SCHOOLS PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS, PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Betty Constance Jackson B.A., (1930-1999) and father, Norman John Jackson (1922-2003), for instilling in me a lifelong love of learning,

and

to my wife, Jennifer and children Elise and Matthew, whose sacrifices have allowed me to complete this thesis.

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STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the Australian Catholic University Ethics Committee.

Ian Jackson

13 December 2008

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ABSTRACT

Australian schools are under increasing pressure to successfully provide for students with disabilities. The impact of the inclusion movement over the past twenty years has empowered more parents to enrol children with special education needs in regular schools. The proclamation by the Australian Government of the *Disability Discrimination Act* (1992) and the *Disability Standards for Education* (2005) has made schools accountable for their provision for students with disabilities. Principals and their school communities are therefore seeking guidance in developing effective teaching and learning strategies for these students.

This study surveyed teachers, parents, students and principals in four western Sydney Catholic secondary schools identified as leaders in Special Education about factors that positively provided for their students with disabilities. Principal behaviour, principal engagement and a range of school conditions were found to be key factors in these schools.

Principals who promoted sound pedagogical practices and articulated inclusive school goals and expectations were found to contribute to a school's successful provision for these students. These behaviours represented a sub-set of school leadership practices found in the literature as providing for all students.

Principal engagement was identified as a new concept for describing how principals exercised their leadership roles for these students. Principal engagement types

identified by the study were pedagogical, organisational, people, vision and disengaged delegation.

A range of school conditions were identified as significant factors in how schools provided for students with disabilities. These conditions included Special Education teacher capacity, Individual Plans, collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers and staff participation in professional development activities in Special Education. The creation of these conditions was linked with the identified core principal behaviours but a diversity of principal engagement types. However, where these leadership factors were absent, alternate school leadership structures were found to create and sustain similar school conditions in providing for students with disabilities.

Schools therefore need to be aware that specific principal behaviours, types of principal engagement and a range of core school conditions represent critical factors in successfully providing for students with disabilities. Principals need to focus on developing the types of leadership behaviours and engagement found in this study. The key factors identified in this study should also impact on the recruitment of principals and the promotion of professional development activities for school staff.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

> *Many countries seem committed to inclusive education in their rhetoric and have acknowledged in their policy documents the central role of the principal in designing, leading, managing and implementing programs for all students, including those with disabilities. However, there is currently very little research that indicates whether principals have the necessary knowledge, skill and attitudes to implement such programs in their schools.* (Forlin & Lian, 2008, p.163).

The stimulus for conducting this study came from the researcher's role in supporting Catholic schools in the Diocese of Parramatta in their provision for students with disabilities. During the period from 1992-2005, school communities developed strategies in responding to an increasing range of Special Education issues. In working with these schools the researcher acquired a particular interest in the principal's role in providing leadership for the school in its support for students with disabilities.

Of particular relevance during this period was the emergence of the inclusion movement for students with disabilities. From the early 1990s, instead of parents enrolling their children with disabilities in segregated educational settings, such as special schools, they began to demand that their neighbourhood school accommodate the special needs of their children (Keeffe-Martin & Lindsay, 2002). This placed staff in regular schools, including those in the Parramatta diocese, under pressure to develop targeted programs to support these students. Principals, in

particular, found themselves at the forefront of the inclusion movement. Decisions were required by them about the enrolment of individual students with a wide range of disabilities. This often necessitated many meetings with parents and teaching staff to ascertain the suitability of a particular enrolment. Principals also needed to arrange for adequate resources to be allocated to their school to support these students as well as work with classroom teachers and support staff in developing effective intervention programs.

Three major public documents addressing roles for schools in providing for students with disabilities were released in the period of the researcher's work in the diocese – the *Disability Discrimination Act* (Australian Government, 1992); the *Salamanca Statement for Inclusive Education for Students with Special Needs* (UNESCO, 1994); and the *Disability Standards for Education* (Australian Government, 2005). Each of these documents helped inform principals how their schools were expected to respond to the demands of the inclusion movement. These documents dealt with specific educational agendas in the Special Education field and challenged all schools to establish and develop strategies for providing for their students with disabilities. In addition, each document recommended a range of leadership behaviours for principals to adopt in providing for these students. Related government inquiries into schools and students with disabilities in the 1990s and 2000s – namely, the *Integration Inclusion Feasibility Study* (NSW Government, 1996) by the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Australian Senate's *Inquiry into the Education of Students with Disabilities* (Australian Government, 2002) – offered

principals and school communities further guidance about how to successfully provide for students with disabilities.

In supporting diocesan schools in their efforts to support students with disabilities, the researcher discovered few substantive research studies specifically addressing the impact of school leadership on how school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Instead, most of the education research literature focused on the impact of school leadership on providing for all students. Even here, there was a diversity of opinion about the nature and extent of principal influence on how schools provided for students. Some of these studies cited the impact of principals in transforming low-achieving schools into schools with enhanced student outcomes (Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason, 2001). Other studies were less conclusive in attributing school leadership with improved outcomes for all students (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Metanalyses by Waters, Marzano & McNulty (2003), Leithwood & Riehl (2003) and Robinson (2007) found that principals exerted small and indirect effects on student outcomes through their leadership practices but that their impact was mediated by teachers in creating a range of school conditions that supported individual student needs.

In the absence of conclusive evidence about the impact of principal behaviours on provision for students with disabilities, this study was conducted to examine what leadership behaviours by principals could be identified as successful in providing for students with disabilities. The following section of the chapter presents the major developments in how schools have provided for students with disabilities over the

past fifty years within the context of community movements on behalf of people with disabilities.

1.1 THE CONTEXT FOR SCHOOLS PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

THE CONCEPT OF DISABILITY

In examining how schools have provided for students with disabilities over the past half century, there is a requirement to define some of the key terms in the Special Education field - disability, integration and inclusion.

Firstly, the *Disability Discrimination Act* (1992) defines disability as:

- Total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions
- Total or partial loss of a part of the body
- The presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body
- A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that result in disturbed behaviour (Australian Government, 1992)

Secondly, integration implies that when a student with a disability is enrolled in a mainstream class it is the student, rather than the school, who is required to change

to accommodate any special needs. Inclusion, by contrast, takes as its starting point that a just state of affairs is where students with disabilities are included in schools as a human right and where the school community develops and implements changes to accommodate any special needs (Northway, 2002). As a consequence, schools provide these students with specially designed instruction and support in the context of regular education settings with students becoming full members of the school community (Rogers, 1993).

Since the Second World War, a range of minority groups have initiated emancipation movements for equal rights and social justice. The United States of America experienced the social upheaval and legislative reforms associated with the Civil Rights Movement from the late 1950s (Morris, 1999); the feminist movement challenged gender roles in the community from the mid-1960s until the present time in most western nations, including Australia (Gottfried, 1996). Other social liberation movements have periodically captured national and international social and political agendas, such as the gay rights movement (Bernstein, 1997), the environmental movement (Hutton & Connors, 1999) and indigenous rights movements. Advocates for people with disabilities have similarly contributed to the social and political agenda in industrialised nations since the late 1950s. Disability in the community is experienced by diverse cultures, races and classes and is a multi-faceted condition, encompassing people with physical, emotional, sensory, intellectual, learning or medical disabilities, and sometimes many or all at once.

Disability can range from mild forms of condition, where people adapt relatively easily, to profound handicapping conditions that severely limit a person's contribution to community life. Disability can be part of our experience as parents, siblings and friends when children are born; disability can be acquired through accidents, illness or the aging process; disability crosses all cultural, gender and socio-economic groups. At any time in our lives, we can acquire the cultural difference of disability.

THE NORMALISATION MOVEMENT

It has taken many years for the disability advocacy movement to capture the political and social policy agenda in industrialised nations. For many years there was a lack of awareness and distinction, for example, between psychiatric conditions and intellectual disability. This confusion is still evident today in some sections of the community. Other disabilities, including learning difficulties and behavioural disorders, are often misrepresented and inaccurately attributed in the community.

The inclusion movement on behalf of students with disabilities emerged in Australian education in the early 1990s (McRae, 1996). This movement was linked to the normalisation principle first developed by Bengt Nirje in 1959. He contended that the normalisation principle should lead to:

> *...the handicapped - in the present case the mentally retarded - having the same rights and obligations as other citizens.* (Nirje, 1982, p.xi)

Wolf Wolfensberger expanded the scope of the normalisation movement's principles in Canada in the 1970s. He defined normalisation as:

> *...the utilisation of means which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviours and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible* (Wolfensberger, 1980, p.18)

Wolfensberger attributed the social treatment of people with disability as a self-fulfilling prophecy based on people's ignorance of their contribution to the community. He claimed that a person with a disability should be positively compensated for a disability:

> *The more positive view of the person with a... disability is that of a 'developing person'. This is the most optimistic view of all because it regards... disabled people, even the very severely disabled, as capable of growth, development and learning. This view also emphasises the vale of training and education.* (Wolfensberger, 1980, p.88)

The pioneers of the normalisation movement suggested that the person with a disability could contribute to the community. The views of Nirje and Wolfensburger were considered extreme in their time, with many people with disabilities still institutionalised and therefore removed from community life. Their ideas, though, were the precursors of the inclusion movement for students with disabilities in education.

PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY

Sanchez & Thomas (1998) state that people with disabilities remain the "largest diverse group" in the United States of America, representing up to 23.5% of the total population. (p.13). The proportion of students accessing Commonwealth

students disability grants in New South Wales public schools represents 2.7% of the total school population according to the latest national census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). The Australian Government recognises intellectual disability, sensory impairment, physical disability and emotional disorder as eligibility criteria for special funding grants to individual students. When students with significant learning disability are added to this group of students, the proportion of students with disabilities can represent to up to ten percent of a school population (Diocese of Parramatta Special Education Audit, 1999, p.4).

EDUCATIONAL TRENDS IN PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The history of provision for students with disabilities in Australian schools can be represented as schools moving from rigid exclusion towards progressive inclusion for these students. The Catholic Church and other charitable institutions were instrumental in first establishing educational opportunities for children in Australia. In 1860, the Institute for Deaf and Dumb set up residential schools in Sydney and Melbourne for children with hearing impairment and a charitable foundation in 1867 established a school for the blind in Melbourne, with a Sydney residential school opening in 1869. By 1898, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia had set up residential facilities, with small scale education programs for children with intellectual disability staffed by specially trained teachers. These institutions tended to be narrowly categorical with a strict medical model approach to education and training (Ward & Center, 1999).

In the early twentieth century the advent of compulsory education laws in Australian states led to the opening of some special day schools for students with disabilities

operating in New South Wales and Victoria. A range of Catholic religious orders continued to operate non-Government special schools, sustaining their commitment to families and children with special needs. By the late 1930s, general education provision for students had been restructured to focus on basic educational skills and students with disabilities were increasingly left in an "educational wilderness" (Ward & Center, 1999, p.10).

Educational reforms for students with disabilities were initiated in the public school system after World War Two in Australia, the United States of America and Great Britain. For example, special class placements for students in the United States increased by 260% between 1945 and 1958 (Daniel, 1997), with a corresponding increase in university training courses for teachers specialising in disability support. In Great Britain, the English Education Act of 1944 mandated equality of educational opportunity for students and nominated eleven categories of handicap that were linked with educational intervention and support. In Australia, the Public Instruction Act (1944) was amended to allow for compulsory education for the "blind" and "infirm". A limited number of special schools were established in both the public and private sectors. In the late 1940s, non-government schools for students with disabilities in New South Wales were registered and certified if they met state government-regulated standards.

In 1951, the New South Wales Subnormal Children's Welfare Association opened its foundation school for students with moderate to severe intellectual disability, the first school for the students with an intellectual disability in Australia. Schools for students with cerebral palsy, administered by the Spastic Centre of New South

Wales, and schools for students with physical disability, administered by the Crippled Children's Society, were also first opened in the early 1950s. In 1952, the Schonell Centre in Brisbane was established and pioneered courses for teachers specialising in remedial education.

By the end of the 1960s many special schools, special classes in regular schools and some special tertiary teaching courses had been established in Australia (Jenkinson, 1997). Many children with multiple disabilities and medical conditions were still institutionalised as there still did not exist educational opportunities for all students with high support needs. The local school was expected to provide any additional educational support for these students and institutionalisation remained the only option for some families confronted with choices about their child's educational future.

While some fragmented integration of students with special needs began to occur in the late 1960s, a segregationist approach to educating students with disabilities was still the dominant educational policy for most students with disabilities. In the United States, the 1975 Public Law 94-142 (*Education for All Handicapped Children Act,* or EHA) changed such segregationist policies in American schools by mandating individualised support for all students with disabilities in their neighborhood school. The provisions of the PL 94-142 included a range of special provisions, including an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the student and a role for parents in developing a shared approach with school staff in meeting their child's special needs. This law has been continually updated since its inception in improving support for these students. For example, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) was passed in

2004 by the United States Congress and significantly updated the provisions of the original EHA. This new law now guarantees a level of funding for each state to provide for the needs of these students.

The Australian Senate *Standing Committee on Health and Welfare* (1970), known as the Wedgewood Report, was the first significant Australian public declaration that impacted national special education practices. This committee reported on the support required by regular schools to educate students with an intellectual or physical disability. It recommended that the Commonwealth Government become involved, for the first time, in training teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help establish guidelines and policies for the states in the preschool, school and vocational education sectors for these students. As a result, the Australian University Commission was directed by the parliament to establish a teaching department dedicated to special needs education in at least one university in each state. A normalisation process for students with disabilities was also adopted as Commonwealth government policy, providing a funding framework for future expenditure in Special Education in schools.

In 1972, the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission provided grants to universities for the purposes of establishing special education courses. Future reports by this committee in 1973 and 1976 recommended further Commonwealth government funding for both special schools and more integrated settings for students with disabilities. In 1984, the Hawke Government used Section 96 of the Constitution to establish tied special education funding for the states, directing them to establish clearly defined entitlement and service delivery processes

for students with disabilities. The States Grants (Schools Assistance) Act in 1984 mandated diagnostic procedures to identify students with special needs, due processes for their school placement and appropriate referral procedures for their future assessments.

The Commonwealth *Report of the Working Party on Special Education* (1985) recommended that "special education policy should be responsive to the child's educational need irrespective of the setting in which learning occurs" (cited in Ward & Center, 1999, p.22). The report acknowledged that enrolment of students with disabilities in the regular education setting, though, was still a burden for some schools. The 1985 *Report of the Handicapped Programs Review*, known as the Grimes Report, recommended the "provision of funds to enable disabled children to gain access to mainstream schools by upgrading physical accessibility and providing note takers, support teachers, therapists and other staff and by developing alternative methods of teaching and assessment" (Bailey & du Plessis, 1997).

In 1992, the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA) was proclaimed, in many ways reflecting the principles of the 1975 American EHA. This national legislation superseded all state-based anti-discrimination laws. For example, the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) included disability as an area of prohibited discrimination, but offered an exemption for religious bodies under Section 56 of the Act. Section 56 stated "nothing in this applies to or in respect of a private educational authority" (cited in Quinn, 1996, p.5). Other states in Australia included similar exemptions for private or church-based educational authorities. No

such exemption was provided for these sectors by the DDA, as it prevented any school authority from discriminating against a student on the grounds of disability. The Act defined disability in the broadest terms possible, including physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning, physical disfigurement, presence in the body of a disease-causing organism, or association with a person with the above attribute (Australian Government, 1992) Though the DDA was essentially a community-based law, it had an immediate impact on the education sectors in Australia. For the first time, every student with a disability had a right to an enrolment in their neighborhood school.

Similar public declarations and government policies were released over the next two decades that reinforced the impact of the DDA on Australian education practices for students with disabilities. The publication of the *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994), of which Australia was a signatory, advocated inclusive education practices in all schools and was followed by implementation guidelines for schools (UNESCO, 2001). The release of the national *Disability Standards for Education* (2005) applied the Disability Discrimination Act in Australian school systems. Each of these public documents reflected a community trend towards more inclusive school settings for students with disabilities. The *Integration Inclusion Feasibility Study* (McRae, 1996) by the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Australian Senate's *Inquiry into the Education of Students with Disabilities* (Australian Government, 2002) inquired into the operational needs of schools in establishing more inclusive practices for students with disabilities. Since the mid-1990s, the role of the national Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Federal Court of Australia

in mediating and ruling on contentious disputes about school placement for students with disabilities has highlighted the increased government and community involvement in determining how to successfully provide for these students in Australian schools.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Principals have been presented with many challenges over the past twenty years in exercising effective leadership for schools in providing for students with disabilities (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). The impact of the inclusion movement and related legislative and policy-driven changes in the community has required principals and teachers in Australian schools to develop and implement new approaches and strategies in providing for these students.

A range of key issues for schools providing students with disabilities was outlined by the *Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools* commissioned by the Western Australian Department of Education - namely, the development and promotion of student enrolment processes, inclusive practices, support interventions, equitable allocation of resources, sound pedagogy, coordinated services and collaborative teaching practices (Government of Western Australia, 2001). The scope and range of these issues highlights the challenges faced by schools committed to successfully providing for these students.

Importantly, these issues also present principals with challenges, as well as opportunities, in providing leadership and direction for schools in promoting these

agendas for students with disabilities based on sound research and evidence-based practices.

As Robinson (2007) states:

> *Politicians, policy makers and the public at large are convinced that the quality of school leaders, and of principals in particular, makes a substantial difference to the progress students make at school. In some jurisdictions, such beliefs are used to justify high stakes consequences for those principals whose schools do or do not meet student achievement targets. Are these convictions supported by the research evidence...?*
>
> (Robinson, 2007, p.5)

The role of the principal, then, is seen as a significant factor in how schools impact on student achievement. Yet the most prominent of the research studies in this area – Hallinger & Heck (1998), Marzano, Waters & McNulty (2005) and Robinson (2007) – examine the impact of principal behaviours on provision for all students. There are few research studies, particularly in the Australian education context, that examine the impact of principal behaviours on providing for students with disabilities.

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

After twenty years of the inclusion movement impacting on Australian schools, there is a need to examine the role of principals in exercising leadership for schools providing for students with disabilities. While the research literature addresses a range of factors in the field of school leadership, this study will focus on principal behaviours in schools. The primary purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine

whether principal behaviour can be identified as a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities. In addition to exploring whether principal behaviour can be identified as a school factor, the study will also focus on identifying any school processes, practices and structures that impact on provision for these students. Finally, the study will endeavor to discover whether, and to what extent, the behaviours of principals contribute to these processes, practices and structures.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDY

The research questions for the study are:

- What behaviours of school principals can be identified as successful in providing for students with disabilities in Catholic systemic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta?
- What processes, practices and structures are present in a sample of schools that are perceived to be successful in providing for students with disabilities?
- In what ways, and to what extent, do the behaviours of principals contribute to these processes, practices and structures?

1.5 DEFINITIONS FOR THE STUDY

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions are proposed:

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

A principal behaviour is defined for this study as the actions, as reflected by the development of policies and the implementation of practices and protocols in a school that were directly attributable to the principal.

SCHOOL CONDITIONS

A school condition is defined for this study as a school characteristic – encompassing policy, practice, process, structure or other feature - identified by a respondent as contributing to that school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT

Principal engagement is defined for this study as the principal personally committing to and then acting in response to student needs. Principal engagement, therefore, represents the principal's personal investment of not only authority, but energy and resources.

SUCCESSFUL PROVISION

Successful provision is defined for this study as the cumulative effect of the school conditions leading to positive student outcomes.

In the education research field, there has been an increasing focus on student outcome as a measure of the success of schools in catering for their student body as a whole. The discourse around students with disabilities has been slightly different, with a focus on the capacity of schools to "cater for" or "make provision" for this specific group of students. This includes the range of school structures, the climate of inclusion, as well as the outcomes for students. Learning outcomes are probably the major subset of the notion of "provision".

In attempting to access perceptions of success of schools in dealing with students with disabilities, then, the decision was made to use the broader notion of successful provision for this study, recognising that enhanced learning outcomes will be, for this group and for students in general, a strong equivalent, but making space for

respondents to consider the broader agenda – and in particular the conditions present in the school which are a focus of this study.

Thus, a significant section of the literature review will concern itself with the link between school leadership and student outcomes.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities is defined for this study as those students who are included in a school's Special Education program, including students with intellectual, sensory, physical, mental health and learning disabilities

CATHOLIC SYSTEMIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

Catholic systemic school in the Diocese of Parramatta is defined for this study as those secondary schools that are part of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta system of schools.

1.6 CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

This study is set in a sample of secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta in the western suburbs of Sydney, New South Wales. In 2005, the year of the study, there were seventy-five schools in the diocese with fifty-three primary schools and twenty-two secondary schools enrolling over 41,000 students. As a self-governing system of schools, the schools in the diocese came under the authority of the Parramatta Diocesan Catholic Schools Council, established in 2004 by the Bishop of Parramatta. Since 1993, the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta has been approved by the New South Wales Board of Studies to act as the registering authority for all its member schools.

The schools in the study are characterised as successfully providing for students with disabilities. The rationale and method for selecting schools for the study will be addressed in the next chapter.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The results of this study will contribute to knowledge and practice in the school leadership and Special Education fields.

Most Australian studies about the successful provision for students with disabilities are based on the Government school sector. This education sector typically provides a range of support services for students with disabilities, including special schools, support classes and specialist support units, as well as regular classroom settings. In determining the viability and suitability of an enrolment in a regular class for a student with disability, parents usually have the option of enrolling their child in a support class in a regular school, a special school or in a regular class in a regular school. Research into the successful provision of students with disabilities in the Government school sector therefore often takes into account a wide range of support options for these students.

There is little research on the successful provision for students with disabilities in non-Government and Catholic schools in Australia. Catholic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta offer students with disabilities a placement in a regular class setting with a range of special education support intervention options. There are few Catholic special schools for students with disabilities in close proximity to the

Diocese of Parramatta or the greater Sydney region. Special units or special classes are therefore not readily available for parents seeking a Catholic school placement in this geographic area. Enrolment options for students with disabilities are limited to either a supported Catholic school regular class placement or an enrolment in a Government school. The limited school and class placement options for parents of students with disabilities in the Catholic school sector presents challenges for both the Catholic school communities in the Diocese of Parramatta and the families of students with disabilities requiring specialist support for their children.

A gap exists in the research literature about how Catholic schools successfully provide for students with disabilities. This study aims to examine whether principal behaviour is a significant factor in schools successfully providing for these students in Catholic systemic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta. The study also endeavours to examine other schools factors that may contribute to this provision and their links with principal behaviour.

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In order to address the research questions, there are three distinct and separate research phases of the study. Each research phase addresses an aspect of the study:

Research Phase One: **A literature review on the impact of principal behaviour on providing for students with disabilities**

The first research phase addresses the question - how does the research literature inform our understanding of the impact of principal behaviour on providing for

students with disabilities? The aim of this research phase is to review the research literature about the impact of principal behaviour on providing for students with disabilities. This phase also leads to the adoption of the metanalysis by Robinson (2007) as a basis for accounting for the principal behaviours identified in the study.

Research Phase Two: Identification of schools that successfully provide for students with disabilities

The second research phase addresses the question - what schools can be identified as successfully providing for students with disabilities? The aim of this research phase is to identify and select for the study four secondary schools that successfully provide for students with disabilities. This aim is achieved by surveying an expert informant group who nominate schools for this purpose.

Research Phase Three: Identification and analysis of principal behaviours and other school factors in successfully providing for students with disabilities

The third research phase addresses the question - what factors can be identified in schools that successfully provide for students with disabilities? The aim of this research phase is for respondents to identify school factors, including principal behaviour, as significantly contributing to schools successfully providing for students with disabilities. This aim is achieved by collecting and analysing data from questionnaires and interviews with teachers, students, parents and principals in the four selected schools for the study.

In the next chapter, a Review of the Literature will address a range of research findings relevant to the context of this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature which has significance for identifying the impact of principal behaviours on provision for students with disabilities. The literature review focuses on studies that examine the impact of principal behaviours on provision for students without special education needs as well as those with disabilities. While most studies in this research field focus on the impact of principal behaviours on providing for all students without any distinction about individual student needs, there are studies that have investigated the impact of principal behaviours on the specific provision by schools for students with disabilities. Both types of research study are examined in this review.

The review analyses specific principal behaviours that are linked with positive student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998) and a range of principal behaviours that are linked with the development and promotion of school conditions that provide for enhanced outcomes (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). An analysis of the research literature highlights a pattern of influence linking the role of principal behaviours and the establishment and development of school conditions that successfully provide for all students. This confluence of factors describes how principal behaviours positively impact on outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities.

The remainder of this chapter will identify and discuss a range of principal behaviours that positively impact on student outcomes within a leadership dimension framework developed by Robinson (2007). This selection is justified in the section that follows.

SECTION ONE: PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS, SCHOOL CONDITIONS AND SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

There are studies that examine principal behaviours and conclude that there is a direct link between these behaviours and positive student outcomes (Robinson, 2007). Most studies, though, address principal behaviours by linking them with the establishment and development of a range of specific school conditions that impact on student outcomes (e.g. Heck, Marcoulides & Lang, 1991; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Marzano Waters & McNulty, 2005). These studies indicate that other people and processes in the school community, not just the principal, exert an influence on student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

This section of the chapter will focus on meta-analyses that address a range of principal behaviours that positively provide for all students.

2.1 METANALYSES ON PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

There is a range of qualitative studies, typically presented as school case studies that document the role of active and committed principals in transforming schools from low-achieving learning communities into centres of excellence where student

outcomes are significantly improved (Robinson, 2007). These studies suggest that specific principal behaviours are directly linked to the transformation of schools, leading to an improvement in student provision. Quantitative research studies, though, are less conclusive in describing a direct causal relationship between specific principal behaviours and improved student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

Metanalyses, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research studies, have reported a range of links between principal behaviours and student outcomes. These major metanalyses include studies by Hallinger & Heck (1996), Waters, Marzano & McNulty (2003), Leithwood & Riehl (2003) and Robinson (2007). The major findings of these studies are outlined in this section and reported in greater depth later in the chapter.

An indirect relationship between principal behaviours and student outcomes is reported by Hallinger & Heck (1996) in their metanalysis. Their metanalysis reviews forty studies from 1980-1995 examining the relationship between the leadership of school principals and student outcomes. They conclude that school conditions play an important role in producing improved student outcomes in highly effective schools, often in conjunction with principal behaviours.

Their study notes:

> *The fact that leadership effects on school achievement appear to be indirect is neither cause for alarm or dismay... (That) principal effects are mediated by other in-school variable does nothing whatsoever to diminish the principal's importance. Understanding the routes by which principals*

can improve school outcomes through working with others is itself a worthy goal for research (Hallinger & Heck, p.39).

Another study which initially considered 5,000 studies (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003) calculates a correlation of 0.25 between school leadership and student achievement. The application of criteria for design, data analysis and methodological rigour led to the authors focusing on seventy studies in the literature from 1970-2002 on effective leadership practices and student achievement. The key variables in determining the type of leadership impact identified by this study were the focus and magnitude of school change adopted by the principal. The authors defined the focus of change as the principal identifying and concentrating on improving school and classroom practices that were most likely to have a positive impact on student achievement in the school. The magnitude of change was defined as the principal understanding the "order" of change required by the school community and adjusting leadership practices accordingly. Waters, Marzano & McNulty (2003) propose a leadership framework incorporating principal behaviours across a range of school activities including the development of a collaborative school culture, adequate resource allocation for teachers, an emphasis on curriculum design, consistent teacher support, effective communication processes and the creation and maintenance of positive professional relationships between members of the school community.

Another metanalysis, by Leithwood & Riehl (2003), contends that the relationship between principal behaviours and enhanced student outcomes is more significant than that found by Waters, Marzano & McNulty (2003). Their study claims that

"leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all student-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p.7). Comprising data from 180 schools in a five-year period, these authors explored the links between student achievement and school leadership practices. The focus of the study was to target principal behaviours and their role in transforming low-performing schools and the authors concluded that while school conditions contribute to this transformation, the role of leadership was the primary catalyst for any positive change. They reported four broad leadership roles for the principal in high performing schools – setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional program.

In summary, while some qualitative studies cite the direct role of principal behaviours impacting on student outcomes, the typical conclusions drawn by quantitative leadership researchers are that principals have small and indirect effects on student outcomes that are essentially mediated by teachers through the creation of a range of positive school conditions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). This is further substantiated by the most recent comprehensive metanalysis, that of Robinson (2007).

2.2 THE ROBINSON (2007) LEADERSHIP DIMENSION FRAMEWORK

From a search of an unspecified number of studies that examined the link between school leadership and academic or non-academic student outcomes, Robinson (2007) used a tight set of criteria to select twenty-six published studies from 1978-2006 that quantified the relationship between types of school leadership and a range of social and academic student outcomes. The author searched the international literature for publications in English that empirically examined these

relationships, excluding unpublished theses and conference papers that had not been subjected to the peer review process. Of the twenty six studies that met the criteria, eighteen were conducted in United States schools with the remainder in schools in Canada, Australia, England, Hong Kong, Israel, Netherlands, New Zealand and Singapore. Sixteen studies examined leadership in primary school contexts, four in secondary schools and six in a mix of primary and secondary schools. Eighteen of the studies focused on an analysis of school leadership by the principal while the remainder took a broader, more distributive view of leadership. The studies examined the impact of leadership on a wide range of student outcomes, with academic outcomes (especially reading, mathematics and language) the most frequently reported outcome. Twenty-two studies focused on academic outcomes with the remainder focusing on non-academic outcomes.

When compared to recent literature reviews examining the impact of school leadership on student outcomes, the Robinson (2007) metanalysis is similar in scope. For example, a synthesis by the London Institute of Education focused on only eight studies (Bell, Bolam & Cubillo, 2003); a metanalysis by Witziers, Bosker & Kruger (2003) included fifteen published studies; and the Marzano Waters & McNulty (2005) metanalysis cited seventy studies, sixty of which were unpublished theses or conference papers. The Robinson (2007) leadership dimension framework is therefore adopted for this study because the author's metanalysis incorporates both research scope and range through the selection of a comparatively large number of studies. The author's rigorous selection criteria also includes studies that clearly identify a set of leadership practices and describe the theoretical principles that explain why these leadership practices work and under what school conditions.

It needs to be highlighted that care was taken to ensure that findings that did not fit inside the Robinson (2007) framework were not excluded. The Robinson (2007) framework was adopted for this study after the initial analysis of the data collected from all respondent groups in all schools. Some responses that were classified as being outside the leadership dimensions established in the Robinson (2007), and significant to the study, were noted and discussed in the case studies.

From her metanalysis, Robinson (2007) developed a leadership framework that categorised successful principal behaviours into five leadership dimensions which made "the biggest differences to students" (p.5). Principal behaviour was defined as what principals do to demonstrate a particular dimension of their leadership practices. She contended that her list of dimensions did not include any distinction between the principal leading tasks and leading people or relationships because a close examination of the leadership indicators showed that relationship skills were embedded in every dimension. These dimensions were identified as the principal:

1. Establishing goals and expectations;
2. Initiating strategic resourcing;
3. Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum;
4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and
5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment (p. 8).

Robinson (2007) reported on the average effect size and standard errors associated with each leadership dimension, concluding that the more leadership behaviours are focused on the core business of teaching and learning in a school, the greater their impact (p.9).

This chapter will use Robinson's framework as a basis for organising the review of literature about significant principal behaviours and any linked school conditions that emerge as having a positive effect on student outcomes, both for students in general and students with disabilities. Each of the leadership dimensions identified by Robinson (2007) in relation to principal behaviours will now be addressed in turn, with reference to other studies where applicable.

SECTION TWO: DIMENSION 1: *ESTABLISHING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS* AS A LEADERSHIP DIMENSION FOR PRINCIPALS

INTRODUCTION

The first of the leadership dimensions established by the Robinson (2007) framework is *establishing goals and expectations.* This dimension can be defined as where the principal sets, communicates and monitors learning goals, standards and expectations for the school. It also includes the extent to which the principal involves staff in these processes and the clarification of school goals among all key school stakeholders. Robinson (2007) found that the principal behaviours identified with this leadership dimension in her meta-analysis had an average effect size of 0.35. This represented a small but educationally significant impact on student outcomes.

Studies describing a principal's establishment of goals and expectations report that these behaviours positively impact on student outcomes by helping focus and coordinate the educational agenda and work of the school community. These studies

highlight the important role of the principal in leading the school in setting clear academic and learning goals for all students (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Heck, Marcoulides & Lang, 1991).

Two significant principal behaviours are identified as consistent with the *establishing goals and expectations* leadership dimension. These behaviours are derived from the studies cited by Robinson (2007) and other studies identified by this literature review.

The identified principal behaviours are outlined below and discussed in the following section:

- Setting goals and directions for the school
- Advocating for the inclusion of students with disabilities

2.3 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: SET GOALS AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL

The principal setting goals and directions for the school around student achievement and staff excellence is reported as a powerful factor in enhancing student outcomes (Griffith, 1999). The benefits of these behaviours are described variously in the literature as:

1. All school staff members are committed to improved student outcomes;
2. Teachers are reported as becoming more focused on meeting the needs of all students; and
3. The promotion of the inclusive nature of the school for students with disabilities

Two metanalyses cite the goal-setting behaviours of the principal as having the most powerful effect on academic achievement for all students (Witziers et.al. 2003; Marzano Waters & McNulty, 2005). These findings are summarised by Latham & Locke (2006) who conclude that principal behaviours that incorporated goal setting are most effective in improving student outcomes when the school staff have the capacity to meet the goals, are committed to implementing the goals and understand the principal's rationale for the goals.

Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason (2001) conclude that when the principal challenges all students and teachers to achieve high standards, all school staff members become committed to improved outcomes for all students. The authors contend that this results in significantly higher student achievement, especially for students with disabilities.

Successful principals are identified as those who had a "strong and simple commitment to make schools work for their students and to build teachers' determination and capacity to pursue this collective goal" (Copland, 2001, p. 532). The author claims that there was evidence that such behaviours lead to improved student achievement. Other studies show that as a consequence of the principal setting goals for the school, teachers are reported as becoming more focused and provide more coordinated support for students that targets academic achievement and individual learning goals (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Brewer, 1993; Heck, Marcoulides & Lang, 1993). Improved student outcomes are gained even if the principal's top priority is not academic (Robinson, 2007).

With respect to meeting the needs of students with disabilities, Salisbury & McGregor (2002) report that principal behaviours that promote inclusive school practices include a willingness by the principal to reflect on strategies required to create a sense of direction for the school. This leadership behaviour helps translate an inclusive school vision into active support for all students. The authors report that the capacity of a principal to reflect on leadership strategies for students with disabilities lead to improved outcomes for these students.

The literature illustrates the importance of the principal providing school goals and directions in promoting student achievement, particularly where the principal sets high standards for teachers and all students.

2.4 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: ADVOCATE FOR THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A key behaviour in the principal establishing goals and expectations, and which positively impacts on provision for students with disabilities, is an uncompromising commitment to inclusive education by providing learning opportunities for all students (Burnett, 2004). Similar findings about this behaviour are reported by Bailey & du Plessis (1998), who report that the principal needs to be "committed to...and a positive advocate for inclusion" (p.24) in transforming a school's practices in successfully providing for students with disabilities. Their study indicates that without such principal behaviours, inclusive practices on behalf of students with disabilities are less likely to be implemented in a school setting and that these students are then less likely to succeed at the school. Their findings also indicate that the principal, in conjunction with a committed leadership team, represents a

positive factor in transforming a school into an inclusive educational community. They contend that these principal behaviours lead to teachers implementing the principal's vision for an inclusive school community. Teachers are reported as introducing inclusive teaching practices into the classroom that subsequently result in improved outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities.

In a series of interviews with leading principals, Goldberg (2001) concludes that high performing schools and improved student achievement require a principal to "courageously work against the current educational orthodoxies" (p.761) in developing a vision that included alternative strategies on behalf of students with disabilities. This advocacy role by the principal is suggested as an effective behaviour that leads to improved student outcomes. The role of the school principal in creating and communicating an inclusive vision on behalf of the school is also cited by Cacioppe (1997). This author identifies key principal behaviours in developing a school that is committed to educating all students. The most effective principal behaviour is identified as the promotion of quality teaching practices across the school for all students, irrespective of special need, with the principal actively supporting teachers in developing appropriate curriculum for students with disabilities. The combination of an articulated vision by the principal and the principal's commitment to support teachers translating the vision into practice is reported as a powerful factor in the development of effective teaching practices and improved learning outcomes for all students.

The principal articulating an inclusive vision where the schools commit to meeting the needs of students with disabilities is therefore reported by the research literature

as a significant factor in enhancing outcomes for these students. A range of studies cite specific principal behaviours that can be linked with the articulation of such a vision and enhanced outcomes for these students.

SECTION THREE: DIMENSION 2: *STRATEGIC RESOURCING* AS A LEADERSHIP DIMENSION FOR PRINCIPALS

INTRODUCTION

The second of the leadership dimensions established by the Robinson (2007) framework is *strategic resourcing.* This dimension can be defined as the principal aligning resource selection and allocation to priority teaching goals and providing appropriate expertise that supports quality teaching and learning through staff recruitment. Robinson (2007) found that the principal behaviours identified with this leadership dimension in her meta-analysis had an average effect size of 0.34. This leadership dimension represents a small but educationally significant impact on student outcomes.

Studies focusing on the principal's behaviours around strategic resourcing found that these behaviours positively impact on student outcomes through the principal making decisions about staffing and teaching resources (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). The use of the term "strategic'" indicates that these decisions made by the principal are directly linked with the teaching and leaning agenda at the school. An important aspect of this leadership dimension is the principals' management of teachers. The roles of staff members are described by many studies as representing the school resource with the most potential for

positive impact on student outcomes (Alton-Lee, 2004; Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges, 2004).

A review of the studies cited by Robinson (2007) as well as additional studies identified by this literature review isolates four significant principal behaviours that are consistent with a *strategic resourcing* leadership dimension:

- Recruiting quality teachers to the school
- Recruiting teachers with expertise in Special Education to the school
- Allocating adequate resources for all students
- Establishing a strong professional bond with Special Education staff

2.5 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: RECRUIT QUALITY TEACHERS TO THE SCHOOL

A range of research studies claim that the employment of quality teachers by the principal is one of the most powerful factors in improving outcomes for all students, as the quality of teachers explains more of the variance in student achievement than any school variable (Rowe, 2003). The principal who targets the recruitment of such teachers has a direct impact on student outcomes by employing teaching staff who introduce classroom teaching practices that improve student learning.

A study of twenty American primary schools found that there was a link between the principal's control of teacher selection and the ambitiousness of teachers in achieving their academic goals for students (Brewer, 1993). As has been shown in the previous section of this chapter, this study showed that when principals appointed a high proportion of teaching staff and when academic goals were a

school priority, high student achievement was measured across all grades. Measures of teacher quality are more strongly related to student achievement in reading and mathematics, after controlling for student poverty and language background, than educational investments such as reduced class size, overall spending on education by governments and other authorities and teacher salaries (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Again, this study found that the most significant behaviour by a principal in its impact on improved student outcomes is the appointment of quality teachers. Similar findings are reported by Nye, Konstantoplolos & Hedges (2004) who conclude that the principal's recruitment of quality teachers heavily influences student performance, especially for those students who are disadvantaged. Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin (1998) analysed the achievement of 400,000 students in 3,000 schools and concluded that while school quality was important, the impact of individual teachers was a more pivotal predictor on student outcomes than any school-based factor.

The principal recruiting quality teachers is reported by the research as one of the most significant factors in enhancing outcomes for students with disabilities. Research studies highlight the impact of quality teaching in the classroom on individual student achievement.

2.6 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: RECRUIT TEACHERS WITH EXPERTISE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION TO THE SCHOOL

The role played by the principal in employing staff with specialist skills and training in the support of students with disabilities in the regular school setting is cited by Lindsay (2002) as an important factor in how a school successfully provides for students with disabilities. This is more than simply a further manifestation of the

general approach to quality recruitment already discussed. The specialist instruction provided by such teachers is described by the author as important in the school's provision for students with disabilities. The study concludes by claiming that without the employment of staff with specialist expertise in the area of special education, schools find it very difficult to adequately provide for students with disabilities.

The decision by the principal to employ specialist teachers is also cited in a study by Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason (2001) as explaining the improvement in both academic and social outcomes by students with disabilities at high performing schools. In their study, Rea, McLaughlin & Walther-Thomas et.al. (1999) state that principals who employ specialist staff members who also have specific skills such as the ability to adapt curriculum for students with disabilities and who are supportive of inclusive practices across the school increase the likelihood that these students will achieve better outcomes.

The recruitment of teachers with expertise in Special Education positively impacts on outcomes for students with disabilities. The principal's willingness to actively recruit specialist staff for the school's Special Education program is an important factor in enhancing the performance of these students.

2.7 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: ALLOCATE ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR ALL STUDENTS

A principal behaviour cited in the literature as important in impacting on outcomes for students with disabilities is the allocation of appropriate resources for all student needs (Mittler, 1995; McRae, 1996; Quinn, 2002).

The level of resource support for schools provided by the principal has a direct effect on how schools provide for students, but especially for those students with disabilities (Mittler, 1995; Quinn, 2002). These authors claim that without systematic and consistent targeting of resources for identified student needs, schools find it difficult to successfully implement programs for its students so that they can fulfill their academic potential.

Quinn (2002) contends that apart from the use of relevant and targeted resources by classroom teachers in the practical support of students, the allocation by the principal of these resources also help create a pedagogical culture throughout the school community that results in better teaching and learning practices. This factor is especially important in those schools with a high proportion of students with disabilities, as educating a student with a disability in a regular school setting costs significantly more than the education of a student without a disability (McRae, 1996). In such schools with high needs, resource allocation is particularly important if teachers are to successfully provide for students with a range of special needs.

The utilisation by the principal of a flexible school budget in providing resource and professional for teachers is cited as a significant factor in a school's successful support of students with disabilities (Griffith, 1999). These studies conclude that this flexibility allows the principal to devote funds to school-specific professional development and resourcing needs, rather than being bound by system-driven priorities.

Research studies report that the capacity of the principal to allocate targeted resources on behalf of students with disabilities positively provides for their needs. This leadership behaviour is cited as an example of how the role of the principal can actively and strategically impact on the outcomes for these students.

2.8 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: ESTABLISH A STRONG PROFESSIONAL BOND WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

Schools that successfully include students with disabilities and successfully provide for these students typically have an established strong professional bond between the principal and the Special Education staff (Tanner, Linscott & Galis, 1996). This study found that principals who develop and promote such collaboration with Special Education teachers help drive positive changes on behalf of students with disabilities at the school. These changes then result in better outcomes for students with disabilities. Among significant principal behaviours cited by the authors is the willingness of the principal to regularly meet with Special Education staff, promote their work across the school community and give them opportunities to address the whole staff on Special Education issues.

SECTION FOUR: DIMENSION 3: *PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM* AS A LEADERSHIP DIMENSION FOR PRINCIPALS

INTRODUCTION

The third of the leadership dimensions established by the Robinson (2007) framework is *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum.* This dimension can be defined as the direct involvement by the principal in the support and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom visits and the provision of

formative and summative feedback to teachers. These behaviours can include direct oversight of the school's curriculum through school-wide coordination across classes and grade levels and its alignment to school goals. Robinson (2007) found that principal behaviours identified with this leadership dimension in her meta-analysis had an average effect size of 0.42. This leadership dimension represents a small to moderate impact on student outcomes. Other studies focusing on the principal's behaviours around planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum found that these behaviours positively impact on student outcomes through the principal's personal involvement in pedagogical matters with all staff members.

Major research studies identify three discrete principal behaviours as most powerfully reflecting this leadership dimension. Firstly, the principal actively oversees and coordinates the school's instructional program (Heck et.al., 1991; Blase & Kirby, 2000; Zepeda, 2007). Secondly, the principal actively observes and offers feedback to teachers about their classroom practices (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003; Halverson, Grigg, Pritchett & Thomas, 2005; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Thirdly, the principal promotes a culture at the school where all staff members systematically monitor student progress (Heck et.al., 1991; Cotton, 2003; Timperley, 2005).

A review of the studies cited by Robinson (2007) as well as additional studies identified by this literature review isolates four significant principal behaviours that

are consistent with a *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum* leadership dimension:

- Providing instructional leadership and support for teachers
- Promoting a whole school commitment to improving student learning
- Providing opportunities for teachers to regularly collaborate with each other around teaching and learning
- Providing opportunities for regular classroom teachers to collaborate with Special Education teachers

2.9 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT TO TEACHERS

Instructional leadership is identified by research studies as one that positively impacts on outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. Principals who exhibit specific instructional leadership behaviours with staff and use the principal's role to support the development of better teacher skills in the classroom have a positive effect on some school conditions that directly impact on student achievement (Rowe, 2003).

While Heck & Marcoulides (1993) conclude that the direct effect of instructional leadership behaviours by the principal on school achievement is not strong, they conclude that a case can be made that principal behaviours, especially in the area of instructional guidance for teachers, can be isolated as an influential factor among a range of school variables that need to be taken into account when designing successful instructional programs for students:

> *...through manipulating a series of variables at the school level both secondary and elementary school principals can have ...a positive influence on school achievement.* (Heck & Marcoulides, p.23)

They state that the role of the principal as an instructional leader must be considered as one of the important factors that can impact on positive student achievement.

This conclusion is supported by Hattie (2003), who states that principals who help create and sustain schools where the focus of discussion among teachers is on student learning have a positive effect on teaching practices. He then claims that the development of this school environment by the principal helps establish positive outcomes for all students, irrespective of their academic achievement levels.

The principal intervening to support a teacher who is struggling is cited as a behaviour that can be linked to improved student achievement (Duggan, 2003). Quality leadership in schools linked to improved student outcomes is also characterised by the principal's emphasis on instructional integrity by teachers and the provision of regular support by the principal to individual teachers (Onick, 2003; Phillips & Galiatsos, 2004).

Quinn (2002) states that an important behaviour by a principal in helping produce high achieving students is the ability to motivate and inspire teachers. There is a similar finding by Brooks (2004) who suggests that the role of the principal as an instructional supervisor was "to enhance the learning of students and...promote the

professional development of all teachers, while creating a safe learning environment" (p. 2). Both these studies reported significant improvements in student outcomes at schools led by principals exhibiting these behaviours.

In a study of twenty-four schools, Hays et.al. (2004) describe the most powerful behaviour of the principal in promoting effective teaching practices and positive learning outcomes for students is working with teachers to ensure that matters of educational pedagogy become a high priority on the school's agenda.

In the special education research field, Udvari-Solner & Thousand (1996) report that in schools where students with disabilities are successfully provided for the principal requires "creativity, collaboration and continual questioning" (p.191) in the leadership role in helping to create a school environment where the principal and teachers work together "to ask the tough questions and seek solutions" (p.141). Classroom teachers need to be supported by the principal in their quest to find the most effective strategies for teaching all students.

McNamara & Moreton (1997, cited in Westwood, 2001) state that when principals base most of their conversations with teachers around teaching and learning, there is a significant impact on positive outcomes for students with disabilities. McLeskey & Waldron (2002) found that a significant principal behaviour in providing for all students is the principal's support of teachers as they develop and establish daily classroom practices.

2.10 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROMOTE A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING

This principal behaviour is identified by research studies as one which positively impacts on outcomes for both students with and without disabilities. There is evidence that principals have a positive impact on how schools provide for all students by developing school communities where there is a collective commitment by all staff members to effective teaching and learning practices for all students (Hord, 1997; Copland, 2001; Hattie, 2003). The successful principal in these schools is cited by these studies as working hard to develop within the school a range of professional relationships around instructional excellence, resulting in a commitment by teachers to provide quality teaching practices that meet the needs of all students. Schools established by principals as professional learning communities are strongly linked to various positive outcomes for students, including lower rates of absenteeism, decreased dropout rates and greater academic gains by students in mathematics, science, history and reading (Hord, 1997).

The development of schools as learning communities by principals is also cited by Mohr & Dichter (2001) as positively providing for all students. They claim that principal behaviours that promote teacher commitment to student learning can be linked with enhanced teaching and learning skills.

The authors state that:

> *Authentic learning requires an authentic learning community that learns from research, from its own experience. And building such a community takes leadership that does the same thing* (Mohr & Dichter, p. 747).

The findings from the *Pathways for Student Success* research project (Noguera, 2004) in ten Boston high schools indicated that while a range of school reform initiatives were piloted in these schools to improve academic performance, the two schools which produced significantly superior student achievement results were those where the principal actively and rigorously involved the whole community in the reform initiative of improving all students' achievement. All teachers, students and parents understood the purpose of the reform and were invited to look for evidence that the reform was achieving its goals. A similar finding is reported by Harris & Chapman (2002) who found that one of a range of successful leadership behaviours by principals in schools facing challenging social circumstances in the United Kingdom was the principal driving an explicit teaching and learning agenda with the active support of staff in the school.

The principal providing regular and supported collaborative planning time for teachers is also reported as a significant factor in successfully meeting the needs of students with disabilities and enhancing their learning (Walther-Thomas, Koriek & McLaughlin, 2000). A similar finding is reported by Roach (1995) whose research reports on principals who actively plan for regular dialogue between staff and the local community about agreed approaches to including students with disabilities in the regular school and provide common time for teachers to plan instructional programs for students. The author states that there is evidence that such principal behaviours result in improvements in the achievement of students with disabilities

A principal who creates a culture of openness where there is positive and effective communication between teachers was found by Burnett (2004) as a significant

behaviour in positively providing for students with disabilities. Of note in this study was the finding that outcomes for students with disabilities are enhanced when teachers are encouraged to talk with each other about shared challenges and solutions around individual student learning. The principal who promotes such an environment can positively provide for students with disabilities.

2.11 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS TO REGULARLY COLLABORATE WITH EACH OTHER AROUND TEACHING AND LEARNING

The third behaviour for this leadership dimension is the principal providing opportunities for teachers to regularly collaborate with each other around teaching and learning. In their study of secondary schools in western Sydney, Dinham et.al. (1995) found a specific principal behaviour was significant in providing for all students - the principal encouraging cooperation and collaboration between teachers through shared decision-making and an "open door" policy for all school staff. Similar research findings about the impact on student outcomes of principals promoting teacher collaboration around teaching and learning are reported by Duggan (2003) and Sergiovanni (2004).

The positive impact of the principal developing a cohesive and committed teaching community - a vehicle for the kind of communication envisaged in this behaviour - is cited in a study by Blase & Kirby (2000). The authors surveyed 1,200 K-12 teachers who identified the specific behaviours of their principals that they perceived as integral in the formation of a cohesive and committed teaching community resulting in improved student outcomes. Teachers nominated the honesty and consideration by the principal for others in the school as critical in building positive and productive

personal and professional relationships between teachers and helping create a teaching and learning environment that promoted enhanced student achievement. The authors claim that this environment in turn reinforces a school culture and a promotion of positive teacher behaviours based on ongoing collaboration that helps to successfully provide for all student needs. A similar research finding is that when a principal establishes processes that promote strong interpersonal teacher relationships and ongoing collaboration, the result is a school that positively provides for all students (Bauer & Brown, 2001; Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason, 2001; Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2006; Goddard, Goddard & Tschannen-Moran, 2007).

Walther-Thomas, Korinek & McLaughlin (1999) cite that there are enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities when productive teacher consultation is promoted in a school. They highlight improved literacy skills in these students when teachers regularly meet to plan intervention strategies in the classroom setting. Duchardt et.al. (1999) found that senior students with special needs benefit from well-coordinated collaborative processes between members of the Special Education faculty and general education faculty.

Principal behaviours that promote cross-school collaboration around teaching and learning are reported in the research literature as an important factor in positively providing for students with disabilities.

2.12 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS TO COLLABORATE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The fourth behaviour cited by the literature is particularly focused on how principal behaviours provide for students with disabilities. Collaborative consultation between classroom teachers and Special Education teachers is found by research studies as one of the powerful factors in supporting these students.

When regular and specialist teachers practice collaborative intervention, it allows them to come together with a shared vision, common principles and language and additional skills on behalf of students with disabilities (Weiner, 2005). Teachers were reported as preferring to collaborate with their Special Education colleagues when asked to provide specific support for a student with a disability, according to Idol (2006). Her study demonstrated that when collaborative consultation was introduced as a school process, there was a positive impact on the academic performance for students with disabilities as well as other students without disability. Specific efforts to effectively include students with disabilities in schools require a range of interventions and school-wide reform, including the development of collaborative consultation between regular staff and Special Education teachers (Friend & Cook, 1990; Anderson, 2003). Hanrahan & Kauffman (cited in Kauffman & Hanrahan, 1995) claim that these collaborative consultation practices represent an important strategy for enhancing a school's successful transfer of students with disabilities from segregated classroom settings into the mainstream culture of the regular school. Thousand et. al. (1992, cited in Stainback & Stainback, 1992) present constructive engagement between Special Education teachers and classroom

teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities as a critical process in establishing inclusive practices in a regular school for these students.

SECTION FIVE: DIMENSION 4: *PROMOTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT* AS A LEADERSHIP DIMENSION FOR PRINCIPALS

INTRODUCTION

The fourth of the leadership dimensions established by the Robinson (2007) framework is *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.* This dimension can be defined as the principal providing leadership that not only promotes but directly participates with teachers in their formal and informal professional learning. These learning processes may be delivered by the principal providing teachers with opportunities to develop and implement new skills and practices for improved student learning in the classroom, providing teachers with leadership opportunities in the school as part of a distributed leadership approach or working with teachers to implement a shared school goal. Robinson (2007) found that principal behaviours identified with this leadership dimension in her meta-analysis had an average effect size of 0.84. This leadership dimension represents the largest and educationally most significant impact on student outcomes.

