collection was conducted by me as the Ph.D. Candidate – referred to throughout this chapter as 'the researcher' – with some administrative assistance from the NSW Teachers Federation.

There were four stages to the qualitative component of the study in which a total of 81 teachers and union officials participated:

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[11] The NSW Department Education and Training (2009) school locator tool was used to identify all non-comprehensive schools. Their addresses were collated to obtain the percentage of these schools that are located in major metropolitan regions.

1. focus groups;

2. participant interviews;

3. key informant interviews; and,

4. follow-up focus group.

As the goal of the qualitative phase was to generate as much detailed information as possible, a semi-structured approach was used in both the interviews and the focus groups. The researcher guided the discussion through the specific research topics of interest but also encouraged participants to elaborate, refine and clarify their responses and provide more detailed information about specific topics as they emerged (Pawson 1996). The use of multiple qualitative methods ensures a more in-depth understanding of the research and counters the biases that are introduced by a single method (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). In this regard, while in-depth interviews provide the most detailed understanding of the phenomena of interest, the interaction in focus groups 'offers valuable data on the extent of consensus and diversity among participants' (Morgan 1996: 139).

The results of the qualitative fieldwork are discussed in detail in Chapter 5. However, as has been discussed, the stages of the qualitative fieldwork were conducted sequentially. Preliminary analysis was therefore conducted at the

completion of each stage of data collection to allow for an iterative review of the methodological approach and the scope of the investigation. The results from each stage were used to inform the categories for exploration in subsequent stages. In the sections below, the main findings from each stage of the research that had significant bearing on the direction, focus and scope of any subsequent stages of fieldwork are briefly discussed.

In general, at the commencement of the fieldwork in 2003, the focus of the study was concentrated on the teaching experiences of comprehensive school teachers as compared to the experiences of teachers in selective and specialist public secondary schools. At the completion of Stage 3 however, it was apparent that aspects of the experiences of teachers in junior and senior might also significantly differ from the experiences teachers in other types of schools. As the experiences of these teachers had not been adequately explored a fourth qualitative stage was added to specifically examine the experiences of teachers in junior and senior campuses. At the completion of Stage 4, the scope of the study, with regard to the original dichotomous conceptualisation of school type, was expanded to include an examination and comparison of experiences of teachers from each of the different types of NSW public secondary schools: comprehensive, selective and specialist schools and junior and senior college campuses.

Stage 1: Exploratory focus groups

In the initial empirical phase of the study, five focus groups of approximately one hour each were conducted by the researcher in early 2003. The focus groups comprised teachers working in NSW secondary public schools. Participants for the focus groups were recruited from the NSW Teachers Federation membership database. The criteria for selection were necessarily limited to the information that was available from the database. As such, participants were selected on the basis that they were currently teaching in a NSW public secondary school and that they taught in a school within one of the five geographic regions of interest. The key aim of organising the focus groups by geographic location was to explore how, if at all, the socio-economic status students in varying locations affected teaching experiences.

Potential participants were contacted on their home telephone after school hours by organisers from the Teachers Federation. This recruitment technique was necessary to ensure members' details were not provided, without consent, to the researcher. In the recruitment approach, teachers were asked to participate in a focus group that would be held two weeks hence in a meeting room at a local public venue. Potential participants were advised that the study was being conducted by a doctoral candidate from the University of Sydney and that the

aim of the study was to explore the experiences of teachers in NSW public secondary schools. Approximately 15 potential participants were recruited for each group to allow for some attrition between recruitment and participation. It was intended, to have approximately 10 participants on the day of the focus group so as to elicit a wide range of potential responses while also allowing all participants a chance to discuss their views and experiences (Morgan 1996).

Of the five focus groups convened, one was conducted on the NSW Central Coast, one in western NSW, one in outer western Sydney, one in south-western Sydney and one in the northern Sydney. This ensured that metropolitan, regional centres and rural areas were included in this phase of the study. However, given the over-representation of non-comprehensive schools in major metropolitan regions, this approach also aimed to maximise the potential for recruiting teachers from these types of schools.

A letter from the researcher was sent to the teachers who agreed to participate, detailing the time and location of the focus group (see Appendix B). All focus groups were conducted by the researcher and held at 4pm so that teachers could travel directly to the focus group from work at the end of the school day.

A total of 60 teachers participated in the focus groups. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of teachers in each geographic location. The focus groups ranged in size from 11 to 13 teachers. The gender composition across all groups was approximately half male (47%) and half female (53%). However, no other demographic information (e.g. age) was collected or recorded.

Table 4.1: Focus group participants by location and type of secondary school

	Type of School		
Location	Comp	Other	Total
Central Coast	7	6	13
Western NSW	11	0	11
Outer western Sydney	5	6	11
South-western Sydney	9	3	12
North Sydney	6	7	13
Total	38	22	60

Note: Comp = comprehensive school; Other = selective or specialist school or junior or senior campus.

The aim of these initial focus groups was to broadly explore the working lives of teachers in NSW secondary public schools. The discussions during the focus groups were moderated by the researcher using an open-ended topic guide (Morgan 1996; see Appendix C for the discussion guide). The main themes explored were:

i.   the key challenges that teachers face in their daily working lives;

ii. how, if at all, these challenges differed for comprehensive school teachers compared to teachers in other types of public secondary schools; and,

iii. how the challenges teachers face have changed over time.

The key research questions guiding this stage of the fieldwork were:

1. *What are the key challenges facing teachers in NSW public secondary schools?*

2. *How, if at all, do the experiences of teachers in comprehensive schools differ from the experiences of teachers in other types of public secondary school?*

3. *How, if at all, do the experiences of teachers differ by location?*

4. *How, if at all, do differences in teachers' experiences vary by the socio-economic status of the students?*

5. *Has the experience of teachers in NSW secondary public schools changed as a result of increased choice for students in the types of public secondary schools available?*

As expected, the findings from Stage 1 showed clear differences in teacher experiences by location that was attributed, by the focus group participants, to differences in the socio-economic status of students.

Stage 2: Participant interviews

In 2004, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to explore the issues that emerged from the focus groups in greater depth (Morgan 1996). As such, the teachers who participated in the interviews were selected based on specific characteristics. In this stage of the study, the geographic focus was

narrowed to the western and south-western suburbs of Sydney, in order to control for differences in the socio-economic status of students.

For the quantitative survey component of the study, the geographic area of consideration in the study had to be of sufficient size to ensure a robust sample could be recruited from the available population. Although western and south-western Sydney differ in specific social and economic characteristics, at an aggregate level there is a similar degree of clustering with regard to a global 'cumulative disadvantage' measure (Vinson 1999: 35) so as to justify including both regions in the study. In addition to the geographic criteria, additional subject characteristics were identified for inclusion in the sampling frame to ensure that a valid representation (Luborsky & Rubinstein 1995) of teachers was included in this stage of the study. The characteristics for sampling were those identified in the first stage of the study as being related to differences in teachers' experiences of work. The additional criteria included teachers:

- who taught subjects that were viewed to be traditional academic subjects (e.g.: history, English, mathematics, science) and those who taught subjects that were viewed to be non-academic in nature (e.g. music, design and technology, drama, visual arts);

- from selective, specialist and comprehensive secondary schools[12]; and,

- who were male and female.

As one of the aims of the participant interviews was to examine any change in teachers' experiences over time, the criteria for potential participants was also limited to only include teachers who had more than 15 years of teaching experience.

Interview participants were recruited via two key contacts in NSW secondary public schools in western and south-western Sydney. The contacts were briefed thoroughly on the nature and purpose of the interviews and on the selection criteria and were asked to approach colleagues and canvass their interest in participating in the research. Teachers who indicted they were interested in participating were given the contact details of the researcher and asked to make direct contact. Recruitment and selection of participants became an iterative process whereby the contacts were asked to approach potential participants who fulfilled the remaining specified criteria.

Seven potential interviewees contacted the researcher, however, one cancelled a scheduled interview and then declined to participate. Therefore, a total of six

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[12] At this stage of the research, the importance of junior and senior campuses as a distinguishing feature that differentiated teachers' experiences of work had not yet been identified.

interviews were conducted with current NSW public secondary school teachers.

Participants were asked to take part in a one hour face-to-face interview.

However, with the consent and encouragement of the interviewees, all

interviews went for more than an hour, with no interview taking more than two

hours. All of the interviews were conducted after school hours by the researcher.

At the request of the participants, three were conducted at the school premises

and three were conducted in the teachers' homes. A semi-structured interview

protocol was developed based on the findings from the focus groups (see

Appendix D for interview guides). The characteristics of the teachers interviewed

are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Matrix of interviewee characteristics.

	Type of subject/s taught and gender of interviewee	
*Type of school**	Academic	Non-academic
Academic selective	One female	One male
Specialist	One male	One male
Comprehensive	One female	One female

* Note: all interviewees taught in schools in the western or south western suburbs of Sydney and had 15 or more years of teaching experience.

With the consent of the participants, electronic audio recordings of the interviews

were taken. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher and a copy of the

transcript was sent to each individual so they could clarify or edit any of their

comments. Two of the participants made comments about their transcripts,

adding details that they felt necessary.

The key research questions guiding this stage of the fieldwork were modified

and refined from the research questions posed in Stage 1:

1. *How do the experiences of teachers differ by school structure?*

2. *How are the experiences of teachers affected by the nature of the subjects taught?*

3. *Do male and female teachers report different experiences of teaching?*

4. *How has the experience of teaching changed since the increase in school choice for public secondary school students?*

Stage 3: Key informant interviews

Semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted by the researcher in

2006 and 2007 with four union officials from the NSW Teachers Federation -

three senior state officials and a regional union organiser (see Appendix D).

These officials were chosen because of their expert knowledge of both the policy

and practice related to teachers' work in NSW. The aim of these interviews was

to validate the initial findings from the focus groups and interviews and to

discuss the proposed themes to be explored in the quantitative phase of the

study. A brief document that outlined the proposed themes for inclusion in the

survey was sent to the key informants for consideration prior to the interview

(see Appendix E for the proposed survey themes). Face-to-face one hour

interviews were conducted with the three state officials and a 40 minute

telephone interview was conducted with the union organiser, who represented teachers from the western suburbs of Sydney.

While the key informant interviewees confirmed and reinforced the preliminary findings they also identified a potentially significant substantial gap in the scope of the study. Each of the key informants recommended that the experiences of teachers working in junior and senior campuses be included as an additional stage in the qualitative component of the study and by explored in the subsequent quantitative survey phase.

Stage 4: Follow-up focus group

In September 2007, a one hour focus group of teachers from junior and senior college campuses was conducted by the researcher. Participants were recruited by the local union delegates and organisers in western Sydney and the focus group was conducted at a local public venue. In accordance with the Stage 1 methodological approach, participants were advised that the study was being conducted by a doctoral candidate from the University of Sydney and that the aim of the study was to explore the experiences of teachers in NSW public secondary schools. A total of eleven teachers, five from junior campuses and six from senior campuses, were recruited and participated in the focus group.

The key themes of interest and the discussion guide that was developed were adapted from those developed during Stage 1 of the study (see Appendix F for the discussion guide). The main themes were:

i. the key challenges that teachers face in their daily working lives;

ii. teachers' experiences of how these challenges change over time; and,

iii. the differences between teaching in a junior or senior campus and teaching in a traditional comprehensive high school.

The main research questions for this stage were:

1. *How do the experiences of teachers in junior and senior campuses differ from each other?*

2. *How do the experiences of teachers in junior and senior campuses differ from teachers in other types of NSW public secondary schools?*

Approach to analysing the qualitative data

A content analysis approach was used to analyse the qualitative findings from the interviews and focus groups (Marshall & Rossman 1989). The first step in this approach was to examine the transcripts to identify content that related to two specific themes:

i. similarities and differences in the experiences of teachers in different types of NSW public secondary schools; and,

ii.   changes in the experience of teachers over time.

The second step involved using an inductive approach to identify and develop a thematic coding frame that classified the data within the two main themes. In the final step, the transcripts were systematically coded against the thematic framework (Strauss & Corbin 1990). The categories that resulted in the greatest absolute frequencies were included in the development of a conceptual model of secondary school teachers' experiences. The conceptual model was then operationalised in a survey instrument (further detail about the survey development is included in the following section).

Stage 5: Quantitative research design

The design of the survey was based on an issue-focussed approach that is traditionally used in employee surveys (Connelly & Groll-Connelly 2005; Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski & Tourangeau 2004).

Three categories for quantitative exploration were derived from the results of the qualitative field work (see Appendix G for the final survey):

1. teacher demographics;

2. school and student characteristics; and,

3. teacher tasks, experiences and workload.

Sampling

The sampling frame was limited by geographic location to control for socio-economic differences in student populations and the potential influence socio-economic factors may have on the experience of teaching in NSW public secondary schools. A random sampling procedure selected 3500 secondary school teachers from the NSW Teachers Federation membership database. Accurate information on the school in which teachers work was not available, therefore, the sampling frame was developed on the basis of those teachers who had a high likelihood of teaching in the western and south-western suburbs of Sydney. The NSW Teachers Federation advised that most teachers who work in these areas live in the western, south-western and southern suburbs of Sydney (J Irving personal communication 18 March 2008). As such, the sampling frame was extended to include teachers whose home addresses were in these areas.

Survey administration

A draft survey tool was developed by the researcher and reviewed by the three key informant officials from the NSW Teachers Federation who participated in Stage 3 of the study. Changes were made following their comments. The survey was pilot tested (Groves et al. 2004) with the six teachers who participated in the interviews in Stage 2. The pilot group was followed up with a telephone call in

which they were asked to comment on their comprehension, ease-of-use and completion time of the survey (Groves et al. 2004). Advice and suggestions from these teachers were incorporated into the survey and the survey was finalised.

In an attempt to achieve the highest possible response rate efforts were made to inform teachers of the study (Baruch 1999). In June and July 2008, the NSW Teachers Federation weekly newsletters ran an article informing teachers of the research study and asking contacted members to participate by responding to a survey they may receive in the mail. In July 2008, surveys were mailed to the home addresses of the teachers in the sampling frame. Mail-out self-response surveys guarantee anonymity, and also increase validity as respondents are able to take time to consider and verify the information they provide (Groves et al. 2004). To increase the response rate (Groves et al. 2004) a letter of from the NSW Teachers Federation and a reply-paid envelope that was addressed to the researchers' university office, were included with the survey. A total of 1,237 useable responses were received, giving a response rate of 35 per cent (see the *Methodological limitations* section below for a discussion of issues related to the response rate bias).

Approach to analysing the quantitative data

Cross-tabulations

The analysis was undertaken in two stages using the statistical package *Stata version 10*. In the first stage of analysis, bivariate and multi-variate cross-tabulations were run to validate and quantify the findings from the qualitative analysis. In this stage, the dependent variable of interest was 'type of school' which included five nominal categories: 1) comprehensive schools; 2) selective schools; 3) specialist schools; 4) junior campuses; and, 5) senior campuses. The dependent variable was cross-tabulated against all independent variables. This stage of analysis aimed to describe the broad patterns of teachers' experiences and to highlight any substantive differences between the experiences of teachers in different types of secondary schools. The key research questions guiding these analyses were:

1. *Do the individual characteristics of teachers vary by type of school?*

2. *Do the experiences of teachers vary by type of school?*

3. *What effect has increases in public secondary school choice had on the nature of the student body within comprehensive, selective, and specialist schools and junior and senior campuses?*

Data modelling

The second stage of analysis involved conducting logistic regression modelling to examine the predictors of teachers' intention to quit. Logistic regression modelling has been increasingly used in the social sciences where categorical variables are common (Peng, Lee & Ingersoll 2002: 3). In this stage of analysis there were three dependent variables of interest that each measured different aspects teachers' intention to quit: whether teacher's had 'thought of leaving...' 1) 'their current school', 2) 'the public education system', and 3) the teaching profession ('teaching to do something else'). In addition, thoughts of leaving that were related to retirement were differentiated from those not related to retirement. To compare teachers who had recurrent thoughts of leaving with those who thought of leaving on a less frequent basis, each of the three indicators was categorised into a dummy variable. This categorisation distinguished between teachers who 'frequently' thought about leaving and the 'other' category which included teachers who 'occasionally', 'rarely' or 'never' thought about leaving.

The great strength of statistical modelling over bi-variate or multi-variate cross-tabulations is that modelling can control for the effects of all variables that are included in the model (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989). As multiple independent

variables can be included in modelling techniques, a strategy was used to select

the most parsimonious model that still adequately explained the data (Hosmer &

Lemeshow 1989). In practice, however, there is no single 'best' model but rather a

number of models that equally explain the outcome of interest (Hosmer &

Lemeshow 1989: 83). A widely accepted approach was therefore taken:

numerous models were tested and considered before developing the three final

models that are discussed in Chapter 7 (Collett 2000; Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989;

Long 1997; Long & Freese 2003).

Variable selection and management

In selecting variables, cross-tabulations between categorical independent

variables and the dependent variable of interest need to be examined for empty

or small cell sizes (Academic Technical Services [ATS] 2009; Hosmer &

Lemeshow 1989). Empty or small cells of less than five observations (Garson

2009) are destabilising and can result in extraordinarily large standard errors

and/or either very large or very small estimated coefficients (ATS 2009; Hosmer

& Lemeshow 1989).

A number of independent variables resulted in small cell sizes when cross-

tabulations with the dependent variables were performed. Included among these

independent variables was the 'type of school' variable. Despite a total sample

size of 1,071 observations, the distribution of observations for 'type of school' included less than 70 observations for teachers in specialist schools ($n = 67$), junior campuses ($n = 54$) and senior campuses ($n = 52$). When 'type of school' was cross-tabulated with independent variables unstable estimates were returned.

Two approaches can be taken in dealing with empty and small cell sizes in the data modelling. The first approach recommends collapsing the categories of concern within the problem variables to create larger cell sizes (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989) which reduces the amount of explanatory information available (ATS 2009; Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989). The second approach is to drop the variables of concern, which is not desirable for variables of particular interest or that are likely to have a significant influence over the outcome variable (ATS 2009).

Attempts were made to collapse the categories within 'type of school' so as to create a dichotomous variable ('comprehensive school teachers' and 'teachers in non-comprehensive schools') but the heterogeneity in the second category confused the findings. As a result a different approach to the modelling was adopted that limited the logistic regression analysis to an examination to comprehensive school teachers only. This approach not only provided robust estimates (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989) but also enabled an examination of the

factors that contribute to intentions to quit among the largest group of secondary

teachers in the NSW public education system; those who teach in comprehensive

schools (Esson et al. 2002).

For the other independent variables, that measured teachers' attitudes and

experiences, two data reduction techniques were applied to develop major

constructs from the individual data items. The first involved collapsing

categories to create cells with sufficient observations for multivariate regression

modelling (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989). The second approach involved

conducting principal components analysis using varimax rotation (Jolliffe 2002).

Using the Kaiser criterion of retaining factors, those with eigenvalues greater

than one were retained (Ford, MacCallum & Tait 1986: 294). Chronbach's alpha

reliability index was used to determine the extent to which there was internal

consistency and reliability within each factor; items with large coefficient alphas

of .70 or greater were retained (Ford et al. 1986: 294).

In developing the logistic regression models, a stepwise approach with backward

elimination was used to test variable selection (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989). This

approach also allowed the number of potential models to be sequentially

examined (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989). In each of the three models a core set of

key variables measuring the demographic characteristics shown to be of

substantive interest in the qualitative findings and cross-tabulations were retained. These variables included 'gender', years of teaching experience ('tenure'), and a composite variable indicating the nature of the subjects taught ('academic' or 'non-academic' subjects) and whether or not teachers had qualifications in these subjects. Variables measuring teachers' attitudes and experiences were retained if the related coefficients were significant (Hosmer & Lemeshow 1989; Long 1997; Long & Freese 2003).

The key research questions for the data modelling were:

1. *To what extent are individual teacher characteristics associated with intentions to leave:*

   a. *Their current school?*

   b. *Public education?*

   c. *The teaching profession?*

2. *What teacher attitudes and experiences are related to teachers' intentions to leave:*

   a. *Their current school?*

   b. *Public education?*

   c. *The teaching profession?*

The results from each of the three regression models are presented in terms of odds ratios and the results are interpreted using predicted probabilities

(Considine & Watson 2005). Odds ratios illustrate the differences in effect size associated with the independent variables and the dependent variables and test the statistical significance of the individual regression coefficients (Peng, Lee et al. 2002). For example, there is an increased odds of thinking about 'leaving current school' if a teacher is female compared to male. The odds of an event occurring, however, provide no indication of the extent to which that event is likely to occur; female teachers are more likely to think of leaving than male teachers, but *how* likely are they (what is the predicted probability?) to think of leaving and how does this compare to male teachers? Hypothetically, female teachers might have twice the odds of thinking about leaving than male teachers (*or* = 2) but is there a 10 per cent probability they will think of leaving, compared to 5 per cent probability for males or is it that female teachers have a 50 per cent probability of thinking of leaving compared to a 25 per cent probability for males? Predicted probabilities can provide this more meaningful information.

Methodological limitations

Sampling technique

The study relies almost entirely on participants who were recruited from the NSW Teachers Federation membership database. While the random sampling technique aimed to achieve a representative sample of teachers from western and

south-western Sydney, the use of the Federation's database to recruit participants effectively excluded non-union members. This may be seen to bias the results of the study.

The extent of this selection bias may be limited. Although union membership has been declining since the 1970s in most OECD countries, including Australia (Blanchflower 2007), union density among all NSW public sector teachers has been estimated at approximately 66 per cent (Banbury 2008: 8), and is higher among secondary school teachers (Briggs 2003). Compared to the national average of 19 per cent (ABS 2008a) union density among public school teachers is extremely high. This suggests that while non-union members have not been excluded from the study, the experiences of the participants are, nevertheless, representative of the majority of public secondary school teachers.

Non-response rate bias

While it is generally agreed that a high response rate is ideal, there is no agreed norm in academic studies as to how high a response rate should be (Baruch 1999). In a meta-analysis of organisational research, the response rate for surveys conducted through organisations in 2000 was, on average 35 per cent with a standard deviation of 18.0 (Baruch & Holtom 2008: 1148). Principle reasons for non-response to surveys are survey fatigue because of the increased use of

surveys (Rogelberg & Stanton 2007) and respondents simply not receiving the survey because of incorrect addresses (Baruch 1999).

This study relied on the accuracy of the NSW Teachers Federation membership database with regard to contact details for members. The Federation acknowledged that, with increasing electronic correspondence, maintaining up-to-date records of home addresses had become increasingly difficult (J Irving personal communication 18 March 2008). Therefore, it is feasible to assume that some proportion of the population of interest did not receive the survey.

Survey non-response can lead to bias in the findings if the non-respondents differ significantly in characteristics from respondents (Baruch & Holtom 2008). In this study, the demographic characteristics of members that were captured within the Federation's database were extremely limited. This hindered analysis of potential response rate biases except with regard to gender; and, on this particular characteristic the respondent and non-respondent group did not differ.

Interpretation of the findings

As has been discussed, the response rate to this survey was 35 per cent. While Baruch argues that the response rate 'is just one element to consider in evaluating the quality of empirical studies' and that it is more important that

respondents are representative of the population of interest (2008: 1153).
Nevertheless, the sampling approach and potential response rate biases
represent possibly limitations with this study and should be taken into
consideration when interpreting the results and generalising the findings to the
broader public secondary school teacher population.

Conclusion

In summary, this study adopted a mixed-method approach to examining the
nature and extent to which the experiences of teachers in NSW public secondary
schools differed by type of school. The strength of this research design was the
ability to validate the findings from each stage of the study through multiple and
independent data collection approaches (Day et al. 2008; Gage 1989; Jick 1979).

Across both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study a total of
1,303 teachers participated: 66 in the focus groups and interviews in the
qualitative phase and 1,237 in the survey component of the quantitative phase. In
addition, four senior union officials provided valuable insight and advice that
ensured the scope of the study accurately reflected the structure of the public
secondary school system in NSW and that the contemporary issues facing
teachers were captured. In this regard, the iterative approach taken in

developing, revising and adjusting the research design, and the flexibility of the

mixed-method approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004), proved invaluable.

In Chapters 5 to 7, the findings from this study are presented and discussed.

Chapter 5 discusses the qualitative findings from the interviews and focus group,

while Chapters 6 and 7 present the quantitative findings. In particular, Chapter 6

presents the descriptive cross-tabulations that disaggregate the patterns of

teacher experiences by the different types of schools. In Chapter 7, the results

from the logistic regression modelling describe the predictors of teacher retention

in comprehensive secondary schools.

Chapter 5 – The nature of the challenges in teachers' work

This chapter presents the findings from the first phase of this study. This phase collected qualitative data through in-depth interviews and focus groups with teachers in western and south-western Sydney and key informant interviews with union officials from the NSW Teachers Federation. The qualitative analysis highlights the nature of the key challenges that are faced by teachers in NSW public secondary schools in western and south-western Sydney. Of particular interest, however, was whether or not the experience of teachers differed by the type of public secondary school. In these analyses, comparisons are made between the experience of teachers in junior and senior campuses, and comprehensive, specialist, and selective schools.

The findings show that there were four broad but interrelated domains in which the particular experiences of teachers differed substantially by type of school:

1. market pressures and competition;

2. the nature of the student body;

3. student/teacher interactions; and,

4. staff profile of the school.

Market pressures and competition

As discussed in chapter two, the de-zoning and restructuring of the NSW public education system in 1980s introduced quasi-market pressures into the public school system. Prior to de-zoning, the student body in any given public school was predominantly determined by the demographic characteristics of the local community. With de-zoning, however, students and their parents were free to choose which school they could apply to and were no longer limited to a determined specific geographic region; referred to as a school zone. In addition, the restructuring of the public school system introduced a wider range of choice in public secondary education with regard to the *type* of school that students and parents could choose. For teachers who had been in the NSW education system since the 1980s there was wide recognition that 'the Metherell reforms [had] changed everything'[13].

De-zoning and restructuring had allowed for a level of student mobility that had previously not existed and 'parents could, pretty much, apply to any school they wanted'[14]. Putting in an application for a school, however, did not guarantee automatic entry. While there was still a requirement for comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses to take students who fell within a local

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[13] South-western Sydney senior campus male teacher, 30 years' experience.
[14] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 25 years' experience.

catchment area any vacancies could be filled by out-of-area students if there were

applications. With de-zoning, the area from which the student pool could be

drawn was, in theory, unlimited.

Practically, however, the geographic region from which the student pool could

be attracted was influenced by factors such as distance and transport.

Nevertheless, many teachers talked of the school executive (the leadership team)

working hard at trying to attract students from suburbs that were from outside

of the designated catchment area. Still other teachers discussed the extent to

which their school had 'developed a reputation'[15] that made the school highly

desirable and of having waiting lists for these out-of-area students. In the public

secondary schools, for which there was the highest demand for places, such as

selective and specialist schools, it was not uncommon for the student pool to be

geographically dispersed within a '20 to 30 kilometre radius'[16].

These quasi-market mechanisms related to market pressures of supply and

demand created a competitive environment between public secondary schools

that hadn't previously existed. Schools were now 'in the business of selling

themselves'[17] and to become and remain competitive within this new

[15] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.
[16] Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 26 years' experience.
[17] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.

environment, had to differentiate themselves from each other and from the private education system. The manifestation of these pressures differed markedly between the various types of public school secondary and differentially affected the experiences of teachers within each of the school type.

Competitive selection

Selective and specialist schools had a competitive advantage over comprehensive schools and multi-campus colleges predominantly because of the high demand for places in selective and specialist schools. It will be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 2 that among selective schools the competitive entry was implemented at an institutional level by the NSW Department of Education and Training through the state-wide selective school exam. Students wishing to enrol in a selective school from Year 7 took this exam towards the end of Year 6.

Many of the teachers in this study, even those who weren't working in a selective school, commented on the competition that existed between the selective schools, to attract 'the best'[18] students. Selective schools, however, were also trying to attract academically gifted students away from the other types of public secondary school and from the private system. The selective schools were seen to be marketing themselves on their reputation for achieving excellent results in

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[18] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.

traditional academic subjects, such as English, mathematics, science and commerce. The reputation for selective schools in particular was based in the well-publicised capacity of the school to achieve outstanding results in the final end of Year 12 exam (the Higher School Certificate [HSC]). There was, therefore, significant pressure on the teachers within the selective schools to ensure that grades were as high as possible across the student body. In addition, however, to increasing the differentiation between selective schools, the executive management in these schools placed a considerable amount of pressure on teachers to diversify their subject offerings and to provide extra-curricular activities to enhance the reputation of the school and attract and retain students:

> ...we have a Student Representative Council... formal elections each year for our school captains...an Assessment Reporting Student Team...sporting teams that are competitive at the state and national level...we run trivia competitions for local Year 8s that get 300 kids participating...we hold lecture days for economics, business and legal studies...we have Student Subject Leaders...we run public speaking, debating competitions, excursions, music – there's a raft of different awards kids can win....it's all part of trying to offer more [than other selective or private schools] (Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 29 years' experience).

Offering a wide range of subjects and extra-curricular activities meant that a number of teachers had taken on significant professional development activities, including postgraduate studies, to become qualified in a broader range of subjects or to become better skilled in their subject areas of specialisation.

In these schools, additional market pressures were placed on teachers to ensure that the best and brightest students were retained in the school. The practice of poaching the highest achieving students was reportedly common practice among popular schools. The more desirable selective schools 'with long standing traditions...head hunt...the best students'[19] from each other. Those selective schools that are regarded as less desirable are more susceptible to losing students. This practice of poaching students occurs right throughout each year of secondary school, with the best students being poached right up until they are in the senior years of schooling:

> You'll get to a stage where you put four or five years of work into a student and they come up with a letter saying they've been accepted into another selective high school. It's very frustrating (Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 29 years' experience).

In specialist schools there were different challenges for teachers. Like selective schools, these schools have highly competitive entry requirements and, in general, there is a much greater demand for student places. Despite high demand, the specialist schools, like the selective schools, have to compete for students with the other types of public secondary schools and with the private system. The reputation of specialist school and its capacity to compete with other highly desirable schools is, therefore, dependent on very high standards in the

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[19] Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 26 years' experience.

field of specialisation *and* in academic achievement. There was therefore, pressure for teachers in the specialist fields to ensure excellent outcomes. However, there was also pressure for the teachers of the traditional academic subjects to ensure that students were also focussed on achieving good grades in these subjects and that the academic standards were maintained. These issues are discussed in more detail below, when examining the teacher-student interactions.

Differentiation among other types of schools

In the comprehensive schools and the junior and senior campuses the competition for students was localised within a much smaller geographic region. Nevertheless, with de-zoning, the geographic region from which students were being attracted had extended considerably. For all of these schools there was still a Departmental requirement to take students who lived within the designated catchment area. In this study, however, there were some comprehensive schools and senior campuses that were in relatively high demand with waiting lists comprising students from out of area. In these comprehensives schools and senior campuses the school executive worked at developing strategies for attracting and retaining high quality students. These strategies were based on the

notion of differentiating from other schools and developing a good reputation that was appealing to would-be parents and students of the school.

For comprehensive schools, in particular, the differentiation was developed through the executive and teachers working at building and maintaining a reputation for excelling in particular subjects or fields of study. In this regard, these schools tried to replicate the capacity to offer subjects and experiences that were similar to the specialist schools. Teachers spoke of comprehensive schools in their areas that 'showcased' themselves based on the 'window-dressing subjects'[20] that were predominantly outside the mainstream academic subjects. Many comprehensive schools relied on establishing and maintaining a reputation for student achievement and outcomes in music, drama, languages or specific sporting codes to 'sell the school'[21]. These strategies had the capacity to attract students with talents in these fields to the school particularly if a related specialist school was a considerable distance away.

The increased need to specialise to remain competitive however, placed substantial pressure on the teachers on whom the reputation of the school was dependent. For these teachers in particular, there was increased pressure to work

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[20] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.
[21] South-western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 18 years' experience.

outside of normal work hours to provide additional lessons or coaching to

students or to participate in related weekend activities. As one teacher described:

> State schools now are right in the business of selling themselves…It's pure competition [and] state schools are starting to sell their wares…I've spent a lot of effort setting the [Music] Department up and getting it to where it is…but I work weekends and I have classes at 8am…It is quite a showcase now…we have lots of out-of-area kids queuing up to get in…(Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience).

In senior campuses the differentiation and reputation of the school were based

on slightly different aspects of the curriculum. Many of these campuses were in

'direct competition[22]' with the local comprehensive schools for their senior

students. Senior campuses, which are typically associated with three or four

feeder junior campuses, could have significantly more numbers of students in

Years 11 and 12 than any of the local comprehensive schools. With greater

numbers of students, these campuses were able to offer a broader range of

subjects because they had the student numbers to fill the classes. For teachers in

the senior campuses, like those in selective schools, it often meant teaching

outside of subject area and learning new subjects so that this variety in the

curriculum could be offered.

In areas that had a local senior campus, many local comprehensive schools were

reportedly struggling with losing students to the senior campus because of a

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[22] Western Sydney comprehensive school teacher, 31 years experience.

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greater choice of subjects on offer. For teachers in comprehensive schools that had a senior campus nearby, it meant teaching smaller senior classes and teaching subjects that some senior students did not particularly want to take. For comprehensive schools the greater attraction of a senior campus resulted in declining senior enrolments. This in turn spiralled into the loss of even more students to the senior campuses as increasing numbers of subjects had to be dropped from the curriculum offered by the affected comprehensive schools.

In yet other comprehensive schools and junior campuses, the executive aimed to develop a reputation based on cultural or ethnic characteristics and sensitivities; whether that was for a particular ethnic group (e.g. based on diverse offerings relevant to Indigenous cultures) or for multi-cultural diversity. Still other schools were known for focusing on pastoral care or for greater integration of students with disabilities. All of which presented different challenges to the teachers working in these schools.

