THE INTERACTION OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY:
AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF VOLUNTARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY/COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES/VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN CORK CITY AND COUNTY.

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by

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Abstract

Summary of Thesis submitted for

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by

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on

The Interaction of School and Community: An Analysis and Comparative Study of Voluntary Secondary Schools, Community/Comprehensive Schools and Community Colleges/Vocational Schools in Cork City and County.

This study attempts to investigate the interaction of school and community through a comparative study of second-level schools in Cork City and County. The Education Act 1998 sets the framework for the development of education as a partnership process involving pupils, teachers, parents, patrons, trustees/owners/governors, management bodies, local community (including voluntary social and business sector) and the State. The challenge is building partnership networks beyond the school where mutual interdependence is fostered and partnerships are inclusive of all persons in the dynamics of the interaction.

The International perspective focuses on flexible learning styles and programmes which enable schools to connect more effectively with the wider diverse community of today. The study also follows the creative and innovative thinking on the developing interface between the school and changing society in Ireland. The focus here is on the school in the local community from inception to the present day.

An in-depth questionnaire was designed with the specific aim of examining if schools were interacting with their community. This was distributed to second-level schools. Follow-up interviews were conducted among five representatives of the major stakeholders in the education process. The questionnaires elicited definite wide-ranging information and the interviews provided further clarification on issues pertinent to the study.

The thesis concludes that the community/partnership dimension of education has gained much ground up to the present day although there are varying levels of interaction across the different sectors. The study also highlights the factors that either enhance or hinder the formation of meaningful strong proactive relationships and partnerships in the local community.
Quotation

Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs.

Albert Einstein (1879 – 1955), on Education.
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Chapter One

Introduction.


1.1 Within our fast-changing society the role of the school has undergone great changes. As early as the nineteen nineties, the OECD countries started to widen the scope of educational discourse from the narrow theme of evaluation of policies for enhancing quality of educational policy-making towards the implementation of educational reform in the wider sense, focussing more on processes. ¹ Accepting this larger frame of reference focus was more on ‘consumers’ – pupils, teachers and the wider public community from that of ‘providers’ of education – educational administrators and professional educators. In this new paradigm both ‘provider’ and ‘consumer’ coexist. Evaluation responds to the internal need of complex modern systems at different levels to account for their activities and progress their own planning purposes. Thus processes are at least as important as end products. Monitoring these processes helps to detect the precise courses of malfunctioning or poor performances and helps to make the necessary corrections and improvements.² The growing complexity of modern societies has resulted in the interweaving of interests not only in the economic sector but also in the social, cultural and political sectors. A consequence is the increase in the number of ‘stakeholders’, ranging from those who are directly interested in education in the community to those who are more

² Ibid., p 8.
in-directly concerned. Certainly today there is more openness to external needs and expectations in school communities and a willingness to adapt programmes to the universal needs of students. Accordingly, collaboration has been redefined from a culture which operated within schools so that it encompasses alliances with groups and individuals outside the school. Thus the community dimension, has gained much ground in the last decade.

McCann suggests that the root idea of the word ‘community’ is derived from cum – together and munus – obligation, hence a mutual obligation explains that this indicates ‘a wide or deep quality of relations within a group of people: spanning a variety of areas of life, lasting in commitment and fidelity’. The survey Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community revealed that most of the definitions mentioned geographical area, common ties, and social interaction. McCann thus lists the components of community as – common location, common interests, common participation and community identity. Moreover, the key to community for Selznick is the ‘comprehensiveness’ of the activities which people share in it. He stresses that ‘the emergence of community depends on the opportunity for, and the impulse toward, comprehensive interaction, commitment and responsibility’.

In Successful Secondary Schools (1988) Wilson and Corcoran found five interrelated components of successful community interaction:

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The establishment of more collaborative links with the school community brings concrete benefits to schools and their staffs. First, collaborative links with the community strengthen the technical aspects of the school. Community people represent an enormous pool of expertise that creative people can tap. Second, strong community involvement makes schools more accessible and attractive places and builds political support across constituencies. As people come to know the schools and to feel that they can contribute to their success, ignorant criticisms diminish. Third, participation in school activities by adults other than school staff communicates an important message to students, it must be an activity of some significance. Finally, collaborative activities shape the school—community, culture that encourages a sense of concern about the quality of life that is so often missing in today's harried, noisy world. Fostering all kinds of involvement of school staff members in the community and of community members in the school sends a message to the school's neighbors. It says, 'we care about you, we want to know you, and we want you to know us'.

Today's political landscape of reforms in Ireland resulting in the *Education Act* \(^7\) (1998) places the partnership concept in the landscape of the community. The White Paper *Charting our Education Future* (1995) outlines the philosophical framework the definition of partnership/community as follows:

The learner is at the centre of the education process. The other principal participants are collectively referred to as the partners in education—parents, patrons/trustees/owners/governors, management bodies, teachers, the local community and the State. Other participants, including the social partners, business and the professions should also be recognised as having legitimate interests in the system. Effective partnership involves active co-operation among those directly involved in the provision of education and the anchoring of educational institutions and the structures in the wider community they serve. This also enhances the contribution of education to the democratic process by enabling communities to actively influence the decisions which affect them. \(^8\)


The *Education Act* in Ireland (1998) clearly outlines the rights and responsibilities of the various partners in education in the local community. It challenges the various sectors in education, both private and public, to be involved more closely in an integrated and mutual partnership of education provision. All schools in responding to the education needs of the third millennium will have to identify distinctive values, which are seen as essential to the process of education, which in essence is the enhancement of the quality of the educational experience for all members of the school community.

This is a major challenge to policy-makers and practitioners alike if building in partnership practices on a continuous basis are to become a reality and not merely a policy aspiration without substance. Therefore in order to study the interconnection of school and community and the processes generated from within the school and by the community outside, the focus of this study is on the principal participants in the partnership process: pupils, teachers, parents, patrons/trustees/owners/governors, management bodies, local community (including voluntary, social and business sector) and the State. The main objectives of this study are to explore.

- As educators are schools going out into the community with empathy and interacting meaningfully with their constituents?

- Are there varying levels of interaction across the different sectors – voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive and community college/vocational?
What factors enhance or hinder the formation of meaningful and strong relationships and partnerships in local communities today?

1.2 The Scope and Objective of this Study.

The primary objective of this study is to assess the level of interaction between school and community. The involvement of students, parents, local communities and agencies operating at local level, is an important dimension in the inclusive collaborative process of education today. There is no doubt that many of the barriers to the educational progress of children and young people are caused by issues outside the education system. These barriers can be financial, family, health related, social/communal, cultural and geographic or a combination of any of these. The challenge for the education system is to work in partnership with others, to overcome as many of these barriers as possible, in a way that is learner-centred, systematic and effective in terms of education outcomes. Therefore the objective of the education system is to provide a broadly based, inclusive, high quality education that will enable individuals to develop to their full potential and to live fulfilled lives, as well as contributing to Ireland’s social and economic development. Education has a critical role to play in nurturing children’s development across a range of intelligences and skills, and in laying the foundations for successful participation in adult life. Education not only reflects society but helps shape its future development, contributing to our national identity, culture and values, supporting citizenship and sustainable development, and contributing to the growth of individuals, their families and their communities.
This study should identify models of good practice or shortcomings across all school sectors in Cork City and County in Ireland. The cross-sector study of the largest county in Ireland and second largest city, using detailed information, should allow the researcher to compare and contrast practices of community interaction. Second-level schools differ in their institutional arrangements, their intake and composition, and their schooling process. An in-depth study of these differences is fundamental in any attempt to analyse and identify some of the limit-situations in the current schooling system. It is hoped that the study might be able to propose examples of ‘good practice’ that could be adopted across all sectors.

The International perspective focuses on practices in OECD countries, and identifies the main issues facing second-level education by exploring aims and models of provision and experience in a range of countries. The challenges faced by education systems are similar across the world. However, the ways in which these challenges are faced must be different, because each national context and heritage is different. Nevertheless the need for constant review and reform in educational policy and provision is needed to inform policy formation to meet the needs of a changing society. Schools are no longer single purpose institutions, devoted to educating children of a particular age and stage of learning but centres of lifelong learning and organisations to reach out to the community forging strong links. The ‘outreach’ proponent assumes that schools are well-embedded organisations which will enhance attitude of community to other services held within them. This thesis studies the interaction of school and community today.
Chapter Two

The International Perspective, focusing on practices in some OECD countries.

2.1 Participation: The Context of Change.

Review and reform are constant elements in educational policy and provision today in order to ensure equality of access and provision at all levels for all learners, with special supports for individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, disability, and ethnic marginalisation. The administrative and control patterns of education are changing substantially and the climate of attention to education is different, involving broader elements of the community, thus bringing new elements \(^1\) to bear on the 'lifelong' perspective of education today. \(^2\) Many different societies are changing education profoundly through their participation rates. In the more industrialised countries, the provision of secondary education is now rising to levels formerly found in very few countries such as Japan and USA. This increase in participation is partly due to deliberate government policy and initiatives, and partly due to increasing demand for education from individuals. \(^3\) Eiken contends that history has proved the intimate relationship between a nation's prosperity and the quality of its educational system. He maintains that when this relationship is proved education policies are no longer the exclusive preserve of specialists and technicians. Education policy has now become the central and strategically important area of the whole range of policy making. He concludes that prosperity

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\(^1\) Lifelong learning includes early childhood education, initial education (primary, secondary and tertiary) and adult learning. It describes not only these stages in combination but also an overall approach to learning that spans all three. Hence, generic competence, transferable skills and an ability and willingness to learn and change throughout life, are essential because it is difficult to predict the nature of the 'workplace' of the future.


\(^3\) Ibid., p 30.
could not have been achieved, and furthermore, cannot be maintained, if we don’t have ‘breadth’ and ‘excellence’ in our education system. ⁴

Eiken highlights examples such as Sweden and Japan as having experienced the most rapid growth rates of the 20th century and this was closely connected to access to cost-free education with high quality. ⁵ Consequently aims and objectives of education must be given special attention. Because of the mobility of individuals within and between countries comparability and recognition of qualifications must also be studied. The International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks (INCA) project ⁶ groups educational aims and objectives into five main areas. These are: Individual or personal in developing individual potential, economic, meeting employer’s needs and thus enhancing the national economy, particularly in relation to European or International competitors, social and cultural in developing a fair society, social justice, recognising the cultural and linguistic diversity of society and promoting democracy or citizenship education. A further aim relates to raising standards, stimulating creativity, stressing the importance of maths and science and preparation for the Information Society. The final aim is extending learning, raising participation in post-compulsory education, thus preparing for lifelong learning. ⁷

Ten OECD countries have set explicit targets to increase participation in, or achievement at upper secondary level; Australia, England, France, Germany, ⁴ Eiken, Odd. (1992). Keynote Address at OECD International Conference on Educational Co-operation, Hiroshima, Japan.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ This project began in 1996 and is ongoing reviewing curriculum and assessment frameworks in 18 countries, Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and since 2002 Wales. It is being conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales.
Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain and U.S.A. In England, the government’s aim is that all young people should continue learning to the age of 19. It had set targets for 2002 that 50 per cent of 16 year olds should achieve five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes at Grade A to C and that 95 per cent should achieve at least one GCSE. By age 19, 85 per cent of young people should achieve five GCSE’s at Grade A to C. The proportion of 16 year olds in England participating in education and government supported training fell from 80.4 per cent in 1995/6 to 76.1 per cent in 1998/9. 8 In France in 1989, the Government’s ‘access rate’ target for 2000 was that 80 per cent of each cohort should continue their education to the age of 18, following general, technological or vocational courses leading to the Baccalaureat. The remainder should have reached the Vocational Aptitude Certificate (CAP) or the Vocational Diploma Level (BEP). However, it is now acknowledged that, despite high levels of investment, 80 per cent may not be attainable. 9 In Ireland, it is national policy as set out in the 1995 Education White Paper: Charting our Education Future that 90 per cent of the age cohort 15–18 complete the full secondary education cycle. 10

Target setting can have unexpected and unintended consequences. These may include teaching to examination questions, using a narrow focus, thus at the potential risk of limiting breadth and depth of learning. Likewise, increasing student numbers to meet government targets may cause problems for third-level institutions. The government’s objective to attract participation among disadvantaged students, has resulted in an informal division of ‘selecting universities’, those that are

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8 Ibid., p 70.
9 Ibid., p 71.
over-subscribed and where pupils compete for places and 'recruiting universities' which are likely to admit less well qualified applicants. The knowledge and skills of some incoming students may therefore be insufficient for them to complete a degree. However, there are numerous other social factors affecting performance of university students, which could be addressed through more inclusive interventions at second-level such as linking more cohesively with partners in the wider community, as it is hoped this thesis will show.

The continuing demand for education from individuals stems from the belief that education and training will increasingly become vehicles for self-awareness and self-fulfilment. More significantly individuals, including parents, are aware that it is difficult to predict the 'workplace' of the future. Career paths may comprise periods of employment, unemployment and education, training and retraining in a variety of settings, including the home. Hence, generic competence, transferable skills and an ability and willingness to learn and change are valued.

The European Commission's White Paper on Education and Training - *Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society* declares that education and training whether acquired in the formal education system, or on the job or in a more informal way, is the key for everyone to controlling their future and their personal development. With lifelong learning becoming a reality rather than a slogan, the provision of education, the nature of education, and access to education all

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12 Ibid., p 89.
become more significant issues. This attention to education will remain, as it is seen as the key to opportunity for individuals and society as a whole.

Increased second-level participation in education poses many challenges for schools. Many societies have become much more multicultural, involving new demands for pluralism and tolerance with a greater diversity of cultures, languages and religions within them. In most countries there is a much wider variety of family units. These developments may not necessarily be negative in themselves but at times necessitate a rethinking of the respective roles of schools, especially when families are disadvantaged or insecure or in need of special psychological services. Allied to this is the growing problem of unemployment in families, which also adds extra stress. In the homogenous classroom of yesterday, the well-prepared teacher could at least reach out to those interested in learning. Not so today. K. Dryden remarked that: 'there is much going on in each kid's life, every story is so complicated'. Pupils today may be disengaged from their own learning and it is difficult to enter their world. 14

This diversity demands flexibility. Hence there is a consequent requirement of an educational system, with 'breath' and 'excellence'. A major part of the approach with the 'new population' of secondary education must be to provide them with the motivation to learn and the confidence that they can learn. What is desperately needed is a pattern of education that is seen as of value and of worth to the community at large.

Levin and Riffel have proposed the following solution in changing the core of what schools do: 'a much stronger connection with parents, families and communities. The strategy assures that the school must work closely with parents and others to ensure not only that schools are good places for young people, but also that the school contributes to the overall economic and social welfare of the community'. The necessity for schools to connect more effectively with the wider community is well expressed by de Gues in *The Living Company*.

To cope with the changing world, any entity must develop the capacity of shifting and changing, of developing new skills and attitudes: in short the capacity of learning....the essence of learning is the ability to manage change by changing oneself – as much for people when they grow up as for companies when they live through turmoil.

Dr. Robert Harris in his address to the OECD Conference *The Curriculum Redefined: Schooling for the 21st Century* focused on the concept of participation in the process of change and readjustment in schooling. The participation of teachers in a process, which also involved the broader community, would give a sense of direction, which he stated was sadly lacking in the education of most OECD countries. This would re-establish the recognition by the community that they so fully merit. This he felt would help to change the paradigm of debate from one which is determined essentially by economic concerns to one which involves people and is closer to the realities which they experience.

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In 1998 the OECD Programme on Educational Building held a conference in Stockholm on the theme *Under One Roof*. The conference described the schools as no longer primarily buildings but 'organisations and networks of relations and communications'. The 'Virtual School' based on information technology will permit new organisational forms, which will be more flexible and open to society and to local community needs. They may also be locations for a new partnership between teachers, children, adult learners and social and commercial organisations.

2.2 **Parents as Partners in Education : Towards the Future.**

The lifelong learning agenda redefines the school as one of many agencies and learning sites, involved with the learner in a more fluid and less specific way than has been the case. Moves to develop partnerships between the school and the family are coming in most countries from policy makers at government level through legislation, local or even school level and also in the other direction, from parents and families themselves.

It is now widely recognised that parents play a major role in the informal education of their offspring and should be seen as 'partners in pedagogy' with the school. With ever higher and more complex academic demands being made on schools, young people need to arrive 'ready-to-learn'. A sound foundation laid by the family is becoming a *sine qua non*.