Studies focusing on the principal's behaviours in promoting and participating in teacher learning and development found that these behaviours positively provide for all students through the principal becoming involved with school staff in professional development and not merely providing them with the opportunities to access professional development (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Youngs & King, 2002). These

studies targeted both formal and informal learning contexts for school communities. The role of the principal in some studies was defined as the "leading learner" at the school. Other studies have highlighted the impact on school improvement and student outcomes by principals adopting a distributed leadership model where teachers are encouraged to develop their leadership practices, either as informal leaders or in a range of formal leadership roles (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

A review of the studies cited by Robinson (2007) and additional studies identified by this literature review isolate two significant principal behaviours that are consistent with a *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development* leadership dimension:

- providing and participating in professional development for all staff
- promoting a distributed leadership model

2.13 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROVIDE AND PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STAFF

This principal behaviour is identified by research studies as another that positively provides for all students, including those with disabilities. A range of studies highlight the impact on student outcomes of a principal who prioritises professional development for a school. The principal promoting staff professional development activities for teachers and support staff is found to contribute to high performing schools and improved student achievement in English schools facing challenging social circumstances (Harris & Chapman, 2002).

Similar research findings by Blegen & Kennedy (2000), Rea, McLaughlin & Walther-Thomas (1999) and Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason (2001) suggest that successful

rincipals promote a special form of professional development by providing pportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles in the school and thereby mprove the quality of both teacher effectiveness and student achievement. By aking on leadership roles in the school, these studies report that these teachers ecome committed to developing a deeper understanding of the learning process for tudents and then working with their colleagues in developing more effective nstructional strategies in the classroom. These studies propose specific principal ehaviours that help this process, including sending teachers to conferences with he expectation that they will present new learnings to staff and then enlisting these eachers to lead their colleagues in studies of curriculum, assessment or nstructional improvement.

A research synthesis based on ninety-seven studies on teaching and learning development by Timperley & Alton-Lee (2008) identified the qualities of professional development that made a difference for students and their learning outcomes. Among the qualities noted as significant in enhancing student outcomes were activities and opportunities made available to teachers by direct decisions and behaviours by the principal – engaging external expertise to assist teachers, providing opportunities for teachers to participate in a professional community that is focused on a teaching-achievement relationship, ensuring that opportunities for teachers in professional development are aligned with current policy and research and involving school leaders who support the school's professional development by setting and monitoring school targets and developing the leadership of others.

In a study that specifically reports on how schools transform their practices and provide effective instructional support for students with disabilities, McLeskey & Waldron (2002) suggest a range of strategies for principals who aim to involve the whole school community in sharing a commitment to these students' learning. A significant principal behaviour is cited as the principal supporting the professional development needs of school staff, especially after conferring with teachers and support staff about their specific needs.

As with principal behaviours promoting professional development and their link with enhanced outcomes for all students, this research study highlights the importance of the principal becoming actively involved with teachers in the provision of professional development activities. This study suggests that the impact of the principal behaviours is enhanced when the principal is willing to consult with school staff about their professional needs as well as being committed to learning new skills in conjunction with teachers at the school.

2.14 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROMOTE A DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP MODEL

This principal behaviour is related to capacity building processes within the school as a means of sustaining improvement (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000) with leadership releasing the human potential in school staff to "embrace goals, to understand the changes needed to strengthen teaching and learning and to work towards improvement" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p.3). Gronn (2000) defines distributed leadership as a network of interacting individuals working in concerted action and

whose activity is enhanced by an additional dynamic gained by working together towards an agreed outcome.

The literature is unclear about the direct outcomes of the principal promoting this leadership model, especially in relation to student outcomes (Bennett et.al. 2003), and there is also some disagreement about an agreed definition of "distributed leadership". The practical obstacles of adopting a distributed leadership model in schools have also been highlighted by some studies, nominating issues such the formal hierarchical structures of most schools, the financial constraints of implementing leadership across a school with promotion positions, the separate academic barriers that divide staff and how leadership roles can be distributed across a school community and who distributes responsibility and authority (Muijs &, Harris, 2005). Spillane, Halverson & Diamond (2001) focus on the quality of the interactions between individuals and describes the principal's leadership function as "stretching over" the work of a number of individuals and where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders.

A number of research studies have indicated that principals adopting a distributed leadership model have a positive effect on teacher morale, teacher self-efficacy, promotion of teacher expertise and knowledge in the classroom and collaborative learning, among a range of school outcomes (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Hopkins & Jackson, 2003). Yet despite many research studies about school improvement advocating more collaborative and distributed forms of leadership, there are currently no clear links between this leadership approach and improved student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). While a study by Bell, Bolan & Cubillo (2003)

concurred with this general finding, the authors suggested that "distributed forms of leadership among the wide school staff is likely to have a more significant impact on the positive achievement of student outcomes than that which is largely or exclusively top down" (p.3). The general contention in the research literature, therefore, is that there is a need to understand more about distributed leadership in action in schools and its relationship with school improvement and improved student outcomes. The evidence is incomplete or inconclusive with a lack of understanding about how this type of leadership is maintained and sustained through different cycles of school development and change, how it is implemented in different types of schools and how it impacts on teachers and students (Muijs & Harris, 2005).

SECTION SIX: DIMENSION 5: *ENSURING AN ORDERLY AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT* AS A LEADERSHIP DIMENSION FOR PRINCIPALS

INTRODUCTION

The fifth of the leadership dimensions established by the Robinson (2007) framework *ensuring an orderly and supportive environment.* This dimension can be defined as the principal protecting time for teaching and learning by reducing external pressures and interruptions and establishing an orderly and supportive environment both inside and outside classrooms. Robinson (2007) found that principal behaviours identified with this leadership dimension in her meta-analysis had an average effect size of 0.27. This leadership dimension represents a small but educationally significant impact on student outcomes.

The major component of this leadership dimension is the creation by the principal of a safe and caring school environment where staff can teach and students can learn (Robinson, 2007). Studies of this leadership dimension cite principal behaviours such as a respect for difference, the provision of teaching time without constant interruptions, the ability to resolve conflict and the capacity to promote harmonious personal relationships across the school community as important indicators that impact on student outcomes. Relational trust is considered as the foundational principle for most of these behaviours (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

A review of the studies cited by Robinson (2007) and additional studies identified by this literature review isolate one significant principal behaviour that is consistent with an *ensuring an orderly and supportive environment* leadership dimension:

- Providing strong administrative leadership

2.15 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR: PROVIDE STRONG ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

While describing the correlation between the role of the principal and the level of student achievement as indirect, Hallinger & Heck (1996) found that teachers look to their principal to provide a sense of order and consistency in the daily life of the school. They stated:

> *...strong administrative leadership was among those factors within the school that make a difference in student learning* (Hallinger & Heck, p.5)

Organisational leadership behaviours by principals are also cited by Gordon (2005) as exerting a positive impact on how schools provide for students. Gordon (2005) claims that the principal primarily influences improved achievement in students through the support of teachers so that they can concentrate their energies and time on providing quality teaching for all students. The author claims that if teachers are not distracted by other ancillary school activities and duties, they can devote their professional time and expertise to providing for all students. The leadership role of the principal, therefore, includes a broader range of behaviours than just the supervision of individual teachers and instead incorporates the coordination and development of the school's administrative structure:

> *Principal actions that structure the school's organisation and climate appear to have an impact on student achievement* (Gordon, p.2)

Heck (1992) reached a similar conclusion by claiming that leadership in high performing schools was judged by teachers to be significantly more successful than leadership in low performing schools when the principal protected teachers from undue pressure from education officials and from parents.

In the Special Education research field, Boscardin (2007) found that responsive administrative and organisational interventions by principals contributed to increased educational achievement for each student with a disability and for all students across the school. These principals typically organised well-coordinated teams implementing school-wide strategies focused on meeting the needs of students with

disabilities. These leadership behaviours helped create school cultures that enhanced outcomes for all students, not just those with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

Three significant issues have been addressed in this review.

Firstly, a wide range of principal behaviours is reported in the review as positively providing for all students. The leadership dimension framework developed by Robinson (2007) allows for a categorisation of these principal behaviours into five leadership dimensions that reflect the range and scope of specific principal behaviours reported in the research literature as positively impacting on student outcomes. The identified principal behaviours either directly positively impact on student outcomes or are linked to the development, promotion and sustainability of school conditions that directly positively impact on student outcomes. The major theme of the research literature on principal behaviours and student outcomes is that while there are some specific principal behaviours that can be directly linked to positive outcomes for students, most studies instead highlight the important role of a range of school conditions that positively provide for students. This review has identified principal behaviours that are directly attributable to positive student outcomes and those principal behaviours that create school conditions that have a positive impact on outcomes for students.

Secondly, the vast majority of studies in the literature consider mainstream school environments. Where there are specific studies examining successful outcomes for students with disabilities, their conclusions are aligned with these general studies

ut with a more nuanced view of the realities of the provision of schools for special education.

Thirdly, not all of the principal behaviours identified in the general literature have been identified in the special education literature. There are resultant "gaps" in the reporting of these behaviours. It cannot be concluded at this stage whether this is because these behaviours do not exist, or because they have simply not been addressed by the literature.

The review has the following implications for this study:

1. The Robinson (2007) leadership dimension framework has been shown to be capable of sustaining dialogue around relevant principal behaviours, school conditions and enhanced student outcomes.
2. Limited attention has been paid in the research literature to an explicit exploration of the role of principal behaviours in positively impacting on outcomes for students with disabilities.
3. Where attention has been devoted to principal behaviours and outcomes for students with disabilities, the results tend to align with outcomes for all students, but lack reference to the special educational needs required by such students in a mainstream school environment.

In the next chapter, the research methodology for the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 identified and described the research problem and purpose of the research. The research context was also identified and described in detail. Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature relating to the key themes of principal behaviours and school provision for students with disabilities.

This chapter addresses the research design of the study, including its epistemology and theoretical perspectives; the research methodology and methods used in the research; its data analysis; the ethical considerations of the study; the range of validity and reliability issues for the study; and the limitations of the research design.

The primary purpose of this study is to identify the behaviours of principals in Catholic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta that successfully provide for students with disabilities. The study addresses the major research question:

What behaviours of school principals can be identified as successful in providing for students with disabilities in Catholic systemic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta?

The study also addresses the following contributory research questions:

What processes, practices and structures are present in a sample of schools that are perceived to be successful in providing for students with disabilities?

In what ways, and to what extent, do the behaviours of principals contribute to these processes, practices and structures?

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts that guides research and determines what things will be measured and what relationships will be explored. The overall purpose of this study was to capture the perceptions and opinions of respondents in schools about the principal behaviours that successfully provided for students with disabilities. To achieve this, information was gathered from four secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta. This section of the chapter outlines how the study was designed and implemented and the techniques employed in collecting relevant data.

After reviewing the purpose of the research, the researcher positioned the study within the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism and recognised the epistemology of constructionism in this theoretical perspective. Consistent with this theoretical perspective, the study adopted a case study methodology and employed

questionnaires, individual and group interviews and document review as methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Principals in schools exercise a range of leadership behaviours in providing for all students, including those with disabilities. In this study, in order to understand the characteristics of these behaviours in providing for students with disabilities and how these behaviours were linked with specific school conditions, the epistemological framework of constructionism was adopted as appropriate to achieve the purposes of the research. From this constructionist viewpoint, leaders help others create meaning and make sense of what they do (Lum, 1997). Located within a school setting, this educational research is defined as:

> ...*critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgments and decisions in order to improve educational outcomes* (Bassey, 1999, p.39).

Many principals seek to exercise their leadership roles in providing for students with disabilities at their schools, but are unaware of specific leadership behaviours and school conditions that are found to be successful in this provision (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). This research study seeks to identify these principal behaviours and school conditions.

The interpretive researcher's purpose in this study was therefore was to advance the knowledge about the types of principal behaviour and related school factors that successfully provided for students with disabilities by identifying and interpreting

principal behaviours and school conditions that successfully provided for these students.

Table 3.1 presents the epistemology and theoretical perspectives of the research and the researcher's choice of methodology and data gathering methods for the study.

TABLE 3.1: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

EPISTEMOLOGY	Constructionism
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	Interpretive Symbolic interactionism
METHODOLOGY	Case studies
METHODS	Questionnaires Individual and group interviews School documents

3.1.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and presents the philosophical basis for how knowledge is applied. As the researcher was interested in how members of a school community found meaning in their daily lives, constructionism presented itself as an appropriate epistemology for the study. The basis of constructionism is that:

> *...all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.* (Crotty, 1998, p. 42).

CONSTRUCTIONISM

Careful selection of the appropriate epistemology was essential for this study. Constructionists believe that meaning is "not discovered but constructed" (Crotty, 1998, p.43) as human beings engage and make sense of the world they are interpreting. The respondents in the four case study schools in this study relied on their interactions as members of their respective school communities to help create meaning about how their schools successfully provided for students with disabilities. The strength of a constructionist orientation is in "illuminating that which is little known or hidden form view" (Hallinger & Heck, 1999, p.147). It was a primary objective of the researcher, therefore, through questioning and probing for deeper meaning, to discover the respondents' understanding and perspective about how their schools successfully provided for students with disabilities.

In addition, constructionism asserts that knowledge and truth are constructed and sustained through linguistic and social processes (Neuman, 2000). Construction and maintenance of knowledge is activated through negotiation with one another rather than only by an examination of the world. Furthermore, it is observed to "change locally and historically, time after time, while building in stages (Bruffee, 1995, p.9). Therefore, if knowledge and truth are locally and historically constructed and reconstructed, this would suggest that principals, teachers, students and parents are influenced in their thinking by the values, beliefs and perceptions they have acquired throughout their lives. Consequently, each of the respondents in the study may have a different construct of knowledge due to the particular context of their school community. This possible difference in respondents' construction of knowledge and

truth was seen as assisting the researcher in illuminating "that which is little known", as the respondents advanced and communicated their understanding of the role of school factors in the provision for students with disabilities.

3.1.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

A theoretical perspective is the way in which an understanding of the world is constructed. The theoretical approach needs to reflect the purpose of the study (Crotty, 1998). The researcher's purpose in this study was to capture the opinions, insights and perspectives of the respondents about how their schools successfully provided for students with disabilities, so therefore the theoretical perspective underlying the research needed to have the capacity to reflect these differing points of view.

Carr & Kemmis (1986) identify three research paradigms - positivist, interpretive and critical. In positivist forms of research, education is considered the object to be studied, where reality is stable, observable and measurable. This is not suited to the analysis of multiple individual perspectives which may be interactive and changing. Critical research considers education to be a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction and transformation. The focus here is on the whole of institution level and again is not suited to developing an understanding of socially constructed meanings. In interpretive research, education is defined as a process and school as a lived experience, where multiple realities are socially constructed by individuals (Merriam, 1998). An interpretive approach was adopted as the most appropriate paradigm for this study.

INTERPRETIVISM

An interpretive approach to the study was considered most appropriate to describe the range of school factors that impacted on the provision for students with disabilities in the case study schools, as it incorporated the "meanings people attach to things in their lives" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p.7). As the object of interpretive research is to understand how individuals in a social setting construct the world around them (Glesne, 1999) - reflecting a constructionist epistemology - the interpretive approach to this study gave the researcher opportunities to formally identify and interpret significant factors about how schools successfully provided for students with disabilities. Interpretative research is specifically focused on discovering how people who share a meaning system acquire this meaning and how they maintain social reality by interacting with others through communication and negotiation processes (Neuman, 2000). By employing this interpretative approach, the researcher was able to gain a deeper knowledge of the meaning system used by respondents as they interacted and communicated within and across their school communities.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

A range of interpretive approaches were considered for this study, including phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and grounded theory (Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionism was the theoretical approach adopted to inform the research for the study, whereby humans become social beings through their interaction and communication with others (Hollingworth, 1999). Blumer (1986) identified three basic premises for symbolic interactionism. Firstly, humans act towards things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things; secondly, the meaning of such

things is derived from, and arises out of the social interaction that one has with others and society; and thirdly, these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he or she encounters, again a reflection of a constructionist process. With symbolic interactionism, reality is experienced through perspectives that filter how everything is perceived and interpreted (Charon, 1998), with the whole reality of a situation limited by an individual's personal perspective. However, perspectives are socially constructed and can change as humans interact with each other through their lifespan (Charon, 1998). This theoretical approach therefore impacted on the research by providing the researcher with a framework for acknowledging the different perspectives brought to the study by respondents about the factors that impacted on their school's provision for students with disabilities.

In addition, symbolic interactionism was appropriate for this study because principal behaviours represent interactive processes. Each respondent brought a unique perspective to the central issues of the study and allowed the researcher to develop a greater conceptual clarity about the contextual conditions in each school situation. This provided the study with rich data about the role of principal behaviours as well as better informing the researcher about how each principal dealt with the complexities and challenges of leading schools in providing for students with disabilities. Consequently, it was deemed appropriate for the study to employ symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective in order to adequately interpret the responses about how each school successfully provided for these students.

3.2 CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

A case study data method was chosen as the most appropriate method, given that a primary focus of the study was discerning the meaning attached to the responses by participants about their school's provision for students with disabilities. The first step of this qualitative analysis was to develop thorough and comprehensive descriptions of the four schools for the study. This is defined as "thick" description (Geertz, 1973; Holloway, 1997) and refers to a detailed account of field experiences in the study where the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them into context (Holloway, 1997). The emphasis on qualitative inquiry in case study methodology also requires data collection instruments that are sensitive to the perspectives of respondents as the study inquires into meaning in context. Through these data collection instruments, the researcher aimed to carefully consider the reality as constructed by the respondents as they identified the range of school factors that successfully provided for students with disabilities.

Thick description also enabled the reader to be aware of the range of school contexts for the research (Stake, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1979). In this study, characteristics of the case study schools were described in detail. Section 4.3 in Chapter 4 describes the features of each school and how these features compared to other secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta. Thick description was therefore employed in this study to help create for the reader a sense of the distinctive characteristics of each school. Another purpose of using thick description was to give the reader as much detail as possible about the central issues of the

study and to enable the reader to make decisions about the applicability of the findings in other settings and similar contexts.

A case study may be described as a bounded system characterised by wholeness or integrity and the integration of its parts (Stake, 1995), or as investigations of an individual, group or phenomenon as an integrated system (Sturman, 1994). Many commentators regard case study as more than just a method and as a distinct research paradigm (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000).

This study incorporated four distinct case studies, each situated within a particular school context with a particular group of respondents from each school. The "phenomenon" for the research was the provision by each school for its students with disabilities. By utilising case studies, the researcher was able to examine and detail the complex and multifaceted factors that characterised each school's provision for these students.

Educational case studies can explain and clarify educational policy and enhance educational practices (Bassey, 1999). Through the systematic and reflective documentation of the perspectives and opinions of a wide and diverse range of individuals, the case studies in this research were designed to identify and interpret the role of principal behaviours and school conditions in successfully providing for students with disabilities.

The case studies focused on four groups of respondents - the principal, all teachers on staff, a random selection of students with disabilities and a random selection of parents of students with disabilities.

Triangulation of data across sites was also achieved for this study by using multiple case studies within the methodology. Triangulation is typically cited as a test for improving the validity and reliability of research or the evaluation of findings (Mathison, 1988; Patton, 2001). Triangulation techniques for data collection attempt to represent the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one perspective (Burns, 1994). Five types of triangulation are typically employed in research – data triangulation; investigator triangulation; theory triangulation; methodological triangulation; and multiple triangulation.

For this study, methodological and data triangulation were employed to verify interpretations across four case studies from questionnaires, interviews, school document review and the validation of results with the metanalysis findings by Robinson (2007). As indicated in Chapter Two, some data collected and analysed from respondent groups in the schools did not directly correspond with the leadership dimensions identified in the Robinson (2007) framework. These exceptions have been noted and discussed in the case studies.

This chapter has positioned the study in the epistemological framework of constructionism. It has also recognised that an interpretive theoretical perspective allows for greater insight for the researcher by utilising a case study methodology.

In the next section of the chapter, details of the methods used for the study will be addressed and discussed.

3.3 METHODS

In addition to the literature review, the sources and techniques used for gathering data for the study included the selection of an expert informant group to determine the case study schools, questionnaires and individual and group interviews for respondents in these schools and a review of school documentation. The relationship between the research questions, sources of data and the techniques used to collect the data are presented in Table 3.2.

TABLE 3.2: DATA SOURCES AND TECHNIQUES

RESEARCH QUESTION	SOURCES OF DATA	TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION
WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SUGGEST ARE THE BEHAVIOURS OF PRINCIPALS THAT SUCCESSFULLY PROVIDE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?	Literature	Literature review
WHAT PROCESSES, PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES IN SCHOOLS ARE PERCEIVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?	Literature The principal, teachers and selected students and parents of the case study schools Case study school documentation	Literature review School-based questionnaires and interviews of principal, teachers, selected students and selected parents Examination of school documentation
A key element of this stage of the study was the selection of schools by an expert informant group	Expert informant group	Questionnaires for selected staff at the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta
IN WHAT WAYS, AND TO WHAT EXTENT, DO THE BEHAVIOURS OF PRINCIPALS IN SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS CONTRIBUTE TO THESE PROCESSES, PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES?	Literature The principal, teachers and selected students and parents of the case study schools Case study school documentation	Literature review School-based questionnaires and interviews of principal, teachers, selected students and selected parents Examination of school documentation

The following section of the chapter discusses in detail the sampling procedures and data collection for the study.

Table 3.3 presents a chronology of these procedures.

TABLE 3.3: A CHRONOLOGY OF THE SAMPLING PROCEDURES AND DATA COLLECTION OF THE STUDY

DATE	SAMPLING PROCEDURE
MAY 2005	Members of the Expert Informant Group chosen from selected Catholic Education Office, Parramatta staff
JUNE 2005	-Selection of case study schools by surveying the Expert Informant Group -Final draft completed of questionnaires for case study school respondents. -Questionnaires critiqued by experienced professionals
JULY 2005	-Case study schools contacted and permission gained to participate in the study -Sampling procedures for teachers, students and parents finalised for questionnaire distribution and interview schedule in case study schools
AUGUST 2005	-Questionnaires sent to schools, completed and returned -Interviews and interview schedules developed for schools -Selection of interview candidates in the case study schools -School document review commenced
SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2005	-Interviews in all schools commenced and completed -School document review completed

3.3.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURES, DATA COLLECTION AND JUSTIFICATION

SELECTION OF THE EXPERT INFORMANT GROUP

In order to identify principal behaviours in secondary schools that successfully provided for students with disabilities, an expert informant group was selected to nominate the case study schools. Clayton (1997) states that seeking expert rather than general or informal opinion is an effective process in identifying best educational practice and services in qualitative research. Billett & Smith (2003) claim that combining a review of the relevant literature and the opinions of expert

informants represent an appropriate research approach when considering exemplary educational policies and practices.

The three characteristics of schools, proposed by Guzman (1997), identified as successfully providing for students with disabilities were adopted by the researcher in determining the composition of the expert informant group. These school characteristics included:

- Curriculum development and delivery
- Leadership skills
- Knowledge and expertise in the specific delivery of support for students with disabilities

In May 2005, informants were chosen for the expert informant group according to their knowledge, experience and skills in the above areas.

The Catholic Education Office (CEO), Diocese of Parramatta is the central administrative authority for schools in the diocese. Members of the expert informant group were chosen from staff at this office. By choosing informants from the CEO staff with a range of expertise and experience, the selection of the schools for the study was based on a broad and comprehensive basis, therefore ensuring that schools with different areas of focus and priority in providing for students with disabilities were eligible for selection.

The respondents selected for the expert informant group according to their expertise and knowledge in the curriculum area were - the Director, Religious Education and Educational Services; the Head of Division, Curriculum and Special Purpose

Programs; the Senior Education Officer - Secondary Curriculum; three Education Officers - Secondary Curriculum; and the Education Officer - Indigenous Education.

The respondents selected for the expert informant group according to their expertise and knowledge in leadership were – the Director - Human Resources; the Head of Division - Professional Development and Leadership; two Area Administrators - Secondary; the Head of Division - Quality Review and Development; and two Education Officers - Quality Review and Development.

The respondents selected for the expert informant group according to their expertise and knowledge in Special Education were – the Head of Division -Special Education; six Guidance Officers - Special Education and the Speech Pathologist - Special Education.

Each person in the expert informant group was provided with a confidential questionnaire (see Appendix A) that required them to nominate four secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta that they perceived as successful in providing for students with disabilities. The questionnaires were sent by internal mail to each person following their verbal agreement to participate in the survey. Each person was advised that they could contact the researcher at any time if they required any clarification or explanation of any of the survey items. The surveys were coded according to a random letter-number sequence on receipt of the completed surveys, so ensuring confidentiality at all times. Each person was given two weeks to return the survey and all participants were reminded of the return date the day before they

were due to be returned. All surveys sent out to participants were returned by the due date in June 2005.

SELECTION OF THE SCHOOLS

The nominations by the expert informant group were tallied and the top four schools were selected (see Section 4.2 of Chapter 4).

The following factors determined the selection of four schools for the study. First of all, multiple sites were required for the study to ensure triangulation for data collection and analysis. Having established this, the researcher sought to balance the resources and capacities he could bring to bear and the need for a diverse group of schools. The maximum number of schools that could be supported in the sample was four. The four schools comprised 20% of the secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta in 2005, providing the researcher with a reasonable proportion of schools in the system. Moreover, by using the four most frequently identified schools, the group included a small, coeducational school with a high proportion of non-English speaking background students in an older suburb, a newly established mid-sized coeducational school, a well-established single sex girls school in a newly developed suburban area and a well-established, large coeducational school in an area of both suburban development and semi-rural development.

CONTACT WITH THE NOMINATED CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

A consensus was established in the nomination of four case study schools by the CEO expert informant group (see Section 4.2 in Chapter 4). Each of the schools was approached in July 2005, first by telephone contact with the school principal and then by a formal letter inviting them to participate in the study.

Agreement with each of the principals was gained to firstly distribute questionnaires to all their teachers, randomly selected students, randomly parents and themselves, and then to allow follow-up interviews with the principals and targeted and randomly selected teachers, students and parents. Informed consent was obtained from all respondent groups for the study (see Appendices C-H).

DOCUMENT REVIEW

An analysis of school documents, publications and websites for each school was used to identify school policies and practices. This documentation included - school policies on the enrolment of students, including those with disabilities; approaches to curriculum programming and assessment for students with disabilities; school processes reflecting how, and by whom students with disabilities were supported; the role of parents and the wider community in supporting school practices and procedures for students with disabilities; the types of individual planning processes in place for students with disabilities; each school's philosophy, mission and vision in regard to their provision for students with disabilities; and specific school implementation strategies in regard to the provision for students with disabilities resulting from recent School Review recommendations.

Each document was reviewed according to the Miles & Huberman (1994) Document Summary Form, as adapted below in Table 3.4:

TABLE 3.4: DOCUMENT SUMMARY FORM (MILES & HUBERMAN, 1994)

NAME OF DOCUMENT	
SCHOOL	
DATE RECEIVED	
EVENT OR CONTACT, IF ANY, WITH WHICH THE DOCUMENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH RELEVANT ISSUES FOR THIS STUDY	
SIGNIFICANCE OF DOCUMENT	
BRIEF SUMMARY OF CONTENTS	

3.3.2 SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENT GROUPS IN THE SCHOOLS

Populations for investigation by case study are indentified by the boundaries of the phenomena which distinguish between people to be studied and those to be excluded (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

The respondent groups chosen in the schools were the principal, all teachers on staff, a random selection of students with disabilities and a random selection of parents of students with disabilities. These groups were selected due to their capacity to provide insights and perspectives for the research questions. Principal behaviours in a school occur within the context of the whole school situation, so it was important to survey the views of different stakeholders at the school.

Due to the study utilising case studies and the requirement for thick data, the researcher opted for the fullest possible set of perceptions. In order to achieve these objectives, all teachers on staff were chosen for the study as their perceptions enriched and broadened the scope and range of the responses available for the

study. The study could also readily manage the large number of teachers completing questionnaires and participating in individual and group interviews within the school settings.

The perceptions of parents and students were considered to be less rich than those of teachers because of the lower likelihood of direct, ongoing engagement. Therefore a sample was seen as appropriate for the study. The parent and student sample chosen, however, was quite large for the purposes of the study. Each school chose every third student and every third parent on their current Special Education roll in selecting the response groups, ensuring both randomness and a reasonable range of students and parents across the Year 7-12 grades (Goldstein, 1995). This process resulted in a significant proportion of students with disabilities and parents of students with disabilities in all case study schools responding to the study through the questionnaires and interviews (see Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 in Chapter 4).

3.3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE SCHOOLS

Questionnaires were developed for the principals, teachers, students and parents in June 2005. A copy of the questionnaires for these respondents can be found in Appendices I-L. These instruments were designed to address the primary themes and issues incorporated in the research questions for the study and the major findings of the research literature (see Chapter 2). The non-English background of some of the respondents, particularly parents, was addressed by arranging for translation of questionnaires, where appropriate (Nusbaum et.al. 2001; Cantor et.al. 2005). No requests were received from the schools for translations of questionnaires for the study. The questionnaires were trialled for the study by seeking feedback

from experts in the field of survey design. Three drafts of the questionnaires for all respondent groups were developed before the final versions for the study were selected by the researcher.

The questionnaires incorporated both open-ended and forced-choice questions. Each questionnaire construct gave respondents opportunities to express their opinions about a range of topics related to their school's provision for students with disabilities. There were five forced-choice questions in the principal and teacher questionnaires. These questions were about the presence or absence of a coordinated school approach in providing for students with disabilities; whether there was any teacher involvement in these students' support; the presence or absence of parental involvement in these students' support; whether there was an awareness of the school's decision-making processes about students with disabilities; and the presence or absence of professional development at the school for teachers in providing for students with disabilities. Each of these questions gave respondents an opportunity to follow their response with an open-ended comment.

There were three forced-choice questions in the parent questionnaires. These questions were about the presence or absence of a coordinated school approach to providing for students with disabilities; whether parents had any involvement in these students' support; and whether students with disabilities were directly supported by the school. There were no forced-choice questions in the student questionnaires.

Each principal, teacher, parent and student questionnaire gave respondents an opportunity to offer unprompted responses for the study.

The questionnaires for the principal, teachers and parents shared common questions about the about school provision for students with disabilities. The items in these questionnaires invited respondents to provide their insights and perspectives about - the school's effectiveness and success in providing for students with disabilities; the type of support provided by the school; the role of coordination and communication processes; the role of parents; the school's decision-making processes; the school's provision of professional development; the role of the principal; and other factors that respondents were invited to contribute in addition to these questions. The questionnaire for the students contained similar questions to those for the other respondents, but were tailored to take into account the capacity of students to provide insights and perspective about their respective school's provision for students with disabilities. The items in these questionnaires invited students to provide their insights and perspectives about - the type of support provided by the school; their role in planning for this support; the role of the principal; and any other issues that could be related to the school's provision for students with disabilities.

The differences between the questionnaires reflected the different and discrete roles and capacities of each of the response groups, but were still directly linked to the major findings of the research literature.

3.3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR THE SCHOOLS

To provide the study with a more comprehensive range of opinions and perspectives, interview schedules were developed in August 2005 for the principals and selected teachers, parents and students in the case study schools. The organisation of the study allowed for the design of the interviews to follow the collection of the questionnaire data from each school. Therefore, each interview schedule reflected particular themes and issues identified by respondents in each school. Both open-ended and forced choice questions were included in the interview schedules for each school. Each interview for all respondents concluded with a "perfect school" question – namely, what a principal in a perfect school would do to provide for students with disabilities.

A copy of the interview schedules for the schools can be found in Appendices D1-S1.

3.3.5 DISTRIBUTION, COMPLETION AND RETURN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires for the principal, teachers, students and parents were personally distributed to each of the case study schools.

Principals at the schools distributed Teacher Questionnaires at staff meetings in August 2005 and concurrently completed their Principal Questionnaires. Return of the principal and teacher questionnaires was requested within two weeks. For the distribution of the questionnaires for students and parents, the Special Education teacher at each of the schools agreed to provide questionnaires to a random sample of students on the school's Special Education program according to the sampling criteria for the study and the relative size of the school. Teachers, parents and

students at all schools were requested to return their completed questionnaires in specially designated boxes situated at the administrative offices in each school, thereby ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Principals were requested to return their completed questionnaires by post.

Each of the questionnaires for the principals, teachers, students and parents was returned within four weeks, with two of the schools requiring follow-up telephone reminders for their teacher questionnaires and one of these schools requiring a letter and another telephone contact for the return of their teacher parent questionnaires. All schools required follow-up contact for the return of the completed student questionnaires. The response rate for each of the respondent groups is reported in Section 2 of Chapter 4.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Each principal was personally provided with a Principal Questionnaire by the researcher. The principal was requested to return the completed questionnaire by post to the researcher within two weeks. In the event of a non-response, it was agreed that the principal would to be reminded by telephone contact.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Each principal at the selected schools was provided with questionnaires for their teachers and requested to distribute the Teacher Questionnaire at their next general school staff meeting. At each school, the teachers were requested to complete the questionnaires and place the completed forms in a box with the emblem "Teacher Questionnaire", located in the school office. There was a time limit of two weeks for each teacher to return the completed questionnaire. The researcher arranged with

each school to personally collect the boxes two weeks after the staff meeting. Anonymity was assured for each teacher, as there was no requirement to identify him or herself on the questionnaire. If a teacher wished to identify himself or herself, there was an opportunity to do so at the end of the questionnaire.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Each Special Education teacher at the selected schools was provided with copies of the Parent Questionnaire. The school's student population determined the number of copies provided to each school, ranging from 30 at the largest school, 15 at the middle-sized school and 10 at the two smaller schools. The questionnaire was given to the parent of every fourth child on the Special Education roll by the Special Education teacher with a request for return in two weeks. The parents were given two choices in returning their questionnaires - either they could place the questionnaires in a box outside the school office, with the emblem "Parents Questionnaire", by themselves or through their child, or they could send the completed questionnaire direct to the researcher at the Catholic Education Office. Anonymity was assured for the parents, as there was no requirement to identify themselves on the form. If parents wished to disclose their identity, there was an opportunity to do so, and this was an option disclosed to them beforehand.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Each Special Education teacher at the selected schools was provided with copies of the Student Questionnaire. The school's student population determined the number of copies provided to each school, ranging from thirty at the largest school, fifteen at the middle-sized school and ten at the two smaller schools. The questionnaire was

given to every third child on the Special Education roll by the Special Education teacher with a request to place the completed questionnaire in a box, situated outside the school office, with the emblem "Students Questionnaire". Students were requested to return their completed questionnaire within two weeks. As with the parent questionnaires, this selection process was employed to ensure a random sample of student views and perspectives for the study. If students wished to disclose their identity, there was an opportunity to do so, and this was an option disclosed to them beforehand.

3.3.6 DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVIEWS FOR THE SCHOOLS

Interviews were developed for the principals, teachers, students and parents in August 2005. A copy of the interviews for the principals, teachers and parents can be found in Appendices D1-S1. These instruments were designed to follow-up and allow elaboration of the primary themes and issues incorporated in the research questions for the study, the major findings of the research literature (see Chapter 2) and the themes and issues raised in the questionnaires. As such, different interviews were developed for each respondent group in each school, based on the types of information collected through the questionnaires. The interviews were therefore developed to fill in gaps about the type of information provided by respondents in each school through the questionnaires, allow for follow-up of the range of themes and issues identified in these questionnaires and allow respondents to further elaborate upon particular themes, issues and concerns related to the study. The non-English background of some of the respondents, particularly parents, was addressed by arranging for interpreters to be available for the interviews, where

appropriate (Marshall & While, 2006). No requests for interpreters for the interviews were requested by the schools.

The interviews were trialled for the study by seeking expert feedback from experts in the field of survey design. Four drafts of the interviews for each school across all respondent groups were developed before the final versions for the study were selected by the researcher. The interviews incorporated both open-ended and forced-choice questions. Each interview for each respondent group in each school gave respondents opportunities to express their opinions about a range of topics related to their school's provision for students with disabilities. Each principal, teacher, parent and student interview also gave respondents an opportunity to offer unprompted responses for the study.

The interviews for the principal, teachers and parents shared some common questions about the about school provision for students with disabilities. The items in the interviews invited respondents to provide their insights and perspectives about - the school's effectiveness and success in providing for students with disabilities; the type of support provided by the school; the role of coordination and communication processes; the role of parents; the school's provision of Individual Plans; the roles of the principal and the Special Education teachers; and other factors that respondents were invited to contribute in addition to these questions. Other questions in the interviews focused on specific issues and themes raised by respondent groups in each school.

The interviews for the students contained similar questions to those for the other respondents, but were tailored to take into account the capacity of students to provide insights and perspective about each school's provision for students with disabilities. The items in these questionnaires invited students to provide their insights and perspectives about - the type of support provided by the school; the role of the Individual Plan; the role of the principal; the role of parents and other issues that could be related to the area.

The differences between the interviews reflected the different and discrete roles and capacities of each of the response groups, as well as the different responses given by respondent groups through the questionnaires at each school, but were still directly linked to the major findings of the research literature.

3.3.7 CONDUCT OF THE INTERVIEWS

The qualitative research interview is an attempt to "understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale, 1996, p.4) while Britten (1995) states that the qualitative research interviewer aims to discover the interviewee's own framework of meanings. The interviews in this study focused on obtaining a special kind of information by entering into the other person's perspective (Patton, 1990, p.190).

Interviewing encompasses more than just asking questions, listening and being responsive to interviewees. Skilful researchers monitor their own use of certain non-judgmental response behaviours to create a feeling of trust and rapport in the

interviewing situation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). These factors were considered by the researcher and addressed when conducting the interviews.

After the completion of the questionnaire stage of the data collection, teachers, students and parents, in addition to the principals, were selected for interviews. These interviews occurred in September-November 2005 and allowed for the elaboration of issues, themes and concepts that were identified in the questionnaires. Both individual and group interviews were conducted for this study. Details of these interview processes are described in the following section.

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEWS

All four principals in the schools were interviewed in their offices.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Teachers were selected in all schools for both individual and group interviews according to their key positions on staff - the Assistant Principal; Curriculum Coordinator; Year 7 and 10 Coordinators; Special Education teacher(s); and two other teachers selected at random (the fifth and twentieth on the staff role). In addition, there was an open invitation to other teachers not already sampled to be involved. The rationale for the selection method for the teacher interviews was to provide the study with a rich and diverse range of responses from these key stakeholders in the school, represented by the teachers in leadership and specific Special Education-related positions as well as a random sample of regular teachers to provide a classroom teaching perspective for the study. Other teachers were also invited to request an interview.

Interviews with teachers were conducted both individually and in the group situation. The Assistant Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, Special Education teachers and grade coordinators in each school were interviewed individually. Classroom teachers were interviewed in small groups in each school, ranging from three to five teachers for each interview. Group interviews for teachers were conducted due to the timetabling constraints and challenges at each school and the subsequent difficulties in providing the necessary time for individual classroom teacher interviews. In the reporting of the case studies, responses from individual and group interviews are noted, where appropriate.

PARENT INTERVIEWS

At each school, three parents of students with disabilities at random were selected with the parent of every fifth student on the Special Education roll contacted by post with an invitation for an interview. Other parents requested interviews through communication through the questionnaires. In addition, there was an open invitation to all parents of students with disabilities not already sampled to be involved in the interviews. The rationale for the selection method for the parent interviews was to provide the study with a parental perspective for the study. For this purpose, a random sampling of parents was employed in conjunction with an opportunity for parents to request an interview.

Each parent (or couple) was interviewed individually in each school for the study.

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Five students with disabilities selected at random with every fourth student on the Special Education roll invited for an interview. Other students requested interviews through communication through the questionnaires. In addition, there was an open

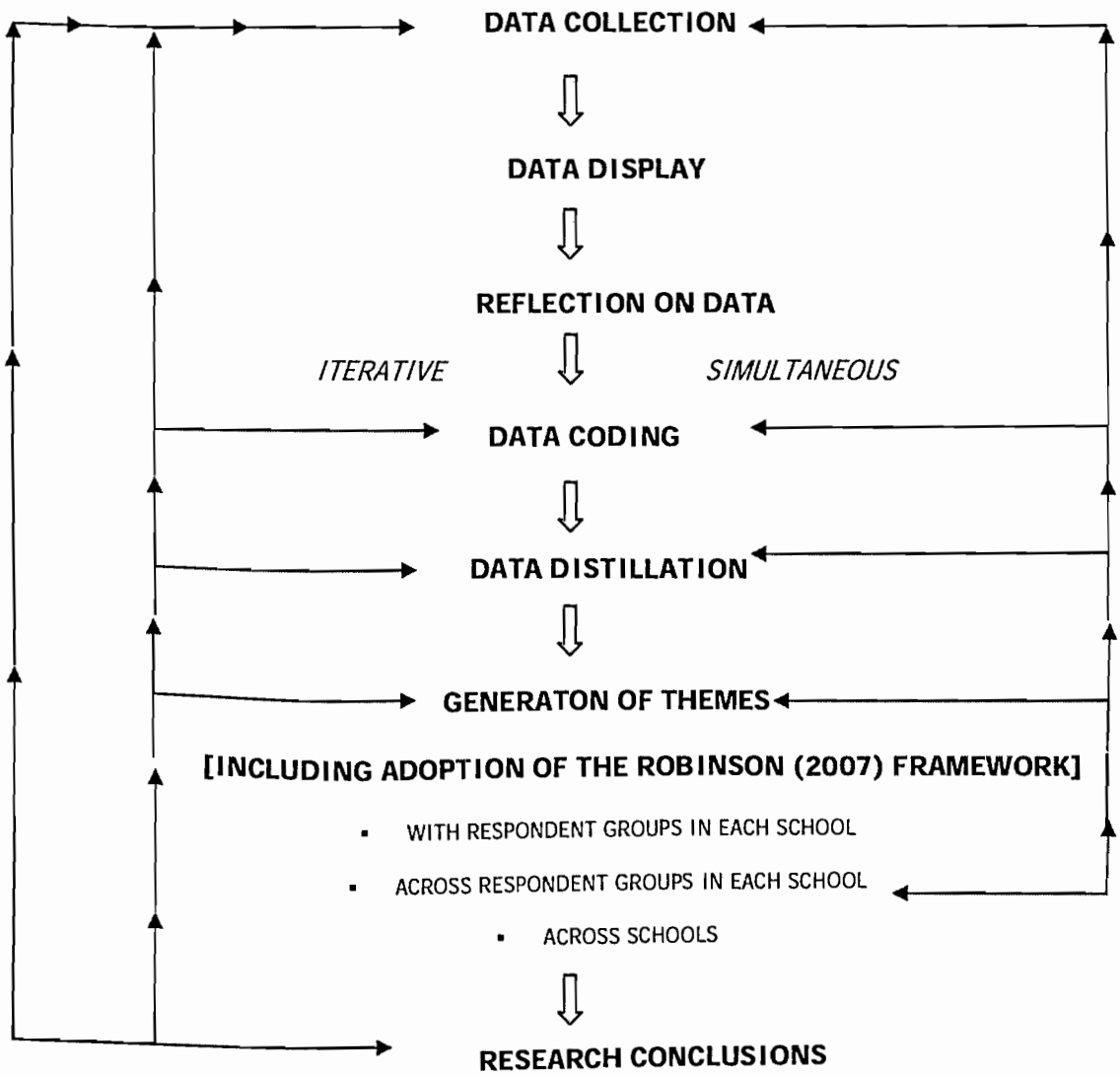
invitation to all students with disabilities not already sampled to be involved in the interviews. The rationale for the selection method for the student interviews was similar to that adopted for the parent interviews. For this purpose, random sampling of students was employed in conjunction with an opportunity for students to request an interview. Each student was interviewed individually in each school for the study.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an eclectic process (Tesch, 1990). It occurs simultaneously and iteratively with data collection, interpretation and report writing.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the data analysis process described by Mertens & McLaughlin (2003) and adopted for this study. This process is known as a constant comparative method of data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and involves data reduction and interpretation, decontextualisation and recontextualisation.

FIGURE 3.1: ITERATIVE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS (MERTENS & MCLAUGHLIN, 2003)



3.4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

The analysis of the questionnaires involved three stages utilising the methods cited by Taylor & Bogdan (1998).

The questionnaire responses by each respondent group in each school were transcribed for each of the questionnaire items. This data was prepared for analysis by organising it into categories using a coding system. Codes are defined as labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information during a study. Codes are usually attached to "chunks" of varying sizes – words, phrases,

sentences or whole paragraphs, related to or independent of a specific setting (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.84). The questionnaire responses, or chunks, were initially reported around "emerging themes" using a mind-mapping branch approach. For each respondent group, emerging themes for principal behaviours (see Appendix Y) and school conditions (see Appendix A1) were established for the study. The leadership dimensions identified by Robinson (2007) in her metanalysis were employed by the researcher at this stage of the data analysis to provide the study with a framework in helping establish emerging themes around principal behaviours and, to a lesser extent, school conditions.

These emerging themes established the major issues, concepts and assertions made by each respondent group in each school. The emerging themes were redefined by adding, collapsing overlapping categories and redefining categories until a group of major themes were organised into theme "clusters" that provided further clarity and detail about the questionnaire responses within and across all respondent groups in all schools. Theme clusters were established for the study around principal behaviours (see Appendices Z and C1) and school conditions (see Appendix B1). As the data was reflected upon, these themes were refined and reflected upon again by weighting both new and previously analysed data with the cycle continued until a thorough and comprehensive picture emerged. This process became especially important during the final stages of the data analysis as a range of different perspectives emerged from each of the case study schools.

The researcher returned at regular intervals to the original transcribed questionnaire responses for each case study school after they had become coherent individual narratives (Wolcott, 1994). This task was to ensure that the data was interpreted, explained and understood within context (Dey, 1993). This process allowed for new classifications to emerge throughout the study, promoting further refinement of the data and making possible more meaningful comparisons and analysis.

3.4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW DATA

The interviews for the study were recorded on separate Mini-Discs for each respondent group in each school.

The analysis of the interview data followed the same approach employed for the analysis of the questionnaire data. Each individual interview was transcribed word-for-word and analysed by establishing chunks, emerging themes and theme clusters for each respondent group in each school (see Appendices M-B1). Emerging themes in the interviews were established around the major issues, concepts and assertions made by each respondent group in each school. Again, the leadership dimensions identified in the metanalysis by Robinson (2007) were employed by the researcher at this stage of the data analysis to help provide a framework for the study in establishing these emerging themes, especially in relation to the identification of principal behaviours by respondents through their interviews.

Theme "clusters" were then identified by the researcher from this process that provided further clarity and detail about the interview responses within and across all respondent groups in all schools. These theme clusters were then grouped with

similar themes identified by respondents through the questionnaires for each group and in each school. This provided the study with a synthesis of theme clusters reflecting a cross group analysis of both interview and questionnaire responses for each respondent group in each school. Themes nominated by respondents in the interviews that were not nominated in the questionnaires were also identified at this stage of the data analysis.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical research requires balancing the value of advancing knowledge with protecting the individuals involved. Careful consideration in this study was given to issues such as privacy, confidentiality, protection from harm, informed consent and how findings were reported and published.

Table 3.5 presents an Ethical Audit for the study, based on Australian human research ethics guidelines (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2001).

TABLE 3.5: AN ETHICAL AUDIT FOR THE STUDY (NHMRC, 2001)

PHASE OF THE RESEARCH	POINTS TO CONSIDER	MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY THE STUDY
RESEARCH DESIGN	Did the research respect the inherent dignity of all the participants?	Yes. All respondents gave informed consent and were treated in ways that respected their dignity as individuals.
	Did the research involve participants who were competent to decide for themselves?	Yes. The design of the research instruments catered for a range of competencies.
	Did risks of harm arise in the research?	No. There were no identified risks associated with the study.
	Was there justification for selecting certain schools and participants for the study and excluding others?	Yes. Justification for participant selection is made in Chapter 2 of the study.
	Were these justifications based on the design of the research?	Yes. The selected schools and participants were central to the research design and key research questions.
	Were the participants representative of the population intended to benefit from the research?	Yes. The roles of the selected respondents were integral to the primary purposes of the research.
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH	Were participants afforded anonymity for the study?	Yes. Participants were given an opportunity to identify themselves but this optional for the study. Collection boxes were provided for participants to place completed questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with participants who were not identified by the study.
REPORTING OF THE RESEARCH	Were schools or participants identified in the reporting of the research?	No. All schools were given a code name and the identity of participants was not given in the study report.

An application was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Australian Catholic University in November 2003. The application included the

following material - formal approval by the Executive Director of Schools for the researcher to approach schools in the Diocese of Parramatta to participate in the research; principal, teacher, parent and student consent forms; an outline of research procedures; a draft of the four survey instruments (Principal Questionnaire, Teacher Questionnaire, Parent Questionnaire and Student Questionnaire); and an explanation of the anticipated outcomes of the research and the perceived benefits to the participants, as well as details regarding confidentiality in data collection, analysis and storage.

The Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee granted approval for the research project using human participants in May 2004 (see Appendix G).

3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Two factors that a researcher should be concerned about when designing a study, analysing its results and evaluating its quality are reliability and validity (Patton, 2001).

3.6.1 RELIABILITY

Reliability is based on the assumption that a study can be repeated and that two or more people can have similar interpretations by using the categories and procedures employed by the study (Burns, 1994).

Joppe (2000) states that:

> *...the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a*

study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. (p.1)

Drawing on procedures suggested by Le Compte & Goetz (1982) and Denzin & Lincoln (1998), this study incorporated a range of features to promote the reliability of its research. These included the use of multiple methods of data collection, such as questionnaires, interviews and school documentation; the researcher spending an appropriate amount of time listening, communicating and recording data with accuracy; and the use of low-inference descriptions including verbatim accounts of what participants said as well as descriptions of practices in the schools.

In addition, reliability for the study was enhanced by the researcher clearly outlining the reason for the research and documenting the primary research questions to be addressed by the study and clarifying the research assumptions of the study. The researcher also explained the data-gathering procedures for the study, including timelines for the conduct of the questionnaires, interviews and document review, documented the specific school contexts for the questionnaire completion and interview schedules and justified the range of categories developed for the analysis of the data (Burns, 1994, p.271).

In addition, the researcher made analytical and personal memos during the interviews by formulating specific questions and developing hypotheses, including what follow-up questions were required, and recording his impressions and reactions throughout the interviews. The identification of the researcher's role and status in relation to the schools and respondent groups investigated was also addressed in

the research design, in addition to a delineation of the types of people participating in the study, the school contexts within which the data was collected and the specification of the methods of data collection and analysis adopted for the study.

3.6.2 VALIDITY

Validity is defined as the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Validity revolves around two key questions – are researchers actually observing or measuring what they think they are observing and measuring; and to what extent are the abstract constructs and postulates generated, refined or tested by researcher applicable across groups? The first question relates to the internal validity of the research and the second question relates to its external validity (Burns, 1994, p.271).

Features promoting the internal validity of this study included the incorporation of triangulation techniques by using different kinds and sources of data. This enabled the use of cross-validation techniques as a means of reducing researcher effects on data (Seale, 1999). The study included a diversity and range of school settings selected through the use of expert opinion, the selection of a diverse range of participants in these schools, a detailed description of participants, contexts and procedures and the publication of documentation associated with the study procedures, such as the questionnaires. The researcher also utilised audio-taped and transcribed data and the use of dual data modes for the study.

Other features of the study promoting internal validity included the careful explanation of the nature and purposes of the study to the participants, supported by assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also allowed the key themes, categories and perspectives of the study to emerge from participant-generated data, employing strict standards of inclusion.

The utilisation of the Robinson (2007) metanalysis and its development of leadership dimensions, in addition to a rigorous and comprehensive literature review promoted the external validity of the study by grounding its findings in current research and related theoretical constructs in the fields of school leadership and provision for students with disabilities.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Two limitations of the methodology are highlighted and explained.

The first consideration is that because the researcher was a Catholic Education Office staff member involved in the Special Education field and known to some of the participants there existed the potential for response bias. The collection methods were designed to address these concerns, with sealed envelopes and the use of designated collection boxes in the schools. In addition, assurances were made that all respondents would remain anonymous; that the focus of the research was not a comparison of individual schools or of individual principals, teachers, parents and students; and that the intent of the study was to derive information about good practice from all participating schools. These measures were also seen to be an

appropriate means to ensure confidentiality for the study. Another factor that limited potential response bias was the transfer halfway through the research period of the researcher to another position in the Catholic Education Office that was unrelated to Special Education provision in schools.

The second limitation was the relatively small number of principals, teachers, parents and students across four quite different schools involved in the research study. This was seen to be addressed by the focus of the research being on the totality of the school experience in specifically targeted schools chosen for their perceived good practice. In other words, the issue at stake was the proportions of people within each school rather than the total numbers of respondents. This represented both a representative and multi-case sampling approach, in that by looking at a range of contrasting schools, the researcher could understand the how, where and why of the research question.

The third limitation could have been that the adopted Robinson (2007) framework excluded some data that was significant to the study. In order to avoid this, data was collated from all respondent groups in all school prior to applying the Robinson (2007) framework. The Robinson (2007) framework was then used to organise, not exclude the collated data. Any factors identified outside the Robinson (2007) framework were given separate treatment in the case studies and the analysis was open to alternative explanations which gave rise to the emergence of the principal engagement factor for the study. This process adopted by the study revealed a very high degree of alignment between the collated data and the factors identified by

Robinson (2007) in her framework but did not prevent an identification and exploration of factors that did not fit inside her framework.

CONCLUSION

By treating knowledge and reality as social constructions, the methodology for this study is logically consistent with the inquiry. The study is based on a case study methodological approach and was designed to focus on the experiences, perspectives and opinions of a range of school community members about the factors impacting on the successful provision of students with disabilities in Catholic secondary schools. The study was based on an interpretative paradigm and provided opportunities to interpret the factors identified by respondents in the case study schools. Research measures for gathering and analysing data were reviewed and addressed, including questionnaires, individual and group interviews and document review. There was particular reference between the data of the study and the findings about school leadership dimensions by Robinson (2007) in her metanalysis study.