However, for teachers from many comprehensive schools and junior campuses in western and south-western Sydney, there were no students queuing to get into the school and declining student numbers, in both the junior and senior years, was the norm. For these schools, the lack of capacity to differentiate based on a reputation for some form of specialisation in a specific field meant that

maintaining student enrolments was a struggle. As has been discussed, this capacity to differentiate was dependent on having both the executive with the vision and capacity to specialise and the teaching staff capable of delivering something special. Another pressure affecting the reputation of many schools in these areas however, was the characteristics of the student body. All of these factors are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

The student body and teacher-student interactions

The nature of the student body was another factor in which the various types of public secondary schools differed significantly. The student body had a substantial effect on the type of teacher-student interactions that would emerge and on the type of emotional labour which teachers had to deploy.

High ability and motivation – intensive learning interactions

By the nature of the competitive selection processes, selective schools were characterised by an academically-gifted student body and specialist schools were characterised by a talented student body. By the very composition of the school, the student body within the senior campuses was characterised by a mature student body. In the selective schools and, to a lesser extent, the specialist schools and senior campuses, the gifted, talented and mature nature of the different

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student bodies created a much greater focus on lessons and learning in teacher-student interactions.

In selective schools, the learning environment was particularly intense and the concentration of academically-gifted students created quite specific challenges for the teachers. The expectation of both the students and their parents around performance and grades in selective schools were very high. Students in these schools were 'very academic and…very demanding'[23] and the teachers were constantly managing students' expectations and anxieties about grades and performance. In these schools, however, 'all students want to do really well'[24]. The extent to which they sought feedback from teachers about their performance meant that teachers had very little down-time during the school day. Teachers were regularly approached before and after school, before and after lessons, and during breaks to provide students with additional guidance about school work and ways to improve grades.

> …even during lunch times they come to you and want to know more. When you hand back work they want to know more… how come they got the mark they did? How can they improve?…There's a lot more pressure in selective schools [than in comprehensives] (Western Sydney selective school female teacher, 14 months' experience).

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[23] Western Sydney selective school female teacher, 14 months' experience.
[24] Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 26 years' experience.

Competition was also strong among students in specialist schools; particularly among students studying the same field of specialisation for positions of privilege. For example, in sports high schools, the students who were talented soccer players would compete with each other to be on the 'A grade team'[25]. In performing arts schools, the students who played orchestral instruments would be competing to be the 'first chair'[26]. In specialist schools, as in other types of schools, the capacity to maintain academic grades was important for the school's reputation and standing. So in specialist schools there was also the pressure on the teachers and students to maintain academic grades. Regardless of how talented students were in their chosen field, if grades weren't maintained at a standard they were excluded from participating in their specialist field until their grades improved. As with students in selective schools, students in specialist schools were therefore highly motivated to do well and consequently teacher-student interactions were characterised by far more intensive learning interactions. In addition, the conduct of the student and their classroom behaviour was also taken into consideration in them being able to maintain the positions of privilege. Many teachers in specialist schools felt they had a real capacity to 'withdraw privileges[27]' which positively affected student behaviour. From a number of these schools, many teachers reportedly had far fewer

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[25] Western Sydney specialist school male teacher, 18 years' experience.
[26] Senior union official.
[27] South-western Sydney specialist school female teacher, 14 years' experience.

interactions that involved behavioural management or disciplining students in comparison to the teacher-student interactions in comprehensive schools or junior campuses.

Teachers in the specialist schools felt that they often did 'more one-on-one work' with those students who were 'struggling to keep their grades up'[28]. In specialist schools, many teachers, of both academic and specialist classes took on additional coaching of students to a much greater extent than they had in comprehensive schools in which they taught. This was particularly the case for teachers of academic subjects who had students who were struggling with maintaining required academic standards.

The nature of the student body in the selective and specialist schools also affected the extent to which teachers in these schools had to prepare for the classes they taught: again, teachers made comparisons with the classes they had taught when working in comprehensive schools. In selective schools, the need for preparation was driven by the extent to which academically gifted students got 'through work' at a faster past, were 'a lot more adventurous' with their learning and 'understood work' and the concepts being taught much 'more

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[28] Western Sydney specialist school male teacher, 18 years' experience.

quickly'[29]. These students required a much greater volume and variety of classroom work to keep them occupied, interested and challenged. The higher academic ability of these students, the strong competition between students, and the desire to perform well meant that teachers had to ensure that they had sufficient work of a complex nature to keep students engaged. Teachers had to be better prepared for every class so that students could be stretched to their full capacity.

> …if you're not well prepared, quite often you'll find you run out of things to do and that's one of the problems because they just take activities and do them very quickly…and they show more initiative in how they want to do things… you need to mix things up...you can't just do the same thing for whole period (Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 32 years' experience).

In specialist schools, however, the need for teachers to be better prepared for lessons compared with teachers in comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses was related to the disruption created by other activities. These other activities were related to the specific curriculum area in which the school specialised. These specialist related activities – particularly those related to sports or performing arts activities – required the students to be absent from their regular classes periodically throughout the year. These absences required considerable advanced lesson planning and preparation on the part of teachers. All classes need to be prepared weeks in advance so that students could be given

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[29] Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 32 years' experience.

the relevant work to take with them when they went away to state, national and international competitions, forums, concerts, games and other such inter-school related activities. The need for preparation this far in advance placed considerable pressure on teachers in specialist schools. Many of these teachers reported having to be far more organised for their classes than they had needed to be in other types of public secondary schools where students' classroom attendance was not interrupted throughout the year due to other school related activities.

> ...it's very difficult to live week-to-week or, dare I say it, day-to-day... because there are students who are going to be away for a week or two. So it's extra work [for teachers]… you've really got to be on-the-ball as soon as you start to teach something because you know that there's going to be a period of time where...[some of the students] are going to be out and will need to take work with them... (Western Sydney specialist school male teacher, 18 years' experience).

Student maturity and exams

In senior campuses, the student body, was, of course, comprised entirely of students in Years 11 and 12. While there was some tendency for the senior campuses to attract students from the local comprehensive schools, on the whole, the capability of the students in the senior campuses was not reported by teachers to be significantly different from the senior students in the comprehensive schools. The experience of the teachers in senior campuses nevertheless, differed; most notably in comparison with the experience of

teachers from comprehensive schools. For teachers in senior campuses 'all of the students… are focussed on the Year 12 HSC final exams'[30]; whether that was the early stages of preparation for Year 11 students or the final stages of preparation for Year 12 students.

Across all school types, all teachers noted a fundamental difference in teaching senior students compared with teaching junior students. The senior students, particularly the Year 12 students, were reportedly and understandably, more focussed on grades and sought more feedback about class work compared with students in junior years. This increased need for more feedback among senior students was driven by the pressure to do well in the final Year 12 exams. The pressure on students, however, translated into pressure for the teachers who were working to prepare these young people for these important exams.

For the senior campus teachers, the level and intensity of the lesson preparation and delivery, the greater intensity of the assessment process and the interactions with senior students that were related to these activities did not differ fundamentally from the experiences they had while teaching in comprehensive schools. The difference for teachers in senior campuses compared with teachers in comprehensive schools was that, for senior campus teachers, *all* of the students

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[30] Western Sydney senior campus female teacher, 16 years' experience.

they taught were affected by the 'more stressful'[31] pressures of the HSC. For these teachers there was no respite in the teaching of the less intense junior classes.

> It's all about the HSC (exams) – every class; even the Year 11's. While they're still a year away from the real pressure, the pressure is still there for them; and for us. [In a senior campus] there are no junior classes where it's more kick-back…[here] it's all about trying to make sure that every single kid you teach gets the best marks they can in the HSC (Western Sydney senior campus male teacher, 24 years' experience).

The tendency for teachers to feel that they have to focus their instruction on exam content at the expense of pedagogical innovation (Hargreaves 1988) was a significant for teachers.

> Obviously, when you teach senior classes, you unfortunately have to teach towards the exam...what I do is I strip [the syllabus] to the bare bones and only do what I know they need to do for the exam: instead of all the curriculum enhancements that are supposed to be in there that I know [the student's] don't want to do and that aren't going to help them in any way. I look at the things that they really need and just give them that...I work backwards from the exam (Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience).

This focus on the exam results has also concentrated teachers' efforts into ensuring that the overall academic achievement of the school is enhanced. This was particularly the case in schools that were trying to improve their academic reputation and attract out-of-area students:

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[31] Western Sydney senior campus male teacher, 24 years' experience.

> ...historically, over the years, what we've been doing is lifting our bottom 10 per cent in terms of their performance in state wide external exams... so you'd prepare and be teaching with one eye on that exam because it's [that's] the tangible thing...and we have fewer students now who are below the state average...we found we needed to do that after we became a [specialist] high; lift our standard academically...to attract the talent (Western Sydney specialist school male teacher, 18 years' experience).

In the comprehensive schools and junior campuses that have significant concentrations of students with learning difficulties and behavioural problems, however, teachers must revert to the 'old school way of doing things...[such as] rote learning techniques…and repetition; going over the same material again and again'[32]. These techniques are aimed at ensuring that these students can at least grasp the fundamentals of a challenging centralised curriculum that is academically oriented. For teachers of these students, their focus is on ensuring that students can recognise the content and material that will be included in standardised exams.

> For most of our kids, [the curriculum] is really challenging and you wonder 'how are they every going to get this?'...part of the exam is going to be unseen material...so we do rote learning with all our kids [so they] can at least spot a simile and a metaphor...and, when they get to the exam, can explain the effect of it (South-western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 28 years' experience)

The nature of the student body and the teacher-student interactions created an experience of teaching that varied between the selective schools and specialist

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[32] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 13 years' experience.

schools and senior campuses. The efforts expended by teachers in these types of schools was very much focussed on supporting students who were anxious to achieve and about trying to manage and create realistic expectations among students and parents. Relative to the selective and specialist schools and senior campuses however, the nature of the student body and the teacher-student interactions in comprehensive schools and junior campuses created experiences for teachers that were fundamentally different again.

The defining feature of the difference between the experiences of teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses, compared with the experiences of teachers in selective and specialist schools and senior campuses was related to the behavioural management of students. In the comprehensive schools and junior campuses, issues with student misbehaviour affected all of the teachers interviewed, if not directly then indirectly, through the experiences of friends and colleagues. Intensive behavioural management of students required different levels of emotional energy and the use of different emotional skills from teachers.

Behavioural problems and discipline

Teachers from selective and specialist schools and senior campuses were unanimous in their reports of the extent to which the behavioural management of students was much less of an issue than it was for teachers in comprehensive

schools and junior campuses. Teachers who were working in selective or specialist schools or senior campuses often considered and discussed their own previous experiences of having taught in local comprehensive schools both in the area and in other locations in the state.

Selective and specialist school teachers and senior campus teachers frequently reported that one of the significant advantages of teaching in these types of schools was that they had 'no' or 'very few and sporadic issues'[33] with student behaviour. This was in marked contrast to the extent to which disciplining students, in comprehensive schools and junior campuses, was reportedly an integral part of day-to-day classroom and playground experiences of teachers. One teacher's explanation summed up this experience when comparing the time he spent working in a number of local comprehensive schools to his experience in working in the selective school in which he was currently teaching:

> At [three local comprehensive schools] I spent probably three-quarters of the day disciplining students…[compared] to coming here [a local selective school] whereby, discipline, I'm glad to say, is a very minor part of my day… here I have only one or two kids in *all* of my classes that are disinterested in being at school. In [the other local comprehensive schools] there'd a number of these kids in every class (Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 26 years' experience).

These sentiments reflected fundamental differences in the nature of the student bodies in comprehensive schools and junior campuses compared with the

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[33] Western Sydney selective school teacher, 32 years' experience.

student bodies in selective and specialist schools and senior campuses. These sentiments resonated across the vast majority of teachers in the study. The comprehensive schools and junior campuses, in western and south-western Sydney were seen by the teachers as having 'more behaviourally disordered children than…ever before'[34]. The concentration of these difficult students within single classrooms was directly related by teachers to the de-zoning and restructuring and had a substantial negative affect on the experiences of both the teachers and the students. Teachers reported increased stress levels that were directly related to the increase in the concentration of difficult students. The consequence of the increase in difficult and challenging students was not only related to classroom disruption but to the extent to which the curriculum could be covered.

> Sometimes we'll now have three or four or even five students in a classroom that are emotionally disturbed children or have special needs and it makes it very very hard and very very stressful; not only on the teacher but on the other students too. It affects what you can actually do in the class; you have to curtail a lot of your curriculum to cater for these children who are just disturbed and [are] disturbing others (South-western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 28 years' experience).

In comprehensive schools and junior campuses the effect of the greater concentration of difficult students permeated the student body as a whole and was believed to generally lowering the motivation of all students. In junior

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[34] Western Sydney comprehensive school teacher, 31 years' experience.

campuses, the 'immaturity of the kids'[35] created even more of a challenge. Many of the teachers in these schools were concerned about the age segregation in the campuses. These teachers felt that the absence of senior students left a 'lack of mature role models'[36] who could 'pull the smart arses into line'[37] and that this outcome of age segregation was detrimental to the students. As with comprehensive school teachers, many of the junior campus teachers reported that the 'good kids'[38] they had in their classes struggled because of the challenges created by the growing concentration of disruptive students.

All teachers reported that there were students in every class who behaved and who really tried with their lessons. However, in a classroom with 'four or five real trouble makers' the students who were trying to concentrate would 'struggle to stay focussed'[39] with the level of disruption that could be created by these challenging students. The emotional labour demanded of these teachers with these types of classes was not just focussed on managing disruptive behaviour from students but also on trying to keep other students focussed, motivated and learning. Related, however, to the behavioural problems amongst many of the students in these schools was a significant increase in student-related violence.

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[35] Western Sydney junior campus male teacher, 9 years' experience.
[36] Western Sydney junior campus female teacher, 12 years' experience.
[37] South-western Sydney junior campus male teacher, 2 years' experience.
[38] Western Sydney junior campus female teacher, 12 years' experience.
[39] South-western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 24 years' experience.

Verbal abuse and violence

Verbal and physical abuse or assault from students, and in some cases from parents, was another significant point of difference in the experiences of teachers in the different types of public secondary schools. Teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses, and in particular in the types of schools that had a significant over-representation of the more difficult students, were faced with alarming levels of violence from students and from parents. While the reported threats from parents were predominantly related to verbal abuse there were also incidences reported in which parents had made physical threats directly to teachers.

Verbal abuse and physical threats from students however, were disconcertingly common in comprehensive schools and junior campuses. Reports of assault and abuse were related by the vast majority of teachers and it was reportedly not uncommon for the situation to get to a point where teachers had to take out an Apprehended Violence Orders (AVO) against students. In some instances, particularly where weapons were involved, incidents of student violence towards teachers and towards other students carried the very real possibility of severe physical injury and even fatality. Teachers, however, had few if any mechanisms at their disposal to diffuse violent and volatile situations and

teachers often lamented that university studies left them completely unskilled and ill-prepared for dealing with such high levels of conflict.

Among teachers across western and south-western Sydney, it was common knowledge which schools in the area had greater concentrations of the more difficult and violent students. The factors that contribute to particular schools having greater concentrations of difficult students are complex and interrelated. On the one hand, as already discussed, the increasing loss of more able students who could act as positive role models to other students was seen by teachers as a clear contributing factor to a decline in the behaviour of the remaining student body. Another contributing factor was that some of these schools were in areas in which there were greater concentrations of families who were dealing with multiple and often inter-generational forms of social and economic disadvantage. The additional problem created by increasing numbers of disruptive students was that it was affecting the capacity of these schools to maintain student enrolments.

Declining standards and maintaining student enrolments

The issue of maintaining student enrolments was related to a number of concerns raised by many of the comprehensive school and junior campus teachers. These teachers perceived that the greater choice in public secondary schools, that was

now available to students through the restructuring and increased capacity to change schools due to de-zoning, meant that more able students were leaving the comprehensive schools and junior campuses in increasing numbers. Those students with the ability or talent were leaving for selective and specialist schools and those students who weren't gifted or talented enough to get into these schools were leaving the public system altogether in favour of the private system.

Within the comprehensive schools and junior campuses this steady drain, of the more able and focussed students, was seen by teachers to be affecting 'the standards of the students left'[40]. The loss of the more focussed students created a situation in which the steadily declining standard and increasing disruption due to higher concentrations of students who required significant behavioural management meant that even more parents were opting to remove their children from comprehensive schools.

> With more and more students going to private or selective schools, it affects the standard of the students left because you **haven't** got anyone there to raise the level and provide the competition or to model the kind of behaviour expected…any 'good' kids that are left are getting overwhelmed just as much as we are and then we end up losing them too. It's a vicious cycle (South-western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 20 years' experience).

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[40] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 30 years' experience.

There were comprehensive schools in western and south-western Sydney in which teachers reported that the nature and extent of behavioural issues among students were not as extreme as in other local comprehensive schools. Nevertheless, in many of these schools, the loss of the gifted and talented students was still notable. Teachers reported that the decline in the number of highly academic students they were teaching was due to the selective schools having attracted them away from the comprehensive schools. This was the case, even in comprehensive schools that had good reputations and 'out-of-area students queuing to get in'[41]. A teacher from one of the reputable comprehensive schools noted that while the students were 'appreciative of what you do for them' they 'weren't wildly motivated'[42].

> It's not like teaching at [a local selective school] where you've got 90% Asian kids who are all fiercely academically motivated. [Our students are] not wanting to charge ahead…and from that point of view you sometimes need to give them a bit of a prod (Western Sydney comprehensive school teacher, 29 years' experience).

Further, however, teachers believed that competition in the public education sector had contributed to the waning reputation of traditional comprehensive schools. The practice of 'creaming' students (Whitty 1997) was perceived to be far reaching with teachers reporting difficulties in attracting the most able local students. For parents who are highly motivated by academic achievement, but

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[41] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 15 years' experience.
[42] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.

whose child fails to gain a place in the selective system, many of the local

traditional comprehensive schools were viewed as unsuitable.

> …parents know full-well which schools get the grades and if their kid
> doesn't get into a selective and they can't get them into one of the
> really good comprehensives, then they go private (South-western
> Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 17 years' experience).

As has been discussed, the factors contributing to disruption and violence from

student body in comprehensive schools and junior campuses were related to

increased concentrations of difficult students. These challenges were more acute

in some comprehensive schools and junior campuses than other types of schools.

The extent to which these challenges affected individual teachers however, also

varied and the differences in individual teacher experience were widely

recognised to be related to a teacher's skills and experience. Some teachers, by

their own admission, were 'formidable in front of a class room'[43] and would have

few problems maintaining discipline. This belief that the skills and experience of

a teacher could significantly affect the level of control a teacher had in the

classroom was widely recognised. Many teachers had never gained these skills

or were still inexperienced and, therefore, struggled to maintain authority. In

addition, the overall level of experience of the teaching staff and of the executive

within any particular school was believed to greatly affect the behaviour of the

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[43] South-western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 22 years' experience.

broader student body. As will be discussed in more detail later in the *Staffing Profile* section of this chapter however, maintaining an experienced staffing complement was more challenging in comprehensive schools and junior campuses than in selective and specialist schools and senior campuses.

Parents

Across the different types of public secondary schools the nature and extent to which parents adopted an instrumental in their approach to their child's schooling was apparent.

Teachers in selective schools reported that the parents with children in these schools were far more demanding with regard to the individual attention they expect their child to receive. These parents also, however, expected that at the class- and school-levels teachers would put in additional time and effort beyond that expected in other types of schools.

> ...we probably now [have] 230 students coming to school on the last day.... the parent's demand it so we've had to respond...this year, the last two days of Term Four are a Monday and a Tuesday...we'll have normal lessons on both those days... because parents don't want [their kids] having the attitude that because it's the last day of school they can just stay at home or goof off at school...the students come in expecting to do work...in each period across the day. (Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 26 years' experience).

Teachers' in selective schools recognised that responding to these kinds of parental demands was required to remain competitive and to retain students. However, in comprehensive schools and junior campuses, and to some extent in specialist schools, teachers were more likely to report that parents were disengaged. The exception, however, was when student disciplinary matters came to the fore. On these kinds of matters, teachers consistently reported they would get a 'guaranteed response'[44] from parents; and this was frequently led to negative parent-teacher interactions:

> ...it's the only time you hear from parents – when their kid is in trouble. And then they can be very combative...I've been called all sorts of names and abused by parents (Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 25 years' experience).

Staffing profile

There were a number of factors related to the staffing profile of the school that highlighted differences between different types of schools. These were related to teacher turnover, the nature and extent of support teachers felt they received and the level of experience across a school's teaching workforce. The challenges faced in different types of schools also affected the extent to which schools could attract and retain qualified and experienced teaching staff.

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[44] Western Sydney specialist school male teacher, 18 years' experience.

Teacher turnover

Teacher turnover in schools varied significantly between the different types of public secondary schools. It was regularly noted by teachers from all types of schools, that the selective schools and senior campuses were the most desirable schools in which to work. To get a position in a selective school in particular it was commonly felt by teachers that you had to 'wait for someone to die'[45] and it was far more likely for these schools to report low turnover; which brought its own challenges related to the lack of new skills and experience being brought into selective schools. Some teachers within the selective and specialist schools even reported seriously considering *not* applying for a promotion on the grounds that they might be transferred out of their current school and, in all likelihood, back into a comprehensive school. In contrast, the teacher turnover in specialist schools and senior campuses and in many comprehensive schools was reportedly more related to teachers leaving to gain positions of promotion in other schools.

In some comprehensive schools and junior campuses however, teacher turnover was considered a significant issue. It was frequently discussed that in the most difficult of the comprehensive schools and junior campuses teachers applied for

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[45] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 14 years' experience.

transfer 'just to get out'[46] of the particular school in which they were working. In many of these instances teachers were known to have transferred to similar positions in 'better schools'[47] and others were applying for transfers as soon as they were eligible. The transfer system within NSW public secondary schools required, in the main, that teachers work for three years within a school before they could apply for a transfer. The comprehensive schools and junior campuses with the most difficult student body had staff turnover rates that reflected the conditions of the transfer system.

> In the five years I've been [here] I can name maybe three or four staff that were here when I started and who are still here…that's out of 80 odd teachers. Some [of those that have left] have sought promotional positions in other schools but most just transfer out as soon as they can (Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 13 years' experience).

Reflecting the high turnover, teachers in these schools discussed at length the inexperience of the teaching staff in these most challenging of schools. New university graduates would often accept a posting to these schools in order to secure a position with the NSW Department of Education and Training. However, their experiences in these schools were typically extremely negative and many of those working in the most challenging comprehensive schools and junior campuses said that they were 'hanging on by a thread' and 'desperate to

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[46] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience.
[47] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 5 years' experience.

transfer out'[48]. A teacher in one of these schools summed up the general attitude of many of these new and inexperienced teachers from these schools:

> I've been here 18 months…and I'm hanging on by a thread at the moment…at the moment I'm thinking as soon as I can I'll transfer out of here but I may not last 'till then. As dedicated as I am to public education, I've also seriously considered just going to a private school. I don't know if I can take it for another 18 months (Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 18 months' experience).

The high teacher turnover in these comprehensive schools and junior campuses created a different kind of vicious cycle that compounded the cycle of declining student enrolments. The schools that were well known for their problems with difficult students, not surprisingly, found it extremely difficult to attract and retain experienced teachers. Another significant factor contributing to the high teacher turnover was poor workplace and departmental support that could assist with these difficult students.

Lack of appropriate support

Despite departmental policy that aims to provide additional staffing resources for those classrooms with the most challenging students, teachers often reported that these resources were insufficient or unavailable. Reports of severely behaviourally disruptive students being in regular classroom situations with no additional teaching support were common. A critical incident report by one

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[48] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience.

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teacher highlights the challenges faced by many teachers in western and south-

western Sydney comprehensive schools and junior campuses.

> Yesterday…I had one child who went off...he lost it completely. Picking up chairs, hurling them across the room, upending tables, punching into doors and walls…screaming 'fuck off' into my face...So while I'm watching him I'm trying to get the other…kids out of the situation…but he's not letting them leave. He's running through the workshop picking up chisels, picking up hammers…blocks of wood, waving them around…really dangerous. And I… follow him, stand within his range so if anything leaves his hands it hits me and not one of the kids. Seriously, I'm beside myself. I'm not a psychologist, I'm not a police officer, I'm a teacher. And I know that if any of those children who are in my care gets hurt, I am responsible and I'm liable (Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience).

The emotional labour required to deal with situations like these highlights the

extent to which teachers are often required to monitor the personal safety of

themselves, the other students, and the violent student. But teachers frequently

reported that despite the fact that specialist support staff are known to make a

key difference in a classroom with difficult, challenging or special needs

students, this kind of support was not generally available. In addition there was

a lack of appropriate departmental policies, school procedures or teacher training

that provided guidance on how to deal with these types of student behaviours.

In the incident related above, the inexperienced teacher involved was

overwhelmed by the gravity of the situation and there was no clear procedure

for her to follow to either diffuse the situation or to get assistance. Her first

response was to 'scribble a note' and send a 'one of the kids who could be

trusted' to look for the head teacher or the principal. However, help was delayed in coming as the principal actually replied saying he was busy on other matters and would 'get there as soon as [he] could'[49].

The lack of school procedures and the extent to which school principals and, indeed, the Department rely on the skill and experience of teachers to defuse situations like this was widely discussed by teachers in this study. Teachers who had faced similar highly volatile and violent situations were often traumatised by the experiences and then further traumatised by the lack of support or assistance. Following incidents like this one there was little if any opportunity for 'debriefing' and frequently teachers just had to 'go straight to the next class'[50]. The teacher involved in this incident had been told by the Deputy Principal to 'not take it personally' as the difficulties with this particular student were well known as there 'had been these problems since primary school'[51]. This particular student had also been sent to his next class where he 'lost it again'[52]. Following the second incident he was sent home and placed on a long suspension. Nevertheless, the incident highlights the inadequacies of any policies that should provide additional support for troubled students but actually fails to deliver on that support.

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[49] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience.
[50] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 13 years' experience.
[51] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience.
[52] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience.

Violence from students was a particular issue where a number of teachers from comprehensive schools and junior campuses felt unsupported by the executive in their school. Many teachers lamented that there were few organisations that would accept their staff being exposed to working conditions that posed such significant and regular occupational health and safety risks. Nevertheless, instead of being resourced to provide adequate support for students like these, principals were forced to adopt their own informal measures for managing the most troubled students.

Related to the critical incident reported above, the teacher involved was hoping that the Principal would be able to 'convince another school to take'[53] the student involved. Other teachers who worked in difficult comprehensive schools or junior campuses reported that it was 'common practice' for the most difficult students to be transferred from one school to another in a kind of 'exchange system'[54]. Principals from the same local area would 'swap'[55] their most difficult students in an effort to break negative teacher-student and student-student relationships and dynamics. While this practice might remove the immediate problem it is far from a suitable solution. Aside from this practice not addressing the behavioural issues of concern, it was recognised that it merely shifted the

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[53] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 2.5 years' experience.
[54] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 13 years' experience.
[55] Regional union organiser.

problem to another school. Teachers and the school executive knew that as they moved one difficult student on, they would need to accept 'another time bomb'[56] in return.

Teacher experience

Teachers felt that even with a lack of specialist resources, there were mediating factors that could positively influence difficult and violent students. In this regard, the experience of individual teachers, the teaching staff in general and the school executive (including the principal and deputy principal/s) were seen as being pivotal in being able to set the culture of a school.

Many of the teachers, amongst both the experienced and inexperienced, recognised that the classroom management techniques of individual teachers could substantially influence the level of disruption in a particular class. But across a school there were significant advantages to having a broader teaching staff that comprised a majority of experienced teaching. Such as staffing profile could establish a general school culture that set expectations among the student body of acceptable behaviour. Regardless of the experience of the teaching staff or individuals however, a strong, skilled, experienced and supportive executive

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[56] Senior union official.

was seen as pivotal in setting the tone for both student behaviour and the required level of management from the teaching staff.

As many teachers reported, the combination of a concentration of difficult students, low overall cumulative teaching experience, and an executive that was not able to provide an appropriate level of support was 'a recipe for disaster'[57]. The problem was seen to be related to students in these schools attending greater numbers of classes that were disrupted by unacceptable behaviour. In these schools, the expectations that teachers established with regard to student behaviour and classroom rules were inconsistently applied from one lesson to the next. With many teachers lacking suitable control the overall level of control in the school was lowered and even the most experienced teachers found managing challenging student behaviour difficult. There were numerous anecdotes of 'burnout'[58], 'nervous breakdowns'[59] and highly experienced teachers being 'off on stress leave'[60] in these particularly difficult comprehensive schools and junior campuses because of a general culture in which students knew they could 'get away with'[61] completely unacceptable behaviour.

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[57] Senior union official.
[58] Western Sydney junior campus female teacher, 6 years' experience.
[59] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.
[60] Western Sydney comprehensive school male teacher, 13 years' experience.
[61] Western Sydney junior campus female teacher, 6 years' experience.

I have a colleague who works at [local comprehensive school]…been teaching for 25 years…he's a great teachers, knows how to handle kids…but there was a Year 7 class at…they were just animals. He had no support from the boss or the deputy and he was shattered…he's off on stress leave…and that's the situation in many western suburbs [comprehensive] schools (Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience).

Attracting and retaining teachers

In many instances junior campuses struggled with the same issues as comprehensive schools in attracting and retaining experienced staff. In the junior campuses, however, attracting and retaining staff was also significantly affected by the very nature of the school. Many teachers, regardless of the type of school in which they taught, recognised the career-limiting nature of a junior campus appointment and 'career suicide'[62] was often mentioned in relation to teaching positions in these schools. The complete lack of capacity and loss of experience in the senior curriculum made it extremely difficult for teachers from junior campuses to transfer to any other type of school that required teaching of the senior curriculum. While there were departmental policies that were aimed at ensuring that junior campus teachers were rotated onto the senior campus on a regular basis, in reality these rotations only occurred infrequently. Teacher turnover in junior campuses, therefore, was reportedly very high.

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[62] Western Sydney junior campus female teacher, 12 years' experience.

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As with trying to attract and retain experienced teachers, some of the schools with the most challenging students also found it difficult to attract and retain experienced principals and deputy principals. In this study, there were teachers, from each type of public secondary school, who spoke highly of the principals and deputy principals in their schools. There was a distinct difference, however, in reports from teachers from selective and specialist schools and those from comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses.

Teachers from selective and specialist schools were unanimous in speaking very highly of their executive and in feeling that suitably experienced staff had been appointed to these positions. In contrast, the reports from teachers in comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses, was much more varied with regard to the management and leadership skills of the executive. Overall, it was generally felt that the most difficult schools not only had an over-concentration of the most challenging students, but also an over-concentration of the most inexperienced staff.

Modelling domains of difference by type of school

The findings from the qualitative research discussed above highlight that teachers' experiences differ substantially across four broad domains dependent on the type of public secondary school in which they teach. The findings, however, also illustrate that across the domains it is not possible to definitively classify the experience a teacher will have in each type of public secondary school. As has been shown, teachers in comprehensive schools, for example, could have vastly different experiences that were related to the nature of the student body because of the moderating effect of both individual and school level factors. At an aggregate level the differences in teaching experiences that are dependent on the type of school lie on a continuum in which the likelihood of an experience appears to be significantly influenced by the type of school. At one end of the continuum were the experiences of the academic selective school teachers where work with students was comprised almost entirely of teaching in an environment of intense learning. At the other end of the continuum were the experiences of teachers in some of the comprehensive schools and junior campuses that reflected a work environment focussed on managing behavioural problems and disciplining students.

This continuum is modelled in Figure 5.1 and shows the spectrum of teacher experiences across four specific domains.

1. student profile (nature of the student body);

2. teacher-student interactions;

3. staff profile, and

4. market pressures.

While the extremes in each of these domains were certainly pronounced and readily identifiable in experiences reported by teachers in the different types of schools, there were also some similarities in teacher experiences across different schools. At the top of the Figure 5.1, the range of experiences likely to occur in each type of school is depicted in the overlapping bands. The four domains across which the nature of the experience differs for teachers in each type of school are expressed in the bottom of the figure.

For example, in the domain of student profile, the model shows that in comprehensive schools in western and south-western Sydney, teachers were likely to experience a range of different student profiles related to the nature of the student body. The profile of the student body ranged from one that was characterised by low academic ability and motivation through to a profile characterised by higher levels of academic ability and motivation. It also,

however, reflects the finding that in comprehensive schools very few teachers are

exposed to substantial concentrations of students with very high levels of

academic ability and motivation

Figure 5.1: Range of teacher experiences by school type across the different domains.

Type of public secondary school

Selective

Senior

Specialist

Comprehensive

Junior

Domains	Range of experience	
student profile	high academic ability high motivation	low academic ability low motivation
teacher-student interaction	intensive learning	intensive behavioural management
	rapid progression through lessons	repetition of lessons
staff profile	low turnover experienced teachers	high turnover inexperienced teachers
market pressures and competition	waiting lists and competitive selection	struggling to maintain enrolments

As has been discussed, teacher-student interactions were highly dependent on the nature of the student body. At one extreme were teacher experiences that were characterised by students who were focussed on intensive learning in which marks, grades and/or performance in class – whether that was academic classes or classes aimed at specific talents or abilities of students – were highly valued by students. In these schools there was rapid progression through greater volumes of new and more complex classroom work. At the other end of the spectrum however, students were more likely to have lower ability and motivation and teachers' interaction with students were much more likely to be dominated by intensive behavioural management and discipline. In these classes, teachers reported they were constantly repeating relatively simple lessons as students struggled to concentrate and/or understand the work required.