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21 This phrase is taken from the seminal American document on co-operation between school and family : *Strong Families, Strong Schools* (1994).
Although there is a widespread movement to involve parents across OECD countries, there are a number of different reasons why countries may decide this is desirable, reasons, which arise from values deeply embedded in the political culture. 22 Broadly, the reasons given by officials and policy analysts during the research report *Parents as Partners in Schooling* 23 were democracy, accountability, consumer choice, lever for raising standards, tackling disadvantage and improving equity, addressing social problems and resources. 24 In many countries, though not all, parental involvement in education is seen as a right. Some such as France, Germany and Denmark have such a right enshrined in their laws for decades. 25 In Denmark, England and Wales parents have a right to be represented on the governing body of schools. 26 In France they have a right to representation on a whole range of policy-making bodies. 27 The parents’ charter gives English and Welsh parents a number of rights, including the right to certain information from the school. 28

Legislation in Ireland places parents at the centre of the educational process and gives them a wide range of statutory rights in relation to it. 29 Accountability is embraced most enthusiastically by England and Wales, Canada and the United States, parental involvement, especially in school governance, is not seen as a right of the parents but as a means of making school more accountable to the

23 *Parents as Partners in Schooling* examines the relationships between families and schools in nine OECD countries – Canada, Denmark, England and Wales, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Spain and the United States.  
25 Ibid.  
26 Ibid.  
27 Ibid.  
28 Ibid.  
society which funds them. The idea of consumer choice is an idea borrowed from market theory. It is based on the belief that parents as consumers have the right to choose schools and thus schools are pushed into meeting their needs more effectively. Findings from large-scale studies in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States show that schools in which pupils do well, in terms of both academic attainment and attitudes are characterised by good home-school relations. In the more market-driven systems parental involvement may be viewed as a way of improving school performance. Tackling disadvantage, improving equity and addressing social problems ‘such as drug and alcohol abuse’ are other reasons why governments are attempting to increase parental involvement in schools. In Schooling for Change: Reinventing Education for Early Adolescents, it is noted that ‘too many of our students are turning away from schools physically, or turning out of them emotionally and intellectually.’ Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan hold that when teenagers are ‘most in need of core support…. we focus on teaching subject, matter ….. and leave students’ emotional needs to the peer group and gang… Early adolescents need independence but we show them indifference. They need kindness but we crush them with control. They are brimming with criticism and curiosity, but we bludgeon them with content and its coverage.’

31 No system can genuinely offer all parents the school that they want. According to Ball et al. (1996) ‘Choice in England and Wales emerges as a major new factor in maintaining and indeed reinforcing social-class divisions and inequalities’. The reality in many countries is usually a limited amount of ‘Managed’ choice. (OECD. 1994b).
Perhaps it is timely that parental partnerships are encouraged in order to enable the school and the home to liaise more closely with one another and thus cater more effectively for those in need of extra supportive care. Conaty reminds us that expectations to date have been that the marginalised must always adapt to the needs of the school. Changes in British society such as altering patterns of family life, unemployment and pupil misbehaviour have led to a growing recognition that parents and families need to be involved in dealing with difficult situations. This has also led to the growth in a range of personnel and agencies to support teachers in schools. So far as student behaviour goes, several projects have been initiated at national level with central government funding. These include the Attendance and Truancy projects paid for through the Grants for Education and Support Training (GEST) budget, and free guidelines on pupil behaviour and anti-bullying material published by the Department of Education and Employment. In Ireland, many elements of the home – school – liaison scheme fulfil the function of supporting parents with various types of need.

In the United States parental involvement is seen by experts as a very important factor for combating disadvantage in ‘at risk’ populations. One important example is ASPIRA, an association founded in 1961 by parents of Puerto Rican youth in New York to promote leadership and education. The movement has now spread to the Latino communities across the country and includes programmes on

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36 Ibid.
37 The Home – School – Liaison Scheme was introduced in Ireland in 1990 / 1 to respond to socio-economic deprivation in primary and second-level schools. It provides teaching assistance and extra funding for schools designated as areas of disadvantage. The scheme currently extends to 210 schools at post-primary level. However, due to financial government restraints, no further posts have been allocated since 1995 to this scheme.
building up cultural pride, counselling, job search, language teaching, extra curricular activities and leadership training.  

It is clear from the study *Parents as Partners: Genuine Progress or Empty Rhetoric?* by Bastiani that involving parents more intimately in the education process has real benefits, educational, social and financial. In more heterogeneous societies and systems, different sections of the community may not understand one another well, or the values of one group may not be shared by the other. 'Home School Partnership' cannot be left to evolve, unaided in its own time. It is a major task that calls for imagination and commitment, initiative and direction. It also needs management, understanding and support.  


The authors of OECD *Jobs Study* maintain that 'adaptation is fundamental to progress in a world of new technologies, globalisation and national and international competitiveness'. The ability of economies to adapt to change, they argue, can be deployed only with people possessed by a sound appropriate set of capacities, competences and knowledge. This requires engagement in and benefit from involvement in a programme of active educational endeavour throughout people’s lives. Effective co-operation and productive relationships between schools  

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and business and industry need to be fostered where everybody in each community is able to see the need for such relationships and the ways in which the interests of each can complement the other. Chapman and Aspin point out that 'students today need to acquire a much broader picture of the world and an understanding of the speed, complexity, dynamism of change in the knowledge and skills required for the world of work. 41 There is thus a need for a much stronger set of linkages, connections and partnerships between business, commerce and schools. In many countries, there are constructive approaches leading to the formation of partnerships between the world of business and industry, acknowledging that public education is a concern of the whole community and not merely of the public sector. The OECD publication *Schools and Businesses: A New Partnership* discusses a number of these initiatives.

The purpose of this partnership is threefold. It permits students a close and continuing link with work, providing a real setting for much of the learning that has a vocational emphasis and encourages schools to have a wide range of activities. It also helps secure particular changes in schooling, relevant to business, for example the development of generic vocational competencies, such as communication, useful in work and in other areas of life. In addition, this partnership provides business with an insight into schools and an appreciation for the full sweep of the curriculum. 42

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In New Zealand, the pathway for senior secondary students from school to work-based education is being strengthened through opportunities to participate in work-based learning, including assessment and recognition of that learning, integrate work-based learning with the general curriculum and test different arrangements for structured work-based learning, involving different environments and different groups of students.

The Ministry of Education negotiated national and regional brokerage contracts for school enterprise links, to provide a context for students to see the relevance of their school work to the wider world within authentic contexts. Thus, they are given insights into the demands of the workplace, particularly in relation to knowledge or skill levels.

The constraints of the school timetable may hamper the general academic advancement of those involved in mainstream work-based education. Germany has a long established programme for integrating the general and vocational education of 80 per cent of students aged 15 – 18. The 'dual system' combines school and workplace. In contrast, in France the focus of general and technological lycée remains firmly on providing a general all-round education, with basic knowledge and culture onto which technological skills can be ‘bolted’ quite quickly. For this reason work-related education and work experience are not given the same degree of attention as in other countries.

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43 The Gateway pilot programme was introduced in 2001.
education to employment is included in the policies and strategies in England and Wales. Schools involve themselves in the life and work of the community through community service schemes, and local companies can co-operate with secondary schools in offering work experience or work shadowing placements, or mentors for ethnic minority pupils. Some businesses are involved in ‘compact’ schemes which guarantee jobs to pupils who have fulfilled their side of the contract in terms of attitude and achievement. Bridges are being built between school and the business sector. These show that the ideological and cultural barriers which separated education and enterprise are breaking down, benefiting both. Chapman and Aspin add a word of caution to this debate. They state clearly that the first obligation of the school is to educate and in developing partnerships with business there should be no compromise, or interference with the core values of the educational institution. However, if effective, co-operative relationships between school and industry evolve and stakeholders in each community see the different roles complementing one another the core values of each partner will be satisfied. The process of co-operation between sectors is important in building trust and in formulating common goals. Hirsh concludes that ‘the challenge for business is to maintain enthusiasm and the fresh eye of the outsider to education, at the same time as becoming a regular part of the process of mainstream educational change’.

2.4 Educational Priorities: Inclusion and Responsiveness.

Education and training systems are increasingly required to be more responsive to perceived economic and social change. Among the objectives cited by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Research Report for socio economic development are: socio economic inclusion, meeting skills shortages in the labour market, keeping pace with scientific and technological developments, political and civic participation and lifelong learning.

Quite frequently these priorities inter-relate and links can be drawn between lack of skills, unemployment and social and political dissatisfaction and in some cases, crime. Lynch in Equality and Education outlines the central role which credentialised knowledge, provided by formal education, plays in determining the generation of wealth. It is extremely important that all people have access to education, and can participate and benefit from it on equal terms, so that they are not excluded from the process of wealth generation in society. The writer points out that the Annual School Leavers Surveys show that there is a positive correlation between the level of education attained and employment opportunities. The higher the level of education attained, the higher one's chances of getting employment, people who leave school without any formal credentials are severely disadvantaged in the labour market. Moreover, failure to equalise access to, participation in and benefit from education means that much of the talent and

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52 This research report has been sponsored by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in the Republic of Ireland. The NCCA is a statutory body that advises the Minister of Education and Science in matters relating to curriculum and assessment for early childhood, primary and post-primary education.
54 Ibid.
ability available in society is under-utilised and disorientation and detachment develops among those who are excluded. 56

The specific aims relating to the five educational priorities must be carefully considered. There are high levels of political commitment to social inclusion and equality opportunity. England gives a commitment to give everyone the chance through education and training and work, to realise his/her potential and thus build an inclusive and fair society and a competitive economy. 57

Similarly in Sweden, the task of the school is to impart knowledge in close cooperation with the home, help students develop into responsible persons and members of society. Education and upbringing involve passing on a cultural heritage, values, traditions, language and knowledge from one generation to the next. Students must also develop the ability to examine critically facts and relationships and appreciate the consequences of the various possibilities facing them. 58 However, while many students may be motivated to achieve the benefits, which the different schools bestow, there must be concern about different levels of participation and achievement and consequent unequal life chances. There are high correlations between specific school types, socio-economic status and student outcomes. 59 It could be argued that a ‘common schooling experience’ would make an important contribution to social cohesion but is this possible if the philosophy of lifelong learning is to be pursued where the school is defined as one of many

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., p 60.
58 Ibid., p 61.
59 Ibid.
agencies and learning sites involved with the learner in a much more fluid and less specific way? 60 This implies multiple experiences in education in the future. The promotion of on-site, off-site courses in a more flexible delivery of knowledge could further fragment the shared experience. Moreover, unless sufficient funding is made available to ensure that all students can take advantage of alternative options including off-site and electronic learning, the education system may further reinforce social disadvantage.

Many individuals see education as a means to achieving more desirable and better-paid employment. Findings from a number of studies on the relationship between labour market earnings and initial education 61 conclude that an additional year of schooling is likely to yield an annual 'rate of return' for individuals of 8% - 10%. 62 It is therefore not surprising that the overriding aim, in virtually all countries, is to raise standards of education as a proxy for social capital. 63 However, the benefits for society and individuals are unlikely to be realised if there is a mismatch between education and employment needs. Education is therefore relevant to employment and is frequently an explicit and common objective. *The Annual Competitiveness Report* 2003 by the National Competitiveness Council (Forfás) discusses the importance of the education and skills as a major input to competitiveness in Ireland. It emphasised that over the coming decades, as the role of knowledge intensive industries increases, the education system would assume an even greater role in driving the economy. 64

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61 Initial Education refers to primary, secondary and tertiary education.
63 Social capital is defined as networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups.
In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in order to support implementation of a New Course of Study has presented policies in a White Paper under the theme Exportation towards Learning. Changes in education are intended to prepare students for the society they are about to enter, as adults.

Business leaders have pushed for educational reform, and have blamed the recent economic crisis in Japan on the outdated system of education. Japan now wants more creative and imaginative employees, because the ‘homogeneous conformist individual’, is not suitable for today’s competitive world. Similar policies are in vogue in most other OECD countries with the exception of France where work-related education and work experience are not given the same degree of attention as in other countries.

Keeping pace with scientific and technological development is another important priority. Ireland’s economic future depends critically on the supply of an increasing number of people qualified in science and engineering. But at the very time this demand is increasing, there is a sharp fall-off in interest in the sciences throughout the education system. There is a similar situation in England and in the United States. The Council of European Union in Brussels 2002 stressed the important role of Science and Technology in developing a competitive knowledge society. General and specialised scientific or technological knowledge is increasingly

67 Ibid.
called upon in professional and daily life, in public debates, decision-making and legislation.  

The positive side of the picture is that prompt and comprehensive action carried out with commitment can reverse this present decline. In Ireland, a Task Force was set up in 2002 in order to address the many inter-linking facets of the problem at all levels of the education system. The strategy requires whole-hearted support not only from the political system but also from all players in the education system and industry. A readiness to change attitudes and to embrace new ways of doing things was seen to be as important as the financial investment. Carrying out the strategy would not be cheap costing €178 million in capital investment plus additional recurrent costs of €66 million each year. In the United States two major initiatives in science education, ‘Benchmarking for Science Literacy’ and the ‘National Science Education Standards’ have been generated at a national level, with a view to influencing state policy. The introduction of information and communications technologies (ICT) currently constitute the most significant investment in schools. At secondary level there is a tendency for ICT skills to be taught in dedicated ICT lessons, in addition to its use to support learning across the curriculum. If ICT qualifications become a requirement or a university expectation, to follow courses and provide online course work, this trend is likely to increase.

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73 Ibid.
74 A level 2 pass in ICT is a requirement for the proposed Matriculation diploma in England.
The history of the twentieth century has shown us that as various groups in society become more politically empowered, the nature of politics altered. Today the lowering of the voting age has empowered young people over eighteen. However, in many democratic societies this very group remains cynical and alienated. As a consequence there is a steady decrease in the number of young people voting. The promotion of individualism, which has underpinned capitalism, has simultaneously underpinned the culture of voluntary service. The National Commission on Service Learning in USA (2002) was given the task to determine the form of education that every pupil in America should receive. In their report they looked at statistics which indicated that there was a 50 per cent decline over the past forty years in citizens’ participation in local community, town, state and world affairs. The average American does not engage in democratic citizenry like voting, and the majority of Americans do not attend a single public meeting. Rarely do Americans intentionally reach out beyond their own professional, religious, ethnic, racial or social groups to be with others different from themselves, or to try to solve issues of a larger community. The commission concluded that every student must learn that his or her education is not only for career advancement but for a larger purpose as well.

Attempts to promote students’ understanding and commitment to responsible participation in civil and political society are evident in the reintroduction of Civics and Citizenship education in for example Australia, France, England, The Netherlands and Ireland. In Ireland the Civic Social Political Education

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Programme (CSPE)\textsuperscript{78} is values driven, seeking to foster respect, tolerance and active citizenship. It is central to the whole programme and life of the school not a marginal concern of the school curriculum.\textsuperscript{79}

Achieving the objective to provide life-wide and lifelong learning in the knowledge society will increase the overall need for investment in education and training. The transformation to a knowledge society implies that access to education and training must be simplified and more democratic, and that the passage from one part of the education and training system to another must be made easier.\textsuperscript{80} Learning must be made attractive throughout life, thus making it more relevant for the individual.\textsuperscript{81} Everyone needs to understand, from an early age, the importance of education and training throughout life. Education and training systems must play a major role here, but families, local communities, and employers must play an important role too if learning is to become part of everyone’s activity.

2.5 \textbf{Coping with Change: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Organisation.}

For those embarking on the reform process in education, there is much preparation work needed before initiating it. Roles and relationships have to be negotiated between schools, local agencies, the business and local communities as well as with governments. Schools have to manage competing sets of realities, not only the policy context set at national or state level, but also the community

\textsuperscript{78} CSPE is a course in citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities. It aims to develop active citizens who have a sense of belonging to the local, national, European and global community, a capacity to gain access to information and structures in which they live and an ability to fully participate in democratic society.


\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., p 30.
location, the neighbourhood context and the social needs in the locality; and the internal workings of the school itself. 82 In practical terms what all these changes mean is that the role of the school is dramatically changing. This calls for a closer and more comprehensive examination of the impact on curriculum, pedagogy and organisation. Achieving a balance between the more traditional custodial role of the school and the need to open up the school to greater community interaction will be a major challenge.

Secondary education is intentionally broad-based, stressing core subjects such as languages, mathematics, science and humanities to provide a holistic foundation for students’ subsequent education. In most countries the focus shifts from a prescribed curriculum during the compulsory years, to greater freedom of choice in upper secondary education. 83 There is now an increasing emphasis on ‘key’ skills 84 and knowledge, to prepare young people for the changing needs of adult and working life. 85 These skills may be developed either in preparatory courses or transition year, or concurrently within or alongside the main programme. 86

Issues of social disadvantage and student alienation continue to be major concerns with programmes aimed at reducing the number of young people without qualifications, improving student motivation, or reducing differences in education opportunities across regions. 87 OECD studies have established that between 15 and 30 per cent of school age children are susceptible to school failure. 88


84 Key skills: Literacy and Communication, information skills, including ICT, problem solving, study skills, interpersonal skills, citizenship, employment and entrepreneurial skills and creativity.