In the next chapter, the data from the study will be reported and analysed.

CHAPTER 4

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the process of selecting the schools for the study and an analysis of the principal behaviours and school conditions identified by respondents in these schools.

SECTION ONE: THE SELECTION OF SCHOOLS FOR THE STUDY

A group of expert informants was chosen to nominate four schools for the study which exhibited school conditions and principal behaviours that successfully provided for students with disabilities. A brief description of background and contextual issues related to the provision of students with disabilities in diocesan schools is presented in the following section.

4.1 THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

Special Education staffing positions are allocated to all secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta to support students with disabilities. Funding for these positions is through the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta according to a diocesan formula based on total student enrolment, the number of enrolled students with disabilities and the degree of special need for these students. In addition to this staffing allocation, students with disabilities are individually funded through the Commonwealth Government's *Students with Disabilities* program. These grants are

typically utilised by schools to employ teacher's aides for their Special Education program. Students with disabilities are enrolled in regular classes, with the exception of eight students with moderate intellectual disability who are enrolled in a support class setting at Viewpoint High. The role of the Special Education teacher in each diocesan school is to coordinate the range of school support services allocated to students with disabilities as well as provide individualised and group support for these students.

Table 4.1 presents data related to the provision of students with disabilities in Catholic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta in 2005, the year of the data collection, according to the 2005 Catholic Education Office *Special Education Division Audit* (Catholic Education Office, 2005).

TABLE 4.1 **SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA IN 2005**

DESCRIPTOR	DATA
NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE	18,907
AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE	822
NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (SWD) IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE (COMMONWEALTH SWD FUNDED)	587
AVERAGE PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE (% OF COMMONWEALTH SWD FUNDED STUDENTS)	3.1
AVERAGE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ALLOCATION PER SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE DIOCESE (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT)	1.8

The next section reports on the selection of schools for the study.

4.2 SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

f the thirty-seven questionnaires provided to the expert informant group, thirty-six ere returned, representing a response rate of 97%. There were a total of seventy- our nominations from the expert group, representing a total of nineteen schools.

able 4.2 presents the results from the nomination survey process:

TABLE 4.2 SCHOOLS SELECTED BY THE EXPERT INFORMANT GROUP

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS FROM THE EXPERT INFORMANT GROUP
LAKESIDE HIGH	**16**
VIEWPOINT HIGH	**8**
RIVERLAND HIGH	**8**
SUNSHINE HIGH	**6**
SCHOOL A	5
SCHOOL B	5
SCHOOL C	4
SCHOOL D	3
SCHOOL E	3
SCHOOL F	3
SCHOOL G	2
SCHOOL H	2
SCHOOL I	2
SCHOOL J	2
SCHOOL K	2
SCHOOL L	1
SCHOOL M	1
SCHOOL N	1

The schools selected for the study, identified through fictional names for this study, were the most nominated four schools and provided the study a range of school approaches in supporting students with disabilities. These schools were:

- Lakeside High

- Viewpoint High
- Riverland High
- Sunshine High

It is noted that Lakeside High was the most nominated school for the study and represented 21.6% of the seventy-four school nominations from the expert informant group. There was a clear gap between Lakeside High and the other schools nominated by respondents. Both Lakeside High and Viewpoint High were perceived by the respondents as having proactive principals who had a passionate commitment to supporting the needs of students with disabilities; Riverland High was perceived as a school with a principal who had inherited a school with a rich history of effectively providing for students with disabilities; and Sunshine High was perceived by respondents as having a principal committed to a broad range of students with special needs but within the context of a very large school enrolment with competing educational agendas for the staff.

The next section provides a brief profile of each of the schools selected for the study.

4.3 PROFILES OF SELECTED SCHOOLS FOR THE STUDY

LAKESIDE HIGH

Lakeside High is a medium-sized co-educational Year 7-12 school serving a low socio-economic community in a well-established area of the diocese. Its enrolment includes a very high non-English speaking student population and its proportion of students with a disability is among the highest of any school in New South Wales. Lakeside High School has a disproportionally high number of students with

disabilities per total school population when compared with other diocesan schools, with fifty-eight students with disabilities representing a student with disabilities proportion of 9.4%. The staff at the school is relatively inexperienced compared to other secondary schools in the diocese, with many of them recently appointed to the school and in their early years of teaching. At the time of the study, the principal had been at the school for three years and it was his initial appointment as a principal. He had previous experience as an Assistant Principal in the diocese. The school had a Special Education allocation of 2.3 FTE in addition to two full-time Teacher's Aides-Special Education.

According to the 2005 Catholic Education Office *Special Education Division Audit* (Catholic Education Office, 2005), the profile of the school's Special Education enrolment consisted of thirty-five students with a mild or moderate intellectual disability, twelve students with a multiple disability, five students with a language disorder, three students with a hearing loss, two students with a physical disability and one student with a mental health disorder. In addition to these students, a further thirty-seven students received Special Education support for their specific learning difficulties.

A diocesan review of the school was conducted seven years prior to the study and a range of reforms and restructures were recommended to the school community. One of the significant changes to the school since the review was its conversion from a Year 7-10 boy's school to a co-educational Year 7-12 school. The current principal was preceded by two principals who implemented some key

recommendations of the review. In addition to its conversion to a co-educational Year 7-12 school, changes included a significant rebuilding and refurbishment of the school, an increase in the school's enrolment across all grades and the establishment of closer partnerships with local feeder primary schools.

Table 4.3 presents the Special Education profile of Lakeside High in the year of the study.

TABLE 4.3 LAKESIDE HIGH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFILE IN 2005

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (SWD)	TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE SCHOOL	PROPORTION OF SWD PER TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ALLOCATION (FTE)
58	612	9.4	2.3

VIEWPOINT HIGH

Viewpoint High School is a relatively small and newly established co-educational school in the diocese, having operated for only three years on its current site. It caters for Year 7-10 students and plans to expand into a Year 7-12 school over the coming years. Its enrolment of students with disability per total school population of 3.0% is similar to the diocesan average proportion for a secondary school. In the year previous to the study, the school established the first support class for students with a moderate intellectual disability in the diocese, operated in conjunction with the school's Special Education program. The school serves a local community with a broad socio-economic profile, ranging from relatively affluent nuclear families to single-parent families with low disposable income in both suburban and semi-rural settings. The staff at the school represents a mix of experienced and relatively inexperienced teachers.

The principal is the foundation principal of the school with previous experience as an Assistant Principal in the diocese. She launched the school two years previous to the study on a setting within the grounds of a local feeder Catholic primary school and the school was established at its present site in the year previous to the study. The school had a Special Education allocation of 1.4 FTE in addition to a full-time Teacher's Aide-Special Education.

According to the 2005 Catholic Education Office *Special Education Division Audit* (Catholic Education Office, 2005), the profile of the school's Special Education enrolment consisted of thirteen students with a mild or moderate intellectual disability, three students with a multiple disability, three students with a language disorder, two students with a hearing loss, one student with a physical disability and one student with a mental health disorder. In addition to these students, a further seventeen students received Special Education support for their specific learning difficulties.

Table 4.4 presents the Special Education profile of Viewpoint High in the year of the study.

TABLE 4.4 VIEWPOINT HIGH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFILE IN 2005

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (SWD)	TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE SCHOOL	PROPORTION OF SWD PER TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ALLOCATION (FTE)
23	749	3.0	1.4

SUNSHINE HIGH

Sunshine High School is a relatively large, co-educational Year 7-12 school that has been established on its current site for over twenty years. The school serves a

diverse community with both suburban and semi-rural families from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. It has a relatively experienced staff with an experienced school leadership team. Its enrolment of students with disability per total school population of 3.9% is slightly higher than the diocesan average proportion for secondary schools. The current principal has been at the school for three years, having previously served as a principal in another diocese. The school had a Special Education allocation of 1.9 FTE in addition to two full-time Teacher's Aide-Special Education.

According to the 2005 Catholic Education Office *Special Education Division Audit* (Catholic Education Office, 2005), the profile of the school's Special Education enrolment consisted of thirty-two students with a mild or moderate intellectual disability, four students with a multiple disability, three students with a language disorder, two students with a hearing loss, two students with a physical disability, one student with a mental health disorder and one student with a vision impairment. In addition to these students, a further twenty-eight students received Special Education support for their specific learning difficulties.

Table 4.5 presents the Special Education profile of Sunshine High in the year of the study.

TABLE 4.5 SUNSHINE HIGH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFILE IN 2005

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (SWD)	TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE SCHOOL	PROPORTION OF SWD PER TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ALLOCATION (FTE)
45	1141	3.9	1.9

RIVERLAND HIGH

Riverland High School is a medium-sized, single-sex school comprising girls from Year 7-12. It is a well-established school with a high demand from the local community for enrolment, with some students being denied enrolment year due to a lack of available places in some years. The school serves families who have average to above-average disposable income from both suburban settings and semi-rural settings. The teaching staff at the school is also well established and experienced, with some teachers having taught for over ten years at the school. The current principal has been at the school for four years, with previous experience as an Assistant Principal in the diocese. The school had a Special Education allocation of 1.6 FTE in addition to a full-time Teacher's Aide-Special Education.

According to the 2005 Catholic Education Office *Special Education Division Audit* (Catholic Education Office, 2005), the profile of the school's Special Education enrolment consisted of twelve students with a mild or moderate intellectual disability, four students with a multiple disability, three students with a language disorder, two students with a hearing loss, two students with a vision impairment and two students with a physical disability. In addition to these students, a further

sixteen students received Special Education support for their specific learning difficulties.

Table 4.6 presents the Special Education profile of Riverland High in the year of the study.

TABLE 4.6 RIVERLAND HIGH SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFILE IN 2005

NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (SWD)	TOTAL STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE SCHOOL	PROPORTION OF SWD PER TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ALLOCATION (FTE)
25	949	2.6	1.6

SUMMARY

The schools selected for this study represent schools from a range of demographic backgrounds and enrolment sizes. They are led by principals who are both experienced and relatively inexperienced in school leadership roles.

Table 4.7 compares the schools in relation to some of these variables.

TABLE 4.7 COMPARISONS OF SELECTED VARIABLES IN SCHOOLS FOR THE STUDY IN 2005

SCHOOL	GENDER CONTEXT	ENROLMENT	PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
LAKESIDE HIGH	CO-EDUCATIONAL	612	9.4
VIEWPOINT HIGH	CO-EDUCATIONAL	749	3.0
SUNSHINE HIGH	CO-EDUCATIONAL	1149	3.9
RIVERLAND HIGH	SINGLE SEX (GIRLS)	949	2.6

The next section reports on the response and participation rates of respondents in the study.

SECTION TWO: RESPONSE AND PARTICIPATION RATES

4.4 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATES

The response rates for the questionnaires by all respondent groups in the schools are presented in the following tables. The response rates for the questionnaires in the study compare favourably with the questionnaire response rate of 55.6% cited by Baruch (1999) as the average rate from 175 academic studies covering 200,000 respondents from 1975-1995.

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

A principal questionnaire (*see Appendix I*) was distributed to each principal at the four schools. All four were completed and returned within the two week schedule.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

Teacher questionnaires (*see Appendix J*) were distributed to all teachers at the four schools. The following table presents the response rate for these questionnaires at each of the schools.

TABLE 4.8 TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED	RESPONSE RATE %
LAKESIDE HIGH	53	41	77
VIEWPOINT HIGH	60	48	80
SUNSHINE HIGH	81	61	70
RIVERLAND HIGH	63	44	75
ALL SCHOOLS	**257**	**194**	**75**

Table 4.8 indicates that across the four schools of the study, the average response rate for the Teacher's Questionnaires was 75%, ranging from 70% at Sunshine High to 80% at Viewpoint High.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

Parent questionnaires (*see Appendix K)* were distributed at each of the four schools. Parents of students with disabilities were selected at random (see Section 3.3.5). The following table presents the response rate for these questionnaires at each of the schools.

TABLE 4.9 **PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE**

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED	RESPONSE RATE %
LAKESIDE HIGH	10	10	100
VIEWPOINT HIGH	10	9	90
SUNSHINE HIGH	30	30	100
RIVERLAND HIGH	15	10	67
ALL SCHOOLS	**65**	**59**	**91**

Table 4.9 indicates that across the four schools of the study, the average response rate for the Parent's Questionnaires was 91%, ranging from 67% at Riverland High to 100% at both Lakeside High and Sunshine High.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

Student questionnaires (*see Appendix L)* were distributed by the schools' Special Education Coordinator at each of the four schools. Students with disabilities were selected at random (see Section 3.3.5). Ten random students were selected at Lakeside High, Viewpoint High and Riverland High and fifteen random students were selected at Sunshine High, reflecting the comparatively larger student enrolment at

this school. The following table presents the response rate for these questionnaires at each of the schools.

TABLE 4.10 STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED	NUMBER QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED	RESPONSE RATE %
LAKESIDE HIGH	10	10	100
VIEWPOINT HIGH	10	8	80
SUNSHINE HIGH	15	8	53
RIVERLAND HIGH	10	10	100
ALL SCHOOLS	**45**	**36**	**80**

Table 4.10 indicates that across the four schools of the study, the average response rate for the Student's Questionnaires was 80%, ranging from 53% at Sunshine High to 100% at both Lakeside High and Riverland High.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE RATES

A total of 371 questionnaires were distributed to principals, teachers, parents and students for this study and 271 questionnaires were returned by respondents. The response rate for the questionnaires for the study was 79%.

4.5 INTERVIEW PROCESSES

An invitation was extended to all survey participants to take part in interviews for the study. The process for interviews is described in Section 3.3.8. A copy of the schedule appears in *Appendix C2*. Data reflecting the number of interviews in the schools with the principals, teachers, students and parents is presented in Table 4.11.

TABLE 4.11 NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS IN SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NUMBER OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS	NUMBER OF PARENT INTERVIEWS	NUMBER OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS	NUMBER OF PRINCIPAL INTERVIEWS
LAKESIDE HIGH	24	10	14	1
VIEWPOINT HIGH	18	10	12	1
SUNSHINE HIGH	22	12	15	1
RIVERLAND HIGH	16	10	12	1
ALL SCHOOLS	**80**	**42**	**53**	**4**

Table 4.11 indicates that across the four schools of the study, there were eighty teacher interviews, forty-two parent interviews, fifty-three student interviews and four principal interviews, totalling one hundred and seventy-nine interviews. All principals in the schools were interviewed.

Teachers were selected for interviews according to their position on staff and by random selection (see Chapter 3 for criteria). In addition, there was an open invitation to other teachers not already selected to be part of the interview process.

Three sets of parents (either singly or as a couple) of students with disabilities were selected at random for an interview in each school (see Chapter 3 for the criteria). Other parents requested an interview through the questionnaires and there was an open invitation to other parents through each school's newsletter to participate in the interviews.

Five students with disabilities were selected at random for an interview in each school (see Chapter 3 for the criteria), other students requested an interview through their questionnaires and there was an open invitation through the Special

Education staff to other students not already selected at each school to be interviewed for the study.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW PROCESSES

Interviews in the schools provided the study with a significant body of data. All principals agreed to a lengthy and comprehensive interview, with each interview lasting at least forty minutes and the principal interviews across all schools averaging one hour. There were 80 teacher interviews compared to 194 teachers who returned completed questionnaires for the study; there were 42 parent interviews compared to 59 parents who returned completed questionnaires for the study; and there were 53 student interviews compared to 36 students who returned completed questionnaires.

Across all schools 32 teachers requested an interview, representing 40% of the total interviews; 33 students requested an interview, representing 62% of the total interviews; and 18 parents requested an interview, representing 43% of the total interviews. The number of respondents who requested an interview was evenly distributed across the schools. The high proportion of respondents who requested interviews indicates the high degree of interest in the study across all schools. This degree of interest by all respondent groups in all schools in following up their questionnaire responses with interviews provides a degree of confidence that the responses in this study accurately reflect the views of teachers, parents and students, as well as the principals, in the schools.

SUMMARY

This study adopted the school features suggested by Guzman (1997) as describing how a school successfully provides for students with disabilities - curriculum development and delivery, leadership skills and a knowledge and expertise in the specific delivery of support for students with disabilities. The Guzman (1997) framework complements the essential elements of the Robinson (2007) leadership dimension framework – a range of leadership skills that include a significant focus on pedagogy - with expertise and knowledge in Special Education. An informant group comprising personnel representing these areas of expertise nominated four secondary schools as successfully providing for students with disabilities.

Respondent groups were then established in these four schools to report to how their schools successfully provided for students with disabilities. Questionnaires and interviews were then arranged for teachers, parents, students and principals in these schools.

These questionnaires and interviews are reported and analysed in the following chapters.

SECTION THREE: THE IDENTIFICATION OF PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS FOR THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This section of the chapter collates and analyses data about principal behaviours identified by respondents as successfully providing for students with disabilities. It develops high level descriptors for these behaviours by clustering like elements of

responses to the question - *what role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?*

As was shown in Chapter Two, Robinson (2007) establishes five leadership behaviours for her framework and identifies them as "leadership dimensions" (p. 12). This current study maps the principal behaviours reported by respondents in the schools with these leadership dimensions noting, where appropriate, any significant responses that did not fit inside the framework.

All questionnaire and interview responses were transcribed. Each separate idea was treated as a contribution in its own right. Responses were gathered together around emergent themes and sub-themes. The clusters of ideas comprising a theme were labelled in such a way as to capture the principal behaviour they reflected. Sub-themes were similarly labelled, forming the indicators of a particular principal behaviour (*see Appendices Y and Z).*

4.6 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IN SUCCESSFULLY PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The following section presents the data for the identified principal behaviours in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This study has adopted a largely case study methodology, based on a constructionist epistemology. This relies on the fact that meanings are created in dialogue within groups. Discussions of significance in this context do not deal with statistical significance, but rather educational significance, and are premised on a judgement of what proportion of a community, and its various sub-groups, might have to hold a view before it is considered to be reasonably commonly held. The levels established for this type of judgement carry with them attendant risks. First, they could be so low that they included views that were not representative. Second, that they are set so high that genuine perceptions are excluded.

The measure adopted in this study seeks to establish the reality of the view of a principal behaviour by requiring that it be ascribed to two of the four respondent groups in each school – principal, teachers, students and parents. The level adopted as best balancing the two forms of risk described above is 40%, on the basis of the fact that such a proportion within a group would represent a group of stakeholders acting out of a set of perceptions that would be influential within the school community. The 40% criterion was applied across all respondent groups for the study in identifying principal behaviours.

MULTI-SCHOOL AND SINGLE-SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED FOR THE STUDY

Two types of principal behaviour were identified for the study. Where a principal behaviour appeared in the responses of more than 40 per cent of participants in two

or more schools, it was described as a multi-school principal behaviour. Where a principal behaviour was identified by more than forty per cent of the participants in only one school, it was described as a single-school principal behaviour.

Data collected from all schools related to the full range of principal behaviours identified by respondent groups are presented in *Appendices M-Z.*

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED BY ALL SCHOOLS

The following table indicates where more than forty per cent of a respondent group nominated a principal behaviour. Each notation reflects the number of specific principal behaviours reported by a respondent group.

TABLE 4.12 **RESPONSES WHERE GREATER THAN 40% OF A RESPONDENT GROUP REPORTED A SPECIFIC PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR**

SCHOOL	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI	TOTAL NO. OF RESPONSES FOR EACH SCHOOL
LAKESIDE HIGH	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	6
VIEWPOINT HIGH	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	10
SUNSHINE HIGH	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
RIVERLAND HIGH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL RESPONSES	11		3		0		9		23

NOTE

The Principal Questionnaire (PrQ) and Principal Interview (PrI) notations indicate that the principal nominated a principal behaviour on the questionnaire or during the interview.

KEY

TQ	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
TI	TEACHER INTERVIEW
PQ	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PI	PARENT INTERVIEW
SQ	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
SI	STUDENT INTERVIEW
PRQ	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
PRI	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA IN TABLE 4.12

The pattern of responses presented in Table 4.12 indicates that respondents in all schools in the study identified principal behaviours as a factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities. Lakeside High, Viewpoint High and Sunshine High respondents nominated a range of principal behaviours as significant factors for the study, according to the study's criteria where at least two respondent groups in a school were required to mark a factor as significant. Respondents at Riverland High did not nominate principal behaviour as a significant factor in their school's successful provision for students with disabilities, with only the principal citing a single principal behaviour as a factor.

A characteristic of the identified principal behaviours was the high number of nominations reported by teacher respondent groups and the principals, with only three nominations for principal behaviours reported by parent respondent groups and none by student respondent groups.

4.7 IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IN ALL SCHOOLS

Table 4.13 presents the identified principal behaviours for the study, as nominated by more than 40 per cent of respondents in a respondent group across all the schools in the study. It presents the principal behaviours as aligned with the Robinson (2007) leadership practices framework. It reports the number of respondent groups nominating a specific principal behaviour and the number of respondent groups from each school nominating a specific principal behaviour.

TABLE 4.13 IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS ALIGNED WITH THE ROBINSON (2007) LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FRAMEWORK

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS ALIGNED WITH THE ROBINSON (2007) LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FRAMEWORK	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT GROUPS NOMINATING THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT GROUPS FROM EACH SCHOOL NOMINATING THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	L V S	L V S		V			L	L V S	**11** Teachers: 6 Parents: 1 Students: 0 Principals: 4	L: 4 V: 4 S: 3 R: 0
PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	V S	V S	V	V			V	V S	**9** Teachers: 4 Parents: 2 Students: 0 Principals: 3	L: 0 V: 6 S: 3 R: 0
PRINCIPAL PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT		L						L	**2** Teachers: 1 Parents: o Students: 0 Principals: 1	L: 2 V: 0 S: 0 R: 0
PRINCIPAL STRATEGICALLY RESOURCES THE SCHOOL										
PRINCIPAL ENSURES AN ORDERLY AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT										

NOTE: The Principal Questionnaire (PrQ) and Principal Interview (PrI) notations indicates that the principal nominated on the questionnaire or during the interview this principal behaviour.

KEY 1

L	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **LAKESIDE HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
V	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **VIEWPOINT HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
S	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **SUNSHINE HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
R	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **RIVERLAND HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

KEY 2

TQ	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
TI	TEACHER INTERVIEW
PQ	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PI	PARENT INTERVIEW
SQ	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
SI	STUDENT INTERVIEW
PRQ	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
PRI	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

Tables 4.12 and 4.13 indicate that the principal behaviours that emerged from the data were:

MULTI-SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

The principal plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum (Lakeside High, Viewpoint High and Sunshine High)

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

The principal establishes goals and expectations (Viewpoint High and Sunshine High)

SINGLE-SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR FOUR

The principal promotes and participates in teacher learning and development (Lakeside High)

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA IN TABLES 4.12 AND 4.13

Respondents in the schools identified three principal behaviours as significant factors in the successful provision of students with disabilities. Data presented in Table 4.12 indicates that these identified principal behaviours were aligned with school leadership practices cited by Robinson (2007) as those impacting on providing for all students – the principal *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum;* the principal *establishing goals and expectations* and the principal *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.* Two of these three principal behaviours were identified as *multi-school* principal behaviours for the purposes of this study. Two school leadership practices cited by Robinson (2007) were not identified in this study – *strategically resources the school;* and *ensures an orderly and supportive environment.*

The results in Tables 4.13 indicate that the principal behaviour with the most nominations was the principal *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum.* This was followed by the principal *establishing goals and expectations* and the principal *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.*

SUMMARY

A range of principal behaviours was reported by respondents in three of the four schools as successfully providing for students with disabilities. Two behaviours – the principal *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* and *establishing goals and expectations* were reported in at least two schools and were categorised as multi-school principal behaviours. One behaviour – the principal *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development* – was reported in only one school and categorised as a single-school principal behaviour. The identification of two multi-school principal behaviours suggests that there exist some common leadership factors that assist schools in successfully providing for students with disabilities. The absence of identified principal behaviours at Riverland High suggests that a school can be judged by external experts as successfully providing for students with disabilities without principal behaviour being identified as a significant factor.

The three principal behaviours identified will be the basis for further analysis of principal behaviours in the four schools in chapters 5-8.

SECTION FOUR: THE IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL CONDITIONS FOR THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This section collates and analyses data for the school conditions identified by respondents as successfully providing for students with disabilities. All questionnaire and interview responses were transcribed. Each separate idea was treated as a contribution in its own right. Responses were gathered together around emergent themes and sub-themes. The clusters of ideas comprising a theme were labelled in such a way as to capture the school condition they reflected. Sub-themes were similarly labelled, forming the indicators of a particular school condition (*see Appendices A1 and B1*).

A school condition was defined for this study as a school characteristic – encompassing policy, practice, process, structure or other feature - identified by a respondent as contributing to that school's successful provision for students with disabilities. Where a school condition was identified by more than 40 per cent of the participants in a given school, it was selected for further explanation and discussion. Where a school condition appeared in the responses of more than 40 per cent of participants in two or more schools, it was described as a *multi-school condition.* Where a school condition was identified by more than 40 per cent of the participants in only one school, it was described as a *single-school condition.*

The selection criteria for school conditions as significant factors for the study were based on the same grounds as those previously presented for principal behaviours.

As this study has adopted a largely case study methodology based on a constructionist epistemology, there is a reliance on the fact that meanings are created in dialogue within groups. Therefore, discussions of significance in this context do not deal with statistical significance, but rather educational significance, and are premised on a judgement of what proportion of a community, and its various sub-groups, might have to hold a view before it is considered to be reasonably commonly held. The levels established for this type of judgement carry with them attendant risks. First, they could be so low that they included views that were not representative. Second, that they are set so high that genuine perceptions are excluded.

The measure adopted in this study seeks to establish the reality of the view of a school condition by requiring that it be ascribed to two of the four respondent groups in each school – principal, teachers, students and parents. The level adopted as best balancing the two forms of risk described above is 40%, on the basis of the fact that such a proportion within a group would represent a group of stakeholders acting out of a set of perceptions that would be influential within the school community. The 40% criterion was applied across all respondent groups for the study in identifying school conditions.

4.8 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS IN SUCCESSFULLY PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The following section presents the data for the identified school conditions in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities. It develops high level descriptors

for school conditions by clustering like elements of responses to the question - *how are students with disabilities supported in this school?*

SCHOOL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED FROM ALL SCHOOL DATA

Data collected from all schools about the range of school conditions identified by respondent groups is presented in *Appendices M-X, Appendix A1* and *Appendix B1.*

Each notation in Table 4.14 indicates where more than 40 per cent of a respondent group nominated a particular school condition. The table also presents the number of respondent groups nominating a specific school condition and the number of respondent groups from each school nominating a specific school condition.

TABLE 4.14 RESPONSES WHERE GREATER THAN 40% OF A RESPONDENT GROUP REPORTED A SPECIFIC SCHOOL CONDITION

SCHOOL CONDITION	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT GROUPS NOMINATING THIS SCHOOL CONDITION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENT GROUPS FROM EACH SCHOOL NOMINATING THIS SCHOOL CONDITION
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	L V S R	L V S R	V S R	L V R	R	R	L V S R	L V S R	**24** Teachers: 8 Parents: 6 Students: 2 Principals: 8	L: 5 V: 6 S: 5 R: 8
INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	L V S R	L V S R	L S	L V S		S	L S	L S R	**19** Teachers: 8 Parents: 5 Students: 1 Principals: 5	L: 6 V: 3 S: 7 R: 3
COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS ABOUT MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	S R	L V S R		L			L	L V S R	**12** Teachers: 6 Parents: 1 Students: 0 Principals: 5	L: 4 V: 2 S: 3 R: 3
STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	L V	L V					L	L V	**7** Teachers: 4 Parents: 0 Students: 0 Principals: 3	L: 4 V: 3 S: 0 R: 0
THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATES PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	R	R					R	R	**4** Teachers: 2 Parents: 0 Students: 0 Principals: 2	L: 0 V: 0 S: 0 R: 4

STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	S	S						S	**3** Teachers: 2 Parents: 0 Students: 0 Principals: 1	L: 0 V: 0 S: 2 R: 0

KEY 1

L	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **LAKESIDE HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS SCHOOL CONDITION
V	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **VIEWPOINT HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS SCHOOL CONDITION
S	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **SUNSHINE HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS SCHOOL CONDITION
R	EACH NOTATION INDICATES THAT A **RIVERLAND HIGH RESPONDENT GROUP** IDENTIFIED THIS SCHOOL CONDITION

KEY 2

TQ	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
TI	TEACHER INTERVIEW
PQ	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PI	PARENT INTERVIEW
SQ	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
SI	STUDENT INTERVIEW
PRQ	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

NOTE: The PrQ (Principal Questionnaire) and PrI (Principal Interview) notations indicates that the principal nominated on the questionnaire or during the interview this school condition.

IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL CONDITIONS THAT BEST PROVIDE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Table 4.14 presents the school conditions that emerged from the data were:

MULTI-SCHOOL CONDITIONS

SCHOOL CONDITION

Special Education teacher capacity (all schools)

SCHOOL CONDITION

Individual Plans are developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities (all schools)

SCHOOL CONDITION

Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers about meeting the needs of students with disabilities (all schools)

SCHOOL CONDITION

Staff members participate in professional development activities in Special Education (Lakeside High and Viewpoint High)

SINGLE-SCHOOL CONDITIONS

SCHOOL CONDITION

The Special Needs Committee effectively coordinates programs for students with disabilities (Riverland High)

SCHOOL CONDITION

Staff members are appointed as case managers for students with disabilities (Sunshine High)

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA IN TABLE 4.14

The pattern of responses presented in Table 4.14 indicates that six school conditions were identified by respondent groups in the schools. Of these six school conditions, four were identified as multi-school conditions and two as single-school conditions.

The following school conditions were reported by more than one school:

SCHOOL CONDITION

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY

Each case study school employed a Special Education teacher. The role of these teachers varied from school to school, however their basic functions were to coordinate support services to students with disabilities as well as provide individual and group-based intervention for these students.

This school condition was the most frequently identified across the schools. It was reported in all schools as a significant factor and by teachers, parents, students and the principal across the four schools. Teachers, parents and principals in all schools nominated this school condition as a significant factor. It was the most nominated school condition at Riverland High, being identified by all respondent groups. Riverland High was the only school where students reported this as a school condition. The identification of this condition in four schools gives the study a degree of confidence that it is a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITION

INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Individual Plans refer to the student planning process in the case study schools that involved input from teachers, parents, the student and other related support staff in reviewing the progress of student with a disability according to agreed-upon benchmarks and developing future educational, social and vocational goals. These student goals were established through consensus among the personnel present at the meeting. Resourcing these goals became the responsibility of either or both the school and family, as appropriate.

This school condition was reported in all schools. Each respondent group reported it as a significant factor in at least one of the schools. The only school where student respondent groups nominated this school condition as a factor was Sunshine High. The identification of this condition in four schools gives the study a degree of confidence that it is a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITION

COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS ABOUT MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Collaborative consultation is an interactive school process that enabled staff with diverse expertise to work together to create solutions to mutually defined problems. Typically, the special needs of a student with a disability were the subject of this

process in a school setting, with the outcome of the consultation the provision of comprehensive and effective support programs for the student.

This school condition was reported in all schools. It was predominantly reported by teachers and principals, with parents identifying it as a factor at Lakeside High. The principal at each school nominated it as a school condition. Parents at Lakeside High reported that they identified this type of consultation as a school condition because they did not need to repeat the details of their child's needs to all teachers at every Individual Plan meeting. They commented that most staff members at the school seemed to be aware of their child's needs. Reflecting its teacher orientation, this school condition was not reported by student respondent groups at any school. The identification of this condition in four schools gives the study a degree of confidence that it is a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITION

STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Professional development activities in Special Education offered by the case study schools were provided through a range of strategies. Specific workshops or whole-school staff development activities coordinated by the Special Education teachers or external consultants and off-site conferences or workshops for staff were the most typical options available to teachers and support staff.

This school condition was reported at Lakeside High and Viewpoint High. The only respondent groups to nominate this school condition were the teachers and the

principal. The identification of this condition in two schools gives the study moderate confidence that it represents a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

The following school conditions were reported by only one school.

SCHOOL CONDITION

STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Case managers were appointed by some diocesan schools to coordinate the support programs provided for students with disabilities. A teacher was typically appointed to case manage an individual student from Year 7-12. This teacher then became the school's contact person for this student for other staff and the parents of the child.

This school condition was only reported at Sunshine High. Teachers and the principal nominated this school condition as a condition direct related to the school's development of the Individual Plan process. The identification of this condition in only one school gives the study less confidence that it represents a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITION

THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATES PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Special Needs Committee was established by some diocesan schools to coordinate the range of Special Education services provided for students. Such a committee varied in size, membership and responsibilities, according to each school's needs.

This school condition was only reported at Riverland High. The only respondent groups to nominate this school condition were the teachers and the principal. The identification of this condition in only one school gives the study less confidence that it represents a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

A range of school conditions were reported by respondent groups as significant factors in how schools successfully provided for students with disabilities. Four school conditions were reported by at least two respondent groups in at least two schools in the study and were identified as multi-school conditions. Two school conditions were reported by at least two respondent groups in only one school and were identified as single-school conditions.

These school conditions are further discussed in chapters 5-8.

SECTION FIVE: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CASE STUDIES

The findings reported in this chapter indicate that respondents identified principal behaviours and school conditions as significant factors in their schools' successful provision for students with disabilities. It is possible to identify a set of principal behaviours and school conditions that are reported as significant by respondent groups in the schools.

Four principal behaviours emerged from the data for this study. These identified principal behaviours are aligned with the school leadership behaviours cited by Robinson (2007) in her research. Three of the four principal behaviours were categorised for this study as multi-school principal behaviours, with one of the behaviours categorised as a single-school principal behaviour.

Six school conditions emerged from the data for this study. Four of the identified school conditions were classified for this study as multi-school conditions, with two classified as single-school conditions.

The identification in this chapter of these factors provides a framework for the further analysis of data from each of the schools in the following case study chapters. These case studies will draw upon the findings reported in this chapter and suggest links between the principal behaviours and school conditions identified in the schools.

CHAPTER 5

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR LAKESIDE HIGH

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter reports and analyses the data for Lakeside High. The Robinson (2007) leadership practices framework is adapted, using the framework laid out in Chapter Four, to report and analyse the responses for this school. The identified principal behaviours and school conditions are examined to explain the ways in which the Lakeside High school community successfully provides for students with disabilities. Principal engagement is then identified as an additional factor in how this school provides for these students.

The first section of this chapter reports on principal behaviours identified by respondents; the second section reports on school conditions identified by respondents; and the third section reports on the type of principal engagement adopted by the principal at the school. The final section of the chapter presents linkages between principal behaviours, principal engagement and school conditions and reveals how these linkages reflect the school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

SECTION ONE: IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS FOR LAKESIDE HIGH

A principal behaviour was reported as a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities if it met two criteria:

- At least 40% of a respondent group reported a behaviour
- More that one respondent group reported a behaviour

These criteria were employed for identifying principal behaviours in all case study schools.

Lakeside High respondents reported that principal behaviours were a significant factor in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Two principal behaviours emerged from the data at Lakeside High:

- the principal *plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum*
- the principal *promotes and participates in teacher learning and development*

These principal behaviours are aligned with the range of school leadership practices reported by Robinson (2007) as impacting on outcomes for all students.

Table 5.1 presents the proportion of the Lakeside High respondent groups that identified a particular principal behaviour that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices M, N,* and *O*).

TABLE 5.1 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED BY LAKESIDE HIGH SCHOOL RESPONDENTS

	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	84%	83%					YES	YES
THE PRINCIPAL PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	58%	78%					YES	YES

^KEY FOR THE TABLES IN CHAPTER FIVE

TQ: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

TI: TEACHER INTERVIEW

PQ: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

PI: PARENT INTERVIEW

SQ: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SI: STUDENT INTERVIEW

PRQ: PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 5.2 presents typical responses from Lakeside High respondent groups identifying principal behaviours.

TABLE 5.2

TYPICAL LAKESIDE HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND CURRICULUM	Actively promotes and advocates for the Special Education program in the school LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal chooses the best teachers to teach Special Education LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The principal values feedback and ideas about good teaching practices and curriculum delivery LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up policies and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
THE PRINCIPAL PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	" My role is to make the school work for the students first" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal leads the school by his own example in providing support for teachers as they support students with disabilities LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	" The type of support programs I set up in the school need to meet the specific needs of a very diverse group of students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

	"We are a learning community with no real hierarchy. Professionals are empowered. Professional development is essential. My role as the principal is to empower the professionals in my school as they meet the students' needs. I am a leader of teachers" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"You need to listen to all the players. All our teachers are trained professionals. They are entitled to feel they are learning during their time here, and know where we are all going as a learning community. They are also entitled to be listened to...if they have a good idea; I need to be open to it. We need creative thinking, not conservatism. Empower your professionals by including them in the conversation and convince them to change by presenting them with data about good practice" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"I attend QEAD and PEEL meetings...these drive quality education. Outcomes, not the executive. You have to be part of it, even though I feel a bit of a fraud due to not teaching any classes. I attend as a teacher, not a principal" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"Sharing of knowledge amongst teachers...shared focus, understanding, language, awareness of individual differences. This is the key to student success. This is the culture of the school" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

The data for Lakeside High indicates that respondents identified other principal behaviours that did not meet the study's criteria for significance. These behaviours were:

- The principal knows the names of students with disabilities
- The principal promotes the school as an inclusive place
- The principal advocates for the school's Special Education program with the diocesan office

It should be noted that these special education-oriented principal behaviours were not aligned with the leadership dimensions included in the Robinson (2007) framework. The principal knowing the names of students with disabilities was identified by a cross-section of teachers and parents, but did not satisfy the criterion for significance for the study. The principal behaviours that included the promotion of the school as an inclusive pace and advocacy for the school's Special Education program with the diocesan office was only cited by teachers and therefore did not satisfy the criterion of at least two respondent groups at the school.

Teachers and the principal were the only respondent groups that identified principal behaviours at Lakeside High (see Table 5.1).

The following section of this chapter presents and analyses these principal behaviours.

5.1 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

In her meta-analysis, Robinson (2007) cites a significant school leadership dimension as the principal planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. This dimension incorporates four types of leadership behaviour – involving staff in discussions of teaching; working with staff to coordinate and review the curriculum; providing feedback to teachers; and systematic monitoring of student progress in collaboration with teachers (p. 14). Teacher respondents at Lakeside High reported these principal behaviours during this study (see *Appendices M, N* and *O).*

A high proportion of teachers noted that the principal actively and publicly supported, encouraged and helped evaluate teachers at regular intervals. An example of this behaviour was cited as the principal inviting feedback from teachers on any issue around the teaching and learning agenda at the school. In particular, the principal was reported by a majority of the teachers as being interested in consulting department heads as well as classroom teachers as they prepared programs for students, especially those with disabilities. The principal was especially interested in the detail of these programs and whether there were opportunities for adequate critical reflection about content and delivery:

> *The principal has an interest in how we support students in our classes and is willing to share his own ideas with us. He is not too interfering but likes us to know that he is engaged with how we teach as much as what we teach...* (Teacher interview)

Teachers commented that the principal had merged the "special education" agenda with the school's general teaching and learning agenda; that is, he refused to treat supporting students with disabilities as a separate issue in the pursuit of quality teaching and learning processes at the school. He was reported by teachers as promoting the development of good planning and programming skills for teachers as a means to enhance outcomes for all students. In addition, he was reported as placing a high priority on teachers developing a capacity to critically reflect on their practices when evaluating their impact on students with disabilities.

As a teacher commented during the interview:

> (Principal's name) *is a promoter of what he likes to call critical reflection. He thinks we need to review what we do as teachers and plan to do it better, or at lest in a different way, if things don't work out as well as we thought they should...*

Teachers also reported that the principal regularly requested meetings with him to review how aspects of the curriculum were being implemented in the classroom. For example, teachers involved with Year Seven and Eight students met with the principal to evaluate the school's literacy program for students with disabilities, as one teacher referred to in the questionnaire:

> *Each of the students on the Special Education program that I teach are also on the school's literacy project to see if we can improve their reading. The principal is concerned that teachers properly plan and review student progress on this program. He often asks for reports on individual students, usually through* (name of the Special Education Coordinator).

Overall, the principal was reported by teachers as regularly requesting meetings with him to review how aspects of the curriculum were being implemented in the classroom. He was reported as having a grasp of the major issues embedded in the school's implementation of a range of syllabuses and was willing to work with staff in improving the planning and evaluation processes required to produce better outcomes for students. These tasks were reported by the principal as an important aspect of his leadership role:

At a school like our's, curriculum development and modification is vital. I see my job as helping staff plan approaches to students that are consistent with the syllabus and then gaining skills in reviewing their classroom practices. Critical reflection is a buzz word, I know, but as a principal I need to help teachers develop an ability to implement the curriculum in ways that are helpful to all students, regardless of their special needs. (Principal interview)

The following excerpt from the principal interview reflects his vision for establishing new school processes and structures to promote improved teacher planning and evaluation of the curriculum:

Principal: *My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up processes and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students. They rely on me being proactive when I see an issue and then acting on it.*

Question: *Can you give me an example of this?*

Principal: *Yes. When I arrived here, there was a great need to establish a formal case conference structure and IPs for Special Education. They had apparently been asking for one for years. It was important that the decision be seen as coming from the top so I announced at a staff meeting "Who would like to join me in setting it up?" The teachers immediately saw that I was behind it and it was therefore important. By being involved in a personal way is far more powerful than simply announcing through a memo. So we then set up a transition case conference system that's been running ever since. And I'm still involved,*

but so are most of the staff, and that includes ancillary as well. And it's led to a more co-coordinated approach to teaching all our students, not just those with special needs.

A majority of teachers through their questionnaire responses also reported that the principal actively developed a range of educational programs and school structures for students with disabilities, with particular focus on the Special Education program. These teachers cited the principal's regular attendance at case conference meetings for these students, his invitation to the Special Education Co-coordinator to join the school's executive leadership team and his readiness to invite Special Education teachers to regularly contribute to staff meetings as practical examples of his determination to establish credibility for the Special Education program. He saw the functions of the Special Education program as an important part of the school's pedagogical and organisational response to student need. These examples also reflect observations by some teachers that the principal was committed to an active engagement with the Special Education program and in strategically positioning them in the school's organisational structure.

The principal's leadership behaviours at Lakeside High in planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum were therefore perceived by his staff as reflecting an active engagement with them in supporting whole-school efforts to successfully provide for students with disabilities. These points of principal engagement were identified by respondents as predominantly pedagogical and organisational in nature.

THE PRINCIPAL PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Robinson (2007) states that leadership practices that include the principal promoting and participating in teacher learning and development have a strong impact on school performance (p.15). These practices involve the principal participating in both formal and informal strategies to improve instructional support for students. Throughout his interview, the Lakeside High principal asserted that his leadership role included establishing a range of school structures and processes that enabled teachers to further develop their professional skills.

The data presented in Table 5.1 indicates that seventy-eight percent of teachers during the interviews identified the efforts of the principal in promoting and participating in teacher learning and development as important factors in the school's provision for students with disabilities. Teachers cited the principal's promotion of professional development activities prioritising quality teaching and learning for all students at the school as a particularly important factor in establishing a supportive teaching environment (see *Appendix M)*. The teacher interviews, rather than the questionnaires, provided most of the data supporting these aspects of the principal's leadership behaviours. The difference between the questionnaire and interview responses by teachers may be due, in part, to the group nature of the teacher interviews at this school where an individual teacher would suggest a principal behaviour (such as the principal's promotion and participation in

supporting teachers and their learning) and other teachers would then elaborate upon it as a significant principal behaviour.

During the interview, the principal stated that he saw his leadership role as including the support of staff members as they developed their classroom skills:

> *Teacher development is the key to our success. Good practices in the classroom provide a catalyst for supporting students. Our staff is committed on the whole to providing the best we can muster for all students, but especially those with special needs. My job is to support them and develop ways for them to do their best. The programs and structures I put in place need to be there as a support, not a hindrance or irrelevant to the main game. As a staff we need to use every moment we meet together as a chance to improve the school.*

The principal claimed that an outcome of developing processes to enhance teacher development was the creation of a "dynamic school learning community" that enhanced the work of classroom teachers in providing for student needs in the classroom:

> *We are a learning community with no real hierarchy. Professionals are empowered here as we support each other. My role as the principal is to empower the professionals in my school as they meet the students' needs. I am a leader of teachers. We aim to teach all students here. The needs of students with disabilities are an obvious priority for a school like our's, so it is up to me as the leader to put in place the conditions for*

quality outcomes for these to occur every day. Teachers developing their skills are an obvious way of me leading this process. We are determined to create a dynamic learning community. (Principal interview)

The principal's commitment to these leadership behaviours was reinforced by teacher comments during the interviews. A high proportion of teacher respondents stated that the principal actively engaged them at regular intervals in supporting their efforts to improve instructional skills in the classroom.

For example, one teacher commented:

> *The principal is a believer in how important teachers can be in making a difference in the lives of our students. He sees our improvement as teachers as a way of changing lives. So every chance he gets he checks how we are doing as teachers. He wants us to develop new skills all the time and develop ourselves as professionals in the teaching game, as he calls it.*

The principal's commitment to improving teacher skills was also reported as leadership behaviour valued by his staff.

As a teacher stated in the interview:

> *The principal sees himself as a partner in everything teachers do at this school. He's always there to support you in thinking about what you're doing with students. He wants us to get better as teachers and he wants to know how he can help...he wants us to continue leaning as the students continue learning, if you know what I mean..*

The principal was therefore seen by his teachers as committed to providing the best possible provision for students through the development of learning and skill acquisition for staff. His leadership behaviours were perceived by teachers as prioritising pedagogically sound approaches to teaching and learning and engaging with staff. An important aspect of his leadership approach was cited as developing appropriate organisational and organisational strategies for targeting staff professional development and promoting effective student learning as a priority for the school. Teachers also noted that the principal not only promoted these behaviours for staff but was personally committed to improving his own skills and abilities as a teacher through his role as a principal.

SUMMARY

The Lakeside High principal was reported by respondents as exercising a range of leadership behaviours that significantly contributed to the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The principal nominated his school's highest priority as providing quality teaching practices and developing effective school structures and policies for all student needs. His behaviours were reported as reflecting commitment to implement these priorities. The principal also stated that he modelled behaviours for his staff that reflected his professional and personal support of these school priorities. He mentioned some of these behaviours as his consultation with teachers and support staff about student needs, an active interest in the needs of students with disabilities, his incorporation of Special Education issues on staff meeting agendas and his development of school policies and structures that directly impacted on provision of support for these students. Overall,

the study concluded that the principal's behaviours reflected his pedagogical and organisational engagement with the school community in providing for students with disabilities.

SECTION TWO: IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS FOR LAKESIDE HIGH

A school condition was reported as a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities if it met two criteria:

- At least 40% of a respondent group reported a school condition
- More that one respondent group reported a school condition

These criteria were employed for identifying school conditions in all case study schools.

Lakeside High respondents reported that school conditions were significant factors in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Four school conditions emerged from the data at Lakeside High:

- Special Education teacher capacity
- Staff members participate in professional development activities in Special Education
- Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities
- Individual Plans are developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities

Table 5.3 presents the proportion of the Lakeside High respondent groups that identified a particular school condition that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices M, N* and *O).*

TABLE 5.3 **SCHOOL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED BY LAKESIDE HIGH RESPONDENTS**

^ SEE TABLE 5.1 FOR KEY

	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
SCHOOL CONDITION SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	84%	100%		100%			YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION ALL STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	56%	78%					YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES		78%		100%			YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	81%		61%	100%		83%		YES

Table 5.4 presents typical responses from Lakeside High respondent groups identifying school conditions.

TABLE 5.4 **TYPICAL LAKESIDE HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING SCHOOL CONDITIONS**

SCHOOL CONDITION	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	The establishment of a Special Education program that has expertise, experience and commitment to students with disabilities LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The LST and her staff communicate, collaborate and provide you with the type of support you need as a teacher LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
INDIVIDUAL PLANS DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	A balance between in-class support, withdrawal and curriculum modification for students with disabilities LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Transition programs involving consultation between the student, teacher and parents, especially regarding after-school placement options LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	There is a whole-school commitment and culture through professional development that values and prioritises the special needs of students LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION	"The key to any success we have is due to the collaborative nature of the school" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	There is excellent communication processes between teachers and between teachers and parents at this school around student needs and outcomes LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT LAKESIDE HIGH

SCHOOL CONDITION

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY

The results in Table 5.3 indicate that teachers, parents and the principal identified Special Education capacity as a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The capacity of Special Education teachers was the most frequently identified school condition at Lakeside High, reported by a high proportion of teachers in both the interviews and through the questionnaires as well as by all parents during the interviews and the principal through his questionnaire responses and during his interview (see *Appendices M, N,* and *O).*

The teacher comments in both the questionnaires and the interviews reflect a high regard for the impact of the school's Special Education program and specifically the capacity, commitment and experience of its Special Education teachers. Eighty-four percent of teachers on the questionnaire and one hundred percent of teachers during the interview (see Table 5.3) commented on the capacity of the school's Special Education teachers. The skills of the Special Education teachers were reported by many teachers as playing an important role in supporting regular teachers as they improved their classroom teaching practices.

During the interviews, one teacher stated that:

> *...the Special Education teachers at this school are really the leaders of teaching and learning. We usually look to them for inspiration and ideas.*

They give so much help in supporting kids with special needs in the classroom.

On both the questionnaire and during the interview, the principal identified the Special Education teachers' range of skills as a major contributor to the school's success in supporting students with disabilities as well as providing the school with a range of effective intervention strategies for these students.

The principal commented during his interview:

> *The skills of the Special Education staff are vital... I just set up the culture and conditions at the school where they can do their work effectively and efficiently. All teachers have a high degree of confidence in them. They give us lots of options in helping our kids here.*

All the parents interviewed for the study commented on capacity of the Special Education staff. These respondents particularly appreciated the skills and commitment of the Special Education teachers and cited these attributes as important factors in the school's success with students with disabilities.

One parent, for example, stated:

> *You just trust their advice. Before we arrived at this school, we were in the dark about our daughter. Here they tell you everything you need to know about your child. We are very happy.* (Parent interview)

The data from Lakeside High indicated that the capacity of Special Education teachers at the school was therefore a significant condition in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITION

STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Staff members participating in professional development activities in Special Education was reported by both the teacher respondent groups and the principal as a significant school condition. The teacher orientation of this school condition explains its identification by teachers and the principal and not the other respondent groups.

More than half the teachers reported through their questionnaire responses and during their interviews that professional development offered them regular opportunities to develop their teaching skills in Special Education (see Table 5.3). Most of these professional development activities were provided through workshops and curriculum-based activities offered by the school's Special Education staff, but there were also reported opportunities for teachers to attend external courses and conferences.

Teachers and support staff regularly taking opportunities to develop their teaching skills in Special Education was reported by the principal as an important condition at the school. He identified the professional growth of the school staff as a significant factor in improving the quality of support for students with disabilities. There were

comments by both teachers and the principal that the availability of targeted professional development around Special Education allowed the whole school community to focus on how to effectively support students with disabilities. One teacher new to the school in the year of the study stated:

> *Most of the stuff I've learned about Special Ed. I've learned this year through the staff meeting workshops and other PD at the school.*

The principal commented:

> *It is important that as a school we don't just preach support for all kids but help each other out in practical ways. PD is vital in this... though we have lots of needs around here, Special Ed. is a pretty important issue for us as teachers. The PD we offer is geared to improve our performance as teachers.*

Professional development was therefore perceived by teachers and the principal as an effective way to provide for students with disabilities by supporting teachers develop better classroom practices.

SCHOOL CONDITION

COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A wide range of respondents identified this condition at the school – the principal, seventy-eight percent of teachers and all parents during the interviews (see Table 5.3). Consultative processes between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers were reported as important factors for students with disabilities because they allowed teachers to feel supported and involved when planning

programs for these students. Regular contact with the Special Education staff was reported by a majority of teachers during the interview as helping forge a partnership with the Special Education teachers in supporting these students.

One teacher commented about the Special Education staff during the interview as follows:

> *...they are often the first person you go to for help; they really know their stuff and provide you with support. You know that you can trust them and that they will go the extra yards with you.*

Another teacher commented:

> *They are welcome in my room any day. They seem to know all the kids well and what they need to do my subject. I chat to them as often as possible.*

A recurring theme of the comments by the teachers through both the questionnaire and during the interviews was the availability and willingness of the school's Special Education teachers to treat every student as an individual, yet also recognise that teachers in the classroom occasionally required one-to-one support.

Some teacher comments on the questionnaires about the Special Education teachers included:

> *They know our challenges and know how to support us. They're "real teachers". They are always ready to work with us.*

and

> *They are always in the staffroom asking the right questions...*

and

They have real credibility as teachers around here when they work with us...

The perceived credibility of the Special Education staff by regular classroom teachers and their identification as "real teachers", their commitment to meeting student needs in a practical way and their flexibility in dealing with the different demands of a range of teachers and students were some of the qualities many of the teaching staff reported as important in establishing productive working partnerships and constructive engagement processes across the school.

In addition, teachers also commented about how the Special Education staff initiated both formal and informal opportunities for staff consultation around impromptu student case conferences in the staff room, after-school meetings between teachers, shared programming sessions between teachers across grades on common topics and workshops during staff meetings around Special Education issues.

The promotion of these consultative practices by the Special Education staff was reported by some teachers as helping develop a consultative school culture. For example, during the teacher interviews some teachers commented that they were encouraged by fellow colleagues to regularly consult with each other around the needs of students with disabilities based on the effective modelling of consultation by the Special Education teachers. One group of teachers commented that a consultative school culture was based on the Special Education staff commitment that that all students could succeed at Lakeside High.