The types of schools were also readily differentiated by the staffing profiles of the schools as represented by teacher experience and tenure within the school. In the selective schools, in particular, teachers reported very low teacher turnover and much greater stability in the school staffing. Low turnover coincided with high proportions of teachers who had many years of teaching experience. In some instances, however, it was highlighted that very low turnover was not

necessarily a positive outcome as it prevented 'new blood'[63] – new teachers, with

new ideas and methods – from coming into the school. It also meant that in some

schools there was a much greater problem with an aging teacher population.

Throughout the other types of schools, teacher turnover ranged considerably. In

schools with high concentrations of difficult students and/or with poor perceived

support from the executive, turnover was much higher. These schools were

much more likely to be either comprehensive schools or junior campuses. The

outcome for schools with high teacher turnover was that the cumulative teaching

experience in these schools was often very low.

The final domain in which there was substantial variability between the types of

schools was that which was discussed first in this chapter; the nature of the

struggles with market dynamics and the introduction of competitive forces

within public education. All public secondary schools, regardless of type, were

facing market-based pressures related to attracting and retaining students. With

competitive selection into selective schools based on a state-wide exam and

significantly greater numbers of students applying to these schools each year

than places available, there was no problem attracting student numbers.

Nevertheless, selective schools had to differentiate from other selective schools

and, to some extent, high performing private schools to attract and retain 'the

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[63] Western Sydney selective school male teacher, 26 years' experience.

best' students. In these schools, the students themselves, and the grades they received in the final Year 12 exam was the greatest marketing tool.

Teachers in this study who were from specialist schools also reported that with there were no problems attracting students. Selection into specialist schools was determined at the local school level through criteria developed by the relevant teachers and/or coaches in the school. The specialist schools, however, had competition for students from some comprehensive high schools that, while not technically specialist high schools, also excelled in particular non-academic fields such as arts, sports or languages. For both selective schools and specialist schools, the student body came from a much larger geographic area than comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses. Therefore, these schools not only had to compete for students with other local schools but with a much larger range of schools outside the local area.

For comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses, competition for students was much more immediate. For these schools there was competition from all other public secondary schools and from all schools within the private sector. 'Show-casing'[64] through specialist areas in which the school excelled was the main method used by these schools to attract and retain student numbers.

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[64] Western Sydney comprehensive school female teacher, 29 years' experience.

But in the senior years, many comprehensive schools struggled to compete to retain senior students if there was a local senior campus in the area.

Conclusion

The qualitative findings discussed in this chapter highlight how structural changes within the NSW public secondary school system have led to variations in the experiences of teachers across the different types of schools. While at the individual level the differences in teachers' experiences can vary significantly, at the aggregate level, variations in experience can be clearly discerned across four specific domains related to the students, the teachers and the market pressures that are exerted by different demand and supply factors.

In the following chapters, these differences in teachers' experiences will be tested further by analysing the survey data through descriptive analysis and logistic regression modelling techniques.

Chapter 6 – The extent of differences in teachers' work

This chapter presents the key descriptive analyses from the survey results. The descriptive analyses explore all of the main themes covered in the survey. These themes relate to workload and staffing issues, the perceived ongoing viability of the school, the nature of the student body and teachers' perceptions of the effect that increased choices for students within the public secondary school system has had on both teachers and students. The survey included several questions that covered each of these themes. In presenting these results, this chapter does not provide an analysis of every item that was included in the survey. Rather, the results from key questions that are indicative of the general pattern of responses for each of the main themes are discussed (see Appendix H for a complete set of cross-tabulated tables of each item by type of school).

While there are numerous individual characteristics that may be associated with different experiences of teaching (e.g. age and gender), the research question of particular interest in this study was: do the experiences of teachers in western and south-western Sydney vary by the type of school in which they work? To explore this question, the experiences and perceptions of teachers from each of the different types of public secondary schools (comprehensive, specialist, and selective schools, and junior and senior college campuses) are explored.

The demographic characteristics of teachers are discussed in the *Respondent characteristics* section to see whether 'type of school' is associated with particular staffing profiles. In this first section, some of the operational aspects of teaching, such as teaching load as represented by number of classes, and number of students taught are also examined.

The second section of this chapter – *School and student characteristics* – presents teachers' perceptions of the school and student body. This section examines issues related to the perceived pressures the school is under with regard to student enrolments, and attracting and retaining teaching staff. The main focus of this section, however, is on examining the factors related to the student population that contribute to the general experience of teaching. This includes an analysis of teachers' perceptions of the extent to which increases in the number of selective schools in NSW have improved the experiences of students.

Teacher tasks and experiences shifts the focus of analysis to issues specifically related to the teachers. This section begins by exploring the frequency with which various administrative and operational tasks are performed. It then examines the perceived support that teachers receive, and the extent to which teachers take leave to get relief from workplace stress. Also examined in this

section are issues related to teacher retention and preferences regarding the types of secondary schools in which teachers would consider working.

The final section summarises the main conclusions from the chapter and discusses the issues that will be explored in greater depth through logistic regression modelling in Chapter 7.

Respondent characteristics

Type of school

Almost three-quarters (73%) of all teachers surveyed taught in comprehensive schools (see Table 6.1). Among the remaining respondents, six per cent taught in selective schools, 11 per cent taught in specialist schools, and 10 per cent taught in multi-campus colleges. As a proportion of all respondents, the teachers in the multi-campus colleges were evenly divided with five per cent of teachers working junior campuses and five per cent working in senior campuses.

Table 6.1: Type of secondary school in which teachers worked

Type of school	count	%
Comprehensive	782	73
Specialist	67	6
Selective	115	11
*Multi-campus colleges**	*106*	*10*
Junior campus	54	5
Senior campus	52	5
Total	1,070	100

Note: *The junior campuses in this sample cater to Years 7 to 10 and the senior campuses cater to Years 11 to 12.
Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Table 6.2 shows the staffing profile of the various types of secondary school. Teacher demographic characteristics are presented, including gender, age, tenure (both with respect to current job and with respect to the teaching profession), role, and employment status.

Gender

In line with increasingly female representation in the teaching profession, almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) were women. When comparing different types of schools, the only noteworthy difference in the gender composition of different schools was between selective schools and senior campuses with women comprising 67 per cent of teachers in senior colleges compared to the 57 per cent in selective schools.

Age

The aging of NSW public secondary school teachers was also apparent with just over half (51%) of all respondents aged 45 years or older. There were, however, a range of age differences between the different types of schools. The age profile of teachers in selective and senior campuses was considerably older than the age profile of teachers in other types of schools. Approximately two thirds of teachers in senior colleges (67%) and selective schools (66%) were aged over 45. In comparison, just under half of the teachers in comprehensive schools (48%) and specialist schools (49%) were over the age of 45, and only 45 per cent of teachers in junior colleges were aged over 45 (see Table H2 in Appendix H for a complete breakdown of all age groups).

Tenure

Respondents were asked how long they had been teaching in their current school. In selective schools, less than one in ten teachers (9%) had taught in the school for less than two years compared to approximately two in ten teachers in comprehensive schools (18%). With regard to long tenure, teachers in selective schools were much more likely to have taught in their current school for more than ten years (42% compared to an overall average of 31%). The findings

indicate that teacher turnover in selective schools is substantially lower than turnover in other types of schools.

To gain an indication of total years of experience, respondents were also asked how long they had been in the teaching profession. Not surprisingly, given the age profile of teachers in the different types of schools, teachers in selective schools and senior campuses had been in the teaching profession longer than teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses. Almost eight out of ten teachers in selective schools and senior campuses (77%) had been teaching for over ten years compared to almost seven out of ten teachers in comprehensive schools (68%) and specialist schools (67%) and only six out of ten teachers (59%) in junior campuses.

Experience in other schools

Despite their long tenure within the current school, teachers in selective schools and senior campuses were more likely than teachers in comprehensive schools to have taught in a different school (90% and 92% respectively in selective schools and senior campuses compared to 81% in comprehensive schools). Again, however, these findings reflect that, on average, teachers in selective schools and senior campuses were slightly older than teachers in other schools.

Role and employment status

It is important to note, particularly for the purposes of interpreting the results, that in each of the types of schools, there were no differences in the role or in the employment status of respondents. Approximately nine of ten respondents from each type of school (between 87% and 94%) were employed on a full-time basis. Similarly, there were only slight differences between different types of schools in the proportion of respondents who were classroom teachers. On average, two-thirds of all respondents were classroom teachers (66%) but this ranged from 63 per cent of respondents in junior campuses to 73 per cent of respondents in selective schools and senior campuses. The remaining respondents were head-teachers (22%), executives (principals and deputy principals, 7%), career's teachers or librarians (4%) or Student Teacher Learning Assistants (STLA 1%; see Table H2 in Appendix H).

Table 6.2: Demographic characteristics of respondents by type of school

	Type of school*					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Gender						
female	65	61	57	63	67	64
male	35	39	43	37	33	36
Age						
45 or older	48	49	66	45	67	51
Tenure - current school						
< 2 years	18	13	9	16	16	17
≥ 10 years	31	32	42	21	33	31
Tenure – teaching						
≥ 10 years	68	67	77	59	77	70
Experience teaching in other schools						
yes	81	84	90	87	92	83
Current role						
classroom teacher	64	70	73	63	73	66
Employment status						
full-time	87	87	88	94	94	88

Note*: In this, and all tables below, comp = comprehensive school; special = specialist school; select = selective school; junior = junior campus; senior = senior campus.
Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Class and student load

The extent to which teachers' workloads involved direct timetabled contact with students was explored by asking respondents to report on the number of 40-minute periods they taught per week and on the total number of students they were teaching in regular classes. While these metrics do not provide an exact measure of workload, they nevertheless provide initial indications of the total number of classes that teachers needed to prepare for each week, the face-to-face teaching hours, and class sizes.

As measured by hours of face-to-face teaching, and total number of students taught, teachers in selective schools and specialist schools reported substantially higher workloads involving direct timetabled contact with students (see Table 6.3). On average, eight out of ten teachers in selective schools (81%) and specialist schools (79%) taught 21 periods or more each week compared to seven out of ten teachers in comprehensive schools (72%), and approximately six out of ten teachers in junior (57%) and senior campuses (64%). Not surprisingly, therefore, teachers in selective and specialist schools also taught greater numbers of students per week compared to teachers in other schools (69% and 70% in selective and specialist schools respectively taught more than 110 students per week compared to an overall average of 56% of teachers across all schools who taught this many students).

Table 6.3: Number of periods and students taught by type of school

	Type of secondary school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
21+ periods taught per week	72	79	81	57	64	81
110+ students taught	56	70	69	56	16	56

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

School and student characteristics

Of particular interest were the characteristics of the schools in which teachers taught. In the following section – *School and student characteristics* – the more objective characteristics are explored. This includes whether or not the student body was sex segregated, the size of the student body, the number of teachers in the school, and the availability of opportunity classes[65] for students. Following from this are three sub-sections which explore the subjective characteristics of schools as measured by a range of teacher perceptions. Firstly, issues regarding student enrolments, and the ability of the different types of schools to attract and retain teaching staff, are examined in the section *Enrolments, teacher turnover and attracting new staff*. In the second sub-section *Nature of the student body*, teachers' perceptions of a range of factors that influence the student-teacher relationship are explored. These include the potential educational outcomes of students, teacher's perceptions of students' attitudes towards school, student initiated feedback, capacities to learn, and issues related to student and parent related violence. In the final sub-section *School choice and the student body*, the perceived extent to which increased choice in public secondary schooling has affected student outcomes and experiences are examined.

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[65] In NSW, opportunity classes provided accelerated learning for academically gifted Year 5 and 6 students.

School characteristics

Sex segregation

Teachers from comprehensive and specialist schools were more likely to be teaching in sex segregated schools than other teachers. A total of 16 per cent of comprehensive school teachers and 13 per cent of teachers in specialist schools taught in single-sex schools. Only two per cent of teachers in selective schools taught in single-sex schools while teachers in junior and senior campuses were only teaching in co-education schools (see Table 6.4).

School size

Specialist schools were reportedly larger than other types of public secondary school (80% of specialist school teachers reported that there were more than 900 students in their school compared to an average of 46% of teachers from all schools who reported a student body of this size; Table 6.4). Not surprisingly, single senior and junior campuses were smaller with only 8 per cent and 19 per cent respectively reporting more than 900 students in their campus. The most common size of the student body in junior and senior campuses was between 100 and 499 students; a third of teachers in each type of campus reported this many students (see Table H3 in Appendix H). However, with regard to junior and senior campuses it should be noted that when considered in terms of a multi-

campus college, in which there are likely to be multiple junior campuses and a single associated senior campus, collectively comprise the largest numbers of students. For example, Chifley College in western Sydney comprises five campuses; four of which cater to Years 7 to 10 and one that caters to Years 11 to 12. In total, Chifley College has over 2,500 students (NSW DET 2009)[66].

Unexpectedly, relative to the number of students, the size of the teaching workforce in each type of school did not directly correspond. While the specialist schools had the largest numbers of both students and teachers, junior campuses, with relatively low student numbers also had relatively large numbers of teachers. In junior campuses, 86 per cent of teachers reported more than 50 teachers in the school; numbers comparable to that of comprehensive schools (88%) in which there were much higher student numbers. This may reflect cross-campus working arrangements for teachers in junior campuses. If teachers work across different locations in given college, at any single college staffing numbers may appear inflated.

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[66] Aside from schools comprising a multi-campus college, the largest single public secondary school in NSW is Cherrybrook Technology High School in Sydney's outer northern suburbs with just of 1,800 students (NSW DET 2009).

Opportunity classes

Shown in Table 6.4, the extent to which teachers reported the existence of opportunity classes within their schools differed between the various types of public secondary schools. Teachers from selective and specialist schools were far more likely to report that there were opportunity classes available for the students in their schools compared to teachers from all other types of schools (79% and 72% respectively reported opportunity classes compared to an overall average of 58% of all respondents in other types of schools). Interestingly, opportunity classes were available to a far lesser extent in senior campuses (28% of teachers from senior campuses reported that opportunity classes were available).

Table 6.4: School characteristics by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
School is						
single sex	16	13	2	0	0	13
co-educational	84	87	98	100	100	87
900+ students in school	47	80	49	19	8	46
50+ teachers in school	88	95	94	44	86	87
School has opportunity classes	57	72	79	44	28	58

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Enrolments, staff turnover and attracting new staff

The ongoing potential viability of the different types of secondary schools was examined through a number of teacher perceptions including the extent to which the school could attract and retain student numbers, perceived issues with teacher turnover, and the extent to which the school could attract experienced staff (see Table 6.5).

Student enrolments

Across all types of secondary schools almost a third of all teachers (28%) reported that 'falling student enrolments' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue. However, only a very small minority of teachers in selective and specialist schools were concerned with attracting students (6% and 9% respectively reported falling student enrolments was either a 'substantial' or 'major' issue). In contrast, more teachers in comprehensive schools (31%) and in junior (30%) and senior (36%) campuses felt that 'falling student enrolments was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue.

Teacher turnover

High teacher turnover was much more of an issue in junior campuses than in all other types of secondary public schools. In junior campuses over two thirds

(68%) of teachers reported that 'high teacher turnover' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue compared to just over a third (38%) of all teachers. In addition, comprehensive and specialist school teachers (40% and 42% respectively) were more likely than senior campus teachers (22%) and selective school teachers (13%) to see 'high teacher turnover' as a 'substantial' or 'major' issue (see Table 6.5). Selective schools, however, were not without some problems with regard to teacher turnover although the perceived problems were related to insufficient turnover of staff. Almost a third of all teachers in selective schools (29%) reported that 'low teacher turnover' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue compared to 16 per cent of all teachers.

Attracting teachers, head teachers and principals

The extent to which different types of public secondary school were able to attract 'experienced' classroom teachers showed similar patterns to the responses reported on issues of teacher turnover. However, the extent to which problems of attracting staff was an issue was perceived to be greater than problems related to teacher retention and turnover. Across all schools, six out of ten (60%) teachers reported that 'attracting experienced classroom teachers' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue. However, an examination of the different types of schools showed that, compared to comprehensive schools (with 63% of teachers reporting it as a

'substantial' or 'major' issue), the problem of attracting experienced classroom teachers was much more of an issue in junior campuses (87%) and much less of an issue in specialist (47%) and selective (43%) schools, and senior campuses (30%).

Table 6.5: School viability issues by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Is a 'substantial' or 'major' issue	%	%	%	%	%	%
falling student enrolments	31	9	6	30	36	28
high teacher turnover	40	42	13	68	22	38
low teacher turnover	14	19	29	8	14	17
attracting classroom teachers	63	47	43	87	30	60

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Nature of the student body

A range of measures related to the nature of the student body were explored (see Table 6.6). Teachers were asked about the type and extent of feedback sought by students on school work, the perceived experiences and attitudes of students, and the broader educational engagement and potential outcomes of the students in their classes. In addition a range of questions examined student-related violence and interactions with parents.

There were substantial differences by school type with regard to these issues. The findings support the analysis of the qualitative phase of the study that showed that teachers in selective schools experience more intensive learning

related interactions with students than teachers in other types of public secondary school. In general, teachers in selective schools, and to some extent teachers in senior campuses and specialist schools, reported interactions that were characterised by students seeking additional feedback on classroom work, grades, and assignments, and that would lead to higher potential academic outcomes for students, than teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools, and junior campuses. In comparison, there was also some support for the hypothesis posed in the model generated from the qualitative phase, that teachers in junior campuses and comprehensive schools experience more intensive interactions with students that are focussed on behavioural management than teachers in other types of schools. Teachers in junior campuses, and to some extent teachers in comprehensive schools, were much more likely to report issues related to behavioural management and the social welfare of students.

Student initiated feedback on learning

Teachers' interactions with students over various learning related activities differed substantially between the different types of schools. In general, teachers in selective schools and to a lesser extent, teachers in senior campuses and specialist schools, had more intense learning exchanges with students than

teachers in comprehensive schools. Teachers in junior campuses, however, had far less intense exchanges with students on learning related issues than all teachers in all other types of schools.

To illustrate these points, Table 6.6 shows that approximately two thirds of teachers in selective schools reported that 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' students sought "additional feedback" on "classroom work" (64%). Teachers in senior campuses and specialist schools also reported high rates of students seeking additional feedback ; approximately half of these teachers reporting that 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' students sought 'additional feedback' on 'classroom work' (47% of teachers in senior campuses and 44% in specialist schools). In comparison, 24 per cent of teachers in comprehensive schools and 12 per cent of teachers in junior campuses reported that 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' students sought feedback on 'classroom work'.

Academically gifted students

The results highlight the success of the education policies that have encouraged the institutional streaming of the academically gifted secondary students. Not surprisingly, in selective schools, eight out of ten teachers (81%) reported that 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' of their students were academically gifted. However, there were also substantial numbers of academically gifted students reported to be in senior campuses (33% of teachers reporting 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' of their students

were gifted). In comparison, 16 per cent of teachers in specialist schools, 5 per cent of teachers in comprehensive schools, and only 4 per cent of teachers in junior campuses thought that substantial numbers of their students were academically gifted.

Likely education outcomes of students

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which the students they taught would attain a range of educational outcomes. Included were measures of the likelihood of students completing Year 12 and of the likelihood of being accepted into a university course. When examining these outcomes by school type, the response patterns were similar to those seen with regard to the feedback sought by students. Teachers in selective schools and senior campuses were far more positive than teachers in other types of schools about potential student outcomes, and teachers in junior campuses were far less positive about educational outcomes than teachers from all other types of schools.

The vast majority of teachers in selective schools and senior campuses reported that 'a lot', 'most', or 'all', of the students they taught would complete Year 12 (96% and 94%) respectively. To a lesser extent, teachers in comprehensive schools (83%) and specialist schools (78%) reported that 'a lot', 'most', or 'all', of the students they taught would complete Year 12. Significantly, however, only 31 per

cent of teachers in junior campuses felt that substantial numbers of the students they taught were likely complete Year 12.

Patterns of responses with regard to likely university destinations followed the same pattern but differed in the reported numbers of students involved. Importantly, teachers in selective schools were far more positive than all other teachers with regard to substantial numbers of their students likely to be accepted into a university course; nine out of ten teachers (89%) felt that substantial numbers of students would be accepted by a university following completion of Year 12. In comparison, only a third of teachers in senior campuses (34%), a quarter of teachers in specialist schools (24%), and fewer than two in ten teachers in comprehensive schools (17%) thought that substantial numbers of their students would be accepted into a university course. Of particular concern however, was that *no* junior campus teachers (0%) felt that substantial numbers of their students were destined for university.

Students' enjoyment of school

With regard to the extent to which teachers perceived that students enjoyed attending class, teachers in selective schools were much more likely to report that 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' of the students in their school 'enjoyed attending class' (80%)

compared to teachers from all other school types (an average of 66%). Further, teachers in junior campuses were much less likely than all other teachers to report that 'a lot', 'most' or 'all' of the students in their school 'enjoyed attending class' (36%).

Table 6.6: Positive student-related issues by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
'a lot', 'most' or 'all' students	%	%	%	%	%	%
seek feedback on classroom work	24	44	64	12	47	30
are academically gifted	5	16	81	4	33	47
are likely to complete Yr 12	83	78	96	31	94	74
are likely to get into uni	17	24	89	0	34	26
enjoy attending class	63	66	80	36	75	66

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Behavioural and learning difficulties

A series of questions were asked that were indicative of the extent to which teachers had intensive management interactions with the student body. While these measures provide no indication of the nature or intensity of the interactions they demonstrate the extent to which teachers in different types of schools have to manage difficult and stressful relationships with students. Across the various issues measured, the patterns of responses by type of school were similar, although differing in intensity (see Table 6.7). Overall, teachers in junior campuses were far more exposed to behaviourally challenging students than

teachers in all other types of schools and teachers in selective schools were far

less exposed to these types of students than teachers in other schools.

In junior campuses, more than eight out of ten teachers reported that 'a lot',

'most' or 'all' of the students in their classes had, 'behavioural difficulties' (85%)

and 'learning difficulties' (81%). In contrast, between 44 and 51 per cent of

teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools reported significant numbers of

students with behavioural difficulties (48% and 44%, respectively) and learning

difficulties (51% and 44% respectively). Teachers in senior campuses and

selective schools however, taught far fewer students with these kinds of

challenges. In senior campuses only 19 per cent of ten teachers reported

significant numbers of students with behavioural difficulties and 33 per cent

reported learning difficulties (33%). In selective schools, fewer than one in ten

teachers reported that 'a lot', 'most', or 'all' students had behavioural difficulties

(6%) or 'learning difficulties' (9%).

Physical threats from students and parents

Teachers were also asked to indicate the frequency with which they had been

exposed to various forms of student and parent related violence. It is important

to note that among all respondents the findings revealed disconcertingly high

levels of exposure to violence (see Table H13 in Appendix H for complete detail). Across all respondents, during 2008:

- a third (37%) had, at some point, been physically threatened by a parent;

- half (52%) had been verbally abused by a parent;

- two-thirds (69%) had been physically threatened by a student;

- more than four out of five had intervened in a student fight (85%); and,

- the vast majority of teachers had been verbally abused by a student (89%).

To illustrate the general pattern of responses across school type, Table 6.7 shows the differences in teachers' levels of exposure to 'physical threats from students' and 'physical threats from parents'. Again, junior campus teachers were much more likely to be exposed to these forms of violence than teachers in all other types of public secondary school; nine out of ten teachers in junior campuses (91%) had been physically threatened by a student and half (53%) had been physically threatened by a parent. In contrast, approximately three-quarters of ten teachers in comprehensive schools (72%) and specialist schools (72%) had been physically threatened by a student and around a third had been physically threatened by a parent (39% and 35%, respectively). In senior campuses and selective schools around half of all teachers had been physically threatened by a

student in the previous 12 months (53% and 47%, respectively) and around two in ten had been physically threatened by a parent (19% and 23% respectively).

Table 6.7: Negative student-related issues by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
'a lot', 'most' or 'all' students	%	%	%	%	%	%
have behavioural difficulties	48	44	6	85	19	44
have learning difficulties	51	44	9	81	33	41
In last 12 months, teacher has been physically threatened…						
by a student	72	72	47	91	53	69
by a parent	39	35	23	53	19	37

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Parental involvement

With regard to parental involvement, teachers in selective schools (52%) were much more likely than all teachers (27% on average) to report that 'demanding parents' were a 'substantial' or 'major' issue. In comparison, teachers in senior campuses were highly unlikely to report that parents were demanding with only eight per cent of these teachers reporting it as a 'substantial' or 'major' issue (Table 6.8).

At the other end of the spectrum with regard to parental involvement, on average a concerning two-thirds of all teachers (68%) reported that 'disengaged parents' were a 'substantial' or 'major' issue. However, this was much more of a problem for teachers in junior campuses (94% reported it as a 'substantial' or

'major' issue) compared to teachers in all other types of schools and was more of an issue for comprehensive (74%) and specialist (68%) school teachers than it was for senior campus (46%) and selective school teachers (28%).

Table 6.8: Nature of parental involvement by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Is a 'substantial' or 'major' issue	%	%	%	%	%	%
disengaged parents	74	68	28	94	46	68
demanding parents	25	32	52	29	8	27

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

School choice and the student body

A key objective of this study was to gain an understanding of the effect of the NSW Department of Education and Training's (NSW DET) policies that are aimed at increasing school choice for public secondary students. Of particular interest was the extent to which teachers perceived that the fundamental nature of the student body had changed within different types of public secondary school, as a result of the expansion of choice for students. One of the NSW DET's rationales for increasing school choice through restructuring public secondary schools was to improve educational outcomes for students (Esson et al. 2002). In this study, therefore teachers were asked to comment on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements that related to whether improved

educational outcomes and experiences for students had been achieved through increased choice in public secondary schooling.

For each of the issues explored in the survey, teachers were asked to comment on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements relating to 'outcomes' and 'experiences' for 'all students' across the secondary education system in NSW, and for students within their 'current school'. In addition, teachers were asked whether or not increased public secondary school choice for students had altered the composition of the student body within their school. In summarising these analyses the findings related to student 'outcomes' are presented below (Table 6.9). However, teacher reports of student 'experiences' follow much the same pattern when examined by type of school (see Table H15 in Appendix H).

Changes in student outcomes and experiences

Table 6.9 shows that overall fewer than a quarter of all teachers (22%) felt that the policy objective of improved 'learning outcomes' for 'all students' across the NSW public secondary school system had been achieved through increased choice in the type of public school that could be attended. Similarly, only just over a quarter of all teachers (27%) felt that increased school choice had led to improved learning outcomes for students within their school. It is interesting to

note however, that while few teachers agreed that improved learning outcomes for students had been achieved, approximately two-thirds (65%) of all teachers felt that the composition of the student body within their school had changed because of increased school choice.

The differences, in teacher perceptions across the various types of schools, however, were apparent. Teachers in senior campuses were much more positive about the 'learning outcomes' of 'all students' in the public secondary school system; 40 per cent of teachers in senior campuses agreed that 'learning outcomes' had improved for 'all students'. Teachers in selective schools and comprehensive schools were less positive about 'learning outcomes for 'all students' than senior campus teachers but they were more likely than teachers in specialist schools or junior campuses to report that increased school choice had improved 'learning outcomes' for 'all students'. A quarter of all teachers in selective schools (25%) and one in five teachers (21%) in comprehensive schools either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that school choice had improved 'learning outcomes' for 'all students'. In comparison, only 14 per cent of teachers in specialist schools and 12 per cent of teachers in junior campuses felt that school choice had increased 'learning outcomes' for 'all students'.

Compared to the responses regarding learning outcomes for 'all students' there were however, markedly different opinions expressed with regard to the perceived effect that increased school choice had on the 'learning outcomes' of students within particular types of secondary public schools. Firstly, teachers in selective and specialist schools and senior campuses were much more likely to report that school choice had led to improved 'learning outcomes' for students 'in my current school' compared to the outcomes of 'all students'. In comparison, the perception of teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses regarding the 'learning outcomes' of 'all students' corresponded to their perceptions of the 'learning outcomes' of students within their school. For example, almost two thirds of teachers in selective schools felt that choice had improved the learning outcomes (64%) of students in their 'current school' compared to only a quarter of these teachers reporting that choice had increased learning outcomes (25%) for 'all students'. In comprehensive schools, however, 21 per cent felt that choice had improved 'learning outcomes' for 'all students' and 23 per cent felt that choice had improved 'learning outcomes' for students within their 'current school'.

Secondly, in comparing teachers' responses to how choice had affected the students within their own school, teachers in selective schools and senior

campuses were much more likely than teachers in other types of secondary schools to report that school choice had led to improved 'learning outcomes' for students within their 'current school'. In addition, teachers in specialist schools were more likely than teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses to feel that choice had improved 'learning outcomes' for students within their school. As a result of increased school choice, approximately two thirds of teachers in selective schools and senior campuses thought that 'learning outcomes' had improved for students within their 'current school' (64% and 62% respectively). In specialist schools, just under half of all teachers thought that students in their school had improved 'learning outcomes' (45%) as a direct consequence of increased choice. In contrast, 23 per cent of teachers in comprehensive schools and 14 per cent of teachers in junior campuses thought that school choice had improved 'learning outcomes' for students within their 'current school'.

Changes in the composition of the student body

When asked about the effect of increased choice for public secondary school students in NSW on the composition of the student body the pattern of responses was slightly different to that observed with the findings for the 'learning outcomes' for students. Teachers in selective and specialist schools were more

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likely than teachers in other types of schools to report that the composition of the student body within their school had changed (71% and 76% respectively). In contrast, 64 per cent of teachers in comprehensive schools, 55 per cent of teachers in junior campuses, and 50 per cent of teachers in senior campuses felt the student body within their school had changed as a result of increased school choice.

Table 6.9: Increased school choice and teachers' perceptions of student outcomes by type of school ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed')

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Increased public school choice has	%	%	%	%	%	%
improved learning outcomes for all students	21	14	25	12	40	22
improved learning outcomes for students in my current school	23	45	64	14	62	27
changed the composition of the student body in my school	64	76	71	55	50	65

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Teacher tasks and experiences

The analyses provided in this section summarise some of the day-to-day experiences of teachers as well as the less frequent operational and administrative tasks that are required of them throughout the year. The particular points of interest are highlighted; for example, where there were substantial differences between the types of schools or, to illustrate the pattern of responses across a number of questions that reflect a common theme (see Tables

H17 to H29 in Appendix H for tables of all of the tasks related to teacher experiences). The issues explored in this section include hours of work, teaching within or outside of subject-area of expertise, professional development, and perceived support received from the executive. Related to various workload issues teachers were asked about work pressures and leave taken to alleviate stress. In addition to these specific questions, teachers were asked about a number of factors that influence their intentions to leave either their 'current school, 'public education' or the 'teaching profession'. Finally, teachers were asked about the type of public secondary school in which they would prefer to teach if they were given a choice.

Nature of tasks performed by teachers

The following section examines the administrative and operational tasks performed by teachers that are outside of the classroom and regular teaching periods (see Table 6.10).

Meetings and playground duty

With regard to administrative workload, the most frequently occurring tasks for all teachers was attendance at meetings; just over a third of all teachers (36%) attended meetings three or more times per week. In comprehensive schools, teachers' attendance at meetings was slightly higher than it was in specialist and

selective schools, (37%, 25%, and 26% respectively attended meetings more than three times per week). However, meetings were far more frequent in the multi-campus colleges than in the other types of schools, with approximately half of all teachers (54% in junior campuses and 47% in senior campuses) attending meetings at least three times per week.

In general, a quarter of all teachers (25%) reported that they were responsible for 'playground duty' three or more times per week. However, two thirds of all teachers in junior campuses (66%) conducted playground duty more than three times per week. In contrast, only 15 per cent of teachers in selective schools and ten per cent of teachers in senior campuses conducted playground duty this frequently.

Supervising over-night school excursions

Teachers in selective schools and junior campuses were more likely to go on over-night excursions each year than teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools. Approximately a third of teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools (35% and 36% respectively) would go on an over-night excursions at least once a year compared to approximately half of the teachers in selective schools (52%) and junior campuses (47%).

Weekly email contact

In total, four out of ten (40%) public secondary school teachers were in weekly email contact with parents or students. However, email correspondence between teachers and parents or students was much more common for selective school (52%) and senior campus teachers (50%) than for comprehensive school (36%) and junior campus (27%) teachers.

Table 6.10: Teachers' operational and administrative tasks by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attends meetings*	37	25	26	54	47	36
Playground duty*	25	23	15	66	10	25
Takes over-night excursions at least once a year	35	36	52	47	41	37
Has weekly email contact with parents/students	36	45	52	27	50	40

Notes: * does this three or more times per week.
Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Teaching hours and extra-curricular activities

This sub-section looks at the frequency with which teachers work unpaid hours by either beginning work early, finishing late, working on weekends, working through breaks, or some combination of each or all of these activities. It also examines the extent to which teachers are required to perform extra-curricular activities that are 'related…' or 'not related to their subject areas of expertise', the extent to which they teach regular classes that outside of their subject area of

expertise, and the extent to which they undertake professional development activities (see Table 6.11).

Work out of school hours

The vast majority of teachers performed school-related work outside of normal school or teaching hours on a regular basis. While it has been argued that the hours of work that fell outside the normal teaching hours are accounted for in a professional salary package (Bartlett 2004), for the purposes of this study, work conducted outside of regular school hours was regarded as unpaid and therefore discretionary. The discretionary unpaid work took a variety of forms, including, starting early, staying back late, taking work home, and working through morning and lunch breaks. Across teachers in all types of public secondary schools, and taking into consideration all of these potential activities, less than one per cent of teachers 'never' or 'almost never' worked at least one of these forms of unpaid overtime each week.