86 Ibid., p 31.

87 Ibid., p 103.

Student performance varies by country, gender and location and, regardless of the source of difficulties experienced at school, there are large differences in the attainment levels of the weakest 25 per cent of pupils and the strongest, generally, the equivalent of two years of schooling, but as much as five years in some countries. Education attainment at age of 16 is the most important predictor of future participation in learning and labour market prospects. Moreover a Report to the House of Commons in England (1998) profoundly shows that annually in the United Kingdom 8 per cent of young people leave school without any qualification whatsoever. The task of education is to provide meaningful and relevant learning opportunities for children, parents and the wider community. This allows children to grow up in an enriched environment, partaking of educational opportunity in an ever increasing quality, depth and duration. In this way education can be seen as a process that is ‘lifelong’, where participants are ‘actively and influentially’ involved and where needs identification ‘determine the nature and the timing of the provision’.

There are a number of initiatives that may motivate students to continue their education. In England there is a pilot scheme of education maintenance allowances (EMA’s) for educationally disadvantaged 16 – 18 year olds. EMA payments are subject to regular attendance and good behaviour, but are not tied to ability. Early indications suggest that the allowances increase motivation and reduce the need for

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the student to take up part-time employment. Partnerships and permeability between schools and complementary organisations, may attract disaffected students and, in some cases, help rekindle positive attitudes towards education. Examples include the Youth Reach programme in Ireland involving schools and community organisations in workshop partnerships, and holiday and homework clubs run by community agencies such as social services or youth services.

There is evidence of 'academic drift' both in the nature of courses and programmes and the choices participants make in their uptake. Thus pathways crossing 'academic' and 'vocational' programmes are becoming more clearly articulated, presenting learners with the option of mixing and matching in order to develop more individualised learning programmes and paths. School-based pre-vocational and vocational courses and programmes are increasingly available and both are characterised by increased levels of general education content in addition to their more specialised elements. A fall in the uptake of specialised vocational options is apparent. These trends are consistent with the convergence of the interests of education with a focus on generic, transferable skills as the ideal basis for the future of working life and lifelong learning.

In general terms, pathways crossing 'academic' and 'vocational programmes' are becoming more clearly articulated, presenting learners with the option of mixing and matching in order to develop more individualised learning programmes and paths. This 'dual system' seeks to meet the needs of a wider student body by means of

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95 Youthreach is a two-year programme run jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise and Employment.
97 Ibid., p 20.
alternative institutional structures and modes of delivery, involving voluntary and private sectors alongside State provision. Ireland is increasing options for students by offering vocational and general education within the same institution or as part of a programme of linked courses, including work-based learning. Three programmes have been introduced to date in senior cycle. Transition Year 98 is a 4th year programme, promoting personal, social and vocational developments of the student; Leaving Certificate Applied 99; is an alternative two-year programme aimed at the weaker student and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, 100 introduced in response to the changing needs of Ireland's education system and the changing business environment. Developing Senior Cycle Education: Directions for Development (2003) is a discussion document by the NCCA which envisages the structure of curriculum content and forms of assessment to be in vogue by the year 2010. It focuses on the important role that community plays in education today. It welcomes school – community links which are valuable and supportive and which add to the level of motivation and engagement of the student. 101

The consultative process for this new direction in senior cycle was greatly enhanced by a number of 'new voices', notably students, the community, the voluntary sector and a network of organisations and individuals 102 convened through the assistance of the Combat Poverty Agency. 103 Linked and integrated learning pathways have major implications for the school. School timetables may not be sufficiently

103 The Combat Poverty Agency was established as a State agency in 1986. It has been given specific responsibilities for monitoring the performance of the National anti-poverty strategy. It has been pro-active in encouraging interventions to prevent early school leaving in Ireland.
flexible to accommodate 'seamless' passage between formal school-based and non-formal, including work-experience and off-site learning. If work-experience is carried out during school time, there is a loss of learning to the student in the academic area. In the case of off-site learning, the responsibilities of the school, the off-site provider and the student need to be established. Health and Safety and Welfare legislation is very pertinent to school organisation today.

There has been a trend towards modular or credit-based learning, leading to a portfolio of evidence of students' knowledge, skills and understandings developed over a number of years and in a range of formal and informal settings. Modular schemes enhance student choice and allow for flexible modes of delivery or pedagogy. They help to sustain motivation by means of early and ongoing reinforcement and prompt intervention where weaknesses are identified. Above all, modularisation offers scope for students to adjust the speed and intensity of their workload to match personal circumstances.

However, the pressure on students, teachers and institutions to meet performance targets may discourage independent exploration. In the same way, aspects of the curriculum that are not assessed externally may receive little attention. Where students choose their own courses, and increasingly direct their own learning, who is responsible if they fail to secure the desired qualification or 'acceptable' employment?

When considering international trends, in reality, a range of cultural, social and economic factors, not necessarily common to all countries, mediate developments

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105 Ibid., pp 86-87.
in curriculum and assessment provision in individual countries, level of funding and flexible resourcing also plays a critical role in the pace, scale and success of these developments.  

2.6 Readjustment.

2.6.1 Redefining the School’s Role in the Community.

Formal schooling cannot be everything but the school certainly plays a key role in making or breaking the learning chain that we are seeking to extend from infancy to old age. In the environment of today we are forced to evaluate and reassess the role of schools in our society, to reconsider relationships between school, parents, business and commerce and to re-conceptualise new roles and functions for educating institutions. In essence the school must manage change by changing itself.

Governments, concerned with improving efficiency, are also reluctant to duplicate costly facilities. Developments are taking place at a time of retrenchment in public financing of educational and social facilities and a contracting economy. Sufficient funding is a key issue when quality education is discussed. Unfortunately reports from several countries indicate that many governments still try to make cuts in the education budget. In Spain, the Education’s Ministry passed a new law in which a reduction in education is a part. In France, new political directions

led to a reduction of public investment in education. Similarly in Norway, the economic situation of money municipalities and countries is difficult. The education budgets have been heavily reduced. Even if it can be argued that increased funding in itself is not sufficient to improve the quality of education, it is not credible to argue that decreased funding will improve quality.

2.6.2 Decentralisation.

Decentralisation has been a popular policy option over recent years, stimulated as much by business trends and the collapse of large, centralised states, as educational arguments whether central or local administrations best serve the educational needs of a community. One of the most cited argument is that local decision-makers are more likely to be sensitive to community demands and therefore able to respond appropriately to the particular needs of their own locality. To some countries the appeal of decentralisation has been that it has offered the potential to improve the quality of services and maximise resources. Other countries have pursued decentralisation, primarily as a way of dispersing power and widening decision-making. In some cases, community financing has been an attraction, either because it offers the prospect of sharing the financial burden of education, by getting extra financing from local communities or private sector organisations.

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110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., p 2.
or because it emphasises the importance of partnership and joint responsibility in the delivery of education. 113 However, enthusiasm for community financing has not always been accompanied by enthusiasm to relinquish control. In Norway, considerable responsibility and decision-making authority have been delegated from the central government to municipalities and counties. The professional autonomy of educational institutions at all levels has greatly increased. 114 In France, the Ministry of Education is implementing a partial devoluation of regional authorities and granting a larger autonomy to individual schools. 115

Even with decentralisation the national context may set the scene, but the local context, the municipality, school district, or local education as well as schools themselves, influence how reform is interpreted and implemented. 116 As local communities become involved in the provision of education they also become aware of the potential of schools as organisations and networks of relations and communication in partnership.

It can be noted that the concrete meaning of decentralisation can be very different in different countries. 117 In the United Kingdom for example, an analysis of "failing schools" 118 suggests that a combination of factors, including decentralisation, competition, reduction in the role of the local

115 Ibid.
118 Those schools which have failed the national inspection carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).
education authority has combined to engender a climate of isolation and insularity, turning schools into themselves in ways that reduce professional reflection and challenge and contribute to failure. Undoubtedly what matters is the approach and focus. Geoff Whitty has argued that attention needs to be given to developing mechanisms of regulation, and the most appropriate ways of deciding these. In other words in thinking about decentralisation, we need to consider what checks and balances are needed to ensure equity, and to support the achievement of other educational goals.

Whether local authorities are the controlling bodies or only have a supportive function in educational matters, their role as catalysts for greater integration between school and the local community will grow in importance with this trend of decentralisation of decision-making in the education sector.

2.6.3 Flexibility.

Flexibility in conception, design and organisation, is central to future developments in schools. In most cases the flexibility in design is the response to consultation and community participation. Multi-purpose buildings are needed to meet varied needs of children and adults. This means using space more flexibly and keeping traditionally specialist


122 Ibid.
rooms to a minimum. Staff need to be able to work in different contexts not ‘owning’ their own classroom as in traditional schools. As teachers work more and more with people beyond their own schools, a whole new range of relationships and orientations are fundamentally changing the essence of their relationships. Hargreaves and Fullan describe this ‘new professionalism’ as collaborative not autonomous; open rather than closed; outward-looking rather than insular; and authoritative but not controlling. 123

It cannot be denied that moving forward represents personal and professional risks but Hargreaves and Fullan advise that it is better to move towards the danger contesting and reconfiguring the terrain with purpose and passion. 124 Moreover, these considerations in the readjustment of educational thinking are not new. Henry Morris, whose ideas inspired the community challenge movement wrote in 1926 ‘We should abolish the barriers that separate education from all those activities which make up adult living .... it is the life the adult will lead, the working philosophy by which he will live, the politics of the community which he will serve in his maturity, that should be the main concern of education.’ 125

Similar concerns in the immediate post-war period led local authorities, architects, planners, school principals and local decision-makers in several

124 Ibid., p 93.
countries to look at innovative solutions in school reform, particularly when new schools were being planned. England and Wales for decades had a community school movement and certain authorities, notably Leicestershire, have taken it very seriously, building schools which included community services such as public libraries or swimming pools, sports halls or senior citizen clubs. In Cambridgeshire, virtually all the secondary schools have been community schools or 'village colleges' since the 1920's. 126

The potential for using the school buildings as a location for a still wider range of educational, social, recreational and cultural activities, has continued to be gradually acknowledged. 127 A major concept emerging in many developed countries is that of community capacity building or community regeneration. 128 Community regeneration focuses on the process of renewal and on activities that will inject new energy into the community. This is one of the reasons for exploring the roles of schools. They provide a local, exciting and alternative venue for the provision of activities associated with community regeneration. A report in the United States by C.S. Mott Foundation entitled *Joining Forces: Communities and School Working Together for a Change* stated that the idea of citizen, neighbourhood and schools partnering was not new. In fact the concept of using the school as a community resource to foster neighbourhood cohesiveness, nurture local leadership, provide enrichment opportunities

128 Ibid., p 43.
and so forth had been around for years. The report concluded that what was
new was the dramatically different communities and the kinds of services
and the way these services should be delivered. 129

There is evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom that closer
co-operation between schools and their community is instrumental in
community regeneration. Examples are emerging where schools are being
used as venues for job search, clubs, employment counselling and business
start-up courses. On the site of Halewood Community School, in
Merseyside, there is a job club that supports local adults in finding
employment, while Minsthorpe Community College in Yorkshire provides a
base for employment counselling. A similar approach has been pursued by
Salome Urena School in Washington Heights, New York, where in
recognition of the high rates of poverty in the community the school has
worked with other agencies to provide services, such as literacy programmes
and advice on employment. 130

Crime and environmental issues are also features of community regeneration
and we must formulate a community response. Bronfenbrenner claims that
those involved in education, parents, extended family, school and
community, are all vital to the socialisation of the child. In this type of
setting ‘the nation’s children can develop into constructive, contributing
members of culture and society’. 131

Paths to Empowerment : Ten Years of Early Childhood Work in Israel, 1990.
It can be argued that because of the location of schools and their potential for activity involving the community, schools are in a position to extend learning opportunities and encourage participation by those who maybe traditionally have not benefited from learning.

2.6.4 Policies for Integrated Service Provision.

Over the last few years, a number of OECD countries have been trying to facilitate the provision of a range of community services on school sites, including adult education and other social welfare services. Schools and educational facilities are increasingly sophisticated and expensive, and local communities want to have better access to them. It is in this context that the Programme on Educational Building (PEB) was set up in 1972 and operates within the OECD. \(^{132}\) Since its inception it has promoted the international exchange of ideas, information research and experience in all aspects of educational building.

The three main themes of the programme’s work are:

- improving the quality and sustainability of educational facilities thus contributing to the equality of education;
- ensuring that the best possible use is made of the very substantial sums of money which are spent on constructing, running and maintaining educational facilities;

\(^{132}\) OECD. (1972). Programme on Educational Building (PEB) promotes international exchange of ideas and information on all aspects of educational building.
• giving early warning of the impact on educational facilities of trends in education and in society as a whole. 133

In this context a workshop was organised by PEB on ‘Making better use of School Buildings’ 134 in Lyons in 1995 and a follow-on conference entitled *Under One Roof* 135 in Stockholm in October 1996. Case studies were presented at the conference, which highlighted the necessity to optimise the use of buildings and facilities and to make schools better integrated not only with local communities but also with other services.

Schools can no longer remain as originally designed for nineteenth-century societies. The final report sees schools as ‘organisations and networks of relations and communication’. Schools have become more aware of the community dimension of their work and they are also increasingly aware that they no longer have a monopoly of education expertise. They have much to give to lifelong learning if they can be drawn into broader partnerships. They also have much to learn from other professions, commerce and industry about the needs of adults and young people entering the world of work and citizenship. 136

2.7 Summary.

Increased second-level participation in education poses many challenges for schools today. To a greater or lesser extent the need to broaden opportunities for

135 *Under One Roof* is a report arising out of a conference in Stockholm. October 1996.
136 Ibid.
all populations to have access to education throughout their lives has focussed educational reform towards an approach which reflects the aspirations of schools and communities alike. Thus the partnership or the community dimension of education addresses the more multicultural society where new demands for pluralism, tolerance and inclusiveness are catered for in addressing a greater diversity of cultures, languages, religions and range of abilities.

It can be argued that lifelong learning has been the policy which has driven governments to promote wider access to educational facilities thus guiding governments in most OECD countries to enshrine the concept of partnership/community building in legislation. Consequently, relationships with parents are now more important as they are acknowledged as central partners in the education system. Schools are also urged to have closer links with business industry and commerce. This enables students to have a link with work and provides a vocational opportunity while still at school. It also ensures that revised new programmes offer the possibility of a new vision for schools in the local community with a more focussed approach to the world of work.

The concepts of inclusion and responsiveness ensure that education and training systems are more responsive to perceived economic and social change. All people must have access to education and should participate and benefit from it on equal terms in order that they are not excluded from the process of wealth generation. Achieving the objective of life-wide and lifelong learning in the knowledge society will require investment in education and training as education and training systems are increasingly required to be more responsive to perceived economic and social change.
In coping with change matters relating to curriculum pedagogy and organisation need to be addressed. The nature of the secondary school from the more discrete, self-contained character that existed for many generations is changing as schools are more inclusive of all persons in the dynamics of interaction between school and community. Revised and new programmes offer the possibility of a new vision for schools in the community with a more focused approach addressing both social and economic needs of society. Decentralisation is gaining credence as a popular policy option as local decision-makers are seen as being more sensitive to community demands and hence respond appropriately to particular needs of their community. Nonetheless, decentralisation may have a different meaning in different countries.

Schools today must be seen as ‘organisations and networks of relations and communications’ addressing the needs of adults and young people. Rebuilding and redefining education and its relationship to the world is in the interest of society as a whole and is a life-line in the way forward in building community as the community at large educates and could therefore be defined as ‘one’s common wealth of experiences’.
Chapter Three

Literature Review.

3.1 Introduction.

Significant changes have taken place in Irish society and in the Irish economy since the early to mid 1990’s, reflective of wider global change. The modernisation of Irish society has resulted in the emergence of an increasingly pluralist society. These changes have been significant in nature but the pace of change has proved to be even of greater significance with many young people emerging from school to an adult world radically different from the world of their parents. Hargreaves and Fullan contend that in diverse, complex and turbulent times, partnerships, networks and community building with people beyond the school are vital for improving the quality within.  

Block describes this partnership as the willingness ‘to give more choice to the people we choose to serve’. All aspects of the Irish education system have been reviewed from ‘the cradle to the grave’, within a lifelong paradigm. In contrast to earlier policy traditions, the Ministers for Education adopted a highly consultative approach engaging all stakeholders in education.