As one teacher commented at the interview:

When I first arrived at this school, teacher meetings were usually about discipline or complaints. Now we seem to have a change – we now usually talk with each other about outcomes for students. Parents, too, are now more willing to come up to the school and discuss these things. The Special Education teachers are usually around-about as well always suggesting new ways of supporting our kids. They have a great belief that all students can learn given the right teaching approach...

The principal linked consultative practices by teachers with improved student outcomes and saw the Special Education staff as being instrumental in initiating many of these teacher exchanges. As the school leader, he sought to promote constructive engagement between teachers around student needs and syllabus outcomes. Such collaboration was seen by the principal as creating a "flat school organisation" where there were no hierarchies and the learning needs of students were the primary school priority. The principal stated that he had an important leadership role in modelling consultative behaviours for his teachers. He gave an example of his "open door" policy for all teachers and his openness to discussion and debate during staff meetings as ways to encourage such consultative practices. During his interview, he commented:

The key to any success we have is due to people feeing free to talk to each other about what's on their minds. This can be defined, I suppose, as effective communication or teacher collaboration. It is a willingness to listen to all people, regardless of their position or role in the school. Sometimes you can set up structures to make this happen more easily; more often than not it occurs because people feel they are valued and

that their ideas and views will be given respect. We have to be open to changing our ways by being open to different ways of doing things.

The establishment of a consultative culture at the school involving Special Education and regular teachers was also identified as a significant factor by parents. All parents during the interviews commented that they appreciated the consultative relationship among staff members because it reflected a whole school commitment to meeting the needs of their children. A high proportion of parents commented that due to the high degree of teacher consultation they did not need to continually repeat a "story" about their child's special needs. Teachers seemed to be aware of their child's needs at teacher-parent meetings:

> *You don't know how frustrating it is to keep repeating the same story all the time. You end up feeling as if no-one talks to each other if you keep saying the same thing. But here, we've noticed a difference. Teachers seem to know your story and so you can then cut to the chase when you meet...I think (Special Education coordinators' name) is behind this, but I' can't be sure...*

The capacity of the Special Education staff and regular teachers to constructively collaborate with each other was reported by a range of respondents as a condition reflecting the school's commitment to providing for students with disabilities. Many teacher respondents stated that the Special Education staff played an important role in initiating these consultative practices for teachers.

INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Individual Plans for students with disabilities were reported by all respondent groups as a school condition at Lakeside High. Table 5.3 indicates that eighty-one percent of teachers, sixty-six percent of parents on the questionnaire and all parents during the interviews, eighty-three percent of students on the interview and the principal during his interview reported that Individual Plans (IPs) were an important factor in the school supporting students with disabilities. The IPs at the school were cited as allowing individual planning processes for these students to include appropriate input by teachers, parents and the student. The IPs were also reported as an important process for teachers to develop a better knowledge of the needs of students in their classes. On occasions during the interviews, teachers and parents commented in detail about how their involvement in an IP process may include curriculum modification, special examination provisions or post-school options for an individual student. Teachers, Special Education staff, parents and students reported the IP process as a means for planning educational and vocational outcomes for students.

As an example of a teacher's experiences in the IP process, the following comment highlights the value of the process:

> *The student, parents and teachers are aiming for the one objective. We work off the same plan. IPs makes the work of teachers a bit easier.*
> (Teacher questionnaire response)

The targeting of individual student needs through IPs was especially valued by parents. Many parents commented that they appreciated the provision of individualised support for their children at the primary school level and feared that their children would be "lost" in the size and confusion of the secondary school setting. An enduring theme during the parent interviews was their relief that most teachers, including the principal, knew the name of their child and understood their child's needs by participating in the IP process.

For example, a parent commented about this aspect of the IP process:

> *It's really nice to know that the teachers actually know my son and his name. At least they care about him; that I am sure about. IPs gave us a good chance to catch up with what's going on.* (Parent interview)

Parents were confident that teacher knowledge of their child's needs through the IPs would result in a support program that addressed their child's disabilities. In addition, some students also mentioned that not only did most staff members know their name but they were also aware of their special needs and the type of support they required in class through the IPs.

One senior student at the school stated:

> *It is nice that the teachers care about your future...they come up to you around here and ask how you're going. And they seem to know what your study needs are and how they can help you. I think my IP has helped in this.*

The IP process at Lakeside High was reported by a wide range of respondents as a condition that gave members of the school community a better understanding of the

individual needs of students with disabilities and allowed for teachers, parents and students opportunities to plan for their future.

SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this study was to identify principal behaviours that successfully provided for students with disabilities. In surveying respondents at Lakeside High, they identified a range of school conditions as representing additional factors in how their school successfully provided for these students. Special Education teacher capacity and the impact of IPs were the most frequently reported school conditions underpinning the successful provision for students with disabilities at Lakeside High. The roles played by Special Education staff members were reported by teachers, in particular, as a powerful school condition and specific mention was made of their practical support for individual students, promotion and involvement in IP processes and their collaborative consultation with regular classroom teachers.

The school's promotion of professional development in Special Education for teachers and the involvement of a wide cross-section of the staff in these activities were also reported by respondents as a school condition that enhanced the school's ability to better provide for students with disabilities.

Overall, the identified school conditions at Lakeside High were reported by most respondents as being primarily focused on pedagogical and organisational strategies employed by the school for these students. The development of these school conditions reflected a belief by the principal and staff that all students could learn,

all teachers had the ability to make a difference in the lives of students in the classroom and that effective school-wide structures, policies and practices enhanced the work of teachers.

SECTION THREE: THE PRINCIPAL'S ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Another factor was identified in analysing the data at Lakeside High. Respondents reported that the principal's leadership behaviours at Lakeside High reflected his **pedagogical** and **organisational engagement** with the school community. This factor was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her leadership framework. For the purposes of this study, this factor will be described as principal engagement and will be defined as the principal personally committing to and then acting in response to these students' needs. Principal engagement, therefore, represents the principal's personal investment of not only authority, but energy and resources.

Both these behaviours - *planning, co-coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum;* and *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development* - were seen by respondents as reflecting the principal's preference to engage with the school community around pedagogical and organisational agendas.

For example, the principal was reported as promoting pedagogical engagement with the school community by exercising leadership behaviours that helped establish and promote sound teaching approaches in providing for students with disabilities. As one teacher commented during the interview:

(Principal's name) *is determined that we take responsibility for our teaching. He works with us in planning our work in class, and especially how we can modify the curriculum for the kids we teach who have special needs. Checking how we are going with these students is also an issue with him. We are encouraged to review our programs as often as possible. He'll sometimes ask us to share our plans for individual students in our classes...he is keen that we take up best practices as teachers in our subject areas.*

Another teacher commented on the principal's preferred approach to relating with staff:

(Principal's name) *likes to see his role here as a teacher of teachers. He really see himself as an educator first and a principal second. It's really humbling, I think, when your boss related to you as a professional, though it puts some pressure on you to develop as a teacher.* (Teacher interview)

A parent stated during the interview:

We like him (the principal) *because he is a believer in schools making a difference in kids' lives. He keeps pushing the teachers here to become better teachers and parents notice this.*

The principal's engagement with the school's organisational agenda was demonstrated by his execution of leadership behaviours that helped establish and develop a range of cross-school structures for delivering these teaching practices and approaches for students with disabilities.

As the principal commented on his questionnaire:

> *One of my roles is to structure the school so that we can be efficient in supporting students on the Special Education program. I need to be innovative in designing these structures and processes for my staff and the students as well as making sure that the staffs are OK with any changes I make.*

Teachers also made comments on the questionnaires and during the interview confirming the principal's priorities in leading structural changes at the school:

> *He's* (the principal) *a great organiser. He's set up our school as a model for others in the way we support kids with special needs. The LST* (Learning Support Team) *is an example...no-one is ever lost here in knowing how to look after student needs.* (Teacher interview)

and

> *Special Education organisation is important. The principal has organised the school so that we have structures that make the teacher's job easier when needing to support special student needs.* (Teacher questionnaire)

Though parent comments about the principal's role did not meet this study's criterion of significance, some parent comments during the interview supported the impression by teachers that the principal's leadership behaviours reflected a type of

engagement with the school community in helping establish effective organisational approaches for students with disabilities:

> *The Individual Plan meetings were set up to help us know what's going on. Mr... (the principal) tells us that he's always trying to make things easy for us to get involved in the school. He thinks these meetings are there for us so we should take advantage of them.* (Parent interview)

and

> *The principal organises the school well. He has put in place many ways we can speak up or ask questions about our son.* (Parent questionnaire)

Teacher respondents cited a range of additional indicators that reflected the principal's pedagogical and organisational engagement. These indicators included the promotion of an explicit teaching and learning agenda at staff meetings and parent meetings, his active support for and participation in the school's professional development activities around establishing sound pedagogy and his ongoing support for the roles played by the school's Special Education staff in developing good teaching and learning practices. What also emerged, therefore, from the data at Lakeside High was that the principal's behaviours reflected a distinct type of engagement that helped establish and develop a range of identified school conditions at the school. These conditions for students with disabilities were reported as consistent with the principal's engagement with staff and parents in promoting sound pedagogy and effective organisational strategies.

The principal's *pedagogical engagement* with the school community was reflected by his leadership behaviours in first collaborating with staff, parents and students and gaining a whole school commitment to developing the school as a learning community. He was reported as working with staff on a day-to-day basis in supporting them adopt effective classroom and specialised teaching practices as a catalyst for enhancing student provision. Respondents cited a range of leadership behaviours executed by the principal to establish and promote this commitment, including supporting targeted staff professional development and planning, co-coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum and becoming personally involved in Individual Plan meetings.

The principal engaged with an *organisational* agenda by collaborating with staff and parents to help establish formal and less formal school structures and processes on behalf of students with disabilities. Some of these leadership behaviours included the setting up of Learning Support Teams, individual planning processes (IPs) and student case conferences. Through his leadership behaviours, therefore, the principal engaged members of his school community in establishing, developing and sustaining the range of school conditions that were identified in this study as successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

In addition to the principal behaviours and school conditions that were identified by respondents at Lakeside High, principal engagement was discovered as another significant factor in the school's successful provision for these students. The

principal's behaviours at Lakeside High were characterised by respondents as reflecting his pedagogical and organisational engagement with the school community.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT LAKESIDE HIGH

INTRODUCTION

Three significant factors emerged from the data at Lakeside High as contributing to the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. A range of *principal behaviours* were identified by respondents, reflecting the principal's pedagogical and organisational *engagement* with the school community. In addition, respondents identified a range of *school conditions* that were reported as arising from the principal's engagement and behaviours. This section of the chapter examines the relationships among these factors and how they impact on the school's successful provision for students with disabilities at Lakeside High.

The principal was reported by respondents as envisioning Lakeside High as a learning community that adopted sound pedagogical approaches in meeting student needs, facilitated by effective school structures and organisational processes. Respondents reported that the principal promoted the development of these pedagogical and organisational approaches by the execution of leadership behaviours identified as *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* and *promoting and participating in teacher learning and development.* The principal's behaviours and engagement with the school community helped

create school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities at the school.

The links between principal behaviours and school conditions are presented in Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR:

PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

Figure 5.1 presents the link between the principal's engagement, principal behaviour - *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* - and three school conditions at Lakeside High.

FIGURE 5.1: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT LAKESIDE HIGH

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT	PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
PEDAGOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL	PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Lakeside High respondents reported (see Section One of this chapter) that the principal modelled instructional support and collaborative practices by his willingness to engage all teachers around quality teaching and learning practices. He was also reported as establishing and promoting a range of organisational school processes to support the needs of students with disabilities. The principal's pedagogical and organisational engagement with the school community therefore underpinned his leadership behaviours and helped create the range of identified school conditions at

Lakeside High. The principal reported that he prioritised the development of a planning and evaluation agenda at the school that promoted "best practice" teaching and curriculum implementation. He reported that an important strategy in implementing this agenda was by regularly encouraging discussion and consultative practices among staff around student needs and establishing a range of school structures and processes such as Individual Plans and case management programs. The capacity of the Special Education teachers was also cited by the principal as an important component in developing sound pedagogical approaches to providing for students with disabilities.

The data supporting the links between the principal's adoption of pedagogical and organisational engagement and leadership behaviours and the creation of school conditions is presented below.

Respondents reported that the capacity of the Special Education teachers was a pivotal factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The principal's commitment to planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum for students with disabilities centred on their roles. His engagement around pedagogy and organisational responses to student needs was encapsulated in these roles performed by the Special Education staff at the school. For the school to succeed in meeting the needs of these students relied on staff recognising the capacity of the Special Education teachers to both support individual students and promote collaborative and productive relationships with regular teachers.

For example, a parent stated during an interview:

> *We knew about the principal's feelings about Special Education at this school for a long time before we enrolled our son...we also knew that he was so keen about Special Education that he employed only the best teachers for boys like mine. The Special Education staff here are the best around...they give our son a chance to catch up with his work and learn new things...*

A teacher comment on the questionnaire supported this parent perspective:

> *There is a bond between the Special Education staff and the principal here. He is so keen on best practice for all kinds of education that he wants the best Special Education teachers he can find. He knows that if you want kids with special needs supported, you need the best Special Education staff you can find. They work really hard behind the scenes to work out how we can all support them.*

The principal stated during his interview:

> *I reckon the Special Ed. staff we have are the best going around. As a supporter of Special Education, I need to back up my teachers in this program as much as I can. It's a bit stupid to support Special Ed. and then ignore the teachers doing the heavy lifting...so, yes, the Special Ed. staff get my full support. It's not really hard, though, when they are as good as they are here. They help us meet some pretty important needs at this school. They give us great support for students and work hard in a systems way to engage other teachers in their work; a sort of whole school approach headed up by the Special Ed. team.*

Respondents reported collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers about meeting the needs of students with disabilities (see Section Two of this chapter) arose out of the principal's promotion of planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. Teachers reported that the principal's modelling of consultative and collaborative behaviours with staff represented an invitation for them to develop regular and constructive dialogue with the Special Education staff and to professionally engage with them in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Teachers also reported that the principal had direct oversight of the curriculum and constantly promoted school-wide coordination of teaching programs. For this oversight and coordination to be implemented efficiently and effectively, the principal directed classroom teachers to regularly consult with the Special Education staff in supporting the curriculum needs of the high proportion of students with disabilities at the school.

One teacher stated during the interview process:

> *The principal encourages all teachers to talk to* (name of Special Education coordinator*) as often as possible. He is a believer in sharing the capacity around the school...he thinks we can learn a lot for her and her staff. He even tells us that he goes to her to ask for ideas and programming hints, so if it's OK for him, why not us?*

Other teachers reported the existence of a strong professional bond between the principal and the Special Education staff, with the principal delegating an active role to the Special Education staff in supporting regular teachers in their classroom responses to individual student needs.

One teacher commented during the interview:

> *The Special Education teachers are really helpful...they can't do enough for you usually. They work with you on improving your teaching; they seem to know lots about the right way to teach some of our kids. And you know that (principal's name) is behind them...he's always urging at staff meetings to work with them.*

The principal was reported as actively supporting the Special Education staff at the school. His promotion of consultative processes between classroom teachers and Special Education teachers was cited by teachers as reflecting a commitment to pedagogical and organisational strategies in supporting all students at Lakeside High, and in particular those students with disabilities.

Respondents reported that Individual Plans (IPs) developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities (see Section Two of this chapter) arose out of the principal planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. For the principal, the development and implementation of IPs reflected the outcome of both his pedagogical and organisational engagement with the Lakeside High school community by promoting sound teaching and learning practices within an accessible and effective structural framework for his staff.

The principal stated that upon his arrival at the school he immediately established a formal case conference structure for students with disabilities around IPs:

> *IPs are a new name for something that teachers have been doing for a long time in an informal way. The case conferencing that goes along with IPs has always been a good way to bring teachers and support staff together to work out what to do about student needs. If a school wants to be serious about planning and evaluating its programs for students, IPs are there to do this. When it comes to students with special needs, IPs are especially important as they coordinate all their support programs. All teachers can contribute to good teaching and learning practices.*

It is noteworthy that the principal at his interview stated that he was personally involved in coordinating the IP case conference program, a commitment that was favourably noted by many teachers on his staff. He commented that he chose to model the types of professional behaviours he required of his staff in his active interest and involvement in how students were progressing at the school.

A teacher during the interviews highlighted the effect of the principal's involvement in the IP process by commenting:

> *Individual Plans are really the brainchild of the principal here, along with* (Special Education Coordinator's name). *He thinks that IPs are the way we get to know the kids better so we can improve the way we support them. He gets involved himself, too, which is pretty unusual for a principal.*

A high proportion of parents also identified the role of IPs in supporting students with disabilities at the school. Some of these parents through their questionnaire

responses referred to the principal's personal promotion of IPs in the school newsletter and commented that he personally attended some IP case conferences.

A parent noted on the questionnaire:

> *I wasn't aware of IPs until I enrolled my child at this school. The principal told us that IPs were an important way we could be involved in supporting our child and if we were a little apprehensive, he would be willing to attend our first IP.*

The school conditions that describe the collaborative consultation between regular classroom teachers and Special Education teachers and the development of the school's IP processes were therefore linked by Lakeside High respondents with a range of principal behaviours around planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. What emerges from the Lakeside High data is a principal who prioritised pedagogical and organisational engagement with his school community. These types of principal engagement underpinned his leadership behaviours, helping create a range of school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

Figure 5.1 indicates that the principal's planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum is linked to a range of significant school conditions at Lakeside High in its successful provision for students with disabilities. Special Education teacher capacity, teacher collaboration and the IP process can all be linked to the principal's leadership behaviours at the school.

The principal's active engagement with staff and parents in planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum also reflected his commitment to establishing and implementing pedagogical and organisational strategies to support students with disabilities.

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR:

PRINCIPAL PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Figure 5.2 describes the link between the principal's pedagogical and organisational engagement, principal behaviour - *principal promoting and participating in teacher learning and development* - and *staff members participating in professional development activities in Special Education.*

FIGURE 5.2:

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL PROMOTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AT LAKESIDE HIGH

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT	PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	SCHOOL CONDITION ARISING FROM THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
PEDAGOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL →	PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT →	STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Respondents reported that staff participating in professional development activities in Special Education (see Section Two of this chapter) arose out of the principal promoting and participating in teacher learning and development. This leadership behaviour was in turn a reflection of his pedagogical and organisational engagement

with the Lakeside High school community. Professional development represented a means for the principal to promote both his pedagogical priorities – by establishing sound teaching and leaning practices through staff development - and organisational priorities – by establishing effective school processes by which all staff could be exposed to current research and effective teaching strategies.

One teacher commented about this link:

> *The boss is always urging us to attend in-services that help us understand the needs of kids here. He wants us to improve our skills and knowledge...* (Teacher interview)

Another teacher commented:

> *The principal is a big believer in teachers developing their skills. He's puts his money where his mouth is, too. The staff meetings are a constant in-service for us here...usually run by the Special Education staff and about individual differences in the classroom.* (Teacher interview)

An important aspect of the principal's promotion of teacher learning and development was his commitment to participating in his own professional development as a "leader of teachers" on staff. The principal modelled the type of professional behaviours he saw as supporting best teaching practices and enhanced student outcomes, such as inviting staff to workshops about effective teaching practice and then leading or participating in the activities as if he was a classroom teacher. His commitment to improving his own knowledge of effective pedagogy

within the context of the school's teaching and learning agenda had a powerful effect on his staff.

One teacher stated during the interview:

> *He* (the principal) *is a learner himself. It's kind of strange to see your principal working with you during an in-service or staff meeting and admitting his own gaps in knowledge or experience. It encourages you to devote yourself to improving how you teach.*

The Lakeside High principal understood the power of both promoting and participating in professional development in Special Education as a model for his staff.

SUMMARY

Figure 5.2 indicates that the principal's promotion and participation in teacher learning and development is linked to the establishment and support of professional development activities for all staff around Special Education. The principal reported that he saw professional development as a key factor in teachers developing their own instructional skills in the classroom and providing for students with disabilities. Respondents at the school identified the principal's personal involvement in these professional development activities as a reflection of his engagement with staff in developing both pedagogical and organisational approaches to the support of these students.

SUMMARY OF THE LAKESIDE HIGH CASE STUDY

The principal's pedagogical and organisational engagement, leadership behaviours and a range of school conditions were identified by respondents at Lakeside High as significant factors in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The Robinson (2007) framework was very useful in organising the Lakeside High data but there were some indicators, mostly those specifically related to Special Education practices that were identified as falling outside this framework. These indicators have been discussed in this case study. In addition, the establishment of principal engagement as a factor at Lakeside High was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her framework.

The principal's leadership behaviours and pedagogical and organisational engagement reflected his commitment to helping establish teaching and learning practices based on sound pedagogy within the context of effective organisational school processes and structures. Respondents reported that the principal adopted a proactive and interventionist role through his leadership behaviours by engaging with the school community in promoting pedagogical and organisational strategies on behalf of students with disabilities. He then modelled the types of behaviours he required from the school community.

A second case study – Viewpoint High – is reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR VIEWPOINT HIGH

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports and analyses the data for Viewpoint High. As in the previous case study chapter, the Robinson (2007) leadership dimension framework is adapted, using the framework laid out in Chapter Four, to report and categorise the responses for this school. The identified principal behaviours and school conditions are examined to explain the ways in which the Viewpoint High school community successfully provides for students with disabilities. As for Lakeside High, principal engagement is then identified as an additional factor in how this school provides for these students.

The first section of this chapter reports on principal behaviours identified by respondents; the second section reports on school conditions identified by respondents; and the third section reports on the type of principal engagement adopted by the principal at the school. The final section of the chapter presents linkages between principal behaviours, principal engagement and school conditions and reveals how these linkages reflect the school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

SECTION ONE: IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS FOR VIEWPOINT HIGH

The criteria for identifying principal behaviours at Viewpoint High are described in Section One of Chapter 5.

Viewpoint High respondents reported that principal behaviours were a significant factor in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Two principal behaviours emerged from the data at Viewpoint High:

- the principal *establishes goals and expectations*
- the principal *plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum*

These principal behaviours are aligned with the leadership practices reported by Robinson (2007) as those impacting on all student outcomes.

Table 6.1 presents the proportion of the Viewpoint High respondent groups that identified a particular principal behaviour that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices P, Q* and *R).*

TABLE 6.1

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED BY VIEWPOINT HIGH RESPONDENTS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	75%	73%	50%	50%			YES	YES
THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	68%	62%		66%				YES

^KEY FOR THE TABLES IN CHAPTER SIX

TQ: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
TI: TEACHER INTERVIEW
PQ: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PI: PARENT INTERVIEW
SQ: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
SI: STUDENT INTERVIEW
PRQ: PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
PRI: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

% PROPORTION OF THE RESPONDENT GROUP THAT REPORTED THIS AS A PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

YES THE PRINCIPAL REPORTED THIS AS A PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

Table 6.2 presents typical responses from Viewpoint High respondent groups identifying principal behaviours.

TABLE 6.2

TYPICAL VIEWPOINT HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	The principal sets up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal is very inclusive in how she acts and sets the tone for the rest of the school VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities VIEWPOINT TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staffroom in the middle of the school...everyone with everyone else. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"We enrol everyone here – that's our policy...we are here for everyone" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The role of the principal in setting up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal is very inclusive in how she acts and sets the tone for the rest of the school VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEWS
	"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	The principal values good teaching and learning practices VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

	We are a school that is committed to providing the best support possible for all students VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal is determined that our teachers develop their classroom practices for all students VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEWS

The data for Viewpoint High indicates that respondents identified other principal behaviours that did not meet the study's criteria for significance.

These behaviours were:

- The principal supports individual teachers as they support students with disabilities
- The principal actively advocates for the Special Education program

It should also be noted that these behaviours – supporting individual teachers as they support students with disabilities and actively advocating for the Special Education program - are special education-oriented principal behaviours and are not consistent with the leadership dimensions included in the Robinson (2007) framework. Both these behaviours were identified by teachers but not other respondent groups and therefore did not satisfy the criterion for significance for the study.

It is noted that three of the four respondent groups identified principal behaviours at the school – teachers, parents and the principal. Students did not identify a principal behaviour.

The following section of the chapter describes and analyses these principal behaviours.

6.1 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

The meta-analysis by Robinson (2007) reports that an important school leadership dimension with significant impact on outcomes for all students is the principal establishing goals and expectations for the school community. Robinson (2007) cites such leadership behaviours as the setting, communicating and monitoring of learning goals, standards and expectations and the involvement of staff in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about school goals. (p. 8).

The principal, a high proportion of teachers and half the parents on both the questionnaire and during the interviews (see Table 6.1) reported that the principal's behaviours reflected her commitment to developing Viewpoint High as an inclusive place with a welcoming culture in conjunction with a range of programs supportive of all student needs. For example, in the questionnaires and during the interviews, a majority of teachers commented how the principal regularly made comments at staff meetings and parent information nights about how the promotion of an inclusive culture was a primary goal for the school. Many teachers commented that the principal also used school assemblies and annual student award functions to celebrate the achievement of all students, but especially those students who achieved in spite of their special needs.

As one teacher noted on the questionnaire:

She is passionate about including all members of the community at our school. She really celebrates achievement for those who have to work hard at it. There is an expectation that all students belong here and can succeed. She speaks about how we need to be inclusive almost every week...she wants us to share her passion for inclusion as a reality at this school.

Parents also commented that the principal's behaviours reflected an active engagement with staff in promoting the school's goals and expectations around inclusive practices. These parents commented that the principal matched her "inclusive rhetoric" with action by her welcoming approach to parents and students. Other parents cited both her commitment to pastoral care in addition to practical support strategies for students with disabilities:

She's (the principal) *not all talk about just being friendly to everyone but she backs it up with the type of support my daughter needs to do well.* (Parent interview)

The principal made statements throughout her interview and through her comments on the questionnaire that articulated a belief that the Viewpoint High school community was enriched by the presence and contribution of students with disabilities. She made clear a determination that the school's enrolment profile would continue to reflect the overall representation of people with disabilities in the outside community. One of the principal's simple strategies for translating her vision for the school into action was to change its annual prize-giving ceremony so that it included awards for student effort and perseverance, as well as academic excellence.

The principal also believed that Viewpoint High had developed, over its short time as a school, a reputation for an inclusive approach to education that featured both pastoral care and high academic expectations for students:

> *We publish our vision for the school in our prospectus. It makes it crystal clear that we are a school for anyone and everyone. If you enrol your child here you know that he or she will be mixing with the whole local community. We believe that can make this school known for excellence and fairness, high standards and tolerance for all, all part of looking after each student's holistic needs* (Principal interview)

Consistent with this policy, during the year of the study the principal established a special support class for students with moderate intellectual disability, the first class in the diocese for this purpose. The principal was confident that this class would attract children with significant disabilities to the school. In addition, she claimed that the establishment of the class served as a sign to the local community that Viewpoint High was committed to ensuring high standards for all students in conjunction with alternative strategies for students with disabilities.

Through their responses on the questionnaire and the interviews, teachers and parents at Viewpoint High revealed an understanding that the principal's articulation of inclusive practices as a goal and expectation represented her aspirations for the school. These teachers cited many examples of how the principal's behaviours were consistent with a determination to implement this school vision. These respondents

identified the principal's inclusive vision as encompassing pastoral care for students with disabilities in conjunction with practical strategies to provide for their learning needs.

During her interview and through her responses to the questionnaire, the principal stated that any successful implementation of an inclusive vision for Viewpoint High required leadership direction from the top. Her leadership behaviours needed be consistent with a belief that Viewpoint High could make a difference in students' lives. She saw her engagement with the whole school community in helping create a school culture that effectively met all student needs in practical ways as converting "inclusion rhetoric" into action. The principal's interpersonal style with staff members assisted in the widespread ownership of the school's goals and vision.

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

In her meta-analysis, Robinson (2007) cites a significant school leadership dimension as the principal planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. This dimension incorporates four types of leadership behaviour – involving staff in discussions of teaching; working with staff to coordinate and review the curriculum; providing feedback to teachers; and systematic monitoring of student progress in collaboration with teachers (p. 14).

The Viewpoint High principal and sixty-six percent of parents during the interview and sixty-eight percent of teachers through the questionnaires (see Table 6.1) reported that the principal's behaviours reflected a commitment to planning,

coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, especially when such processes impacted on the progress of students with disabilities. A majority of parents cited the principal's coordination of teaching practices in achieving syllabus outcomes for students with disabilities and the systematic monitoring and evaluation of student progress as being implemented through two key initiatives – an implementation of Individual Plan (IP) processes and the establishment of the school's support class for students with moderate intellectual disabilities. While most parents acknowledged that these processes represented cross-school programs, they claimed the principal "championed" them with parents at the school and they were launched by the principal to provide for students with disabilities. One parent stated that it was the principal who personally advocated for the establishment of the support class with the school's Parent Council; another parent claimed that the principal's support for IPs encouraged her to enrol her child at the school. Most parents who cited examples of this principal behaviour stated that the ability of teachers to successfully provide for students with disabilities was enhanced by the principal planning and coordinating a whole school response to the learning needs of students with disabilities.

The principal was also reported by teachers and parents as actively supporting positive instructional practices by her staff. These leadership behaviours were most evident in the area of student evaluation and monitoring. During the interviews, some teachers stated that the principal would occasionally monitor the progress of an individual student by arranging a meeting with teachers or parents, thereby

ensuring that she was up-to-date with essential details about that student's ongoing needs.

One teacher commented at the interview:

> *You are always confident that* (Principal's name) *is interested in how you are tracking in class with kids. She likes to know how they're going, especially those with difficulties. Your programming ideas are usually what she asks for – how we are going to help this student, she'll ask...*

Another example of these behaviours was given by a parent during the interview. The principal attended an initial enrolment meeting for her child and then followed this contact up with enquiries about the child's progress throughout her first year at the school. The principal then exhibited her ongoing concern for the child by sending notes home inquiring about her progress and by making occasional phone calls to the family.

A parent commented about the principal's behaviours at her interview:

> *She seems to be interested how my daughter's teachers are helping her...some teachers tell me that she is a stickler for getting the planning and review stuff right and the rest will follow. I'm not sure what that means, really, but it shows that she wants quality teachers at this school.*

Questionnaire responses by the teachers confirmed the comments by parents about the principal's behaviours. A majority of teachers claimed that the principal was committed to coordinating the school's teaching and learning programs for all students through a range of supportive behaviours. The principal promoted these

programs as integral to the school's commitment to sound pedagogy in all its teaching and learning approaches. Some teachers cited behaviours such as her regular classroom visits to provide feedback to teachers about their instructive practices; her involvement in cross-grade processes to modify the curriculum for students with disabilities; her intervention to ensure an alignment of Life Skills programs for students with Board of Studies guidelines; her active support for the roles of the Special Education staff; and her promotion of constructive engagement between the Special Education staff and regular classroom teachers.

Another indicator for this principal behaviour cited by teachers and parents was her active promotion of the school's IP processes. The principal was reported as constantly promoting IPs for teachers, parents and students as representing a good pedagogical framework for planning the future needs of students with disabilities. In addition to articulating her support for IPs, the principal was also reported by teachers as becoming personally involved in these processes:

> (Principal's name) *is a 'mover and shaker' when it comes to IPs. She states how important they are at our staff meetings. She also attends IP meetings as often as she can, or sends one of the executive to them instead.* (Teacher questionnaire)

These comments indicate that principal behaviours at Viewpoint High were instrumental in committing staff to plan, coordinate and evaluate teaching and the curriculum around individual student needs. Both teachers and parents gave examples of how the principal's behaviours reflected her willingness to engage with

people in exercising this leadership behaviour. This type of engagement reflected her determination to work with staff and parents in converting an inclusive vision for the school into practical teaching and learning programs supporting the needs of students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

A common theme from the respondent groups at Viewpoint High was a high regard for the personal and professional leadership behaviours of the principal. A significant proportion of teachers and parents commented on the principal's behaviours as reflecting her enthusiasm for the leadership position and the opportunities it gave her to change the lives of students in her care. In addition, these respondents observed that her behaviours were characterised by integrity and a willingness to establish healthy and positive relationships with staff members and parents. These respondents reported that the principal had succeeded in establishing a multilayered approach to school leadership at Viewpoint High based on her personal engagement with people and her ability to effectively communicate an inclusive vision for the school.

On one level, the principal was reported as establishing school goals and expectations around care for all students as valued and supported individuals. On another level, the principal helped create processes that promoted effective planning and coordination of teaching practices so that these school goals could be achieved on behalf of students with disabilities. The impact of these principal behaviours resulted in the development of a distinctive school approach to meeting the needs of these students based on sound teaching and learning practices within the context of

an inclusive practices framework. On yet another level, the principal was engaged with the members of the school community in a way that engendered confidence and regard for her role as the school leader. Through her genuine and cooperative leadership behaviours she was reported as treating others with dignity and respect, resulting in relationships of trust and openness.

The principal's engagement with the Viewpoint High school community around implementing an inclusive vision was therefore a critical factor in the school successfully providing for students with disabilities. An inclusion school culture was envisaged by the principal as integrating school policies and practices based on holistic care for students with disabilities aligned with practical teaching and learning strategies. Her leadership behaviours were reported as significant contributors in realising this vision.

SECTION TWO: IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS FOR VIEWPOINT HIGH

The criteria for identifying school conditions at Viewpoint High are described in Section Two of Chapter 5.

Viewpoint High respondents reported that school conditions were significant factors in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Four school conditions emerged from the data at Viewpoint High.

The school conditions identified by respondents were:

- Special Education teacher capacity

- Staff members participate in professional development activities in Special Education
- Individual Plans are developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities

Table 6.3 presents the proportion of the Viewpoint High respondent groups that identified a particular school condition that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices P, Q* and *R)*.

TABLE 6.3

SCHOOL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED BY VIEWPOINT HIGH RESPONDENTS

^ SEE TABLE 6.1 FOR KEY

	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
SCHOOL CONDITION SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	73%	73%	42%	66%			YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	100%	73%						YES
SCHOOL CONDITION INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	68%	57%		66%				
SCHOOL CONDITION COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES		73%						YES

Table 6.4 presents typical responses from Viewpoint High respondent groups identifying school conditions.

TABLE 6.4

TYPICAL VIEWPOINT HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING SCHOOL CONDITIONS

SCHOOL CONDITION	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	Support provided by Special Education teachers in the classroom for students with disabilities VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
INDIVIDUAL PLANS DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	Specifically targeted support programs for student with disabilities VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Individual planning support for students with disabilities VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	My child has an individualisd program that meets his/her needs VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEWS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	School-based professional development around special needs education VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION	Formal cross-school meetings focusing on the needs of students with disabilities VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

6.2 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT VIEWPOINT HIGH

SCHOOL CONDITION

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY

This school condition was reported by the principal, parents and teachers in both the interviews and through questionnaire responses. The results in Table 6.3 indicate that the capacity of Special Education teachers at the school was a significant school condition cited by the principal through her questionnaire responses and comments during her interview and seventy-three percent of teachers on both the

questionnaire and during the interviews. These respondent groups stated that the capacity of the Special Education staff was primarily based upon their ability to effectively apply their skills in both withdrawal situations and the regular classroom in providing for students with disabilities.

Teacher, parents and the principal cited their ability to effectively provide for their children's individual special needs. For one parent, the Special Education teachers helped her child read independently for the first time; for another parent, her child had been introduced to the Life Skills syllabus and experienced academic success for the first time; other parents expressed their gratitude that their children were treated with respect as individuals by the Special Education staff.

Teachers and the principal reported about the wide repertoire of the Special Education teachers' instructional skills, commitment to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and ability to engage with staff, students and parents. The Special Education role was also reported as being instrumental as advocating for the needs of students with disabilities at the school.

In addition, specific comments were made by teachers and the principal about the capacity of the Special Education staff to develop targeted programs meeting individual learning needs of students. Some teachers also commented that they particularly valued the ability of the Special Education staff to both work collaboratively with them in the classroom as well as individually supporting students and producing significant improvements in their academic achievement.

The principal commented about the role of Special Education during her interview:

> *Our Special Ed. teachers are well thought of by all staff and parents. They have great credibility. Teachers know that if they ask for support, it will always be there. The role of the Special Ed. staff and the teacher's aides is crucial in the day-to-day support of our students with specials needs. Parents also know that if they want advice, or just someone to talk to, our staff will make the time. We are very fortunate to have them here.*

Parents reported that they appreciated two specific qualities of the Special Education staff at the school. Firstly, a majority of parents found the Special Education teachers approachable and friendly. Some of the interviewed parents commented that the process of approaching a school was not especially enjoyable as they were sometimes contacted by staff about the challenges faced by their child. Yet the Special Education teachers at Viewpoint High seemed to understand these potential difficulties. Such was their credibility and approachability that some parents requested that they act as advocates for their child at the school:

> *We don't usually look forward to going up and talking about how our son is going. Primary school was a real ordeal at times, especially for my husband who didn't like being told about how our son was failing in class. But this school is different because* (Special Education teacher's name) *knows* (son's name) *well now and he trusts her to help him. So do we....* (Parent interview)

The capacity of the Special Education staff, then, was found to be a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities on a number of levels.

SCHOOL CONDITION

STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

This school condition was reported by both the principal and teacher respondent group. The absence of parent and student reporting for this school condition probably reflects its teacher-related nature. The results in Table 6.3 indicate that all teachers on the questionnaire and seventy-three percent of teachers during the interview reported this school condition. The principal and most teachers reported that the impact of professional learning opportunities focused on Special Education enhanced their ability to support students with disabilities. An important element in enhancing the effectiveness of these professional development activities was their development by school staff tailored to the particular needs of teachers, rather than being developed by outsiders for the school.

During the interviews, most teachers reported that a focus on professional development reflected the school's commitment to meeting the needs of students with disabilities:

> *The teachers put a lot of their own time into PD. We want to improve our skills as teachers and this school encourages us to do this. That PD has*

such a profile here shows you that we are serious about looking after all student needs. (Teacher interview)

During her interview the principal commented that she was determined that the focus of much of the school's professional development program be around Special Education issues:

> *Our school is keen to do whatever it takes to improve student learning. The most challenging area for most of us is improving the learning of our students with special needs. Our PD activities tend to be based around this.... It may be a bit repetitive at times but we are really stretching our wings at times trying to come up with ways to make a bigger impact in the classroom...*

There was a broad consensus across the teaching staff, reinforced by the principal's comments at the interview, about the role of professional development in supporting teaching and learning on behalf of students with disabilities. As a significant proportion of these professional development activities in Special Education were developed by staff with a focus on issues relevant to the specific needs of teachers, this school condition was reported by respondents as a powerful agent of change for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITION

INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was reported by teacher and parent respondent groups as a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

The results of Table 6.3 indicate that sixty-eight percent of teachers on the questionnaire, fifty-seven percent of teachers during the interviews and sixty-six percent of parents during the interviews reported Individual Plans (IPs) developed by the school to meet specific student needs as helpful in supporting the needs of students with disabilities.

Teachers reported the value of IPs as providing the school with a teaching and learning framework for monitoring student progress from grade to grade. Most parents who reported this school condition commented that IPs helped document a range of targeted objectives for their child and allowed them to be involved in helping the school implement them:

> *Like most things in life, if it's not written down, it's not taken seriously. I like that people at the school are meeting about my son and his needs. And that they invite me and my wife to come as well.* (Parent interview)

Individual Plans were therefore reported as helping facilitate collaborative practices between teachers and parents on behalf of individual student needs and supplementing the range of school processes in place for providing for students with disabilities.

COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was reported by a high proportion of the teacher respondent group during the interviews and by the principal during her interview. Table 6.3 indicates that the principal and seventy-three percent of teachers during the interviews cited constructive engagement between Special Education staff and classroom teachers as an essential condition in promoting a school culture that successfully provided for students with disabilities.

The principal identified her own readiness to approach the Special Education staff on teacher-related issues as modelling collaboration for the school. The principal saw the promotion of a collaborative school culture as important in supporting student needs as it allowed teachers to readily share ideas about good institutional practices.

As the principal commented during her interview:

> *To be credible at this school, you need to be approachable. I am always trying to make myself available to all members of my staff...trying to get away from the mystique that I am above everyone and that I know all the answers. I don't know all the answers; no-one does. But by sharing our ideas we can come up with some better ideas for supporting students, especially for those who need extra help. It is important that our teachers feel comfortable approaching the Special Ed. team about ideas and insights into supporting our students with special needs. If*

teachers see me being open to new ideas and approaching them for assistance, then they might feel more comfortable doing it themselves.

The principal stated that she was committed to creating a flat school structure where teachers were accessible and accountable to each other and staff could work together for the benefit of individual student needs. She also stated that the readiness of staff to engage with the Special Education teachers enhanced how the school provided for students:

> *There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staff room in the middle of the school...everyone is with everyone else. This includes the Special Ed. staff. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless and where all teachers have the opportunity to work together for students with special needs. The better the relationships between staff the better the chance of making progress with student achievement.*

The majority of the interviewed teachers stated that the principal constantly encouraged them to break down barriers at the school and be more open to exploring new ways of teaching students with disabilities.

One teacher commented during the interview:

> *It's amazing how often a problem I have in my class with a student is similar to one that the Special Ed. team has some insights about. Once we begin to talk to each other about our experiences, any problems usually become manageable. But we need to trust the Special Ed. first before we can really work well together. I reckon that's starting to happen...breaking down the barriers between Special Ed. and ordinary*

teachers is quite a task, as most schools don't encourage much interaction between staff.

Special Education staff engagement with regular classroom teachers was reported as an important condition that assisted the school successfully provide for students with disabilities. It represented for many teachers a key to developing their own instructional skills in conjunction with their Special Education teacher colleagues.

SUMMARY

Viewpoint High respondents identified a range of school conditions as factors in providing for students with disabilities - Special Education teacher capacity; opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development activities focusing on Special Education; collaborative consultation between Special Education staff and regular teachers about meeting the needs of students with disabilities; and the IP process in supporting individual student needs. The role of the Special Education teachers was identified by many teacher respondents as pivotal in promoting the school's range of programs for these students. Special Education staff roles included developing individualised programs for students, providing consultative support for regular classroom teachers and offering advocacy for students with disabilities across the school community. Teacher respondents also identified Special Education-related professional development as reflecting the active role played by Special Education staff in supporting teachers in their provision for students with disabilities.

The development and implementation of the IP process and the willingness and capacity of teachers to engage with Special Education staff about the needs of

students were also identified as key factors in Viewpoint High successfully providing for the needs of students with disabilities. These two school conditions highlight the development at Viewpoint High of a school culture where teachers reported feeling comfortable collaborating with each other around student needs. The IP process represented a more formal consultation process promoted by the school. The impetus for this shared commitment to students with disabilities and development of a consultative work culture was reported as being inspired by the leadership behaviours of the principal reflecting a vision for inclusive practices at Viewpoint High.

SECTION THREE: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A definition of principal engagement is provided in the Lakeside High case study. Respondents reported that the way in which the principal carried out her leadership behaviours at Viewpoint High reflected her engagement with **people** and **vision** with the school community. This factor was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her leadership framework. Each of these behaviours – *establishing goals and expectations* and *planning, co-coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* - was linked by respondents with the principal's preference to engage in a relational way with the school community around promoting a vision for inclusive practices. For example, the principal was reported as engaging with people by executing leadership behaviours that helped establish and promote positive and productive personal and professional relationships with teachers, parents and students in promoting the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The principal relied on these professional relationships to help translate her school

vision for inclusive practices into an effective means by which the whole school provided for these students.

As evidence of this approach, members of the Viewpoint High school community consistently reported their principal's people-centred approach to leadership at the school. Many teachers noted her willingness to consult and discuss with staff and parents about issues related to the school's provision for students with disabilities:

> (Principal's name) *loves to chat about how we are helping kids on the Special Ed. program. She seems to be just angling for a chat but you know that this is her way of getting to know what you are doing first-hand as well as their* (the student's) *progress. She's not a memo-type boss but a real person you can talk to...* (Teacher interview)

and

> (Principal's name) *is a real people person. Everyone will tell you that. She wanders around but she has a purpose to the conversations she has with us. It always gets back to the student...and those students with special needs are her passion and she seems to always get around to how we can value-add as a school for them in her talks with us...* (Teacher interview)

The principal commented on her leadership approach on her questionnaire:

> *Staff are the heart of this school. They are the reason we are the school we are. It is one of my jobs to work with them as one of them. Kids on the Special Ed. program? Teachers are the key to how we support them, of course...*

And during the interview, the principal stated:

> *I love being with my teachers and admin. staff. And the teacher's aides as well. I think they enjoy coming to school every day. I certainly do. I think sometimes you need to be more focused on people as a principal than anything else...again, they are the change agents for the kids who come here.*

The principal's engagement around a school vision was demonstrated by her execution of leadership behaviours that helped staff and parents understand and share her commitment to develop inclusive practices on behalf of students with disabilities. Teachers reported that the principal's behaviours served a dual purpose in reflecting her engagement around a vision agenda – she constantly articulated an inclusive vision for the school and then modelled inclusive behaviours in her leadership role.

A teacher commented on the questionnaire:

> (Principal's name) *has a vision for us as a school meeting student needs however severe they are. She then shows us all how to operate as if we can all meet these needs.*

And another teacher stated during the interview:

> *All students are equal at this school...we are all caught up eventually in* (principal's name)'s *passion for equality and a vision for including all students and supporting them...*

A parent commented that the principal articulated to the whole school community her vision of an inclusive school and then showed staff how to convert the vision into reality:

> *The principal at our school shows no favours because of who you are and what you do. She treats everybody as she finds them. She's a builder of friendships and partnerships between people. She says justice and fairness for all students drives her because it's consistent with how Jesus treated people. And you know what? It sounds trivial, but to me the most powerful way she shows that she practices what she preaches is she seems to know the names of every student at this school....*(Parent interview)

What also emerged from the data for Viewpoint High was that the principal's behaviours helped establish and develop the range of identified school conditions at the school for students with disabilities within the context and framework of her engagement around people and vision. Respondents reported that the principal's behaviours impacted on the development and promotion of these school conditions through her engagement with the school community. They reported that the principal's behaviours in developing professional relationships based on trust, integrity and a shared vision for meeting the needs of all students revealed her preferred leadership approach. The principal's engagement with the school community involved first developing a vision for Viewpoint High as an inclusive place for all students and then focusing her leadership behaviours on building up positive, productive and authentic relationships with staff, parents, students and the local community. Through these relationships, the principal engaged members of her

school community in establishing, developing and sustaining the school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities and defined the inclusive nature of the school.

SUMMARY

In addition to the principal behaviours and school conditions that were identified by respondents at Viewpoint High, principal engagement was discovered as another significant factor in the school's successful provision for these students. The principal's behaviours at Viewpoint High were characterised by respondents as reflecting her engagement with the school community around people and vision.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT VIEWPOINT HIGH

INTRODUCTION

Three significant factors emerged from the data at Viewpoint High as contributing to the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. A range of *principal behaviours* were identified by respondents, reflecting the principal's *engagement* with people and vision. In addition, respondents identified a range of *school conditions* that were reported as arising from the principal's engagement and leadership behaviours. This section of the chapter examines the relationships between these factors and how they impact on the school's successful provision for students with disabilities at Viewpoint High.

The principal was reported by respondents as having a vision for Viewpoint High as an inclusive place for all students and a commitment to establishing and promoting

positive and productive relationships with people in her school community. Respondents reported that the principal's engagement with people and vision was reflected by the execution of two fundamental leadership behaviours identified as *establishing goals and expectations* and *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum*. Both these principal behaviours helped create school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities.

As each identified school condition reflects aspects of the principal's engagement with the school community, both principal behaviours are presented as giving rise to the same range of school conditions at the school. The links between principal behaviours and school conditions are presented in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

Figure 6.1 presents the link between principal engagement, the principal's behaviour – *establishing goals and expectations* - and four school conditions at Lakeside High.

FIGURE 6.1: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT VIEWPOINT HIGH

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT	PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS
PEOPLE AND VISION	PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL *ESTABLISHING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS*

What characterised the principal's behaviours in *establishing goals and expectations* at Viewpoint High was her commitment to engage with members of the school

community in developing an inclusive school culture in conjunction with practical strategies for providing for students with disabilities (see Section One of this chapter). The principal's goals and expectations for an inclusive school culture were realised through her engagement with staff in helping establish a consensus around core school beliefs about the individual worth of every student and the need to meet their special needs. While these goals and expectations were idealistic, the principal also committed the school to establishing practical strategies in meeting these student needs, as represented by her promotion of the school's identified school conditions (see Figure 6.1).

As an example of this leadership approach, the principal articulated the two dimensions of her goals and expectations for the school community as follows:

> *We need to set up our school as a welcoming and inclusive place that embraces all students, whatever their needs. We need to commit to a belief that our students all contribute to our school, whatever their special need. At the same time, we need to be a school of choice for people in our area because we provide best practices in Special Education and other support programs. To convert the rhetoric of inclusion into a reality requires a two-pronged strategy of cultural change and sound pedagogy – compassion and justice, if you like. Pastoral care and academic excellence And my behaviours as the principal need to both foster these school strategies as well as model the behaviours we all need to develop across our school community.* (Principal interview)

Converting a rhetorical commitment to inclusion into practical support for students with disabilities represented the principal's primary goal as a principal. Linked to this vision for Viewpoint High were a range of school conditions including the role of Special Education teachers with capacity, Individual Plan processes, engagement of staff with the Special Education teachers and the promotion of professional development activities focused on Special Education. Without an overarching inclusive vision for the school, though, the principal stated that the quality of these school conditions would be compromised:

> *Many schools have Special Education teachers and IPs and professional development and so on. I have been part of schools that have all these supports for kids with special needs. But I want our school to be different. Don't get me wrong...we need these practical things for the students who need them. I want these support strategies, though, to reflect our belief as a staff that that all students are full members of the school community and contributors as well. They are real individuals with real needs as they grow into adults – emotional, spiritual, relational needs as well as academic needs. Not just recipients of special programs because they find some learning tasks difficult. Special programs at our school are a right and are just one part of our care for students...* (Principal interview)

The principal's goals and expectation for Viewpoint High, then, were ambitious on two levels. They included the provision of a range of highly effective intervention programs for students with disabilities but as part of a school culture that had a strong pastoral component that was welcoming and inclusive of the contributions of

these students. Many respondents commented that the key to the attainment of these goals and expectations was the principal's engagement with the school community. This engagement was reflected by her behaviours promoting the range of identified school conditions at Viewpoint High as well as modelling supportive and positive approaches to personal and professional relationships with staff, students and parents. Many teacher comments indicated that they understood and accepted the principal's vision for the school and linked its implementation with her ability to professionally engage with staff:

> *The principal sets high standards at this school. But she also shows us how to achieve these standards by her own efforts and behaviours and how she relates to us. She expects that if you choose to teach here, you share her vision for the school: a school where all students can succeed. When you choose to teach here, you accept the whole package of high standards plus a pastoral concern for our students. But you don't do it by yourself – you know that the principal will be there with you.* (Teacher interview)

Many parents also commented during the interviews that they recognised that the school promoted a different type of culture to other schools and that the values of this inclusive culture were reflected in the principal's behaviours:

> *We were surprised at how dedicated* (principal's name*) was about looking after our son when we enrolled him here. We had never heard of IPs, for example, before now...she told us that how we treat students is as important as what we teach them. They deserve our time and focus, she*

said. My husband and I are not used to how the teachers treat (son's name) *here. It is a completely surprising experience and makes us feel good about our decision to send him here. The principal practices what she preaches.* (Parent interview)

The principal's establishment of goals and expectations at Viewpoint High was nominated by teachers and parents, as well as the principal herself, as a key element in how they provided for students with disabilities. The identified school conditions reflected both the inclusive practices of the school culture and its commitment to provide students with disabilities with the best available pedagogical support. The principal's engagement with members of the school community helped promote these practices and support programs through the execution of her identified behaviours. Through her leadership behaviours, the principal's vision for Viewpoint High helped incorporate both these elements as seamlessly integrating the *why and what* of the school's provision for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL *PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM*

FIGURE 6.2: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT VIEWPOINT HIGH

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT	PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS
PEOPLE AND VISION	PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

There were two primary outcomes of the principal's behaviours in *planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* at Viewpoint High (see Figure 6.2). Firstly, the principal behaviour helped create school conditions that promoted a range of effective support programs and processes for students with disabilities. The principal was determined to help develop practical strategies for providing for students with disabilities through the development of school policies, practices and structures that were characterised by sound teaching and learning principles. Secondly, the principal behaviour helped create school conditions that promoted a range of inclusive practices, characterised by the school's determination to approach the needs of students with disabilities as holistically as possible. Respondents reported that the principal consistently stated that inclusion at Viewpoint High would represent more than rhetoric and instead encompass effective interventions for all students so that they could contribute to the school to the best of their ability. While the principal's establishment of goals and expectations described *why* and *what* the school provided for students with disabilities, her behaviours in planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum described *how* the school supported these students.

