ABSTRACT

The building of leadership and management capacity with a focus on teaching and learning effectiveness has been a defining characteristic of the Catholic schools in Sydney, during the past decade.

During the 1990s, the leaders of the 148 parish primary and regional secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney adopted a common leadership and management framework that incorporates long-term strategic planning with an annual implementation cycle characterised by a sharp focus on teaching and learning outcomes. Principals and senior staff are involved in an on-going performance management scheme that is linked to the schools’ annual curriculum goals and targets.

This paper provides evidence of a culture of high level managerial leadership, that utilises recent developments in leadership management benchmarking by EFQM and ABEF to give validity to “the Sydney cycle”.

This paper will be complemented by school case study presentations of Strategic Management Planning by:

- Mrs Margaret Heslin, Principal of St Aloysius Primary School, Cronulla
- Mr Michael Barrington, Principal of De La Salle College, Ashfield

http://www.ceo.sydney.catholic.edu.au
The Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney was the winner of the Leadership Award at the recent annual Australian Business Excellence Awards, an initiative of SAI Global (formerly Standards Australia). This Award was sponsored by Boeing Australia Ltd and presented by its General Manager, Mr David Gray, to Brother Kelvin Canavan, fms, Executive Director of Schools, at the Sydney Town Hall on Friday evening 28 May.

The Citation read:

*The “Leadership” category Award recognises those organisations demonstrating the purpose, vision and goals to ensure sustainable success. The organisation will have a clear leadership system and also contribute effectively to the community in which they work.*

*Tonight’s winning organisation has shown that its Chief Executive Officer has set strategic directions and values, that are tightly held by its employees and demonstrated in their actions. It actively supports its community in many effective ways.*

Following an evaluation of school and system documentation, a Review Team from SAI Global visited schools, met with focus groups of Principals and CEO Staff as well as some SACS Board members, in April. They spent time at Regional CEOs and at the Leichhardt Office in order to make an assessment of the schools’ and school system’s leadership performance against the criteria of the Australian Business Excellence Framework.

Kelvin Canavan

Kelvin Canavan is a Marist Brother who taught in Sydney Catholic schools prior to being appointed Inspector of Schools in January, 1968. He became Executive Director of Schools in 1987.

Kelvin has published widely and has lectured in the US, the UK, the Phillipines, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Mauritius. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Sydney University, a Master of Science Degree from Cornell University and the award of Doctor of Education from University of San Francisco.

In recent years the education authority in Hong Kong - the Education and Manpower Bureau - adopted a school improvement model similar to that outlined in this paper. Kelvin has been assisting Hong Kong principals with their strategic leadership and management.

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The parish primary and regional secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney came together to form a system in the late 1960s. Since that time all government grants and tuition fees from parents have been paid into a single operating account in the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. The CEO is responsible for allocating these resources to schools according to need. About 80% of this systemic school income is from Commonwealth and State governments. The remaining 20% comes from fees and levies paid by parents. The CEO, as the approved authority, accounts for this expenditure to government and parents. The regional secondary schools in Sydney are all comprehensive schools.

Visitors to any of the parish primary or regional secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney would quickly discover that during the past 15 years these schools have adopted a common approach to leadership and management that incorporates long-term strategic planning with an annual implementation cycle characterised by a sharp focus on teaching and learning outcomes. The genesis of this development was the desire by Catholic school administrators and Principals in Sydney to provide confident management and leadership in a rapidly changing educational environment.

By the late 1980s school staff had begun setting goals and developing strategic management plans to guide teaching and learning. The results were positive and gradually a more comprehensive approach to strategic leadership and management evolved across the network of schools. This strategic framework proved invaluable in the late 1990s when schools were subject to considerable pressures as successive governments brought forward their education agendas.

These strategic planning tools enable schools to cope with changing requirements without detriment to their core business of teaching and learning in the Catholic tradition.

Visitors to the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Sydney would find that this office has roles and functions similar to those of a local education authority in England and Scotland. The CEO is the approved authority for a system of 148 non-government schools (Education Act [1990] part 7:39-40). The government student grants are paid to the CEO. The tuition fees collected by schools from parents are also forwarded to the CEO, which is responsible for distributing these resources to schools according to need.