Consequently relationships with parents are now an important part of school responsibility as parents are acknowledged as central partners of the education system

Schools are being urged to establish closer liaison with social workers, health and welfare officers and forces of law and order. \(^4\) Revised and new programmes offer the possibility of a new vision for the school in the local community with a more focused approach to the world of work. Hence experimenting with work – placement experience and school – industrial links are being adopted. \(^5\) The advent of lifelong learning further adds a new dimension to the role of the school and provides a broader framework within which to interpret its role. \(^6\) Such developments are greatly changing the nature of the secondary school from the more discrete, self-contained character that existed for many generations. As well as becoming more open to non-school agencies within Irish society, the post primary system now operates within a wider European context. As the White Paper *Charting our Education Future* outlines Ireland's membership of the European Community it gives particular importance to the European dimension of education. \(^7\) The prospect of increasing integration within the European Union ensures that this aspect will assume an even greater importance in the future.

This partnership element to education is transforming and inspiring thus bringing into play a set of fundamental values relating to people and to the cultures of their institution. Those values relate to the manner in which people are esteemed, to how they are treated and to how they relate to each other. Prendergast claims that the partnership model proposes three core values. The first is a profound respect for persons, expressed as a mutual attitude, the second value proposes the human interaction to be inclusive of all persons in the dynamics of the interaction.

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and the third value underlines the interdependence of people. He sees this partnership leading to community building because community grows when people share visions and aims, have a sense of belonging, are allowed to contribute, have a say in where things are going and are recognised.

Decades before this partnership was enshrined in education in Ireland, the Second Vatican Council was proclaiming ‘that it is through the family that (young people) are gradually introduced into a civic partnership with their fellow men’ and asking teachers ‘to perform their services as partners of the parents’. The consequent view of the school was a kind of centre whose operation and progress deserve to engage the joint participation of families, teachers, various kinds of cultural, civic and religious groups, civic society and the entire human community. Legislation in Ireland has given the partnership approach in education official recognition. The challenge is engagement. In embracing this partnership vision there is need for named strategies and practical measures, which relate to how each member of a core partnership operates. They must be empowered and supported in the roles ascribed to them and given nurturing attention in the systematic factors that bind them together as partners into a community.

In order to study the interconnection of school and community and how the community can grow through processes generated from within and by the

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9 Ibid.
11 *GE : 8*.
12 *GE : 5*.
community, the focus of this study is on the principal participants in the partnership process, parents, teachers, patrons/trustees/owners/governors, management bodies, local community including the voluntary social and business sector and the State.

3.2 Church and State.

3.2.1 Divergent Views.

The Irish educational system in all its interesting complexity today is, no doubt, a product of the unique character and history of Ireland, its past as part of the United Kingdom, its economic structure, the homogeneity and heterogeneity, both religious and cultural, of its people and the traditional high concern with religion at the heart of the educational process. In *Irish Educational Expenditures – Past, Present and Future*, Dale Tussing described the Irish education tradition as one of the oldest in Europe. He explained the well developed and articulated Irish system dating back to the bardic schools which had grown out of concern in the community with education from earliest times.¹⁴

It is possible that the seeds of later distrust by the Catholic hierarchy of government initiatives were sown during this period. The right of Catholics to teach in public or private schools was restored with an *Act of Parliament* in 1782 provided they had taken an oath of allegiance and

had received a licence from the Protestant Ordinary of the diocese. 15

O’Flaherty sees this Act as regulating Catholics to second-class citizens where a bishop of the Established Church would grant or refuse a licence to Catholic teachers. 16 Despite these inhibiting factors numerous schools were established by Catholic religious orders and diocesan clergy. 17 While educational developments in the nineteenth century were the focus for frequent prolonged and deep controversy, they constitute nevertheless, a remarkable achievement in a society characterised by political unrest and widespread social and economic deprivation. 18 The structure of education which developed in the nineteenth century reflects two historic influences. Akenson in The Irish Education Experiment attributes this educational achievement ultimately and equally to Church initiatives and positive State interventions. He claims that the controversy and conflict arose from the divergent perspectives of Church and State on educational structure and their different roles in education provision and management. 19 The Irish secondary or superior education was described in 1837 as a ‘record of poverty of abused endowments and of numerous enquiries preceding reform’. 20

The schools largely followed the denominational divisions of the community. Church of Ireland schools were more favourably placed, thus benefiting from

endowments, while Catholic schools under penal legislation were not entitled to endowments. Furthermore, Protestants constituted the richer section of the community. Unendowed schools depended on fees and on any local contributions that might be forthcoming from the local community for the provision of buildings, teaching equipment and payment of teachers. Coolahan explains the class-structured view of education which prevailed at the time as secondary education being the preserve of the middle – classes who if they saw fit could buy it as a commodity just like other personal goods. The Catholic schools had developed without State assistance during an era of repression and active proselytism, and were perceived by the larger Catholic population as an expression of religion, culture and identity apart from the British system.

Some attempts were made to rectify abuses under the endowment system and to instigate reform. A select committee established by the House of Commons in 1835 under the chairmanship of Sir Thomas Wyse examined the state of existing endowed schools and proposed the establishment of new schools according to a nation-wide plan.

It was also envisaged that each county would have a government-funded and locally maintained county academy which would be interdenominational and

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21 Endowments: Church of Ireland schools received endowments. Funds for these schools were derived from uncertain sources such as Custom and Excise whiskey duties, more popularly known as 'whiskey money'. It was not until the Endowed Schools Commission was set up in 1885 and continued until 1894 that the terms of endowments were examined and reformed schemes devised.
23 Ibid.
26 Report of the Royal Commission into endowments, funds and purpose of education in Ireland. H.C. 1854 – 58, XXII.
an agricultural school and a college in each province. The report of this committee highlighted the value of supplementary education provided by museums, libraries, botanical gardens, art galleries and observatories in the community 'which enlarge and perpetuate the advantages of other branches of education'. What was being advocated here in fact is more akin to the philosophy of the 1990's which was advocating that school systems needed to establish constructive alignments with the wider society in the light of new developments and change. A further Royal Commission under the Earl of Kildare, 1854, proposed supplementing interdenominational schools run by local committees with State aid. However such proposals were totally rejected by the Catholic hierarchy. At a special meeting in Cork the Catholic position was clearly outlined under the leadership of Cardinal Cullen. He stated that: 'no form of intermediate education is suited to Catholic people, unless it is granted to them in separate schools and on terms strictly in accordance with the teaching and discipline of the Catholic Church'. The attitude of the Irish Catholic hierarchy to State involvement in secondary education is clearly evident in relation to Protestant dominance which prevailed at the time. Commenting on Cullen's influence on educational matters Larkin made the following points:

In thus making the education question the great objective end in the subjective battle for the faith and subordinating the other themes in the synodical address to that objective end, Cullen was, in effect, setting the political goals and priorities for the Irish Church for the next thirty years.

Catholic reaction to the Kildare Commission stimulated a rapid growth and expansion in the number of Catholic secondary schools, and later influenced the nature of the Intermediate Education Act 1878. The schools which provided secondary education for the 24,710 pupils in 1871 varied in size, curriculum, facilities, teacher qualifications and quality of instruction. Church foundation of diocesan origin were being established although the most rapidly growing category were those being established by Catholic teaching orders of men and women. A significant catalyst for the founding of secondary schools by religious orders was that they saw Catholic education as a vital area of active apostolate in the community. The institutional Church had become a major force in Irish public life, and the strength of Cullen was significant both in organising the Church and providing leadership in dealing with matters of local concern. Though the wider aspects of education envisaged by Wyse and Kildare were not being established it is interesting to note that Edmund Rice’s first school in Mount Sion in Waterford exemplified more current aspirations of creating schools which are truly caring communities. As well as encouraging pupils to read to their parents, he also set up a lending library, held evening and Sunday classes for parents and pupils supporting his vision of the school as part of the wider network building community in the Ballybrackan suburb of Waterford. The census returns for 1871 show 587 schools as offering intermediate

33 Census of Ireland 1902 table 186.  
education. ³⁸ These schools were dependent on small endowments from patrons and on small fees that parents could afford, many of those conducted by teaching orders charged no fees. ³⁹ The area of education, with its potential influence for moulding young minds was seen of vital concern, and so took on a pastoral responsibility. ⁴⁰ Furthermore, Archbishop Cullen’s major achievement was to confer a new status on the education system as a public or community issue, which he achieved by organising and modulating the expression of lay opinion, by lobbying politicians and by numerous public meetings, statements, pastoral letters and pamphlets. ⁴¹ There is no doubt that his public pronouncements on Catholic demands in education formed the ideological base for future developments. Henceforth, the Church, in Coolahan’s opinion was to be very alert to any encroachment into the area of secondary education by the State except when it made finance available on the Church’s terms. Moreover, other Churches, though in a less forceful manner, were also anxious to keep secondary schools, as far as possible, under their direct influence, uncontaminated by State control. ⁴²

Under the Intermediate Education Act 1878, a compromise was reached which permitted the State to give indirect funding to denominational schools by establishing an examination board which dispersed funds to managers on the basis of the success rate of their pupils in public examinations. ⁴³
While undue emphasis may have been on examination success, the majority of those institutions offered educational opportunities to a growing number of able scholars from a section of the community which previously seldom continued in education beyond elementary level. It offered life chances and access to higher education to many thousands of children mainly urban and middle class, at a critical stage in the political and economic development of society. In opting for the competitive examination system Coolahan claimed that it was in harmony with a widespread public mood at the time which greatly valued such examinations and saw in them an accountability scheme where only those who reached certain standards could lay claim to public financial support. Any threat to Church dominance such as local popular control or rate aid to schools was dealt with by the energetic Cardinal Cullen. The Church continued to assert that education was not a function of the State, but an inalienable office of the parents, where the clergy acted in loco parentis. They thus gave themselves the right to control any measures which involved local democratic bodies participating in educational administration since they interpreted this as anti-parent and a threat to the supremacy of Church control. The official Church distrust of parental rights and a more democratic control of education is manifest in the declaration of the bishops of May 1899 against denominationally mixed agricultural colleges. It stated that while they were prepared to support an agitation for the reform of the National Board to give adequate representation to the educational needs of the people, they were against any movement that

47 'The right to educate to whom does it belong'? in Irish Ecclesiastical Record, iii (1867). 280.
might result in a change that might interfere or endanger the authority of the Catholic managers which ensured the safety of religion in schools. Therefore, the Church was clearly resisting any lay community input into education.

3.2.2 A System Under Pressure: Legislative Reform.

The rapid growth of technical education in England and Germany at the close of the nineteenth century was not pursued in Ireland because of lack of industrial competition and the dominance of agriculture in the economy. However, the Report of the Commission on Intermediate Education 1899 and the Report of the Recess Committee 1896 urged a new type of post-primary school to prepare students for industry and agriculture and the establishment of continuation and evening classes for those working during the day who wished to pursue further education. This system would involve the blending of central and local popular control with statutory origins.

The Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 set down the framework for a systematic local authority structure and provided for the levying of rates for technical instruction. This was followed in 1899 by Agriculture and Instruction (Ireland) Act.

This broadening of the education structure was paving the way towards partnership and a more inclusive education structure. Dr. William Walsh,

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48 Irish Ecclesiastical Record; XIX (1900) 466.
49 This Commission was set up to inquire into the operation of existing legislation.
50 Report of the Recess Committee. Dublin: Brown and Nolan, (1896). Although this was not a government report, it was influential in the area of technical education.
53 Agriculture and Technical Instruction Act (1899). House of Commons. (280) 1, 73
Archbishop of Dublin, who was a supporter of practical education was instrumental in getting the Catholic hierarchy to support this secular controlled and rate-supported branch of education. 54 The Report of English inspector Dale and Stephens in 1905, 55 the Wynham Bill 1904, 56 Irish Council Bill 1907, 57 and the McPherson Irish Education Bill 1919 58 all proposed a gradual move towards local control, and a rate support for both technical and secondary education. Cardinal Logue issued a pastoral letter and described the Bill as ‘the pernicious education Bill’ threatening the eternal and temporal interests of generations of Irish children, he restated the rights of parents and claimed that the Bill ‘trenches the rights of parents upon their parental rights’. 59 Bishop Foley of Kildare and Leighin was equally vocal on the Bill. He saw it as binding in foreign fetters the mind and soul of the nation. 60 The reaction of the Catholic clergy shows its suspicion of the extension of State involvement. Cardinal Logue further stated that if the Bill was passed, the eighty years struggle to shape the education system as a sympathetic instrument for the preservation of the faith, would have to be fought again. 61 This resulted in the Church rejecting education reforms empirically researched which might have promoted greater participation, bearing in mind that participation rates in secondary education at that time were as low as 10%. 62

55 Report of Messrs. F.J. Dale and T.A. Stephens, His Majesty’s inspectors, Board of Education, on Intermediate Education in Ireland. H.C. 1905 (Cd. 2546) XXVIII, 709
57 Irish Council Bill. H.C. 1907 (182) ii, 481., Hansard.
58 Irish Education Bill 1919. (214), 2, 407.
60 Ibid., p 306.
62 UCD Archives, Mulcahy Papers. p 7 / C / 1 / 70, item XV.
Had the *McPherson Bill* succeeded, the reforms in time would have extended the power structure beyond the binary mode of Church State to include local elected representatives, teachers and parents at local level.  

### 3.2.3 A New Alliance Evolves.

The Reports of Aireacht na Gaeilge[^64] to the Dáil of June and August 1920 contain information on contacts being made with Catholic bishops, managers of schools, teachers, local bodies and parents.[^65] However, with a government beset by economic problems and political instability, whose social philosophy centred on a strong commitment to the *status quo*,[^66] the ideal of a more inclusive partnership approach to education was not to be easily realised. The mainly Catholic community would support their bishops and religions in the running of schools. In fact the new Irish Dáil resolved that they would support the bishops in setting up and maintaining a national system of education.[^67] The secondary schools were to remain as strictly private institutions and the State did not wish to take any active role with regard to founding schools or management. Eoin Mac Néill, Minister for Education 1922 proposed ‘to create a broad highway in Irish education from infant school to university’[^68] though later became a cautious unquestioning Minister.

[^64]: Aireacht na Gaeilge: This Ministry for Irish was set up to encourage the revival of the Irish language in 1919. It was later changed to the Ministry of Education in 1921 as it also dealt with general educational matters.
[^68]: Dáil Debates. 13, 192. 1925.
His policies seem to be characterised by some paradoxes. He defined equality of educational opportunity and the right of the child to education as ‘equal opportunity in proportion to capacity’. He made frequent appeals for contact between schools and the economic and agricultural development of the local community, even issuing a circular that education should turn the bulk of pupils towards the land yet on the other hand he was opposed to practical or technical education which would prepare pupils for either economic or agricultural activity. In one of his articles he described practical/technical education as simply ‘slave education; an insult to human nature’ and ‘a menace to society’. Overall a number of significant factors prevented any radical change in educational structures. The government’s economic policies were mainly policies of deflation and retrenchment was necessary to counteract further economic setback. This economic restraint envisaged its role in education as minimal interference. There was also a close relationship between the ruling government and the Catholic Church. Consequently there was little use for idealism and less scope for utopianism. Moreover, the educational structures and policies of the new State were in line with the papal encyclical on education; *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929). The function of education according to Pope Pius XI belonged in due proportion to the family, the State and the Church. The Church’s role in education is derived from a ‘supernatural title conferred by

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69 Dáil Debates. Debate on Constitution 1, 1695, 1699. 1925.
70 Ibid., 13, 189; 13, 353.
72 Meenan, James. *The Irish Economy since 1922*, 92. also Governor General’s address to Dáil 3rd October 1923.
73 Dáil Debates. 1, 696; Dáil Debates 11,547. 1925.
74 Lynch, Patrick. ‘The social revolution that never was’ in T.D. Williams (ed), *The Irish Struggle 1916 – 1926*, (Dublin, 1966), 53.
God upon her alone, transcending in authority and validity any title of the natural order'. Therefore education is super-eminently the function of the Church and her rights are independent of any earthly power, universal in their scope and include the supervision of any education given to its members.  

Mac Néill warned of the hypertrophy of the State in a series of articles in the *Irish Review* and the *Irish Statesman* and proclaimed that the principles of education in the historic practice of the Catholic Church were the trusted guidelines for an Irish education policy –

In the Christian teaching, the individual is immortal, the particular community to which he belongs, its political organ, the State are transitory. Therefore, the interest of the community and the State is subordinate to the interest of the individual.  

Therefore the *status quo* prevailed, the Church acted in *loco parentis* for parents in the community.