The first school condition to be examined in relation to this principal behaviour is the capacity of the Special Education teachers (see Section Two of this chapter). The principal commented that a vision for inclusive practices at Viewpoint High required practical strategies for the day-to-day support of individual students:

> *While we have the desire here to treat all students as equals, it is naive to think that all students have equal needs. There is a difference...while each student has so much to contribute at our school, some need special support, others don't so much. It is no good if you have fine rhetoric about inclusion if there is no on-the-ground support for students when they need it.* (Principal interview)

The principal elaborated on this theme by highlighting the school's commitment to best practices in teaching and learning:

> *We need to be rigorous about the quality of the teaching and learning across the school if we are serious about supporting all our students. This must include coordinating and reviewing what we do on a regular basis...we need to plan student support together so that we all know what we are doing and communicate this to each other...* (Principal interview)

Teachers commented that the principal depended on staff to help create a school culture where all students would succeed:

> *She* (the principal) *can't do it all, though she tries sometimes...she really depends on us to pitch in and do the best we can. A lot of the day-to-day stuff is the work of the Special Ed. teachers, especially* (name of the Special Education Coordinator*). Without expert staff in Special Ed., we would struggle a bit.* (Teacher interview)

and

The whole school culture for kids with special needs is the vision of (principal's name) *but the really hard work is done by the Special Ed. staff...* (Teacher interview)

and

(Principal's name) *gives us a lot of latitude to support students on our case-load. She said when she employed me that we would work together a lot...she also asked me if I shared her dream of a school that was welcoming for all in the community and I said 'let's go'.* (Special Education Coordinator interview)

The principal commented during her interview that the Special Education staff had a responsibility to utilise their capacity and experience to support regular classroom teachers as they provided for students with disabilities. She identified her own leadership behaviours in promoting these roles by the Special Education staff with teachers:

I have always had a vision of a school that is a great place for all students. For those students who struggle a little, we have a brilliant Special Ed. Team here. I spent a lot of time thinking about the Special Ed. role here before I employed them (the Special Education teachers), *and that includes the current teacher for the unit* (the newly established Support Class). *They are one of the keys for us in building up this school as a leader in inclusive education...it would be impossible if we didn't have the best around in this field. They need to be both good teachers and able to engage with their colleagues at different levels and for different purposes. It's why I appointed* (name of the Special Education

Coordinator) *to the executive – she has to be seen as having a role of responsibility in name as well as function. And it's why I spend as much time as I personally can supporting the Special Ed. team by planning with them, sharing with them ideas, just spending time with them over a coffee if needed. We are all in this together, with different roles to perform, but the Special Ed. Team is vital...* (Principal interview)

Teacher comments indicated that the principal's delegation of these roles to the Special Education staff was also central to her practical approach to providing for students with disabilities. The principal supported and advocated activist Special Education roles in the coordination of support programs for students:

> (Principal's name) *is very close to the Special Education teachers, especially* (Special Education Coordinator's name). *They work together with the same ideas and approaches and are united in their passion for good teaching and learning practices across the school.* (Teacher questionnaire comment)

The second school condition to be examined in relation to this principal behaviour is the role of Individual Plans (IPs) meeting the needs of students with disabilities (see Section Two of this chapter). Most of the teachers and parents reported that IPs were an important aspect of the school's pedagogical approaches in providing for students at the school. Most respondents claimed that IPs were driven as a school initiative by the principal in planning and coordinating support programs for students with disabilities:

The principal has supported IPs for a long time as a way for all staff to get involved in supporting students on the Special Ed. program. She shows us what she thinks of them by attending them as much as she can. She talks a lot about them at staff meetings too. (Teacher interview)

Parents identified IPs as giving them a process that allowed them some involvement in suggesting ideas about their children's learning. Some parents claimed that the principal's promotion of the process at parent-teacher meetings and even, on occasion, personally contacting them at home on behalf of the Special Education program, gave them confidence that IPs had the support of the school executive:

Once the principal said that she liked IPs as a way of involving us in what the school was doing for our son, we decided that they might be OK. My husband is not too keen on school meetings and especially when he feels he's being lectured to. (Principal's name) *assured us that she would welcome us to these meetings...she said that it help us in monitoring how (son's name) was going.* (Parent interview)

Teacher respondents who cited IPs as a factor in the school's support of students with disabilities also commented about how the principal used them as a way of promoting the planning process at staff and parent meetings. The principal was reported as regularly welcoming teachers, parents and students to be actively involved in the IP process and recommending it as a means by which the school could better provide for all students:

> (Principal's name) *is always bringing up the planning meetings as important in the life of our school. She is a great promoter of them for our students with special needs.* (Teacher questionnaire comment)

and

> (Principal's name) *is often at our case meetings. She encourages us to keep our appointments for them. The* (school) *newsletter is often the way she does it. And when we attend, we get some understanding of how he* (their child) *is going at school in his subjects.* (Parent interview)

IPs were identified as an important factor in how Viewpoint High provided for students with disabilities, with the process perceived by respondents as supporting the learning of students. The principal's promotion of and involvement in the IP process was cited by many respondents, including parents, as significant factors in their successful implementation at the school.

The third of the school conditions at Viewpoint High to be examined in relation to this principal behaviour is collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities (see Section Two of this chapter). A high proportion of teachers and the principal claimed that the principal promoted this engagement as a marker of inclusive practices at the school. She was reported as actively supporting teachers who were willing to share ideas and approaches about good institutional practices as a practical way of the school supporting student needs. The principal's comments during her interview also link her own leadership behaviours with these teacher consultative practices:

I am always trying to make myself available to all members of my staff... I don't know all the answers; no-one does. My staff often see me asking (Special Education Coordinator's name) *for advice and help. I sometimes say – 'I don't know it all' - as I talk to them. By sharing our ideas we can come up with some better ideas for supporting students, especially for those who need extra help. I need to take the lead in this...*

A teacher comment during his interview reinforced these principal beliefs:

No-one is unclear about what this school is about. I've taught for a long time and our principal here is the first who has been so definite about what she expects from us as teachers. An important part of her vision is for all of us to be part of the solutions for the kids here. And a good way to do this is for us to keep talking with each other...by doing this, she thinks we can come up with better strategies for teaching students in our class.

Most respondents linked the principal's active promotion of these consultation processes with the Special Education teachers, as a factor in their successful implementation across the school.

The fourth of the school conditions at Viewpoint High to be examined in relation to this principal behaviour is the participation of staff members in Special Education-related professional development activities (see Section Two of this chapter). The principal's promotion of professional development activities in Special Education was identified by a high proportion of teachers and the principal as a factor in the school's approach to providing for students with disabilities.

The principal claimed that professional development was an ideal opportunity for staff to learn how to better plan and review their programs for students:

> *If you want to deliver well prepared and relevant lessons for students, you need to up-to-date with the syllabus. Our in-services in Special Ed. give staff the chance to evaluate their approaches in the classroom. It also gives them some insights into how to plan their support for students who find it hard to learn at the same pace as others.* (Principal interview)

Teachers commented that an important characteristic of the professional development program was its role in producing better coordination of the school's curriculum delivery for all students. The principal invariably attended these professional development activities with staff:

> (Principal's name) *not only urges us to attend in-services in Special Ed. but attends pretty much all of them herself. It's great that we can learn new things as a staff together...* (Teacher interview)

The principal reinforced these comments by stating during her interview:

> *I see myself as a learner here as well. I look forward to the in-services we run as much as anyone. We are all learners at this school and can all improve how we teach.*

And a Special Education teacher commented during her interview:

> (Principal's name) *makes a point of promoting in-services we run for Special Ed. and she attends as much as she can...she sees it as a way of furthering our support for the kids as well as slowly changing the way we*

do things around here. She is very insistent about how we critically reflect on our teaching and better coordinate what we do in the classroom and across the school.

The principal's behaviours were therefore identified by teachers as an important factor in the promotion of the school's professional development activities in Special Education. The principal's commitment to planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum led to her endorsement of these activities as giving teachers opportunities to improve their instructional strategies for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY OF THE VIEWPOINT HIGH CASE STUDY

The principal's engagement with people and vision, her leadership behaviours and a range of school conditions were identified by respondents at Viewpoint High as significant factors in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The Robinson (2007) framework was very useful in organising the Viewpoint High data but there were some indicators, specifically related to Special Education practices, that were identified as falling outside this framework. These indicators have been discussed in this case study. In addition, the establishment of principal engagement as a factor at Viewpoint High was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her framework.

Respondents identified two primary characteristics of the principal's behaviours at Viewpoint High – her promotion of inclusive policies and practices and her commitment to establishing and developing positive and productive relationships

with members of the school community. These behaviours were characterised by respondents as reflecting particular types of engagement around people and vision. These behaviours and engagement were found to give rise to specific school conditions, namely Special Education teacher capacity, collaborative consultation proceses between Special Education teachers and classroom teachers, Individual Plans for students with disabilities and staff participating in professional development activites in Special Education.

A third case study - Sunshine High School – is reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR SUNSHINE HIGH

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter reports and analyses the data for Sunshine High. As in the previous case study chapters, the Robinson (2007) leadership practices framework is adapted, using the framework laid out in Chapter Four, to report and analyse the responses for this school. The identified principal behaviours and school conditions are examined to explain the ways in which the Sunshine High school community successfully provides for students with disabilities. As for Lakeside High and Viewpoint High, principal engagement is identified as an additional factor in how this school provides for these students.

The first section of this chapter reports on principal behaviours identified by respondents; the second section reports on school conditions identified by respondents; and the third section reports on the type of principal engagement adopted by the principal at the school. The final section of the chapter presents linkages between principal behaviours, principal engagement and school conditions and reveals how these linkages reflect the school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

SECTION ONE: IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS FOR SUNSHINE HIGH

The criteria for identifying principal behaviours at Viewpoint High are described in Section One of Chapter 5.

Sunshine High respondents reported that principal behaviours were a significant factor in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Respondents nominated two principal behaviours - the principal *plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum*; and the principal *establishes goals and expectations*. These principal behaviours are aligned with the range of leadership practices reported by Robinson (2007) as providing for all students.

Table 7.1 presents the proportion of the Sunshine High respondent groups that identified a particular principal behaviour that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices S, T* and *U)*.

TABLE 7.1 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED BY SUNSHINE HIGH RESPONDENTS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND CURRICULUM	40%	67%					YES	YES
THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	40%	42%						YES

^KEY FOR THE TABLES IN CHAPTER SIX

TQ: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
TI: TEACHER INTERVIEW
PQ: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PI: PARENT INTERVIEW
SQ: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
SI: STUDENT INTERVIEW
PRQ: PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
PRI: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

% PROPORTION OF THE RESPONDENT GROUP THAT REPORTED THIS AS A SIGNIFICANT PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

YES THE PRINCIPAL REPORTED THIS AS A SIGIFICANT PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

Table 7.2 presents typical responses from Sunshine High respondent groups identifying principal behaviours.

TABLE 7.2

TYPICAL SUNSHINE HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND CURRICULUM	The school's leadership team has identified good teachers in the school who have been chosen to teach in the Special Education program SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers in planning and programming, especially my Special Education team" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The school's leadership team has identified good teachers in the school who have been chosen to teach in the Special Education program SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students through their expertise as teachers" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can " SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal has a very positive role in supporting and sustaining the inclusive approach of the school, by providing resources and time-tabling support for teachers SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

The data for Sunshine High indicates that respondents identified other principal behaviours that did not meet the study's criteria for significance.

These behaviours were:

- The principal knows the names of students with disabilities
- The principal promotes and participates in teacher learning and development
- The principal advocates for the school's Special Education program with the diocesan office

Two of these principal behaviours – knowing the names of students with disabilities and advocating for the school's Special Education program with the diocesan office - also did not fit within the Robinson (2007) framework. As specifically related to Special Education practices, they were not targeted as significant by Robinson (2007). These two behaviours, though, are discussed in this case study within the context of the principal's establishment of inclusive goals and expectations. The principal promoting and participating in teachers learning and development, a factor included by Robinson (2007) in her framework, was only identified by teachers at Sunshine High and therefore did not satisfy the criteria for significance in this study.

It is noted that the principal behaviours are reported as a significant factor by only two respondents groups at the school – teachers and the principal (see Table 7.1). Parent and student respondent groups did not report any significant principal behaviour. The absence of reporting from these respondent groups indicates that the principal's behaviours primarily impacted on teachers at Sunshine High and that her leadership approach was more focused on the school's organisational structures that provided for students with disabilities.

The following section of the chapter describes and analyse these principal behaviours.

7.1 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

The meta-analysis by Robinson (2007) states that an important school leadership dimension involves the principal planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. This dimension incorporates four types of leadership behaviour – involving staff in discussions of teaching; working with staff to coordinate and review the curriculum; providing feedback to teachers; and systematic monitoring of student progress in collaboration with teachers (p. 14). Teacher respondents at Sunshine High reported these principal behaviours during the study (see Table 7.1). The principal and forty percent of teachers in their questionnaire responses and sixty-seven percent of teachers during the interview reported that the principal planned and coordinated teaching practices at the school by working within established school structures with teachers in performing their everyday duties in the classroom and that this behaviour was important in providing them with practical support as they provided for students with disabilities. Most of the teachers reported that the principal's primary role in these processes was facilitating their planning and evaluation practices, as well as providing feedback to them about their efforts in providing for students with disabilities.

These teachers stated that they were aware that the principal had a very demanding role at the school, contending with a range of challenging agendas and issues on behalf of all students, teachers and parents. Despite these pressures most teachers stated that the principal was generous with her time and readily shared her skills in program planning and reviewing student progress. Many teachers commented that the principal actively engaged with them in helping establish organisational structures at the school to assisting them plan and coordinate their teaching and delivery of syllabus outcomes. The Individual Plan process, student case conferences and the school's intra-net were given as examples of these organisational structures.

One teacher commented about the principal's promotion of organisational approaches to her leadership role:

> *She is always concerned that she should be better supporting us, especially with planning and evaluating work for kids. By whatever means, though, she keeps us focused. She has a lot of experience with the nitty gritty stuff around programming and student evaluation. With programming, she is a great organiser and has really worked hard to get the organisation aspect of the school working smoothly. As teachers we find it much easier to work together than before she came. Some of the school structures she has thought of and trialled here are really useful.* (Principal's name) *is a great one for organisation and procedure.* (Teacher interview)

Other teacher comments about the principal's organisational skills were as follows:

> *The principal has a big role in supporting and sustaining our work as teachers by the working groups and committees and the other structural*

stuff set up here. We don't exactly die by committees at this school, but there is always some policy or procedure that is there to help us out. (Teacher interview)

and

> *She* (the principal) *gives us feedback through our coordinators about the difficult to teach students and is OK to have a chat about how we can best support the kids on the Special Ed. program. With her, you don't feel so isolated in the classroom as with other principals. She co-ordinates the school's approach our work around the needs of students...our coordinators are always meeting together, for example,, to discuss classroom issues and student needs and apparently* (Principal's name) *is usually there or knows what's going on.* (Teacher interview)

A teacher commented during the interview that one way the principal approached the coordination of the school's teaching and learning agenda was by asking questions of individual teachers. She seemed interested in genuinely understanding the challenges teachers faced every day:

> (Principal's name) *is the type of principal who is interested in how we teach every day but without getting down to micro-management. She cares, though. There's no doubt about that with the staff here. She also gives us the impression that she knows how the syllabus can be taught in the classroom and she provides the organisational clout to provide us with the support we need through such things as IPs and case conferences and the intra-net* (Teacher interview)

At her interview, the principal stated that she understood the importance of coordinating a school's teaching and learning agenda. She was comfortable delegating the day-to-day decisions for students with disabilities to the Special Education staff. These decisions included providing advice to parents regarding student career and work experience choices, presenting enrolment options for students through their Individual Plans (IPs) and organising the transfer of students to alternative curriculum options. Through regular consultation with the Special Education coordinator, she maintained contact and knowledge of the needs of both regular and specialist teaching staff.

The principal stated that she was very busy in her school leadership role but never too distracted to meet with a student, teacher or parent about an important issue, given enough notice:

> *It's important that how we teach here is best practice and it's one of my jobs to make sure we program according to what's best for the student.* (Principal interview)

The principal reported that though she attempted to play an active role in the support of students with disabilities at the school, she tended to depend on the support of her staff, particularly her executive team, to advise her about effective strategies to provide students with disabilities. She was especially reliant on the school's organisational network that was established to provide for these students:

> *I inherited a good Special Education team and some really effective structures and procedures that help support our special needs students. I have tried to bolster these structures so that we can all better coordinate programming and support for all students but mostly for those on the Special Ed. program. If we can get the way we work together right through*

smart thinking and clear organisational pathways, we will be more than half-way to providing the best support around. Together we need to promote good teaching and learning practices and its' partly up to me to develop organisational ways that help teachers, not hinder them. (Principal interview)

Teacher respondents therefore reported that the principal's leadership behaviours reflected her organisational engagement with the school community in helping enhance school practices and processes for planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. The principal saw one of her important leadership behaviours as developing and sustaining with staff a range of strategies and structures that helped facilitate effective teaching practices and curriculum delivery for students with disabilities. Respondents reported that her behaviours reflected a priority for promoting organisational approaches at the school so that staff could better plan and evaluate their provision for students with disabilities.

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

The establishment of goals and expectations by the principal was cited in the meta-analysis by Robinson (2007) as an important school leadership dimension with significant impact on student outcomes. Robinson (2007) cites such leadership behaviours as the setting, communicating and monitoring of learning goals, standards and expectations and the involvement of staff in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about school goals (p.14). The principal and forty-two percent of the teachers during the interview (see Table 7.1) commented that the principal regularly articulated goals and expectations for developing Sunshine High

as an inclusive place meeting all student needs. She was reported as regularly promoting an inclusive vision for the school at staff meetings and other teacher and parent forums.

As an example, a Special Education teacher commented on the questionnaire about the principal's public advocacy for the rights of students with disabilities and their contribution to the school:

> (Principal's name) *is always supporting our role in the school by reminding everyone of the school vision of real inclusion. She expects all staff to put inclusion into action here. She reminds us all the time that it is the students who count around here. She's determined that we develop our school so that families know their students will receive the support they need every day. Once given this support, she believes that these students will be able to fully participate at school.*

Other teachers cited the principal's expectation that the school adopt a whole-school approach in providing for students with disabilities. The principal was reported as investing her time and resources in organisational change processes at the school as a means to promoting whole-staff involvement in meeting student needs. The principal confirmed these ideas about her leadership role creating a whole-school commitment to meeting student needs by stating:

> *We share a commitment – a vision even – of an inclusive school where everyone is treated equally, despite their special needs. That's pretty ambitious, I know, but if you don't get everybody to join you in setting high goals, what is the point of turning up every day? So I keep thinking hard*

about how I can arrange things here so that everyone who wants to support students with disabilities can do so with a minimum of fuss. It is my plan to make inclusion work on the ground... (Principal interview)

Overall, teacher respondents stated that the principal's behaviours reflected a commitment to develop Sunshine High as an inclusive place, welcoming and supportive of students with disabilities. Most of the teacher comments reported that the principal was determined to promote organisational change and innovation in offering practical support for these students as part of this inclusive vision for the school.

SUMMARY

Teacher respondents and the principal were the only respondent groups to identify principal behaviours as factors in the successful provision for students with disabilities at Sunshine High. These respondent groups identified the principal's planning, coordination and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum and establishment of school goals and expectations as significant principal behaviours. The absence of parent and student identification of principal behaviours suggests the principal's leadership roles were identified at the school as predominantly staff-oriented, though most parent and student respondents were positive in their description of the principal's behaviours.

Many teacher respondents reported that the principal worked "behind the scenes" at the school on behalf of students with disabilities. To be fully aware of her influence on Special Education at the school, some teachers commented that you needed to be part of the "school process" and be alert to her focus on organisational change

and promotion of facilitative school structures for meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Respondents reported that the principal's behaviours therefore reflected her engagement with the organisational elements of the school's structures and policies in developing practical whole-school strategies in providing for students with disabilities. For example, she allocated regular practical support – teacher time, school resources and assistance in setting up new school structures - in meeting their special needs. She also established and sustained, through her leadership behaviours, a range of cross-school policies, structures and resources that directly enhanced the effectiveness of these teachers as they supported students with disabilities. She provided teachers with as much practical support in their planning, and evaluation of programs for these students as the school could manage within its budget capacity. The practical application of her provision for students with disabilities was reported as predominantly through a commitment to developing and sustaining organisational strategies on behalf of these students.

SECTION TWO: IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS FOR SUNSHINE HIGH

The criteria for identifying school conditions at Viewpoint High are described in Section Two of Chapter 5.

Sunshine High respondents reported that school conditions were significant factors in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Four school conditions emerged from the data at Sunshine High.

These four school conditions were identified as:

- Special Education teacher capacity

- Individual Plans are developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- Staff members are appointed as case managers for students with disabilities
- Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities

Table 7.3 presents the proportion of the Sunshine High respondent groups that identified a particular school condition that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices S, T* and *U)*.

TABLE 7.3 SCHOOL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED BY SUNSHINE HIGH RESPONDENTS

^ SEE TABLE 7.1 FOR KEY

	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
SCHOOL CONDITION SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	70%	83%	73%	40%			YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	70%	42%	53%	40%		80%	YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES		42%						YES
SCHOOL CONDITION COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	70%	83%						YES

Table 7.4 presents typical responses from Sunshine High respondent groups identifying school conditions.

TABLE 7.4 TYPICAL SUNSHINE HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING SCHOOL CONDITIONS

SCHOOL CONDITION	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	The expertise of the Special Education team SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The expertise and commitment of the Special Education teachers SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
INDIVIDUAL PLANS DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	The Individual Plan process is a good way to find out information about your child SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
CASE MANAGERS	"I case manage three students with disabilities" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	Case manager roles are an important component of tracking student needs across the school SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION	The planned meetings between Special Education teacher and class teachers SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Collaboration between the teachers and the Special Education staff is the key to our success SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

7.2 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT SUNSHINE HIGH

SCHOOL CONDITION

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY

This school condition was reported by a high proportion of teachers, parents and the principal in both the interviews and through questionnaire responses. Its nomination

by three respondent groups reflects the impact of the Special Education role across the Sunshine High school community. This capacity was recognised in terms of both skill and commitment of these teachers. The results in Table 7.3 indicate that the principal and seventy percent of teachers and seventy-three of parents through their questionnaire responses in addition to eighty three percent of teachers and forty percent of parents through the interviews mentioned the capacity of the Special Education staff and how their roles were highly regarded throughout the school. Some teachers who had been employed at Sunshine High for many years claimed that the positive impact of the current Special Education program and its credibility was partly due to the excellent practices by previous Special Education teachers at the school. These teachers stated that these past practices had created an expectation throughout the school community that students with disabilities would be well supported by the school.

One of these teachers commented during the interview:

> *The current Special Ed. Staff have inherited some of the gains we have made over many years in this area. Don't get me wrong – they are good at what they do, but some of the hard battles have already been fought and won...*

A majority of teachers reported that the role of the current Special Education teachers was important in initiating case-based meetings including teachers, parents and students around specific student needs. They claimed that this process helped engender confidence and trust in their work across the school:

> *Our Special Ed. teachers are very active – proactive - in involving everyone in supporting the students on their program. Their ability to organise us is second-to-none.* (Teacher questionnaire comment)

In particular, teachers reported that they were confident that the Special Education staff was not only committed to students with disabilities but capable of meeting a wide range of their specific learning needs on a daily basis. Some teachers commented favourably on the effective literacy program implemented by the Special Education teachers and the impact that small group reading programs had on students with severe learning difficulties:

> (Special Education Coordinator's name) *is a real help when it comes to supporting students with reading difficulties. She seems to gain their confidence easily and they trust her to help them.* (Teacher interview)

A majority of parents reported their appreciation for the care and concern shown by the Special Education staff towards their children and that they respected their levels of capacity. Parents used words such as "approachable", "skilled", "helpful" and "patient" when describing the qualities of the Special Education staff as reflecting both their skills and commitment to students with disabilities. Some parents reported that they saw themselves as "partners" with the Special Education staff and that individual Special Education teachers were often their primary contact at the school.

A parent commented during the interview:

> (Special Education teacher's name) *has always been there for my son. She has shown enormous patience in putting up with some of his behaviour and resistance but now we're seeing some progress* as (name of student) *has matured a little. Without her help, I don't think he would still be at school.*

There was particular mention by parents at Sunshine High of the role of the school's Itinerant Teacher – Vision, who had a small caseload of students with vision impairment. Two parents through the questionnaire cited this teacher's commitment to the special education needs of students in her care, especially in assisting their integration at the school in Years 7 and 8.

One of these parents noted on the questionnaire:

> (Name of Itinerant Teacher) *is a real asset. She goes out of her way, quietly, to look after our son and make sure he is not forgotten.*

Special Education staff members were identified by the principal as one of the key factors in the school's success in providing for students with disabilities. The principal was especially impressed with the ability of these teachers to work productively with the rest of the school staff and efficiently co-ordinate a range of individualised programs for students across the grades:

> *To be a good support teacher takes a great deal of capacity, personality and ability to coordinate things across a school. Our Special Ed. teachers*

are great organisers and have good credibility with not just classroom teachers but the executive as well. (Principal interview)

The capacity of the Special Education staff at Sunshine High was a significant factor in the school's success in providing for students with disabilities. A high proportion of teacher and parent respondents, in addition to the principal, identified their roles as critical in how the school community provided for these students.

SCHOOL CONDITION

INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was nominated by all respondent groups at Sunshine High, reflecting its impact on a wide cross-section of the school community. The data in Table 7.3 indicates that seventy percent of teachers, fifty-three percent of parents and the principal through their questionnaire responses and forty-two percent of teachers, fifty-three percent of parents, eighty percent of students and the principal during their interviews reported that Individual Plan (IP) processes were a factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. IPs were seen as important in assisting individual student planning as well as generating collaborative practices in responding to those student needs.

The principal reported that she fully supported the IP process:

The IP process is important in coordinating our response to student needs. It documents their needs and our responses...it is a very

important organisational response to Special Ed. provision at our school. (Principal interview)

Teachers commented that the IP process gave staff an opportunity to better understand the needs of students with disabilities in their classes:

> *At some schools, you just flounder with some kids. You try things, but you're not sure if you are on the right track. Some students just annoy the hell out of you and don't know where to turn. The IPs we have here give you the chance to share the load a bit, spread the responsibility across the staff, get to know a bit more about the students in your class and what makes them tick...* (Teacher interview)

Other teachers stated that IPs allowed classroom teachers to work more constructively with both the Special Education staff and the parents of students with disabilities:

> *You are a bit alone in class with some students. You want to know a bit more about their background and what you can expect of them. IPs get you in contact with the Special Ed. crowd and the parents so that you can compare notes, if you like, about where we are heading.* (Teacher interview)

Parents reported that IPs provided them with a practical way of monitoring their child's progress. They appreciated the opportunity the planning process gave them to participate in the development and reporting of special support programs for their children. A significant proportion of parents who reported this school condition

claimed that they enrolled their child at Sunshine High due to its excellent reputation in implementing IPs:

> *This school was recommended to me by a friend who said good things about how they cared for her daughter. She said that you were always consulted and that they had these "plans" where you could bring up your concerns. It seemed the right place for our son.* (Parent questionnaire response)

Another parent noted on the questionnaire:

> *The IPs give my wife and me a chance to discuss our concerns with the Special Education teachers whenever we need it. IPs are a good way in which we know the school cares for our son.*

The students who identified IPs as a school condition stated that case conference meetings linked to the planning process showed that their individual needs were taken seriously by the school:

> *Because of the planning time we have at school, most of the teachers know who I am and what I need for my exams.* (Student interview)

Another student commented:

> *IPs are a way of letting my parents know what I am doing in class and gives a chance to tell them what I want to do when I leave school.* (Student interview)

The IP process was reported by all respondents as a powerful school condition in providing for students with disabilities. As one of only two school conditions reported

by parents at Sunshine High, its nomination reveals that parents valued IPs as an effective and practical school strategy at the school.

SCHOOL CONDITION

STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was identified by parents and the principal as a significant factor at Sunshine High. This is a practice that occurred in no other school in the case study sample. Data in Table 7.3 indicates that the principal and forty-two percent of teachers during the interview reported that the appointment of staff members as case managers was an important factor in the school providing for students with disabilities.

The identification of the case manager role is noteworthy as the principal and teachers cited it as representing an important evolution in the school's Individual Plan process for students. The case management framework ensured that all teachers could become involved in planning for the support of students. Case managers were responsible for communicating their knowledge about individual students with their colleagues. This organisational process was cited as important in promoting and enhancing positive and productive communication across the school community about student needs and any specific intervention strategies by school staff.

The principal commented during her interview about the case manager role:

> *The case manager role really involves the teacher in tracking the progress of a student with a special need. We have seen much more talk*

around the staff room about student progress since we introduced this approach.

And a teacher stated during his interview:

The more we talk with each other, the better we get to know how to help our kids. The case manager really helps us out.

The identification of the case manager role as a school condition reflected how the school had taken the IP process to another level on behalf of students. Teacher respondents reported that as their school continued to develop a student-centred organisational framework in Special Education, the number of staff taking on new responsibilities for these students with disabilities had increased and with it a belief that these students were achieving better outcomes.

SCHOOL CONDITION

COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was reported by teachers and the principal as a significant factor for the study. The data in Table 7.3 indicates that this school condition was cited by eighty-three percent of teachers during the interviews and seventy percent of teachers on the questionnaires, as well as the principal during her interview. Consultative practices, in addition to IPs and case management processes, facilitated constructive engagement and were reported as a process primarily driven by the Special Education staff in partnership with classroom teachers in initiating meetings, both formal and informal, around a teaching and leaning agenda for students with disabilities. Teachers cited a wide range of consultative strategies employed by

teachers to enhance connections between members of the school community, including memos, posting of bulletin boards in the staffroom and the use of the school's intra-net. A high proportion of the teachers who identified this school condition cited the leading role played by the school's Special Education teachers in sustaining the process:

> *A week doesn't go by without a message from the Special Ed. staff. It is usually the notice of a meeting, a question about a student in my class or just a friendly note of encouragement. We know they are around, and that they are on your side. They show us how to consult with each other and remain focused on our main job of supporting students.* (Teacher questionnaire comment)

The principal stated that regular consultation processes involving Special Education staff and other teachers was a powerful school condition that enhanced student provision. She stated that a lot of her time as principal was devoted to encouraging connections between staff members across the school – teachers, Special Education staff, teacher's aides, itinerant teachers, parents and students:

> *Teaching can be a lonely profession if you let it be. I enjoy the chance to bring staff together and think that if you start the discussion about what we all have in common – how am I going to make a difference in this student's life today? – the rest sort of falls in place. Special Ed. is an obvious place to start this and we are lucky that we have Special Ed. teachers here who are naturally outgoing and generous with their time*

and skills. They form good working relationships with staff very quickly, as a rule. (Principal interview)

The principal concluded her interview by citing the school's intra-net as an important innovation in improving teacher consultation. She stated that the Special Education staff, in particular, had adopted the intra-net to more effectively share information about student needs and organise case conferences and teacher meetings.

Collaborative consultation between the Special Education staff and regular classroom teachers was therefore identified as a school condition that fostered improved communication and team-work across the school. As with the case manager school condition, this school condition was identified by many respondents as a consequence of the school's Individual Plan processes in facilitating improved cross-school communication and collaboration. In combination with these school conditions, this school condition helped the school provide for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

The school conditions identified by respondents at Sunshine High depend, to varying degrees, on the promotion of more or less formal organisational responses in providing for students with disabilities within an inclusive school framework. Teacher and parent respondents, in particular, reported that the principal behaviours and the school conditions reflected the school's priority in developing practical policies, practices and structures for meeting student needs. This was confirmed by the

principal's nomination of Individual Plans, case manager roles and related student case conferences as pivotal processes and structures around which the school organised its student support. The organisational approach fostered by the principal at Sunshine High facilitated inclusive practices in providing all members of the school community a range of opportunities to support students with disabilities. For example, three of the four school conditions at the school – IPs, case manager roles and teacher consultation processes - describe how a whole school approach was implemented by the school by adopting a highly organised approach to providing for students with disabilities. The Special Education teacher role at the school – the fourth school condition – was embedded in each of these school processes.

Another finding that emerged from the Sunshine High data was that three of the four respondent groups identified one of the school conditions - the role of Individual Plans – and all respondent groups identified another school condition – the capacity of the Special Education staff. This finding indicates that these two school conditions significantly impacted how the school provided for students with disabilities. Respondents also reported that these school conditions also affected the remaining school conditions; that is, Special Education teacher capacity impacted on the quality of the teacher consultative processes for students with disabilities and the case management roles for staff represented an evolution of the school's Individual Plan processes. The interconnected elements of these school conditions suggest that a feature of the school's successful provision for students with disabilities was the development of an organisational framework, promoted by

principal behaviours, to provide for students with disabilities within an inclusive school framework.

SECTION THREE: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A definition of principal engagement is provided in the Lakeside High case study. Respondents reported that the principal's leadership behaviours at Sunshine High reflected her engagement with the **organisational** elements of the school. The principal engagement factor was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her leadership framework. Both these behaviours - *planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* and *establishing goals and expectations* - were linked by respondents with the principal's preference to engage with the special education agenda through organisational means. The principal was reported by teachers as engaging with an organisational agenda at the school by executing leadership behaviours that helped establish and promote effective school structures and processes that successfully provided for students with disabilities.

A teacher described the principal's leadership behaviours in the following terms during the interview:

> *She (the principal) is very keen on developing the school as a place where everyone knows where to find information and know what everyone does...if you need advice or support for a student about how to teach him or her a skill or you're having a problem in class with someone, there are lots of ways to get help or advice...*

Another teacher commented about the principal's leadership approach through this questionnaire response:

> *Our principal is a great organiser and has a flair for setting up easy-to-follow ways of doing work around the school. If you have a student in class who has a learning difficulty, there are school policies and procedures that you follow to get assistance.*

Other teachers spoke of her development of organisational strategies as a means to establishing inclusive practices at the school:

> *She's not one for pd in the curriculum much or fancy programs for the kids but believes that if she can get some structures up or processes that help teachers organise their work with each other that the staff has all the wherewithal they need here in the staffroom to help most kids. She looks after teachers with their programs for the classroom and also provides committees, working groups and IP meetings so we can share our programs and ideas with each other.* (Teacher interview)

and

> *Since she's (the principal) been here, we have much better ways of supporting the kids on the Special Ed. program. IPs, the intranet and case managers are smart ways of organising the school so that we harness staff skills and ideas. She is very particular that we have our programs well prepared and checks up with our coordinators now and then to see how everything's going but she would rather us meet and*

plan together than have her looking over our shoulders. (Teacher questionnaire comment)

Though parental reporting of the principal's leadership behaviours were not measured as significant for this study, some parents commented how the principal clearly communicated through newsletters and teacher-parent meetings about the types of school processes available for them if they wanted to contact staff or contribute to the school's support for their child with a disability:

> *The good thing about this school is that you know what you can do if you have a problem. The principal is up-front about the freedom parents have to discuss concerns and she has put in place since she arrived ways to do this.* (Parent interview)

What emerged from the data for Sunshine High was that the principal's behaviours helped establish and develop a range of school conditions for students with disabilities within the context and framework of her engagement with the school community around organisation. The principal was committed to establishing and developing a range of school structures and processes to facilitate inclusive practices and effective teaching practices on behalf of students with disabilities. Her setting of goals and expectations for the school and her planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum leadership behaviours helped promote and develop an organisational framework for the school's successful provision for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to identify principal behaviours that successfully provided for students with disabilities. In addition to the principal behaviours and school conditions that were identified by respondents at Sunshine High, the principal's organisational engagement was identified as another significant factor in the school's successful provision for these students.

SECTION FOUR: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT SUNSHINE HIGH

INTRODUCTION

Three significant factors emerged from the data at Sunshine High as contributing to the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. A range of *principal behaviours* were identified by respondents, reflecting the principal's organisational *engagement* with the school community. In addition, respondents identified a range of *school conditions* that were reported as arising from the principal's engagement and behaviours. This section of the chapter examines the relationships between these factors and how they impact on the school's successful provision for students with disabilities at Sunshine High. As each identified school condition reflects components of the principal's organisational engagement, both principal behaviours are presented as giving rise to the same range of school conditions at the school. The links between principal behaviours and school conditions are presented in Figures 7.1 and 7.2.

SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL *PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHERS AND THE CURRICULUM*

Figure 7.1 describes the link between the principal's engagement, principal behaviour – the principal *plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum* - and the four school conditions at Sunshine High. The school conditions at this school were identified as arising out of both the principal's leadership behaviours and organisational engagement.

FIGURE 7.1: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT SUNSHINE HIGH

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT	PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THIS PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
ORGANISATIONAL	PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Sunshine High respondents reported that their principal's organisational engagement and leadership behaviours reflected her commitment to promoting school-wide organisational strategies for delivering effective intervention programs for students with disabilities (see Sections Two and Three of this chapter). Teacher respondents,

in particular, stated that the principal was committed to meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities and had an ability to grasp and appreciate the various challenges teachers faced in meeting these needs. A high proportion of teachers claimed that the principal was committed to working with staff in developing effective organisational frameworks for providing for students with disabilities.

In particular, Sunshine High respondents linked the principal's commitment to planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum with four school conditions – Special Education teacher capacity; collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities; Individual Plans developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities; and staff members appointed as case managers for students with disabilities.

The data supporting the establishment of these links is presented below:

The principal, teachers and parents identified the capacity of the Special Education staff as a school condition at Sunshine High (see Section Two of this chapter). These respondents cited this school condition as a consequence of the principal's behaviours in planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. The Special Education coordinator commented that the principal was determined to integrate the support for students with disabilities within the teaching and learning framework of the school:

(Principal's name) *urges us at every stage not to fall into the trap of being marginalised in Special Ed. She sees us as a leading force in the school for promoting best teaching practices. She thinks that we are given some of the hardest kids to teach, so we have a lot to share with staff about good teaching and leaning practices. So our role is really central to the teaching agenda here...* (Special Education Coordinator interview)

Teachers also cited the critical role of the Special Education teachers in promoting the teaching and learning agenda at the school and how the principal's behaviours helped support this role:

> *The principal is a great supporter of the Special Education staff having a role in our school as educators for all students and not just the place we send kids we can't manage...*(Teacher interview)

and

> *When I arrived here this year as a first-year-out* (principal's name) *asked me to spend some time with* (Special Education teacher's name). *She said I could learn a lot from her and that she had some good ideas I should try...* (Teacher interview)

The Special Education teachers were therefore delegated important responsibilities by the principal in promoting the teaching and learning agenda at the school for all students.

A high proportion of teachers cited collaborative consultation between Special Education staff and regular classroom teachers as a school condition (see Section Two of this chapter). Teachers cited this school condition as a consequence of the principal's promotion of processes for planning and evaluating teaching and the curriculum for all students:

> (Principal's name) *likes to encourage us to consult with each other as much as possible. She has set up the intranet as a way of organising this, so we don't have to tramp across the school as much as we did before. The case conferences are a great way for the Special Ed. team to plan together with us and see how we're all going with individual students.* (Teacher interview)

A member of the school executive stated:

> (Principal's name) *is a believer in being rigorous about curriculum delivery. She's very experienced in schools and has seen all the trends come and go, and come back again. She likes to work with the staff as much as possible in planning how we support students, especially those who struggle a bit. Her big thing is to leave this school one day with structures in place that continue to encourage classroom teachers and Special Ed. staff to work together and concentrate on the real agenda – the kids in the classroom. Getting together and working for students is the main game.* (School executive member interview)

A member of the Special Education staff commented during the interview:

> (Principal's name) *is devoted to setting up meetings and case conferences and all sorts of other ways of staff meeting with each other. She loves to concentrate on organising the school around best practice – planning, reviewing, thinking critically about our options. She thinks if she can set the school up organisationally, kids won't fall through the cracks of such a big school such as is...*

The impact of the principal's behaviours in promoting planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum was therefore reported as helping create conditions at Sunshine High where teachers felt supported and empowered in developing constructive working relationships with each other and the Special Education staff.

Parent respondents and the principal reported that the principal's behaviours in planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum was linked to the school's ongoing utilisation of Individual Plans (IPs) for students with disabilities (see Sections two and Three of this chapter).

The Sunshine High principal stated in her interview:

> *I hadn't really had any experience with IPs before I came to this school. But as soon as I saw how useful they were with the needy kids here I was determined to adopt them as a way of improving our teaching practices around here. So IPs are now an important way of keeping us up*

to standard with our teaching and learning. I try to become as involved as I can with the planning meetings; try to attend as many of the important sensitive case meetings as I can. I tell my staff – if you need me there for support, I will come.

Parent comments through the questionnaires reflected a similar sentiment about the principal's promotion of IPs. The formal IP case conference was reported by some parents as reflecting the principal's commitment to promoting quality teaching and learning practices for students with disabilities:

> *The principal always mentions IPs as a way for our child to learn better at this school.* (Parent questionnaire comment)

and

> *The principal thinks the IP meetings my wife and I attend keep us informed about how* (name of child) *can be better supported at the school.* (Parent questionnaire comment)

IPs were therefore endorsed by the principal as an effective school-wide initiative for improving the school's provision for students with disabilities.

Teachers and the principal at Sunshine High cited the case manager role as linked to the principal's behaviours in planning and evaluating teaching and the curriculum (see Section Two of this chapter). A powerful symbol for teachers was the principal's willingness to become a case manager for students at the school:

> (The principal) *is a big support for the case manager role. She sees Special Ed. as part of the general teaching program at the school so any way of involving other teachers in what we do is a way of improving the school as a whole. And the case manager role we've brought in over the past year or so is an extension of the IPs by designating teachers as looking after specific kids and improving how we organise ourselves in Special Ed. When she became a case manage for three students, she gave the whole initiative her approval and authority. We couldn't have asked for more.* (Special Education teacher interview)

Another teacher stated:

> *When we saw the principal become a case manager we knew she took Special Ed. seriously. She took lots of risks doing this but she really believes in case management as a way of regulating, I suppose, how we do things well at this school...* (Teacher interview)

The principal and teachers saw the establishment and development of the case management role as a consequence of the principal's behaviours in promoting processes for planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum at the school. Case management for students with disabilities was another feature of the principal's preference for organisational strategies in the school's provision for these students.

SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THE PRINCIPAL *ESTABLISHING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS*

Figure 7.2 describes the link between the principal behaviour – *establishing goals and expectations* and the school condition - *Special Education teacher capacity.*

FIGURE 7.2: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT, THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT SUNSHINE HIGH

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT	PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	SCHOOL CONDITION LINKED WITH PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
ORGANISATIONAL	ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS	SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS CONSTRUCTIVLEY ENGAGE WITH EACH OTHER ABOUT MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Sunshine High respondents reported that the principal envisioned a school where all students would be welcomed and receive a high standard of support in meeting

their special needs (see Section One of this chapter). The principal was reported by respondents as being determined that the school develop practices consistent with its rhetoric about inclusion:

> *She* (the principal) *wants us to live up to our claims as a Catholic school that looks after the poorest of the poor...she sees kids with special needs as our poor at the school. If we cannot look after them, she says, why put out stuff that claims we are here for everyone?* (Teacher interview)

The identified school conditions at Sunshine High represented practical strategies that converted the principal's inclusive goals into a reality. The principal's behaviours were critical factors in creating these inclusive practices that provided for students with disabilities.

The first of the school conditions identified by respondents was the capacity of Special Education staff (see Section Two of this chapter). The effective support of students with disabilities was a critical element in the realisation of the principal's goal for inclusive practices. Their capacity was an important factor in the staff working with them on behalf of students with disabilities.
As a teacher stated during an interview:

> *The principal places a lot of pressure on the Special Ed. staff to lead us with the kids who have special needs. She has a plan, I think, to make this school a fairer place for the families who send their children here and having a good Special Ed. team is pretty important for this.*

The principal commented during her interview:

> *My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation in the district as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team to bring this about.*

The principal was determined to create a school that attracted families with children with disabilities. Recruiting and supporting capable Special Education teachers who effectively supported students with disabilities was a key element of her approach to this challenge.

The principal's establishment of goals and expectations at Sunshine High was also linked to the remaining school conditions – IPs, case management roles and collaborative consultation between Special Education staff and regular classroom teachers. These conditions all represented strategies promoted by the principal as representing practical processes and practices that provided for students with disabilities. Their implementation by staff reflected how the principal's organisational engagement resulted in a range of whole school practices. For example, the IP process was nominated by the principal as a key school strategy for implementing its goal to promote inclusive practices:

> *IPs bring together staff from all over our school to discuss student need. We use the IPs to support our intention to offer the best support we can for our students with special needs.* (Principal interview)

A range of teacher comments highlighted how the IP process reflected the principal's establishment of inclusive school goals:

> *She* (the principal) *says IPs are our way of acting as a united group in supporting kids with special needs.* (Teacher interview)

and

> (Principal's name) *urges us to find the time to be part of the planning meetings for students with special needs. She says that if we are going to be a fair school for all students, we need as many teachers to own our problems and solutions as possible.* (Teacher interview)

The principal's establishment of inclusive practices as a school goal was also linked to the development of the case manager role for students with disabilities. Most teachers identified this initiative as representing another feature of the IP process. The principal was seen as promoting case management by her decision to case manage three students with disabilities:

> (Principal's name) *really impressed teachers the way she put up her hand as a case manager. She says that getting involved like this shows parents that we are supportive of these students' needs. She has an expectation that we will become an inclusive school and that we need to take small steps, one at a time. Case managers are leading the way, I suppose...* (Teacher interview)

The principal and the principal reported that collaborative consultation between Special Education staff and regular classroom teachers was a school condition that

was especially effective in providing for students with disabilities. While the primary catalyst for this condition was the principal's behaviours in promoting planning and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum, some teachers also recognised that the condition also resulted from the principal's expectation that the school promote inclusive practices. For example, the Special Education Coordinator commented during her interview:

> *The principal is a campaigner for staff to model inclusion be the way we conduct ourselves as teachers. Consultation between us gives out a message that we are not alone as teachers and that we are better for getting together to discuss common issues...*

The school conditions at Sunshine High arose from the principal setting a goal for the school to be welcoming and accommodating of all student needs. The principal saw this goal as encompassing a commitment to develop and sustain conditions that provided practical support for all students, regardless of their special need.

SUMMARY OF THE SUNSHINE HIGH CASE STUDY

Principal behaviours, a range of school conditions and the principal's organisational engagement with the school community were identified by respondents at Sunshine High as significant factors in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The Robinson (2007) framework was very useful in organising the Sunshine High data but there were some indicators, specifically related to Special Education practices that were identified as falling outside this framework. These indicators have been discussed in this case study. In addition, the establishment of principal engagement as a factor at Viewpoint High was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her framework.

The principal's leadership behaviours and engagement with organisational strategies created the impetus and framework for the school's establishment of school conditions that helped provide for students with disabilities. The principal was committed to developing Sunshine High as a school where a range of inclusive practices was established to meet student needs and where these practices were based on sound teaching and learning principles.

The principal's vision for inclusion at Sunshine High encompassed the establishment of integrated school structures, policies and processes on behalf of students with disabilities reflecting a key factor that emerged from the data for this school - the principal's behaviours highlighted an organisational engagement with the school community as her preferred leadership approach to providing for students with disabilities.

A fourth case study - Riverland High School – is reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 8

REPORTING AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FOR RIVERLAND HIGH

INTRODUCTION

The following chapter reports and analyses the data for Riverland High. As in the previous case study chapters, the Robinson (2007) leadership practices framework is adapted, using the framework laid out in Chapter Four, to report and analyse the responses for this school. The absence of identified principal behaviours at the school, a range of identified school conditions and the identification of disengaged delegation by the principal in providing for students with disabilities are examined to explain the ways in which the Riverland High school community successfully provided for students with disabilities.

The first section of this chapter reports on the absence of principal behaviours identified by respondents; the second section reports on school conditions identified by respondents; the third section reports on the identification of disengaged delegation by the principal's in providing for students with disabilities; and the final section of the chapter addresses how these factors contributed to the school's successfully provision for students with disabilities.

SECTION ONE: IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS FOR RIVERLAND HIGH

The criteria for identifying principal behaviours at Viewpoint High are described in Section One of Chapter 5.

Riverland High respondents did not report any principal behaviour as a significant factor in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. The principal reported one behaviour as significant – *plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum.* This principal behaviour is aligned with the range of leadership practices reported by Robinson (2007) as impacting on the outcomes for all students.

Table 8.1 presents the proportion of the Riverland High respondent groups that identified a particular principal behaviour that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices V, W, X).*

TABLE 8.1: PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR IDENTIFIED BY RIVERLAND HIGH SCHOOL RESPONDENTS

	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	**TQ**	**TI**	**PQ**	**PI**	**SQ**	**SI**	**PrQ**	**PrI**
THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM								YES *

* NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR AS THE PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR WAS CITED BY ONLY ONE RESPONDENT GROUP AT THIS SCHOOL

^KEY FOR THE TABLES IN CHAPTER SEVEN

TQ:	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
TI:	TEACHER INTERVIEW
PQ:	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
PI:	PARENT INTERVIEW
SQ:	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
SI:	STUDENT INTERVIEW
PRQ:	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
PRI:	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
%	PROPORTION OF THE RESPONDENT GROUP THAT REPORTED THIS AS A SIGNIFICANT PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR
YES	THE PRINCIPAL REPORTED THIS AS A SIGIFICANT PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

Table 8.2 presents typical responses from the Riverland High principal in describing her leadership behaviours.

TABLE 8.2

TYPICAL RIVERLAND HIGH PRINCIPAL REPONSES IDENTIFYING PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	"I see my role as working behind the scenes and supporting and resourcing teachers in the school with their planning and programming" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"I am supportive of the work done in this area and always respond positively to any initiatives" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 8.1 presents a principal behaviour reported by the principal – *plans, coordinates and evaluates teaching and the curriculum.* This behaviour was only reported by the principal and it was not recorded as a significant factor in accordance with the criteria for the study.

Though this behaviour was not recorded as a significant factor for Riverland High, its nomination by the principal will be addressed in this chapter. It provides the study with the principal's perspective on her leadership role in supporting students with disabilities at the school.

The following section of this chapter presents and analyses this principal behaviour.

8.1 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR

THE PRINCIPAL PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

In her meta-analysis, Robinson (2007) cites a significant school leadership dimension as the principal planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. This dimension incorporates four types of leadership behaviour – involving staff in discussions of teaching; working with staff to coordinate and review the curriculum; providing feedback to teachers; and systematic monitoring of student progress in collaboration with teachers (p. 14). The principal was the only respondent to identify this factor at Riverland High. None of these types of leadership behaviours were identified by teacher, parent or student respondents at the school. During her interview, however, the principal reported some aspects of this leadership dimension. For example, she stated that an important factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities was her commitment to working with the staff at Riverland High to help coordinate and "add value" to the learning outcomes of all students. The principal stated that her support of school polices and structures focusing on best practice teaching and learning was an

example of her commitment to this objective. She claimed that her leadership behaviours enhanced the capacity of teachers to provide quality teaching for students.

In addition, the principal cited her support for the school's Special Needs Committee as a specific distributed leadership behaviour she had adopted on behalf of students with disabilities. She stated that her ongoing promotion of this committee as a working group dedicated to assisting teachers in planning and evaluating instructional practices in the classroom helped facilitate better provision for students with disabilities. School structures such as the Special Needs Committee provided teachers with the opportunity to work collaboratively with a common purpose in their efforts to teach students with disabilities. Furthermore, the practices of the committee and its role encouraged teachers to remain open to adopting a range of alternate strategies in meeting the needs of all students in the classroom:

> *The Special Needs Committee provides teachers with the opportunity to regularly meet and discuss how we can work out how to support the girls. Through the work of the committee, teachers are assisted in developing their own skills and confidence in the meeting some of the challenges these students give us in the classroom...the committee receives my full support in helping the school develop a more coordinated approach to meeting the individual needs of our girls.* (Principal interview)

The principal's support for the role of the Special Needs Committee was confirmed by a number of teachers on both the questionnaire and during the interviews. For example, some teachers commented:

> *She* (the principal) *is always telling us how effective the Special Needs Committee is at the school and that we should support our colleagues who are members of it...* (Teacher interview)

and

> *The Special Needs Committee is the principal's way of coordinating Special Education at the school.* (Teacher questionnaire comment)

The principal claimed that her delegate on the Special Needs Committee – the Assistant Principal - kept her well-informed about how the school was providing for students with disabilities. She also commented that her leadership approach allowed Special Education issues to be included as regular agenda items at school Executive Leadership meetings. The principal stated that she preferred to work in the background in providing for students with disabilities:

> *I prefer to work behind the scenes in Special Education. I will intervene if I'm asked to by staff. I like to delegate as much as I can in this area...I leave it to others to advise me and then I can make informed decisions if necessary.*

lost teachers, however, reported that the principal showed a lack of active ngagement in her leadership approach to providing for students with disabilities.