In addition to the 148 Catholic systemic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney, there are 20 independent (private) Catholic schools that are owned and operated by Religious Congregations and receive government funding according to need.

Catholic systemic schools in Sydney do not have Boards or School Management Committees and the Executive Director of Schools is the legal employer of all teaching and support staff. Principals are on four year contracts (renewable) and exercise delegated authority to employ staff and conduct the schools within established guidelines. In recent years schools have begun establishing advisory councils. In some areas Principals have combined their resources and set up an advisory council for a cluster of schools, typically a regional secondary and associated parish primary schools.

Catholic schools in Australia are thriving and enrolments are at record levels. Currently, 20 percent of all students in Australia attend Catholic schools – up from 17 percent 30 years ago. In 2001 about 27% of the Australian population was Catholic. Across the growth areas of Sydney the Catholic population now exceeds 36%. Many Catholic schools in Sydney have
waiting lists, and demand for places from families of other faiths is increasing. Two new primary schools opened in 2002 and a new secondary college is expected to open at Hoxton Park West in 2006.

**SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

During the past 15 years a particular leadership and management culture emerged within the network of 148 Catholic parish primary and regional secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney. This culture is characterised by cycles of school review (systematic self-evaluation), external educational audit (that is, external school evaluation), publication of strategic leadership and management development plans, annual school planning and reporting to the community annually on achievement, and a performance management scheme for Principals and senior staff. These developments followed an organisational review in 1988-9, and were in place for about a decade before governments began holding schools in Australia more accountable.

Every five years each school undertakes the formal processes of school review, educational audit and planning leading to the development and publication of the school's strategic plan. Each year, the school undertakes a set of processes which provides for the systematic implementation and ongoing self evaluation of agreed goals and strategies. These processes, comprising the annual implementation cycle (Figure 1), Annual Development Plan, Active Role Descriptions, Personnel Performance Planning and Review (ie performance management) and Annual Reports to the Community, ensure the implementation of the five-year plan in a systematic, purposeful and managed way. The implementation is monitored through the Contract Renewal Process for Principals. The comprehensive *Resources Manual for School Review and Development 1999-2003* (1999) sets out the context, purposes, procedures and intended outcomes of the linked processes used across the school system.

The key components of the planning and review cycle (Figure 1) are as follows:

1. **Review of previous plan**
   An internal review of the outcomes of the previous strategic management plan begins the review process. The Principal is responsible for assembling the documentary evidence, including data on student learning outcomes. Staff, parents and students are involved through workshops and questionnaires, and contribute to the identification of issues for inclusion in the next strategic management plan.

2. **External Educational Audit**
   An Educational Audit Team comprising the Regional Consultant (chair and representative of the Executive Director of Schools), the Principal and up to two nominees of the CEO, Sydney, is established at each school and begins work upon the completion of the internal school review of the previous plan. The team engages a number of senior teachers from other schools to assist with the examination of the evidence of effectiveness of Religious Education and each curriculum area. The Audit team reports on the implementation of the recommendations in the previous report, on the school's self-review documents, and on compliance with the *Education Act (1990)*. The report contains specific recommendations for improved school effectiveness, and is made available to the school community. The recommendations are incorporated into the school's next five-year strategic plan, and accountability is now being strengthened by a tracking mechanism managed by the Principal and monitored by the Regional Consultant.
3 School Review
The Principal is responsible for the School Review process, which builds on the work of the Educational Audit Team, and includes extensive consultation with staff, parents, pastors and students. Key questions focus on all operations of the school and can include:
- what does the school do best of all?
- what does the school need to be better at?
- what are the most significant priority issues?

The process concludes with a review of the existing mission statement. Most Principals seek the support of an external facilitator to assist with the School Review. The Regional Consultant (as the representative of the Executive Director of Schools) has responsibility for validating the outcomes of the review process.