### 3.2.4 Major pressure for Reform.

It seems clear that the behaviour of the Church in the education sphere was that of a dominant group and equally clear that other groups, parents, teachers, politicians and the Department of Education, not only accepted that reality but also accepted the consequent subordinate nature of their own roles.  

Ó Buachalla remarks that a consequence of the general orientation of the main parties *vis-à-vis* the Church was that ministers had been subservient

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78 *Irish Statesman*, Pt. 1 (24 October 1925), p 202; The Irish Education Policy Pt. 2. *Irish Statesman* (7 November 1925); The Control of Education.
To most if not all, aspects of Church policy. This 'theocentric' paradigm is explained by O'Sullivan as a view of education which is determined mainly by unchanging principles 'based on a Christian view of human nature and destiny'. Murphy contends that the symbiosis between Church and State was not confined to the sphere of education alone but that the Church's influence extended into all of the vital socialising agencies of the State. The effect of the pervasiveness of the 'theocentric' paradigm especially during the first half of the twentieth century provided a favourable context for the emergence of a 'consensual conception of the social order throughout Irish society'. Drudy and Lynch argue that this view allows for the representation of society as 'an undifferentiated whole' and educationally this assumes that there is an agreement within all sectors as to what is 'the public interest' or 'collective interest in education'. O'Sullivan points to the absence of any real 'generative dialogue' between the State and society that could cultivate 'a realisation of the complexity, production, situateness and functioning of interpretive frameworks' in people's lives.

This description of the educational scenario was about to be seriously challenged. Under the Vocational Education Act 1930 the administration of both continuation and technical education

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81 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
was put in the hands of local statutory committees, Vocational Education Committees (VEC) 88 representative of local authorities, employers, trade unions or individuals with a special interest or expertise in education. Under the legislation these vocational committees had the duty to set up schools in each local authority area. The former assumption that education was primarily a school matter was being tested and challenged. Now a system of education suited to local areas with a bias towards the local economy was being implemented. This move towards a more embracing system of local education was accepted by the bishops as they were assured that the new concept of vocational schools would not be allowed to develop or impinge upon the field of general education in the denominational secondary schools. 89 In outlining proposed reform of the education system, Professor O’Meara of UCD identified the major weakness of the system as the predominance of the Church, the spinelessness of the Department of Education, and the exclusion of the people in the community from any direct influence on the system. 90

Subsequently popular interest in education grew rapidly as a result of media coverage of various aspects of education. The public debate on education as represented in articles, news reports, editorials and letters to the editor was quite extensive. 91 It was timely that the unbalanced policy process should be more inclusive of political parties, professional educators, parents and

88 Vocational Education Committees were intended to be small local committees. The term of office was to be the same as local authority. Each V.E.C. had a Chief Executive Officer who co-ordinated schemes and implemented policy.
91 Unpublished Survey data.
representative's of social and economic life. A notable contribution regarding more inclusive educational policies was made by the Most Reverend Dr. Birch, Bishop of Ossory who had been Professor of Education in St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth. In addressing the Annual Conference of Convent Secondary Schools (CCSS) he warned against the dangers of complacency.

If the system is closed to advances by a blind devotion to tradition, it will be harmful. Any system which is not elastic will eventually strangle those who persist with its use, and if our education system becomes rigid and does not make allowance for development, it will become a hardship which the young themselves will eventually throw over.  

Birch called for more radical changes in relation to educational issues and stressed the need for close social and educational surveys of specific requirements of education in order to plan scientifically requirements in education in the future. Birch included parents, pupils and the State in this envisaged reorganisation. These ideas expressed were in reality the start of the new thinking on ‘comprehensivisation’ and ‘rationalisation’ which were later to emerge.

However, people were reminded by the Minister for Finance, Jack Lynch, that education in Ireland was a partnership between Church and State and that financial pressure should not be brought to bear on schools to force
them to accept a system imposed by the State. In reply to this statement the Minister was reminded that the country was too poor to economise on education and there was an urgent need to spend more money on equipping people for the battle of life. This growing insistence on the need for a more comprehensive education system was to gain momentum. The almost total acceptance of the free education scheme in 1967 of Minister O’Malley should give the Department of Education a degree of control over Irish post-primary schools which would become more intrusive and demanding in time as it reached out to meet the needs of the community.

O’Connor in an article on community schools referred to the Church/State relations in education in Ireland and this led him to declare that: ‘it seems that education is being adversely affected by institutional considerations not related to education’. While he did acknowledge the great sacrifices made by the Religious Orders for the benefit of Irish education, he argued that as the State was more and more the provider of funds, it should have an increasing role in educational decisions: ‘no one wants to push the religious out of education, that would be a disaster in my opinion, but I want them as partners not as masters’.

The religious authorities who were in charge of 485 secondary schools took exception to O’Connor’s views. He made no mention of the lack of any

95 Ibid., Col. 512.
98 Ibid., p 249.
grants for school buildings and of recent inadequate grants or any reference to
the huge annual subsidies the religious had given from their own salaries. 99

The position of the Catholic Church was about to change also due to the
depth decline in religious vocations and the resulting balance of personnel
between lay and religious. In 1973 - 1974 only 27% were religious and the
trend was downward. 100 Nevertheless there was certainly a good number of
religious who saw their future in community schools believing that they
could best preserve and transmit their ethos through their participation in
those schools. John H. Whyte had observed that the changes in Church
attitudes had been profound due to the more flexible and more open-minded
views of the Church leaders at the time:

At the beginning of the 1950's, Catholicism appeared
monolithic and triumphant; by the end of the 1960's it was
self-questioning, more open-minded and divided between
different opinions. 101

In addition, the Future of Religious Involvement in Education Report 1973
(FIRE) 102 urged a move towards involvement in community schools.

The Report focussed on educational factors, on pupil numbers, the
possibility of universal and recurrent education and the relationship
between school and home. The thrust of the Report was towards
initiatives, new approaches to curriculum and assessment, work in

community schools, special education and broadly based boards of management. This Report provided evidence that within the Church there was a willingness to change and participate in changing structures in Irish education. This is also reflected in the paper Religious Congregations in Irish Education; A Role for the Future?:

Congregations are actively seeking new ways of bringing their distinctive perspectives to bear on the educational enterprise. They are engaging in this search because they know that, in the past, they performed a council role in the development of the educational system and because they believe that there are new urgent needs in education which perhaps they can meet or, at least, identify and highlight. 103

Many religious congregations are currently engaged in a process of developing new forms of patronage/trusteeships for Catholic secondary schools. The Education Commission of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) has published reviews and guidelines for congregations in search for ‘ways of ensuring that their roles as patrons of schools can be assumed by others’. 104 Mc Cormack is in no doubt but that those involved in the trusteeship of schools will face many challenges in the early years of the twenty-first century. The role of the trustees will become increasingly important, while, at the same time the resources available to those who traditionally acted as trustees, religious congregations in particular, will continue to decline. 105 Nonetheless she concludes that there is now a strong consensus in Irish education that the most appropriate way of accommodating

104 Ibid.
the growing pluralism in society is through the availability of a diversity of school types. In *Towards an Identity and a Contribution*, O’Brien and Coyle also outlined the challenges of the future in education as Ireland emerges from clarity to confusion, from distinctiveness to diversity, from answers to questions and from prescribed practices to re-definition of practices. In this setting they proposed that the Catholic ethos should be open to challenge and questioning if it is to survive and develop in the new millennium. The White Paper in Education, 1995, has recognised that ethos is an ‘organic element which arises from the actual practice of a school and is the concern of all the partners’. The White Paper also acknowledged the particular functions of trustees in relation to continuity of the ethos of the school. Though the needs of ‘Celtic Tiger’ third millennium Ireland are in many respects different to the needs which Edmund Rice responded to two hundred years ago, yet the gospel values espoused by him in his first schools are still very relevant today.

### 3.3 The Comprehensive Debate.

#### 3.3.1 Equality and Economic Concerns.

In ‘answering the challenge to comprehensive’s’ Lowe gives the real meaning of the comprehensive ideal as referring to both pupil-intake and to the curriculum of the school. He suggests that both must be broad and that the rationale is based on educational, social and economic arguments.

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106 Ibid.
Moreover, the National Foundation for Educational Research has stated the purposes quite succinctly and accurately:

- To eliminate separation in post-primary education by gathering pupils of the whole ability range in one school so that by their association pupils may benefit each other and that easy readjustments in grouping and in subjects studied may be made as pupils themselves change and develop.
- To collect pupils representing a cross-section of society in one school, so that good academic and social standards, an integrated school society and a gradual contribution to an integrated community beyond the school may be developed out of this amalgam of varying abilities and social environments.
- To concentrate teachers, accommodation and equipment so that pupils of all ability groups may be offered a wide variety of educational opportunity and that scarce resources may be used economically.  

The comprehensive debate in Ireland lagged behind the United States and Great Britain but both economic and equality concerns brought it to the fore. Nonetheless in the course of the 1960s, reform of the education system became a ‘burning issue’ and such reform was largely inspired by a push towards industrial development. The Government’s new drive for economic and industrial development envisaged education as having a significant role to play. Economic development and education were now seen to have reciprocal links. Thus, stronger partnerships between education and the working world would point to the need for schools to develop skills, knowledge and capacities more suited to the envisaged demands of the newly emerging economic society.

Official recognition was given to the importance of vocational education in


two Reports, *The Report on Economic Development* 112 by T.K. Whitaker of the Department of Finance in 1958 and the Government White Paper *Programme for Economic Expansion*. 113 Both studies mentioned the part vocational schools could play in economic development. Whitaker explained how these schools were more flexible than secondary schools, as secondary schools did not provide for the public after normal school hours. He further remarked that the vocational schools catered for large areas of rural Ireland and in so doing, gave something of a missionary character to their work. *The Second Programme for Economic Expansion*, 1963 also reflected a new emphasis on educational expenditure. It referred to the need for greater participation in education and the restructuring of post-primary school provision. 114 The new overt linking of the quality and nature of education with economic development in the wider community was also seen in the analytical appraisal of the education system carried out by the OECD and the Government jointly in 1962 entitled *Investment in Education*. 115 *Investment in Education* could be described as a wake-up call for the government and therefore it was decided substantially to increase investment in education and that the State would take a central role in the running of the system. 116 Educating the ‘right way’ was later described by Dunne as ‘education as a business, students and their parents as customers, and teachers as mere functionaries who must satisfy the demand of their manager and clients’. 117

This conception of the educational project is congruent with O’Sullivan’s depiction of the ‘mercantile paradigm’ which contends that ‘what education is for is a matter for consumers of the system, such as pupils, parents, civic leaders and business interests to decide’. In this new climate of mercantilism the civic remit of education becomes correlated to the contribution that it makes to national economic prosperity. In such a climate Hargreaves puts the onus on teachers to serve as ‘courageous counterpoints’ where teaching must include ‘dedication to building character, community, humanitarianism, and democracy in young people; to help them think and act above and beyond the seductions and demands of the knowledge economy’.

### 3.3.2 Different Perspectives.

The Secretary of the Department of Education, Dr. T. O’Raifeartaigh, in June 1960, visited educational institutions in America and became acquainted with the American system of education. His report *Education in the U.S.A.* is indicative of the new ideas he brought back to the Department of Education. The decentralised administration of American education impressed him greatly. He found that public education was almost entirely in the hands of each individual State. Dr. O’Raifeartaigh saw that this regional control of education produced a high degree of local and civic pride in schools. Active Parent/Teacher Associations were concerned with educational matters of public interest.

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In addition he found the USA ‘in the throes of an educational upsurge’\textsuperscript{122} as a result of recent intensification of public interest in schooling, similar to what was happening in Ireland. Because of later educational developments in Ireland Dr. O’Raifeartaigh’s observations on comprehensive High Schools are worthy of comment. He assured us that it would be in conflict with American democracy to have anything but one single school in an area catering for all ranges of ability in the community. Any attempt to assign Americans to two different types of schools, as was the case in Ireland, with voluntary secondary schools and vocational schools, would not be tolerated by parents or by public opinion.\textsuperscript{123} It is clear that Dr. O’Raifeartaigh saw for himself the merits of a more inclusive and community-based system of second-level education.

However, Clyde Chitty in an article in the\textit{Forum} (2005) The Challenges Facing Comprehensive Schools questions the future the ideal of the freestanding autonomous comprehensive school.\textsuperscript{124} He recalls that back in the 1950s and 1960s in England comprehensive schools faced two problems: the continued existence of a large number of grammar schools and a lack of general agreement as to what a comprehensive school was meant to be. Nonetheless since most comprehensive schools, particularly in larger cities, drew on strictly defined localities, they contrasted strongly with selective grammar schools which took children from every social class. Many comprehensive campaigners began to argue that the new schools must be socially mixed and thereby ‘plan a significant role in the

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\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p 58.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., p 62.
\textsuperscript{124} Chitty, Clyde. (2005). The Challenges Facing Comprehensive Schools in\textit{Forum}. Volume 47, Number 20, 3, 2005
\end{small}
creation of a more cohesive and harmonious society'. Nonetheless Chitty argues that the comprehensive movement has found it difficult to cope with recent emphasis on choice and diversity thus dismantling the comprehensive system in favour of private education and faith schools.

On 29 March 2005, the Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly addressed the Fabian Society Lecture Series: ‘Life Chances: The Positive Agenda’ with the title ‘From Comprehensive Schools to Comprehensive Education’. 125 She proclaimed that ‘yesterday’s education system is not necessarily suited to today’s world’ and that the aims of the future demand our ‘moving beyond just comprehensive schools to having a genuinely comprehensive education system’. The heretofore ‘strong autonomous institutions’ were now replaced by ones that value ‘carefully developed interdependence’.

Moreover, it is interesting to recall comments made by Professor Eoin Mac Tiarnáin, a visiting American educationalist to Ireland. Having gained a valuable insight into American education from Dr. O’Raifeartaigh it is not surprising to hear Professor Mac Tiarnáin ridiculing the Irish system while addressing the Catholic Congregation of Secondary Schools (CCSS). 126 He referred to the Irish education system as ‘a caste system’. 127 He pointed out that the ‘lack of native virile philosophy’ 128 was a serious defect in Irish education. He furthermore concluded that this may have caused the appalling lack of self-confidence

127 Ibid., pp 35 - 36.
128 Ibid., p 42.
that the nation exhibited. 129 Mac Tiarnáin’s comments may have been harsh and direct but they were a further incentive to Irish educationalists to give serious consideration to the present system of education vis-à-vis a more holistic comprehensive and community-embedded approach. The bipartite system of education comprising academic voluntary secondary schools, where some exercised a ‘cherry picking’ syndrome, and vocational schools emphasising technical and applied studies, that to some extent catered for outside needs, was being questioned. The increased willingness of the Government to invest in education reflected a growing public awareness of the importance of education and a growing political commitment to extend educational opportunity and to link the educational system more directly with economic and social development. 130

3.3.3 Educating Towards Europe.

Efficiency in every field became more important as Ireland prepared for membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1961. The Dublin branch of Tuairim presented its findings and recommendations in a paper called Educating Towards a United Europe in light of the pending future of Ireland as part of the EEC. It found that certain aspects of the educational system had remained unchanged or stagnant while rapid worthwhile progress had been made in other European countries. 131 Thus, a major challenge faced Ireland in the education field. It highlighted the

129 Ibid., p 36.
single major deficiency as the lack of a ‘policy formulation body’. The Department of Education was merely an administrative body, which took no responsibility for general educational policy. It proposed the setting up of a National Board of Education to provide the most effective machinery possible for formulating educational policy of the future and implementing it. It further advocated that investment in education was economically as well as socially desirable. In international statistics there seemed to be a strong correlation between expenditure on education and the general standard of living. This matter was subsequently pursued at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) level.

The OECD Policy Conference on Economic Growth and Investment in Education, Washington 1961, directed the formulation of forecasts and programmes for the development of education in relation to demographic, social and economic trends which would be ‘a delicate and complex operation’. The task implied the creation or strengthening of the development and planning functions within Ministries responsible for education, in co-operation with the Government and other groups concerned with research. They would also have responsibility for advising on the most economical allocation of natural resources. It was obvious to the members of the conference that what was about to happen in education in the 1960’s was to have a ‘profound influence on the future course of history’.

132 Ibid., p 7.
133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid., p 13.
Now access to education was being put on a more formal basis using collective decisions. Education was opening up to the wider world and being influenced by outside bodies, later to be called 'partners' or 'stakeholders'. Following this conference Ireland became one of the participants in the Education Investment Programme for developed European Countries. The programme promoted a series of comprehensive studies of education in Ireland, Sweden, Britain, Holland, Norway, Austria and other European Countries. The national survey team in Ireland was established in 1962, under the leadership of Professor Patrick Lynch, an economist. This was to be a major pioneering quantitative analysis of the education system in Ireland. The Report when published was expected to offer the quantitative basis for a coherent rational restructuring policy and the way forward in the future. The Report of the Council of Education was published in 1962 though presented to the Minister for Education in 1960. The Irish Press editorial described it as adopting an overcautious stance, thus limiting its value as a practical contribution to any reassessment of Irish education. Randies sums up the Report as a non-event but at least it removed the excuse for inaction in the area of secondary education in Ireland and those involved in education began to look to the future.