As a teacher commented during the interview:

> *Our principal seems to be apart from the real stuff that happens in Special Ed. It seems that she is happy for it to happen elsewhere without her involvement.* (Teacher interview)

Another teacher commented:

> *The principal does not involve herself in the day-to-day work of Special Education. She is more interested in other teaching and learning matters.* (Teacher questionnaire comment)

A majority of the teachers interviewed for the study also stated that the current principal's approach to students with disabilities was different to that exhibited by the two previous principals at the school. These teachers claimed that the previous principals had been pro-active in promoting the needs of students with disabilities by establishing the school's current Special Education policy and practice framework, including the Special Needs Committee, the Individual Plan processes and the school's case manager roles. In addition, the previous principals had appointed the current Special Education staff. One of these teachers stated:

> *Everything that works well now was put in place years ago. We had a vision then for Special Education...now we keep on going. But with nothing new.* (Teacher interview)

Another teacher commented:

> *I worked under* (names of the two previous principals at Riverland High). *They really cared about kids with special needs. Not to the detriment of other girls, but they had a soft spot for them. And they worked really hard to make this school a leader in Special Ed.* (Teacher interview)

Another teacher commented:

> *I worked under* [names of two previous principals at Riverland High]. *They really cared about kids with special needs. Not to the detriment of other girls, but they had a soft spot for them. And they worked really hard to make this school a leader in Special Ed.* (Teacher interview)

Other teacher comments during the interviews included:

> *It's like she's never here to see what's happening. I doubt she knows who's on the Special Ed. program.*

and

> *It would be great if she showed some interest once in a while. We seem to be pushing up-hill most days...*

A small proportion of teachers during the interviews stated that the principal's lack of active engagement with the school's support of students with disabilities was preferable to her involvement in the Special Education program:

> *It's better that she keeps out of our way. She's not interested anyway so it's best if we run our own race...*

and

The Special Ed. teachers run things pretty well by themselves, anyway. They don't really need her (the principal's) *support most of the time.*

and

The worst thing that could happen is for her (the principal) *to get really involved in Special Ed. She doesn't seem very supportive of the girls who struggle, so she does well to leave it to teachers who are sympathetic to their needs.*

The parent respondent groups, like the teachers, did not report any significant principal behaviour for the study. One parent stated that the principal attended the initial enrolment interview for her child and that she appreciated the principal's positive responses to questions about how the school planned to support her child's special needs in the classroom. The principal, though, had not directly contacted them in the four years since this interview, a situation that disappointed this parent. The following exchange is included to report some of the views expressed by one of the parents about the school's support of students with disabilities:

Parent: *We really like this school. The Special Ed teachers are terrific; they look after our daughter and keep us informed. We are really pleased with her progress.*

Interviewer: *What role does the principal have in this?*

Parent: *I don't think the principal really knows much about us or our experiences. More's the shame...*

SUMMARY

Riverland High School was nominated for this study due to its reputation as a secondary school that successfully provided for students with disabilities. It was well regarded as a school with effective support programs for these students and was considered by many as a diocesan leader in its promotion of inclusive educational practices. Reports from the teacher, parent and student respondent groups indicated that principal behaviour, however, was not identified as a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. Furthermore, a significant proportion of teachers, especially during the interviews, claimed that the behaviours of previous school principals were primarily responsible for establishing, developing and sustaining the school conditions that were now identified as significant factors in its successful provision for students with disabilities. Some respondents stated that the current principal relied on the members of the Special Needs Committee to advise her on issues in this area of education and that she failed to actively engage with staff or parents in leading the school in providing for these students. These teachers and parents reported that the school's success in providing for students with disabilities could be attributed to the leadership and coordination role of the Special Needs Committee in conjunction with a range school conditions established at the school over many years.

The principal's identification of her own leadership behaviour highlighted a discrepancy in perceptions between the principal and the rest of the school community about how Riverland High provided for students with disabilities. The principal reported that through her oversight and support of the Special Needs

Committee she contributed to school-wide processes for planning and coordinating teaching and curriculum delivery for students with disabilities. Other respondent groups did not interpret the principal's behaviour as achieving this outcome. This inconsistency suggests that there exist two possible scenarios at the school. The principal has either not adequately communicated to staff and parents that her leadership behaviours reflected her commitment to students with disabilities; or staff and parents do not value her current contribution to the school's provision for these students and would prefer a different leadership approach by the principal. An analysis of the data from this school does not clarify the reason for this discrepancy in perception. What emerges from the data, though, is that while the principal identified her leadership behaviour as a factor in the study, a high proportion of teachers in addition to some parents during the interview reported that the principal did not adequately engage with them as they provided for students with disabilities.

SECTION TWO: IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT RIVERLAND HIGH

The criteria for identifying school conditions at Viewpoint High are described in Section 2 of Chapter 5.

Riverland High respondents reported that school conditions were significant factors in explaining how the school successfully provided for students with disabilities. Four school conditions emerged from the data at Riverland High.

The school conditions identified by respondents were:

- Special Education teacher capacity
- The Special Needs Committee effectively coordinates programs for students with disabilities

- Individual Plans are developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities

Table 8.3 presents the proportion of the Riverland High respondent groups that identified a particular school condition that emerged from an analysis of teacher, parent, student and principal data from questionnaire and interview responses (see *Appendices V, W, X).*

TABLE 8.3

SCHOOL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED BY RIVERLAND HIGH RESPONDENTS

^ SEE TABLE 8.1 FOR KEY

	RESPONDENT GROUP ^							
	TQ	TI	PQ	PI	SQ	SI	PrQ	PrI
SCHOOL CONDITION SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	68%	100%	80%	100%	73%	75%	YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATES PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	44%	66%					YES	YES
SCHOOL CONDITION INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	57%	100%						YES
SCHOOL CONDITION COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	44%	66%						YES

Table 8.4 presents typical responses from Riverland High respondent groups identifying school conditions.

TABLE 8.4

TYPICAL RIVERLAND HIGH REPONSES IDENTIFYING SCHOOL CONDITIONS

SCHOOL CONDITION	TYPICAL RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENT GROUPS
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	Individual targeting of student needs by the Special Education staff RIVERLAND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The Special Education teachers help me with my work RIVERLAND STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	Special Education support provided by the Special Education teachers RIVERLAND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	The key to our success is the expertise and commitment of our Special Needs teachers RIVERLAND TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The Special Education teachers know me very well and help me all the time RIVERLAND STUDENT INTERVIEWS
INDIVIDUAL PLANS DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	Individual Plan management process across the school RIVERLAND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION	"There are no distinctions between teachers at the school...we rely on relational strengths across the school to achieve what we achieve. It is a collaborative approach here" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE ROLE	Special Needs Committee processes are important at this school RIVERLAND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

8.2 ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT RIVERLAND HIGH

SCHOOL CONDITION

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY

Special Education teacher capacity was the most frequently reported of all the school conditions at Riverland High, identified by all respondent groups. The school condition was nominated by a high proportion of teachers, parents and students in both the interviews and through the questionnaires and by the principal through her questionnaire and interview responses. All respondent groups reported that the capacity of the Special Education staff was primarily due to their range of specialist teaching skills and commitment to supporting students with disabilities. Well over half of all respondents nominated this factor as a critical role for the Special Education teachers in the school. As an example of the comments during the interviews about the capacity and commitment of the Special Education staff, one teacher stated:

> *The key to our success is the skill and commitment of our Special Education teachers. They really know their stuff and help us every day. They bring a lot of credibility to their role at school and teachers look for them for guidance and support.*

A parent comment on the questionnaire reflects the general perception among this respondent group about the capacity for the Special Education staff at the school:

I know that if I have any concern about our child, I only have to give the school a call and we will have a meeting sooner rather then later. The Special Education teachers are very knowledgeable and committed.

Apart from their capacity, a range of other qualities were reported by respondents about Special Education roles in the school. A significant proportion of students on their questionnaires, for example, cited their active involvement with students as an important factor. In particular, many students appreciated how the Special Education teachers appeared to enjoy working alongside them in individual, small group or classroom settings.

A student wrote on her questionnaire:

I trust the Special Education teachers all the time. They are great supports and enjoy teaching us. And they give me confidence that I can do better at school.

Another student commented during her interview:

They (Special Education staff) *come to me to see how I'm going. I don't have to keep remembering what things they can help me with. They are really well organised and friendly and know what I should be doing most days.*

During the principal's interview, she identified the skills and dedication of the Special Education staff as an important factor:

We are lucky to have such good teachers looking after our students with special needs. They are always there for the kids and are appreciated by the staff. They have a lot of credibility.

Overall, all respondent groups reported that the capacity of the Special Education teachers at Riverland High. Their skills, commitment and willingness to collaborate with teachers and engage with students were the qualities most mentioned by these respondents.

SCHOOL CONDITION

THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATES PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was reported by the principal and a significant proportion of teachers at both the interview and questionnaire (see Table 8.3). It was not identified by parents or students, perhaps reflecting the teacher focus of Special Needs Committee role at the school.

Teachers stated that committee members regularly advocated for students with disabilities by highlighting Special Education issues at staff meetings and being personally involved in both formal and less formal decision-making processes at the school on behalf of these students.

As one teacher stated:

As teachers of kids with special needs, we are represented through the Special Needs Committee and they do the best they can when they get a go at staff meetings, but it is fairly limited sometimes. There's no

mistake, though, that they really go out on a limb sometimes by going into bat for the girls. (Teacher interview)

A teacher on the committee commented that the Assistant Principal's membership legitimised the position of students with disabilities in the school by allowing their needs to be raised at the school's Executive Team meetings:

> *We know that if we bring up an issue at these committee meetings, there is a fair chance that it will be heard at the executive level. They provide us with a way of getting our views heard.* (Teacher interview)

The principal confirmed the committee's cross-school roles by claiming that she gained most of her information about the needs of students with disabilities through her regular consultation with the Assistant Principal, her delegate on the committee. She also commented that the Special Needs Committee performed many important school leadership functions in coordinating programs for students with disabilities:

> *The committee is a way for me to keep in touch with Special Education. They lead our school in supporting girls with special needs and give our school direction and focus in Special Education. I trust them to do the right thing by these students.* (Principal questionnaire response)

It is noteworthy that while the above comments by the principal indicate that she valued the committee's function in keeping her "in touch" with Special Education, other respondents in the study did not similarly report an appreciation of her links with the committee. Teachers and parent respondent groups, including teachers on

the committee, did not comment on any principal behaviour that would reflect the principal's engagement with members of the committee.

SCHOOL CONDITION

INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was reported by fifty-seven percent of teachers through their questionnaires and all teachers during the interviews and by the principal during her interview. A teacher noted on the questionnaire about the important role of Individual Plans (IPs) in supporting students with disabilities:

> *Teachers get involved through the IPs and plan manager processes. It gives us a chance to have our say about the girls in our classes.*

Another teacher commented during her interview that IPs were an efficient strategy for supporting students and that Riverland High was a pioneer in the diocese in their implementation of IPs:

> *IPs give us teachers the opportunity to know straight away the needs of a particular student, her needs and who is seeing her to help out. It also brings in parents and allows the girl to speak up for herself. It's a good initiative; we've been doing this for years. We're used to now.*

The principal commented that IPs were an effective strategy for monitoring the progress of students on the Special Education program:

Our school has always been a leader in putting in place IPs for students. It is the primary vehicle for all of us to be involved and contribute to Special Education. We can track how the girls are going and where we should be putting our resources to help them. I keep a close eye on how its' going... (Principal interview)

Parents and students did not identify IPs as a significant school factor. This suggests that it was perceived as a teacher-focused process at the school. While some parents commented that IPs gave them a forum for contributing ideas for their child's support programs, most parents did not nominate the process on their questionnaires or mention them as a significant factor during the interviews. This suggests that parents either perceived that they had little involvement in planning processes for students with disabilities or that IPs were so entrenched in the school's provision for these students with disabilities that parents did not deem them to be significant enough to report for the study.

SCHOOL CONDITION

COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This school condition was reported by a significant proportion of teachers on both the questionnaire and during their interviews and by the principal during her interview. The data presented in Table 8.3 indicates that about half the teachers reported on their questionnaires and nearly two-thirds of teachers through the interview process commented that Special Education staff and classroom teachers regularly consulted with each about meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

A majority of these teachers reported that these consultative processes reflected a commitment by the staff to work together on behalf of students with disabilities:

> *There has always been a good spirit at this school. Teachers are, on the whole, OK about special needs and going the extra mile, if needed, to look after these girls. You know that if you need help that it's there for you if you ask for it from the Special Ed. team. I suppose that's a fancy way of saying that we like to collaborate with each other...* (Teacher interview)

Another teacher commented:

> *We're busy as teachers but if we don't work together, we lose out. And so do the girls. Consultation is talked about a lot nowadays but it's important so that we keep talking to our Special Ed. colleagues. As long as we stay in touch, and organise time to think up better ways of supporting the girls, we have some chance of making a difference.* (Teacher interview)

Other teachers commented that regular classroom teachers appreciated the capacity and experience of the Special Education staff in supporting students with disabilities and naturally gravitated towards them when faced with challenges with individual students with disabilities:

> *You know where to go if you need help with a girl who's having problems. You don't go to your coordinator; you go to* (Special Education teacher's name) *or* (Special Education teacher's name). *They have the good oil on all the girls on their programs.* (Teacher interview)

The expertise of the Special Education teachers helped promote confidence in this consultative teaching culture. Most teachers stated that consultation between regular staff and the Special Education team was a key factor in providing ongoing support for students with disabilities. The Special Education teachers were identified as usually taking the initiative in this consultation process:

> (Special Education teacher's name) *knows everyone here and has been here forever so she is comfortable with all staff. She has cred. with the teachers and we don't feel failures if we talk to her about any issue in our classes about how to teach any particular girl. We don't have to approach her usually as she seems to know when we need a word in the ear...* (Teacher interview)

Collaborative consultation between teachers and the Special Education staff was reported as an effective way to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities were acknowledged and met by staff in a coordinated manner at the school. Teachers cited examples of consultative practices, including case meetings about student needs, informal opportunities in the staffroom to establish co-ordinated approaches to classroom practices, memos about student needs and sharing of program ideas.

One teacher stated:

> *We really make this up as we go...any chance to discuss a shared problem with the Special Ed. team is grabbed. It probably depends on what day you're having, but we're pretty organised around here when it comes to sharing ideas and views about the girls.* (Teacher interview)

The principal stated that she was keen to promote a consultative approach between the Special Education staff and teachers in providing for students with disabilities. She stated that the most effective consultative strategies were when all staff collaborated with a shared vision for improving classroom practices. This allowed staff to be aware of innovative ways for meeting student needs and helped in the development of productive personal and professional relationships among teachers. The principal did not elaborate on how she promoted these consultative practices at the school.

Collaborative consultation between teachers and Special Education staff in meeting the needs of students with disabilities was therefore identified as an important school strategy for providing for students with disabilities that relied on co-operation between teachers, a shared belief that all students could learn and a proactive approach by the Special Education staff.

SUMMARY

The capacity of the Special Education teachers, the leadership and coordination roles of the Special Needs Committee, the implementation of Individual Plan processes and collaborative consultation between teachers and Special Education staff were identified as school conditions underpinning Riverland High's response providing for students with disabilities. With the exception of the role of the Special Education staff, these school conditions were only nominated by the teacher respondent groups and the principal.

A common feature of these school conditions was the involvement of the Special Education staff in the school's range of intervention strategies for students with disabilities. The capacity of the Special Education teachers was reported by all respondent groups and their support roles across the school were identified as impacting on each of the identified school conditions. For example, Special Education teachers were members of the Special Needs Committee, had a major role in coordinating Individual Plan processes and played a proactive role in consulting with teachers about the needs of students with disabilities.

Another significant feature of the identified school conditions was the leadership roles played by members of the Special Needs Committee. The principal and teachers cited the functions of this committee as providing the school with direction and focus in supporting students with disabilities. The principal reported a high regard for the quality of their advice to the school executive team and staff reported satisfaction in the willingness of committee members to consult with teachers and parents about individual student needs.

SECTION THREE: PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A definition of principal engagement is provided in the Lakeside High case study. Teacher, parent and student respondent groups did not identify any behaviour by the principal in providing for students with disabilities. The absence of identified principal behaviour by respondents may be characterised as the principal adopting

disengaged delegation in providing for these students. This factor was not identified by Robinson (2007) in her framework.

Many teachers in the study reported that the current principal continued to maintain the range of key school conditions established by her predecessors as principal for students with disabilities. These teachers also commented that she had not attempted to change the fundamental nature of the school's provision for these students in the four years of her leadership at the school. In addition, during her interview the principal expressed confidence in the school's current approach to providing for students with disabilities. She also commented that she was comfortable with her current leadership role in supporting the range of school conditions that were coordinated by the Special Needs Committee through its management of individual student cases. The principal stated that she gave the committee her delegated authority to provide school leadership in the area of Special Education:

> *Our Special Needs Committee is the best place for decisions to be made about girls receiving extra support. These people know the Special Ed. area better than me and they give us the direction we need to be a leader in this area...* (Principal interview)

These findings indicate that:

- A school can successfully provide for students with disabilities when principal behaviours are not identified as contributing directly to this provision.

- A school can successfully provide for students with disabilities when the principal adopts a disengaged delegation approach to this provision.
- A range of school conditions can be maintained by a school community in the absence of principal behaviours and active principal leadership engagement.

A high proportion of teacher respondents commented that the leadership behaviours of previous principals were a significant factor in the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The school conditions established, promoted and sustained by these principals were also identified by these respondents as representing the school conditions that continued to successfully provide for students with disabilities at the school. By trusting key staff members to lead the school in Special Education matters, these previous principals were reported as adopting a distributed leadership approach. The current principal also stated that she trusted the abilities of these key school staff members to lead essential school functions on behalf of students with disabilities.

The concept of relational trust is cited by West-Burnham and Coates (2005) who suggest that some principals empower school staff to take on key school functions in order to achieve shared goals for the school:

> *Empowerment is delegation without caveat, where authority is sufficient to or greater than the level needed to meet the demands of the responsibility agreed...the ability to initiate and modify strategies without recourse to 'asking permission'...it recognises personal autonomy and*

ability, irrespective of age or status (West-Burnham & Coates, 2005, p.105).

What emerged from the data at this school was that the principal trusted members of the Special Needs Committee to effectively provide for students with disabilities and allowed them to provide leadership and coordination of the school's approach to these functions. At issue, though, is whether other members of the Riverland High school community interpreted the principal's trust as informed delegation and empowerment or neglect for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to identify principal behaviours that successfully provided for students with disabilities. Respondents at Riverland High did not identify principal behaviour as a significant factor for this study but rather a range of school conditions. The principal was identified by these respondents as failing to actively engage in the school's approach to providing for these students. Some teachers conceded, though, that she continued to sustain the already established school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities.

During her interview, the principal spoke of her trust and high regard for the roles played by members of the Special Needs Committee who coordinated the school's support programs for these students. She stated that these committee members exercised school leadership roles in this area. There was no evidence, however, of any reciprocal trust by committee members for the role played by the principal. As a result of questionnaire and interview comments by teachers and the principal, the

principal's approach to providing for students with disabilities at Riverland High is described as disengaged delegation. This leadership approach is interpreted as the principal allowing the members of the Special Needs Committee to maintain their school leadership roles in providing for students with disabilities but without any engagement by the principal with the committee. The disengaged delegation approach adopted by the principal could be characterised as encompassing some of the aspects of the empowerment concept cited by West-Burnham and Coates (2005), though it is questionable whether the members of the Special Needs Committee regarded her delegation of leadership roles as true empowerment. The leadership behaviours by the principal in allowing them to exercise school leadership, however, helped sustain the identified school conditions that were identified as successfully providing for students with disabilities.

SECTION FOUR: SCHOOL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM THE LEADERSHIP APPROACH AT RIVERLAND HIGH

INTRODUCTION

This section of the chapter addresses how school conditions at Riverland High arose out of the leadership approach for providing for students with disabilities developed by the school.

Respondents at Riverland High reported that the school's success in providing for students with disabilities could be attributed to a range of school conditions in place for these students. Respondents also identified Special Needs Committee members as providing the school with leadership in this area. While respondents did not identify a role for principal behaviours in providing for students with disabilities and characterised the principal's leadership approach as representing disengaged

delegation, a number of teachers commented that the principal nevertheless supported the leadership roles exercised by members of the Special Needs Committee. A high proportion of teacher respondents also commented that the school leadership function of the Special Needs Committee arose from the distributed leadership behaviours by previous principals at the school. These leadership behaviours helped create many of the identified school conditions at Riverland High, including the leadership role for the Special Needs Committee in providing for students with disabilities.

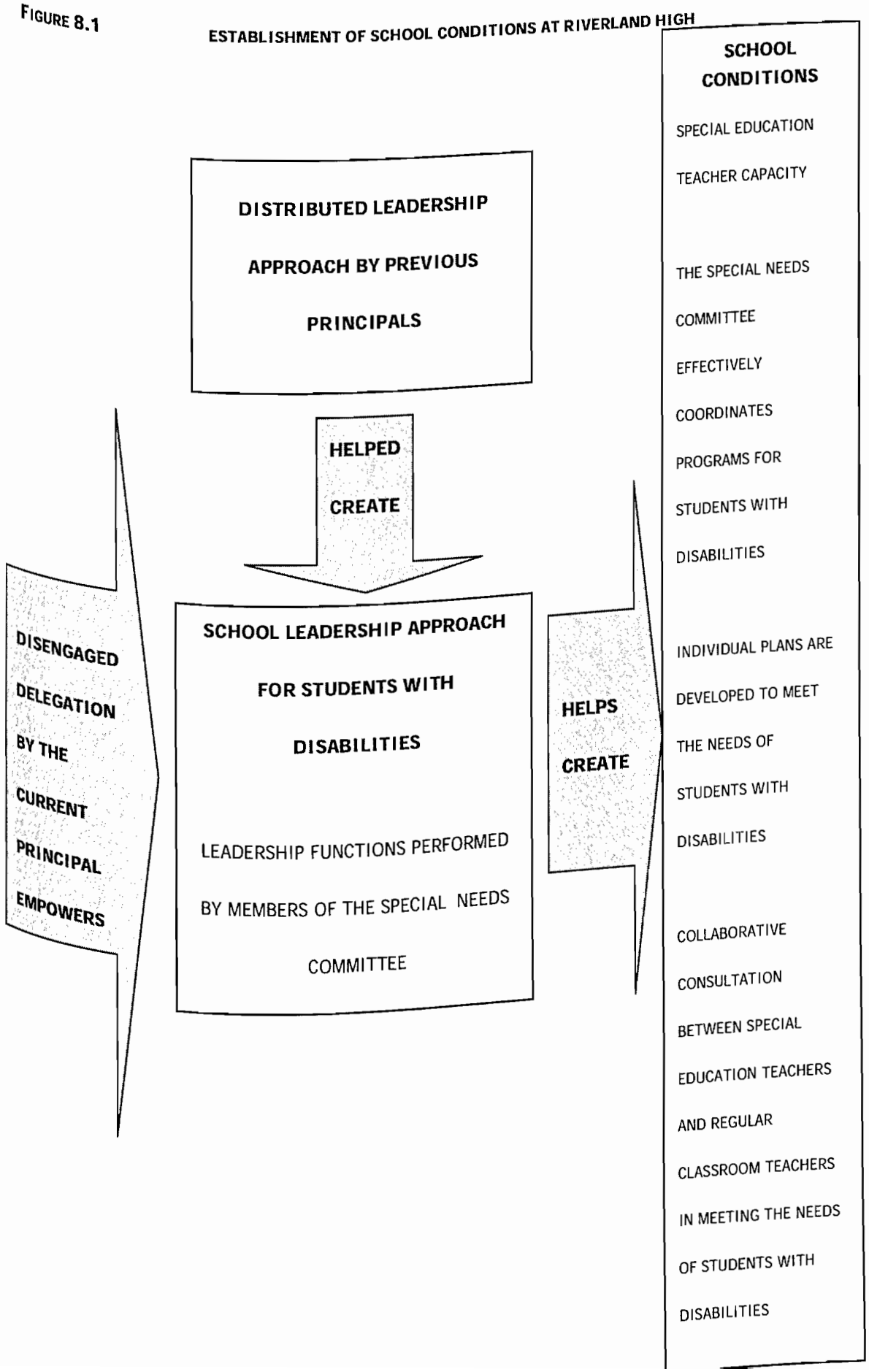
Importantly, the current principal stated that she trusted the members of the Special Needs Committee to provide the school with leadership in this area. There is evidence that the current principal's behaviours at Riverland High give members of the Special Needs Committee the space to provide a leadership for the school in providing for students with disabilities. The linkages between previous principals' distributed leadership behaviours, the current principal's disengaged delegation, the leadership functions of the Special Needs Committee and the identified school conditions at Riverland High are presented in Figure 8.1.

It should be noted the significant differences between Table 8.1 and the tables attached to the other case studies in describing how school conditions arose out of principal behaviours. In Table 8.1, the distributed leadership behaviours of previous principals at the school are shown as helping create the leadership role of the Special Needs Committee and the leadership behaviour by the current principal is shown as delegating this leadership role to members of the committee. The Special Needs Committee leadership roles are then shown as helping create the identified

school conditions that are reported as successfully providing for students with disabilities.

FIGURE 8.1

ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL CONDITIONS AT RIVERLAND HIGH



THE PRINCIPAL ADOPTS DISENGAGED DELEGATION IN ALLOWING MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Respondents at Riverland High did not identify principal behaviour as a significant factor in providing for students with disabilities (see Section One of this chapter), with the principal's leadership role characterised as disengaged delegation:

> *She's* (the principal) *a fan of the (Special Needs) committee and is happy to let them do their thing...* (Teacher interview)

and

> *The Special Needs Committee couldn't do their work without the principal's approval...* (Teacher interview)

and

> *The principal places a lot of pressure on the* (Special Needs) *committee to do the work in Special Ed. here. I think she trusts them to get the job done and give us the advice we need for these girls.* (Teacher questionnaire response)

The principal stated her confidence in the leadership and coordination functions performed by the Special Needs Committee:

> *The committee is a good way for coordinating our work in Special Ed. They represent the staff and me in looking after the interests of the girls on special programs* (Principal questionnaire response)

The role of the Special Needs Committee at Riverland High was reported by respondents as therefore providing leadership for the school's provision for students with disabilities. The committee consisted of a cross-section of staff who executed a range of leadership roles in developing implementing and coordinating a range of intervention strategies for these students. Teachers reported that the leadership functions of the committee were allowed to continue by the principal who appointed committee members who occupied positions of influence in the school as well as staff who were recognised as "leading teachers". Respondents reported that the Assistant Principal was selected by the principal to be her delegate on the committee and she was joined by the Special Education coordinator, the school counsellor and five classroom teachers, including a grade coordinator and a faculty head. One of the current Special Education teachers commented at the interview about her experiences on the committee:

> *The committee has terms of reference that give us a leadership role of the special needs programs. We were the first school in the diocese to establish a Special Needs Committee with a role to provide leadership in Special Education.*

A member of the school's Special Education staff commented during her interview about the committee's role:

> *Most of the structures other schools are now only starting we have put in place here. Our school was the first with a Special Needs Committee and transition and IPs. We were the guinea pigs! It's given us a lot of scope to do our own thing and develop*

some interesting ideas for teachers in the classroom. We really provide leadership in special needs education here.

Teachers reported that the Special Needs Committee provided leadership in the school's provision for students with disabilities (see Section Two of this chapter):

> *The Special Needs Committee is the centre of all that happens in Special Ed. They're held in high regard and we look to them to coordinate the IPs and parent contact for us. They're always up at staff meetings advocating for this or that for girls on the Special Ed. program.* (Teacher interview)

Another teacher stated about the role of the Special Needs Committee:

> *It's good to know that there are teachers on the committee who are passionate about the girls who need the most help. I've been in a few schools and the committee role here is pretty special. They've been at it a long time and they know what they're doing...* (Teacher interview)

The role of the Special Needs Committee in leading and coordinating the school's provision for students with disabilities was also linked by respondents to the establishment and development of the other three school conditions at Riverland High.

Respondents reported that the impact of the Special Education teacher role was enhanced by the leadership functions of the Special Needs Committee. Teachers commented that the Special Needs Committee provided the Special Education

program with an organisational framework that assisted them in their support of students with disabilities:

> *You know that they* (the Special Needs Committee) *work hand-in-hand with the Special Ed. teachers. It's handy to know that there's a kind of one-stop shop when you're dealing with girls on those special programs. The committee coordinates our referrals and any assessments for girls and helps us with the IPs and the like...* (Teacher interview)

A Special Education teacher commented that her role was supported by the leadership function of the Special Needs Committee:

> *Our job would be pretty lonely sometimes if it weren't for the committee* (Special Needs Committee). *They give us a voice with the exec. team and some profile in the school.* (Special Education teacher interview)

Teachers and the principal claimed that members of the Special Needs Committee were initially responsible for establishing the Individual Plans (IPs) at the school and were then instrumental in enhancing their effectiveness for students with disabilities. During the interviews, teachers stated that IPs had been an established component of the Special Education program for more than ten years and had been introduced as a school process by the Special Needs Committee. The ongoing development of the IP as a whole school approach was closely aligned to the leadership roles adopted by the Special Needs Committee. Teachers reported that IPs were

introduced by the committee so that teachers could take on more active roles in case managing individual student needs:

> *The committee's really taken on a change agent role in special needs education at our school. IPs and case management were their ideas and they pitched it to us* (the executive team) *and then sold it to the staff. It transfers responsibility for girls on the Special Ed. program to everyone, not just the Special Ed. team.* (Executive Team member interview)

Teacher respondent groups and the principal reported that the quality of the consultative processes between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers was another school condition that was initiated and promoted by the Special Needs Committee. Some experienced teachers reported during the interviews that the school had always promoted a consultative culture around curriculum development and delivery. With the establishment of the Special Needs Committee and their introduction of IPs, an organisational framework became available that facilitated similar consultative processes with the Special Education staff for students with disabilities:

> *Like all schools, we're busy all the time. When the committee* (Special Needs Committee) *brought in IPs, we found it easier to talk with each other and the Special Ed. team about classroom ideas and so on for the girls with special needs...so we came out of our subject departments and started developing some proactivity as teachers.* (Teacher interview)

and

> *The Special Needs Committee are keen that we use the skills of our Special Ed. team as much as possible. 'Don't forget Z'* (Special Education Coordinator's name*) was a catch-cry of Y* (member of the Special Needs Committee)*...they went out of their way to give us opportunities for consulting. They coordinated release time, professional development and modelling how to do it themselves, taking a lead in our development as teachers...* (Teacher interview)

SUMMARY OF THE RIVERLAND HIGH CASE STUDY

Respondents did not identify principal behaviour as a significant factor at Riverland High but instead cited a range of school conditions as contributing to the school's successful provision for students with disabilities. The absence of identified principal behaviours was interpreted by many respondents as reflecting disengaged delegation by the principal. There was evidence from the data that the principal's disengaged delegation allowed members of the Special Needs Committee to take on school leadership roles in providing for these students. A high proportion of teachers reported that the Special Needs Committee leadership roles initially arose out of distributed leadership behaviours by previous principals. The leadership functions of this committee were reported as helping create the school conditions identified by respondents as contributing to the successful provision for students with disabilities.

The following chapter presents a synthesis and discussion of the major findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations arising from the case studies.

CHAPTER 9

SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This chapter draws together the major findings that emerged from the case studies in terms of principal behaviour, principal engagement and school conditions. It discusses these factors in the light of previous studies and proposes a conceptual model to enhance understanding of the ways in which principal behaviours contribute to a positive provision for students with disabilities. It identifies key implications of the results and applies these implications for future research and practice. It then presents a set of conclusions.

9.1 PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

While the research literature addresses a range of factors in the field of school leadership, this study focused on principal behaviours in schools. Principal behaviour was defined in the study as the actions directly attributable to the principal in developing and implementing policies, practices and protocols in the school. The principal behaviour variable emerged from the questionnaire and interview responses in the case study schools. Principal behaviour was identified by the study as a significant factor in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

Table 9.1 presents the identified principal behaviours in the case study schools.

TABLE 9.1: PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS IDENTIFIED IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

[X INDICATES THAT THE PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR WAS IDENTIFIED IN THIS SCHOOL]

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOUR	LAKESIDE HIGH	VIEWPOINT HIGH	SUNSHINE HIGH	RIVERLAND HIGH
PLANS, COORDINATES AND EVALUATES TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM	X	X	X	
ESTABLISHES GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS		X	X	
PROMOTES AND PARTICIPATES IN TEACHER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	X			

Two principal behaviours were identified in two or more schools. These core behaviours were:

- Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum
- Establishing goals and expectations

While the size of this study precludes any broadly based generalisation, the emergence of particular behaviours in more than a single school in the present sample indicates that these behaviours were worthy of closer attention, at least in the present study.

The significance of the two core principal behaviours for this study is strengthened when it is noted that they are consistent with two of the five leadership practices identified by Robinson (2007) in her meta-analysis as positively impacting on outcomes for all students. *Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum* was found by Robinson (2007) to exert a small to moderate impact on student outcomes and *establishing goals and expectations* was found to exert a

small but educationally significant impact on student outcomes. The results of the present study indicate that these two principal behaviours were also identified by respondents across a range of groups and in different schools as contributing to successful provision for students with disabilities. The remaining three leadership practices identified by Robinson (2007) - *promotes and participates in teacher leaning and development; strategic resourcing of the school;* and *ensures an orderly environment* - cannot be reported with any confidence by this study as positively impacting on provision for students with disabilities.

PLANNING, COORDINATING AND EVALUATING TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM

Principals in this study who focused on planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum exercised a range of leadership behaviours. These behaviours made use of three broad leadership practices – a promotion of effective instructional practices, a commitment to a whole school response to student needs and an encouragement of collaborative processes between teachers. These leadership practices are discussed below.

PROMOTION OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Principals in the present study who engaged in the promotion of effective instructional practices used a variety of strategies. They invited feedback from teachers on any issue related to the teaching and learning agenda at the school. They actively consulted department heads as well as classroom teachers about their preparation of programs for students, especially those with disabilities, and

promoted the development of good planning and programming skills for teachers as a means to enhance student outcomes. They were seen to actively support the Special Education staff as they developed programs for students with disabilities. They regularly requested meetings with teachers to review aspects of curriculum implementation in the classroom, visited classrooms to provide feedback to teachers about their instructive practices and monitored the progress of individual students by arranging review meetings with teachers and parents.

Typical of this behaviour was the approach to school leadership by the Lakeside High principal. This principal perceived his role at the school as a "teacher's teacher", an instructional leader for his staff. He was reported as actively seeking out classroom teachers and establishing instructional partnerships with them, supporting them in practical ways as they provided innovative and effective programs for students with disabilities. This principal, in particular, was seen as establishing a strong and enduring liaison with the school's Special Education teachers and in particular the Special Education Coordinator.

The above principal behaviours, with the exception of the behaviour with a specific focus on actively supporting the Special Education teacher, are all found in the research literature as having a positive impact on outcomes for all students. Some Special Education research studies cite these principal behaviours as positively impacting on the school's provision for students with disabilities, but with less confidence about any impact on specific learning outcomes of these students.

Instructional leadership practices by principals, representing a targeted leadership approach by principals to improve individual teaching practices, are cited in the metanalyses by Hallinger & Heck (1998) and Marzano, Waters & McNulty (2005) as significant factors in contributing to schools providing for all students. Heck & Marcoulides (1993), Hattie (2003), Onick (2003) and Phillips & Galiatsos (2004) found that principals providing instructional support for teachers - including regular feedback, involvement in teacher planning and attendance at teacher meetings - positively impacted on their classroom teaching skills and led to some enhanced student outcomes. Scheerens & Bosker (1997) identified a range of instructional leadership dimensions exercised by principals – including regular consultation with teachers, the promotion of planning and evaluation and the coordination of work-oriented teaching teams – as enhancing outcomes for all students. Targeted support by the principal for teachers experiencing difficulties with classroom instruction practices was also found by Duggan (2003) to have a positive effect on a school providing for student needs.

In the Special Education research literature, there is some alignment between the principal behaviours identified in this study and behaviours that positively impact on schools providing for students with disabilities. McNamara & Moreton (1997, cited in Westwood, 2001) and McLeskey & Waldron (2002) found that when principals based most of their interactions with teachers around a discussion of pedagogical issues, there was a positive impact on some learning outcomes for students with disabilities. Udvari-Solner & Thousand (1996) found that students with disabilities were effectively supported by schools when the principal promoted staff discussions

about instructional and curriculum strategies. Their study concluded that when the principal and teachers worked together to promote good planning and programming classroom practices, the result was enhanced outcomes for these students. The study by Nind & Wearmouth (2006) found that a principal's encouragement of effective pedagogical approaches for teaching all students positively impacted on academic achievement, social involvement and improved behaviour for students with disabilities.

There are few research studies that directly link the active support by the principal for the Special Education staff with enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities. Walther-Thomas & DiPaola (2002) commented on the positive influence of supportive leadership principal behaviours in promoting the Special Education teacher school role, but did not report any subsequent improvements in achievement for students with disabilities. A study by Tanner, Linscott & Galis (1996) reported a tentative contribution to enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities by the development of a strong professional bond between the principal and Special Education teachers.

The principal behaviours identified in this study as positively contributing to provision for students with disabilities were found to be similar to those found in the research literature as impacting on outcomes for all students. Some research studies in the Special Education literature also confirmed that these principal behaviours impacted on outcomes for all students, regardless of special educational need. The principal behaviour identified in this study as specific to a Special Education agenda was also found in the research literature as representing a school factor in supporting

students with disabilities, but without conclusive evidence about its impact on student outcomes.

COMMITMENT TO A WHOLE SCHOOL RESPONSE TO STUDENT NEEDS

Principals in this study who promoted a whole school response to student needs exercised a range of strategies. They coordinated a whole school response by working with teachers in planning and implementing cross-grade approaches to teaching students. They established special programs for students with disabilities that involved involvement by a wide cross-section of staff members. They became personally involved in cross-grade meetings that involved teachers modifying the curriculum and aligning Life Skills programs with Board of Studies guidelines for students with disabilities.

The Viewpoint High principal, in particular, was identified as exhibiting these leadership behaviours. She was reported as proactively committing the school to adopting inclusive practices by establishing a range of support programs for students with disabilities, such as the school's support class for students with moderate intellectual disability. She was especially enthusiastic to include parents of students with disabilities and the students themselves in cross-school support programs. By exercising a range of specific and targeted leadership behaviours, this principal was seen by members of her school community as an active and passionate advocate for a whole school response to the needs of students with disabilities.

The identification by the study of principals coordinating a whole school response to the meeting the needs of students with disabilities is consistent with findings from research studies in the general education literature that highlight the impact of this principal behaviour on positively providing for all students. The remaining principal behaviours specifically aligned with a Special Education agenda are more closely related to findings in the Special Education literature and are not cited in the general education research literature.

For example, the principal's coordination of cross-grade teaching practices and development of specific programs was found by Hord (1997) and Copland (2001) as a significant school factor in schools providing for all students. Similar findings by Mohr & Dichter (2001) and Armstrong (2004) highlighted the positive impact on student outcomes of principals developing schools as cohesive learning communities in response to diverse student needs. A study by Harris & Chapman (2002) found that principals promoting explicit whole-school teaching and learning agendas resulted in some improved student achievement in schools with students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This principal behaviour is therefore found by the study as positively impacting on outcomes for all students, regardless of special education needs.

Specific Special Education-related leadership behaviours cited in the research literature are also replicated by the principal behaviours identified in this study. The principal's establishment of special programs for students with disabilities was found by DiPaola & Walther-Thomas (2003), Wedell (2005) and Freeman et. al. (2006) as

a leadership behaviour that enhanced some outcomes for students with disabilities. Similarly, the principal's active involvement in promoting curriculum modification processes was found by a range of studies, including Haag, Evans & Thomas (1999), Wehmeyer, Lance & Bashinski (2002) and Goddard (2005) as impacting on enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities.

The principal behaviours cited above that are specifically related to the school's provision for students with disabilities – the promotion of special programs and modification of the curriculum - reflect the particular efforts by principals to provide for these students. These specific behaviours linked to the Special Education agenda in schools were similar to those found in the Special Education research literature as positively impacting on outcomes for students with disabilities. The promotion by principals in the study of a whole-school response to teaching all students, a leadership behaviour cited in the general research literature, was also found to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES BETWEEN TEACHERS

Principals in this study who encouraged teacher collaboration used many strategies. They promoted a wide range of collaborative consultation processes between members of staff including those between teachers and Special Education staff about meeting the needs of students with disabilities. They also regularly attended case conference meetings for students with disabilities and became involved in implementing Individual Plans for these students.

Examples of such leadership approaches in the study were the behaviours of the Lakeside High and Sunshine High principals, who both promoted collaborative practices between teachers and Special Education staff at their schools. Each of these principals established learning support teams that formalised collaborative practices between teachers around meeting student needs. In addition, these principals made great efforts to personally attend case conferences involving teachers and parents of students with disabilities, thereby effectively modelling collaborative practices for their staff.

Unlike some of the other clusters of practices underlying the behaviours of principals who made successful provision for students with disabilities, these are all explicitly related to enhancing outcomes for students with disabilities. The study therefore offers new insights into the impact of principal behaviours in successfully providing for the needs of these students. The impact of the principal's promotion of collaborative processes between teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities on enhanced outcomes for these students is extensively cited in the Special Education literature (Roach, 1995; Walther-Thomas, Korinek & McLaughlin, 1999; Blase & Kirby, 2000; Walther-Thomas et. al., 2000; Bauer & Brown, 2001; Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason, 2001; Burnett, 2004). In addition, Duchardt et.al. (1999) report that specific collaborative practices between members of the Special Education faculty and the general education faculty result in improved achievement for students with disabilities.

The remaining principal behaviours identified in this section of the study – attendance at case conference meetings and involvement in the implementation of

Individual Plans - are examples of principals exercising leadership roles in particular areas of their school's provision for students with disabilities. These behaviours reflect the contribution of principals to the development of case conferences and Individual Plans as key processes in providing for these students, and have not been identified previously in either the general education or Special Education research.

Overall, then, principals in the study who focused on planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum were shown to engage closely with programs and practices established by their schools to provide for students with disabilities. The study replicated the major findings from the Special Education research literature in relation to the types of principal behaviour that positively impact on a school's provision for students with disabilities. While these principal behaviours were found to positively impact on outcomes for students with disabilities, some of them were also aligned with leadership practices found in the research literature as impacting on enhanced outcomes for all students. Significantly, principal engagement in case conferencing and individual planning has not been previously identified in the research. This may be because such direct engagement with students is atypical of the work of many principals. This could be an area for further research.

ESTABLISHING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Principals in the study who focused on establishing goals and expectations were characterised as setting goals and directions for the school, advocating for the inclusion of students with disabilities and helping create facilitative school structures

and processes that met the needs of students with disabilities. These leadership practices are discussed below.

SETTING GOALS AND DIRECTIONS

Principals in the study were described as regularly articulating inclusive practices as a school goal. In particular, the principals at Sunshine High and Viewpoint High actively and regularly communicated with staff and parents their schools' inclusive goals and directions as a means of reinforcing a commitment to providing for students with disabilities. The Viewpoint High principal, for example, was reported by teachers and parents as using the school's prize-giving assemblies and annual graduation ceremonies to highlight the various achievements of students with disabilities, constantly using these occasions to highlight the inclusive goals of the school. Similarly, the Sunshine High principal was reported by parents as articulating an inclusive vision for the school at parent-teacher nights and other related local community functions.

This reinforces findings from other studies regarding the contributions principals make through goal setting. For example, schools where principals focus on school goal setting were found to be effective in enhancing outcomes for all students (Witziers et.al. 2003; Marzano Waters & McNulty, 2005; Latham & Locke, 2006). In these schools, outcomes for students was enhanced by teachers becoming more focused on co-ordinating support for students and setting individual learning targets for them (Barnburg & Andrews, 1991; Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason, 2001). Robinson (2007) found evidence for improved student outcomes even when the

principal set non-academic school goals. Fullan (2001) and Bezzina (2008) also cite positive outcomes in schools where principals establish a sense of collaboration around a shared moral purpose.

The present study supports the findings of Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason (2001) who conclude that when principals set high achievement expectations for all students and promote inclusive practices as a school goal, teachers became more committed to supporting individual student needs. They found that this results in improved school outcomes for some students with special education needs.

ADVOCATING FOR THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Principals in the study were described as actively engaging with staff in promoting inclusive practices. This goes beyond simply enunciating a vision for inclusion to becoming directly involved with staff in its pursuit.

This type of principal behaviour is consistent with the findings of research studies in the literature that address specific outcomes for students with disabilities. The principals in the case study schools were reported as promoting quality teaching practices across the school for all students, irrespective of special need, as well as actively supporting teachers in developing effective approaches for students with disabilities. School leadership approaches closely aligned with these principal behaviours were reported by a range of research studies in the Special Education literature. These studies found that principals created a sense of direction for schools by advocating inclusive practices and that this led to enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities (Bailey & du Plessis, 1998; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002;

Burnett, 2004). Cacioppe (1997) concluded that the principal's articulation of an inclusive school vision for supporting students with disabilities in conjunction with regular assistance for teachers in the classroom helped develop effective instructional practices and improved outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities.

The Viewpoint High principal, in particular, exhibited these leadership behaviours. She was reported by both teachers and parents as proactively seeking the enrolment of students with disabilities at the school so the school enrolment better reflected the local community profile of people with disabilities. The Sunshine High principal was also reported as behaving in a way that reflected a welcoming approach to the enrolment and contribution of students with disabilities at the school.

CREATING FACILITATIVE SCHOOL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Principals in the study who successfully made provision for students with disabilities were described as developing school structures and processes that reflected inclusive practices. The principals at Lakeside High and Sunshine High were especially identified as prioritising an establishment of cross-school facilitative structures that targeted provision for students with disabilities. At Sunshine High, for example, the sheer size of the school dictated that any effective school approach to providing for students with disabilities necessitated a promotion by the principal of effective structures and processes that involved as many staff as possible. The Lakeside High principal was committed to developing and promoting a range of school structures and processes, such as Individual Plans, case conferences and

learning support teams that encouraged teacher involvement and contribution to provision for students with disabilities.

A range of studies cite the positive impact of principals setting up facilitative structures and processes on outcomes for students with disabilities (Fergusen, 1995; Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason, 2001; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Fergusen (1995) cited the principal actively reforming classroom programs so that they became structured around meeting the needs of all students. Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason (2001) reported that the principal's development of innovative school structures and processes for these students challenged staff to work constructively and productively. The principal's establishment of alternative grading and grouping practices on behalf of students with disabilities was identified by McLeskey & Waldron (2002) as contributing positively to outcomes for these students. These studies each make claims about how these principal behaviours positively impact on outcomes for students with disabilities.

Principals in the present study who focused on establishing goals and expectations were shown to closely work with staff in promoting the school's provision for students with disabilities. These principals were identified as primarily advocating inclusive practices as a means to enhance outcomes for all students, but with a particular focus on students with disabilities. The general research literature reports that principals who set goals and expectations have a positive impact on outcomes for all students. Findings in the Special Education literature similarly highlight the

impact of principals promoting inclusive practices on enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities.

SUMMARY FOR PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

Two major conclusions arise out of the identification of principal behaviours for this study:

1. Principal behaviours identified in this study as contributing to the successful provision for students with disabilities are:
   - Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum and
   - Establishing goals and expectations
2. The particular principal behaviours found in this study as contributing to the successful provision for students with disabilities form a subset of those behaviours identified in the general literature related to school leadership and enhanced student outcomes.

9.2 PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT

Analysis of the case study data gave rise to the use of the label "principal engagement" as a way of describing a key variable in a school's successful provision for students with disabilities. Principal engagement is defined for this study as the principal personally committing to and then acting in response to these students' needs. Principal engagement, therefore, represents the principal's personal investment of not only authority, but energy and resources.

In other studies, engagement has been used as a research construct in connection with students, teachers and parents. There are references in the research literature to student engagement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider & Shernoff, 2003; Kuh, 2004; Tadich, Deed, Campbell & Prain, 2007; Barnes & Bramley, 2008), teacher engagement (Giangreco, Broer & Edelman, 2001; Zhang, Wehmeyer & Chen, 2005; Bryson & Hand, 2007) and parent engagement (Epstein, 2001). An extensive review of the literature found no use of the term in connection with principals. There are suggestions of some dimensions and characteristics of principal engagement in studies describing clusters of behaviours reflecting a leadership preference or style (Varaki, 2003), however no other study could be located which made use of the principal engagement variable explicitly.

Principal engagement was found to take a variety of identified forms and was quite different in each of the case study schools, as presented in Table 9.2:

TABLE 9.2:

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT IDENTIFIED IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	TYPE OF PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT
LAKESIDE HIGH	PEDAGOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL
VIEWPOINT HIGH	PEOPLE AND VISION
SUNSHINE HIGH	ORGANISATIONAL
RIVERLAND HIGH	DISENGAGED DELEGATION

The types of engagement can be characterised as follows:

Pedagogical engagement was characterised as the principal personally committing to and acting in response to the needs of students with disabilities by establishing, developing and promoting good classroom teaching and learning practices and identifying their importance for these students.

MacNeill, Cavanagh & Silcox (2003) describe a similar process, which they label pedagogical leadership:

> *The role of pedagogical leaders circumscribes informed teacher practice and reflection, empowering teachers to exercise professional responsibility and discretion, and demonstrate credible knowledge of learning and teaching processes* (MacNeill, Cavanagh & Silcox, 2003, p.2)

A pedagogically engaged principal regularly works with staff in developing effective classroom and specialised teaching practices. This takes the form of the principal regularly meeting with teachers to review aspects of curriculum implementation in their classroom and visiting classrooms to provide feedback to teachers about their instructive practices. Typical of this type of engagement was the principal at Lakeside High, who constantly monitored the progress of individual students by arranging review meetings with teachers and parents. This principal was committed to promoting a proactive pedagogical agenda at his school and was convinced that by actively and positively engaging with members of the school community around

this agenda, the needs of students with disabilities would be successfully met over time.

Another way in which pedagogical engagement is expressed is in encouraging all staff to participate in professional development activities. This makes it clear that pedagogy has a significant place in the principal's agenda. This was especially observed at Lakeside High where the ongoing commitment by its principal in providing both formal and informal professional development opportunities for his staff was seen as an effective strategy in promoting enhanced teaching and learning provision for all students at his school.

The pedagogically engaged principal does not leave the curriculum work of the school to others. He or she takes on a direct role in coordinating curriculum development and modification focused on meeting a range of student learning needs. In addition, he or she becomes directly involved in individual student planning processes. Typical of this engagement, again, was the leadership behaviour of the Lakeside High principal who welcomed opportunities to attend Individual Plan meetings with teachers, parents and students. This principal actively engaged with members of his school community in promoting curriculum development and modification that directly provided for students with disabilities. His staff knew that he was passionate about this aspect of the school's provision for students and looked forward to his active involvement in student planning and developing innovative pedagogy.

Organisational engagement was characterised as the principal personally committing to and acting in response to the needs of students with disabilities by establishing, developing and promoting effective school structures and processes and identifying their importance for these students.

An organisationally engaged principal regularly collaborates with staff and parents to help establish formal and less formal school structures and processes on behalf of students with disabilities. Typical of this type of engagement was the leadership approach employed by the principals at Sunshine High and Lakeside High. These principals actively responded to the needs of students with disabilities at their schools by helping establish Learning Support Teams that focused on developing cross-school strategies to support them, by promoting and attending individual planning meetings and by modifying the school's timetable to allow for the creation and promotion of student conferences at regular intervals. At Sunshine High, the principal established a school intra-net to facilitate better communication and organisational processes across her school on behalf of all student needs. Members of the Sunshine High community commented that due to the size of their school, innovative organisational approaches to teaching and learning were essential in providing for students with disabilities. The principal's understanding and recognition of the day-to-day needs of her staff and her capacity to provide whole-school organisational strategies allowed them to more effectively provide for these students. The principal's organisational engagement with the school community was therefore pivotal in the success of Sunshine High and Lakeside High in providing for students with disabilities.

Engagement with people was characterised as the principal committing to and acting in response to the needs of students with disabilities by establishing, developing and promoting productive and positive professional relationships between staff members, parents and students and identifying their importance for these students. Duignan (2006) speaks of a similar phenomenon which he describes, drawing on the work of Starratt (2004), as the ethic of presence:

> *...being fully present in the moment to and for others; building relationships based on authentic connections. ... and without effective relationships educational leaders have little influence.* (p.135)

A principal who prioritises engagement with people actively promotes positive and authentic relationships with staff, parents and students and encourages such relationships among staff, parents, students and members of the local community as a means of providing for all students. These relationships are typically based on trust and integrity. This type of principal engagement was best displayed at Viewpoint High where the principal was described as a "people person" who perceived relational strategies as instrumental in successfully providing for student needs. This principal actively sought out staff and parents to encourage and support them in providing for students with disabilities. She also initiated contact with students with disabilities at her school and modelled inclusive behaviours by getting to know each student and parent by name and making herself aware of their individual needs and backgrounds. By promoting authentic relationships and being "in the moment" with her colleagues, this principal effectively practiced engagement with people as a powerful leadership strategy in her school's provision for students with disabilities.

Engagement with vision was characterised as personally committing to and acting in response to the needs of students with disabilities by establishing, developing and promoting inclusive practices as a school vision and identifying its importance for these students. In some ways, this type of principal engagement can be characterised as engagement at the highest level, as it involves the principal gaining the attention and participation of staff around ideals. It also has parallels with the leadership concepts of moral purpose and coherence making proposed by Fullan (2001). His model of school leadership transcends the promotion of instructional advancement for students and instead facilitates growth experiences for students and teachers that are spiritual and life enhancing. He describes this leadership approach as encompassing a moral purpose:

> *I do not, for a minute think that moral purpose automatically attracts people to do good things. Coherence making, which involves prioritising and focusing, is greatly facilitated when guided by moral purpose. To achieve moral purpose is to forge interaction – and even mutual purpose – across groups....moral purpose is worthwhile on just about every meaningful criterions; it may not becomes activated on its own accord, but it is there in nascent form to be cultivated and activated. Although moral purpose is natural, it will flourish only if leaders cultivate it.* (Fullan, 2001. p.4)

A principal whose leadership behaviours reflect engagement with vision regularly articulates a vision for the inclusion of all students as contributing and valued

members of the school community. Such a principal discusses with staff issues associated with implementing inclusive teaching and learning practices and then suggests whole-school strategies about how they can work together to convert the vision into a reality for all students. Principals at Lakeside High, Viewpoint High and Sunshine High all exhibited elements of this type of engagement, with respondents in these schools reporting their principal's regular articulation of an inclusive agenda for students with disabilities. Respondents at Viewpoint High, though, were most insistent that their principal exercised ongoing engagement with staff, parents and students around an inclusive school vision that articulated a proactive commitment to providing for the needs of students with disabilities. This principal constantly reminded members of her school community that the Viewpoint High vision was that all students were welcome and that each teacher therefore had a responsibility to meet the needs of these students, regardless of their special needs.