4 School Strategic Management Plan
The process of school review concludes with the development of a five-year strategic management plan that includes the school's mission statement, a response to recommendations in the external Educational Audit Team report, areas for development and improvement, and associated goals and outcomes. At the conclusion of this process, and before publication, the endorsement of the staff is sought. The school's strategic management plan conveys a comprehensive message about the students, school and community and the mission of the Church. It highlights the Catholic identity of the school and focuses priorities and goals on enhancing student learning for the next five years.

An examination of school strategic plans in the Archdiocese of Sydney reveals some common priorities, namely:
- religious and spiritual dimension
- curriculum development and teaching practice
- students' learning, progress and attainment
- pastoral care within the school community
- school, parents, parish and the wider community
- facilities, resources and budgeting.

Most staff have now been through this planning process a couple of times, and the more recent school plans contain very specific goals to improve school effectiveness. The five-year plan is published and copies distributed to the school community.

A copy of the plan is forwarded to the Executive Director of Schools.

Schools invite parents, parishioners and the wider community to the launch of their new strategic plan. This provides an opportunity to celebrate past achievements and to focus on what is to be achieved in the next five years. These plans are integral to the leadership and management of Catholic schools in Sydney. An unanticipated consequence of the publication and implementation of strategic management plans by schools has been the marketing spin-off. The profiles of the schools were raised, and frequently this resulted in increased enrolments.

5 Annual Development Plan
The Principal is responsible for the development, publication and implementation of the annual school development plan comprising goals selected from the school's five-
year plan. This is done in the context of the school system plan Sydney Catholic Schools ‘Towards 2005’ Strategic Management Plan: Mark 2 (2000). Staff are involved in developing strategies and in decisions as to who is responsible for the implementation of the various strategies. The Regional Consultant has responsibility for validating the appropriateness of the annual development plan and its implementation processes. The annual plan is published and made available to the school community.

Some of these plans now contain specific targets and performance indicators and provide clear direction to the staff for the coming year. Progressively Principals are moving to include more key performance measures in their plans. However, there is considerable variation across the 148 schools.

6 Personnel Performance Planning and Review
The Principal negotiates the role description annually with each staff member and clarifies who is responsible for taking forward particular goals and strategies in the annual plan. These role descriptions are a key component of the Personnel Performance Planning and Review (PPPR) process that is designed to ensure effective performance management, appraisal and development processes for all staff within the context of the school's strategic plan. The PPPR process provides a forum for professional dialogue and constructive feedback in order to celebrate achievements, identify emerging needs, and plan developmental opportunities which focus on enhancing professional effectiveness. The Independent Education Union has supported the CEO in the implementation of this review process.

The Regional Consultant (as the representative of the Executive Director of Schools) is responsible for leading the PPPR of the Principal, who in turn, is responsible for the PPPR of the Assistant Principal. Increasingly, Subject Co-ordinators are accepting responsibility for the PPPR of teachers. The PPPR process for Principals also ensures the effective implementation of the school’s strategic management plan, and is the vehicle for taking forward the recommendations in the Principal’s previous contract renewal report.

7 Annual School Report to the Community
The annual report is a document which provides the community with fair, reliable and objective information about the school’s performance, initiatives, developments and achievements. The report specifically addresses the goals in the annual development plan.

In recent years these reports have included more student performance data in Statewide tests (Basic Skills Test, School Certificate, Higher School Certificate). Some schools report achievement against targets for literacy and numeracy. The report is prepared by the Principal and validated by the Regional Consultant. A copy is forwarded to the Executive Director of Catholic Schools.

The schools in this system have responded to the demands of the parent community and the education authorities for increased accountability.

The strategic leadership and management cycle (Figure 1) evolved during the 1990s. Initially, the use of this particular approach to leadership and management was optional. It was modified over the years in consultation with Principals, and by the mid 1990s all schools
were utilising the cycle. The early adopters of the cycle were very significant in developing positive attitudes among their colleagues. The utilisation of this cycle enables Catholic schools in Sydney to satisfy the Registration and Accreditation requirements of the NSW Education Act (1990). The contract renewal processes for Principals and Assistant Principals are also integrated with the leadership and management cycle and the leadership framework. (Principals and Assistant Principals are on a four year (renewable) contract).