3.3.4 European Educational Structures Influence Irish Thinking.

Dr. Hillery's appointment as Minister for Education in 1959 coincided with a movement towards European unity in the educational as well as in the economic spheres. The International Bureau of Education (now amalgamated to form UNESCO) held annual conferences for officers of the Department of Education. The Irish delegation paid frequent visits to Britain, France, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Luxembourg, Austria, Germany, and Turkey. Contacts with European education made the Minister and his Department familiar with trends abroad. The increase in school population and the prolongation of school attendance resulted in a wider intelligence span among pupils. This was a general pattern observed all over the continent. The knowledge of what was happening in Europe combined with the growing pressures at home inevitably led to the Government's plans for secondary education which were about to be announced in 1963. Hillery made specific reference to France and the single secondary school called Collège d'Enseignment Secondaire run along comprehensive lines which had classical, modern, transitional and terminal streams to permit children to pass from one stream to another. In order to cater for the greater spread of intelligence and variety of aptitudes and to enable a pupil to move from one subject stream to another suitable stream, there was a growing need to combine the traditional academic course and the technical courses in one school in Ireland.

141 UNESCO – the United Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation was founded in 1945. Ireland joined in 1960. UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its 191 Member States and 6 Associate Members in the fields of education, science, culture and communications.
The influence of the international community was beginning to challenge the Irish system. On May 20, 1963, Hillery in what is regarded as a landmark initiative, introduced the concept of comprehensive education in Ireland. The Minister announced his plan to the press, so that he might put before the public his new plans. He reviewed the historical background and pointed out that despite the growth there were still areas where children did not have a voluntary secondary or vocational school within easy reach. He maintained that the equality of educational opportunity towards which is the duty of the State, must nowadays entail the opportunity for some post-primary education for all. The Minister underlined a structural weakness in the provision of education, in that voluntary secondary schools and vocational schools were being constructed as separate and distinct entities with no connecting link between them. This resulted in:

> Children entering vocational schools who might have benefited from a more academic course. Conversely there are large numbers in voluntary secondary schools who derive little benefit from the study of academic subjects, but who might benefit from the more practical type of course provided in the vocational schools.

This bipartite system in Ireland did not cater for the wider intelligence span among pupils attending second-level schools who might wish to move from one subject stream to another or to choose subjects not offered in that particular school. The Minister’s answer to this problem was direct State provision of a post-primary building, a new principle in Irish education, aligning the school system more closely with the needs of the

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146 Ibid., par. 13.
community. The curriculum of this school would be ‘comprehensive’ combining the academic subjects of the traditional secondary schools with that of the more practical subjects previously offered only in vocational schools. 147

One of the political parties in opposition, the Labour Party was also very conscious of the people’s intense interest in education and set up a Working Committee 148 which published a document *Challenge and Change in Education*. 149 The Report advocated that educational facilities be improved and new schools built in areas that hitherto lacked educational facilities. It discussed larger schools, the increased involvement of parents, and a comprehensive school medical service. It also recommended the extension of vocational education and easy transfer between vocational and secondary schools. 150 *The Second Programme for Economic Expansion 1963* (Part 1) 151 explicitly included educational development. The inter-dependence of education and the economy was recognised. Comprehensive post-primary education for pupils in areas that hitherto did not have such a facility was prioritised. Aligned to this was bringing the vocational school course to a parity of standards and status with voluntary secondary schools. The programme also envisaged parents and teachers in a better position to guide pupils towards appropriate courses in preparation for future careers. 152

147 Ibid., par. 19.
148 Members of this Committee were Mr. Barry Desmond T.D., Mrs. Catherine McGuinness, Mr. Dan Desmond T.D., Mr. Séamas Pattison T.D., Mr. Seán Tracy T.D., Senator Tim McAuliffe, Councillor Denis Larkin and Mr. Donal Nevin
150 Ibid.
152 Ibid., par. 14.
The Minister, Mr. Hillery in his speech to the Vocational Education Association in 1964 entitled ‘Education : Quality, Quantity’ referred to the great progress in pupil population which had grown from 30,000 in 1924 to over 120,000 fulltime students in 1964. In dealing with this great influx he stressed it was necessary to keep a very sharp eye on academic standards or there would be a serious danger of being carried away in the flood - tide of numbers. The Newsom Report in the UK (1963) had drawn attention to the children described as ‘Half our Future’. These were the children of average or below average ability to whom the education organisers had a special responsibility. The Minister, mindful of these needs, referred to the comprehensive school as catering not only for children of the abilities provided for in the secondary schools and vocational schools, but also for the ‘in-between group’. The difficulties of such a group may arise from limited ability or an uncompleted course or any other cause.

The concept of comprehensivisation requires ‘an integrated school society and an integrated community beyond the school’. Unfortunately Hillery had not consulted managers of schools and teachers and the general public in establishing the comprehensive system of education. In fact he felt that nothing could be achieved if he consulted widely.

154 Ibid., p 15.
158 Ibid.
Moreover it is clear that equal educational opportunity, despite its frequent citation and an ideal by the Minister was never confronted as a concept demanding analysis and elaboration. The appeal to equal opportunity as a guiding principle was no more than a sense of ‘fairness’ and accordingly used to emotional rather than intellectual effect. Though he spoke of giving a full chance to every child in the community he did little to actually seek or encourage co-operation among the ‘stakeholders’ in education, which would have progressed the educational aim of his policy. Though intense ideological debate on both the social and educational aspects of comprehensive education accompanied the development in Europe this was not the case in Ireland. The innovative ideal of comprehensive education which originated from both a social and educational critique when imported into the Irish discourse lost all elements of social reconstruction. The Irish educational planners acted ideologically in the interests of those social groups who benefit from existing social and educational structures. Equality of effect was not incorporated into the political understanding of equal educational opportunity. When asked in the Dáil to explain the educational theory behind the comprehensive school proposal Dr. Hillery’s reply was that ‘to do what is possible is my job and not to have the whole matter upset because of some principle or ideal’. 159

159 P.J. Hillery, reply to Dr. N. Browne, TD in Dáil Reports, Vol. 203, Col. 684, 11 June 1963.
3.3.5  More Local Co-operation and Consultation.

Minister George Colley (1965 – 1966) responded actively to the findings in *Investment in Education* advocating educational planning and in doing so he set up the Development Branch in the department. He appealed for co-operation and harmony on educational issues. The new Minister for Education set out deliberately to seek consultation not only with educationalists but with the general public. His efforts to broaden educational participation in the policy process included parents whose rights he frequently advocated: ‘I have felt and I have said this in public that deliberate efforts were made to exclude parents from education’.

Colley’s primary objective seemed to be to restore harmonious relationships between teachers and managerial bodies while advancing a policy of increased opportunity and educational planning. To remedy this perceived lack of harmony and collaboration he proposed in October 1965 to establish a Consultative Committee. He said it was his intention to promote the principle and practice of consultation with all concerned. School authorities hoped that they would no longer be ‘outside bodies’ but as partners whose co-operation was vital for the satisfactory implementation of future proposals.

Colley outlined the main function of the Development Branch of Education as assembling statistics regarding existing facilities and in planning,
consulting and implementing educational improvements and reform. One of the most important reforms was that of raising the school age limit to 15 in line with other European countries. He asked that this be done with courage, co-operation and confidence.\textsuperscript{165} He had ‘broken new ground’ \textsuperscript{166} in discussing, in presenting his views and in giving the Dáil and the community an opportunity for wider discussion. Colley, replying to the Dáil Debate on July 1965, spoke of his efforts directed at getting ‘rid of compartmentalisation’ as it appeared to him that it was retarding the educational process.\textsuperscript{167} What he had in mind was more open co-operation and sharing of facilities by voluntary secondary and vocational schools, thus taking the Irish educational system a step nearer the comprehensive curriculum. He stressed that a comprehensive scheme incorporated both academic and vocational education by using fully existing resources. He wished to address the problem of providing post-primary education for all.\textsuperscript{168} What was said here in his Dáil speech was significant as it contained the blueprint for future restructuring of Irish post-primary education in bringing the individual autonomy of the two major school types within a more community-style structure.

On January 4, 1966 Colley, sent a personal letter to the authorities of all secondary schools.\textsuperscript{169} His message was that post-primary schools in a locality should co-operate with one another for the good of all pupils.

\textsuperscript{165} Dáil Reports. Vol. 216, Col. 978, 1965.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., Col. 1960, 1965.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., Col. 1961, 1965.
What he had in mind was 'a pooling of resources' so that the shortcomings of one would be met by the resources of the other, thus making available to the student in either school the post-primary education most suited to him or her. Official policy was moving away from the distinctive 'comprehensive schools' as announced by Hillery.

The Colley letter prognosticated that the number of such public comprehensive schools would not be very great. It was, now rather planned that a 'comprehensive type of education' could be provided by the combined and co-ordinated work of the existing post-primary schools in each area. No doubt Colley was aware of the challenges to comprehensive schools in both the United States and the United Kingdom. This letter was timely as the Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education*, issued at the end of October 1965, advocated the importance of the spirit of co-operation at diocesan, national and international levels in education. It advised that collaboration between various Catholic schools and other schools was in the 'interest' of the whole human family. The clearest message from the Colley letter was that schools were going to change radically. In the Dáil, in answer to a controversy regarding national schools he said that people were now taking an interest in education and thus were learning more about it. He welcomed this involvement and stated that the country had suffered far too much in the past from a lack of interest and apathy towards education in general.

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continued his efforts to arouse interest in education with a message in the first issue of The Secondary Teacher appealing for help and co-operation from teachers. 172 He also used the media, the Sunday Press January 9, 1966, 173 to address his plans for a small number of comprehensive schools. He stressed that his plans were not inflexible and if experience should demand reconsideration of the plans, the welfare of the school would take precedence.

He hoped that these schools would serve as 'demonstration centres' which would encourage both secondary and vocational schools to adopt a comprehensive programme. Mr. Colley, later, in an article published in the Irish Press 174 linked modern Irish education with the vision of 1916. Here he quoted Pearse's prophecy that under an Irish Minister, Irish education would be drawn into:

> a homogenous whole – an organic unity (which would) replace a composite freak in which the various members are not only not directed by a simple intelligence but are open mutually antagonistic and sometimes engaged in open warfare with the other. 175

As Minister for Education, Colley never addressed the substantive issue of differential status between vocational and voluntary secondary schools that he alluded to in Pearse's prophecy and thus neutralised the ideological debate on comprehensive schools. Debates in Europe saw the

175 Ibid.
comprehensive model as 'ushering in a new and more equal society where barriers between occupational groups would be broken down, and elitism and privilege in education abolished', where others saw it as 'dangerous utopianism, an attempt at social engineering, imposing unwanted structures and undesirable Fabian ideas on society'. Colley on the other hand made a disclaimer when explaining the comprehensive school idea:

I feel I should begin by explaining what I mean by comprehensive education.... it is necessary, because of the misconception which many people have about it, to state as precisely as possible what comprehensive education is negatively, it is not anything ideological or political. Positively it is a system of post-primary education combining academic and technical subjects in a wide curriculum.....

3.3.6 The Economic Function of Education.

The National Industrial Economic Council (NIEC) comments on Investment in Education related exclusively to the economic function of education. The Investment in Education Report was the first report in Ireland which measured the contribution of increasing education to economic growth. Similar studies in other Western countries had already concluded that improved education had been a major factor in economic growth. It was universally accepted that more and better education and economic progress were interlinked both as cause and consequence.

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178 This was a body set up by the Government whose main task was the preparation of general reports expressing views on the principles which ought to be applied for the development of the national economy.
180 Ibid., par. 9.
The NIEC learned from *Investment in Education* that the inequalities in participation rates in Ireland by social groupings in post-primary schools were mainly due to inequalities of educational opportunity because of the bipartite system of education. The Council spoke strongly of the need for educational opportunity for all children. Ultimately the Council argued that 'inequality of opportunity was by far the most damaging to the ethos, efficiency and material welfare of a society'. The *Report* went on to state that those with the innate ability to benefit from it were denied access to further education, 'their reasonable ambitions' are thwarted, their potential contributions towards achieving society's objectives are reduced and social cohesion endangered'.\(^{182}\) The inability of parents to pay for education could easily and quickly be remedied by Government policy. Consequently the Council advocated that 'the community at large must be willing to do with less other things in order to obtain additional and improved education'.\(^{183}\) The community was being told of its responsibility in delivering a more inclusive education system.

The Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, in a *Circular* to every Fianna Fáil TD stated his intention to deliver the radical change which was being called for by the wider community. He stated it was the Government's aim to develop education services in order to give every individual the opportunity of realising his or her full potential, thereby enabling all to make a maximum contribution to the welfare of the country.\(^{184}\) More and more the call for reforming educational structures was becoming louder.


\(^{183}\) Ibid., par. 35.

\(^{184}\) *Circular* to Fianna Fáil Deputies. Published in National Newspapers. June 4, 1966.
3.3.7 Access to Education for all in the Community.

Colley was succeeded in education by Minister Donogh O’Malley in 1966. Colley’s conviction of the essential link between the Department of Education, the school and the wider community made his proposals for the education of all children widely receptive. However, it fell to O’Malley to introduce the new ‘quantum leap’ of ‘free’ education for all. O’Malley had deep convictions on the social role of education, the matter of innate inequalities and injustices and the long-term national benefits of an extended and more inclusive educational opportunity to all. He said he was concerned with the ‘dilemma of parents, particularly those with large families, who in the matter of post-primary education wish to do their very best for their children but find that the school fees - even when modest – are quite beyond their means’. 185 He was acutely aware of those 17,500 who never transferred from primary to post-primary school and whose formal education ended at 14 years of age. 186 He committed himself to removing that ‘dark stain on the national conscience’. 187

The introduction of free education won for O’Malley the support, the gratitude, and in time, even the support of most of the parents of the country. This was predicted in The Irish Times Editorial. 188 Most school

186 Investment in Education. (1966). op cit., par. 6.75.
authorities asked parents of the pupils in school to help them arrive at a
decision whether to opt for or remain outside the ‘free scheme’. This
activity marred a period when post-primary education ‘became a topic of
great interest and concern to all people of Ireland’. 189 Professor Desmond
Swan in an article in the Secondary Teacher ‘To See Ourselves’ aptly
describes the level of interaction of school and community at the time:

Education in Ireland is now in the spotlight, not just from
benign prelates, and prize-giving headmasters, but from
teachers, tycoons and economists, from politicians, poets,
playwrights, and programme producers, as well as general
practitioners, psychiatrists and psychologists, not to
mention parent and pupil. It is important to all of them, to
our whole society. 190

O’Malley found that his hopes of success of the ‘free scheme’ were
greatly surpassed. In 1967 92 per cent of all pupils would have free
education totalling 69,258. 191 In September 1967 there were 118,000
pupils on the rolls in secondary schools, a staggering increase of 15,000 on
enrolment of the previous year. This growth was not confined to
voluntary secondary schools, as enrolment in vocational schools increased
by approximately 3,000 over the previous year. 192 This almost total
acceptance of the free education scheme gave the Department of
Education a degree of control over Irish post-primary schools which
would become more intrusive and demanding in time as they reached out
to meeting the needs of the community. The final provision of the free

89 Ibid., p 253.
Dublin: ASTI.
92 Ibid.
book scheme to schools was yet another incentive to parents of low income to value the more inclusive education system which O’Malley delivered.

O’Malley succeeded in giving Irish education a central role in Irish life and in getting the wide spectrum of the population involved through fostering partnerships, understanding and co-operation. A significant catalyst was his skilful use of the media in order to emphasise the interdependence and integrated nature of the learning environment. He echoed Colley’s views on a ‘comprehensive type education’ when he said that comprehensive facilities would be provided through ‘dovetailing of the activities of the voluntary secondary and vocational school system’ rather than establishing separate comprehensive schools. O’Malley was aware that Ireland heretofore had a secondary system of education that had been governed by the operation of market forces. Therefore it would be difficult to guarantee equality of opportunity in a formula that would cover all possible contexts, mindful of the broad range of abilities that constituted the school population. It fell to future educationalists to define equal opportunity in education in terms of inputs, processes and outputs. However, the document Community School (1970) indicated a development in the official thinking of the Department of Education. It is the researcher’s opinion that the change in title from comprehensive to community school was most likely because the government felt this type

of school would be more acceptable to the Irish people who may have
been influenced by the well documented controversies about
comprehensive schools in the United Kingdom.