Considering these findings with regard to the percentage of teachers who *did* work some unpaid discretionary hours, 98 per cent of teachers either started work early or finished late on a weekly basis, and 96 per cent of teachers worked through either morning or lunch breaks on a weekly basis. There were, however, some substantial differences across school type (see Table 6.11 below).

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Examining the aggregated discretionary efforts of teachers in different schools shows that approximately two thirds of teachers in junior campuses and specialist schools worked significant hours of unpaid overtime each week (65% and 61%, respectively started early, finished late, took work home on the weekend *and* worked through morning and lunch breaks at least three times a week; see Table 6.11). In comparison, approximately half of the teachers in comprehensive selective schools (52%), selective schools (47%) and senior campuses (55%) worked these forms and this amount of unpaid hours each week

Teaching outside of subject area

Teachers were asked about the subjects in which they were qualified and the subjects in which they taught. On average, a third of all teachers (36%) were, at least once a week, teaching subjects in which they had no formal qualifications. With regard to differences between types of schools, half of all teachers in junior campuses (50%), taught subjects each week in which they had no formal qualifications while in comparison approximately a third and a quarter (26%) of teachers in other school types were teaching outside their subject area of expertise.

Coupled with the analyses that showed that junior campus teachers were the youngest and most inexperienced, these findings related to teaching outside of

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subject area suggest that junior campus teachers are being stretched during their most vulnerable time as teachers; when they are trying to consolidate their teacher training, develop experience and embark on new teaching careers. These findings may also explain why teachers in junior campuses are working more discretionary unpaid hours; in preparation for classes that are outside their subject area of expertise.

Vocational education and training

The percentage of respondents in each type of school who taught vocational education and training (VET) subjects highlights the importance of VET in the post-compulsory years. Teachers in senior colleges were far more likely than teachers in any other type of secondary school to teach VET related subjects (28% compared with an average of 13% of teachers in all secondary schools). Conversely, reflecting the academic focus of selective schools, it appears that the demand for VET subjects in selective schools is very low, with only 2 per cent of these teachers currently taking VET subjects.

Extra-curricular activities

Teachers were asked to comment on the amount of time they spent on extra-curricular activities that they regarded as being 'related to their subject areas of expertise' and on extra-curricular activities that fell outside of their subject

specialisation. Across all types of public secondary schools, a third of all teachers (34%) spent three or more hours per week on subject related extra-curricular activities and a quarter (26%) spent three or more hours on non-subject related extra-curricular activities. However, teachers in junior campuses were not only more likely to spend time on subject and non-subject related extra-curricular activities, unlike teachers in other types of schools, there was no difference in the amount of time they spent on subject and non-subject related extra-curricular activities. In total, approximately four out of ten teachers in junior campuses spent three or more hours per week on subject related extra-curricular activities (45%) and on non-subject related extra-curricular activities (41%). In comparison, senior campus teachers, for example, were just as likely to spend three or more hours on subject related extra-curricular activities (45%) but were much less likely to spend time on non-subject related extra-curricular activities (29%). These findings may further explain why junior campus teachers are working more unpaid hours than other public secondary school teachers; to prepare for extra-curricular activities that are outside their area of expertise.

Professional development

The extent to which teachers were engaged in professional development activities was canvassed. Included in the activities of interest were in-service programs and classes that were attended both during and outside of school hours. Another question about professional development related more broadly to any other professional development in which the teachers had been engaged.

Considering all forms of professional learning activities more than two-thirds of all teachers (68%) undertook at least one type of professional development activity at least once a term. There were, however, differences between the professional development activities of teachers in the various types of public secondary schools. Teachers in junior (76%) and senior (79%) campuses were more likely than teachers in comprehensive (67%) and specialist schools (63%) to have undertaken some form of learning activity at least once a term. Teachers in senior campuses were also more likely to have undertaken some form of learning activity at least once a term than were teachers in selective schools (79% compared to 69%).

Table 6.11: Teaching matters and professional development by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Works significant hours of unpaid overtime each week*	52	61	47	65	55	53
Teaches outside subject area at least once a week	37	33	33	50	26	36
Teaches VET[Y] subject/s	13	12	2	11	28	13
Teaches extra-curricular, subject related, activities 3 or more hours per week	32	31	29	45	45	34
Teaches extra-curricular, non-subject related, activities 3 or more hours per week	25	14	23	41	29	26
Undertakes teacher learning activity at least once a term	67	63	69	76	79	68

Notes: *Does each of the following three or more times a week; works through morning and lunch breaks, starts and finishes early and takes work home. Making conservative estimates that: 1) the morning and lunch breaks each day total 1 hour and 15 minutes; 2) that these teachers work an extra half an hour each day when they begin early or finish late; and, 3) that they work at an hour when they take work home, 'significant' hours of unpaid overtime equates to a minimum 9 hours and 45 minutes each week being worked by teachers outside of classroom hours.
[Y]VET (Vocational Education and Training)subjects refer to courses that provide specific industry or work related skills.
Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Perceived support

Lack of support from principal, deputy principal, DET and other teachers

A series of questions were asked of teachers that related to the extent to which teachers felt support was 'lacking' on 'work related matters' from the 'principal' 'deputy principal', 'other teachers' and 'the DET' (Department of Education and Training; see H23and H25 in Appendix H for perceptions on support of matters related to students and parents). Approximately a third of all teachers felt that a lack of support from either the 'principal' (33%), the 'deputy principal' (28%) or 'other teachers' (27%) was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue (see Table 6.12).

However, half of all teachers (51%) felt that the 'lack of support from the DET…' was a 'substantial' or 'major issue'. Perceptions of support from the DET were uniform across most types of public secondary schools. The only exception was that teachers in senior campuses were not as dissatisfied, as teachers from other types of schools, with the 'lack of support from the DET' (40% of teachers in senior campuses felt unsupported by the DET compared with between 50% of teachers in junior campuses and 54% of teachers in specialist schools).

There were, however, differences between types of schools when considering perceived support from the 'principal', 'deputy principal' and 'other teachers'. In addition, the pattern of responses with regard to these potential sources of support differed by types of schools. Teachers in specialist schools (48%) and junior campuses (44%) were much more likely than teachers in other public secondary schools to feel that a lack of support from the principal on work related matters was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue. In addition, teachers in comprehensive (32%) and selective (33%) schools were more likely than teachers in senior campuses (20%) to consider that a 'lack of support on work related matters' from the principal was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue.

With regard to perceptions about the 'deputy principal', about a third of teachers in comprehensive (28%), specialist (34%), and selective schools (32%), and junior

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campuses (32%) thought that a 'lack of support' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue. In contrast, however, only 16 per cent of teachers in senior campuses reported that a 'lack of support from the deputy principal' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue.

Perceptions about the 'lack of support' from 'other teachers' also varied by type of school. Teachers in comprehensive schools (30%) and junior campuses (34%) were more likely to report that there was the 'lack of support from other teachers'. In comparison 20 per cent of teachers in senior campuses, 16 per cent of teachers in specialist schools and 11 per cent of teachers in selective schools felt that the 'lack of support from other teachers' was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue.

Considering these findings within school type, these results show that approximately a third of teachers in comprehensive schools consistently thought that support was lacking from 'principals' (32%), 'deputy principals' (28%) and 'other teachers' (30%). Teachers in specialist schools however, were more likely to report an increasing problem with lack of support from colleagues through to the 'principal' with only 16 per cent reporting a 'lack of support' from 'other teachers', 24 per cent reporting a 'lack of support' from the 'deputy principal' and 48 per cent reporting a 'lack of support' from the 'principal'. A different pattern again was seen for teachers in selective schools, with teachers much less

likely to report a 'lack of support' from 'other teachers' (11%) but around a third feeling a 'lack of support' from the 'principal' and 'deputy principal' (33% and 32% respectively) was problematic. In junior campuses, about a third of teachers felt a 'lack of support' from both the 'deputy principal' (32%) and 'other teachers' (34%) but just under half (44%) felt there was a 'lack of support' from the 'principal.' Finally, in senior campuses perceptions about a 'lack of support' were fairly consistent across all sources of support with only 20 per cent of teachers in these schools reporting a 'lack of support' from the 'principal' and 'other teachers' and 16 per cent reporting a 'lack of support' from the 'deputy principal'.

Inequitable work practices at school

In addition to perceived support, teachers were asked about the extent to which inequitable work practices at their school were an issue. Almost half of all teachers (49%) felt that inequality in work practices was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue in their school. With regard to differences across the various types of public secondary schools, teachers in specialist schools were much more likely to feel that work practices were inequitable (64% felt this was a 'substantial' or 'major' issue) compared to between 42 per cent (in senior campuses) and 49 per cent (in comprehensive schools) of teachers in other types of schools.

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Table 6.12: Lack of support or equity on work related matters by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Lacks support from	%	%	%	%	%	%
Principal	32	48	33	44	20	33
Deputy Principal	28	34	32	32	16	28
Other teachers	30	16	11	34	20	27
DET	52	54	51	50	40	51
Is a 'substantial' or 'major' issue						
inequitable work practices	49	64	46	46	42	49

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Stress leave for work related issues

Taken leave to alleviate stress

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they had taken sick leave or other forms of leave specifically to gain relief from stress related issues. Table 6.13 shows that across all types of schools, on average over the previous year, almost a third of all teachers (31%) had 'taken sick leave to get relief from stress' either 'occasionally' or 'frequently'. However, looking at teachers in different types of public secondary schools showed that comprehensive (39%) and specialist school teachers (40%) were more likely to take sick leave to get relief from stress compared to teachers in selective schools (30%).

Table 6.13: Taken leave for relief from stress by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Has 'occasionally or 'frequently'	%	%	%	%	%	%
taken sick leave for relief from stress	39	40	30	37	33	31

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Intentions to quit

Teachers were asked about their thoughts of leaving their 'current school', 'public education' and, more broadly, the actual 'teaching profession'. In addition to these issues, teachers were asked to stipulate the 'main reason' for which they would consider leaving their current school (see Table 6.14). Of particular interest were those teachers who were most at risk of leaving their jobs. The issues examined indicate a high degree of disenchantment among teachers as measured by those who 'frequently' thought about leaving.

Leaving current school, public education or teaching

On average almost a third of teachers (30%) had 'frequently' 'thought about leaving their current school' and one in five 'frequently' thought about either leaving the 'public education system' (19%) or thought about 'leaving teaching' altogether (21%). In addition, one in five teachers (22%) 'frequently' thought of 'retiring'.

When considering these issues with regard to school type, the largest differences related to thoughts of leaving the current school. The teachers who were the least likely to think about leaving were those teaching in senior campuses; approximately one in ten (12%) 'frequently' thought about leaving the 'current school'. Teachers in selective schools were also less likely than teachers in the other types of schools to 'frequently' think about leaving their 'current school' (23% compared to 31% in comprehensive schools and 33% in specialist schools). However, teachers in junior campuses were the most dissatisfied with their current work environment; four out of 10 teachers (43%) 'frequently' thought about leaving their 'current school'.

Teachers in junior campuses were also slightly more likely than teachers in other types of schools to frequently think about leaving 'public education' (26% compared to an average of 19%) and were more likely to frequently think about leaving the 'teaching profession' than teachers in other types of schools (30% compared to an average of 21%). These issues of teacher intentions to quit are examined in greater detail in Chapter 7 with logistic regression modelling.

Table 6.14: Teachers' thoughts of leaving by type of school

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Has 'frequently' thought of	%	%	%	%	%	%
leaving current school	31	33	23	43	12	30
leaving public education	19	18	19	26	21	19
leaving teaching	20	26	19	30	19	21
retiring	21	22	25	23	28	22

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Main reason for leaving current school

Teachers were asked 'if you could move to any school you wanted, what would be your *main* reason for leaving your current school?' Table 6.15 shows that across all types of public secondary schools, one-fifth of teachers (20%) indicated that they 'would not leave' their current school and an additional one-quarter (24%) of teachers said that their main reason for considering leaving was due to positive factors associated with career advancement opportunities. There were, however, differences in these responses when type of school was considered. Teachers in selective schools and senior campuses were much more likely to indicate that they 'would not leave' their current school (33% and 42% respectively). In contrast less than one in ten teachers in junior campuses (8%) and one in five teachers in comprehensive (20%) and specialist (20%) schools said they would not consider leaving their current school. With regard to considering moves related to career advancement opportunities, teachers in specialist schools (29%) were slightly more likely than teachers in selective schools (21%), and

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junior (22%) and senior campuses (19%) to say that their main reason for wanting to leave their current school was to gain a promotion or further their skills or knowledge.

In total, however, 57 per cent of all teachers cited an 'other' reason for their main reason for wanting to leave their current school. 'Other' main reasons included a combination of factors related to some form of dissatisfaction with the type of school, its location, or the way in which it was managed (management). The second section of Table 6.15, shows that the *main* 'other' reasons for wanting to leave the current type of school were associated with wanting to work 'closer to home' (42%), to change the type of school in which one was working (31%), work at a school where either the behavioural management of students was less of an issue (10%), or where there was better executive management (13%). As with the issues related to not wanting to leave and career advancement, though, there were substantial differences in responses from teachers in the various types of schools[67].

Wanting to 'move closer to home' was the most cited 'other' main reason teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools cited for wanting to leave their

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[67] There were only 24 responses from senior campus teachers that fell into the 'other' main reason for wanting to leave the current school. Standard errors around these metrics were too large to make any reliable comparisons so these figures are omitted from the table.

current school (44% and 57% respectively). However, a third of teachers in comprehensive schools (30%) who stated an 'other' main reason for wanting to leave their current school said they wanted to change to a different type of school. Dissatisfaction with the type of school in which they worked was much more common among junior campus teachers than all other teachers and was the most cited 'other' reason for thinking about leaving the 'current school' among these teachers (48%). In selective schools, 'other' main reasons for wanting to leave were equally spread between wanting to work at a school with 'better executive management' (29%), wanting to 'work closer to home' (27%) and wanting to change type of school (27%). Given the level of dissatisfaction with the type of school among comprehensive and selective school teachers, and junior campus teachers, it was interesting to note that only about one in ten (11%) teachers in specialist schools who cited an 'other' main reason for wanting to leave their current school, stated that it was to change to a different type of school.

Table 6.15: Main reason for thinking about leaving current school by type of school

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total	count
	%	%	%	%	%	%	no.
Main reason for leaving current school							
would not leave	20	20	33	8	42	20	223
career advancement	24	29	21	22	19	24	349
other	57	54	48	72	40	57	443
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,015
'other' main reason, not related to career progression, for leaving current school							
closer to home	44	57	27	33	-	42	184
change type of school	30	11	27	48	-	31	134
better exec m'gement*	11	11	29	12	-	13	55
less behaviour m'gement	11	7	5	6	-	10	42
better conditions	4	14	12	0	-	5	22
total	100	100	100	100	-	100	443

Notes: * exec m'gement = executive management. The totals exclude teachers who said that the main reason they would leave was to retire (n=7). - standard errors were too large for reliable reporting so figures have been omitted.
Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

School choice and changes in teacher experiences

A series of questions were asked that examined the extent to which increased choice for students had led to improved teaching experiences for '*all* teachers', for teachers within their current school ('my school') and for their own experiences of teaching ('my teaching experience'; see Table 6.16).

Following on from this, a series of questions were asked that related specifically to the effect that the increased number of selective schools and multi-campus colleges had had on teacher experiences in the different types of schools. Finally, in this sub-section, teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their career

prospects and overall experiences had changed as a result of increased student choice in secondary public schools, are examined.

Changes in teaching experiences

The perceived influence that increased public school choice for students had on the experience of teachers was, on the whole, much more negative than the perceived effect that choice had on student outcomes and experiences that were examined earlier. Interestingly, however, teachers were slightly more negative when considering the experiences of their peers in other schools ('all teachers'), than they were of the experiences of teachers within their own school, and of their own experiences. Only 17 per cent of all teachers reported that increased school choice for students had improved the experiences of 'all teachers', 22 per cent felt that choice had improved the teaching experiences of teachers within their current school, and 26 per cent felt that choice had improved their 'own' personal experience of teaching.

There were also, however, differences in responses from teachers in different types of secondary public schools. As with consideration of student outcomes and experiences, teachers in senior campuses were much more likely than all other teachers to 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that 'increased school choice had led

to overall improvements in the teaching experiences of 'all teachers' (39% compared to between 14% and 28% of teachers in other types of schools).

With regard to the experience of teachers within their current school and their 'own' experiences, however, teachers in both senior campuses and selective schools were more positive than teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools, and junior campuses. Overall, 49 per cent of teachers in senior campuses and 40 per cent of teachers in selective schools felt that choice had improved the experiences of teachers within their own school compared to 25 per cent of teachers in specialist schools, 19 per cent of teachers in comprehensive schools and only 8 per cent of teachers in junior campuses. Similarly, when commenting on their own experiences, 54 per cent of teachers in senior campuses and 44 per cent of teachers in selective schools 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their experiences had improved with increased student choice. In comparisons, only 25 per cent of teachers in specialist schools, 22 per cent of teachers in comprehensive schools and 14 per cent of teachers in junior campuses were positive about the effect that increased student choice in secondary schooling had on their own experiences.

Table 6.16: Increased school choice for students and perceived teacher experiences by type of school ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed')

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Choice has led to improvements in	%	%	%	%	%	%
the teaching experiences of all teachers	16	14	18	14	39	17
the teaching experiences for teachers in my school	19	25	40	8	49	22
my teaching experience	22	25	44	14	54	26

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Increased choices

When examining the extent to which teachers in different types of school felt that either increased selectivity or increased numbers of multi-campus colleges had changed their own experience of teaching, teachers within these types of schools, not surprisingly, felt most affected. Teachers in selective schools were much more likely than all other teachers to feel that increased selectivity had changed their experience of teaching (73% compared to an overall average of 50%; Table 6.17). Similarly, teachers in multi-campus colleges were much more likely than teachers in other types of schools to feel that the increase in the number of these colleges had changed their experience of teaching (77% of teachers in junior campuses and 66% of teachers in senior campuses 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that increased numbers of multi-campus colleges had changed their experience of teaching compared to an overall average of 21%).

It is noteworthy that while few teachers in other types of schools felt affected by the increased numbers of multi-campus colleges (between 7% in specialist schools and 16% in comprehensive schools), around half of all teachers felt that their experience of teaching had changed because of increases in the number of selective schools (between 56% of teachers in specialist schools and 41% of teachers in junior campuses).

Table 6.17: Effect of increases in selective schools and multi-campus colleges on teachers experiences by type of school ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed')

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
My experience of teaching has changed due to increased numbers of	%	%	%	%	%	%
selective schools	47	56	73	41	53	50
multi-campus colleges	16	8	7	77	66	21

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Overall changes in teaching and career prospects

Following on from these questions, teachers were asked to comment more broadly on the effect, if any, that increased choice had had on their career prospects (see Table 6.18). Across all types of public secondary schools only one in ten (9%) teachers felt that increased school choice had improved their career prospects. However, while still relatively low, a larger minority of teachers in selective schools felt that their career prospects had improved compared to teachers in specialist and comprehensive schools and junior campuses (17% in

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senior campuses, compared to 5% in specialist schools and 8% in both

comprehensive schools and junior campuses).

Table 6.18: Increased school choice and changes in career prospects ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed')

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
My career prospects have improved	%	%	%	%	%	%
since public school choices have increased	8	5	17	8	12	9

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Preferences for school type

Finally, teachers were asked to comment on the types of schools in which they

would readily consider taking a position. In general, teachers provided the

strongest endorsement for the type of school in which they currently worked. For

example, eight out of ten teachers in comprehensive schools (81%) agreed they

would consider working in another comprehensive school. However, their

endorsement for working in a different type of secondary school was not as

strong; 62 per cent said they would consider working in a selective school, 61 per

cent would consider a senior campus, 58 per cent would consider a specialist

school, and only 30 per cent would consider a junior campus (see Table 6.19).

With the exception of teachers in junior campuses, this pattern held for teachers

in all other types of schools; the strongest preference was for the type of school in

which they currently work and the lowest endorsement was for working in a

junior campus. Leaving aside the junior campus teachers, consistently approximately 80 per cent of teachers would consider working in the same type of school in which they currently worked, but no more than a third of teachers from other types of schools would consider working in a junior campus.

Among junior campus teachers their weakest preference was for working within a junior or senior campus (51% and 50% respectively) while their strongest preference was for working in a comprehensive school (91%).With regard to the desirability of the junior campus as a workplace, it is worth noting that senior campus teachers were much less likely than teachers from all other types of schools to say that they would consider working in a junior campus (18% compared to 30% of teachers in comprehensive, 35% of teachers in specialist, and 32% of teachers in selective schools). In addition, teachers in selective schools and senior campuses were much less likely than teachers in other types of schools to consider working in comprehensive schools (54% and 65% respectively, compared to 77% of teachers in specialist schools, 81% of teachers in comprehensive schools, and 91% of teachers in junior campuses).

Table 6.19: Preference for place of employment by type of school ('agreed' or 'strongly agreed')

	Type of school					
	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
I would work in a	%	%	%	%	%	%
selective school	62	78	84	59	57	65
specialist school	58	85	75	59	47	61
junior campus	30	35	32	51	18	31
senior campus	61	65	68	50	82	73
comprehensive school	81	77	54	91	65	77

Source: Survey of secondary school teachers, 2008.

Conclusions

There were a number of key findings from this chapter that indicate that type of school is associated with distinctly different experiences for teachers in secondary public schools in western and south-western Sydney. Considered in their entirety, the descriptive findings suggest that within this geographic location there are no two types of school in which teachers' experiences can be broadly classified as directly comparable. In this regard, perhaps the most informative findings have been those revealing the extent to which teachers perceive that schools have changed as a result of increased choice for students. Approximately two-thirds of all teachers (65%) felt that increased numbers of selective schools, in particular, had changed the composition of the student body in their own schools. Further, half of all teachers felt that increased numbers of selective schools had changed their experiences of teaching.

While there are a number of specific issues common to the experiences of teachers from the various types of schools (e.g. the taking of leave for relief from work related stress), on the whole, the differences seem to far outweigh the similarities. The pattern of differences, however, is quite complex.

In general, teachers in selective schools and junior campuses stood out as having experiences that deviated most often and to the greatest extent; both from each other and in comparison to the experiences of teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools and senior campuses. Further, adding support to the findings from the qualitative phase of the study and the model proposed in Chapter 5, the differences between the experiences of teachers in selective schools and junior campuses were often diametrically opposed. For example, teachers in selective schools reported that their interactions with students were characterised by intensive learning related experiences in which students enjoyed attending class. In contrast, teachers in junior campuses reported that their interactions with students were much more likely to be characterised by low educational achievement, behavioural management issues and violence.

Looking more closely at the specific characteristics associated with different experiences for teachers in each of the types of public secondary schools, the analyses show that teachers in selective schools have a range of experiences that

are far more positive than the experiences of teachers in other types of public secondary schools. Selective school teachers worked with many more students who were academically gifted, and who enjoyed attending class and school. These teachers also had very few experiences of student related violence relative to teachers in other types of public secondary schools and had very low levels of behavioural problems and learning difficulties among their students. Given these factors it was not surprising teachers in selective schools were much more satisfied with their work and careers. These teachers were much less likely to indicate a desire to leave the school in which they currently taught and they reported improvements in their own experiences of teaching as a result of greater school choice for students and parents.

The experiences of teachers in selective schools, however, were not without their challenges. These teachers had larger teaching loads, as measured by greater student numbers, and their interactions with students had a greater learning and outcome focus with students demanding more individual attention and feedback. Again, however, these findings were not surprising given the numbers of students reported by these teachers who were academically gifted and/or talented. These challenges were also reflected in the high demands placed on teachers from the parents of these students. In addition, the teachers in selective

schools indicated that the schools themselves faced much less pressure with regard to attracting and maintaining student enrolments and in attracting and retaining classroom teachers and senior staff. Indeed, these teachers were more likely to report that low teacher turnover was more of a concern than high teacher turnover.

The staffing profile of selective schools, also however, differed from that of other types of schools. There was a greater proportion of male teachers in selective schools, and along with teachers in senior campuses, these teachers were much more likely to be over the age of 45, and to have more years of teaching experience.

In contrast, the experiences of junior campus teachers could almost be considered the antithesis of the experience of selective school teachers. In general, junior campus teachers were younger and less experienced than teachers in other types of schools. Despite their relative inexperience, however, junior campus teachers were much more likely to be teaching outside their subject area of expertise in both their day-to-day classes and in the extra-curricular activities for which they were responsible. In addition, junior campus teachers taught far more students who did not enjoy attending class or school, were verbally and physically abusive, had behaviour problems and learning difficulties, and who had low

expected educational outcomes. The characteristics of the student body may explain why junior campus teachers had substantially more playground duty than all other teachers.

Particularly disturbing for these teachers was the finding that they had more frequent interactions with parents who were verbally and physically abusive but they also reported many more parents of students in their schools were disengaged with the learning and education of their children. Junior campus teachers were much more likely to report that far fewer students from their schools would be likely to remain in school until they had completed Year 12 but also reported general problems with attracting and maintaining student numbers. Compounding these problems was a greater likelihood that junior campus teachers felt they lacked appropriate support from the school's executive and were much more likely to be concerned about their career prospects following increased school choice for students.

Not surprisingly, given all of these factors, the junior campus teachers reported that their schools had difficulty attracting and retaining teaching staff, they themselves were much more likely to have considered leaving the school, but they were also more likely to have considered leaving the teaching profession

altogether. In addition, as a potential workplace, the junior campus was the least favoured by teachers across the public secondary school system.

As was discussed in reference to the qualitative findings, the experiences of teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools and senior campuses generally fell in between the extremes that were experienced by teachers in selective schools and junior campuses. Compared to teachers in selective schools and junior campuses, teachers in specialist schools and senior campuses reported a moderate number of students who had were expected to achieve high educational outcomes and who had positive attitudes and motivations towards learning. Along with teachers from comprehensive high schools, they also reported moderate numbers of students with learning difficulties and low numbers of students who were academically gifted.

However, this was the extent of the similarities between the experiences of specialist school and senior campus teachers. Specialist school teachers taught more students who were talented and they were more likely to say that school choice had improved the learning experiences of students within the school than were teachers from comprehensive schools or senior colleges. Finally, specialist school teachers were much likely to feel that work practices were inequitable and

were more likely, than comprehensive school and senior campus teachers to have considered leaving their current school.

The issues in which the experiences of teachers in specialist schools resembled those of teachers in comprehensive schools related to violence from students and disengagement from parents; both of which were more commonly experienced by these teachers than by teachers in senior campuses. Comprehensive and specialist schools were also more affected by high teacher turnover. Other than the issues already mentioned however, the main similarity between the experiences of teachers in senior campuses and comprehensive schools was related to the pressure of the education market place and concerns over maintaining student enrolments.

Teachers in selective schools reported similar attributes among their students to the teachers in senior campuses. Senior campus teachers taught high numbers of students who enjoyed attending class and school, were likely to complete Year 12, and who were less likely to engage in violent behaviours or have behavioural or learning difficulties. Similarly, as with selective school teachers, senior campus teachers had a low likelihood of reporting problems in the school with high teacher turnover. In fact, senior campus teachers were the least concerned of all teachers, including selective school teachers, about the ability of the school to

attract suitably experienced teaching staff. In addition, like selective school teachers, senior campus teachers were much more positive about the effect that increased choice for students had had on their own teaching experience and the experiences of teachers within their school. However, unlike teachers from all other types of schools, senior campus teachers were much more likely to report that improved choice for students had improved the experiences of all teachers.

There were also other experiences and perceptions among senior campus teachers that differentiated them from teachers from the other types of schools. Senior campus teachers held the most positive views about the effect of choice on the educational outcomes of students. They were also the least likely to feel that the composition of the student body within their school had changed because of increased choice in the public secondary school system.

Finally, despite these differences there were a few experiences that were common to the teachers working in senior campuses and those working in junior campuses. Teachers from both of these types of schools attended meetings more frequently than teachers in other types of schools; perhaps reflecting the likely co-ordination and administration that is required among schools within the same college. They were also both more likely to have to teach extra-curricular activities and teachers in junior and senior campuses participated to a greater

extent in learning related activities every term for their own professional development.

It is not surprising that there are some similarities between the experiences of teachers in campuses that are essentially from the same multi-campus college system. What is surprising is that, for schools that are intrinsically related through the multi-campus college system, there were so few experiences that were similar for the teachers from the junior and senior campuses. These findings suggest that due to the increased maturity of senior students and the attrition of the less able and perhaps more difficult students at the end of Year 10, the senior student body is substantially different from that of the junior student body. As a consequence, the experiences of teachers in senior campuses are much more favourable than the experiences of junior campus teachers.

In Chapter 7, the effect that various experiences have on teachers is examined further using logistic regression analyses. Specifically, the modelling is used to examine the relationship between various teacher experiences and the likelihood that teachers will be considering leaving their 'current school', 'public education' and the 'teaching profession'.

Chapter 7 – Teachers' intentions to quit

In Chapter 6 the factors that were associated with teachers' experiences, and that distinguished between the different types of schools in the NSW public secondary education system were examined in detail using descriptive analysis techniques. This chapter expands on those analyses to explore more thoroughly one of the key issues facing the education sector in many OECD countries including Australia; that of teacher shortages (OECD 2002). In this study, potential attrition was measured by three indicators assessing teacher's intentions to quit. The specific questions asked whether teachers had thoughts of leaving their 'current school', the 'public education' system, and 'the education profession'.

The independent variables tested and controlled for in each of the three regression models included individual characteristics and personal experiences, attitudes and perceptions. The individual characteristics included age, gender, years of teaching experience and type of subjects taught (with or without relevant qualifications for those subjects). The experiences, attitudes and perceptions modelled included 'main reason for wanting to leave current school', number of 'challenging students', perceived 'lack of support from the executive', the extent of 'unpaid overtime' worked, and the level of agreement that

'increased school choice for students' had led to overall improvements in learning outcomes and experiences for students'.

As discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), the logistic regression analyses were restricted to the largest sub-group of teachers in the NSW public secondary schools; teachers working in comprehensive schools. In addition, each of the dependent variables were dichotomised so as to examine, in particular, the factors associated with teachers who were most at risk of leaving; those who 'frequently' thought about leaving. The three dependent variables (thoughts of leaving the 'current school', 'public education', and 'the education profession') provide an indication of the degree of dissatisfaction among teachers and, as such, each of these aspects of potential attrition have different policy implications. Each dependent variable reflects, to an increasing degree, different threats to the education system. Teachers who actually leave their current school may still be retained within the public education system; thus localising any attrition issues to a single-school issue. Teachers, who are seriously considering leaving public education however, pose a more serious issue for the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) in maintaining qualified staff across the public secondary school system. Finally, teachers who frequently thinking about leaving the teaching profession, affect labour market supply for

both the public and private education systems. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the discussion (Chapter 8).

The regression analyses are presented in two main sections. The first section – *Odds of thinking of leaving* – presents the analyses from the full regression models for each of the dependent variables. The sub-sections within the first section discuss separately the factors that affect teachers' thoughts of leaving their 'current school', 'public education' and the 'teaching profession'. The second section of this chapter – *Probability of leaving* – presents the regression model findings in terms of predicted probabilities to provide a clearer indication of the extent to which teachers' frequently think about leaving their 'current school', 'public education, or the 'teaching profession. The final section of this chapter draws out the conclusions from these analyses.

Factors contributing to intentions to quit

In this section, the results from the three regression models are presented in terms of odds ratios. It will be recalled from the methodology chapter (Chapter 4) that odds ratios illustrate the statistical significance of the differences in effect size associated with each independent variable and the dependent variable (Peng, So, Stage & St. John 2002). Particularly noteworthy is that the effect of

individual personal characteristics, such as gender, teaching experience and whether or not teachers taught traditional academic subjects or non-academic subjects (with or without relevant associated qualifications), were not consistently related to thoughts of leaving across the three different measures of teacher intentions to quit. For example, while male teachers had reduced odds of considering leaving their 'current school' relative to female teachers ($or = 0.53$, $p \leq 0.01$), gender was not significantly related to thoughts of leaving 'public education' ($or = 0.86$, $p > 0.05$) or the 'teaching profession' ($or = 1.01$, $p > 0.05$). Of much greater importance in predicting intentions to quit were the experiences teachers had in their working lives and their perceptions of their working environment. The findings from each of the models are discussed in detail in the three following sub-sections.

Predictors of thinking about leaving current school

Table 7.1 shows that the most significant predictor of intention to quit from the 'current school' was the reason for wanting to leave. Teachers' whose 'main reason' for thinking about leaving was related to negative factors associated with the type of school, school location, or management had increased odds ($or = 3.27$, $p \leq 0.001$) of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' compared to those whose reasons for thinking about leaving were associated with positive

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factors (i.e. the omitted category). For modelling purposes, the omitted or 'other' category reflected factors such as wanting to leave to seek career advancement opportunities, and included those teachers who indicated that they would not want to leave their current school at all.

However, other experiences were also strong predictors of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'current school'. Controlling for all other factors, teachers who felt that they had responsibility for working with large numbers of students with behavioural and/or learning difficulties had over twice the odds ($or = 2.05$, $p \leq 0.001$) of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' compared to teachers who reported lower numbers of 'challenging students'. Similarly, those who were more likely to report a 'lack of support' from the executive also had increased odds ($or = 1.78$, $p \leq 0.001$) of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' compared to those who felt a supported by the executive. Finally, independent of all other variables, teachers who held positive attitudes about the effect that increased school choice had on student learning outcomes and experiences had reduced odds ($or = 0.75$, $p \leq 0.05$) of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' compared to teachers who felt strongly that student outcomes and experiences had not improved due to increased choice for students.