Today, the cycle enjoys a high level of support among Principals, Assistant Principal and, increasingly, among staff. A doctoral study survey of Principals (Turkington, March 2003) provided further evidence that the strategic management practices used in Catholic schools in Sydney are perceived positively by Principals and are helping schools improve the quality of their teaching and learning. 92.4% of principals agreed or agreed strongly with the questionnaire item: “Strategic Management practices encouraged by the CEO help schools address their annual priorities”. 96.5% agreed / agreed strongly with the statement “Principals have a clear understanding of the Strategic Management Cycle used by the CEO. ” In addition, their strategic planning ensures that the Religious Education and faith development of students is a priority for all staff.

Documentation on these systemic school processes are on file at the Catholic Education Office.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE, SYDNEY

Visitors to Australia are generally surprised to learn that Catholic education offices have roles and responsibilities that equate to an LEA in England or Scotland. In the Archdiocese of Sydney, for example, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) co-ordinates and oversees the efforts of the 148 Catholic systemic schools. Government funding for each of these schools is forwarded to the CEO, which also receives the student tuition fees collected by schools from parents. The CEO is responsible for the distribution of these resources to schools according to need and is generally accountable for the performance of the schools in the network.

During the past 15 years the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Sydney has utilised a strategic management cycle (Figure 2) similar to that used by schools, and this has provided opportunities to model good leadership and management practice across the diocesan network of schools.

Following much community consultation, 1995 saw the publication of the Sydney Catholic Schools: Towards 2005 Strategic Management Plan containing mission and vision statements and ten priorities to focus the activities of the CEO for the next ten years. A mini review took place during 2000 and a Mark 2 plan was published. This plan details the outcomes to be achieved by 2005. The CEO publishes an Annual Development Plan detailing priorities, and performance indicators (with targets for literacy, numeracy, Religious Education, English and Mathematics), while the various CEO teams develop achievement plans with a focus on the strategies that will ensure the effective implementation of the annual agenda. All CEO staff take part in a PPPR performance management process that is similar in design to that used with and by Principals. An Annual Report to the community details achievements across each priority.

During the 1990s the CEO continued to challenge and support schools, particularly in relation to students’ academic performance and the achievement of the school’s religious goals. The system processes were also used by the CEO to monitor the performance of schools and school leaders. These structures and frameworks have been utilised by the CEO to focus the
energy of Principals on teaching and learning and student outcomes. The 1990s saw a change in the culture of many schools, with the Principals providing increased instructional leadership.

In 2000 the CEO began publishing Student Achievement Targets for the school system (see Bulletin 66 and 68) and Principals are now encouraged to set targets for English / Literacy, Mathematics / Numeracy and Religious Education.

As the approved authority (under the Education Act (1990), the CEO holds Principals accountable for the achievement of the goals and targets in the school’s annual plan. These accountability procedures are linked to the contract renewal process for Principals.

Every five years the CEO, having followed the agreed monitoring processes described in these pages, seeks from the NSW Board of Studies further certificates for Registration and Accreditation for each school in the diocesan network. This integration of the government and diocesan accountability requirements has been popular with school communities.

In January 2004, the SACS Board released a document (Bulletin 69) outlining the process for an external review of the effectiveness of the CEO, to be conducted in July 2004. This process of external scrutiny will, among other things, evaluate the effectiveness of the ten-year plan, Towards 2005. It will also re-examine the annual review of achievements (since 1996) against published performance indicators, targets and other criteria, as well as looking more broadly at the effectiveness of the CEO. The framework for this CEO evaluation has structures, features and terminology that are similar to those used by schools and are recognised by Principals, teachers and the wider community.

This 2004 review will be followed by widespread consultation with the school community leading to the publication of a new strategic plan for the system of Catholic schools in Sydney covering the period 2006 – 2010.