3.4 From Comprehensive to Community.

3.4.1 The Community School Concept.

As education intimately touches the lives of individuals and
also has strong and important repercussions on society, it is
not surprising that the form and temper of educational debate
does not show any great level of unanimity. 196

Mindful of the challenges to education, O'Suilleabhain advocates the
importance of debate on a level as informed as the resources of each
country can make possible. 197

Investment in Education surveyed educational provision and made
projections for the future, in directing educational reform, a challenge that
could not be ignored. 198 Vaisez proclaimed: 'about the general direction
there will be little quarrel: about the timing and phasing there will be'. 199

This is indeed an important point. He continues by telling us that timing and
phasing imply evolution rather than revolution. Evolution takes time but
what is perhaps more important it allows for the development of changed
mental attitudes and this is indeed important if restructuring is to take place in
a harmonious way. Mental attitudes may be changed by a fuller and frank
discussion of facts and opinions.

196 O'Suilleabhain, SV. (1971). The Concept of the Community School in Social Studies, October 1. Dublin : Irish
Journal of Sociology. p 1.
197 Ibid.
The Irish education system underwent dramatic changes from the mid seventies. Demographic factors exerted a strong influence, with more young people remaining in education. Table 3 clearly shows the percentage rise in school population between 1964 and 1974.  

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
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The figures speak for themselves. The increases represent a healthy sign. But they do add to the tensions within the system, tensions arising from the need to provide courses for a wider spectrum of ability and from the necessity to make economic use of public funds.

Traditionally in Ireland second level schools were designed for smaller numbers from a more restricted social band and the voluntary secondary schools in particular followed a rather intense academic course. Against this background O’Connor in an article in *Studies* 1968 ‘Post-primary Education: Now and in the Future’ introduced a new approach to educational development by the Department of Education. As head of the Development Branch of the Department of Education, O’Connor had presided over many stormy local meetings concerned with amalgamation and closing of schools and his hard official line had established animosity towards him. O’Connor describes these ‘confrontation meetings’ where at county level, meetings

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202 Ibid. p 234.
were held where the educational interests in the county were represented and at local level meetings, problems posed for particular areas were discussed in more detail. He maintained that in this way, school authorities and the general public were involved in the educational planning process and a channel of communication was opened between the Department and the local interests. Those 'confrontations' were tremendously valuable as they provided a two-way exchange of information and ideas and helped to promote an identity of interests and a common approach to the task of meeting future requirements and finding acceptable solutions to the problems exposed. Perhaps the term 'confrontation meetings' was more revolutionary than evolutionary. This confrontational language was further added to by the then Minister for Education Brian Lenihan in 1968 when he insisted that this Department was implementing an 'educational revolution through consultation'. 203

Randles explains that O'Connor's article aroused great interest and concern as it was the first published attempt to give a coherent connected account on what had happened to date in the restructuring of education under Ministers for Education, Hillery, Colley and O'Malley. In the absence of any regular Educational Review, events had tended to be forgotten. 204 In this article O'Connor traced the working out of a policy to provide education for more pupils. The two main targets of the Department of Education were stated to be:

- equality of educational opportunity for all.


• the fashioning of education so that it is responsive to the individual pupil. 205

The professed aim of the Department was to make free comprehensive—type education available to all children in the community. Consequently O’Connor explained that these ideals would require schools of a certain size, larger than the usual in Ireland. Therefore he signalled the change from the small rural school:

It is beyond the potential of the country to sustain inadequate schools – and inadequacy must be assessed by economics as well as by educational criteria. Schools must be brought together so as to establish units viable by present-day educational standards. Single community schools are the national requirements in most centres outside the large urban areas. Yet though we have made progress in some respects, in the matter of co-operation, we have made no significant gains in our drive for community schools. Maybe we did not try hard enough last time. 206

This school type would allow a broad curriculum embracing academic, scientific, practical and artistic subjects in contrast to the high concentration of academic subjects in the secondary schools and the high concentration on practical subjects in the vocational schools. Dr. Michael Hubberman referred to this as democratisation of education. 207

The lesson is clear: a small élite educational system that must expand and democratisé cannot cling to patterns and norms of an earlier age and created for different purposes. Most developed countries will have to be prepared for 40% or more of the age group to enter full time higher education for the year 2000 …. one by one the arguments of keeping highly selective the access to higher education has been disproved.

206 Ibid., p 247.
Consequently student numbers would increase. This meant increased costs and with public money, in practically every country, stretched to the limit, the whole question of cutting costs would arise due to economic considerations, avoidance of duplication, sharing of facilities, discussion of optimum size of schools and the best way of utilising scarce resources both of personnel and of buildings and equipment. Another major factor was the increasing importance being attached to educational provision by economic planners, whose chief concern according to Vaisez was in providing an educational structure which would feed out the right skills in the right balance and in the right number to make the forecast requirements that had been made.

A further matter to be considered was the knowledge explosion. This was also creating a problem in attempting to provide a balance between the general as opposed to specialised studies. Young in his work on *Innovation and Research in Education* made the following comments:

> The division of labour has produced the knowledge explosion, which is further accentuating specialisation inside as outside education. Education itself has been forced to serve bureaucracy, training and then through ubiquitous examination, selecting children for their adult role as functionaries of society at every level of competence and authority.

As a result of these factors something of a crisis was developing in education, a crisis of which Coombs has exposed as student increase,

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rising costs, unsuitability of output in the schools, inefficiency and inertia within the systems. In Ireland O’Connor saw the community school model as addressing these pressing demands. Out of a total of 885 second level schools only 123 had an enrolment exceeding 350 pupils. Therefore there was certainly a viable economic argument for a larger school unit but what was being proposed would virtually change the character of second level schools to non-selective comprehensive type schools with varying forms of internal organisation to cater for individual aptitudes and interests. This was referred to in the document Community School:

The provision of comprehensive facilities in each area of the country so as to cater for the varying aptitudes and abilities of pupils and to provide reasonable equality of educational opportunity for all children irrespective of the area of the country in which they reside or the means of their parents.

When assessing equality of educational opportunity one must bear in mind that there are a variety of independent conditions, forces and circumstances not all of which are educational nor can they be solely educational. Some indeed have argued that ‘this can be accomplished only by an unequal differentiated educational system which levels out the handicap created for the able pupil by the inadequacies of his family’s social and economic position’. One could also argue that a system of separate schools does not allow for equality of educational opportunity. Hubberman would

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contend that 'behind the principle of equality of opportunity in education is an invisible machinery of social and scholastic inequality'. 214 Professor H.J. Butcher in work on Human Intelligence writes:

Comprehensive secondary education may reduce but cannot in itself remove such (social) inequalities which are due less to inefficient selection procedures than to deep rooted class attitudes. 215

Dr. Thomas Kellaghan of the Education Research Centre in St. Patrick’s Training College, in the course of a study on ‘Choices of post-primary school’ findings showed that 60% of pupils choose secondary grammar schools. 216 This proportion was one of the largest in Europe and considerably larger than in most European countries. O’ Súilleabháin gives the reasons for this as mainly because of the educational ambitions of nearly all sections of the Irish people in education and the work of the religious over the years that made this realisation possible at a low cost and in many cases at no cost at all. He continued that social background did and does inhibit full participation in second level education but the reasons were, and still, are other than financial. Academic ability, however mediocre, was a required standard in practically all schools. That was their function. Thus to blame these schools for being moderately academically selective is foolish as there was no other conception of their role. 217 A conclusion then is that the aim of education should be to prepare an individual to become an expert in some particular vocation or art and in the general art of the free man and

the citizen. Thus the two kinds of education once given separately to
different social classes must be given together to all alike. This would
give consideration to the range of interests, aptitudes and ambitions of large
numbers of pupils.

O'Connor also introduced the notion of the school's closer involvement with
the local area. Some of the sentiments here were previously suggested by
O'Malley but they were clearly enshrined in this new model of proposed
community school:

The greater identification of the schools with the areas in
which they are located would have advantages from the point
of view of the social and community development. The
equipment provided in the schools is too often not available
outside ordinary school hours, and it seems wrong that such
fine facilities should be locked up early in the evening and
altogether over the holiday periods. Were such facilities
made available to both children and adults outside of ordinary
hours they could be of considerable benefit to the country
generally.

This more inclusive approach to education suggested by O'Connor was
challenging but indeed laudable. Were such facilities made available to both
children and adults outside of ordinary school hours they could be of
considerable benefit to the community generally. O'Connor hoped that the
possibilities of this would be more widely appreciated in the future and
genuine efforts made to overcome practical difficulties as may arise. Closer
links with the local community is a further development of the

Press. pp 53 – 58.
comprehensive model thus adding a new dimension. Accordingly the school would foster a consciousness of the community at large, its needs both recreational and educational and possibilities for integrated projects with both social and business sectors.

The question of control and ownership in schools was a very real factor in the situation in Ireland. From the document *Community School* the State was not advocating State ownership but it was advocating amalgamation which would necessitate a form of joint ownership. 220 A long history of dedication, service and hardship had placed the religious in charge of a great many schools. This evolved as the needs of the community were met by greater effort and greater acceptance of the challenge of the times. There is no doubt that O'Connor found the private ownership of secondary schools ‘impeding his plans’. In ‘post-primary school, now and in the future’ he proclaims: ‘It seems clear that education is being adversely affected by institutional considerations not related to education’. 221

On this point O'Connor was being confrontational rather than conciliatory. The Religious teaching orders built schools to meet a community need for education, an education which was conducted in a decidedly religious atmosphere. This was their purpose. The omission in the document *Community School* of any reference to religion was not accidental 222 consequently it would be a betrayal of principle if they accepted a decision
which might make their schools neutral in religious atmosphere or even secular in character. Any institution would look after its own interests whether religious institution, corporate body or an association of teachers. This argument is supported by Cardinal Conway: ... ‘To regard the nurturing of a religious interpretation of life as something secondary or peripheral in education is a position which no thinking believer could accept, particularly at the present time’. 223

Though the ideals underpinning the establishment of the community school were well founded, a change that involved a major break with tradition could not be implemented quickly. From the mid 1970's new ways of exercising trusteeship began to emerge in response to the call of Vatican II for greater lay involvement due to the fall in numbers in religious life. These new ways of exercising trusteeship were based on Articles of Management of Schools in conjunction with strategic documents, setting out a congregation’s religious and educational philosophy. 224 Community schools are individually governed by a Board of Management.

*The Deed of Trust* provides for the nomination of Trustees to whom the Minister for Education and Science grants and demises the property for the purpose of the school to be established with the object of providing a comprehensive system of post-primary education open to all the children

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of the community combining instruction in academic and practical subjects and ongoing education in the area and for the purpose of contributing towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical well-being of the community. 225 Mc Cormack confirms that in general religious congregations are happy with the existing model of management and recognise that it affords them some important opportunities to influence school ethos while working with other partners and through the Board of Management. 226

Since the nineteen nineties throughout the world there was a growing acceptance that education was to be a life-long process and thus second-chance education needed to be provided. Adult Education development would require facilities to expand and operate in the local community. Allied to this was the demand for school facilities such as halls, gymasia, meeting rooms and playing fields to be made available out of school hours to voluntary organisations and the adult community. 227 The document Community School does not expand further on these issues.

In view of increasing pupil enrolment, the changing needs of society and the high cost of education, aspects all discussed in the community school debate, it is clear that restructuring of the education system was necessary. McCarthy while commenting on O'Connor's article in Studies made a very valid suggestion: 228

While under a well framed Act, all could endeavour to form and inform, to experiment and innovate, confident that their past contribution is not forgotten and that what they are proposing to do is wanted, and respected, and is endorsed in the community.

Legislation which followed was to prove this suggestion true.

3.5 Partnership through a legislative Framework.

3.5.1 Partners in Education.

The White Paper *Charting Our Education Future* (1995) defines the role of educational legislation as follows:

Legislation, insofar as it can provide for legitimate autonomy, defines the necessary links and relationships for interdependent action among the partners and establishes the legitimate and proper role of the State.\(^{229}\)

In Ireland, education plays a central role in the lives of people involving their rights and responsibilities and, therefore, it is reasonable that there should be legislation dealing with it. While all the partners have distinctive roles, the complexity of the education system is characterised by a necessity for all to work as constituent parts of a dynamic, interdependent and inclusive structure.

Under the framework of legislation, while recognising the legitimate rights and responsibilities of the various partners, mechanisms – organisational,
legal and policy related nurture and facilitate constructive interaction and genuine partnership among parties. Though the Irish State had adopted a strong interventionist role in education in pursuit of economic development with investments from £39 million in 1966 to 1.6 billion in 1992, since the 1960's the system needed a coherence and direction. This was to be brought about by the government’s intention to introduce a comprehensive Education Act. The planning for new educational legislation came about because of expressed desire by Irish society, that education should be more responsive to local needs and should reflect a closer partnership between school and community. The current legal basis for Ireland's educational system had been described as 'a patchwork of legislation stemming from the nineteenth century'. In addition, doubts had been raised whether some of the current practices in relation to education fully conformed to Articles 42 and 44 of the Constitution. The Green Paper (1992) was a discussion document where interested persons and bodies offered comments on issues in education. Block holds that each person is responsible at every level for defining vision and values in the partnership situation: ‘purpose gets defined through dialogue.... with each person having to make a declaration.... Each has a voice in discussing what the institution will become’.

230 Ibid.
234 Ibid.
236 Ibid., Article 44. pp 168 - 170.
Common interest articulated and agreed, planning together, an equal share in decision-making processes and interdependence are all part of a solidarity that is inherent in partnership and partnership is a central notion of solidarity. Common struggle was to be undertaken in the consultation and preparation process for the Education Act 1998.

3.5.2 *Education for a Changing World - Green Paper on Education (1992).*

The Green Paper dealt in detail with the concept of 'broadening education'. The second-level programme in voluntary secondary schools was traditionally geared towards entering a more holistic third level and to selecting the minority of academic high achievers. In education for life, emphasis on critical thinking would aid young people in preparing for both work and life. The OECD in its Report, *Education and the Economy in a Changing Society,* stated that: 'a high quality of basic education is our essential prerequisite for a vocationally skilled and adequate labour force'.

The Green Paper was further influenced by a Confederation of Irish Industry Survey which emphasised the importance of oral and written communication skills, numeracy and foreign language skills, together with problem-solving, enterprise, initiative and creativity. The need to enhance the quality of preparation for the work environment, to include an awareness of the economic and social factors that have an impact on the operation of business and industry, was also seen as vital.

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Reflecting the priorities mentioned, a combination of an effective foundation of general education and a strengthened and expanded vocational orientation would form the basis for the development of reformed programmes within a revised senior cycle course structure. Consequently links between the school and the world of work were prioritised. A report from the Centre of Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Schools and Business: A New Partnership* (1992) stated that:

> In the past ten years, partnerships between business and schools have started to play a significant part in educational change..... The 1990's will determine whether these partnerships prove to be a passing fad, or whether they consolidate their position, to become permanent, integral part of the education process. That will depend partly on the extent to which those involved in education, from Ministers to teachers, accept the regular involvement of business and other employers in developing curriculum, teaching methods and other aspects of schooling.

Offering young people an experience of the working world, while they are still at school, makes a valuable contribution to their learning and development. Over the years schools had developed links with employers and community agencies in their locality such as the Transition Year Programme, the Senior Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Post-Leaving Certificate courses (PLC's), but it was envisaged in the Green Paper that schools would go further, either singly or collectively in establishing linkages with local employment and training interests, including the use of visiting teachers from industry.

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The concept of the health promoting school was also to be developed in the school as a whole, 'including its environment and climate, its curriculum and its participation in the community'. 243 There were examples of Health Education Projects involving co-operation between school and Regional Health Boards and voluntary agencies. The Green Paper wished to adopt a more focused approach to the promotion of personal and social development of students 'a willingness to involve and consult with parents and the wider community which would both draw on the support of the community and also play its part in promoting the welfare of the community'. 244 This thinking was later to evolve in the Education Welfare Act 2000.245

The Green Paper endorsed the building up of a genuine partnership between the school system and parents. Since parents are the primary educators, their representatives have a critical role to play in the education process.