Predictors of thinking about leaving public education

The factors related to thoughts of leaving 'public education' were similar to those related to thoughts of leaving 'current school'. Dissatisfaction with the current school management and with the numbers of 'challenging students' were both strong predictors of thoughts of leaving 'public education'. Teachers who said that the type of school, its location, or management was the 'main reason for thinking about leaving' had increased odds of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' compared to those whose 'main reason for leaving' was related to positive factors ($or = 1.73$, $p \leq 0.05$). Similarly, teachers who felt that they taught large numbers of 'challenging students', also had increased odds of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' compared to those who didn't report high numbers of students with behavioural and/or learning difficulties ($or = 1.72$, $p \leq 0.01$). Lack of support from the school's executive was also significantly related to 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' with those who were highly dissatisfied with the lack of support having increased odds of intending to quit ($or = 1.53$, $p \leq 0.001$).

Predictors of thinking about leaving the teaching profession

As with intentions to quit considerations related to the 'current school' and the 'public education' system dissatisfaction with the type of school, its location, or

management being the 'main reason' for wanting to leave, large numbers of 'challenging students', and a 'lack of support' from the school executive were also significant predictors of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession'. As these issues increased for teachers the odds of being more inclined to leave the teaching profession increased ($or = 1.56$, $p \leq 0.05$; $or = 1.90$, $p \leq 0.001$; $or = 1.27$, $p \leq 0.05$, respectively).

Table 7.1: Logistic regression for the three models of intentions to quit (n = 702)

	Odds ratios (e^β)		
	school	public ed.	teaching
Gender			
male	0.53**	0.86	1.01
Teaching tenure			
< 5 years	0.47*	0.93	0.63
5 to < 10 years	0.74	0.52	0.70
20 years +	0.66	1.01	0.86
*Subjects taught and associated qualifications**			
acad, no quals in subject/s	0.86	0.46*	0.88
non-acad with quals in subject/s	0.78	0.56	0.87
non-acad with no quals in subject/s	1.22	0.89	1.81
does not teach	0.84	0.35*	0.89
Main reason for leaving			
negative factors	3.27***	1.73*	1.56*
Experiences/perceptions scores			
challenging student	2.05***	1.72**	1.90***
lacks support	1.78***	1.53***	1.27*
works unpaid overtime	1.22	1.31	1.19
improved student outcomes and experiences	0.75*	0.85	0.87
constant	0.02***	0.02***	0.02***

Notes: *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$; While the statistical significance level has been indicated for the purposes of convention, it is important to note that there is wide spread debate about the relevance of *p* values in categorical models compared to the substantive effect size of the model parameters (Marden 2000) as presented here by the odds ratios. 'school' = frequently thinks about leaving current school; 'public ed.' = frequently thinks about leaving public education; 'teaching' = frequently thinks about leaving the teaching profession.
* acad = academic subjects; non-acad = non-academic subjects; quals = formal qualifications.
Reference categories for the categorical variables are: *gender*, female; *teaching tenure*, 10 to 19 years; *subjects & qualifications*, academic with qualifications; *type of* school, non-comprehensive schools; *main reason for leaving*, 'other' category which included the positive factors such as wanting career advancement or not wanting to leave at all. The scores for 'negative student', 'lacks support', 'works overtime', 'improvements due to choice' and 'violence from students' are continuous.

Actual likelihood of thinking of leaving

The odds ratios illustrate the strength and significance of the relationships (Peng, So et al. 2002) between various teacher characteristics and experiences and frequent thoughts of leaving. However, to better understand the model, and to illustrate the extent to which the three outcomes (frequent thoughts of leaving) are likely to happen, predicted probabilities were calculated (Peng, So et al. 2002; Long & Freese 2003). These probabilities provide more meaningful comparisons of different teacher characteristics associated with higher or lower intentions to quit.

The predicted probabilities, presented in Table 7.2 below, clearly show the extent to which each of the individual characteristics, experiences, and attitudes influence intentions to quit. On average, in public secondary comprehensive schools in western and south western Sydney, teachers have a 32 per cent probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school' and have around a 20 per cent probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' (19%) or the 'teaching profession' (20%).

Table 7.2: Predicted probabilities for the three models of intentions to quit

	school	public ed.	teaching
	%	%	%
unconditional	32	19	20
Gender			
male	24	17	20
female	36	20	21
Tenure - teaching			
< 5 years	24	19	16
5 to < 10 years	37	15	19
10 to < 20 years	39	21	23
20 years+	27	18	19
*Subjects taught and associated qualifications**			
acad, with quals in subject/s	38	30	20
acad, no quals in subject/s	30	15	16
non-acad with quals in subject/s	31	19	18
non-acad with no quals in subject/s	34	22	26
does not teach	29	12	17
Main reason for leaving is			
negative factors	49	25	25
positive factors	19	14	15
Issues with problem students			
very low	11	6	8
low	16	10	11
average	26	15	16
high	39	21	23
very high	51	31	32
Issues with lack of support from executive			
very low	18	11	14
low	31	17	20
average	36	21	22
high	48	27	25
very high	60	36	31
Unpaid overtime			
very low	35	17	19
low	28	16	18
average	30	18	19
high	36	22	22
very high	42	28	26
Choice has improved education outcomes and experiences for students			
strongly agree	21	14	16
agree	23	15	16
neutral	34	20	20
disagree	38	22	24
strongly disagree	43	25	26

Notes: 'school' = frequently thinks about leaving current school; 'public ed.' = frequently thinks about leaving public education; 'teaching' = frequently thinks about leaving the teaching profession.
* acad = academic subjects; non-acad = non-academic subjects; quals = formal qualifications.

The details in Table 7.2 above, related to the influence of individual

characteristics, experiences, and attitudes are examined below with reference to

thinking about leaving 'current school', 'public education', and the 'teaching

profession'. In the 'current school' section all of the probabilities are presented to

illustrate the increased or reduced affect that variations in each of the

independent variables have on the intentions to quit. However, for the sake of

brevity, in the 'public education' and 'teaching profession' sections, only the

significant factors contributing to intentions to quit are explained.

Likelihood of thinking of leaving current school

Focusing first on the issues that are associated with increasing the probability

that teachers will 'frequently' think about leaving their 'current school' Table 7.2

shows the difference that individual characteristics such as gender and tenure

make to intentions to quit after controlling for all other factors. Female teachers

have a 36 per cent probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving their

'current school'. In contrast, male teachers have only a 24 per cent probability of

'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school'. Similarly, teachers with

more than five years but less than ten years of teaching experience (37%) and

teachers with more than ten but less than 20 years of teaching experience (39%)

are significantly more likely to 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current

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school' compared to teachers with less than five years (24%) or more than 20 years (27%) of total teaching experience.

The predicted probabilities associated with the subjects taught and whether or not the teachers had qualifications relevant to the subjects they taught showed some slightly different probabilities for two sub-groups of teachers. Teachers who had the relevant qualifications in the traditional academic subjects in which they taught had a slightly increased probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' (38%) compared to those who do not have the relevant qualifications in the academic subjects that they teach (30%), those with qualifications in the non-academic subjects they teach (31%), those without qualifications in the non-academic subjects they teach (34%) and those who are in roles that do not involve classroom teaching (29%). However, as shown in Table 7.1, these differences are not statistically significant.

The probabilities associated with various teacher experiences and attitudes and 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' starkly illustrate the influencing nature of negative relationships between teachers and the school, the students, or the education system. If the 'main reason' a teacher was thinking about leaving their 'current school' was related to dissatisfaction with the type of school, its location, or management then there was a significant increase in the

probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' (49%) compared to teachers who did not want to leave or for whom their 'main reason' for leaving was related to career advancement (19%).

With regard to teacher experiences, Table 7.2 highlights how 'challenging students' have the most influential effect on teachers 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school'. When the perceived number of students with behavioural or learning difficulties was 'very low', the probability of teachers 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school' was only 11 per cent after controlling for all other factors. However, the probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school' increased significantly as the perceived number of 'challenging students' increased. When the number of students with challenging behaviours or learning difficulties was 'very high', the probability of teachers 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school' reached 51 per cent.

The other substantial issue that is highlighted in the predicted probability table is the effect of 'lack of support' from the executive on intentions to quit. When perceived 'lack of support' from the school executive is not considered a problem, teachers' probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school' was 18 per cent. However, when teachers had very high scores

on the 'lack of support' scale their probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving their 'current school' increased to 60 per cent.

The effect of 'unpaid overtime' on intentions to quit from 'current school' was not significant in the model as shown in Table 7.1 (*or* = 1.22). The predicted probabilities also reflect the extent to which working 'unpaid overtime' only slightly increased quit intentions (35% for low levels of unpaid overtime compared to 42% for high levels of unpaid overtime).

The other factor of particular interest in this study was the perceived influence that increased school choice for students had on teachers' experiences of work and the effect these perceptions had on intentions to quit. Teachers who were more likely to agree that increased school choice for students had improved student outcomes and student experiences were significantly less likely to 'frequently' think about leaving their current school (21%). In comparisons, teachers who thought that increased school choice had *not* improved student outcomes or experiences had a predicted probability of 43 per cent of 'frequently' thinking about leaving their current school.

Likelihood of thinking of leaving public education

The predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' was lower than the predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'current school' (19% compared to 32% respectively). As Table 7.1 showed, neither gender nor years of teaching experience, significantly influenced the probability of a teacher 'frequently' think about leaving 'public education' and this is reflected in the small differences in probabilities in Table 7.2. For example, teachers with less than five years of teaching experience had a predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' of 19 per cent compared to 21 per cent for teachers who had been teaching between 10 and 20 years.

The predicted probabilities based on subjects taught and associated qualifications however, did influence the extent to which teachers thought about leaving public education. Teachers who were teaching academic subjects with no relevant qualifications in these subjects and teachers who were not doing any classroom teaching had significantly lower predicted probabilities of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' compared to those with relevant qualifications in the traditional academic subjects they were teaching (15% and 12% compared to 30%, respectively).

Similarly, the extent to which the 'main reason' for wanting to leave the current school was significantly related to 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' is also illustrated by the differences in predicted probabilities. Teachers whose main reason for wanting to leave their current school was because of dissatisfaction with the type of school, its location, or management had a predicted probability of 25 per cent of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education'. In comparison teachers who did not want to leave their current school, or whose main reason for wanting to leave their current school was related to seeking promotion had a predicted probability of only 14 per cent of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education'.

Controlling for all other factors, high perceived numbers of 'challenging students' and perceived 'lack of support' from the school executive were also related to significant differences in predicted probabilities of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education'. When the perceived number of 'challenging students' was 'very low', the predicted probability of teachers 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education' was only 6 per cent. As the perceived number of 'challenging students' increased so too did the predicted probabilities of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education'. Teachers who felt they taught 'very high' numbers of students with challenging

behaviours had a predicted probability of 31 per cent of 'frequently' thinking about leaving 'public education'.

Similarly, the predicted probabilities associated with teachers perceptions of a 'lack of support' from the executive ranged from 11 per cent when there was little or no issue with a 'lack of support' to 36 per cent when perceptions about a 'lack of support' was a 'very high'. Although not significant in the model the predicted probabilities also increased with rising hours of 'unpaid overtime' and with declining levels of agreement that increased choice had improved educational outcomes experiences for students.

Likelihood of leaving the teaching profession

As with thinking about leaving public education, neither gender nor years of teaching experience significantly affected the extent to which teachers 'frequently' thought about leaving the 'teaching profession'. Among the teacher experiences that affected intentions to quit the profession, 'challenging students' was the strongest predictor of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession' ($or = 1.9\ p \le .001$; shown in Table 7.1). When the perceived number of 'challenging students' in the current school was 'very low' the predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession' was only 8 per cent. The probability increased however, to 32 per cent when the

number of 'challenging students' was 'very high'. Similarly, if there was little or no issue with a 'lack of support' from the executive the predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession' was only 14 per cent. In comparison, when the 'lack of support' from the executive was perceived as very problematic ('very high') the predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession' was 31 per cent.

The other significant factor associated with 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession' was that related to the 'main reason' for considering leaving the 'current school'. Teachers who were dissatisfied with the type of school, its location, or management had a significantly higher predicted probability of 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession' compared to teachers who did not want to leave their current school or whose 'main reason' for leaving was to seek career advancement (25% and 15%, respectively).

As with thoughts of leaving 'public education', 'unpaid overtime' and attitudes towards the effect of 'increased choice for students…' on their educational outcomes and experiences did not significantly explain variances in 'frequently' thinking about leaving the 'teaching profession'.

Conclusion

Teachers from public secondary comprehensive schools are far more likely to think about leaving their current school than either the public education system or the teaching profession. This finding suggests that teachers feel that changing schools can provide some relief to their dissatisfaction with their work environment. It also suggests, however, that teachers in comprehensive secondary schools are more committed to public education and to the teaching profession than they are to their own school.

The most significant finding, however, was the extent to which school level factors, associated with the nature of the student body and the level of support from the executive, create working conditions that are particularly detrimental to teacher retention within the current school. Considered in light of the findings from Chapters 5 and 6, these results suggest a particularly bleak outlook for junior campuses in which problem students and lack of support from the executive were reportedly substantially more of a problem than the situation in comprehensive schools. In contrast, the results suggest that the situation in selective schools and senior campuses is far more positive with regard to teacher retention. The implications of these findings are discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 8 – Discussion

In this chapter the intentions of the policy reforms that were introduced in NSW public education are interpreted in light of the experiences of teachers in public secondary schools in western and south-western Sydney. While some of the intentions of the policy reforms – such as the introduction of competition for student enrolments – have been achieved, the extent to which the competition has generated efficiencies in the allocation of public sector resources (Stilwell 1994) is debatable. Under-funding by the state (Helsby 1999) and discrepancies in the level of parental support between schools (Meadmore 2001) indicate that public sector resources are not only being inefficiently allocated, they are also being inequitably allocated (Lamb & Teese 2005). In this regard, the findings from this study demonstrate that the concerns of the opponents of the neo-liberal reforms (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Junor 1982; Mascarenhas 1993) have been realised.

The differentiated public secondary school system in NSW has institutionalised the segmentation of the student body along learning and behavioural characteristics. Both the qualitative and quantitative results from this study highlight the extent to which students with behavioural challenges are concentrated in comprehensive schools and junior campuses. In contrast, the

most academically gifted students have been segregated from the more difficult students into academically advanced enclaves and those students with specific music, sports, arts, or language talents are overwhelmingly clustered into specialist schools.

This form of differentiation has significantly affected the composition of different types of schools and the extent to which they can compete in the education market. Junior campuses and many comprehensive schools struggle in the education market place to maintain enrolments while senior campuses, selective schools and specialist schools vie for the most able students from the more popular comprehensive schools. Indeed the very premise of a market-based education system – the ability to provide consumer choice (Marginson 1997a) – is fulfilled by this differentiation. The findings from this study add weight to earlier UK research showing that a differentiated market-place enables popular schools to enrol less burdensome students (e.g. Edwards & Whitty 1992; Gewirtz 1997).

As has been found in the UK, a consequence of the 'cream-skimming' (Whitty 1997: 14) and deliberate profiling by schools of particular types of students, a lack of diversity in student bodies in particular schools has been created. In NSW, this lack of diversity has been institutionalised by public policy. This study has

shown that a significant, yet arguably unintended outcome of these policies, has been that teachers' experience of has been fragmented to such a degree that each type of public secondary school now represents a substantially different labour market experience for the teachers that work within them. In this regard, structured inequality in the state education system has been implicitly sanctioned (Junor 1982) and the comprehensive education ideal in which a common educational experience was provided to the local community's diverse student population (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Hughes 2002) has been effectively abandoned.

Chapters 5 to 7 detailed the effect that neo-liberal policy reforms have had on the work of teachers in the public secondary school system in NSW. However, it is also instructive to consider how the differences in teachers' experience, based on the type of school in which they work, reveal the nature and extent to which the policy reform objectives have been achieved. In particular, the differentiation in teacher experiences provides an indication of the extent to which efficiencies in the system and improved educational outcomes have not been achieved in public secondary education. These issues will be examined in the final section of this chapter. First however, the intentions and consequences of the neo-liberal reforms and the extent to which competition has improved the standing of public

education vis-à-vis the private system are explored. Secondly, the chapter explores the implications of the differences in the experiences of teachers in the various types of public secondary schools. Finally, the broader implications of the policy reforms, and the extent to which the outcomes observed in this thesis appear sustainable, are examined in the last section of this chapter.

Public sector education reforms

The growth of differentiation in schools and labour markets

This thesis has shown that the neo-liberal policy reform agenda has created different labour market experiences for public secondary school teachers in NSW. Between the 1960s and the late 1980s, the public secondary school system in NSW was dominated by traditional comprehensive secondary schools (Campbell & Sherington 2006). The one exception to this dominant form of public secondary schooling was the retention of the few public academically selective secondary schools (Hughes 2002). The neo-liberal reforms that were introduced in 1989 significantly restructured this system by introducing a range of competitive market-mechanisms into education at the systemic and the local school levels (Marginson 1997a; Meadmore 2001).

Under the neo-liberal reform agenda of the late 1980s, the number of selective schools was significantly increased and additional types of public secondary schools were established. Among these new types of schools were specialist schools that were created to cater to specific student talents and/or interests, including creative and performing arts, technology, languages and sports. A number of multi-campus colleges were also established in which two to four junior feeder schools and a single senior campus were grouped into one single college system (Esson et al. 2002). The traditional comprehensive secondary schools still comprised the majority of schools in this newly restructured system, but the abolition of public school catchment areas through de-zoning and the introduction of school-based management facilitated competition (Apple 2004; Esson et al. 2002; Helsby 1999; Whitty et al. 1998). In terms of establishing and fostering competition, these neo-liberal policies were extremely effective as evidenced by the increase in these non-comprehensive secondary schools. Between 1988 and 2010, the number of these non-comprehensive secondary schools increased by massive 955 per cent and they now represent 29 per cent of all public secondary schools[68].

This differentiated public secondary school system has changed the experiences of teachers and the nature of their work. In each type of school the working

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[68] Derived from the most recent figures available (NSW DET 2011b).

conditions and experiences of public school teachers vary considerably along four distinct dimensions: 1) profile of the student body; 2) the nature of the student-teacher interactions; 3) the staffing profile; and, 4) the manner in which market-forces influence school operations and teachers' work.

Intentions and consequences

By the end of the 1980s, there were a number of competing agendas and rationales that were driving the push for public sector reform. Amid growing concerns about global competitiveness, in Australia, as in Britain and the United States, conservative politicians introduced neo-liberal public sector reforms that would create competitive market-based forces in government sector agencies (Laffin 1995; Mascarenhas 1993). Under competitive conditions, it was argued, public sector agencies would be forced to develop greater efficiencies when subjected to market mechanisms (Stilwell 1994).

The aim of de-regulating the bureaucratic public sector and introducing competition was to drive out inefficient poor performers and then reallocate those resources to more efficient operators (Laffin 1995; Mascarenhas 1993; Stilwell 1994; Wheelwright 1994). With poor performers driven out of the system, overall public sector expenditure overall would be reduced (Apple 2001; Laffin 1995; Mascarenhas 1993; Stilwell 1994). In education, there were two other

key driving forces behind the policy reforms. The first was a growing concern with national economic productivity (Marginson 1997b) and improving overall educational outcomes (Apple 2004; Brown 1990). The second concern, which was focussed at the state level, was the desire to reverse the flow of students from the public sector to the private sector by improving the reputation and performance of public education (NSW Parents Council 1988).

Competition – public versus private

In Australia, as in many OECD countries, the existence of a dual system of public and private institutions had instilled competition as a long standing feature of the education system (Marginson 1997b). In Australia, competition between the public and private education sectors was introduced in the 1950s when the Federal Government began to take an increasing role in the state-based education systems (Marginson 1997a). Decades before neo-liberal policy reforms were introduced, Federal Government support for the private system had been growing through federally funded taxation benefits (Marginson 1997b), capital works expenditure (Marginson 1997b), and recurrent grants (Marginson 1985; Marginson 1997b; McCollow & Martin 2002). In essence, this funding reduced the personal cost of private education (Campbell & Sherington 2006). With the notion of 'free' education in the public system being continuously challenged by

compulsory parental contributions (Marginson 1997a; Meadmore, 2001), the

reduced cost of private education made it a more attractive and affordable

alternative to public education for an increasing proportion of parents. While the

dominant position of public education across Australian states and territories

was still maintained throughout this time, it had begun to decline (Marginson,

1985: 10).

From the 1970s, the private education sector became a serious competitor for

public education students; and this was particularly marked in the secondary

school system (NSW Parents Council 1988). The extent of this growth in private

school enrolments led to its identification as a key policy concern in NSW for the

incoming Minister for Education, Dr Terry Metherell, in 1988. A key aim of the

neo-liberal policy initiatives, that led Metherell to introduce competitive market-

mechanisms into education, was to reverse the loss of public education students

to the private education sector (NSW Parents Council 1988). Figure 8.1 shows

however, the extent to which the growth in private school enrolments has

continued despite efforts to the contrary. Since 1979, when the proportion of

public school enrolments was at its peak (Marginson 1985), the private education

sector has continued to gain market share, despite the introduction of neo-liberal

reforms aimed at making public education more competitive and more attractive

against the private sector (NSW MEYA 1989). As discussed in Chapter 2, in 1977

at the peak of public school enrolments across Australia, 76.5 per cent of all

secondary students in NSW were enrolled in public schools (ABS 1978: 15).

Figure 8.1 shows the decade-on-decade decline in the market share held by

public secondary schools since 1977. Thirty years on, private secondary schools

enrolled 37.7 per cent of all NSW secondary school students (ABS 2008b). Over

this period, the total number of students in public secondary schools increased

by only 1.9 per cent compared to an increase of 103.1 per cent in the private

secondary schools.

Figure 8.1: Public and private secondary school enrolments, 1977 to 2007
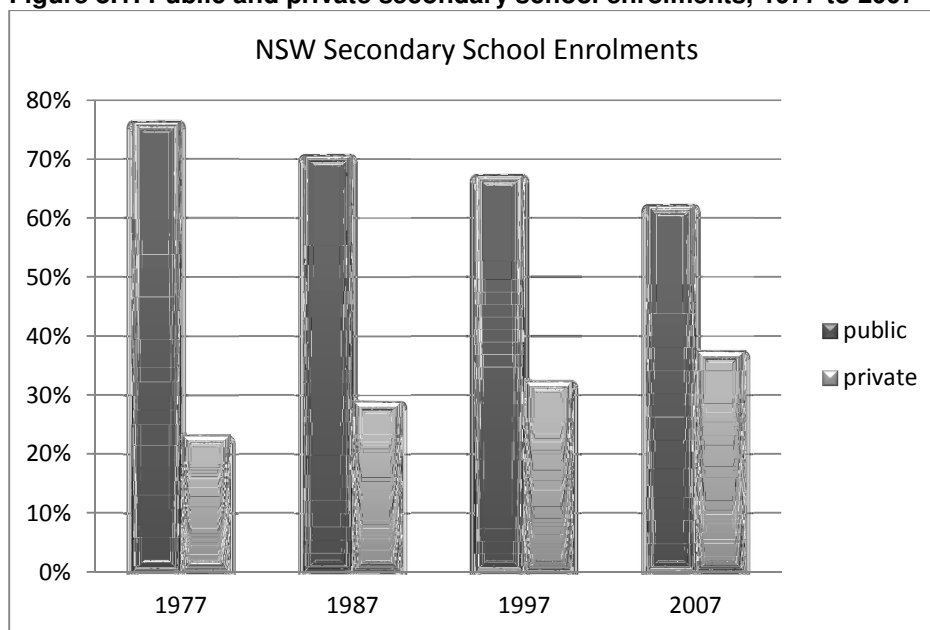
Sources: derived from figures in ABS (1978: 15; 1988: 10; 1998: 12; 2008b: 13).

In the mid-1990s, concerns were raised over the extent to which public schooling was becoming a residual system that would cater solely to those families without the social, economic or cultural resources to choose an alternative (Anderson 1992; Ball et al. 1994; Campbell 2005; Marginson 1997b). The increasing hold gained by the private sector since the late-1970s suggests that, more than ever before, private secondary education is seen as a better alternative to public education. As those families who have the resources and capacity to exercise choice increasingly do so, the loss of more able and motivated students from the public system only serves to increase the social divisions and inequality in the education system as a whole (Anderson 1994; Vickers 2004). These social divisions and inequalities are apparent in the student profiles that have emerged from this study.

It could be reasonably argued that competition in the public sector has stemmed the flow of students to the private sector and that the size of the private secondary education sector in NSW may be even larger than it is today if competition had not been introduced. However, the reverse is also possible: the introduction of competition in the public sector may have further devalued the relative position of comprehensive schools and junior campuses. In this scenario, competition in the public sector has reinforced to parents the importance of

making a 'good' choice (Campbell et al. 2009: 4) and increasing the flow of students to the private sector. With competitive selection in the most desirable public secondary schools making entry into these schools difficult, if a position in these schools is not secured, parents may opt for the private sector in preference to a devalued comprehensive school or junior campus. This scenario is supported by enrolment figures that show, despite competition and 'choice' in the public system, parents are increasingly opting for private education. In this system, 'choice' becomes somewhat of a misnomer when competitive selection procedures have enabled public schools to discriminate with regard to student enrolments (Gewirtz et al. 1995).

Further, it is evident, from these enrolment figures that many types of schools in the public secondary school system are struggling with their positional value and remain a less attractive educational option for increasing numbers of parents. In this regard, the objective of the neo-liberal policy reforms to improve the competitiveness of the public education sector as a whole, relative to the private sector, appears to have been less than successful.

Changes in the NSW secondary public education system

Despite the declining popularity of public education the vast majority of school students in NSW are still enrolled in government schools (ABS 2011). As such, since the 1960s the largest labour market for teachers has remained in the public sector. Chapter 2 described in detailed that prior to the reforms of the late 1980s there was little differentiation within the government sector in the types of schools available at the primary or secondary school levels. Indeed, as demand for secondary schooling increased during the 1960s there was a rapid expansion in NSW of comprehensive schools, the majority of which were co-educational (Campbell & Sherington 2006). Comprehensive schooling was defined at the time by ideals of uniformity and consistency and the student body in each school represented the diversity within the local community (Esson et al. 2002).

Between the 1960s and late 1980s, the experiences of teachers and the nuanced detail of their work might well have differed significantly between local comprehensive schools. As research has shown, teachers' experiences are significantly affected by factors such as the skills and experience of the principal (Glasman & Heck 1992) and the nature of the student body as determined by the social and economic characteristics of the local community (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Ingersoll 2004). Schools in different geographic locations had

student bodies that varied across a range of characteristics including the level of family affluence, the extent of welfare dependence, cultural, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds and the occupational characteristics of parents (Campbell & Sherington 2006).

At the height of the 'comprehensive revolution' (Campbell & Sherington 2006: 67) the only institutionally created difference in the nature of the student bodies at the public secondary school level was that created by the retention of selective schools. The students in selective schools were intentionally chosen based on their academic ability as determined by an examination process at the end of Year 6. An act of departmental policy created a student body in these selective schools that significantly differed from the student body in traditional comprehensive secondary schools. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, by 1987 only three per cent of all public secondary schools were selective schools[69]. The potential differences in the student bodies and, therefore, in the experiences of teachers in the NSW public secondary school system that were due to systematic and structural factors were limited to this small group of selective school students and their teachers.

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[69] Derived from Esson et al. (2002: 124) and ABS (1988: 8).

The findings from this study highlight the extent to which the neo-liberal approaches which were first implemented in the late 1980s, have changed the nature of the public secondary education system in NSW. Departmental policy has instituted such a degree of differentiation in the public secondary school system that five distinct types of secondary schools now exist in the Sydney metropolitan region and in major regional cities (Esson et al. 2002). In NSW, the expansion of selective schools and the establishment of specialist schools, and junior and senior campuses was so significant that, by 2010, approximately 35 per cent[70] of public secondary school teachers in major metropolitan regions were teaching in one of these non-comprehensive public secondary schools.

The differences in teachers' experiences in each of these types of public secondary schools reflect a fundamental shift in the characteristics of public secondary schools and in the underpinning principles of public education. The differentiation also supports the argument that five distinct labour market experiences for public secondary school teachers have emerged in major metropolitan regions in NSW. While the main employment conditions of teachers' work – such as pay and leave entitlements – remain the same in all

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[70] Derived from ABS (2011:29-30), NSW DET (2011b: 2011c: 8). See footnote 6 in Chapter 2 for more detail.

types of secondary schools, the experiences of teachers are now differentially influenced across a number of key domains.

Competition – public versus public

While increased competition between the public and private education sectors was created through government changes to educational funding arrangements (Marginson 1997a), competition between public secondary schools was introduced along different and multi-faceted lines. At the political level, despite the increasing popularity of private education rising retention rates in secondary schooling had seen the state cost of public education increase (Marginson 1997a). The introduction of competition and quasi-market mechanisms in public education and the encouragement of individual investment in education were seen as solutions to these burgeoning state costs (Marginson 1997a). Under the emerging neo-liberal reform agenda, which aimed to reduce public sector expenditure (NSW Commission of Audit 1988: 37; Laffin & Painter 1995b), the concept of choice in public education had to be encouraged at the individual level (Apple 2001; Marginson 1997b). This encouragement, however, did not prove particularly difficult (Marginson 1997b). The introduction of market-mechanisms through public sector reform coincided with the increasing

popularity of social ideals about freedom of choice and the individual right to

pursue social and economic aspirations (Apple 2001; McMurtry, 1998).

Extensive reviews of, and inquiries into, the NSW education system led to the

suggestion of a range of various market-mechanisms through which competition

and efficiencies could be increased (Blakers 1985; McGowan 1981; Swan 1983;

Swan & McKinnon 1984; Winder 1984). Some of these recommendations would

only be partially implemented. For example, McGowan's (1981) recommendation

to shift from a centralised system of curriculum development to a school-based

system was turned aside by federal level endorsement of a centralised

curriculum framework (Dawkins 1988). Nevertheless, school-based management

enabled and encouraged even some comprehensive secondary schools to offer,

and specialise in, subjects that catered to the clientele the school wished to

attract. In this regard, school-based management enabled public schools to

develop niche market positions that differentiated them from the competition.

For the non-comprehensive schools, the ability to adopt overt selection criteria

and strategies for attracting and recruiting students makes that differentiation

even more distinct. In comparison to comprehensive schools, specialist and

selective schools are able to alter the focus of the school-level curriculum to

create a greater range of subjects of particular interest to the student body and

their parents. The evidence from this study shows that timetabling in these schools is adjusted accordingly and teachers have to coordinate lesson planning to take into consideration the disruptions that are created by the extra time needed for the additional specialist classes and activities.

Similarly, all public secondary schools can take into consideration the preferences of the community with regard to offering different non-core subjects and extra-curricular activities. Some traditional comprehensive schools and junior and senior campuses have developed a niche position in the local education market through specialising in particular creative arts, extra-curricular activities, and/or vocational education and training programmes or by providing classes that focus on the specific cultural and/or language needs of the community. In this regard, the offering of different subjects, activities and programmes creates a level of market differentiation between the various local schools. The content and assessment process of the non-core and vocational subjects, however, are still centrally determined and prescribed.

The other significant market-based mechanism that facilitated competition and enabled the operation of five distinct types of public secondary schools was the abolition of school catchment areas through de-zoning. De-zoning was a strategic policy aimed at reversing the perception that all comprehensive schools

provided the same education and instead recognised that educational outcomes did in fact differ depending on the school (Esson et al. 2002). With parents already educated on the possibility of choosing between public and private education, they readily embraced the notion of options in the public education system. Exercising choice in the public education sector became not only desirable but an essential component of 'good parenting' (Campbell et al. 2009).

As evidenced by the experiences of teachers, however, the way and extent to which different types of secondary schools are able to compete in this new free-market education system differs significantly. Competition for student enrolments across the system is now extensive. School choice and the market-mechanisms put in place to facilitate that choice have increased student mobility to such an extent that the vast majority of teachers felt that parental choice in the public secondary school system had significantly changed the composition of the student body in their school.

The concept of increasing diversity in the student body that emerged in the 1980s with increased multi-culturalism (McGowan et al. 1981) and with the rising retention rates into the senior years of schooling (Barcan 1988) broadened the range of academic and non-academic abilities and interests among students (Hughes 2002). More recently the acceptance of diversity has been extended even

further. Differences in ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds and divergent

learning styles, learning capacities, welfare needs, student talents and

community values are all widely recognised in public education (Campbell &

Sherington 2006; Esson et al. 2002). Much of this diversity in student

backgrounds and needs, however, is now concentrated in particular types of

schools rather than being distributed across the public education system. As

such, student segmentation, based on learning and behavioural characteristics,

has been institutionalised through departmental policies that have created and

supported the settings in which specific types of students are clustered.

Concentrations of particular types of student

Before the neo-liberal reforms of the late 1980s it was reasonable to assume that

any differences in the student body between public secondary schools were

determined by factors that were outside the control of the NSW Department of

Education and Training. The characteristics of the student body in these pre-

reform schools would be influenced by the social and economic characteristics of

the local community and this could result in significantly different school

populations (Campbell & Sherington 2006; Ingersoll 2004) and experiences for

teachers. Nevertheless, with the exception of the small number of selective

schools there were no systematic policy-driven strategies that were creating these

differences. The advent and expansion of different types of public secondary schools in NSW has fundamentally altered the extent to which the full diversity of the local student population is represented in each type of school.