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

In the early 1990s there was an increasing awareness across the Sydney Catholic schools network of the need to find more effective structures and frameworks to support those with management responsibilities, and to reduce the discontinuity flowing from change of Principal and the use by schools of a variety of un-coordinated planning and goal setting tools. Time was wasted when recently appointed Principals set about involving staff in yet another goal-setting exercise, or when key staff moved on.

The call to school leadership in Australia was not always accompanied by a corresponding call to management. Postgraduate leadership studies and visiting lecturers kindled a desire to lead and make a difference, but some leaders who lacked the managerial tools to be effective fell by the wayside.

The challenge for the Sydney Catholic school system in the 1990s was to strengthen those management structures and frameworks that would build further leadership capacity. In 1993, the Executive Director of Schools began challenging Principals to become more involved in teaching and learning, to be the head teacher and instructional leader. This involved the gradual development of planning, implementation and review competencies that facilitated the effective management of continuous organisational change and school improvement within the Catholic tradition. This change of roles for Principals – and senior
Catholic Education Office staff – has provided a new vitality for systemic schools with a very clear focus on student achievement. Test data are now openly discussed and incorporated into school plans. In an earlier period test data was not well analysed and not well used to support teaching and learning.

The leadership and management cycles (Figures 1 and 2) are now supported by the Catholic Schools Leadership Framework (Figure 3), consisting of six foundational dimensions of leadership: religious, leadership for learning, strategic, human resources, organisational and personal. The publication Catholic Schools Leadership Framework: Core Competencies and Key Elements (2001) provides a comprehensive analysis of the six foundational dimensions and lists understandings, skills, values and indicators for each of the core competencies. This document grew out of a Needs Survey conducted with Principals and Assistant Principals in 1997, and is the result of much consultation with stakeholders. All leadership development programs, including leadership succession (Figure 4), are now related directly to the strategic direction of schools and the school system. Applicants for Principalship are required to demonstrate evidence of experience and understanding of these six dimensions.

The adoption of common strategic leadership and management cycles and frameworks (Figures 1 – 4) across the network of Sydney Catholic schools has contributed significantly to the school system's educational effectiveness. In many ways these frameworks provide the bridge between the turbulent and changing educational environment and the teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. Importantly, the frameworks provide Catholic school leaders with highly effective management tools to manage change, develop staff and improve school effectiveness. The frameworks also recognise that teachers are busy people who like to get the job done, and therefore give little support to activities that are not perceived as being related to teaching and learning.

Documentation on these system processes are on file in the Catholic Education Office.

BEST PRACTICE ACROSS SECTORS

Leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action and, according to Kotter, "...each has its own function and characteristic activities. Both are necessary for success...but strong leadership with weak management is no better, and is sometimes actually worse, than the reverse. The real challenge is to combine strong leadership and strong management and to use each to balance the other." (Kotter, 1999, p.3).

The task in Sydney of strengthening managerial effectiveness across the Catholic school system mirrors similar development in Europe. To help organisations improve managerial performance, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) launched the EFQM Excellence Model to facilitate the sharing of 'good practice' across different sectors throughout Europe. “Regardless of sector, size, structure or maturity, to be successful, organisations need to establish an appropriate management system.” The EFQM Excellence Model (1999, p.6).

The fundamental concepts of EFQM are:

- results orientation
- customer focus
- leadership and constancy of purpose
- management by processes and facts
- people development and involvement
• continuous learning, innovation and improvement
• partnership development
• public responsibility.

This structured management system "is now being used by tens of thousands of organisations across Europe and beyond. Companies, schools, healthcare organisations, police services, utilities and government offices all use it." Eight Essentials of Excellence (1999, pp8-10).

According to EFQM, "organisations perform more effectively when all inter-related activities are understood and systematically managed and decisions concerning current operations and planned improvements are made using reliable information that includes stakeholder perceptions." (1999, p.7).

Closer to home, the seven categories in the Australian Business Excellence Framework provide an integrated leadership and management system that describes elements essential to organisational excellence. These are:

- Leadership and Innovation
- Strategy and Planning Processes
- Data, Information and Knowledge
- People
- Customer and Market Focus
- Processes, Products and Services
- Business Results

This holistic Framework is based on a set of 12 principles of leadership and management that draw heavily on the writings of leading management and organisational theorists and practitioners, The Australian Business Excellence Framework (2004, pp.10-13).