Disengaged delegation was, in reality, a form of non-engagement. The behaviours of the principal at Riverland High were almost diametrically different from those of the other three principals, and yet the school received a similarly positive rating for its provision for students with disabilities. This principal's behaviours can be characterised as an absence of direct principal engagement in providing for students with disabilities, with the principal instead choosing very high levels of delegation of leadership roles for this school agenda to other members of the school community. At this school, principal behaviour was not identified by other respondents as a factor in shaping school conditions which turned out to be very similar to those identified in other schools in the study.

A principal who practices disengaged delegation leaves responsibility and school leadership for practices, processes and policy development for students with disabilities to other staff members without any personal or professional engagement in their implementation of these tasks. This type of principal engagement was identified at Riverland High and the school was therefore identified as the exception in this study.

The principal's disengaged delegation gave members of the school's Special Needs Committee the space to take on leadership roles in providing for these students. A high proportion of teachers reported that these leadership roles initially arose out of distributed leadership conditions created by previous principals in establishing the range of school conditions at the school, including the Special Education leadership role exercised by the Special Needs Committee. In the absence of direct principal engagement, the committee continued to carry out their leadership functions in this domain of school activities and created the conditions providing for students with disabilities.

The implication for the study from the Riverland High findings is that a school can successfully provide for students with disabilities when the principal plays no direct role. For this to happen, the school needs to develop an alternate leadership approach for helping create and sustain the range of school conditions identified as significant factors in providing for these students.

This study has shown that principal engagement is a significant variable in understanding how provision is best made for students with disabilities in schools. Moreover, there is no single best way of engagement identified by the study. Principals adopted a range of options in engaging with their school communities on behalf of students with disabilities. Significantly, these diverse types of principal engagement led to similar school conditions across the case study schools.

SUMMARY FOR PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENT

Two major conclusions arise out of the identification of principal engagement for this study:

1. Principal engagement, defined as the principal personally committing to and then acting in response to student need, is a significant construct in understanding how schools successfully provide for students with disabilities.
2. Diverse styles of principal engagement have been identified in schools that successfully provide for students with disabilities.

9.3 IDENTIFIED SCHOOL CONDITIONS

School conditions were defined in the study as the structures, policies, practices and protocols in schools that contributed to the successful provision for students with disabilities. School conditions emerged as a variable from the responses to questionnaires and interviews in the case study schools.

Table 9.3 presents the identified school conditions in the schools

TABLE 9.3: **SCHOOL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS**

[X INDICATES THAT THE SCHOOL CONDITION WAS IDENTIFIED AT THIS SCHOOL]

SCHOOL CONDITION	LAKESIDE HIGH	VIEWPOINT HIGH	SUNSHINE HIGH	RIVERLAND HIGH
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CAPACITY	X	X	X	X
INDIVIDUAL PLANS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	X	X	X	X
COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	X	X	X	X
STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	X	X		
THE SPECIAL NEEDS COMMITTEE EFFECTIVELY COORDINATES PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES				X
STAFF MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED AS CASE MANAGERS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES			X	

Using the same criteria as for principal behaviours and using the principle of triangulation, those conditions identified in more than one school were considered to be of the greatest interest and were analysed in some detail. Two other school conditions were identified in only one school and were reported as reflecting specific strategies adopted by these schools in providing for students with disabilities. Due to the uniqueness of these school conditions, they will be omitted from discussion here.

Of relevance to the findings of the study, school conditions that focused on a Special Education agenda were identified in all the schools. These conditions included the capacity of Special Education teachers, the provision of individualised support processes for students with disabilities, the use of collaborative practices between teachers and Special Education staff in meeting the needs of students with

disabilities, and participation by staff in professional development activities in Special Education.

Each school condition had a key indicator or a number of key indicators. In the case of Special Education teacher capacity, key indicators included the Special Education teachers' specialist skills and expertise in supporting individual needs of students with disabilities and their ability in promoting effective consultative practices with regular classroom teachers in meeting these needs. These indicators were similar to findings in the research literature about the impact of specialist teachers in schools for students with disabilities. For example, specialist teaching skills in Special Education are cited by Lindsay (2002) as a pre-condition for schools effectively supporting students with disabilities. Skilled and committed Special Education teachers also help these students achieve better academic and social outcomes by being able to work productively with other teachers in the school (Mittler, 1995; Bartholomay, Wallace & Mason, 2001; Quinn, 2002). All schools in this study were reported as having exceptionally competent and respected Special Education teachers. The Lakeside High Special Education coordinator, in particular, was reported as having the capacity to proactively lead the school in its ongoing provision for students with disabilities. All respondent groups at this school – the principal, teachers, parents and students – cited her expertise in developing with staff a range of pedagogically sound strategies for students with disabilities as well as having the ability to personally engage with staff and parents about meeting the daily needs of these students.

The key indicator for the provision of individualised support for students with disabilities in this study was the range of school policies and practices associated with the development and implementation of Individual Plans (IPs) for students with disabilities. This condition was identified by the study as a highly specialised factor in how case study schools provided for these students and it is a school condition prominently featured in the Special Education literature. In the case study schools in the present study, teachers, students and parents reported that IPs gave them opportunities to better develop sound teaching plans for students with disabilities as well as establish effective communication processes across the school community in meeting student need. An example of the citation of individual planning processes in the research literature is a study by Cooper (1996) who addresses the administrative work involved in implementing an IP and finds that well-coordinated processes lead to some schools successfully providing for students with disabilities. McGahee et.al. (2001) and Allen, Smith & Test (2001) also found that the IP process was a powerful strategy for including parents and students in planning for future school and vocational placements. They offered tentative conclusions that IPs enhanced the capacity of schools to enhance outcomes for students with disabilities.

In the case study schools, teachers reported that collaborative practices established between classroom teachers and Special Education staff gave them greater access to Special Education staff and allowed them to develop new skills and establish ongoing partnerships with Special Education teachers in supporting students with disabilities. For example, at Riverland High, the whole-school role given to the Special Needs Committee facilitated many opportunities for staff to collaborate with

Special Education teachers. At Sunshine High and Lakeside High, the roles given to learning support teams allowed for ongoing collaborative processes between staff and Special Education teachers.

Examples of these collaborative processes in the research literature include the study by Ripley (1997) that indicates that Special Education staff and classroom teachers enhance school outcomes for students with disabilities by collaborating with each other in modifying key curriculum material. A study by Duchardt et.al. (1999) found that senior students with disabilities benefited from well-coordinated collaborative processes arranged between members of the Special Education faculty and the general education faculty. Walter-Thomas, Korinek & McLaughlin (1999) cited enhanced outcomes for students with disabilities when productive teacher consultation time was planned between classroom teachers and specialist staff members. The impact of collaborative consultation in enhancing provision for students with disabilities was therefore replicated by this study.

This condition also demonstrated how staff in the case study schools adopted aspects of distributed leadership in providing for students with disabilities. The Special Education teacher at each school was given varying degrees of leadership responsibility in supporting students and established both formal and informal collaborative coalitions with other staff members in exercising these leadership roles. While this school condition was identified in all schools, collaborative consultation between the Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers at Riverland High reflected the adoption of a high level of distributed leadership by this school as

a primary vehicle for the school's provision for students with disabilities. The Special Needs Committee at Riverland High was the key organisational structure by which staff collaborated with each other and the Special Education teachers in the absence of direct principal engagement. The operations of formal collaborative school structures as the Special Needs Committee are not cited as discrete school factors in the Special Education research literature. The identification of the pivotal role played by the Special Needs Committee at Riverland High in coordinating these collaborative processes, in addition to providing a formal leadership approach Special Education, is therefore an original contribution by this study to the Special Education research literature.

Professional development in Special Education clustered around the development of school in-services and staff meeting presentations for all teachers focused on practical strategies for classroom practices for students with disabilities.

In the case study schools, teachers reported that professional development activities helped them develop new teaching skills, better understand the nature of specific disabilities in students and develop strategies so that their needs could be effectively met in the classroom. Typical of the effectiveness of professional development as a factor in providing for students with disabilities was the regular opportunities given to teachers at Lakeside High to develop skills and awareness about meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the classroom. The principal and Special Education staff collaborated at this school to provide teachers with exposure to a range of best-practice approaches in Special Education. The effectiveness of professional development as a school factor in providing for students with disabilities

is supported by the findings of other studies that have focussed on all students and their leaning needs (Garet et.al. 2001; King & Newmann, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2006). The present study found that professional development activities that focused on Special Education could also assist schools providing for students with disabilities. The impact of the above identified indicators is supported by a range of research studies in the Special Education literature. Well-coordinated Special Education-related professional development activities in developing inclusive classroom practices were cited by Buell et.al. (1999) as improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Zorfass (cited in Woodward & Cuban, 2001) reported the impact of professional development in developing innovative curriculum strategies for schools for students with disabilities, leading to tentative conclusions about enhanced learning outcomes for these students. Professional development activities focused on developing alternative strategies for teaching students with disabilities were factors found by Allington & Cunningham (2002) as enhancing literacy outcomes for students with disabilities.

The school conditions above were identified in schools regardless of the types of principal engagement adopted by the principal, including one in which there was no direct principal engagement. One possible interpretation of this is that principal behaviour had no impact on the creation of school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities. However, the design of the study allows for a refutation of this suggestion. In each of the case study schools, all respondents were asked the question - *what role does the principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?* In three of the four schools, respondents provided a wide

range of principal behaviours as contributing to the provision for these students. These responses are reported in the case study chapters. The unique situation at Riverland High, with its reliance on the historical exercise of distributed leadership, has been discussed previously (see Section 9.2).

SUMMARY FOR SCHOOL CONDITIONS

Two major conclusions arise out of the identification of school conditions for this study:

1. The school conditions shown to contribute to successful provision for students with disabilities are:
   - Special Education teacher capacity
   - Individual Plans are developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities
   - Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities
   - Staff members participate in professional development activities in Special Education
2. The conditions identified as contributing to successful provision for students with disabilities are the same regardless of variations of principal behaviour and type of principal engagement.

The major conclusions of the study about principal behaviours, principal engagement and school conditions have contributed to the development of a conceptual framework which will be described in the next section of the chapter.

9.4 A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE STUDY

The following conceptual model addresses the interconnectedness of the three key factors identified in the study – principal behaviour, principal engagement and school conditions. The model is predicated on the fact that all case study schools represent good practice in providing for students with disabilities. Core principal behaviours identified by the study are exercised by principals adopting different types of engagement in their schools. Core school conditions identified by the study are the same regardless of variations of principal behaviour and type of principal engagement.

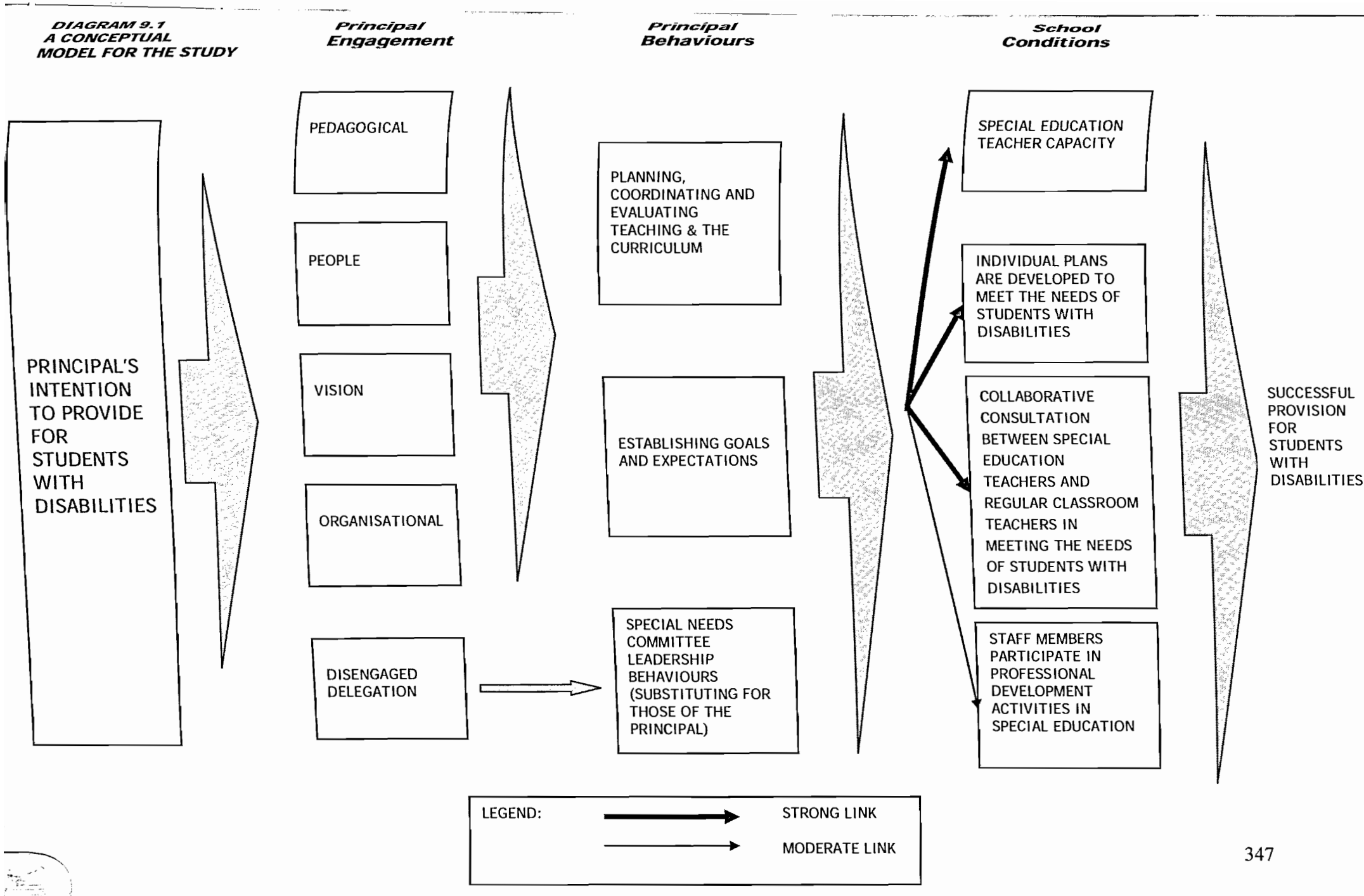
The model describes four phases in schools in their successfully provision for students with disabilities.

Firstly, principals demonstrate an intention to provide for students with disabilities in their schools. Secondly, in their provision for these students principals adopt an engagement with their school community. Principals adopted different types of engagement in the study – pedagogical, organisational, people, vision and disengaged delegation. Thirdly, principal engagement is manifested through principal behaviours. Principals exercised their leadership through a range of behaviours in the study. The core behaviours identified by the study were planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum and establishing goals and expectations. Fourthly, principal engagement and principal behaviours create a range of conditions in schools that result in successful provision for students with disabilities. The core school conditions identified by the study were Special Education

teacher capacity, Individual Plans developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teacher in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and staff member participation in professional development activities sin Special Education.

Figure 9.1 presents this conceptual model.

DIAGRAM 9.1
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THE STUDY



9.5 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of this study are presented in the following section of the chapter. In drawing out the implications of these findings, the limitations of the research need to be kept in mind. These were discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.9) and relate to the characteristics of the sample, the data gathering techniques and the data analysis techniques. These limitations present issues in making recommendations from the study and include the sample size of the study and the specific characteristics of the case study schools; the limitations of questionnaires and the possible lack of response, lack of ability to check response and difficulty in determining the extent to which non-respondents differed from respondents; the identity of the researcher as familiar with the school system for the study and the data gathering processes for the case studies that may have been affected by the perceptions of the researcher. The conduct of the research was structured in a way to address, as far as possible, these limitations. None of the limitations discussed here is considered to seriously affect the validity of the results or the major findings of the study.

Finding 1: School leadership that successfully provides for all students will also successfully provide for students with disabilities

Principal behaviours identified by this study represent a sub-set of school leadership practices found in the literature as positively impacting on all student outcomes. Principals who promote pedagogically sound teaching and learning practices and establish school goals and expectations on behalf of all student needs will contribute to successful provision for all students, including those with disabilities.

Finding 2: Leadership in the creation of school conditions is the key to successful provision for students with disabilities, but this need not necessarily be directly exercised by the principal

Principal behaviour and engagement were identified as significant factors in providing leadership for a range of school conditions found to successfully provide for students with disabilities. However, where these factors were absent, alternate school leadership structures were able to create and sustain similar school conditions in providing for these students.

Finding 3: The principal behaviours that make a difference in providing for students with disabilities are –

- **Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum**
- **Establishing goals and expectations**

Principals exercising leadership behaviours in successfully providing for students with disabilities promoted sound pedagogy and established school goals and expectations. These leadership behaviours were exercised in conjunction with an engagement with the school community on behalf of these students.

Finding 4: Principal engagement is a key variable in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

A range of principal engagement types was identified by this study:

- Pedagogical
- People
- Vision
- Organisational

Finding 5: The school conditions that make a difference in providing for students with disabilities are –

- **Special Education teacher capacity**
- **Individual Plans developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities**
- **Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities**
- **Staff members participating on professional development activities in Special Education**

The above school conditions were found by the study to be key variables in providing for students with disabilities regardless of variations of principal behaviour and type of principal engagement.

9.6 RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings above have implications for practice for schools, educational systems and principals. They give rise to a series of recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Schools and/or educational systems that seek to successfully provide for students with disabilities will:

Recommendation One

Recruit (or develop) capable Special Education teachers.

Special Education teachers are a key contributor to how schools successfully provide for students with disabilities. They facilitate and complement a range of school

conditions that provide for these students by developing and promoting pedagogically sound instructional programs and collaborating with and supporting classroom teachers.

Recommendation Two

Develop individual planning processes for these students that include opportunities for participation by teachers, parents and students.

Individualised planning is a powerful process that allows for informed input by key stakeholders in a student's education as well as an organisational framework for ongoing school support for the student with a disability.

Recommendation Three

Establish and promote collaborative consultation processes between Special Education staff and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of these students.

Collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and classroom teachers facilitates a more effective whole-school provision for students with disabilities.

Recommendation Four

Establish and promote opportunities for all teachers to participate in professional development activities dealing with Special Education.

In the light of this study, some of the focuses should include the development of Individual Plans and the acquisition of skills in collaborative consultation.

Recommendation Five

Recruit principals who have demonstrated skills in the core principal behaviours identified by this study and who can articulate their personal type of engagement in promoting this agenda.

Principals provide informed and proactive leadership for schools in successfully providing for students with disabilities when they exercise the range of behaviours and types of engagement reported in this study.

Recommendation Six

Provide targeted teacher release time to allow staff members to consult with each other and Special Education staff about meeting the needs of these students.

Staff members require adequate consultative time in effectively collaborating and planning successful provision for students with disabilities.

Recommendation Seven

Provide professional development opportunities for principals to acquire skills in promoting pedagogically sound teaching and learning practices in their schools.

The practices indicated by the findings of this study include the promotion of effective instructional practices, a commitment to a whole school response to student need and a promotion of collaborative processes between teachers.

Recommendation Eight

Provide professional development opportunities for principals to acquire skills in promoting inclusive teaching and learning practices as school goals and expectations for school communities.

The practices indicated by the findings of this study include the articulation of an inclusive vision for schools and the promotion of inclusive practices on behalf of students with disabilities.

Recommendation Nine

Provide professional development opportunities for principals to develop skills in engaging with one or more particular dimensions of their school's learning agenda.

Principals who develop skills in one or more types of engagement with their school community are shown by the findings of this study to positively contribute to their school's provision for students with disabilities.

Recommendation Ten

Involve parents and care-givers in individual student planning processes.

Parents and care-givers require opportunities to be involved in the school's provision for their child with a disability. Once given these opportunities, they can positively contribute as partners in this provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

Principals who seek to contribute to their school's successful provision for students with disabilities need to focus on developing the types of leadership behaviours and

engagement that are found in this study as significant in helping create these school conditions. They will:

Recommendation Eleven

Plan, coordinate and evaluate teaching and the curriculum for these students in promoting pedagogically sound teaching and learning practices.

Principals need to exercise these leadership behaviours as pedagogically sound teaching and learning practices are key factors in how a school successfully provides for students with disabilities.

Recommendation Twelve

Articulate inclusive practices as a school goal for these students, implement school practices consistent with this goal and model behaviours that reflect the values aligned with this goal.

Principals who articulate inclusion for students with disabilities as a school goal and then model and promote inclusive teaching and learning practices make a significant contribution to schools successfully providing for students with disabilities.

Recommendation Thirteen

Enhance sustainability by promoting shared leadership practices that establish school conditions for these students that do not rely entirely on the actions of the principal.

Shared leadership practices are an important factor in how some schools sustain conditions on behalf of the needs of students with disabilities.

Recommendation Fourteen

Identify their preferred type of engagement and foster their skills in this area.

Principals need to be clear about how they engage with their school communities and foster and develop their skills in this area of leadership.

9.7 POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study have emerged from a set of single school case studies. There would be merit in further research into the usefulness of the factor described in this study as principal engagement. Questions to be pursued could include –

Can principal engagement be observed in other settings and does it add to the richness and comprehensiveness of our understandings of the contributions of principals to the work of schools?

Is principal engagement a term that could be generalized to other leaders in schools?

Are there other types of principal engagement not identified in the present study?

In terms of principal engagement, Riverland High School was identified as a special case. It would be worthwhile for a follow-up study to be conducted at this school to determine the sustainability of its successful provision for students with disabilities in the absence of the principal's direct leadership role in adopting disengaged delegation.

In order to provide a capacity to generalise beyond the present small sample, this study could be replicated with a larger number of schools, and from different educational sectors and different educational systems.

Finally, the utility of the conceptual model developed in this study could be tested by building school level interventions on its elements and studying their impact.

9.8 CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this study was to identify principal behaviours as factors in schools successfully providing for students with disabilities. Contributory research questions for the study focused on the identification of school processes, practices and structures and the extent to which principal behaviours contributed to these school conditions.

The study can be summarised in terms of the questions on which it is based:

What behaviours of school principals can be identified as successful in providing for students with disabilities in Catholic systemic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta?

The principal behaviours identified in this study as contributing to successful provision for students with disabilities are planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum and establishing goals and expectations. These particular principal behaviours form a subset of those identified in the general literature related to school leadership and student outcomes.

What processes, practices and structures are present in a sample of schools that are perceived to be successful in providing for students with disabilities?

The school conditions shown to contribute to the successful provision for students with disabilities are Special Education teacher capacity; Individual Plans developed to meet the needs of students with disabilities; collaborative consultation between Special Education teachers and regular classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities; and staff members participating in professional development activities in Special Education.

In what ways, and to what extent, do the behaviours of principals contribute to these processes, practices and structures?

The conditions identified as contributing to the successful provision for students with disabilities are the same regardless of variations of principal behaviour and type of principal engagement. Core principal behaviours identified for the study are planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum and establishing goals and expectations. In addition, distinct types of principal engagement were identified in the schools. In one school, leadership behaviours by previous principals were responsible for the school conditions that successfully provided for students with disabilities and the school's development of an alternate leadership approach currently sustained these conditions.

Important insights into best practices for providing for students with disabilities are offered by the types of principal engagement, specific principal behaviours and range of school conditions identified by this study. Principals and staff in schools

seeking to successfully provide for students with disabilities should consider adopting these practices.

The findings for the study therefore affirm the significant role played by principals in successfully providing for students with disabilities. The identification of a set of core principal behaviours in the study is consistent with similar types of leadership behaviour by principals found by the research literature as positively impacting on provision for all students, regardless of their special education need. Principals promoting sound pedagogy and setting school goals and expectations, then, help create conditions that enhance provision for all students, as well as for those students with disabilities. This key finding of the study permits principals to adopt similar leadership behaviours in providing for students with disabilities as they would for all students. Students with disabilities require no more, and no less, from principals exercising school leadership, a finding that should encourage principals to be less apprehensive in accepting students with disabilities into their schools and more confident in their school's capacity to successfully provide for them.

The identified school conditions in this study also support a central premise of the inclusion movement that regular schools can create conditions whereby the needs of students with disabilities can be successfully met by school staff. That a regular school can be successful in this area by creating and implementing a range of core conditions presents all schools with a set of relatively straight-forward strategies for providing for these students. Again, though these conditions focus on a Special Education agenda, research in the general education literature demonstrates that many of them are central to schools seeking to provide for all students.

This study has made two original contributions to the understanding of the role of principals in providing for students with disabilities.

The first is the use of the variable "principal engagement" for the first time in a research study. This variable was identified by this study as a new factor in how schools successfully provide for students with disabilities. The identification of this factor contributes to the development of a more multi-faceted understanding and appreciation of how leadership in schools positively impacts on provision for these students. The concept of principal engagement therefore expands our understanding of the school leadership role to incorporate more than just the behaviours of principals in successfully providing for students with disabilities.

The second is the conceptual model that arose from the major findings of this study. It may be of assistance to principals and staff members seeking to establish and develop effective approaches in providing for students with disabilities. Importantly, the framework highlights the interconnectedness of principal engagement, principal behaviours and school conditions in providing for these students. Schools would be well advised to adopt this framework in developing processes and practices in providing for students with disabilities, particularly when considering a whole-school approach to this provision.

With regular schools enrolling more students with disabilities and staff needing to develop whole-school responses to government legislation such as the *Disability Discrimination Act* and *Disability Standards for Education*, these evidence-based

guidelines about best practice will assist schools in responding to government and community demands in this area.

The four case study schools involved in this research have demonstrated that it is possible to make successful provision for students with disabilities in a mainstream environment through the appropriate exercise of leadership. As is the way with research, the process of distillation can sometime mask the underlying lived realities of the people whose lives are under consideration. It would seem to be appropriate, then, to finish where this study has spent so much of its time - in the lived reality of schools and in the words of practitioners. These words remind us that beyond the discussions of skills and policies and the behaviours of teachers and parents and leaders lies a deep seated commitment, which might find its expression in many ways in different settings, but which reflects deep seated and fundamental values in the schools of this study.

> *If we are not here for the neediest in our community, who are we here for? What is our purpose as a Catholic school if we cannot attract the poorest of the poor? But if we do this, we must also be the best school in the community – we must be the best of the best.*

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APPENDIX A

LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE STAFF

Dear Colleague,

Please find enclosed a questionnaire associated with my current Doctor of Education studies at the Australian Catholic University. I am studying how Catholic secondary schools in our diocese provide for students with special needs. For this purpose, I plan to work in four diocesan schools that are perceived as being successful in this area of education.

The attached questionnaire is designed to assist me in selecting four schools by drawing on the expertise and knowledge of key Catholic Education Office staff in nominating schools they perceive as being successful in providing for students with special needs.
The questionnaire is **anonymous**, so please do not identify yourselves when completing it.
As I am only surveying a limited number of people at the Catholic Education Office, I would appreciate that the survey be returned by the due date of **Friday June 1st.**

I value and appreciate your opinions and perspectives, as well as your willingness to participate in this survey. Many thanks, again, and please contact me at any time if you wish to discuss any aspect of this study.

Kind regards,

Ian Jackson

PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN PARRAMATTA DIOCESAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

As part of my Doctor of Education studies at the Australian Catholic University, I propose to work with secondary school communities that are successfully providing for students with disabilities.

In your present role at the Catholic Education Office, you have regular contact with secondary schools across the diocese. Of the secondary schools you have had contact with over the past year, could you please:

a) Nominate up to four (4) schools that you perceive as being particularly successful in providing for students with disabilities
b) For each school, indicate the characteristics of the school you believe helps it in successfully providing for students with disabilities

You may like to consider the following section of our Vision Statement when thinking about your responses:

To be inviting, inclusive and just is to ensure that we work to promote the common good in our school, the system as a whole, and the wider society.
We will be inviting, inclusive and just by:

-ensuring that our schools embrace the diversity of people and cultures;
-promoting collaborative practice;
-reaching out particularly to those who are poor, marginalised and most in need;
-ensuring that our administrative and educational practices address the issues of access and equity;
-taking a public stance on issues of injustice and inequality.

School _____

Its characteristics

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School _____

Its characteristics

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School _____

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School _____

Its characteristics

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If you need any more space to complete your responses, please attach a separate page.

(Please return this form to Ian Jackson, Senior Professional Officer, Policy, Planning and Equity by **Friday June 1st**. Many thanks for completing this survey!)

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION TO PRINCIPALS OF CASE STUDY SCHOOLS FOR THE STUDY

Dear (Principal),

You may be aware that I am currently enrolled in a Doctor of Education course at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield. My research focus involves the study of four secondary schools in the Parramatta diocese that are successfully providing for students with disabilities. In surveying a wide range of staff at the Catholic Education Office this year, your school was nominated as one such school. I am now writing to ask whether you would be willing to have your school involved in this study.

The next stage of my research will involve working with the participating schools by surveying selected staff, students and parents about the factors contributing to the success of the school. This school-based work will take no longer than two or three days in total and will involve the distribution of questionnaires and follow-up interviews with some of the respondents. Interview times will be negotiated to avoid disruption to school routine. In any reporting or discussion of this project, individuals or schools will not be identified. For your information, I have attached a copy of the Catholic Education Office approval for the research topic.

Each participating school will receive feedback on the results of the research at the completion of the study. My supervisors at the University for the Research are Associate Professor Paul Chesterton and Dr Toni Noble and they are willing to liaise with the principals of the participating schools at any stage of the project.

I am hoping that your school can be involved in this study and would appreciate your advice at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Jackson
Senior Professional Officer
Policy, Planning and Equity
Catholic Education Office, Parramatta
Phone: 9840 5613
FAX: 9840 5678
Ian.Jackson@parra.catholic.edu.au

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Focus of Research Study: *How secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta successfully provide for students with special needs*

Researcher: Ian Jackson (Catholic Education Office, Parramatta)

Academic Supervisors: Associate Professor Paul Chesterton (Principal Supervisor, Australian Catholic University)

Dr Toni Noble (Associate Supervisor, Australian Catholic University)

Academic Program: Doctor of Education, Australian Catholic University

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Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in this research study that is trying to find out what makes secondary schools successful in providing for students with special needs. I am asking for your cooperation in sharing with me the reasons you believe your school is successful in this area.

I will be at your school for approximately one week and will interview teachers, students and parents about their views. My interview with you will last no longer than thirty minutes. I will be taping the interview so that I can get an accurate record of your views. The tape will be wiped at the conclusion of the study.

By finding out the reasons why your school is successful, I will be able to advise other schools in the diocese about the things they can put in place to better provide for their students with disabilities.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary. You can withdraw your involvement in the study at any time. Also, your views expressed to me are confidential – your identity will not be given to anyone.

If you agree have any questions about this study, please contact me at:

Catholic Education Office, Parramatta
12 Victoria Road, Parramatta 2150
Telephone: 9840 5613
FAX: 9840 5678
E-Mail: Ian.Jackson@parra.catholic.edu.au

Alternatively, you may wish to contact either of my academic supervisors, Paul Chesterton of Toni Noble. They can be contacted at the Australian Catholic University on 9701 4000.

Once this study is completed, I will provide your school with feedback about its findings.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian Catholic University and by the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during this study, or have any query that my academic supervisors or myself have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee, who can be contacted at:

Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Strathfield Campus
Locked bag 2002
Strathfield 2135
Telephone: 9701 4159
FAX: 9701 4350

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign both copies of the attached Consent Forms, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to me in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Thank you once again for agreeing to be involved in this research study.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Jackson

ACU National

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

Focus of Research Study: *How secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta successfully provide for students with special needs*

Researcher: Ian Jackson (Catholic Education Office, Parramatta)

Academic Supervisors: Associate Professor Paul Chesterton (Principal Supervisor, Australian Catholic University)

Dr Toni Noble (Associate Supervisor, Australian Catholic University)

Academic Program: Doctor of Education, Australian Catholic University

---

Dear participant,

Your child is invited to participate in this research study about what makes secondary schools successful in providing for students with special needs. I am seeking your permission to ask your child about the reasons he or she believes your school is successful in this area.

I will be at your school for approximately one week and will interview teachers, students and parents about their views. My interview with your child will last no longer than thirty minutes. I will be taping the interview so that I can get an accurate record of your child's views. These tapes will be wiped at the conclusion of the study.

By finding out the reasons why your school is successful, I will be able to discuss with all schools in our diocese how best to provide for students with special needs. This should prove beneficial to all members of our school communities across the diocese, including participants in the study at your child's school.

Your child's involvement in this study is voluntary. Your child can withdraw from the interview at any time if they wish. Also, your child's views expressed to me are confidential- his or her identity will not be given to anyone.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at:

Catholic Education Office, Parramatta
12 Victoria Road, Parramatta 2150
Telephone: 9840 5613
FAX: 9840 5678
E-Mail: Ian.Jackson@parra.catholic.edu.au

Alternatively, you may wish to contact either of my academic supervisors, Paul Chesterton of Toni Noble. They can be contacted at the Australian Catholic University on 9701 4000.

Once this study is completed, I will provide your school with feedback about its findings.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian Catholic University and by the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you or your child has been treated during this study, or have any query that my academic supervisors or myself have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee, who can be contacted at:

Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Strathfield Campus
Locked bag 2002
Strathfield 2135
Telephone: 9701 4159
FAX: 9701 4350

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, please sign both copies of the attached Consent Forms, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to me in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Thank you once again for agreeing to be involved in this research study.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Jackson

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO TEACHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

Focus of Research Study: *How secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta successfully provide for students with disabilities*

Researcher: Ian Jackson (Catholic Education Office, Parramatta)

Academic Supervisors: Associate Professor Paul Chesterton (Principal Supervisor, Australian Catholic University)

Dr Toni Noble (Associate Supervisor, Australian Catholic University)

Academic Program: Doctor of Education, Australian Catholic University

---

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in this research study that is trying to find out what makes secondary schools successful in providing for students with special needs. I am asking for your cooperation in sharing with me the reasons you believe your school is successful in this area.

I will be at your school for approximately one week and will interview teachers, students and parents about their views. My interview with you will last no longer than thirty minutes. I will be taping the interview so that I can get an accurate record of your views. These tapes will be wiped at the conclusion of the study. I will also ask you to complete a short questionnaire about your views.

By finding out the reasons why your school is successful, I will be able to discuss with all schools in our diocese how best to provide for students with special needs. This should prove beneficial to all members of our school communities across the diocese, including participants in the study at your school.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary. You can withdraw your participation at any time. Also, your views expressed to me are confidential – your identity will not be given to anyone.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at:

Catholic Education Office, Parramatta
12 Victoria Road, Parramatta 2150
Telephone: 9840 5613
FAX: 9840 5678
E-Mail: Ian.Jackson@parra.catholic.edu.au

Alternatively, you may wish to contact either of my academic supervisors, Paul Chesterton of Toni Noble. They can be contacted at the Australian Catholic University on 9701 4000.

Once this study is completed, I will provide your school with feedback about its findings.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Australian Catholic University and by the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during this study, or have any query that my academic supervisors or myself have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee, who can be contacted at:

Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Strathfield Campus
Locked bag 2002
Strathfield 2135
Telephone: 9701 4159
FAX: 9701 4350

Any compliant or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign both copies of the attached Consent Forms, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to me in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Thank you once again for agreeing to be involved in this research study.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Jackson

APPENDIX F

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE APPROVAL LETTER

MB:kc
Reference: SU/02/0078

April 8th,

Mr. Ian Jackson,
Senior Professional Officer,
Policy, Planning and Equity,
Catholic Education Office,
12 Victoria Road,
PARRAMATTA. NSW 2150

Dear Ian,

Our Executive Director of Schools, Dr. Anne Benjamin, is happy for you to approach schools in the diocese in order to carry out research on ***'The role of school principal behaviours in successfully providing for students with disabilities in systemic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta'***. We always stress the following points in relation to research requests:

- It is the School Principal who gives final permission for research to be carried out in his/her school.
- Confidentiality needs to be observed in reporting.
- There should usually be some feedback to schools and a copy of the final report forwarded to the Catholic Education Office.
- This letter of approval should accompany any approach to schools.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Michael Bezzina,
Director,
Department of Religious Education and Educational Services.

APPENDIX G

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: A/Prof Paul Chesterton Sydney Campus
Co-Investigators: Dr Toni Noble Sydney Campus
Student Researcher: Mr Ian Jackson Sydney Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
The role of school principal behaviours in successfully providing for students with disabilities in systemic secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta.

for the period: May 2004 to May 2005.
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: N2003.04-46

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants. The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

K. Pashley.

Signed: Date

APPENDIX H

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Title of Study

How secondary schools in the Diocese of Parramatta successfully provide for students with disabilities

Name of Academic Supervisors

Associate Professor Paul Chesterton, Australian Catholic University
Dr Torii Noble, Australian Catholic University

Name of Researcher

Ian Jackson, Catholic Education Office, Parramatta

I, _____, have read and understood the information provided to me in the Letter to_____. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that my child, nominated below, may participate in this study, realising that I can withdraw my consent at any time. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Name of Parent/Guardian:_____
(block letters)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of Child: _____
(block letters)

Signature of Principal Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX I

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

2. What is the basis for your answer?

3. How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

4. Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

   If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

5. How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with each other about students with disabilities?

6. Are parents involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

If so, how are they involved?

7. Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Is this process understood and followed by everyone on staff?

8. What professional development activities are available for staff in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

9. What role do you play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

10. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Thank you for the time you have taken to complete this questionnaire.

APPENDIX J

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

2. What is the basis for your answer?

3. How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

4. Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

   If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

5. Do you have any involvement in this process?

   If so, please describe how you are involved.

6. How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with each other about students with disabilities?

7. Are parents involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

If so, how are they involved?

8. Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Is this process understood and followed by everyone on staff?

9. What professional development activities are available for staff in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

10. What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

11. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Please indicate your role in the school:

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX K

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

2. What is the basis for your answer?

3. How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

4. Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

   If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

5. Do you have any involvement in this process?

   If so, please describe how you are involved.

6. How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with you about students with disabilities?

7. How are you involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

8. Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

9. What direct school support is available for parents in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

10. What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

11. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX L

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How does your school support students on the Special Education program?

2. How are you involved in planning for your support at the school? (e.g., planning what type of support you receive, working towards goals every year, etc.)

3. How does your principal help you in your studies at the school?

4. What else would you like to say about the Special Education program at your school?

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.

APPENDIX M

LAKESIDE HIGH

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Frequency
Special Education expertise	22
Physical resources	16
Classroom support	7
Awareness of student needs	5
Whole school commitment	4
Itinerant teacher support	4
Curriculum modification	3
Small group work	3
Special exam provisions	3
Special Teacher Aide support	2
Support for students in playground	2
Funding support	2
Life skills programs	1
Reading groups	1
Work experience programs	1
Timetabling arrangements	1
Support for students with physical disability	1
Technology resources	1
School literacy plan	1
Liaison between SETs and staff	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Frequency
LST/SET teachers	21
Individualised support	16
In-class support	12
Curriculum modification	10
Physical resources in school	9
Itinerant teachers	9
Small groups/tutorials	7

Literacy programs	6
Special exam provisions	5
Liaison between SET and staff	5
Special Teachers Aide support	3
Inclusion approach/acceptance	3
Needed care is given	2
Life skills programs	2
Other students help in school	2
Informed teachers	1
Development of teacher skills	1
Reading groups	1
Student profiles	1
Playground support	1
Students treated with respect	1
Individual plans	1
Funding support	1
Timetabling of staff support	1
Case management	1
Programming support	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 85.0%
No: 7.5%
N/A: 5.0%
D/K: 2.5%

Response	Frequency
SET active support for teachers	9
LST coordinator leads process	8
Teacher-student partnerships	8
In-class support for students by SET team	6
Student profiles	5
Curriculum modification	4
Identification of students	4
Teacher meetings	4
Timetabled support	4
Support for teachers	3
Individual Plans	2
Primary-secondary transition	2
Student reports	2
Liaison with community supports	1
Student reviews	1
Referrals for support	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: **55.0%**
No: **42.5%**
N/A: **2.5%**
D/K: **0%**

Response	Frequency
Liaison with Special Education/LST team re. individual students	14
Regular classroom teaching	7
Curriculum/assessment modification	5
Life skills programs	3
Team teaching	1
Written communication	1
Playground support for students	1
Individual Plans	1
Student identification	1
Liaison with school leadership team	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with each other about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Talking and 1:1 discussion	17
Planned meetings	14
Written communication	11
Student profiles	5
Staff meetings/briefings	4
KLA meetings	3
Special examination provisions	2
Work samples	2
In-class support	2
Working together with students	2
Curriculum modification	2
Life skills	1
Sharing resources	1
Individual Plans	1
Professional Development days	1
Timetabled plan meetings	1

Question 7

Are parents involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

If so, how are they involved?

Yes: **37.8%**
No: **10.8%**
N/A: **5.4%**
D/K: **46.0%**

Response	Frequency
Individual Plans/Individual Transition Plans	4
Formal interviews	4
Regular parent liaison	2
When there is a problem	1
Keep in touch	1
Informal conversations daily	1
Student transport process	1
Help with homework	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Is this process understood and followed by everyone on staff?

Yes: **27.0%**
No: **35.0%**
N/A: **19.0%**
D/K: **19.0%**

Response	Frequency
Parents, students, staff consulted	12
LST liaison with staff, parents	7
Assessment of students	7
Student profiles	5
Teacher surveys	2
Individual Plans	2
Written communication	1
Curriculum modification	1
Referral of students	1
Special exam provisions	1
Liaison between principal and LST	1
Leadership role in school	1
Consultation with CEO	1

Question 9

What professional development activities are available for staff in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: 25.0%
No: 30.6%
N/A: 25.0%
D/K: 19.4%

Response	Frequency
CEO initiatives	13
In-school PD	6
Staff meetings/briefings	5
None available	4
Itinerant teacher briefings	2
Literacy PD	1
Learning teams	1
Co-planning with teachers	1
Individual student planning	1
Information sheets	1
Outside professionals	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Liaison/support for LST	8
Advocates for school's funding	8
Ensures students' needs are met	6
Supports information sharing	5
Liaison/support for all teachers	5
Allocates staffing to support students	5
Determines effective resource allocation	4
Gives time at staff meetings for LST	4
Constantly supports work of SET program	4
High profile support for Special Education program	4
Actively supports the Special Education program	3
Provides PD across school	3
Promotes an inclusive school	2
Advocates for the school-based literacy plan	2
Advocates for students	2
Encourages teachers who need PD	2
Active involvement in student enrolment process	2
Provides release time for planning/programming	2

Supports programming initiatives for students with disabilities	1
Develops policies for Special Education	1
Develops a leadership network in school	1
Sets expectations that all students can learn	1
Provides vital leadership	1
Is aware of all special education issues	1
Reads LST meeting minutes	1
Cares for students with special needs	1
Is proactive in supporting students	1
Is involved in the identification of students with disabilities	1
Knows all the students	1
Liaises with parents	1
Gives feedback to teachers who have concerns	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
More teacher support is needed	6
Staff do a great job under trying circumstances	3
The staff are dedicated	3
Special examination support is excellent	2
School is very welcome and supportive	2
The school's physical resources are excellent	2
A more regimented timetable is needed	2
Our support for students with disabilities mirrors work of Christ	1
School has a good reputation	1
There is an atmosphere of acceptance and awareness	1
Enrolment of two high-needs students led to positive changes	1
Special Education staff are encouraging and supportive	1
Staff unaware of scope of SET's work	1
We need more practical strategies for inexperienced teachers	1
I need more information	1
Balance needed between withdrawal and in-class support	1

APPENDIX N

LAKESIDE HIGH

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Responses
My child is understanding more/more confident/improved	8
Extra classes for students	1
Staff very helpful	1
Communication with parents	1
Plenty of time for students with special needs	1
Experience of all staff	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Response
Students are well supported	5
Individualised support	3
Extra classes for students	2
Teacher's Aides in classroom	1
Students challenged by staff	1
Students supported according to their needs	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: **85.0%**
No: **7.5%**
N/A: **5.0%**
D/K: **2.5%**

Response	Frequency
SET active support for teachers	9
LST coordinator leads process	8
Teacher-student partnerships	8

In-class support for students by SET team	6
Student profiles	5
Curriculum modification	4
Identification of students	4
Teacher meetings	4
Timetabled support	4
Support for teachers	3
Individual Plans	2
Primary-secondary transition	2
Student reports	2
Liaison with community supports	1
Student reviews	1
Referrals for support	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: 70.0%
No: 30.0%
N/A: 0%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
Individual Plans process	6
Meetings with teachers	2

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with you about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Written communication	5
Parent-teacher meetings	4
Phone calls	4
Teachers offer you their time	1
Not much communication	1

Question 7

How are you involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Meetings with school staff	3
Not much	3
Written communication	1
Talking with coordinator	1
I have no time	1
Consultation and support	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Response	Frequency
Parent-teacher meetings	4
Consultation with all parties	3
Individual Plan meetings	1
Special programs for students	1

Question 9

What direct school support is available for parents in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: **60.0%**
No: **10.0%**
N/A: **30.0%**
D/K: **0%**

Response	Frequency
Personal consultations	6
Meetings with staff	1
Encourage and help	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Meetings with parents	3
Consultation available anytime	2
Committed and concerned for students	2
Approval for student support	2
Not aware	2
Aware of latest updates about students	1

Committed to all students reaching their potential	1
Supportive of students	1
Provides new equipment for students	1
Makes you feel welcome	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
We are extremely happy with the school	5
My child has made big improvements	1
My child is more confident and happy	1
I can ask for help at any time	1
Excellent support across the school	1
The mobility support for my child is great	1
The school makes students welcome	1
Students feel secure	1
Staff know about my child's disabilities	1
Best school in the diocese	1
More career advice needed	1

APPENDIX O

LAKESIDE HIGH

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1

How does your school support students on the Special education program?

Response	Frequency
I am helped when it is needed	5
Help with assignments	3
Multi-lit every day	2
They take me out of class	2
Come into my class to help me	2
Assessment help	1
Work is explained in detail	1
Ramps and a special elevator	1
Teacher's Aides in class	1
Text books enlarged for me	1

Question 2

How are you involved in planning for your support at the school? (eg. planning what type of support you receive, working towards goals every year etc.)

Response	Frequency
My parents come up with me and discuss my work and my after-school options	9
I am not involved	1

Question 3

How does your principal help you in your studies at the school?

Response	Frequency
By providing the teachers	3
To help me in every way that's needed	1
If I have a problem with my work, I can see him	1
He lets me out of class to get help	1
Introducing reading programs to the school	1
Getting specially trained English teachers	1
He encourages me to work to the best of my ability	1
He doesn't	

Question 4

What else would you like to say about the Special Education program at your school?

Response	Frequency
It is very good to see the school help kids like me	1
Get more Learning Support teachers	1
Let the teacher give us more help with classwork	1
Multi-lit has helped me with my reading	1
I would like the SETs to sit next to me in class when I need help in class, especially Maths	1
I would like more 1:1 lessons	1
I am very pleased with the Special Education program – I couldn't ask for any more help	1
The reading group showed me how to read and understand what I was reading	1
I have seen teachers using sign-language with other students	1
It helps a lot- continue the good job	1

APPENDIX P

VIEWPOINT HIGH

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Frequency
Support in classroom	17
Inclusion philosophy/policy	8
Support unit	8
Special Education staff expertise	6
Special Education Teacher Aide support	5
Profile of special education in school	5
Physical resources/facilities	5
Range of support options	5
Transition processes	4
Reading groups	4
Awareness of special needs	3
Support for students in playground	3
Out of class support	2
Community links	1
Individual plans/programs	1
Partial streaming	1
Students made feel welcome	1
Planning meetings	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Frequency
SETs	16
Special Teachers Aide support	13
Curriculum modification	13
Small group work (DIAL)	11
In-class support	10
Special unit	10
Special exam provisions	7
Inclusive approach	7
Physical resources/facilities	5
Regular teachers	4
Peer support	4
Individual Plans	4
Reading groups	3

Transition processes	2
Work experience	2
Itinerant teachers	2
Playground support	2
Technology support	2
Life skills programs	1
Social skills	1
Home group support	1
Smaller classes	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 86.7%
No: 0%
N/A: 8.9%
D/K: 4.4%

Response	Frequency
SETs	9
Teacher meetings	7
Individual Plans	6
Student assessments	5
Timetabled support	5
In-class support by SET team	3
Parent meetings	3
Transition process	3
Professional development for teachers	3
Student profiles	3
Reports on students	3
Special education unit/class	2
Special Education team updates	1
Reading program	1
Feedback across school	1
Curriculum modification	1
Induction for students	1
Whole-school process	1
Weekly staff updates	1
Regular teacher support for students	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: **54.50%**
No: **38.7%**
N/A: **6.8%**
D/K: **0%**

Response	Frequency
Home group teacher roles	5
Parent liaison by teachers	5
Progress reports on students	4
Curriculum modification	4
Regular classroom teaching	4
Individual Plans	4
Cross-school teacher partnerships	4
Transition process	1
Assessment of students	1
Small group support	1
Reading programs	1
Itinerant teacher liaison	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with each other about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Written communication	31
Talking and 1:1 discussion	21
Planned meetings	10
Staff meetings/briefings	8
Professional Development days	6
Transition meetings	3
Individual Plans	3
Planning days	2
Referral system	2
Weekly newsletter	1
Home group information	1
Timetabled student support	1
In-class time	1

Question 7

Are parents involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

If so, how are they involved?

Yes: 77.8%
No: 2.2%
N/A: 8.9%
D/K: 11.1%

Response	Frequency
Transition process	10
Formal meetings	9
Individual Plans	8
Verbal communication	7
Diary contact	4
Phone calls	3
Consultation	2
Curriculum modification	1
Task planning processes	1
Liaison with special education unit	1
Home group contact	1
Transport to work experience	1
Invited to school activities	1
Help with homework	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Is this process understood and followed by everyone on staff?

Yes: 32.5%
No: 20.0%
N/A: 27.5%
D/K: 20.0%

Response	Frequency
Cross-school community liaison	10
Special Education teachers	5
Formal meetings	3
Collaborative teacher reporting	3
Written communication	3
Individual Plans	3
Transition meetings	2
Class teacher role	1
Verbal communication	1
Principal's role	1

Question 9

What professional development activities are available for staff in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: **34.1%**
No: **22.7%**
N/A: **31.9%**
D/K: **11.3%**

Response	Frequency
In-school PD	10
Seminars on disability	7
Staff meetings	7
Resource folder	6
Consultation with SETs	5
CEO in-services	5
Group presentations	1
Curriculum modification	1
Teacher aide roles	1
Work placement for students	1
Outside PD	1
None	1
Very little	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Provides support to all staff	10
Advocates for students	7
Provides active, visible, encouraging leadership	6
Promotes a just and inclusive school culture	6
Supports students and parents	5
Liaises with staff	4
Provides financial support for the school	4
Employs adequate support staff	4
Cares and provides resources for students	3
Encourages the role of special education in the school	2
Has a planning role across the school	2
Promotes a whole-school approach	2
Sets an example to staff	2
Knows every student	2
Provides release time for teachers	2
Promotes the training of teachers	2
Provides cross-school in-services	1
Is very accepting	

Has an overseeing role in the school	1
Has a largely unseen role	1
Promotes a safe school for students	1
Attends meetings across school	1
Is involved with the whole school community	1
Promotes collaboration among the staff	1
Has Christian ethics	1
Is aware if disability issues	1
Allows Special Education teachers to do their job	1
Embraced the Special Education unit	1
Gives time to others	1
Supervises teachers	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Professional development is good	1
This school is unique	1
School inclusion policy accepts all students	1
The role of the Teacher's Aide is good	1
Travel training program is excellent	1
Reading groups are excellent	1
Tutorial groups are excellent	1
DIAL small groups are excellent	1
Work placement program is excellent	1
Emotional development of students is a priority	1
Physical development of students is a priority	1
Students contribute to the school's positive inclusion practices	1
There is insufficient funding	1
We need a teacher's aide desk in the staffroom	1
More staff need PD	1
School is seen as a "special education" school	1
Our community college links are good	1

APPENDIX Q

VIEWPOINT HIGH

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Frequency
Allowances are made for my child	4
Extra help in class	3
Individual planning process	3
Liaison with parents	3
Development of independence in students	2
Very dedicated Special Education teachers	1
Students are proud of their school	1
My child has friends	1
Transition planning process	1
Range of supports	1
My child is very happy	1
Integration strategies	1
Practical skills for students	1
The school is open to supporting students with disabilities	1
The school is very welcoming	1
The Principal has an active interest in the students	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Frequency
Individualised support	5
All teachers are aware of student needs	3
Other children in the school support students with disabilities	3
Students feel confident	2
Range of support options	2
Through the expertise of the Special Education staff	2
Classroom support	1
Targeted support for students	1
Individual Plans	1
The leadership of the principal	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 88.9%
No: 0%
N/A: 0%
D/K: 11.1%

Response	Frequency
Meetings with staff	4
Organised support across the school	3
Transition meetings and process	2
Support of the Teacher's Aides	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: 88.9%
No: 0%
N/A: 11.1%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
Meetings with staff	8
Consultation with Special Education teachers	4
Written communication	3
Parents are made to feel welcome	3
School forums	1
The principal knows all the parents	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with you about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Written communication	5
Meetings	4
Phone calls	3
Special Education teacher liaison	2
Email	1

Question 7

How are you involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Meetings with teachers	2
Individual planning process	1
Teachers consult me	1
Not directly	1
Don't know	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Response	Frequency
Parent involvement with staff	3
Principal is aware of decisions and meetings	3
Outside consultants are involved	2
Regular meetings with parents	1
Ongoing communication with parents	1
Individual Plan process	1

Question 9

What direct school support is available for parents in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: **66.7%**
No: **22.2%**
N/A: **11.1%**
D/K: **0%**

Response	Frequency
Support from Home Group teachers	3
Support from Special Education teachers	2
Support from Principal	2
Support from School Counsellor	1
Partnership between school and parents	1
Support from Catholic Education Office	1
Support from Transition team	1
Not known	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Supports all students with disabilities	5
Effective liaison with the Special Education teachers	4
Sets the tone for the school	3
Has an inclusive approach to education	3
Has an involvement in the school's special programs	1
Opens her arms and heart	1
Cannot happen without her	1
Knows all the students	1
Has a vision for the school	1
Not known	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
The school supports parents	3
The Special Education team is very committed to the students	3
Everyone at the school is dedicated	2
My child has succeeded because of this school	2
This is a Christian school	1
There is love and acceptance at this school	1
The Special Education staff and the principal make this school happen	1
The school staff is approachable and caring	1
The Support Unit is successful	1
The school accepts everyone	1

APPENDIX R

VIEWPOINT HIGH

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1

How does your school support students on the Special education program?