The findings from this study highlight the extent to which different types of schools can be characterised by particular types of students and how these student clusters affect the work of teachers within those types of schools. While the student bodies in each type of school are far from homogenous there are discernable patterns with regard to particular student characteristics, which are far more typical in some types of schools than others. The most extreme examples of this are the differences between the student bodies in selective schools as compared to the student body in junior campuses and many comprehensive secondary schools. In selective schools, teachers characterise the students as being engaged and motivated learners who enjoy attending classes, have high educational outcomes and have high likelihood of undertaking further studies at university. Teacher-student interactions in these schools are based on the intensive learning environment that is created by students requiring significant volumes of new and challenging work to keep them occupied and by their constant requests for feedback and support with regard to their academic progress and grades.

In contrast, teachers in junior campuses and teachers from many comprehensive secondary schools characterise the students in their schools as having low academic ability and motivation, being disengaged from school and academic achievement and highly unlikely to attend university. In addition, in junior campuses an alarming proportion of teachers reported that substantial numbers of students have learning difficulties and the educational aspirations and capacities of the students in these schools are so low that teachers feel that the majority of students are unlikely to complete Year 12.

The educational capacity of students is not the only characteristic that differentiates the various types of public secondary schools. The other factor that varies significantly between the types of schools relates to student behavioural difficulties and propensity towards violence. Teachers in all types of public secondary schools are exposed to a concerning level of violence such as being physically threatened or verbally abused by students and parents and having to intervene in student fights. Again, however, it is the experiences and reports from teachers in junior campuses that highlight the extent to which these challenging student behaviours are far more concentrated in these schools than in other types of public secondary schools. For teachers in junior campuses, where there are no senior students to act as positive role models, teachers' level

of exposure to violence is considerably higher than that of teachers in other types of public secondary schools. Similarly, the level of violence that teachers in comprehensive and specialist schools are exposed to is higher than that of teachers in senior campuses and selective schools.

The effect of competitive selection

It is interesting to note that with regard to most of the student-related factors affecting teachers' work that have been discussed, there are very few discernable differences, at the aggregate level, between the reported experiences of comprehensive and specialist school teachers. In both types of schools, teachers reported very similar issues with regard to students' behavioural and learning difficulties, violent behaviours, enjoyment from learning, and their likelihood of completing Year 12. This lack of difference in some of the student characteristics, however, highlights the important effect of competitive selection in creating different levels of motivation in students in these schools. In specialist schools, where there is competitive selection, teachers were far more likely than their comprehensive school counterparts to report that their students sought further feedback on their class-work and academic progress. Yet, specialist and comprehensive school teachers reported similar patterns of responses with regard to students' academic ability and likely educational outcomes. Similar

ability but differing levels of motivation might be explained by differences in the pressure on students to maintain academic grades in specialist schools where competitive selection processes mean that students face greater disciplinary pressures and likelihood of expulsion for unsatisfactory behaviour and/or falling grades. Further, as the findings in this thesis show, students in specialist schools who may be struggling and/or more likely to be disruptive are positively influenced by the greater proportion of able and more motivated students within these schools.

While specialist schools must enrol a proportion of local students regardless of whether or not these students have specific talent in the field in which the school specialises, they also have a specialised talent program. Thus, with regard to out-of-area students, specialist schools have a locally determined rigorous selection process that requires students to meet certain criteria. With high market-driven demand for places, these schools can be, and are, discerning with the students they enrol. Further, however, in these specialist schools, as in all secondary schools regardless of other achievements, it is important for the schools' reputation to maintain high academic standards. Once a student is enrolled in a specialist school on the basis of a particular talent, the results from this study highlight the pressures that are placed on the students and their teachers to

ensure that suitable grades are achieved and maintained. These findings suggest that the process of selection into a specialist school, and the potential threat, to a student of losing a place of relative prestige and privilege – such as on the sporting team or in the orchestra – due to poor academic achievement, may well have a positive influence on motivation and on the extent to which students also strive, and are encouraged, to achieve academically.

It is certainly the case that some comprehensive schools are in high demand, have waiting lists comprising out-of-area students and, therefore, have some form of competitive selection that is applied to determine successful applicants. Nevertheless, this study highlights that these schools are exceptions and that relative to specialist schools, comprehensive schools are far more likely to be struggling with falling student enrolments. In comparing teachers' experiences in comprehensive schools and specialist schools, this translates into more intensive learning interactions with students for specialist school teachers compared to that of their colleagues in comprehensive schools.

Competitive mechanisms and market pressures

Related to the issue of competitive selection and falling student enrolments was the extremely limited success that comprehensive schools and junior campuses had in attracting and retaining high achieving students. This study adds further

support to concerns that were raised over the development of a residual

education system (Anderson 1992; 1994; Ball et al. 1994; Campbell 2005;

Marginson 1997b; McCollow & Martin 1997; Vickers 2004) in NSW. Teachers in

many of the comprehensive schools discussed at length the loss of the most able

students to the selective and specialist schools and to the private system. Further,

the quantitative findings highlight the extent to which teachers believe that

increased choice in the public secondary school system has changed the

composition of the student body in each type of school.

Competitive market forces have increasingly attracted students, and particularly

the high achieving students, away from traditional comprehensive schools.

Many of these students are being attracted to the selective and specialist schools

and senior campuses. But, equally, the continued growth in private secondary

schooling indicates that non-government schools remain an important option for

those parents whose children do not attain a place in non-comprehensive system

or in a highly desirable comprehensive school, and who can afford private

schooling. Enrolment figures underscore the extent to which the traditional

public comprehensive system has declined under the market-based system.

Figure 8.2 shows the extent to which enrolments in traditional comprehensive

secondary schools have declined since the introduction of neo-liberal market-

based reforms. When the private sector enrolments are considered, and the

public sector enrolment figures are disaggregated into comprehensive and non-

comprehensive schools, traditional comprehensive schools comprised only 44

per cent of all secondary school students in NSW in 2010.

Figure 8.2: Comprehensive, non-comprehensive and private secondary school enrolments, 1987 and 2010
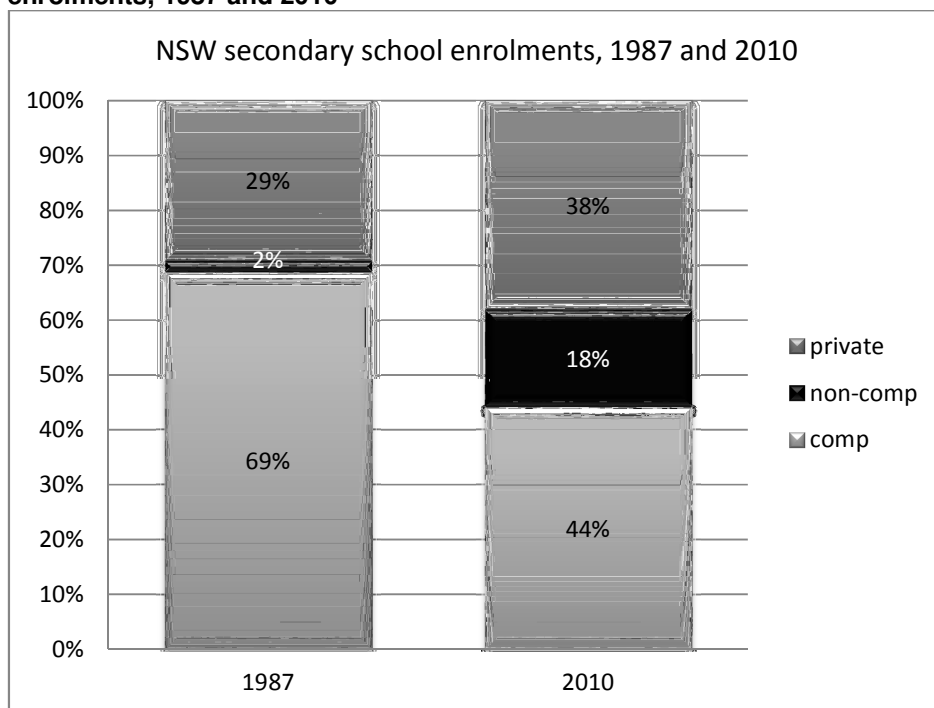
Sources: student enrolment numbers for public and private schools (ABS 1988: 10 & 2011: 19). Proportion of comprehensive and non-comprehensive students in government schools derived from NSW DET (2011a: 1) and Esson et al. (2002: 124)

In the public system each type of school is becoming increasingly homogenous as

parental choice and market-forces have led to the segmentation of students along

specific ability and behavioural characteristics. Irrespective of the type of public

secondary school, teachers perceive this increasing uniformity in students as a

substantial change that is attributable to the introduction of choice. For selective and specialist schools and senior campuses the change in the nature of the student body is borne out of an ability to discriminate with competitive selection criteria and ensure that the more desirable students are enrolled. However, this study also highlights that the capacity for these schools to discriminate with student enrolments creates a situation that reinforces the negative parental perceptions about traditional comprehensive schooling (Wolfe 2003). For teachers in junior campuses, and for teachers in many comprehensive schools, falling student enrolments only add to their challenges. To maintain funding these schools do not have the luxury of discriminating with student enrolments, and as such, have very limited, if any, capacity to exclude undesirable and resource intensive students (Gewirtz et al. 1995).

The competition hierarchy – attracting and retaining students

A school's reputation is particularly important for attracting and retaining students (Gewirtz 1997) but this reputation operates differently at the high- and low-demand ends of the education market. Under-subscribed schools that have low demand for student places and that are struggling to retain current students can find it difficult to reverse any negative perceptions about the school and stem the loss of students (Adler 1997). In junior and senior campuses and in

comprehensive schools teachers report that the issue of retaining students is focussed on the need to maintain *absolute* student numbers. Under a per-student or per-capita funding model (Gerwirtz 1997; Whitty 1997) declining student numbers affects teachers' work in variety of ways: class sizes increase (Larson 1980; Smyth et al. 2000), teachers are required to teach outside of their subject area of expertise (Mander 2006), and as highlighted in this study, schools are forced to cut non-core subjects and programs. For these schools, maintaining current funding and resourcing levels through student retention is a constant struggle (Gewirtz 1997; Whitty 1997).

Student retention, however, is also a substantial problem in the more popular, high-demand schools that are over-subscribed. Although all selective and specialists schools are all in high demand, and many comprehensive schools have waiting lists for out-of-area students, there is certainly greater demand for positions in some schools than others. Among these 'high-end' schools, the mechanisms and pressures that are associated with student retention differ from the pressures in the low demand schools.

In selective and specialist schools problems associated with student retention are minor in comparison to those of junior and senior campuses and comprehensive schools. Further, in these schools there is little, if any, concern about attracting

students or maintaining *absolute* student numbers. Gaining entry into a selective school is extremely competitive and there are constant waiting lists. In 2009, 13,454 Year 6 primary school students sat the state-wide academic Selective School Exam, but only a quarter (26%; n = 3,533[71]) of those students actually gained a place in a public selective school. In specialist schools, although similar application figures are not available, the findings from this study suggest that while the demand might not be as high as selective schools, there is certainly no problem attracting and retaining absolute student numbers. In both of these types of schools, regardless of the year level a student might be in when they leave the school, they are readily replaced from a list of potential applicants. Despite this lack of a problem in maintaining absolute student numbers there is nevertheless a very real concern over ensuring that the highest achieving students are retained.

Among the selective schools in particular, the stakes involved a school's positioning on league tables has led to practices in which there is active identification and recruitment of the highest achieving students. As schools attract more of these high achieving students the overall reputation of the school is elevated or, in the case of the most prestigious selective schools, secured and

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[71] Calculations derived from figures available from the *Better Schools* website (viewed 12 July 2011) http://bettereducation.com.au/Resources/2009NSWSelectHSEntryScores.aspx

maintained. For selective schools, therefore, the practice of head-hunting and poaching students is a strategic practice aimed at gaining a competitive advantage in the market-place. In the education quasi- market place this freedom to selectively and actively approach those students who enhance the reputation of the school through high academic achievement is in practice the sole privilege of popular schools (Edwards & Whitty 1992; Gewirtz 1997)

For all teachers in the public secondary school system however, the role of marketer and promoter of the school has clearly become as important as the role of instructor and educator (Hargreaves 1994; Robertson 1996; Smyth et al. 2000). For all schools, this marketer and promoter role is associated with the development and provision of a range and combination of activities that seek to maintain and/or enhance the reputation of the school (Gewirtz 1997) and appeal to the parent-consumer (Gewirtz 1997; Power et al. 2009). For these schools and for their executive this necessitates leadership and strategic management approaches that ensure that some, if not all, of the teaching staff are devoting attention to particular activities that distinguish their school from the competitor schools.

The capacity for the various types of schools to offer this differentiation however, varies in relation to the resourcing that is available. With government funding

dependent on attracting and retaining student numbers, and with a general level

of under-funding under the school-based management approach (Helsby 1999),

parental contributions have become particularly important in subsidising extra-

curricular activities (Chitty 1997). Activities that gain parental interest and secure

parental support in the school are therefore, critical. This interest must be

secured, first and foremost, through the provision of information that allows

comparisons between schools to be made. The standardised and publicised

examination results provide this mechanism through which parents can assess

and monitor the academic performance of schools (Gewirtz 1997).

The contradictions of standardisation

Student poaching practices highlight how standardised processes and metrics

facilitate the competitive market-environment. While the points of differentiation

offered by extra-curricular activities are important, it is through the 'high stakes

testing' (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006: 31) and associated publicised ranked

league tables (Apple 2004; Day 2006) that parents are enabled to make

comparisons between *all* secondary schools (Brown 1990: 74; Clarke & Newman

1997; Whitty et al. 1998; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008) across both the public and

private sectors. In many countries the popular media has played a significant

role in publicising and comparing the performance of schools (Power & Frandji

2010) in these standardised examination results. In Australia, in each state and territory, annual media portrayals of school league table positions are particularly prevalent with the Year 12 results (Patty & Boland-Rudder 2010; Parker 2010; Sydney Morning Herald 2010).

In 2010, however, amidst much controversy (Hunter 2010; Peating 2010) and teacher and union opposition (Australian Education Union [AEU] 2010) the Federal Government launched its *My School* website (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2010). The *My School* website publishes a range of information about each school in Australia; including Year 12 exam results and national standardised exam results such as the NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy; ACARA 2010). While this site is explicitly designed to enable parents to make comparisons between schools (ACARA 2011) it is through the privately operated for-profit sites that specifically ranked league tables are readily available.[72]

These ranked league tables detail the relative position of each school and emphasise the extent to which selective schools and private schools out-perform other types of schools in NSW in terms of academic achievement as measured by

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[72] For example, privately owned sites such as *Better Schools* website http://bettereducation.com.au/Results/Hsc.aspx*; and Our Kidz* website http://ourkidz.com.au/content/view/1606/186/lang,en/ (viewed 12 July 2011).

the HSC results. Teachers in this study were acutely aware of the marketability of their school relative to that of their immediate competitors as determined by the positioning in these league tables and of the reputational advantage, or disadvantage, afforded those positions. These rankings and associated standardised testing practices significantly increase the pressure teachers are under (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006) and they limit the control and autonomy teachers can exercise over educational content and instruction (Apple 1986; Apple & Jungck 1990; Gewirtz 1997; McInerney 2001; Meadmore 2001; Whitty 1997). Similarly, teachers in this study were ever mindful of the exam content, and while aware that they are sacrificing the enhancement of the learning experience for students, necessarily stifle pedagogical innovation (Hargreaves 1988) in the pursuit of exam results and market-share as discussed in Chapter 5.

The work environment created for teachers, who teach in schools where the focus is on high academic achievement and intensive learning interactions with students, represents one end of a spectrum of teachers' experience. At the other end of the spectrum, as was discussed above and in Chapters 5 and 6, competitive market pressures have had a much more negative effect on the student composition of junior campuses and many comprehensive schools. In these schools, teachers' work is far more likely to be concentrated on behavioural

management issues than on intensive learning-related interactions with students. For these teachers, however, there is still a need to focus on the content of the standardised exams but the focus necessitates reliance on different pedagogical techniques. In schools with a concentration of less academically able students teachers apply rote learning techniques in an attempt to teach students the basic aspects of the academically oriented centralised curriculum.

Parental engagement

The tendency for parents to adopt a 'consumer' mentality (Brown 1990; Helsby 1999; Marginson 1997a) was apparent in teachers' reports of parental pressures and demands. Given the differences in the nature of the student body in the various types of public secondary schools, it is not surprising, however, that the type of interaction that teachers have with parents also varies, to some extent, by the type of school.

Selective school teachers are much more likely to be exposed to demanding parents who are acutely aware of, and driven by, performance measurement outcomes such as examination results and academic achievement. In these schools in particular, teachers reported that parents demand individualised attention for their child/ren but also expect a higher overall level of contact between teachers and students. This instrumentality in parental approaches to

education (Brown 1990) is associated with an awareness of education as a credential that is increasingly important in attaining entry into prestigious higher education courses and labour market positions (Brown 1990; Campbell 2010; Junor 1991; Livingstone 1998). As instrumental parents increasingly seek to support their child's education (Campbell 2010), the level of accountability felt by teachers increases (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006; Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008; Troman 2000). Selective schools, however, are much more likely to have demanding parents, and teachers in these schools are much more pressured to meet parental demands.

In contrast, it was the level of parental disengagement that was much more likely to characterise the experiences of teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses, and to some extent in specialist schools. However, while there was disengagement from parents over learning and educational outcomes, there was a greater likelihood of negative parent-teacher interactions including verbal abuse and threats of violence from parents over issues of student behaviour and discipline.

The cost of school diversity

It is evident that within the NSW public secondary school system there has not been a universal benefit to the introduction of market competition. In creating

schools with increasingly homogenous student bodies, neo-liberal education policies in NSW have institutionalised and effectively supported inequality.

Different types of public secondary schools have distinct clusters of students based on characteristics and capabilities associated with academic achievement, motivation and ability, learning difficulties and behavioural challenges. While theorists have raised concerns that public education is becoming the residual system to private schooling (Anderson 1992; 1994; Ball et al. 1994; Campbell 2005; Marginson 1997b; McCollow & Martin 1997), it is apparent that in the NSW public secondary school system in the western and south-western suburbs of Sydney that residualisation is confined to the junior campuses and many comprehensive schools. The quasi-market environment has encouraged parents who can make a choice to abandon those schools that have student bodies that are characterised by disruptive or delinquent behaviours and poor academic results (Campbell et al. 2009). Under the neo-liberal policy reform agenda however, if they have the capacity to negotiate the education market, there is little in the way of choice for the parents of these challenging students. In a competitive environment, it is in the interests of the more popular schools to turn-away these students, lest they damage the reputation of the school (Gewirtz et al. 1995). Thus, while it may have been the intent of neo-liberal policies and

market-based mechanisms to 'weed out poor schools' (Helsby 1999: 38), the reality is that these schools are unable to affect the composition of the student body and they continue to operate with teachers working under extremely difficult conditions (Grace 1995; Apple 1996; Blackmore et al. 1996). Consequently, these schools also have limited capacity to attract and retain experienced and qualified teaching staff.

Staffing issues

In the different types of public secondary schools, there are aspects of the school staffing profile that also differentiate one type of school from another. A particularly concerning, although not unexpected, finding from this study was the extent to which many schools are inappropriately staffed. The schools with the largest proportion of challenging students and who, therefore, should have the most experienced teachers (OECD 2002) in fact have the least experienced staffing profile.

As shown in this study, junior campuses, where there are significant proportions of students with learning difficulties and behavioural challenges, have the least experienced teachers, the highest staff turnover and the most difficulty attracting experienced classroom teachers. Further, these types of schools are also, by far, the least desirable type of school in which teachers would consider working.

These conditions create three very different problems. Firstly, the many inexperienced teachers in these schools lack the individual and collective skills and knowledge to be able to work effectively with challenging students and to manage the stress that is associated with significant disruptive behaviours (Robertson 1996). Secondly, inexperienced teachers lack the resources to be able to modify and adapt the centralised curriculum to make it relevant and interesting to less academically inclined students (Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008). Finally, high staff turnover and inexperienced staff further stratifies and disadvantages the educational opportunities and outcomes of the students (Ingersoll 2004).

In contrast, while years of experience do not necessarily equate to better teaching practices (Skerrett & Hargreaves 2008), at the other end of the spectrum the teachers in selective schools are more mature and have, on average, many more years of teaching experience. Selective schools, with low teacher turnover, also have a much more stable workforce.

Importantly the issue of staff turnover and the results from the logistic modelling support previous research that has shown a strong relationship between teacher turnover and the working conditions associated with work intensification and poor student behaviour that arise from both systemic and school-level factors

(OECD 2005). Teachers in schools that have high proportions of challenging students are, not surprisingly, much more likely to consider leaving the school. However, teachers who have been working with concentrations of challenging students are also more disillusioned with the education system and have a higher propensity to be thinking about leaving public education and the teaching profession.

System sustainability?

The qualitative and quantitative findings from this study highlight patterns of teacher experiences that vary significantly depending on the type of school. In essence, these patterns reflect a segmentation of teachers' labour market experiences and indicate an extension is required, in NSW, to the distinction made between public-private sector labour markets. In NSW, teachers' work in the public secondary education system is now not just organised by student age, subject specialisations and timetabling (Hargreaves 2004; Reid 2003) but by student profile, teacher-student interactions, staff profile and the way in which market-mechanisms influence school operations. But, this labour market segmentation has fragmented teachers' work, calling into question the sustainability of a system that is characterised by schools in which teachers are increasingly reluctant to work and which parents are not supporting.

Given the aging of the teaching workforce and significant teacher shortages across many OECD countries (OECD 2002) including Australia (MCEETYA 2004a) the importance of policy strategies and approaches aimed at developing, retaining and replacing the existing workforce are paramount (OECD 2002). The evidence from this study, however, highlights that the neo-liberal policy reforms that were introduced in the late 1980s in NSW have not created a public secondary school system in which equality of opportunity is a feature for either students or teachers. These differences raise questions about the extent to which the system, as a whole, has become more efficient and whether or not universal improvements in educational outcomes have been achieved.

Improved efficiencies?

The main intention of the neo-liberal public sector reforms was to improve education performance by driving efficiencies through the education system (Laffin & Painter 1995a). In education, as in many other public sector bureaucracies, economic rationalism and market-based competition were the mechanisms through which these efficiencies would be achieved (Stilwell 1994).

Arguably, the effect of the education reforms on teacher experiences was, and is, an unintended consequence. Nevertheless teachers' work is still vital to the success of the reforms. To create efficiencies and improve overall educational

outcomes, teachers would have to change the way in which they work. Certainly the introduction of neo-liberal management practices that were intended to induce savings in the education budget (NSW Commission of Audit 1988; Laffin & Painter 1995b) were expected to alter some aspects of teachers' work if efficiencies were to be gained.

The devolution of operational and administrative functions to the local level was focussed on changing school resourcing and improving the quality and standards of educational outcomes (Caldwell & Spinks 1992; Knight 1990; Willis 1991). School-based management also shifted the philosophical approach to schooling and teachers' work (Smyth 1995) and increased the pressures under which teachers worked (Lingard et al. 1995). Specifically, school-based management has transferred the responsibility for school and student outcomes rom the systemic level to the individual school and to teachers (Gewirtz 1997). However, in the competitive market-based environment school and student outcomes are evaluated on a 'unidimensional scale of academic excellence' (Whitty et al. 1998: 117) measured by the results in standardised 'high stakes' examinations (Hargreaves & Goodson 2006: 31).

Teacher competence is an invaluable contributor to education outcomes (Hanushek 1997; Lingard, Mills & Hayes 2001). However, student capacity and

motivation is also a significant factor in determining educational achievement (Day et al. 2006). In the NSW public secondary school system, differentiation in student capacity and motivation has been institutionally segregated through neo-liberal reforms that have implemented choice through competitive market-mechanisms.

The characteristics of all school students range from those who are academically gifted, motivated and highly engaged through to those with learning difficulties, poor motivation and engagement, and problems appropriately regulating behaviour. The diversity in student characteristics that fall between these two extremes however, are not equally represented across the different types of public secondary schools in NSW. Rather, there is a concentration of students with particular characteristics and attributes that are readily discernible in each of the five different types of public secondary schools. In the diversified school system, teachers in junior campuses and comprehensive schools are disproportionately working with the students who are the most difficult to teach while, at the other end of the spectrum, teachers in selective schools work solely with the academically gifted students. Whether or not this system results in a more efficient use of resources, however, is clearly debatable.

One way in which gains in efficiencies can be measured is through the extent to which competition has improved the allocation of resources by eliminating under-performers (Stilwell 1994). Cost efficiencies in the NSW education system, it was argued, would be brought about through a range of competitive market mechanisms (Marginson 1997a) and the devolution of operational and administrative functions to the local level (Willis 1991). In the education system this meant that poorly performing schools would lose students and, consequently, their funding would be reduced; ultimately forcing those schools to shut down (Brown 1990; Chubb & Moe 1992). As has been discussed, in a competitive market-based environment, parental decisions about school choice are predominantly assessed by the educational outcomes achieved by the school. However, the nature of peer groups and the schools' reputation for having disruptive or delinquent students are also significant predictors of parental choice and student mobility (Campbell et al. 2009). Although school popularity is not a measure of effectiveness (Edwards & Whitty 1992), in an environment created and defined market-mechanisms, popularity, as reflected in the ability to attract and retain students, does become a proxy measure of school performance and success. The performance on this proxy measure of junior campuses and many comprehensive schools is, at best, poor; calling into question the

effectiveness of these schools, as measured by neo-liberal standards of economic viability.

The findings from this study highlight that many of these schools are still operating despite having significant problems with attracting and retaining students. For these schools, having large concentrations of the types of students that make the school increasingly undesirable to parents is particularly problematic because these student characteristics are also associated with teacher mobility. These findings add weight to the arguments that the introduction of competition and market-mechanisms has not, in fact, driven out under-performing schools (Anderson 1994; Apple 2004; Edwards & Whitty 1992; Whitty 1997). Following the neo-liberal logic, it is therefore, reasonable to conclude that efficiencies in the NSW secondary school system have not been gained. Rather, this study has shown that inefficiencies – as defined by the continued operation of 'under-performing' schools in which maintaining student enrolments and reducing staff turnover are constant struggles – are confined to particular types of schools. In this unequal market place, the price paid by junior campuses and comprehensive schools is to the advantage of selective and specialist schools and senior campuses.

A fundamental flaw in the neo-liberal education reforms is that not all families have the cultural, social and economic capital to explore and exploit the education market options that are supposedly available to them (Ball et al. 1994). As the children from those families without the means to navigate the education market become concentrated in particular types of schools, the conditions under which these schools operate become increasingly difficult (Apple 1996; Blackmore et al. 1996; Grace 1995; Helsby 1999). As shown in this study, and supporting earlier research, for teachers this has meant increasing class sizes as student enrolments fall and resourcing is cut (Blackmore et al. 1996), having to work with insufficient resources and essential equipment (Apple 1996; Gewirtz 1997; Grace 1995), and teaching outside of subject area (Mander 2006). Rather than becoming more efficient, this study suggests that for the less competitive schools, the educational opportunity that is provided to students is compromised by insufficient resourcing and endemic student and staffing challenges.

Improved performance?

Gains in efficiency can also be measured by improved educational outcomes. In Australia, studies that have examined the academic performance of schools have had methodological problems that make the results inconclusive (Anderson 1994). While actual academic outcomes have not been measured in this study,

teachers' perceptions of the extent to which educational outcomes have been influenced with the introduction of competition and choice strongly suggest that the rhetoric around universal improvements have been not translated into practice. Adding strength to this argument are teachers' own perceptions that also reflect a level of dissatisfaction with the way in which competition and choice has changed the nature and experience of their work.

Conclusion

In the early- to mid-1990s, many theorists warned of the effects of a residual system in which the rights of those without the capacity and resources to negotiate the education market place would have their rights to a universal education undermined (Anderson 1992; 1994; Ball et al. 1994; Campbell 2005; Marginson 1997a; 1997b; McCollow & Martin 1997). This chapter argues that rather than improving resourcing efficiencies or educational outcomes, competition and market-based pressures have instead deepened already entrenched inequality in the public secondary education system. Teachers who work in this system no longer work with students who represent, in all its variations, the diversity of the local community. Instead, competition, driven parental choice and student mobility have created a system in which teaching experiences differ by school type in NSW public secondary schools.

While the idealised vision of a true comprehensive public education system might never have been attained (Connell 2006), the system that has been created represents, in many ways, the antithesis of the comprehensive principles. Rather than stemming the outflow of students from the public sector into the private, competition in the public sector has reinforced the message that comprehensive schooling – and, by association, junior campus schooling – is the alternative that caters only to those families who are unable to choose other alternatives (Anderson 1992; 1994; Ball et al. 1994; Campbell 2005; Marginson 1997b).

When there are schools which comprise only those students from families who do not have the social, economic and cultural resources to leave it calls into question the extent to which those schools are not only residualised but become a form of charity (Anderson 1994). In these schools, high concentrations of students with learning and behavioural difficulties mark a distinct shift from a teaching experience that is characterised by a student diversity that is representative of the local community. With the challenges these teachers face, they may well be better equipped with additional qualifications, skills and experience in social work and youth welfare. At the other end of the spectrum, the work of teachers in selective schools also lacks a breadth of experience and diversity. For these teachers there is little, if any, respite from the intense learning

and academic focus of their students or from the continual pressure from demanding parents.

Collectively, the teachers in the public secondary school system lack exposure to true community representativeness in their interactions with students. In this regard the system is constraining and controlling the experience of teachers in different ways. The findings from this study suggest that teachers' work has intensified by greater concentrations of particular types of students and teachers require new skills to deal with the intensity of the experience that has been created by type of school in which they work.

That many teachers are dissatisfied with their experience of teaching is apparent in the extent to which they consider leaving the schools in which they work. Also apparent, however, is the extent to which the private education sector has become a competitor, not just for public sector students, but, for disgruntled public sector teachers as well. The loss of teachers from specific schools and from the public education system however, is disproportionately borne by junior campuses in comparison to all other types of schools, and by comprehensive and specialist schools relative to selective schools and senior campuses.

In the 1980s, the popularity of the private education system was damaging the viability of the public comprehensive system (Hughes 2002). Now, more than 20 years after the initial introduction of neo-liberal reforms, the growing popularity of the selective and specialist schools and senior campuses can be added to the ever increasing market share that has been, and by all indications, continues to be lost from the traditional comprehensive schools. The sustainability of this system, and in particular, the fate of comprehensive schools and junior campuses, and the teachers and students in them, is indeed cause for concern.

The public secondary school system that has emerged, as demonstrated by the experiences of teachers who work in it, has systemically entrenched inequality and all indications are that, in the continuing neo-liberal environment in which choice is paramount, there will be a continued deterioration of the types of schools at the bottom of this policy-induced educational hierarchy. In the following chapter, the implications of these changes to the NSW public secondary school system are discussed with reference to the current policy responses, and potential ways forward.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

In Australia, as in many western countries, neo-liberal policy reforms introduced during the 1970s and 1980s have brought significant changes to school education (Ballet et al. 2006; Gewirtz 1997; Helsby 1999; Robertson 1996; Smyth et al. 2000; Whitty 2002; 1997; Whitty et al. 1998). The Australian and international literature highlights the nature and extent to which market-mechanisms and the restructuring of organisational arrangements have affected teachers' work. A common feature of these reforms has been the introduction of decentralising mechanisms that push responsibility and accountability for educational outcomes from the system to the school level (Apple 2004; Gerwirtz 1997; Helsby 1999; Whitty 2002; Whitty et al. 1998). These mechanisms facilitate the operation of the education market by encouraging schools to differentiate themselves from their competitors, and enhance parental choice (Ball et al. 1994; Marginson 1997b; Gewirtz 1997; Whitty 1997; Whitty et al. 1998).

In NSW public secondary schools, the key features of the neo-liberal reform agenda were the increased diversification and expansion of different types of public schools and the relaxation of enrolment practices to promote parental choice and student mobility (Esson et al. 2002). The system that has been created from these reforms comprises five different types of public secondary schools:

comprehensive, selective, and specialist schools, and junior and senior campuses. This thesis has argued that each type of school has unique characteristics and that these characteristics translate into fundamentally different labour market experiences for teachers. In addition, however, the experiences of teachers have provided insights into the effect of these changes on the secondary education system more broadly. The study highlights that while diversification between schools has certainly been achieved, the consequence of this diversity is the fragmentation of teachers' work and a widening of educational inequality that has been implicitly sanctioned by these formal institutional arrangements.

This thesis makes a number of empirical contributions to the conceptual understanding of the effect of neo-liberal reforms on teachers' work and on the education system more broadly. This chapter explores these contributions, highlights the implications of the diversification in public secondary schooling, examines current and potential policy responses, and suggests potential areas for further research in the area.

Education reform – diversification and teachers' work

The school level effects of diversification

A central argument of this thesis has been that the teaching environment in the NSW public secondary school system has fundamentally changed as a result of the neo-liberal reforms that have increased diversification in the public secondary school system. Prior to the reforms, the experiences of teachers in public schools were strongly influenced by the social and economic characteristics of the local community in which they worked. More than twenty years after the introduction of market mechanisms and with the continued state support and promotion of competition in the public secondary system, the student body, the profile of the teaching staff, the competitive pressures, and to some extent, the experience of the executive now differs in each type of school by a number of distinct characteristics.