A panel from The Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) organization visited the Sydney CEO in April 2004 and met with Principals, SACS Board members, CEO Directors and staff before visiting two schools. The focus of the site visit was an assessment of system wide strategic leadership and innovation, measured against ABEF’s 12 principles of business excellence. The site visit focussed on:
  - leadership and innovation
  - organisational culture
  - leadership throughout the organization
  - environmental and community contributions

Both these Australian and European approaches emphasise the importance of all those with management responsibilities gaining a shared understanding of the concepts and frameworks that can contribute to the building of leadership and management capacity.

The Quality Assurance Framework - Integrated Processes for Development and Accountability (Sydney CEO 2000, p.4) and the Catholic Schools Leadership Framework would appear to meet the criteria of both the Australian Business Excellence Framework and the EFQM model.

Against the background of a new statutory framework, the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act (2000) the authors of Improving Leadership in Scottish Schools (2000) write:
"Effective leadership and effective management are often found together. The Standard for Headship in Scotland (SHS) defines the key purpose of headship as: 'To provide the leadership and management which enables a school to give every student high quality education and which promotes the highest possible standards of achievement'. Of course, a Principal's vision and leadership skills need to be complemented by well-developed management expertise if a school is to be successful." (2000, p.4).

In the Scottish system, "Leadership and management are closely related concepts. In much of the literature, leadership is regarded as a key part of management. However, (school) inspection evidence has suggested that, in some schools, managers tend to over-emphasise the day-to-day administrative functions of their roles rather than giving sufficient attention to the key aspects of providing more strategic leadership. In such schools, management may be associated mainly with planning, organising, deploying and monitoring the use of staff and other resources. Leadership is an essential requirement of providing a more strategic approach to management. Leadership has many aspects but involves developing, sharing and sustaining a vision based on shared values, providing clear direction and motivating others." (2000, p.5).

The *Scottish Act* (2000) sets down managerial cycles and frameworks similar to those developed across Catholic schools in Sydney during the 1990s, namely:

- The education authority publishes annual statements of objectives and targets.
- Each school publishes an annual development plan containing a set of objectives and takes account of the objectives in the authority’s plan.
- An annual report outlining achievements against the published objectives is prepared by each school and made available to parents.
- Schools and local education authorities are expected to set objectives and targets for improvement that are challenging, realistic and achievable.
- Schools are reviewed on a six-year cycle.

The *Schools Standards and Framework Act* (1998) requires schools in England to follow similar school improvement processes with a focus on student achievement.

Recent developments in Hong Kong – with a focus on school development and accountability through self-evaluation and external review – have characteristics similar to those found in the Sydney Catholic Schools System. Both systems of schools are now categorised by strong school development frameworks (SDA). *Education and Manpower Bureau Circulars* (2003) Nos 23 and 269.
| Self Evaluation | Review of previous plan |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
|                 | - internal review begins cycle of self-evaluation |

| External School Review (ESR) | Educational Audit** |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| - EMB’s QA team             | - external review / CEO |
| - 4 year cycle              | - 5 year cycle       |
| - feedback loop and forward planning | - feedback loop and forward planning |

| School Review process** | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| - concludes with publication of strategic management plan |

| School Development Plan (SDP) * | School Strategic Management Plan** |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - 4 year cycle                   | - 5 year cycle                   |
| - Strategic Plan : Priorities and Strategies | - Priorities and Goals |

| Annual School Plan (ASP)* | Annual Development Plan** |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|

| Annual School Report (SR)* | Annual School Report** |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| - website                  | - website              |

| Personnel Performance Review** | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| - review of individual performance |

| Key Performance Measures (KPM) | Targets and Performance Indicators |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - Specific reporting required | - Reporting encouraged            |
| - Benchmark information       | - Benchmark information           |

| Stakeholder Questionnaires | Stakeholder Questionnaires |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|

* To be endorsed by School Management Committee
** To be validated by Regional Consultant

K Canavan
13.1.2004
School leaders need to be vigilant and ensure that the concepts, tools and procedures of strategic management remain focused on the needs of students. The management cycles and frameworks must serve the interests of students and their teachers. The leadership and management cycles (Figures 1 and 2) and the Catholic Schools Leadership Framework (Figure 3) serve the core purposes of the Catholic school by providing leaders in the network with a structure to be effective, and to contribute to the development of a strong organisational culture that builds leadership and management capacity, improves school effectiveness, and helps leaders turn their dreams into reality.