Response	Frequency
Help with homework	3
Help with assignments	3
Reading help	3
Teacher's Aides in class	3
Careers advice	1

Question 2

How are you involved in planning for your support at the school? (e.g. planning what type of support you receive, working towards goals every year etc.)

Response	Frequency
My parents meet with the Special Education teachers	7
I am not involved	3

Question 3

How does your principal help you in your studies at the school?

Response	Frequency
By giving us good teachers	3
She's encouraging	3
She talks to me and asks if she can help	3

Question 4

What else would you like to say about the Special Education program at your school?

Response	Frequency
They are very helpful	1
They give me assistance with my exams	1
She helps me work out what I want to do after school	1
They are always there when you need them	1

APPENDIX S

SUNSHINE HIGH

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Frequency
SET expertise	9
Support in classroom	6
Case manager roles	6
Curriculum modification	5
Itinerant teacher support	5
Students succeed/excel/happy	5
Special exam provisions	4
Whole school commitment	4
Inclusion philosophy/policy	4
Special Teachers Aide support	3
Vision student cared for	3
Identification of students	3
Physical resources/facilities/technology	3
Support for teachers	2
Literacy programs	2
Life skills programs	2
Collaboration in school	2
VET program	1
Outside network collaboration	1
Students feel safe	1
Advocacy for students	1
Parents involved	1
Students given self-direction	1
School structure in place	1
Special classes	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Frequency
SETs	17
Curriculum modification	14
Special exam provisions	10
In-class support	8
Special Teacher Aide support	8
Technology/resources	8
All teachers open to innovation	7
Literacy support	6
Itinerant teacher support	6
Case managers	6
Peer support	6
Individual Plans	6
Physical modifications/access to school	6
Life skills programs	5
Small groups/tutorials	4
Social development of students	3
Range of support options	3
Targeted support for students	2
Work experience/placement	2
Networking with community	2
Leadership team involvement	2
Inclusive environment	2
Student profiles	1
Catholic Education Office support	1
Advocacy for students	1
Parent collaboration	1
Pastoral care	1
Special classes	1
Student assessment	1
ESL program	1
Teaching resources	1
Changes to school structure	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 71.7%
No: 2.2%
N/A: 8.7%
D/K: 17.4%

Response	Frequency
SET team oversees	13
Teacher meetings	7
School leadership role	6
Whole-school approach	5
Curriculum modification	4
Student profiles	4
Student assessments	3
Special exam provisions	3
Individual Plans	2
Parent liaison by teachers	2
Programming support in class	2
Special Teachers Aide role	1
Small group tutorials	1
Pastoral care	1
School structure	1
Written communication	1
Itinerant teacher-Vision role	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: 51.2%
No: 46.5%
N/A: 2.3%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
Liaison with Special Education team	7
Regular classroom teaching	7
Liaison with school leadership team	7
Cross-school case management	6
In-class support for students	4
Special examination provisions	3
Classroom programming	1

Teacher mentors for students	1
Student identification	1
Professional development for teachers	1
Cross-school case conferencing	1
Transition processes	1
Life skills programs	1
Individual Plans	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with each other about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Talking and 1:1 discussion	28
Intranet student profiles	13
Planned meetings	9
Staff meetings/briefings	5
Professional Development days	3
Individual Plans	3
Liaison with school leadership team	3
Feedback to teachers	1
Working teams	1
Case management meetings	1
Special examination provisions	1
Programming plans	1

Question 7

Are parents involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

If so, how are they involved?

Yes: 57.4%
No: 6.4%
N/A: 4.2%
D/K: 32.0%

Response	Frequency
Individual Plans/Transition processes	10
Case manager meetings	5
Diary contact/updates	5
Phone calls	5
Formal interviews	3
Consultation	3
General meetings	2
Liaison with SET	1
Student review process	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Is this process understood and followed by everyone on staff?

Yes: **27.6%**
No: **29.8%**
N/A: **27.6%**
D/K: **15.0%**

Response	Frequency
SET role in management	13
Consultation with teachers	10
Assessment of students	9
Parent meetings and consultation	8
School leadership team involvement	8
Case management role	5
Consultation with students	5
Contact with outside agencies	3
Class teacher involvement	1
Identification of students	1
Case manager left out of process	1
Funding	1
No process	1

Question 9

What professional development activities are available for staff in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: 13.6%
No: 38.6%
N/A: 31.9%
D/K: 15.9%

Response	Frequency
School-based in-services/PD	7
None	6
SET team	5
Transition/IP process	4
Curriculum modification	3
Itinerant-Vision training	3
Staff meetings	3
Student information	3
Written information	3
Case manager induction	2
Literacy support	1
Minimal	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Is very supportive of the Special Education program	9
Is aware of school needs	3
Leads the school's inclusion policy	3
Gives staffing support for teachers	3
Case manages a number of students	2
Liaises with parents	2
Advocates for funding and resources for the school	2
Is involved in the enrolment process	2
Has a major leadership role	1
Has the final say with decisions	1
Is approachable and open to innovation	1
Reinforces the school's ownership of students	1
Accepts the recommendations of the SETs	1
Is interested in the progress of students	1
Is sensitive to emotional/family issues of students	1
Gives release time to cater for students	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides fo students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
More staff/resources needed	7
School does a tremendous job for students with disabilities	4
Special Education are extremely helpful/committed	4
Commitment of the school beyond normal teaching/learning	1
Extensive school support for students	1
Programs are accessible to all	1
We cater so well, students not aware of their special needs	1
Excellent school initiatives	1
We are working toward a more realistic strategic approach	1
Future involvement of curriculum/literacy support good	1
Fantastic support by Itinerant Teacher-Vision	1
Nothing is too hard for the school	1
Executive/administrative support is great	1
Growing, rewarding experience in this school	1
SETs ensure there is an equal chance for students to succeed	1
School building a smaller, more committed Special Education team	1
More support needed for Years 9-12 teachers	1
We have done well, but can do better	1
We need more teacher training	1
We need smaller classes	1
We need clearer procedures	1
Some students still fall through cracks	1

APPENDIX T

SUNSHINE HIGH

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Frequency
Specialised support for students	4
Students enjoy the school	2
1:1 teaching	2
The work of the Special Education team	2
Study program	1
Work experience program	1
Long-term commitment of the school	1
Support for parents	1
Classroom support for students	1
LITE program	1
Teacher's Aide support	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Frequency
Special Education program	10
Life Skills program	1
Integrated support across the school	1
Funding support	1
Physical equipment/resources	1
Dedicated staff at the school	1

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: **77.0%**
No: **0%**
N/A: **7.7%**
D/K: **15.4%**

Response	Frequency
Special Education Team coordinates	3
All teachers are aware of my child	2
Teacher/mentor appointed to each student	2
Through the Life Skills program	1
Through Transition plan meetings	1
The Principal coordinates	1
Through the Special Exam provisions program	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 77.0%
No: 0%
N/A: 7.7%
D/K: 15.4%

Response	Frequency	%
Special Education Team coordinates	3	27.3
All teachers are aware of my child	2	18.1
Teacher/mentor appointed to each student	2	18.1
Through the Life Skills program	1	9.1
Through Transition plan meetings	1	9.1
The Principal coordinates	1	9.1
Through the Special Exam provisions program	1	9.1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: 64.2%
No: 21.4%
N/A: 7.2%
D/K: 7.2%

Response	Frequency
Meetings with staff	4
Consultations with Special Education teachers	3
Individual Plan process	2
Help my child at home	1
Through the Life Skills course	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with you about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Written communication	7
Phone calls	4
Parent-teacher meetings	4
Meetings with the Year Coordinator	1
Through student assessments	1
Email	1
Case manager meetings	1
Through the Teacher's Aide	1

Question 7

How are you involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Not involved	8
I help my child at home	2
Consultations with teachers	1
Mentor interviews	1
Don't know	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Response	Frequency
Staff-parent liaison	4
Meetings with Special Education team	3
Individual Plan process	3
By the school alone	1
Don't know	1

Question 9

What direct support is available for parents in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: **50.0%**
No: **16.7%**
N/A: **16.7%**
D/K: **16.7%**

Response	Frequency
Meetings with Special Education teachers	3
The expertise of the teaching staff	3
All the teachers are approachable	2
In-services/information nights	1
Don't know	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Don't know	8
Supports the school's inclusive environment	2
Provides expert staff	1
Supports the Special Education teachers	1
In the decision-making processes	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Special Education teachers are great	3
The school is committed to students with disabilities	3
There is poor communication at the school	2
Parents need to be listened to	1
More meetings are needed for parents	1
More school-community liaison is needed	1
The only school I've found willing to help students with disabilities	1
My son is overwhelmed by the demands of school	1
Self-esteem building is an issue	1
Future involvement of curriculum/literacy support good	1
Fantastic support by Itinerant Teacher-Vision	1
Nothing is too hard for the school	1
Executive/administrative support is great	1
Growing, rewarding experience in this school	1
SETs ensure there is an equal chance for students to succeed	1
School building a smaller, more committed Special Education team	1
More support needed for Years 9-12 teachers	1
We have done well, but can do better	1
We need more teacher training	1
We need smaller classes	1
We need clearer procedures	1
Some students still fall through cracks	1

APPENDIX U

SUNSHINE HIGH

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1

How does your school support students on the Special education program?

Response	Frequency
Assignment help	5
Homework	5
Reading help	4
Transition	3
Enlarged print	1

Question 2

How are you involved in planning for your support at the school? (e.g. planning what type of support you receive, working towards goals every year etc.)

Response	Frequency
My parents come to the school	10
I am not involved	5

Question 3

How does your principal help you in your studies at the school?

Response	Frequency
Good Special Education teacher	5
Transition	4
I don't know	4

Question 4

What else would you like to say about the Special Education program at your school?

Response	Frequency
Reading help	1
Exams special provisions	1

APPENDIX V

RIVERLAND HIGH

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Questions 1, 2

To what extent do you feel that this school is successfully providing for students with disabilities?

What is the basis for your answer?

Response	Frequency
Communication/liaison between SETs and staff	9
Support in classroom	8
Special education staff expertise/commitment	7
Physical resources/facilities	6
Students seem happy/content	5
Special exam provisions	4
Positive special education team/advocacy	3
Whole school commitment/collaboration	3
Special Teachers Aide support	2
In-services for staff	2
Student information given to each teacher	1
Curriculum modification	1
Innovative special education teachers	1
Life skills courses	1
A planned approach	1
Awareness of special needs	1
Coordination of program	1
Inclusion philosophy/policy	1
Contribution of special needs students in classroom	1

Question 3

How are students with disabilities supported in this school?

Response	Frequency
In-class support	14
Individual Plans/managers	12
Special exam provisions	12
Curriculum modification	9
Physical resources/facilities/access/technology	9
SET/team	7
Special Teachers Aide support	6
Individual support for students	5
Transition planning	4

Infrastructure support	3
Leadership team support	3
Liaison across school	3
Consultancy support	2
Steamed support	2
Professional development	2
Funding for students	2
Reading groups	1
Homework group	1
Work experience	1
Travel training	1
Consultation with PC Coordinator	1
Plan meetings	1
Playground support	1
Teacher mentors	1
Whole school support	1
Oversee of student needs	1
Awareness of student needs	1
Advocacy for students	1
Peer support for students	1
Teaching resources	1
Changes to school structure	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 94.0%
No: 0%
N/A: 6.0%
D/K: 3.0%

Response	Frequency
Special Needs committee	14
SET liaise with staff	11
Cross-school information for staff	6
School leadership team	6
Teacher referral process	5
Plan managers	4
SET assessment of students	3
Teacher meetings	3
Individual Plans	3
Practical strategies in classroom	3
Student profiles	2
Special Teacher Aide role	1
School support program	1

Transition processes	1
Problem resolution processes in school	1
School administration processes	1
Written communication processes	1
Timetabling	1
Parent liaison by teachers	1
Principal leadership	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: 78.8%
No: 21.2%
N/A: 0%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
Regular classroom teaching	9
Liaison with SETs/Special Needs committee	5
Cross-school teacher partnerships	5
Plan manger roles	4
Liaison with school leadership team	4
Progress reports on students	2
Written communication	2
Teacher meetings	2
Special Education teacher role	1
Teacher mentors for students	1
Special examination provisions	1
Staff meetings	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with each other about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Talking and 1:1 discussion	28
Written communication/information sheets	21
Formal updates/booklets	7
Planned meetings	6
Staff meetings/briefings	5
Liaison with school leadership team	4
In-class time	2
Sharing resources/ideas	1
Parent meetings	1

Plan manager meetings	1
Student profiles	1
Survey processes	1
Assessment support	1
Modelling in classroom	1

Question 7

Are parents involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

If so, how are they involved?

Yes: 67.8%
No: 0%
N/A: 6.4%
D/K: 25.8%

Response	Frequency
Individual Plans meetings	9
Transition processes	4
Diary contact/updates	4
Verbal contact with SET	3
Verbal communication with teachers	2
Phone contact	2
Liaison through school leadership team	2
Assisting student development	1
Parent-teacher night	1
Consultation	1
Formal interviews	1
Assessment process	1
Enrolment process	1
Special examination provisions	1
Teacher aide role	1
Welcome to participate	1
Discussion groups	1

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities

Is this process understood and followed by everyone on staff?

Yes: **47.0%**
No: **23.5%**
N/A: **14.7%**
D/K: **14.7%**

Response	Frequency
Cross-school community liaison	9
Special Needs committee	7
School leadership role	6
Discussion groups	5
SET recommendations	5
Consultation between SET and teachers	4
Student assessments	3
Liaison between teachers and parents	2
Teachers make decisions	1
Plan manager role	1
Special exam provisions	1
Funding	1
Consultation with CEO	1

Question 9

What professional development activities are available for staff in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: **42.4%**
No: **21.2%**
N/A: **15.2%**
D/K: **21.2%**

Response	Frequency
CEO/system PD	11
Staff-based in-services	8
Curriculum differentiation/modification	5
Regular staff updates	3
None	3
Case conferences	2
Literacy PD	1

Focus on Learning	1
Programming strategies	1
Induction courses	1
Itinerant program	1
Teacher Aides	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Has regular meetings with the Special Education team	7
Provides resources for the school	4
Provides funding and staffing for the school	3
Oversees the Special Education program	3
Supports the philosophy and principles of special education	2
Is briefed regularly about special education issues	2
Shows initiative and approval for Special Education	2
Liaises with parents	2
Supports teachers supporting students	2
Supports PD for teachers	2
Is involved in the enrolment process with SETs	2
Collaborates with the student welfare network	1
Knows what's going on	1
Sets school policy	1
Leads the school	1
Oversees through the leadership team	1
Liaises with the Special Needs committee	1
Supports the upgrading of SET qualifications	1
Gives time release for SETs	1
Knows all the students with disabilities	1
Gives timetabling allocations	1
Liaises with the CEO for the school	1
Upgrades school facilities	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
We have a wonderful, effective Special education team	5
More specialised staff needed	3
The school's acceptance of an inclusion policy is important	2
Special Education programs work very well	2
Special Education team need more time to do their work	1
School-based collaboration is a crucial part of school's success	1
Principal's support and understanding is crucial	1
Tension between inclusion and whole-school needs	1
There is a strong Special Education presence in the school	1
I appreciate all the work of the Special Education team	1
Our students are happy	1
More Teacher's Aide time needed	1
Plan managers need more time	1
More funding is needed	1
I don't really understand the school processes	1
We are very HSC-driven	1

Question 4

Is there a coordinated process for this support in the school?

If so, please give some details about this coordinated process.

Yes: 75.0%
No: 0%
N/A: 25.5%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
Meetings between Special education teachers and staff	1
Meetings with parents	1
Whole school collaboration	1
Updates to parents	1

Question 5

Do you have any involvement in this process?

If so, please describe how you are involved.

Yes: 75.0%
No: 0%
N/A: 25.0%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
School consults parents	2
Written feedback	1

Question 6

How do class teachers and the Special Education staff at the school communicate with you about students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Talking and 1:1 discussion	2
Written communication	2
Phone calls	2

Question 7

How are you involved in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Staff consult me about my child	2

Question 8

Describe the process by which important decisions are made about students with disabilities.

Response	Frequency
Student assessment	2
Individual Plan process	1
Consultation with parents	1
Case conferences	1

Question 9

What direct school support is available for parents in relation to providing for students with disabilities?

In your view, are these activities sufficient?

Yes: 75.0%
No: 0%
N/A: 25.0%
D/K: 0%

Response	Frequency
The program is tailored to suit my child's needs	1
The staff are always available to me	1
Through the School Counsellor	1
Through the Special Education teachers	1
Through the Year Coordinator	1

Question 10

What role does your principal play in the school's provision for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
Not sure	1

Question 11

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about how the school provides for students with disabilities?

Response	Frequency
The school does a great job for my child	1
The school always consults with me	1

APPENDIX X

RIVERLAND HIGH

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1

How does your school support students on the Special education program?

Response	Frequency
They take me out of class and helps with my school work	3
Homework help	3
Reading help	3

Question 2

How are you involved in planning for your support at the school? (e.g. planning what type of support you receive, working towards goals every year etc.)

Response	Frequency
My parents come to the school	5
I am not involved	5

Question 3

How does your principal help you in your studies at the school?

Response	Frequency
Good Special Education teachers	3
Transition	3
I don't know	4

Question 4

What else would you like to say about the Special Education program at your school?

Response	Frequency
They treat me well	1
Exams special provisions	1

APPENDIX Y

EMERGING THEMES FROM CASE STUDY SCHOOLS FOR PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

RESEARCH QUESTION: IN WHAT WAYS, AND TO WHAT EXTENT, DO THE BEHAVIOURS OF PRINCIPALS CONTRIBUTE TO THESE PROCESSES, PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES?

RESPONSES BY TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS & PRINCIPAL

All Schools	All Questionnaires and Interviews – Key themes, issues and quotes	
	SPECIFIC REFERENCES BY SCHOOL INFORMANTS	
	SUPPORTS THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM STAFF	Actively promotes and advocates for the Special Education program in the school (23/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
		Provides staffing, timetabling, funding and resource support for the Special Education program (20/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACER QUESTIONNAIRES
		The principal is actively involved in the coordination of the Special Education program (5/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		"I am supportive of the work done in this area and always respond positively to any initiatives" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		"I see my role as working behind the scenes and supporting and resourcing teachers in the school with their planning and programming" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		The principal actively supports the Special Education program (8/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		The school's leadership team has identified good teachers in the school who have been chosen to teach in the Special Education program (4/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
		"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	PROMOTES AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE	Actively promotes an inclusive school culture by developing policies and practices that support students with disabilities (20/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
		The role of the principal in setting up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs (45/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

		The principal coordinates school-based professional development around special needs education (41/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
		The principal is very inclusive in how she acts and sets the tone for the rest of the school (4/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities (8/11 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER INTERVIEWS
		"There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staffroom in the middle of the school...everyone with everyone else. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"I see my role in the school as critical in the impact it has on the outcomes for students with disabilities. At the same time, the leadership style for the school is 'collective' " VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"We enrol everyone here – that's our policy...we are here for everyone" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"To be credible at the school, you need to be approachable" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"All teachers and parents have a right to contribute here" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		Parents are encouraged to contact the school (12/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		"All parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		"I case manage three students with disabilities" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can " SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AND THE NEEDS OF REGULAR TEACHERS	Provides good teachers for the school (6/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		The principal chooses the best teachers to teach Special Education (8/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
		The principal values feedback and ideas about good teaching practice (8/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
		The principal leads the school by his own example in providing support for teachers as they support students with disabilities (15/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
		"My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up policies and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

		"We are a learning community with no real hierarchy. Professionals are empowered. My role as the principal is to empower the professionals in my school as they meet the students' needs. I am a leader of teachers" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"You need to listen to all the players. All our teachers are trained professionals. They are entitled to feel they are learning during their time here, and know where we are all going as a learning community. They are also entitled to be listened to...if they have a good idea; I need to be open to it. We need creative thinking, not conservatism. Empower your professionals by including them in the conversation and convince them to change by presenting them with data about good practice" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"I attend QEAD (Quality Education and Discourse) and PEEL meetings...these drive quality education. Outcomes, not the executive. You have to be part of it, even though I feel a bit of a fraud due to not teaching any classes. I attend as a teacher, not a principal" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"Sharing of knowledge amongst teachers...shared focus, understanding, language, awareness of individual differences. This is the key to student success. This is the culture of the school" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"A whole school approach to supporting students with disabilities is valuable in that it provides good modelling for all members of the community and allows for mentoring for new teachers" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"Around here we like to talk about teaching and learning" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
		"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers (8/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	IS COMMITTED TO THE PROGRESS OF ALL STUDENTS	He knows who I am and how I need help in class (4/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		Consultation with parents about student progress (7/10 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		Committed to and concerned about student progress (6/10 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
		" My role is to make the school work for the students first" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		" The type of support programs I set up in the school need to meet the specific needs of a very diverse group of students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
		The principal knows my name and why I need help (3/6 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT INTERVIEWS
		The principal knows my child and cares for him (3/3 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT INTERVIEWS
		The principal personally knows my child and she understands his/her needs (2/3 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEW
		"People can make mistakes at this school. We celebrate and value student achievement" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

		The initial enrolment process for my child at the school was very good and supportive (4/6 respondents) RIVERLAND PARENT INTERVIEWS
		"As a leadership team we table and discuss the needs of all our students, especially those with special needs" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

APPENDIX Z

CLUSTER OF THEMES – PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS ALL SCHOOLS AND ALL RESPONDENT GROUPS

RESPONSES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION: IN WHAT WAYS, AND TO WHAT EXTENT, DO THE BEHAVIOURS OF PRINCIPALS CONTRIBUTE TO THESE PROCESSES, PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES?

RESPONSES BY TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS & PRINCIPAL

SUPPORTS THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM STAFF	Actively promotes and advocates for the Special Education program in the school (23/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Provides staffing, timetabling, funding and resource support for the Special Education program (20/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal is actively involved in the coordination of the Special Education program (5/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	"I am supportive of the work done in this area and always respond positively to any initiatives" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"I see my role as working behind the scenes and supporting and resourcing the program by providing structures in the school" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The principal actively supports the Special Education program (8/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	The school's leadership team has identified good teachers in the school who have been chosen to teach in the Special Education program (4/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
PROMOTES AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE	Actively promotes an inclusive school culture by developing policies and practices that support students with disabilities (20/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The role of the principal in setting up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs (45/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal coordinates school-based professional development around special needs education (41/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal is very inclusive in how she acts and sets the tone for the rest of the school (4/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

	The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities (8/11 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staffroom in the middle of the school...everyone with everyone else. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"I see my role in the school as critical in the impact it has on the outcomes for students with disabilities. At the same time, the leadership style for the school is 'collective' " VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"We enrol everyone here – that's our policy...we are here for everyone" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"To be credible at the school, you need to be approachable" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"All teachers and parents have a right to contribute here" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	Parents are encouraged to contact the school (12/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	"All parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"I case manage three students with disabilities" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can " SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AND THE NEEDS OF REGULAR TEACHERS	Provides good teachers for the school (6/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal chooses the best teachers to teach Special Education (8/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The principal values feedback and ideas about good teaching practice (8/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The principal leads the school by his own example in providing support for teachers as they support students with disabilities (15/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up policies and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"We are a learning community with no real hierarchy. Professionals are empowered. My role as the principal is to empower the professionals in my school as they meet the students' needs. I am a leader of teachers" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"You need to listen to all the players. All our teachers are trained professionals. They are entitled to feel they are learning during their time here, and know where we are all going as a learning community. They are also entitled to be listened to...if they have a good idea; I need to be open to it. We need creative thinking, not conservatism. Empower your professionals by including them in the conversation and convince them to change by presenting them with data about good practice" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

	"I attend QEAD (Quality Education and Discourse) and PEEL meetings...these drive quality education. Outcomes, not the executive. You have to be part of it, even though I feel a bit of a fraud due to not teaching any classes. I attend as a teacher, not a principal" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"Sharing of knowledge amongst teachers...shared focus, understanding, language, awareness of individual differences. This is the key to student success. This is the culture of the school" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"A whole school approach to supporting students with disabilities is valuable in that it provides good modelling for all members of the community and allows for mentoring for new teachers" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"Around here we like to talk about teaching and learning" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers (8/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
IS COMMITTED TO THE PROGRESS OF ALL STUDENTS	He knows who I am and how I need help in class (4/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	Consultation with parents about student progress (7/10 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	Committed to and concerned about student progress (6/10 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	" My role is to make the school work for the students first" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	" The type of support programs I set up in the school need to meet the specific needs of a very diverse group of students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal knows my name and why I need help (3/6 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT INTERVIEWS
	The principal knows my child and cares for him (3/3 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT INTERVIEWS
	The principal personally knows my child and she understands his/her needs (2/3 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEW
	"People can make mistakes at this school. We celebrate and value student achievement" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The initial enrolment process for my child at the school was very good and supportive (4/6 respondents) RIVERLAND PARENT INTERVIEWS
	"As a leadership team we table and discuss the needs of all our students, especially those with special needs" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

APPENDIX A1

EMERGING THEMES- SCHOOL CONDITIONS

RESPONSES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT PROCESSES, PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES ARE PRESENT IN A SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE PERCEIVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

FOR EACH SCHOOLFROM ALL RESPONDENT GROUPS

SCHOOL	RESPONSE GROUP	COMMENTS AND QUOTES	EMERGING THEME
LAKESIDE HIGH	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	The establishment of a Special Education program that has expertise, experience and commitment to students with disabilities (45/53 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		A balance between in-class support, withdrawal and curriculum modification for students with disabilities (43/53 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Active involvement and advocacy by the principal in supporting the Special Education program (31/53 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		Regular contact and collaboration between class teachers and the Special Education teachers (24/53 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		Regular consultation between Special Education staff, class teachers and parents focusing on student needs (24/53 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
	TEACHER INTERVIEWS	The principal leads the school by his own example in providing support for teachers as they support students with disabilities (15/18 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		There is a whole-school commitment band culture that values and prioritises the special needs of students (14/18 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		There is excellent communication processes between teachers and between teachers and parents at this school around student needs and outcomes (14/18 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL

		The Special Education staff collaborate and provide you with the type of support you need as a teacher (14/18 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		The principal actively supports teachers in the classroom (11/18 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		Transition programs are very important practical strategies for students with disabilities (10/18 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The school chooses its best teachers to teach Special Education (8/18 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		The principal values feedback and ideas about good teaching practice (8/18 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		The role of the classroom teacher is valued at this school (7/18 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"The expertise, commitment and communication skills of the Special Education staff are vital... I just set up the culture and conditions at the school where they can do their work effectively and efficiently"	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education program (8/10 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		The teachers look after you (7/10 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	STUDENT INTERVIEWS	The teachers at the school know my needs and help me (5/6 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The Individual Plan is helpful (3/6 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The principal knows my name and why I need help (3/6 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education program looks after the needs of the students (9/10 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		The Individual Plan program (5/10 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

	PARENT INTERVIEWS	The role of the parent is actively encouraged...I feel that they listen to me (3/3 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		All children are treated as individuals and equals (2/3 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	The Special Education program is excellent	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		There is a great commitment to all students from all staff across the school	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The school is here for all students	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	"My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up policies and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"Communication across school is imperative...a philosophy of collaborative practice structured into teachers' work practices"	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		"We are a learning community with no real hierarchy. Professionals are empowered. My role as the principal is to empower the professionals in my school as they meet the students' needs. I am a leader of teachers"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"You need to listen to all the players. All our teachers are trained professionals. They are entitled to feel they are learning during their time here, and know where we are all going as a learning community. They are also entitled to be listened to...if they have a good idea; I need to be open to it. We need creative thinking, not conservatism. Empower your professionals by including them in the conversation and convince them to change by presenting them with data about good practice"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

		"I don't talk about a hierarchy here, except as an inverse pyramid. The principal is at the pointy end at the bottom, with all the pressure on him. I need to balance the community so that we have the best possible outcomes for all the students here"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"I attend QEAD (Quality Education and Discourse) and PEEL meetings...these drive quality education. Outcomes, not the executive. You have to be part of it, even though I feel a bit of a fraud due to not teaching any classes. I attend as a teacher, not a principal"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"Sharing of knowledge amongst teachers...shared focus, understanding, language, awareness of individual differences. This is the key to student success. This is the culture of the school"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
VIEW-POINT HIGH	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	Formal cross-school meetings focusing on the needs of students with disabilities (50/60 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		The role of the principal in setting up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs (45/60 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		Specifically targeted support programs for student with disabilities (44/60 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		School-based professional development around special needs education (41/60 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Individual planning support for students with disabilities (34/60 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Support provided by Special Education teachers in the classroom for students with disabilities (33/60 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	TEACHER INTERVIEWS	The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities (8/11 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

		Everyone feels part of a community at the school (6/11 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		There are solutions found for any problems or challenges (6/11 respondents)	*MISCELLANEOUS THEME*
		Expertise and commitment of the Special Education staff (6/11 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		Cross-school collaboration and teamwork on behalf of student with disabilities (5/11 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		All the teachers seem to be aware of my child's special needs (6/10 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Specifically targeted meetings with parents focusing on my child's needs at regular intervals (6/10 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education teachers are very helpful (8/10 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	STUDENT INTERVIEWS	The Individual Plan is central to the type of support made available to students (3/4 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The Special Education staff coordinate the support made available to students with disabilities (2/4 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		"Staff commitment and ownership for meeting the needs of all students"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"The support of the Special Education staff and the Teacher's Aides is crucial in the day-to-day support of students with disabilities"	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		"I believe that our school is 'strong at our broken places". The acceptance and value placed on students with disabilities is paramount"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

		"We have been fortunate that we have never had to 'change" culture – it has always been this way and staff come on board knowing this. Staff who may feel a bit uncomfortable at first soon realise that they are out of step with the culture and are quickly reassured by others"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education program is excellent (8/10 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	PARENT INTERVIEWS	All the teachers are aware of the needs of my child (3/4 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The school staff is approachable and helpful, both to myself as a parent and to my child when we have any issues (2/4 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	The school is an inclusive place	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The teachers are all dedicated and committed to the needs of the students	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		We have a first-rate Special Education program with committed professionals	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	*"People can make mistakes at this school. We celebrate and value achievement"*	*MISCELLANEOUS THEME*
		"There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staffroom in the middle of the school...everyone with everyone else. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"I see my role in the school as critical in the impact it has on the outcomes for students with disabilities. At the same time, the leadership style for the school is 'collective' "	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"A whole school approach to supporting students with disabilities is valuable in that it provides good modelling for all members of the community and allows for mentoring for new teachers"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

		"We enrol everyone here – that's our policy...we are here for everyone"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"To be credible at the school, you need to be approachable"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"Around here we like to talk about teaching and learning"	*MISCELLANEOUS THEME*
		"All teachers and parents have a right to contribute here"	
RIVER-LAND HIGH	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	Individual targeting of student needs by the Special Education staff (43/63 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		Individual Plan management process across the school (36/63 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Special Needs Committee processes (28/63 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		Communication between teachers, coordinated by the Special Education staff (27/63 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		School and system-based professional development activities around Special Education (25/63 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	TEACHER INTERVIEWS	The key to our success is the expertise and commitment of our Special Needs teachers (8/8 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		Teachers become involved through the Plan Manger process (5/8 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Quality support is provided to students with disabilities through the excellence of the communication between teachers and the Special Education teachers (4/8 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education teachers are good (9/10 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	STUDENT INTERVIEWS	The Special Education teachers know me very well and help me all the time (6/10 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		The teachers in class seem to know where I need help (4/10 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education teachers look after the students very well (12/15 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	PARENT INTERVIEWS	The support of students with disabilities is mainly through the Special Education teacher role (4/6 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		There is an excellent enrolment process at the school *(4/6 respondents)*	*MISCELLANEOUS THEME*
	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	The role of the Special Education teachers is crucial	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	"The strengths for the program are with our teachers and teacher's aides"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"I see my role as working behind the scenes and supporting and resourcing the program by providing structures in the school"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"There are no distinctions between teachers at the school...we rely on relational strengths across the school to achieve what we achieve. It is a collaborative approach here"	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		"The support for students with disabilities starts before enrolment through contact with our feeder schools; plan managers are appointed; it concludes with transition plans for their entry into the community"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"I am supportive of the work done in this area and always respond positively to any initiatives"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		The Special Needs Committee is chaired by the Assistant Principal but I also appointed the Curriculum Coordinator to the committee to provide advice in this area"	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		"The key to our success is the professionalism and enthusiasm of the Special Needs Committee"	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
SUNSHINE HIGH	TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education team is very effective and committed to all students with disabilities (55/81 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

		The principal has a very positive role in supporting and sustaining the inclusive approach of the school, by providing resources and time-tabling support for teachers (32/81 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
	TEACHER INTERVIEWS	Collaboration between the teachers and the Special Education staff is the key to our success (10/12 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		Case manager roles are an important component of tracking student needs across the school (9/12 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers (8/12 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		Our aim is to spread expertise across the school in supporting student with disabilities (7/12 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The school's leadership team has identified good teachers in the school who have been chosen to teach in the Special Education program (4/12 respondents)	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		All teachers know the students with disabilities (22/81 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	There is help available to me when I need it in class(10/15 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The HELP Class is very good (10/15 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	STUDENT INTERVIEWS	The teachers in class know my needs (4/5 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The Individual Plan is a good way to work out how I should be supported (3/5 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The Individual Plan process is a good way to find out information about your child (16/30 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		Parents are encouraged to contact the school (12/30 respondents)	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL

	PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	The Special Education program is excellent (11/15 respondents)	EXPERTISE, COMMITMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF
		The Individual Plans are good for the students (8/15 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
	PARENT INTERVIEWS	The Individual Plan process is an excellent way for us as parents to contribute to our child's progress (4/5 respondents)	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		The teachers at this school are very committed (4/5 respondents)	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

	PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	"All students are treated as "abled individuals"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"All parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children"	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
		"I case manage three students with disabilities"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"The Special Needs Committee is important in coordinating the teachers' response to student needs. It communicates student profiles and plans across the school"	COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION PROCESSES ACROSS THE SCHOOL
	PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	"The expertise for supporting students with disabilities in this school comes from a whole school effort"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"The type of support available to students who are differently abled in the classroom depends on the particular expertise and awareness of the teacher"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"Individual Plans represent our school's positive 'genuine partnerships' between teachers, students and families"	SPECIFICALLY TARGETED PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"As a leadership team we table and discuss the needs of all our students, especially those with special needs"	THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL
		"While we are committed to the academic needs of our students, we are determined to 'value add' in our support of all students"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
		"An inclusive philosophy underpins all our efforts here"	A WHOLE SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

APPENDIX B1

CLUSTER OF THEMES – SCHOOL CONDITIONS ALL SCHOOLS AND ALL RESPONDENT GROUPS

RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT PROCESSES, PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES ARE PRESENT IN A SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE PERCEIVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

CLUSTER OF THEMES	INDICATORS FROM THE DATA – ALL SCHOOLS AND RESPONDENT GROUPS
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE SCHOOL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	The establishment of a Special Education program that has expertise, experience and commitment to students with disabilities (45/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRES
	The LST and her staff communicate, collaborate and provide you with the type of support you need as a teacher (14/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	Support provided by Special Education teachers in the classroom for students with disabilities (33/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Individual targeting of student needs by the Special Education staff (43/63 respondents) RIVERLAND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The Special Education teachers help me with my work (11/15 respondents) RIVERLAND STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	Special Education support provided by the Special Education teachers (12/15 respondents) RIVERLAND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	The key to our success is the expertise and commitment of our Special Needs teachers (8/8 respondents) RIVERLAND TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The Special Education teachers know me very well and help me all the time (6/8 respondents) RIVERLAND STUDENT INTERVIEWS
	The support of students with disabilities is mainly through the Special Education teacher role (6/7 respondents) RIVERLAND PARENT INTERVIEWS
	The expertise of the Special Education team (57/81 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The expertise and commitment of the Special Education teachers (22/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE SCHOOL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	A balance between in-class support, withdrawal and curriculum modification for students with disabilities (43/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Transition programs involving consultation between the student, teacher and parents, especially regarding after-school placement options (9/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	Teachers use the IP process to keep parents informed (3/3 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	Specifically targeted support programs for student with disabilities (44/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Individual planning support for students with disabilities (34/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	My child has an individualisd program that meets his/her needs (8/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEWS
	Individual Plan management process across the school (36/63 respondents) RIVERLAND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The HELP Class is very good (10/15 respondents) SUNSHINE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	The Individual Plan process is a good way to find out information about your child (16/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES BY THE PRINCIPAL THAT REFLECT AN ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	Active involvement and advocacy by the principal in supporting the Special Education program (31/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	The principal leads the school by his own example in providing support for teachers as they support students with disabilities (15/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up policies and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The role of the principal in setting up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs (45/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	"I see my role in the school as critical in the impact it has on the outcomes for students with disabilities. At the same time, the leadership style for the school is 'collective' " VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"I am supportive of the work done in this area and always respond positively to any initiatives" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

	The principal has a very positive role in supporting and sustaining the inclusive approach of the school, by providing resources and time-tabling support for teachers (32/81 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can " SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers (8/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"As a leadership team we table and discuss the needs of all our students, especially those with special needs" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"To be credible at the school, you need to be approachable" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities (8/11 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER INTERVIEWS
A COMMITMENT BY ALL STAFF IN PROMOTING THE ACTIVE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	There is a whole-school commitment and culture that values and prioritises the special needs of students (14/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The teachers at the school know my needs and help me (5/6 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT INTERVIEWS
	Formal cross-school meetings focusing on the needs of students with disabilities (60/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	School-based professional development around special needs education (41/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	"Staff commitment and ownership for meeting the needs of all students" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"We have been fortunate that we have never had to 'change" culture – it has always been this way and staff come on board knowing this. Staff who may feel a bit uncomfortable at first soon realise that they are out of step with the culture and are quickly reassured by others" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

	The principal has a very positive role in supporting and sustaining the inclusive approach of the school, by providing resources and time-tabling support for teachers (32/81 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can " SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers (8/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"As a leadership team we table and discuss the needs of all our students, especially those with special needs" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"To be credible at the school, you need to be approachable" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities (8/11 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER INTERVIEWS
A COMMITMENT BY ALL STAFF IN PROMOTING THE ACTIVE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	There is a whole-school commitment and culture that values and prioritises the special needs of students (14/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	The teachers at the school know my needs and help me (5/6 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT INTERVIEWS
	Formal cross-school meetings focusing on the needs of students with disabilities (60/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	School-based professional development around special needs education (41/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	"Staff commitment and ownership for meeting the needs of all students" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	"We have been fortunate that we have never had to 'change" culture – it has always been this way and staff come on board knowing this. Staff who may feel a bit uncomfortable at first soon realise that they are out of step with the culture and are quickly reassured by others" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

	"There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staffroom in the middle of the school...everyone with everyone else. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"A whole school approach to supporting students with disabilities is valuable in that it provides good modelling for all members of the community and allows for mentoring for new teachers" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	"We enrol everyone here – that's our policy...we are here for everyone" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	There is help available to me when I need it in class(10/15 respondents) SUNSHINE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES
	The teachers in class know my needs (4/5 respondents) SUNSHINE STUDENT INTERVIEWS
EFFECTIVE AND ONGOING COMMUNICATION PROCESSES AMONG STAFF AND WITH PARENTS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	"The key to any success we have is due to the collaborative nature of the school" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE
	There is excellent communication processes between teachers and between teachers and parents at this school around student needs and outcomes (14/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	"You need to listen to all the players. All our teachers are trained professionals. They are entitled to feel they are learning during their time here, and know where we are all going as a learning community. They are also entitled to be listened to...if they have a good idea; I need to be open to it. We need creative thinking, not conservatism. Empower your professionals by including them in the conversation and convince them to change by presenting them with data about good practice" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	Special Needs Committee processes (28/63 respondents) RIVERLAND TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	"There are no distinctions between teachers at the school...we rely on relational strengths across the school to achieve what we achieve. It is a collaborative approach here" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW
	The planned meetings between Special Education teacher and class teachers (51/83 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES
	Collaboration between the teachers and the Special Education staff is the key to our success (10/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS
	Case manager roles are an important component of tracking student needs across the school (9/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX C1

CLUSTER OF THEMES – IMPLICATIONS FROM FINDINGS ABOUT PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS

RESPONSES FOR RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS THAT ARE SUCCESSFUL IN PROVIDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SPECIFIC REFERENCES FROM SCHOOL SOURCES	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS
SUPPORTS THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM STAFF	Actively promotes and advocates for the Special Education program in the school (23/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	An understanding of the principles and fundamentals of Special Education program delivery in schools
	Provides staffing, timetabling, funding and resource support for the Special Education program (20/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACER QUESTIONNAIRES	An understanding of the funding and support provision fundamentals of Special Education delivery in schools
	The principal is actively involved in the coordination of the Special Education program (5/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	"I am supportive of the work done in this area and always respond positively to any initiatives" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
	"I see my role as working behind the scenes and supporting and resourcing the program by providing structures in the school" RIVERLAND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
	The principal actively supports the Special Education program (8/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	The school's leadership team has identified good teachers in the school who have been chosen to teach in the Special Education program (4/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS	A knowledge of best practice pedagogy in Special Education

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SPECIFIC REFERENCES FROM SCHOOL SOURCES	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS
	"My primary role in Special Education is to sustain our school's reputation as a comprehensive school that is proactive in its support of all students and to support my teachers, especially my Special Education team" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
PROMOTES AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURE	Actively promotes an inclusive school culture by developing policies and practices that support students with disabilities (20/53 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	An commitment, and understanding of inclusive practice principles and practices in Special Education delivery in schools
	The role of the principal in setting up a culture of inclusive education for all student needs (45/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	
	The principal coordinates school-based professional development around special needs education (41/60 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES	A commitment to teacher professional development at the school level
	The principal is very inclusive in how she acts and sets the tone for the rest of the school (4/10 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	"We have created a strong culture of inclusive practices and we feel we are enriched by students with disabilities" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
	The inclusive culture of this school comes from the top – the principal models the type of approach we adopt for students with disabilities (8/11 respondents) VIEWPOINT TEACHER INTERVIEWS	
	"There are no 'silos' in the school, with the staffroom in the middle of the school...everyone with everyone else. We try to create a holistic education which is seamless" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
	"I see my role in the school as critical in the impact it has on the outcomes for students with disabilities. At the same time, the leadership style for the school is 'collective' " VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	An distributive leadership approach to school management

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SPECIFIC REFERENCES FROM SCHOOL SOURCES	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS
	"We enrol everyone here – that's our policy...we are here for everyone" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	A commitment to an open enrolment policy that promotes the inclusion of students with disabilities
	"To be credible at the school, you need to be approachable" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	An open and consultative approach to school management and leadership
	"All teachers and parents have a right to contribute here" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	An approach to school management that encourages parental and community involvement
	Parents are encouraged to contact the school (12/30 respondents) SUNSHINE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	"All parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
	"I case manage three students with disabilities" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
	"I continue to promote the school as an inclusive place where I can " SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
IS COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AND THE NEEDS OF REGULAR TEACHERS	Provides good teachers for the school (6/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	The principal chooses the best teachers to teach Special Education (8/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS	
	The principal values feedback and ideas about good teaching practice (8/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS	
	The principal leads the school by his own example in providing support for teachers as they support students with disabilities (15/18 respondents) LAKESIDE TEACHER INTERVIEWS	
	"My role is to lead the school by creating and setting up policies and structures that enable teachers to provide quality teaching for all students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	A commitment to quality teaching and learning practices for all students at the school

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SPECIFIC REFERENCES FROM SCHOOL SOURCES	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS
	"We are a learning community with no real hierarchy. Professionals are empowered. My role as the principal is to empower the professionals in my school as they meet the students' needs. I am a leader of teachers" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	A commitment to support teachers and all school staff as life-long learners
	"You need to listen to all the players. All our teachers are trained professionals. They are entitled to feel they are learning during their time here, and know where we are all going as a learning community. They are also entitled to be listened to...if they have a good idea; I need to be open to it. We need creative thinking, not conservatism. Empower your professionals by including them in the conversation and convince them to change by presenting them with data about good practice" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	A willingness to be open to new ideas and approaches to teaching and learning and a commitment to develop structures and processes that promote the whole-school development of innovative practices
	"I attend QEAD (Quality Education and Discourse) and PEEL meetings...these drive quality education. Outcomes, not the executive. You have to be part of it, even though I feel a bit of a fraud due to not teaching any classes. I attend as a teacher, not a principal" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	A willingness to be involved in the day-to-day development of teaching policy and practices for the benefit of all students
	"Sharing of knowledge amongst teachers...shared focus, understanding, language, awareness of individual differences. This is the key to student success. This is the culture of the school" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
	"A whole school approach to supporting students with disabilities is valuable in that it provides good modelling for all members of the community and allows for mentoring for new teachers" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
	"Around here we like to talk about teaching and learning" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
	"I try to structurally support the efforts of the teachers as they meet the needs of students" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	

PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOURS	SPECIFIC REFERENCES FROM SCHOOL SOURCES	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPALS
	The principal sets the scene for our school's inclusive approach by providing the resources and support for all teachers (8/12 respondents) SUNSHINE TEACHER INTERVIEWS	A commitment to provide adequate funding, resources and professional development for the Special Education program in the school
IS COMMITTED TO THE PROGRESS OF ALL STUDENTS	He knows who I am and how I need help in class (4/10 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES	A willingness to get to know the students involved in the school's Special Education program
	Consultation with parents about student progress (7/10 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	Committed to and concerned about student progress (6/10 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES	
	" My role is to make the school work for the students first" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
	" The type of support programs I set up in the school need to meet the specific needs of a very diverse group of students" LAKESIDE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE	
	The principal knows my name and why I need help (3/6 respondents) LAKESIDE STUDENT INTERVIEWS	
	The principal knows my child and cares for him (3/3 respondents) LAKESIDE PARENT INTERVIEWS	
	The principal personally knows my child and she understands his/her needs (2/3 respondents) VIEWPOINT PARENT INTERVIEW	
	"People can make mistakes at this school. We celebrate and value student achievement" VIEWPOINT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	
	The initial enrolment process for my child at the school was very good and supportive (4/6 respondents) RIVERLAND PARENT INTERVIEWS	The development of a welcoming and inclusive enrolment policy and process for all students
	"As a leadership team we table and discuss the needs of all our students, especially those with special needs" SUNSHINE PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW	The development of whole-school processes for the coordination of the school's Special Education program

APPENDIX D1

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW - LAKESIDE HIGH

1. I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you comment on their role and give some examples?

2. I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially around the organisation and leadership they provide for the school. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?

3. Can you comment on how Individual Plans and the LST impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do you see your own role and actions having an impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

5. How do think your behaviours impact on providing for students with disabilities?

6. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX E1

TEACHER INTERVIEW - LAKESIDE HIGH

1. *I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you give me some examples of their role and how it impacts on students with disabilities?*

2. *I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially around the organisation and leadership they provide for the school. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?*

3. *Can you comment on how Individual Plans and the LST impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?*

4. *Do the behaviours of the principal impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?*

5. *In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?*

APPENDIX F1

PARENT INTERVIEW - LAKESIDE HIGH

1. Can you give me some examples of how the Special Education staff has worked with you and your child at this school?

2. Has your contact with the Special Education teachers at the school helped your child? How do you usually make contact with the Special Education staff?

3. Do you think the Individual Plan program has helped your child? Can you give me some examples?

4. Does the principal have any influence on how your child has been supported at this school? Can you give me some examples?

5. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX G1

STUDENT INTERVIEW - LAKESIDE HIGH

1. Do the Special Education teachers help you at school? Can you tell me how?

2. Do you get any help from your class teachers? Can you give me some examples of this?

3. Do you have an Individual Plan or IP through the Learning Support Team? Do you think it has helped you with your school work? Did you have any say in writing the plan?

4. Have you parents talked to the Special Education teacher(s) or class teachers/anyone about how to help you with your school work? Has this helped in any way?

5. Does the principal at this school know you? Does he do anything to help you? Can you give me some examples of how he helps you?

APPENDIX H1

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW - VIEWPOINT HIGH

1. I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you comment on their role and give some examples?

2. I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially around how they support the inclusive nature of this school? How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff around this culture?

3. Can you comment on how Individual Plans and the role of parents impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do you see your own role and actions having an impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

5. How do think your behaviours impact on providing for students with disabilities?

6. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX I1

TEACHER INTERVIEW - VIEWPOINT HIGH

1. I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you give me some examples of their role and how it impacts on students with disabilities?

2. I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially around how they support the inclusive nature of this school. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?

3. Can you comment on how Individual Plans and the role of parents on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do the behaviours of the principal impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

5. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX J1

PARENT INTERVIEW - VIEWPOINT HIGH

1. *Can you give me some examples of how the Special Education staff has worked with you and your child at this school?*

2. *Has your contact with the Special Education teachers at the school helped your child? How do you usually make contact with the Special Education staff?*

3. *Do you think the Individual Plan program has helped your child? Can you give me some examples?*

4. *Does the principal have any influence on how your child has been supported at this school? Can you give me some examples?*

5. *In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?*

APPENDIX K1

STUDENT INTERVIEW - VIEWPOINT HIGH

1. Do the Special Education teachers help you at school? Can you tell me how?

2. Do you get any help from your class teachers? Can you give me some examples of this?

3. Do you have an Individual Plan or IP through the Learning Support Team? Do you think it has helped you with your school work? Did you have any say in writing the plan?

4. Have you parents talked to the Special Education teacher(s) or class teachers/anyone about how to help you with your school work? Has this helped in any way?

5. Does the principal at this school know you? Does she do anything to help you? Can you give me some examples of how she helps you?

APPENDIX L1

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW - SUNSHINE HIGH

1. *I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you comment on their role and give some examples?*

2. *I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially around the organisation and support they provide for staff at the school. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?*

3. *Can you comment on how Individual Plans the use of the school's intranet impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?*

4. *Do you see your own role and actions having an impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?*

5. *How do think your behaviours impact on providing for students with disabilities?*

6. *In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?*

APPENDIX M1

TEACHER INTERVIEW - SUNSHINE HIGH

1. I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you give me some examples of their role and how it impacts on students with disabilities?

2. I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially around how the Special Education teachers provide support for staff. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?

3. Can you comment on how Individual Plans and the use of the school's intranet impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do the behaviours of the principal impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

5. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX N1

PARENT INTERVIEW - SUNSHINE HIGH

1. Can you give me some examples of how the Special Education staff has worked with you and your child at this school?

2. Has your contact with the Special Education teachers at the school helped your child? How do you usually make contact with the Special Education staff?

3. Do you think the Individual Plan program has helped your child? Can you give me some examples?

4. Does the principal have any influence on how your child has been supported at this school? Can you give me some examples?

5. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX O1

STUDENT INTERVIEW - SUNSHINE HIGH

1. Do the Special Education teachers help you at school? Can you tell me how?

2. Do you get any help from your class teachers? Can you give me some examples of this?

3. Do you have an Individual Plan or IP through the Learning Support Team? Do you think it has helped you with your school work? Did you have any say in writing the plan?

4. Have you parents talked to the Special Education teacher(s) or class teachers/anyone about how to help you with your school work? Has this helped in any way?

5. Does the principal at this school know you? Does she do anything to help you? Can you give me some examples of how she helps you?

APPENDIX P1

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW - RIVERLAND HIGH

1. I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you comment on their role and give some examples?

2. I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially in the context of the roles played by the Special Needs Committee. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?

3. Can you comment on how Individual Plans impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do you see your own role and actions having an impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

5. How do think your behaviours impact on providing for students with disabilities?

6. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX Q1

TEACHER INTERVIEW - RIVERLAND HIGH

1. I have a fair amount of data about the role and work of the Special Education staff. Can you give me some examples of their role and how it impacts on students with disabilities?

2. I also have data on the collaboration between Special Education staff and other staff, especially through the roles played by the Special Needs Committee. How do classroom teachers typically liaise with the Special Education staff?

3. Can you comment on how Individual Plans impact on the learning outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

4. Do the behaviours of the principal impact on the outcomes for students with disabilities? Can you give me some examples?

5. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX R1

PARENT INTERVIEW - RIVERLAND HIGH

1. Can you give me some examples of how the Special Education staff has worked with you and your child at this school?

2. Has your contact with the Special Education teachers at the school helped your child? How do you usually make contact with the Special Education staff?

3. Do you think the Individual Plan program has helped your child? Can you give me some examples?

4. Does the principal have any influence on how your child has been supported at this school? Can you give me some examples?

5. In the perfect school, what would a principal do to provide for students with disabilities?

APPENDIX S1

STUDENT INTERVIEW - RIVERLAND HIGH

1. Do the Special Education teachers help you at school? Can you tell me how?

2. Do you get any help from your class teachers? Can you give me some examples of this?

3. Do you have an Individual Plan or IP through the Learning Support Team? Do you think it has helped you with your school work? Did you have any say in writing the plan?

4. Have you parents talked to the Special Education teacher(s) or class teachers/anyone about how to help you with your school work? Has this helped in any way?

5. Does the principal at this school know you? Does she do anything to help you? Can you give me some examples of how she helps you?