The relationship between the different teaching environments in each type of school and the flawed operation of the market is apparent. While this research supports earlier studies showing that a significant proportion of parents are using the options presented by the education market and making choices with regard to schooling (Campbell et al. 2009) not all parents have the capacity to explore and exploit the schooling options that are available (Ball et al. 1994;

Marginson 1997a; Power 1992). In addition, the findings from this thesis demonstrate that for those students in the secondary school system who have particularly challenging behaviours, there are no options. These students are the least desirable (Gewirtz et al. 1995) and are concentrated in comprehensive schools and junior campuses that have the limited capacity to turn-away any students. As issues arise with the behaviour of these students they are transferred between other under-subscribed schools that are struggling to retain a consistent funding base through student enrolment stability.

One of the specific intentions of the introduction of competition into the NSW public secondary school system was to stop the loss of public school students to the private sector (NSW MEYA 1989; NSW Parents Council 1988; Sherington 1995). Since the introduction of the reforms, however, the size of the private sector has continued to increase and choice within the public secondary system has sanctioned discriminatory enrolment practices.

Theorists have raised concerns that public schools are becoming the residual system for those who cannot navigate the education market (Anderson 1992; 1994; Ball et al. 1994; Campbell 2005; Marginson 1997b; McCollow & Martin 1997). This thesis argues, however, that it is not *all* public secondary schools that constitute the residual system but rather particular types of schools that have

become residual. The selective and specialist schools and senior campuses stand in direct competition with the private sector and have retained or regained a high degree of positional advantage in the education market. In contrast, comprehensive schools and junior campuses have become the safety net that is analogous to a welfare system of schooling in which those who cannot arrange access into the sought after schools are relegated.

As a whole, the non-comprehensive public secondary schools have taken an increasing share of the secondary education market and are competing successfully with both the private system and the traditional comprehensive schools. This thesis has shown that in NSW the neo-liberal education reforms have created a system in which traditional comprehensive schools now enroll less than half of all public secondary school students. Further, the composition of the student body in many of these schools, and in the junior campuses, is discernibly different from that of selective and specialist schools and senior campuses. In comprehensive schools and junior campuses neo-liberal reforms and the operation of the market have created a much greater concentration of students with behavioural and learning difficulties and lower academic abilities, talents and achievements.

Comprehensive schools and junior campuses are much more likely to be situated in the low-demand, under-subscribed end of the education market. At this end of the market there is a constant struggle to maintain student enrolments and to attract and retain suitably qualified teaching staff. While senior campuses have to actively compete for student numbers, relative to comprehensive schools and junior campuses, it is easier for these schools to attract and retain staff. In contrast, the strong positional advantage (Marginson 1997b) afforded specialist and selective schools is apparent in the high demand for student places and the ability to attract experienced teaching staff.

The effect of these varying positions of advantage – or disadvantage – is that traditional education hierarchies, associated with social, economic and cultural capital, have been further reinforced (Apple 2004; Gewirtz et al. 1995; Whitty 1997; Whitty et al. 1998). Greater social segregation has been created by the loss of the more capable and motivated students from the comprehensive schools and junior campuses. These segments of the education market are no longer thriving (Ranson 2007), but they are also not being weeded out. The neo-liberal reform agenda intended that markets would 'work their wonders' in the education system; culling under-performers and freeing up resources to be used more cost-effectively in more efficient segments of the market (Chubb & Moe 1992: 11).

Instead, the under-subscribed comprehensive schools and junior campuses continue to operate but struggle with declining student enrolments, insufficient funding to appropriately meet the needs of a challenging student body, inexperienced staff and high teacher turnover.

Adding to the challenges for these schools, however, is that through school-based management initiatives, it is considered to be within each school's control to strengthen their own position in the market (Caldwell & Spinks 1992; Caldwell & Harris 2008) by improving student achievements and retention rates (Teese & Polesel 2003). While the findings from this study suggest that some comprehensive schools have managed to develop a positive reputation and relatively favourable position in the education market, the continued loss of the more capable and motivated students nevertheless takes its toll. From a market-based perspective the most obvious effect of this loss is on the ability of these schools to contend on ranked league tables and in standardised exams. However, these schools also struggle to attract and retain experienced teachers.

Teachers' work

The other significant argument made by this thesis is that the long established dichotomy between the public and private education labour markets for teachers (Helsby 1999; Jefferson & Preston 2011; van Gellecum et al. 2008) now requires

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consideration of other dimensions. In the public secondary school system in NSW, the introduction of market mechanisms has resulted in the clustering of students with particular characteristics into different types of schools. At a simplistic level, selective schools have academically gifted students, specialist schools have students with specific talents in creative and performing arts, technology, languages or sports, and senior schools have older more mature students. Conversely, as has been discussed, comprehensive schools and junior campuses have disproportionate concentrations of students who are less academically able, talented and motivated.

The labour market experiences for teachers in the public secondary schools are therefore, increasingly fragmented. Teachers are no longer working with the diversity of students as reflected by the characteristics of the local community. Instead, teachers are working with quite specific and far more homogenous groups of students. This concentration of particular types of students has intensified the teaching experience in ways that are unique to each type of school.

At one end of the spectrum are the experiences of the selective school teachers who are working in environments that are characterised by intensive learning interactions with students. In these schools a concentration of students with high

academic ability and who are motivated to engage in their education pose particular challenges for teachers that are unique to these schools. The vast majority of students in these schools seek individualised attention in the form of advice and feedback on academic progress. In addition, the parents of these students are consistently more demanding and far more likely to hold teachers accountable for the academic outcomes achieved by their children. Finally, in terms of specific market pressures, while teachers in the selective schools do not have the concerns of attracting students and maintaining absolute student numbers, there are, nevertheless, issues with student retention. Poaching practices from other highly sought after schools means that the retention, particularly of the highest achieving students, is of significant concern to these teachers and necessitates the individual attention that is sought. Related to this, are considerable pressures on these teachers to ensure that the school's position on ranked league tables is maintained or improved so as to reduce the loss of students to higher ranking schools; thus upholding both reputation and market position.

At the other end of the spectrum, however, the experiences of teachers who work in junior campuses and in many of the comprehensive schools are disproportionately characterised by the behavioural management of students. As

a result of increased competition in the public secondary school system these teachers work with a much greater concentration of students who have learning and behavioural difficulties and who, on average, have lower academic ability and a weaker motivation to engage in their own learning. These changes to the student body have substantially intensified the behavioural management and classroom control aspects of teachers' work. For those teachers who are working in the comprehensive schools that have developed or retained a good reputation in the market place, there has been an increased pressure to cultivate and promote a specific market niche that differentiates them from both public and private sector competitors.

Similarly, there are unique aspects to teachers' work in specialist schools and senior campuses. For teachers in the senior campuses the intensification of their work is brought about by the continuous focus, for *all* the students in the school, on the final Year 12 exams. The importance of VET courses for these students has also necessitated a substantial shift in the pedagogical practices of these teachers as they have to coordinate the teaching of the traditional secondary school curriculum with VET subjects that used competency-based instruction and adult learning principles (Dalton & Smith 2004).

The students enrolled in specialist schools include concentrations of exceptionally talented students as well as students from the local community and out-of-area enrolments. The competitive selection into these schools for the positions in the talent-related programs adds to the prestige of these schools. For the teachers, while attracting and retaining students is less of an issue than in comprehensive schools and junior campuses, ensuring that academic grades are maintained and improved among all students, is particularly important to safeguarding that positional advantage. In addition, however, the teaching environment in these schools is one that requires the planning and management of the interruptions to regular classroom activities that come from the demands of the talented programs.

These divergences in teachers' labour market experiences in the NSW public secondary school system are also related to differences in the staffing profiles in each type of school and in the manner in which teachers react to the different working conditions that have been created. Selective schools and senior campuses have low teacher turnover and these schools, along with specialist schools, have much less difficulty in attracting experienced teachers. In contrast, comprehensive schools and junior campuses struggle with staffing and find it difficult to attract and retain the experienced teachers who are needed for much

larger concentrations of students with difficult behavioural problems (Ingersoll 2004). For the teachers working in these schools, the issue of retention goes beyond considerations of wanting to leave that particular school. Teachers who have been exposed to concentrations of these particularly challenging students are much more likely to consider leaving both the public education system and the teaching profession more broadly.

Implications for sustainability and equality

The findings from this study have implications for both sustainability and equality. The issue of sustainability relates to the ongoing capacity of the NSW public secondary school system to attract and retain both new and experienced teachers in *every* type of school in the system. Equality, on the other hand, relates to the extent to which the system that has been created provides the best opportunity to all students regardless of the type of school attended.

Sustainability and current 'solutions' to staffing

With aging teaching workforces across many OECD countries (OECD 2005), including Australia (MCEETYA 2004a), the ability to attract and retain teachers has been a significant policy concern for a number of decades (Hanushek et al. 2004). However, the challenge of appropriately staffing schools is not related to a

shortage of people with teaching qualifications but rather to an unwillingness among teachers to work in contemporary education systems (Hanushek et al. 2004; Ingersoll 2001; 2004).

In NSW, staffing challenges are not borne equally across in the public secondary school system. Instead, as has been consistently shown by international research (Guarino et al. 2006; Hanushek et al. 1999; 2004; Ingersoll 2001; 2004) and supported by this study, schools with the most problematic staffing issues – with high teacher turnover and difficulties with attracting and retaining experienced staff – are those with the greatest concentrations of challenging students. In the NSW public secondary school system it is the comprehensive schools and junior campuses that have the greatest staffing difficulties. From a labour market perspective it is here that any policy initiatives need to have the greatest impact if these schools are to be given the chance to attract and retain experienced and qualified staff.

Resolving teacher staffing issues is a politically complex exercise in which the competing interrelated policy issues need to be balanced, despite not being well understood (Hanuschek et al. 2004). At a practical level these issues include broad public sector management and industrial relations issues (Conley, Muncey & Gould 2002), and at a philosophical level there are social considerations related

to the effect of teacher quality on student outcomes (Hanushek 1997; Lingard et al. 2001) and to the undervaluing of the teaching profession (Smithers & Robinson 2002). There is, however, a wealth of empirical, theoretical, and policy research offering strategies for attracting and retaining teachers and improving teacher quality (Borman & Dowling 2008).

Economic labour market theory of supply and demand argues that the 'prevailing or negotiated levels of salaries, benefits, and working conditions in a given school...will determine the number of teachers' who can be employed by, and who will be willing to take up a position in, that school (Guarino et al. 2006: 174). In NSW, a number of strategies have recently been proposed to manipulate salaries, benefits, and working conditions in an attempt to address teacher shortages and retention issues and improve teacher quality.

With regard to attracting teachers to the profession and improving teacher quality, a review in 2000 made a number of recommendations regarding improvements to the pre-service training and ongoing professional development of teachers (Ramsey 2000). Specific recommendations that are pertinent to the findings of this thesis included proposals for specific additional targeted training in areas such as teaching gifted and talented students, and in developing

relationships and working with troubled students who have behavioural problems (Ramsey 2000).

In 2010, the AITSL (Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership) was established nationally to oversee standards and improve professional development across the teaching workforce (AITSL 2011). Other state based initiatives include the establishment of the NSW Institute of Teachers in 2005. The Institute has legislative responsibility for ensuring that all teachers employed after October 2004 become accredited and then continue to meet professional teaching standards throughout their career (Standing Committee on Social Issues 2006). While still in its infancy, the Institute has met with a mixed response. One the one hand, it has been regarded as a 'significant step forward' in the development and support of the profession, and in the improvement of teaching quality (Standing Committee on Social Issues 2006: 13). On the other hand, however, there is concern over the degree to which accreditation and the developed standards will be properly operationalised and supported at the local school level (NSW Teachers Federation 2005).

Attention has also been paid to the development of initiatives that specifically target the issues of attracting and retaining teachers in hard-to-staff schools. Current approaches are closely linked to negotiated industrial arrangements.

Graduates of scholarship programs have to take compulsory postings in hard-to-staff schools (Standing Committee on Social Issues 2006) and for existing teachers, incentives (Hatton & Watson 2002) such as the priority transfers, additional leave entitlements, and accommodation subsidies are offered when positions are taken in rural and remote areas (Social Standing on Social Issues 2006). These approaches, however, are far from ideal solutions to staffing these schools as many result in the most challenging schools having large numbers of new graduates who are only there for a short period of time (Standing Committee of Social Issues 2006).

Another more recent initiative has been the provision of financial incentives to experienced and exceptionally skilled teachers who agree to take up a position in a hard-to-staff school (Firth 2009). Under this initiative the Department of Education and Training created approximately 100 Highly Accomplished Teacher positions (NSW DET 2010a). The role of these teachers is to work with other teachers in the school, passing on and modelling knowledge and skills that will 'improve student learning outcomes' (NSW DET 2010a: 3). These positions, however, are only temporary two year appointments that have the possibility of a further two year extension (NSW DET 2010a). While the intention is to build

capacity within the school, the temporary nature of these appointments does little to contribute to, or model, staffing stability within the school.

Collectively, many of these initiatives may contribute to improvements in teacher quality. These initiatives may also lead to greater job satisfaction and stability in the teaching workforce as teachers become more competent and confident to manage the particular school environments in which they work (Hargreaves 1994). Nevertheless, the supply-side focus of these initiatives does little to address the 'structural features...that compound educational inequalities' (Power 1992: 496) and contribute to staffing problems in comprehensive schools and junior campuses. In essence, these approaches continue to focus the responsibility for educational outcomes at the school and its teachers and away from the education system (Gewirtz 1997). The institutionalised segmentation of the student body into the different types of public secondary schools in NSW will be, at best, only marginally affected by these initiatives. They may reduce staff turnover and improve teacher quality but it is only as consequence of these potential outcomes that the reputation of these schools might be improved enough to attract and retain a wider diversity of students.

Equality and current 'solutions' to educational disadvantage

In NSW, as in many Australian states and territories, the main policy approach for addressing educational disadvantage has been the implementation of a range of targeted equity programs (Lamb & Teese 2005). More than 500 schools (or approximately 22 per cent of all state schools) participate in the Priority Schools Programs and of these approximately 15 per cent of all schools that are involved are secondary schools (NSW DET 2010b). Every type of public secondary school is represented in these programs and approximately 48 per cent of the secondary schools involved in the programs are located in western or south-western Sydney (NSW DET 2010c). Similarly, the National Partnership Low SES School Communities is a bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and participating states (including NSW) that aims to improve educational outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Council of Australian Governments [COAG] 2008).

The programs provide additional financial compensation to schools with high numbers of students from disadvantaged families (COAG 2008; NSW DET 2010c). The funding supports a range of programs and activities but the extent to which many aspects of these programs have been able to reduce educational inequality has been limited (Lamb & Teese 2005). In addition, the threshold

approach to the provision of funding means that many schools with a high degree of need narrowly miss out on any additional support (Lamb & Teese 2005).

While there are a number of learning and student support schemes in these programs, one of the fundamental issues influencing variations in student performance across different schools is the quality and stability of the teaching workforce (Lamb & Teese 2005). While staff development activities comprise one of the key aspects of these programs (NSW DET 2010c) the lack of attention to the structural problems in the system affect the extent to which these programs can effectively reduce educational inequality (Livingstone 1998; Power 1992). With high staff turnover in the schools involved in these programs, the extent to which professional development activities are of benefit is particularly constrained when the teachers involved transfer to less challenging schools (Lamb & Teese 2005).

With a less experienced staffing profile and high rates of transfer, the teaching standards in these schools are, on average, lowered and the quality of education received by the students is generally poorer (Ingersoll 2004). This 'stratification of educational opportunity' further increases the equality of outcomes (Ingersoll 2004: 3) for the students, the school and the community (Lamb & Teese 2005).

Potential ways forward

The organisation of teachers' work in NSW public secondary schools is no longer confined to just age, subject specialisation and timetabling arrangements (Hargreaves 1994; Reid 2003). Teachers' work is now also organised by the educational abilities, academic motivations and behavioural dispositions of the students within specific types of schools. This increasing homogenisation of the student body by school type is deepening educational inequality. If this inequality is to be reversed a multi-faceted approach is required. Such an approach needs to extend beyond current attempts to attract and retain teachers and improve teacher quality in the most challenging schools and include initiatives that confront the structural inequalities (Livingstone 1998; Power 1992).

In the current environment the political popularity of neo-liberal reforms and the implementation of education markets (Connell 2006) would make the abolition of these markets and the removal of parental choice, at the very least, politically challenging. Therefore, strategies are needed that will attract a wider diversity of students and their families back to the comprehensive schools and junior campuses and that will improve the working conditions of the teachers within these schools.

A national review of school education funding – the Gonski review – that began in July 2010 (DEEWR 2010a) has been tasked with identifying an equitable system of financing all schools that will promote 'excellent educational outcomes for all Australian students' (DEEWR 2010b). While the final reports and recommendations are still to be delivered, four major research projects that were commissioned as part of this review are specifically examining the multiple factors that contribute to educational disadvantage as well as the programs and funding approaches that seek to alleviate inequality (DEEWR 2011).

With educational disadvantage the central focus of the Gonski review, it is hoped that the findings from the specific research projects and the recommendations from the panel will advocate for strategies that will address the structural inequalities that are apparent in the secondary education system in NSW. Funding models need to ensure that an appropriate skill-mix of experienced and new graduate teachers are attracted and retained in each school and that associated workloads are commensurate with the requirements of the student body and the skills and experience of each individual teacher. Attracting and retaining experienced teachers in the most challenging schools requires working conditions, salaries, and benefits that ensure that a range of experienced teachers are prepared to work in these schools, and this requires appropriate funding

(Guarino et al. 2006). Reductions in teaching workloads and improving the quality of leadership and support provided to all staff in these schools (Ramsey 2000) are potential starting points to making these schools a more attractive working environment.

A key challenge for the Gonski review will be balancing the competing demands of the state. On the one hand, there is a consistent desire to address educational inequality and disadvantage (Dawkins 1988; DEEWR 2010b; 2011; Education Commission of NSW 1986; NSW Public Education Council 2005; McGowan et al. 1981; Ramsey 2000; Swan 1983; Swan & McKinnon 1984; Winder 1984; Wyndham Committee 1958). However, there is a tension between current attempts to reverse inequality and the concurrent philosophical and political standpoint that posits that 'the benefits to some are not achieved at the cost of others' (NSW Public Education Council 2005: iv). The findings from this thesis highlight that the benefits achieved by those students and teachers in selective and specialist schools and senior campuses, *are* at the expense of students and teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses.

It is foreseeable, however, that a reverse of this situation – the benefitting of students and teachers in comprehensive schools and junior campuses through, for example, a disproportionate increase in resources, at the expense of selective

and specialist schools and senior campuses – would be politically unpopular.

Regardless of the popularity, creating a system that does *not* benefit some to the

detriment of others goes against the principles of a market-based system. The

education market is based on competition (Marginson 1997b) which, by its very

nature, creates winners and losers (Blackmore et al. 1996; Grace 1995; Helsby

1999; Willis 1991). In this environment, equitably meeting the different needs of

students, schools, and communities, and creating a system that allows for

significant improvements in the working conditions, salaries, and benefits of

teachers at some types of schools and not others, will remain a significant

challenge.

Future research

This research offers the first examination of the nature and extent to which the

diversification of the public secondary school system has influenced the

operation of public secondary schools at the local level. To date, despite more

than 20 years of market-based reforms in education, the extent to which

diversification in school type is specifically considered in educational research is

limited. In Australia, when consideration has been given to the specific effect of

school type, this has been limited to a dichotomisation between the public and

private education sectors (Anderson 1992; 1994; Marginson 1997a; Teese 1989;

Teese & Polesel 2003) with only limited recognition of the diversity that exists within the public system (Esson et al. 2002). To improve the evidence available for policy ongoing development more research into the effects of diversification in the public education sector is warranted.

To provide some control over socio-economic characteristics of local communities this study was geographically located within a specific region of Sydney that reflects, at an aggregate level, relatively low socio-economic characteristics (Vinson 1999). To better understand the effect of school diversification on both teachers' labour market experiences and on student educational outcomes more comparative research is required that examines the interaction between student characteristics, and systemic and local school-level conditions. Of particular interest for future research is the extent to which the findings observed in this study are evident in a geographic area that is characterised by higher socio-economic characteristics.

Evidence-informed policy requires the state to provide its full support to examining educational outcomes from a systemic perspective. The lack of information on particular types of public secondary schools in national and state

data collections[73], beyond public and private distinctions, limits the extent to which robust analysis can be undertaken on the effect of the education policy reforms that have increased choice in public education. Initiatives that improve the quality of information that is available will advance our understanding of the relationship between neo-liberal reforms, teachers' experiences, student educational outcomes, and educational equality.

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[73] Type of public secondary school is not reported on by the NSW DET (2011b) or collected and/or available in the *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth* (2009) or the ABS *Schools* survey (2011).

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Appendix A – Ethics Approval

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NSW 2006 Australia

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The University of Sydney

Dear Dr Hall

Thank you for your correspondence received 15 April 2008 addressing comments made to you by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). After considering the additional information, the Executive Committee at its meeting on **22 April 2008** approved your protocol entitled **"The changing nature of teachers' work in secondary schools in Western Sydney"**.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref No.:	*04-2008/10818*
Approval Period:	*30 April 2008 to 30 April 2009*
Authorised Personnel:	*Dr R Hall*
	Ms G Considine

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007* under Section 5.1.29

The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities to ensure that:

(1) All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

(2) All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

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(3)   The HREC must be notified as soon as possible of any changes to the protocol. All changes must be approved by the HREC before continuation of the research project. These include:-

   •   If any of the investigators change or leave the University.
   •   Any changes to the Participant Information Statement and/or Consent Form.

(4)   All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The Participant Information Statement and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee and the following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement. *Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Senior Ethics Officer, University of Sydney, on (02) 9351 4811 (Telephone); (02) 9351 6706 (Facsimile) or gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).*

(5)   Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.

(6)   It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

(7)   The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.

(8)   A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely

Professor D I Cook
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee

Cc: Ms Gillian Considine, Workplace Research Centre, Storie Dixson Wing – H10, The University of Sydney

Encl: Copy of Approved Participant Information Statement, Copy of Approved Letter to Teachers, Copy of Approved Survey

Appendix B – Example letter sent to focus group participants

[printed on University of Sydney letterhead]

[date]

Dear [first name]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the PhD project examining the experiences of teachers' work in NSW secondary schools.

As was mentioned to you on the phone, the aim of the study is to explore how, if at all, the experiences of teachers differ by the type of school in which they work. In this regard teachers from selective and specialist schools and junior and senior campuses, as well as those from traditional comprehensive high schools, have been asked to participate.

The researcher, Gillian Considine, will ask the group a range of questions about your day to day experiences as a teacher. Your responses to these questions are confidential and anonymous and no information that can identify you will be included in any subsequent reports or provided to the Teachers' Federation.

Below are the details of the venue, time and date of the focus group in which you have agreed to participate. If you have any questions concerning the research please feel free to contact Gillian at the University of Sydney on 02 9351 5718 or via email on g.considine@econ.usyd.edu.au.

> **Venue details: Gosford High School, meeting at the front office.**
> **Racecourse Rd (cnr Showground rd).**
> **Time: 4-5.30**
> **Date: Thursday, March 13 2003**

Thanks again for agreeing to assist in this project.
Regards

Gillian Considine
PhD Candidate
University of Sydney.

Appendix C – Focus group discussion guide

Introductions
1. Thank group

2. Brief aim of research

3. Participants introduce themselves (name, school/school type, how long been

   teaching)

Discussion topics
1. What attracted you to teaching in the public sector?

2. What are the key challenges facing you/public secondary teachers today?

   > Potential prompts
   >> i. Students
   >>
   >> ii. School-based management

3. *Explore if any differences seem to be emerging between teachers in*

   comprehensive schools and non-comprehensive schools / why do they think

   there are differences?

4. What do you think has caused these challenges and/or changes?

   > Potential prompt
   >> i. Markets (choice)
   >>
   >> ii. Curriculum

5. How have the challenges to teachers' work changed over time?

6. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss?

Appendix D – Interview questions

Participant interview guide

1. Can you start by telling me a bit about your background?

    a. Why did you become a teacher?

    b. How long have you been a teacher?

    c. Can you tell me about the sorts of schools you've taught in?

2. What is it about teaching that you enjoy?

3. What are the challenges?

    a. If he/she has taught in different types of schools – explore what the other schools were like to teach in?

4. Can you take me through what a typical day looks like for you?

    a. Prompts: time started/finished, tasks done, Years taught

5. On the last 'great' day you had, what happened?

6. And, what about the last 'rotten' day you had; what happened then?

7. Since you started teaching, how has the work you do changed?

    a. Prompts: choice, competition, students, parents, curriculum, school-based management.

8. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss?

Key informant interview guide

1. What are the key challenges facing public secondary education today?

   > Potential prompts
   >> i. Competition and market forces
   >>
   >> ii. Changing student characteristics

2. Can you talk to me about any differences in experiences you see between the teachers who work in traditional comprehensive schools and those who work in selective and specialist schools?

   > Potential prompts:
   >> i. student characteristics
   >>
   >> ii. teaching staff characteristics
   >>
   >> iii. parental expectations

3. How have the challenges to secondary school teachers' work changed over time?

4. I'd like to go through each of the major themes I'm proposing to include in the survey. Is there anything you think is missing or unnecessary?

Appendix E – Proposed survey themes

Demographics
1. School location
2. Tenure at current school
3. Tenure in profession
4. Subjects taught
5. Student load (on average p.a)
6. Qualifications

School characteristics
1. Type of secondary school (comprehensive, selective, specialist)
2. Student population (coed, single sex)
3. Size (students/ teachers)
4. Teacher turnover
5. Falling student enrolments
6. Maintaining student enrolments
7. Attracting suitably qualified classroom teachers
8. Attracting suitably qualified senior staff (principal, deputy)
9. Perceived support from executive

Student characteristics:
1. Seek additional feedback on their performance
2. Would readily get into a university course if they applied
3. Will complete high school (years 10/12?)
4. Are difficult to settle into lessons
5. Have learning problems
6. Have behavioural problems
7. Are academically "gifted"
8. Are talented in a chosen field
9. Have a permanent physical disability
10. Have an intellectual disability
11. Have been in trouble over significant disciplinary issues
12. Are highly motivated to learn
13. Enjoy attending school/class
14. Require discipline

Workload/tasks
1. Conduct playground duty
2. Attend interviews with parents
3. Attend meetings on other school related matters
4. Works outside normal school hours
5. Involved in extra-curricular activities
6. Attends training/professional development activities

Teacher experiences/attitudes
1. Thought of leaving
2. Abuse/violence from students/parents
3. Worked with social services on student matter
4. Stress
5. Attitudes towards reforms
    i. increased choice for students in the public system
    ii. student outcomes
    iii. teacher outcomes

Appendix F – Multi-campus focus group discussion guide

Introductions
1. Thank group

2. Brief aim of research

3. Participants introduce themselves (name, junior or senior campus, how long

    been teaching)

Discussion topics
4. What attracted you to teaching in the public sector?

5. What are the key challenges facing you/public secondary teachers today?

    Potential prompts
    i. Students

    ii. School-based management

6. What do you think has caused these challenges and/or changes?

    Potential prompt
    iii. Markets (choice)

    iv. Curriculum

7. How have the challenges to teachers' work changed over time?

8. How does teaching in a junior or senior campus differ from teaching in a

    traditional comprehensive school?

    b. why do they think there are/aren't these differences?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss?

Appendix G – Survey instrument

Survey of Secondary School Teachers

Dear Member,

Enclosed is a survey being sent to about 3,500 randomly selected members of the NSW Teachers Federation. It is being conducted by Gillian Considine and Associate Professor Richard Hall from the University of Sydney with the support of the Teachers Federation. The research is being conducted as part of Gillian's doctoral thesis looking at the changing nature of work for NSW public secondary school teachers.

The aim of the study is to examine the experiences of teachers in comprehensive, selective, and specialist schools, and multi-campus colleges. This survey will assist in investigating how, if at all, the growth of selective and specialist schools and multi-campus colleges has affected the experience of teaching.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary. If you choose not to participate this will in no way prejudice your current or future relationship with the NSW Teachers Federation, the University of Sydney, or the researchers. If you choose to complete and return the survey, you are consenting to participation. Your responses are completely anonymous. No individual respondents can be identified. **Do not** put your name or membership number on the survey. P*articipants cannot be guaranteed the right to withdraw their data "at any time" because the data, once submitted, cannot be identified with specific individuals.*

If you agree to participate please return your completed survey **by Friday July 25th** in the reply paid envelope provided. You do not need a stamp if you use this envelope.

Should you have any questions about this survey or need any help to complete it please contact Gillian Considine on (02) 9351 5718 or contact her by email on g.considine@econ.usyd.edu.au.

Thank you, in anticipation, for your cooperation and assistance.

John Irving
General Secretary

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

1. Is your school?

1) ☐ Co-ed
2) ☐ Single sex boys
3) ☐ Single sex girls

2. What type of school do you work in?

1) ☐ Comprehensive secondary
2) ☐ Specialist secondary
3) ☐ Selective secondary
4) ☐ Junior campus (go to   Q4)
5) ☐ Senior campus (go to Q4)
6) ☐ Across junior and senior
         campuses (to to Q4)
7) ☐ Other _____

3. If your school is selective or specialist,
    what category best describes your
    school?

1) ☐ fully selective
2) ☐ partially selective

4a. What, if any, curricular program does
your school use to attract and retain
students?

1) ☐ there is no specific curricular or
         program of specialisation
2) ☐ academic
3) ☐ arts
4) ☐ language
5) ☐ music
6) ☐ sport
7) ☐ other _____

4b. Are there any specialist academic,
opportunity classes or accelerated classes
at your school?

1) ☐ no
2) ☐ yes
3) ☐ don't know/not sure

5. Approximately how many students are
at your school/campus?

1) ☐ less than 100
2) ☐ 100 to 499
3) ☐ 500 to 899
4) ☐ more than 900
5) ☐ Don't know/not sure

6. Approximately how many teachers work
at your school/campus?

1) ☐ less than 10
2) ☐ 10 to 49
3) ☐ 50 to 99
4) ☐ 100 to 149
5) ☐ 150 or more
6) ☐ don't know/not sure

7. Where is your current school located?

1) School district: _____

2) Suburb/town: _____

3) Postcode: _____

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ABOUT YOU

8. Are you?

1) ☐ Female
2) ☐ Male

9. What is your age?

1) ☐ 21 to 24 years
2) ☐ 25 to 34 years
3) ☐ 35 to 44 years
4) ☐ 45 to 54 years
5) ☐ 55 to 64 years
6) ☐ 65 or older

10. How long have you been teaching at your current school?

1) ☐ less than 1 year
2) ☐ 1 year to less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 to less than 20 years
6) ☐ 20 years or more

11. Taking into account your total years of service, how long have you been teaching?

1) ☐ less than 1 year
2) ☐ 1 year to less than 2 years
3) ☐ 2 to less than 5 years
4) ☐ 5 to less than 10 years
5) ☐ 10 to less than 20 years
6) ☐ 20 years or more

12. What role best describes your current position?

1) ☐ class room teacher
2) ☐ head teacher
3) ☐ executive/management
4) ☐ other _____

13. What is your employment status?

1) ☐ full-time
2) ☐ part-time
3) ☐ casual

14. How many periods a week do you teach? *Use the Award definition of a 'standard' teaching period as 40 minutes.*

1) ☐ 1 to 3 periods
2) ☐ 4 to 7
3) ☐ 8 to 14
4) ☐ 15 to 20
5) ☐ 21 to 28
6) ☐ more than 28

15. Considering all the regular classes you currently teach, how many students are you teaching?

1) ☐ Less than 30
2) ☐ 29 to 59
3) ☐ 60 to 89
4) ☐ 90 to 109
5) ☐ 110 or more
6) ☐ Don't know/not sure

16. Apart from your current school, what other types of school have you taught at? *Tick as many as applicable*

1) ☐ Private
2) ☐ Comprehensive
3) ☐ Specialist secondary
4) ☐ Selective secondary
5) ☐ Junior campus
6) ☐ Senior campus
7) ☐ Other _____

In the next few tables, please respond by circling the number that most closely corresponds to how often you do each of the following.

17. Approximately how many **times a week** do you do the following?

Never or almost never	1 or 2 times	3 to 5 times	6 to 10 times	more than 10 times	Don't know/Not applicable
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	Playground duty	1	2	3	4	5	9
2	Attend/hold interviews with parents	1	2	3	4	5	9
3	Attend/hold meetings on other school related matters	1	2	3	4	5	9
4	Start work early to prepare	1	2	3	4	5	9
5	Stay back after school to prepare or mark	1	2	3	4	5	9
6	Take work home	1	2	3	4	5	9
7	Work through the morning break (not including any rostered playground duty)	1	2	3	4	5	9
8	Work through lunch (not including any rostered playground duty)	1	2	3	4	5	9
9	Teach at different campuses	1	2	3	4	5	9
10	Teach outside your subject area of expertise	1	2	3	4	5	9
11	Answer emails from students and/or parents	1	2	3	4	5	9

18. Approximately how many **hours a week** do you spend on the following?

None – don't do this	1 to 2 hours	3 to 5 hours	6 to 10 hours	more than 10 hours
1	2	3	4	5

1	Extra-curricular activities **related** to my subject area/s on a **normal week**	1	2	3	4	5
2	Extra-curricular activities **related** to my subject area/s on a **busy week**	1	2	3	4	5
3	Extra-curricular activities **unrelated** to my subject/s on a **normal week**	1	2	3	4	5
4	Extra-curricular activities **unrelated** to my subject/s on a **busy week**	1	2	3	4	5

19. Approximately how many **times a year** would you normally do the following?

Never or hardly ever	Once or twice a year	Every term	Monthly	Weekly
1	2	3	4	5

1	Work on issues related to new DET policies	1 2 3 4 5
2	Participate in selection committees	1 2 3 4 5
3	Go away over night on school related excursions/activities	1 2 3 4 5
4	Attend in-service training in **out of school** hours	1 2 3 4 5
5	Attend in-service training in **during** school hours	1 2 3 4 5
6	Undertake other learning related activities	1 2 3 4 5
7	Have to make changes/additions to your work practice based on DET policies	1 2 3 4 5

20. In the table below, please indicate the subjects that you have **formal qualifications in AND** the **subjects you currently teach (or will be teaching this year)**

Please tick all the options that are applicable in each list

Have formal qualifications in...