SOME EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

In 1997-1998 a major evaluation of the leadership and management cycles in the Sydney system of schools was undertaken by national and international researchers. The report, *From Strength to Strength* (1998) indicated that in Sydney Catholic schools there is evidence that:

- Annual Development Plans provide recently appointed Principals with immediate starting points for their leadership.
- Role Descriptions are adjusted annually to reflect the priorities and strategies of the Annual Plan.
- Annual Reports to the community are focused and relate achievement to goals.
- Staff changes are accommodated and planning momentum and enthusiasm maintained through the school's five-year planning cycle.
- "Working with School Review and Development and developing strategic plans were positive experiences for school communities." (pp. 2-41).

The report recommended a better use of all available quantitative and qualitative data in the Educational Audit process. It also advocated a sharper focus on explicit educational outcomes.

Professor John MacBeath (1998) wrote: "The (Sydney) review 'package' is comprehensive and ambitious. Its heart is clearly in 'the right place'. Its head is very much in line with current thinking on school self-evaluation and school improvement…The thought, care, and above all the vision which has gone into this approach, is a model for other systems to emulate. It is driven by values and conviction about the process of education and the central place of student learning." (*From Strength to Strength, Research Report*, No 4, pp.1 and 7).

Following this review, Quality Assurance procedures in the Archdiocese of Sydney were modified to reflect the outcomes of the report. A new *Resources Manual for School Review and Development 1999-2003* was published in 1999 and is now used by all schools as they move through another five-year leadership and management cycle.

There is evidence from Principals and school communities, CEO staff and external evaluators that this system-wide strategic leadership and management approach is increasing the educational effectiveness of schools, and is:

- enhancing student learning through a continuity of strategic goals focusing on teaching and learning, and assisting with the identification of those schools and students needing additional support, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- helping to manage the pace, process and direction of change more effectively, and
helping teachers to cope with a decade of State-wide curriculum reform and the change of focus from inputs to outputs and standards and associated testing requirements.

- turning discussion and planning away from short-term problems towards longer-term and more significant goals.
- focusing energy, attention and resources, both human and financial, on the more significant aspects of teaching and learning.
- developing planning skills among staff, and enabling them to see more of the larger picture.
- helping to unify staff and giving a sense of common purpose.
- ensuring that professional development is focused and related to student needs.
- minimising anxiety about performance appraisal.
- ensuring that evaluation is grounded in long-term goals - demonstrating to the parent community effective and efficient planning and commitment, at a time when the status of and esteem for teachers need to be raised.
- encouraging the development of management structures which promote quality decision-making, processes and shared leadership.
- providing the means to demonstrate accountability to education authorities, governments and the wider community.
- helping Principals provide confident and effective leadership, even in a changing educational environment.

The research by Mark Turkington (March 2004) indicates high levels of support among Principals for the strategic management practices described in this profile. This support correlates with the positive experiences of school level strategic planning and school effectiveness.

Today, much is said and written about the accountability of schools with government and the media calling for schools – particularly non-government schools – to be more publicly accountable. This does not present a major problem for the leaders of Catholic schools in Sydney as accountability is an integral component of the leadership and management cycles introduced in 1995. Both individuals (through the PPPR process) and schools (through their Annual Reports) are part of an ongoing ‘culture of review’. In 2002, for example, each of the 148 schools provided an Annual Report to the community, most with data on student achievement and financial information. At the end of 2003, all schools again reported to their community, most with expanded financial information. Copies of these Annual Reports are filed at the Catholic Education Office.

Clearly, these Catholic schools are not driven by externally imposed accountability requirements. Rather, accountability is viewed as an integral and natural component of any quality leadership framework.

A visitor to the network of Catholic schools in Sydney would find relationships between Principals and their CEO colleagues characterised by a shared vision and sense of direction, mutual trust, effective channels of communication, and commitment to the educational mission of the Church. Data collected in recent years would indicate a “togetherness” on key issues, including attitudes to a revised Religious Education Curriculum and the introduction of potentially controversial student textbooks in Religious Education.
Postscript: What is outlined here is an holistic and integrated leadership and management approach that is driven by a passion for educational excellence in the Catholic tradition. This approach has evolved over the past 15 years and now provides Principals with the tools to confidently and effectively lead and manage their school communities in a continually changing educational environment.

Notes:
1. Regional Consultants in the Catholic Education Office have roles similar to the link advisor/inspector in England or to the members of the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) in Hong Kong. Typically these Regional Consultants are each responsible for 12-15 schools. They serve as the link between the schools and the CEO (the approved authority).

2. The consolidated report was prepared by Bill Clark, currently Director of Schools’ Services, CAE @ Islington, London. Professor John MacBeath (currently Cambridge University) reported an ‘international best practice critique’.
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Figure 1

**Strategic Leadership and Management Cycle for Each School**

Catholic Education Office, Sydney (1995)
Figure 2

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT CYCLE 
for the Network of Schools

Catholic Education Office, Sydney (1995)
FIGURE 3

CORE PURPOSE

The core purpose of the Catholic school is to take forward the mission of Jesus and the Church in partnership with parents and parish for the formation, education and development of the students entrusted to the school.

Religious Leadership
- Mission of the contemporary Catholic Church
- Religious Education curriculum
- Catholic life/integration of values
- Parish/school/parents partnership
- Ritual/celebration/liturgy/prayer/retreats
- Sacramental/eucharistic/scriptural Life
- Pastoral Care
- Service to community
- Social Justice
- Christian Leadership

Leadership for Learning
- Educational Vision
- Learning culture
- Student learning outcomes
- Student needs
- Curriculum
- Teaching practice
- Assessment and reporting
- Quality Assurance
- Learning resources

PERSONAL DIMENSIONS

The personal dimensions of leadership underpin and relate to all areas of the Leadership Framework.

- Personal Dimensions of Leadership
  - Faith/ Spirituality
  - Human / personal dimension
  - Relationships / communication
  - Ethical/moral dimension
  - Cognitive/emotional dimension
  - Decision making/ responsibility
  - Leadership
  - Leader as learner

SUPPORTING PROCESSES

The core purpose is served by the support processes – Strategic, Human Resources and Organisational Leadership. It is important that these processes do not become ends in themselves, but that they are always seen to serve the core purpose.

- Human Resources Leadership
  - Employment processes/perspective
  - Deployment of staff/workplace practices
  - Performance management and review
  - Employee relations
  - Development of staff
  - Succession planning
  - Support staff
  - Relationship with unions

- Strategic Leadership
  - Leadership of Vision/Mission/Goals
  - Archdiocesan context
  - Strategic direction
  - Culture of change
  - Annual cycle of implementation
  - Culture of reflection, review and improvement
  - Community leadership
  - School marketing

- Organisational Leadership
  - Co-ordination of school processes and activities
  - Legal/Statutory requirements
  - Technology
  - Records management
  - Financial management
  - Risk Management
  - Property and facilities
  - Enrolments/forward planning

Catholic School Leadership Framework

Catholic Education Office, Sydney (2000)
Leadership Succession Series:

COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

PROVIDE INDUCTION PROGRAMS

FOLLOW UP UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

RECOGNISE DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS

DEVELOP SELF

DEVELOP OTHERS

TACKLE DISINCENTIVES

RETAIN HIGH POTENTIAL STAFF

PROVIDE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

IDENTIFY FUTURE LEADERS

ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

CLARIFY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

School Level Strategic Plans

System Level Strategic Plan