1. ☐ Aboriginal studies
2. ☐ Agriculture
3. ☐ Business studies
4. ☐ Commerce
5. ☐ Dance
6. ☐ Design & technology
7. ☐ Drama
8. ☐ Economics
9. ☐ English
10. ☐ Food technology
11. ☐ Geography
12. ☐ History
13. ☐ Languages
14. ☐ Legal studies
15. ☐ Mathematics
16. ☐ Music
17. ☐ Personal development, health & PE
18. ☐ Science
19. ☐ Technics
20. ☐ Textiles & design
21. ☐ Visual arts
22. ☐ Vocational subjects

_____
(*Please specify*)

23. ☐ Other_____
(*Please specify*)

Currently teach /will teach this year...

1. ☐ Aboriginal studies
2. ☐ Agriculture
3. ☐ Business studies
4. ☐ Commerce
5. ☐ Dance
6. ☐ Design & technology
7. ☐ Drama
8. ☐ Economics
9. ☐ English
10. ☐ Food technology
11. ☐ Geography
12. ☐ History
13. ☐ Languages
14. ☐ Legal studies
15. ☐ Mathematics
16. ☐ Music
17. ☐ Personal development, health & PE
18. ☐ Science
19. ☐ Technics
20. ☐ Textiles & design
21. ☐ Visual arts
22. ☐ Vocational subjects

_____
(*Please specify*)

23. ☐ Other_____
(*Please specify*)

In the next table, please respond by circling the number that most closely corresponds to how often you have had the following thought or experience...

21. Consider the following statements and indicate how often **in the last year** you have…?

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Not applicable
1	2	3	4	9

1	Thought of leaving your current school	1 2 3 4 9
2	Thought of leaving the public education system	1 2 3 4 9
3	Thought of leaving teaching to retire	1 2 3 4 9
4	Thought of leaving teaching to do something else	1 2 3 4 9
5	Felt physically threatened by a student	1 2 3 4 9
6	Had to intervene in a physical fight between students	1 2 3 4 9
7	Been verbally abused by a student	1 2 3 4 9
8	Felt physically threatened by a parent	1 2 3 4 9
9	Been verbally abused by a parent	1 2 3 4 9
10	Liaised with social services on a student related matter	1 2 3 4 9
11	Taken sick leave specifically to try to get relief from work related stress or pressure	1 2 3 4 9
12	Used other forms of leave (ie: annual or long service) to get relief from work related stress or pressure	1 2 3 4 9

22. If you could move to any school you wanted, what would be your **main** reason for leaving your current school?

Please tick only one box

1) ☐ I would not want to leave my current school
2) ☐ To take a promotion position
3) ☐ To change to comprehensive school
4) ☐ To change to selective or specialist school
5) ☐ To change to a junior campus
6) ☐ To change to a senior campus
7) ☐ To change to a private school
8) ☐ To broaden my experience
9) ☐ To change areas
10) ☐ other _____
(*please specify*)

23. At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

In the next few tables, please respond by circling the number that most closely corresponds to how you feel about each statement.

Not an issue	Minor issue	Substantial	Major issue	Don't know
1	2	3	4	9

1	Demanding parents	1 2 3 4 9
2	Disengaged parents	1 2 3 4 9
3	High teacher turnover	1 2 3 4 9
4	Low teacher turnover	1 2 3 4 9
5	Falling student enrolments	1 2 3 4 9
6	Retaining students once they are enrolled	1 2 3 4 9
7	Attracting suitably experienced classroom teachers	1 2 3 4 9
8	Attracting suitably experienced head/senior teachers	1 2 3 4 9
9	Attracting suitably experienced principals and/or deputies	1 2 3 4 9
10	Lack of support from the Principal in matters related to your work	1 2 3 4 9
11	Lack of support from the Deputy Principal in matters related to your work	1 2 3 4 9
12	Lack of support from the other teachers in matters relating to your work	1 2 3 4 9
13	Lack of support from the DET in matters related to your work	1 2 3 4 9
14	Workplace practices that are inequitable	1 2 3 4 9
15	Workplace practices that are not fair and transparent	1 2 3 4 9

24. Of all the students you currently teach approximately how many?

None or hardly any	Some	A lot	Most	All	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	Seek additional feedback on or input into their class room work	1 2 3 4 5 9
2	Seek additional feedback on or input into their assignments	1 2 3 4 5 9
3	Seek additional feedback on grades	1 2 3 4 5 9
4	Are likely to apply to university	1 2 3 4 5 9
5	Are likely to get into university	1 2 3 4 5 9
6	Are likely to complete year 12	1 2 3 4 5 9
7	Are likely to complete year 10	1 2 3 4 5 9
8	Have learning difficulties	1 2 3 4 5 9
9	Have behavioural difficulties	1 2 3 4 5 9
10	Have problems settling in class	1 2 3 4 5 9
11	Have been in trouble over significant disciplinary issues	1 2 3 4 5 9
12	Enjoy attending school	1 2 3 4 5 9
13	Enjoy attending class	1 2 3 4 5 9
14	Are academically gifted	1 2 3 4 5 9
15	Are talented in a specific field	1 2 3 4 5 9
16	Have special needs	1 2 3 4 5 9

25. Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on **ALL** secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not sure don't know
1	2	3	4	5	9

1	Increased school choice for students has led to overall improved **learning outcomes** for **all students**	1 2 3 4 5 9
2	Increased school choice for students has led to overall improved **learning experiences** for **all students**	1 2 3 4 5 9
3	Increased school choice for students has led to overall improved **learning outcomes** for **students in my current school**	1 2 3 4 5 9
4	Increased school choice for students has led to overall improved **learning experiences** for **students in my current school**	1 2 3 4 5 9
5	Increased school choice for students has led to overall improvements in the **teaching experiences** for all teachers	1 2 3 4 5 9
6	Increased school choice for students has led to overall improvements in the **teaching experiences** for **teachers in my school**	1 2 3 4 5 9
7	Increased school choice for students has improved **my** teaching experience	1 2 3 4 5 9
8	The increase in selectivity in secondary public schools has changed the composition of the student body in my school	1 2 3 4 5 9
9	The increase in selectivity in secondary public schools has changed my experience of teaching	1 2 3 4 5 9
10	The increase in multi-campus colleges has changed the composition of the student body in my school	1 2 3 4 5 9
11	The increase in multi-campus colleges has changed my experience of teaching	1 2 3 4 5 9
12	My career prospects have improved since public school choices have increased	1 2 3 4 5 9
13	I would consider working in an academic selective school	1 2 3 4 5 9
14	I would consider working in an specialist selective school	1 2 3 4 5 9
15	I would consider working in an junior campus	1 2 3 4 5 9
16	I would consider working in an senior campus	1 2 3 4 5 9
17	I would consider working in a comprehensive high school	1 2 3 4 5 9

26. In your opinion what is the major change that has affected teaching in the last five years?

27. What do you think the Federation should be making the priority to improve the quality of the professional life of teachers?

Thank you for completing the survey.
Your input and cooperation is appreciated.

Please return the survey by <u>Friday 25th July</u>
in the supplied reply-paid envelope.

Appendix H – Survey findings: tables of each item by type of school

This appendix presents tables of all the descriptive analyses from the survey results. The tables in this appendix are set out in three sections corresponding to the order in which the analyses are presented in Chapter 6.

Respondent characteristics

Table H1: Type of secondary school in which respondents worked

Type of school	count	%
Comprehensive	782	73
Specialist	67	6
Selective	115	11
Multi-campus colleges†	*106*	*10*
Junior campus	54	5
Senior campus	52	5
Total	1,070	100

Notes: † The junior campuses within this sample encompassed students from Years 7 to 10 and the senior campuses catered to Years 11 to 12.

Table H2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Gender						
female	65	61	57	63	67	64
male	35	39	43	37	33	36
Age						
21 to 24	4	3	0	6	2	3
25 to 34	21	28	17	24	12	20
35 to 44	27	19	18	26	19	25
45 to 54	31	27	30	28	38	31
55 to 64	16	21	35	17	29	19
65+	1	1	1	0	0	1
Tenure - current school						
< 1 year	10	7	4	9	8	9
1 to < 2 years	8	6	5	7	8	8
2 to < 5 years	24	25	17	22	13	23
5 to < 10 years	28	28	31	41	38	29
10 to < 20 years	21	22	25	15	29	21
20 years+	10	10	17	6	4	10
Tenure - teaching						
< 1 year	3	0	3	4	4	3
1 to < 2 years	2	4	3	4	2	3
2 to < 5 years	11	13	5	11	4	10
5 to < 10 years	15	15	12	22	13	15
10 to < 20 years	27	25	22	31	25	27
20 years+	41	42	55	28	52	43
Current role						
Class room teacher	64	70	73	63	73	66
Head teacher	23	19	18	26	19	22
Executive/management	8	4	4	9	4	7
STLA*	1	3	1	0	2	1
Careers advisor/librarian/others	4	3	5	2	2	4
Employment status						
full-time	87	87	88	94	94	88
part-time	10	10	8	6	2	9
casual	3	3	4	0	4	3
Experience teaching in other schools						
no	19	16	10	13	8	17
yes	81	84	90	87	92	83

Note: *STLA = Student Teacher Learning Assistant

Table H3: Number of periods and students taught and experience in other schools

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
Number periods taught per week						
1 to 3	3	2	2	2	2	3
4 to 7	5	3	3	11	4	5
8 to 14	6	11	4	4	8	6
15 to 20	15	6	11	26	22	15
21 to 28	47	50	61	36	56	48
> 28	25	29	20	21	8	23
Number of students taught						
0 to 30	10	3	5	6	12	9
30 to 59	6	3	2	11	20	6
60 to 89	12	8	5	11	36	12
90 to 109	16	16	20	17	16	16
110+	56	70	69	56	16	56

School and student characteristics

Table H4: Characteristics of the schools

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
School type						
co-ed	84	87	98	100	100	87
all boys	6	1	1	0	0	5
all girls	10	12	1	0	0	8
Number of students						
< 100	0	2	0	0	0	0
100 to 499	6	2	1	37	35	8
500 to 899	46	17	50	44	58	45
900+	47	80	49	19	8	46
Number of teachers						
< 10	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 to 49	12	5	6	56	14	13
50 to 99	77	62	93	44	86	77
100 to 149	11	33	1	0	0	10
150+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Opportunity classes						
No	43	28	21	56	72	42
Yes	57	72	79	44	28	58

Table H5: Student enrolments issues

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Falling student enrolments						
not an issue	44	71	83	42	43	50
minor issue	24	20	12	27	22	23
substantial issue	16	6	5	15	24	15
major issue	15	3	1	15	12	13
Maintaining student enrolments						
not an issue	34	65	77	19	24	39
minor issue	27	20	15	38	25	26
substantial issue	22	9	6	27	27	20
major issue	17	6	2	15	24	15

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H6: Teacher turnover issues

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
High teacher turnover						
not an issue	24	26	53	12	55	28
minor issue	36	32	34	21	24	34
substantial issue	24	22	9	35	10	22
major issue	16	20	4	33	12	16
Low teacher turnover						
not an issue	54	58	36	63	45	52
minor issue	32	23	35	29	41	32
substantial issue	10	14	19	8	6	11
major issue	4	5	10	0	8	5

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H7: Attracting suitably qualified staff

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attracting experienced classroom teachers						
not an issue	13	21	27	8	40	16
minor issue	23	31	30	6	30	24
substantial issue	30	19	23	40	16	29
major issue	33	28	20	47	14	31
Attracting experienced head teachers						
not an issue	20	26	34	15	31	22
minor issue	25	23	25	13	35	25
substantial issue	25	17	23	15	19	23
major issue	31	35	19	57	15	30
Attracting experienced principals						
not an issue	32	38	38	15	45	33
minor issue	26	20	27	38	27	26
substantial issue	16	8	17	10	12	15
major issue	26	35	19	37	16	26

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H8: Feedback sought by students

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Additional feedback on classroom work						
hardly any	15	15	2	28	8	14
some	61	40	34	60	46	56
a lot	15	37	34	6	27	19
most	8	6	21	4	12	9
all	1	1	9	2	8	2
Additional feedback on assignments						
hardly any	11	10	4	25	10	11
some	60	45	32	50	37	54
a lot	20	28	31	19	33	22
most	8	15	21	4	13	10
all	1	1	12	2	8	3
Additional feedback on grades						
hardly any	16	19	6	45	12	16
some	59	45	35	47	47	54
a lot	18	24	25	4	24	19
most	7	12	19	2	8	8
all	1	0	16	2	8	3

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H9: Students' academic outcomes

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Likely to apply to university						
hardly any	11	3	1	23	17	11
some	57	57	10	70	38	52
a lot	25	34	11	8	27	23
most	7	5	42	0	13	11
all	0	2	37	0	4	4
Likely to get into university						
hardly any	17	8	1	36	16	16
some	66	68	10	64	51	59
a lot	15	21	14	0	22	15
most	2	3	49	0	10	8
all	0	0	26	0	2	3
Likely to complete Year 12						
hardly any	1	4	1	9	0	2
some	26	18	4	60	6	24
a lot	35	27	9	23	29	31
most	34	45	42	8	42	35
all	4	6	45	0	23	9
Likely to complete Year 10						
hardly any	0	0	1	0	4	0
some	6	5	1	15	13	6
a lot	19	14	5	19	13	17
most	54	58	20	60	21	50
all	21	24	73	6	50	27

Question asked: Of the students you currently teach, approximately how many are…?

Table H10: Student's enjoyment of school and class

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enjoy attending school						
hardly any	3	0	2	2	2	2
some	32	29	12	57	25	31
a lot	35	35	23	26	19	32
most	29	34	57	15	52	33
all	1	2	6	0	2	2
Enjoy attending class						
hardly any	3	2	2	2	2	3
some	34	32	8	60	23	32
a lot	36	25	22	34	23	33
most	26	38	61	4	52	31
all	1	3	7	0	0	2

Question asked: Of the students you currently teach, approximately how many…?

Table H11: Student behavioural management issues

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Have been in trouble over disciplinary issues						
hardly any	7	10	38	0	43	12
some	56	61	57	32	39	55
a lot	29	22	4	53	10	26
most	7	3	1	15	8	6
all	1	3	0	0	0	1
Have behavioural difficulties						
hardly any	5	7	31	0	27	9
some	47	48	63	15	54	47
a lot	35	37	5	62	15	32
most	12	4	1	19	2	10
all	1	3	0	4	2	2
Have problems settling in class						
hardly any	4	6	23	0	25	7
some	42	48	69	19	54	45
a lot	39	37	7	53	15	35
most	14	6	1	23	4	12
all	1	3	0	6	2	2

Question asked: Of the students you currently teach, approximately how many …?

Table H12: Students' specific learning abilities/needs

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Are academically gifted						
hardly any	33	21	3	47	35	30
some	62	63	17	49	58	57
a lot	5	15	29	4	8	8
most	0	1	33	0	0	4
all	0	0	19	0	0	2
Are talented in a specific field						
hardly any	17	6	2	32	13	15
some	67	38	23	58	65	60
a lot	14	38	33	9	19	18
most	1	18	27	0	2	5
all	0	0	15	0	0	2
Have learning difficulties						
hardly any	2	4	30	0	4	5
some	48	51	61	19	54	48
a lot	36	37	7	62	29	34
most	12	3	1	15	8	10
all	3	4	1	4	6	3
Have special needs						
hardly any	6	7	21	0	6	8
some	52	61	57	30	54	52
a lot	30	22	11	49	31	28
most	8	6	3	15	2	7
all	4	3	9	6	8	5

Question asked: Of the students you currently teach, approximately how many …?

Table H13: Teachers' exposure to violence and threats in the last year

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Been verbally abused by a student						
never	8	3	35	0	27	11
rarely	27	33	32	13	25	27
occasionally	37	42	26	30	45	36
frequently	28	22	7	57	2	26
Had to intervene in a student fight						
never	10	19	39	0	35	15
rarely	35	25	40	6	37	33
occasionally	42	46	21	54	29	40
frequently	13	9	0	41	0	12
Felt physically threatened by a student						
never	29	28	53	9	47	31
rarely	39	48	33	32	37	39
Occasionally		18	13	42	16	23
frequently	8	6	1	17	0	7
Been verbally abused by a parent						
never	46	40	67	20	71	48
rarely	35	36	27	41	23	34
occasionally	16	18	5	28	6	15
frequently	3	6	1	11	0	4
Been physically threatened by a parent						
never	61	65	77	47	81	63
rarely	25	24	18	32	13	24
occasionally	12	9	4	19	6	11
frequently	2	2	0	2	0	1
Liaised with social services on student matter						
never	38	42	64	25	42	41
rarely	24	21	18	15	19	22
occasionally	21	30	12	31	23	21
frequently	17	6	5	29	15	16

Question asked: Consider the following statements and indicate how often in the last year, you have…?

Table H14: Parental involvement

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Demanding parents						
not an issue	22	16	14	13	41	21
minor issue	53	51	34	58	51	51
substantial issue	18	22	29	21	8	19
major issue	7	10	23	8	0	8
Disengaged parents						
not an issue	5	9	27	0	26	8
minor issue	22	22	46	6	28	24
substantial issue	34	31	24	21	24	32
major issue	40	37	4	73	22	36

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H15: Teachers' perceptions of school choice and perceived student outcomes

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
School choice has led to overall improved learning outcomes for all students						
strongly disagree	16	8	8	20	6	14
disagree	36	38	34	20	26	34
neither agree nor disagree	27	39	33	47	28	30
agree	19	11	19	12	30	19
strongly agree	2	3	6	0	10	3
School choice has led to overall improved learning experiences for all students						
strongly disagree	15	10	9	14	6	13
disagree	32	25	28	22	24	30
neither agree nor disagree	24	42	38	28	22	26
agree	27	20	19	36	40	27
strongly agree	3	3	7	0	8	3
School choice has led to improved learning outcomes for students in this school						
strongly disagree	16	5	3	16	6	13
disagree	31	18	14	33	15	28
neither agree nor disagree	30	32	19	37	17	29
agree	21	38	45	14	37	25
strongly agree	2	7	19	0	25	5
School choice has led to improved learning experiences for students in this school						
strongly disagree	16	5	3	10	4	13
disagree	27	14	10	38	15	25
neither agree nor disagree	27	29	23	28	15	26
agree	27	46	47	24	42	30
strongly agree	3	7	18	0	23	6

Question asked: Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on ALL secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Table H16: Teachers' perceptions of school choice and changes in student body

	comp	special	selective	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased selectivity in secondary public schools has changed the composition of the student body in my school						
strongly disagree	6	5	5	4	2	5
disagree	13	6	9	11	17	13
neither agree nor disagree	17	13	6	30	30	17
agree	32	49	36	34	26	33
strongly agree	32	27	45	21	24	32
The increase in multi-campus colleges has changed the composition of the student body in my school						
strongly disagree	16	23	22	2	0	15
disagree	26	19	25	9	13	24
neither agree nor disagree	39	48	47	17	22	38
agree	11	6	5	25	37	13
strongly agree	7	4	1	47	28	10

Question asked: Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on ALL secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Teacher tasks and experiences

Table H17: Teachers' day-to-day operational and administrative tasks

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Playground duty						
never/almost never	7	6	8	6	18	7
1 to 2 times per week	69	71	77	28	72	68
3 or more times per week	25	23	15	66	10	25
Attend parent interviews						
never/almost never	49	63	57	38	47	50
1 to 2 times per week	33	20	31	38	39	32
3 or more times per week	17	18	12	24	14	17
Attend meetings						
never/almost never	8	12	8	6	10	8
1 to 2 times per week	56	63	66	41	44	56
3 or more times per week	37	25	26	54	47	36
Answer parent/student emails						
never/almost never	63	55	47	74	51	61
1 to 2 times per week	21	23	32	21	22	23
3 or more time per week	15	22	20	6	28	17

Question asked: Approximately how many times a week would you normally do the following?

Table H18: Teachers' irregular operational and education related tasks

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Work on DET policies						
never/almost never	13	12	17	13	20	14
1 to 2 times per year	26	31	22	31	35	27
every term	36	38	32	22	33	35
monthly	14	8	19	19	4	14
weekly	11	9	11	13	8	11
Change work practices						
never/almost never	12	9	14	11	18	13
1 to 2 times per year	41	37	35	44	39	40
every term	32	46	31	28	35	32
monthly	11	6	12	9	6	11
weekly	4	2	7	7	2	4
Participate in selection committees						
never/almost never	68	70	79	79	69	70
1 to 2 times per year	17	9	13	11	22	16
every term	6	12	4	8	6	6
monthly	4	9	3	0	2	4
weekly	4	0	1	2	2	3
Go on over-night excursions						
never/almost never	65	65	48	54	59	62
1 to 2 times per year	32	34	42	41	39	34
every term	3	2	8	6	0	3
monthly	0	0	1	0	2	0
weekly	0	0	1	0	0	0

Question asked: Approximately how many times a year would you normally do the following?

Table H19: Teachers' unpaid hours

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Start early						
never/almost never	9	10	8	4	10	9
1 to 2 times per week	16	12	18	6	27	16
3 or more times per week	75	77	73	91	64	76
Stay back late						
never/almost never	7	12	11	2	8	8
1 to 2 times per week	17	13	21	15	15	17
3 or more times per week	76	74	67	83	77	75
Take work home						
never/almost never	5	3	4	4	2	4
1 to 2 times per week	17	13	13	7	15	16
3 or more times per week	78	73	84	89	82	80
Work through morning break						
never/almost never	7	8	8	2	6	7
1 to 2 times per week	22	18	20	17	23	21
3 or more times per week	71	73	71	81	71	72
Work through lunch break						
never/almost never	5	6	4	4	4	5
1 to 2 times per week	25	30	26	15	21	25
3 or more times per week	70	64	69	82	76	71
3 to 5 times per week	52	46	58	63	54	53
6 to 10 times per week	9	9	5	13	10	9
more than 10 times per week	9	9	6	6	12	9
Teach at different campuses						
never/almost never	97	96	100	96	96	97
1 to 2 times per week	1	2	0	2	0	1
3 or more times per week	1	2	0	2	4	1
more than 6 times per week	0	0	0	0	0	0

Question asked: Approximately how many times a week do you do the following?

Table H20: Teaching within subject area

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Teaches outside of area of formal qualifications[+]						
no	72	75	73	65	79	72
yes	28	25	27	35	21	28
Has formal qualifications but doesn't teach subject[+]						
no	42	39	37	41	33	41
yes	58	61	63	59	67	59
Teach outside subject area*						
never/almost never	63	67	68	51	73	64
1 to 2 times per week	22	23	22	22	12	22
3 to 5 times per week	9	5	8	16	12	9
6 to 10 times per week	3	3	1	6	0	2
more than 10 times per week	3	2	2	6	2	3

[+]Derived from combining responses from multiple questions.
*Question asked: Approximately how many times a week do you do the following?

Table H21: Extra-curricular activities performed by teachers

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Extra-curricular activities, subject related, normal week						
don't do this	20	27	20	26	8	20
1 to 2 hours per week	47	42	50	30	48	46
3 to 5 hours per week	21	18	19	28	37	22
6 to 10 hours per week	7	6	4	15	2	7
more than 10 hours per week	4	7	6	2	6	5
Extra- curricular activities, subject related, busy week						
don't do this	20	23	15	28	12	20
1 to 2 hours per week	27	29	35	22	21	28
3 to 5 hours per week	28	20	24	20	27	27
6 to 10 hours per week	13	15	10	15	21	14
more than 10 hours per week	11	14	16	15	19	12
Extra- curricular activities, non-subject related, normal week						
don't do this	35	54	33	30	29	35
1 to 2 hours per week	40	31	44	30	42	40
3 to 5 hours per week	15	9	14	31	21	16
6 to 10 hours per week	6	1	7	6	4	6
more than 10 hours per week	4	4	2	4	4	4
Extra- curricular activities, non-subject related, busy week						
don't do this	32	46	32	36	31	33
1 to 2 hours per week	32	28	32	21	31	31
3 to 5 hours per week	18	12	18	21	13	17
6 to 10 hours per week	10	4	9	17	19	11
more than 10 hours per week	8	9	9	6	6	8

Question asked: Approximately how many hours a week do you do the following?

Table H22: Learning related activities of teachers

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Attend in-service out-of-hours						
never/almost never	21	27	23	11	10	21
1 to 2 times per year	47	55	53	48	49	48
every term	23	15	18	31	33	23
monthly	7	2	6	7	8	7
weekly	2	2	1	2	0	2
Attend in-service during school hours						
never/almost never	12	17	18	15	6	13
1 to 2 times per year	44	45	46	40	35	43
every term	34	29	29	34	47	34
monthly	9	8	7	8	12	9
weekly	2	2	0	4	0	2
Undertake other learning activities						
never/almost never	13	23	16	13	12	14
1 to 2 times per year	39	30	31	34	45	37
every term	28	38	29	28	25	28
monthly	11	3	10	11	8	10
weekly	10	6	14	13	10	10
Undertaken at least one of these forms of learning activities						
once a term or more frequently	67	63	69	76	79	68

Question asked: Approximately how many times a year would you normally do the following?

Table H23: Teachers' perceptions of support on student related matters

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of support from principal on student matters						
not an issue	42	35	54	25	65	43
minor issue	27	24	24	38	24	27
substantial issue	14	21	12	17	10	14
major issue	17	20	11	21	2	16
Lack of support from deputy principal on student matters						
not an issue	39	31	56	38	59	41
minor issue	28	37	25	23	22	27
substantial issue	19	17	11	23	18	18
major issue	15	15	9	15	2	13
Lack of support from other teachers on student matters						
not an issue	33	31	48	34	57	36
minor issue	37	52	41	32	24	38
substantial issue	19	9	7	19	16	17
major issue	11	7	4	15	4	10

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H24: Teachers' perceptions of support on work related matters

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of support from principal on work related matters						
not an issue	41	27	43	25	57	40
minor issue	28	24	23	32	24	27
substantial issue	14	18	15	23	16	15
major issue	18	30	18	21	4	18
Lack of support from deputy principal on work related matters						
not an issue	44	35	48	38	61	45
minor issue	28	31	20	30	24	27
substantial issue	12	17	13	18	12	13
major issue	16	17	19	14	4	15
Lack of support from DET on work related matters						
not an issue	22	12	25	12	31	21
minor issue	27	34	24	38	29	28
substantial issue	23	20	26	16	24	23
major issue	29	34	25	34	16	28

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H25: Teachers' perceptions of support on parent related matters

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of support from principal on parent matters						
not an issue	53	37	56	33	71	52
minor issue	26	38	23	42	24	27
substantial issue	11	15	14	8	4	11
major issue	10	9	7	17	2	9
Lack of support from deputy principal on parent matters						
not an issue	52	42	62	45	67	53
minor issue	28	37	21	35	24	28
substantial issue	11	12	10	8	8	11
major issue	9	9	7	12	2	9

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H26: Teachers' perceptions of workplace practices

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Inequitable work practices						
not an issue	22	13	15	19	38	21
minor issue	29	22	39	35	20	29
substantial issue	22	27	24	17	20	22
major issue	27	37	22	29	22	27
Workplace practices that are not fair or transparent						
not an issue	26	13	17	15	36	24
minor issue	28	28	37	33	26	29
substantial issue	21	22	26	19	20	22
major issue	25	36	20	33	18	25

Question asked: At your school to what extent do you feel the following issues arise?

Table H27: Frequency of leave taken for stress related reasons

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Taken sick leave to get relief from work stress						
never	33	24	40	33	44	34
rarely	28	36	29	30	23	29
occasionally	31	26	18	28	27	29
frequently	8	14	12	9	6	8
Used other leave to get relief from stress						
never	53	45	55	47	58	52
rarely	19	23	23	27	23	20
occasionally	23	17	17	20	15	21
frequently	6	15	5	6	4	6

Question asked: Consider the following statements and indicate how often in the last year, you have…?

Table H28: Frequency of thoughts of leaving school, public education or teaching

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Thought of leaving current school						
never	17	11	22	6	27	17
rarely	19	15	22	13	23	19
occasionally	33	41	33	39	38	34
frequently	31	33	23	43	12	30
Thought of leaving public education system						
never	29	19	28	28	38	29
rarely	24	27	28	22	21	24
occasionally	28	36	25	24	19	28
frequently	19	18	19	26	21	19
Thought of leaving teaching						
never	25	18	30	28	37	26
rarely	26	26	22	19	19	25
occasionally	29	30	30	24	25	29
frequently	20	26	19	30	19	21
Thought of retiring						
never	47	40	35	45	42	45
rarely	14	22	19	17	16	15
occasionally	17	16	21	15	14	17
frequently	21	22	25	23	28	22

Question asked: Consider the following statements and indicate how often in the last year, you have…?

Table H29: Main reason for thinking about leaving current school

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total	count
	%	%	%	%	%	%	no.
Main reason for leaving current school							
would not leave	20	20	33	8	42	20	223
promotion	24	29	21	22	19	24	349
other	57	54	48	72	40	57	443
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,015
Other main reason, not related to career progression, for leaving current school (n=443)							
change school type	30	11	27	48	-	31	134
less behaviour management	11	7	5	6	-	10	42
better exec management	11	11	29	12	-	13	55
closer to home	44	57	27	33	-	42	184
better conditions	4	14	12	0	-	5	22
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	443

Question asked: If you could move to any school you wanted, what would be your main reason for leaving your current school?
*the total excludes teachers who said that the main reason they would leave was to retire (n=7).
- standard errors too large to for reliable reporting.

Table H30: School choice and perceived teacher experiences

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
*Increased school choice for students has led to overall improvements in the **teaching experiences** for all teachers*						
strongly disagree	20	14	18	30	8	19
disagree	35	41	34	30	33	35
neither agree nor disagree	29	32	31	26	20	29
agree	14	14	16	12	31	15
strongly agree	2	0	2	2	8	2
*Increased school choice for students has led to overall improvements in the **teaching experiences** for **teachers in my school***						
strongly disagree	19	10	7	29	6	17
disagree	32	32	25	35	22	31
neither agree nor disagree	30	33	28	29	24	29
agree	17	20	34	8	33	19
strongly agree	2	5	6	0	16	3
*Increased school choice for students has improved **my** teaching experience*						
strongly disagree	16	10	7	25	4	15
disagree	31	33	18	37	13	29
neither agree nor disagree	31	32	31	25	29	31
agree	18	20	29	10	29	20
strongly agree	4	5	15	4	25	6

Question asked: Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on ALL secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Table H31: School choice and changes in teacher experience

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased selectivity in secondary public schools has changed my experience of teaching						
strongly disagree	4	3	0	2	2	3
disagree	16	17	14	17	11	16
neither agree nor disagree	33	23	13	40	34	30
agree	33	43	42	33	34	35
strongly agree	14	13	31	8	19	15
The increase in multi-campus colleges has changed my experience of teaching						
strongly disagree	15	21	23	0	0	14
disagree	26	19	25	8	13	23
neither agree nor disagree	43	52	44	15	21	41
agree	11	8	6	35	32	13
strongly agree	5	0	1	42	34	8

Question asked: Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on ALL secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Table H32: School choice and changes in teaching and career prospects

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
My career prospects have improved since public school choices have increased						
strongly disagree	21	11	22	26	17	21
disagree	33	35	20	26	28	32
neither agree nor disagree	37	49	41	40	43	39
agree	7	5	13	8	6	7
strongly agree	1	0	4	0	6	2
Overall, my experience of teaching has improved since public school choices have increased						
strongly disagree	16	8	7	22	13	15
disagree	35	32	23	35	15	32
neither agree nor disagree	39	42	40	39	38	39
agree	9	13	26	4	17	11
strongly agree	2	5	4	0	19	3

Question asked: Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on ALL secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Table H33: School choice and preference for place of employment

	comp	special	select	junior	senior	total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I would work in an academic selective school						
strongly disagree	10	6	4	17	8	10
disagree	15	6	5	9	20	13
neither agree nor disagree	13	9	7	15	16	12
agree	42	55	25	44	39	41
strongly agree	20	23	59	15	18	24
I would work in a specialist selective school						
strongly disagree	10	6	6	13	8	9
disagree	16	2	8	15	22	15
neither agree nor disagree	16	8	12	13	24	15
agree	41	63	39	44	35	42
strongly agree	17	22	36	15	12	19
I would work in a junior campus						
strongly disagree	28	27	30	14	33	28
disagree	27	24	20	10	35	26
neither agree nor disagree	15	13	18	25	14	15
agree	23	32	24	41	14	24
strongly agree	7	3	8	10	4	7
I would work in an senior campus						
strongly disagree	12	14	7	11	2	11
disagree	15	10	8	17	2	13
neither agree nor disagree	12	11	16	13	14	13
agree	41	49	42	41	35	41
strongly agree	20	16	26	19	47	22
I would work in a comprehensive high school						
strongly disagree	2	3	8	0	6	3
disagree	2	6	12	2	8	4
neither agree nor disagree	15	14	25	8	20	16
agree	41	51	39	42	41	41
strongly agree	40	26	15	49	24	36

Question asked: Considering the effect that changes to the public education system have had on ALL secondary public sector students and teachers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

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