A British educationalist S. Wolfendale, called for greater participation of parents so: 'that the proper exercising of citizen’s rights would extend to parents having a greater share in educational decision-making on behalf of their children but in true community spirit on behalf of all adult citizens of tomorrow'. 246 A National Parent’s Council was established in Ireland in 1985. 247 The importance of the Council was noted by OECD in its review of Irish education. It suggested that it was only when the Council was

243 Ibid., p 129.
244 Ibid., p 130.
247 National Parents’ Council is a statutory body with the enactment of the Education Act 1998.
established that people began to speak of the need for local parents’
associations and that generally, the idea began to be entertained that parents
should be actually and not merely constitutionally partners in the education
process. Accordingly, appropriate links between the school and the home
and community are essential in forging a partnership between all concerned.
Perhaps the most focused policy to date is the Home – School – Community
Liaison Scheme. This initiative reflects a wide range of best-practice
features of genuine partnership, as it operates in the unostentatious but
efficient and effective manner. One of its key aims is to empower
disadvantaged parents by nurturing their capacity to engage as partners in
the education of their children. The OECD study Parents as Partners in
Schooling (1997) endorsed this scheme: ‘it is clear from the Irish experience
that educational initiatives based in schools can raise the educational levels
of adults involved, and result in a general sense of empowerment in the local
community’. The changing role and responsibilities of post-primary
schools vis-à-vis parents/guardians was to be later endorsed in the Education

The Green Paper introduced the topic of transparency and communication
into the education system. It defined the broad constituency of education
and the rights of the constituents as follows: ‘a continuing two-way flow of
information, from local providers of education to parents, to local

communities and to the Department, as well as from the Department to all concerned interests both locally and nationally'. This would be critical to the success of the education system in the future. The Education Minister, Mr. Séamus Brennan also introduced the idea of a School Plan which would be a formal report to parents and the local community on school performance and achievements.

In Ireland adult education emerged as a central theme in the Report of the Commission on Adult Education 1983 which described adult education as including:

All systematic learning by adults which contributes to their development as individuals and as members of the community and of society apart from full-time instruction received by persons as part of their uninterrupted initial education and training.

The deliberations in this Report had little impact on the education system that was coping with a greatly expanded provision for a rapidly increasing youth population in the mid-eighties. This led the OECD in 1991 to conclude that despite considerable references to the ideal of lifelong learning and second-chance education in the Report of the Commission, 'in Ireland as in nearly all other countries there is no evidence of any concerted efforts to render it a reality'. The ever-increasing rate of change in society in the intervening years from 1983 – 1991 emphasised the link between lack of knowledge and skills and social and economic disadvantage for the

253 Ibid.
individual and community alike. Therefore, the concept of lifelong learning was gaining more credence. The Green Paper outlined the increased need for community involvement and more effective liaison between community and statutory interests at local level. Heretofore, the Vocational Education Committees had played a central role in the provision of adult education down through the years. The community and comprehensive schools, since their inception in the seventies, also played a local role in the provision of courses and programmes. 256 The Department gave a commitment in the Green Paper to the continued availability of accommodation on a countrywide basis both by day and in the evening in all secondary schools, including privately owned schools to accommodating adult learners. 257

This was later endorsed in the White Paper – *Learning for Life* (2000) 258 where in addressing the partnership concept of home, school and community there is a growing consensus that in ‘re-educating’ and ‘re-orientating’ attitudes, the lifeline is through adult and community engagement. The Unesco Report, *Learning the Treasure Within : Education for the Twenty First Century* (1996) had previously emphasised lifelong learning as the guiding principle for education in the new century, that learning throughout life would be essential for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery of the changing time-frames and rhythms of individual existence. 259

257 Ibid., p 216.

The unprecedented level of discussion leading up to the publication of the White Paper was a recognition that education is a key determinant of human well-being. Society now had an opportunity to construct an education system which meets the needs of the whole community. With innumerable seminars, conferences, 1,000 written submissions, culminating with a *National Education Convention* in October 1993, the response to the Green Paper was enormous. The list of organisations that made submissions give an insight into the extent to which Irish society felt that education had a role to play in a diverse range of areas. This no doubt reflects a new sense of public ‘ownership’ of the debate on the future of Irish education. It is not possible, as our neighbours as England have discovered, to effect change in education solely by Government edict.

In *Summary of Main Issues - What Partners are Saying* the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS) felt that the essential thrust of the paper was inspired and driven by ‘economic pragmatism, acquisitive individualism and functional efficiency’. This overemphasis on enterprise and individualistic values was later addressed by the Minister, who subsequently enunciated a more liberal conception of ‘enterprise’ and a more balanced educational commitment was in evidence.

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In a policy speech in Tralee in October 1993. Minister Brennan’s successor Niamh Breathnach was responsible for holding a National Education Convention and brought together forty-two organisational bodies, the social partners and the Department, in an effort to encourage solutions through multi-lateral dialogue. This process ensured that organisations had to think deeply and defend their positions, on partnership in education. The extensive coverage by the media and the publication of a Report helped highlight issues for the general public. This lengthy process culminated in the publication of a White Paper (1995) Charting our Education Future. The Minister, Niamh Bhreathnach, concluded that the multi-lateral dialogue among the major partners in education contributed greatly to the enhanced understanding of issues and thus facilitated robust consensus in support of key changes. The Minister maintained that the objective of the strategies set out in the White Paper would provide every student with fulfilling educational experience at every stage in a lifetime of learning.

It acknowledged that all partners have distinctive roles and rights, the complexity of the education system is characterised by the necessity for all to work as constituent parts of a dynamic interdependent structure. Thus, the framework for education into the twenty-first century needs to be developed on the basis of a recognition of the legitimate rights and responsibilities of the various partners, coupled very importantly with the putting in place of mechanisms – organisational, legal and policy-related – which nurture

265 Ibid. p 8.
and facilitate, constructive interaction and genuine partnership among the interests. Coolahan and McGuinness noted that the process that Breathnach had engaged in was a useful prelude to the publication of the White Paper.

Getting the Bill onto the statute books was a major achievement as the process involved five Ministers. For decades the debate about Irish education had been dominated by issues of structure, process, ownership and control of schools but now however, the principle of partnership has become firmly rooted in the educational landscape. The Education Bill was finally signed into law on 23 December 1998 and it remains the most significant piece of legislation enacted for the education system.


Conaty sees school as a centre of change which exists within the context of home, community, voluntary and statutory agencies, religious bodies and affiliations, educational organisations and institutions and the government. The multi-lateral consultation which resulted in a consensus for change by all of the above partners in education and a commitment by government to legislate, provided a framework within which a true partnership can operate, thus re-orientating education. The preamble to the

266 Ibid., p 207.
Education Act 1998 requires that ‘education is conducted in a spirit of partnership between schools, patrons, students, school staff, the community served by the school and the State’. The Education Welfare Act 2000 underlines further the holistic approach which schools are required to adopt to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged students. The preamble to this Act aims at providing a comprehensive national system for ensuring that children of compulsory school-going age attend school or, if they do not attend school that they at least receive a minimum education. The Act seeks to address the underlying causes of truancy by helping children and their families, and by identifying at an early age, children who may be at risk. The Act imposes statutory rights on schools to have a more pro-active approach to the issue of truancy and provides a mechanism for co-ordination between the activities of various publicly funded agencies as regards matters relating to school attendance.

The National Education Welfare Board designates officers to liaise with schools and other institutions and engage in a range of consultative processes. As the emphasis in policy initiatives is on the integration of services, schools now have to find ways of working with parents, the local community and a range of social and statutory agencies. It is through these relationships ‘that most individuals thrive, learn and grow’. The quality of care of teachers, institutions and the local community is essential to the proper growth and development of the child.
3.6 Conclusions.

The legacy of the nineteenth century has been a major factor in influencing the policy process in education to this present day. The patterns of power and patronage and school structures which emerged from the controversies in that century have played a major role in determining the interaction of school and community to date. The dominance of the Churches and the State of the system, meant that while education was not a high profile area, nevertheless education, its control and its inherited structures constituted a complex central element of Irish political and social life. The subordination and mono-integration which characterised the Church – education link diminished the involvement of other entitled groups in the policy process, depressed the level of professional autonomy and promoted an inertia and complacency. The Church, while asserting that education was not a function of the State but an inalienable office of the parents, acted *in loco parentis*.

Voluntary secondary schools were strictly private institutions and under the *Intermediate Act 1879*, the State devised a scheme to give financial support on the basis of the success of pupils in public examinations. This link between the central authority and the management of schools depressed the concept of any education network or collective local responsibility in the community. With the establishment of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, 1899 a different school model was introduced. This new model of public school was jointly funded by the State and local authorities. These Local Authority Committees were elected.

democratically and were representative of local community. However, the number of schools and pupils remained but a small portion of schooling provision, for a long time. Nonetheless, this broadening of the education structure was paving the way towards a more inclusive interactive communal education network and a new vision of education.

The major legacy from the nineteenth century was the total emphasis on the process of education, curriculum syllabus, prescribed courses and examinations. The narrow centralised control of ‘payment by results’ and political avoidance of structural or access policy produced a narrow exclusive academic view of the educational experience. This policy process was totally unbalanced in the range of inputs, precluding professional educators, parents, and representatives of social and economic life from engaging in the process in any meaningful or structured manner. Thus the quality of the process was not being influenced by a balanced range of inputs which might have led to a more cohesive structure.

With the achievement of political independence in 1922 there was a remarkable degree of continuity regarding the State – Church interface on the manner of ownership and management style. The ‘Clear educational highway’ 274 envisaged by MacNeill, the first Minister for Education, in 1925 was a philosophy rather than an envisaged policy or structural change. Under the Vocational Education Act 1930 the technical school system was restructured, and the new vocational / technical schools operated as publicly owned and locally controlled. Thus the assumption of former times that education was primarily a school matter, was to be tested and challenged.

In the early sixties the OECD commissioned report *Investment in Education*, the first empirical study in the history of the State proved to be a catalyst for the restructuring and modernisation of the secondary system of Education. It advocated the setting up of the Educational Research Centre in 1966, with a particular brief to conduct experimental research studies of qualitative aspects of the education service. In the context of significant reforms in the 1960’s, the State up-graded vocational schools, gave capital grants to voluntary secondary schools and took the major initiative of establishing two new kinds of post-primary school – comprehensive and community school. These latter schools were more in the tradition of public schools and were mainly managed by boards of management, representing the State, local authority and denominational interests, to which parent and teacher representatives were later added. Voluntary secondary schools were later to follow this more inclusive model of management, involving stakeholders in the community.

The Irish education system further underwent dramatic changes in the seventies with the advent of ‘free education’ and the consequent rise in student population. The education system had to meet new challenges, more urgent than before, a growing student mixed ability population and the demands of a growing competitive economic and technological world. The concept of a ‘comprehensive type’ education was brought to the fore to expand educational participation, to perpetuate economic growth, and further, comprehensivisation was viewed as a mechanism to tackle the glaring class inequalities in educational achievement, characteristic of the older wide divisions between the more elitist academic
secondary schools and the more working class vocational/technical schools, not to mention the high percentage of the population who attended neither.

A school system needs to serve the needs of society and when society is experiencing significant change, there is a necessity to establish a satisfactory and constructive alignment between the education system and changing societal needs. Accordingly a great deal of re-appraisal of programmes and analysis of education systems was undertaken in the 1980’s and 1990’s. This led to a more inclusive co-operative partnership policy which resulted in a major legislative agenda, the most significant in the history of the State.

In contrast to earlier traditions, successive Ministers for Education adopted a more consultative approach to the much needed educational reform. All aspects of the educational system were reviewed within a lifelong learning paradigm. In 1991, the government identified education as a strategic force for social, economic and cultural development of the State.

Since then, a formal review of the system was conducted by the OECD, the government issued two Green Papers, policy proposal documents and three White Papers, policy decision documents. The approach taken was consultative with all the partners/stakeholders resulting in major educational legislation. This legislation has given the partnership approach official recognition. In embracing fully this partnership vision strategies and practical measures need to be put in place. Partners need to be empowered and supported in the roles ascribed to them so that partnership can lead to community building. This study assesses the level of interaction between second-level schools and community in Cork City and County.
Chapter Four
Research Design and Methodology.

4.1 Introduction.

Cohen and Manion quote Mauly’s definitive statement when summarising the role of research in education:

Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. It is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress, and enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes and to resolve his conflicts.  

The purpose of this research is to assess the interaction of school and community and identify models of good practice in school organisation and process, which can inform policy and practice across all second-level schools in Ireland. The sample of schools includes all second-level schools in Cork City and County from the Department of Education and Science list of post-primary schools 2006 – 2007.  

Schools in sample, 87 in total, are representative of all sectors – voluntary secondary schools, community/comprehensive schools and community colleges/vocational schools. They are also representative in terms of religious affiliation, gender composition, school size, location and social stratification. The cross-sector sample of the largest county in Ireland and second city means that the results provide an accurate picture of the differences or similarities between schools in key features of organisation and process. The detailed information

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gathered allows the researcher to compare and contrast schools and thus focus on levels of interaction between different schools and community. Similarly, the combination of qualitative and quantitative information allows the researcher to identify general trends across the second-level sector, while providing detailed information on how schools operate 'on the ground'. Second-level schools differ substantially from each other in their institutional arrangements, their intake and composition, and their schooling process. An awareness and understanding of these differences is fundamental to any attempt to measure the extent of interaction of school and community in this study.

The White Paper on Education, *Charting Our Education Future (1995)*, outlines the philosophical framework, the definition of partnership/community. ³

Legislation in Ireland has given this partnership approach in education official recognition. The challenge is engagement. Therefore in order to study the interconnection of school and community and the processes generated from within the school and by community outside, the focus of this study is on the principal participants in the partnership process: pupils, teachers, parents, patrons/trustees/owners/governors, management bodies, local community (including voluntary, social and business sector) and the State.

This thesis is driven by three key research questions:

- As educators are schools going out into the community with empathy and interacting meaningfully with their constituents?

• Are there different levels of interaction across the different sectors – voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive and community college/vocational?
• What factors enhance or hinder the formation of meaningful and strong proactive relationships and partnerships in local communities today?

4.2 Research Methods.

Having decided upon and specified the primary objective of the survey as the assessment of the interaction of school and community, the second phase of the planning involved the identification and itemisation of subsidiary topics that related to the central objective or purpose discussed in The International Perspective Chapter 2 and the Literature Review Chapter 3. These topics related to Demographic Information, School Policies, Curricula, Programmes, Board of Management, Parental Involvement, Adult/Continuing Education, Business/Commercial Community Involvement, International Dimension, Statutory/Voluntary Agencies, Student Council and Mission Statement. As the details unfolded the most appropriate methods of investigating this information had to be considered.

4.3 Research Approaches.

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches in education have arisen from different research needs. In order to describe and evaluate the different strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research it is necessary to investigate the concepts behind both research approaches, focussing on their origins and underlying philosophies. It is common in the debates between proponents of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and in methodological textbooks that several polar differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches are
emphasised. The terms qualitative and quantitative research are usually seen to signify more than different ways of gathering data but they also denote divergent assumptions about the nature and purpose of research in the social sciences.

4.4 Theoretical Positions.

4.4.1 The Embedded Method Argument.

This position implies that research methods are ineluctably rooted in epistemological and ontological commitments. Hughes outlines the issues related to this position:

Every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world. To use a questionnaire, to use an attitude scale, to take the role of participant observer, to select random sample, to measure rates of population growth, and so on, is to be involved in conceptions of the world which allow these instruments to be used for the purpose conceived. 4

According to this position, participant observation if employed is not simply about how to go about data collection but a commitment to an epistemological position that is inimical to positivism and consistent with interpretism.

Bryman gives the following definitions of positivism and interpretism:

Positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond.

Interpretism is taken to denote an alternative to the positivist orthodoxy that has held sway for decades. It is predicted on the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subject meaning of social action. 5

A further epistemology, which has been responsible for the anti-positivist position, has been phenomenology, which stresses that social reality has a meaning for human beings.

Schutz’s position often quoted is as follows:

The world of nature as explored by the natural scientist does not ‘mean’ anything to molecules, atoms and electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist – social reality – has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the beings living, acting, and thinking within it by a series of common-sense constructs they have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it. The thought objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of men, living their daily life within the social world. 6

Smith (1983) argues that each of the research strategies, qualitative and quantitative ‘sponsors different procedures and different epistemological implications’ and therefore advises researchers that methods are not ‘complementary’. 7

4.4.2 The Paradigm Argument.

Thomas Kuhn (1970) introduced the idea of paradigms in the context of natural sciences. A paradigm is conceived of as a:

Cluster of beliefs and dictates, which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what, should be studied, how research should be done (and) how results should be interpreted. 8

Kuhn however, highlights an important feature of paradigms, which is that they are incommensurable – that is, they are inconsistent with each other because of their divergent assumptions and methods.

Originally they were used in the natural sciences, but some social and educational researchers have taken over the idea of paradigms and use it in the context of educational research. In the earlier days of the debates proponents of qualitative and quantitative approaches the issues were often technical in nature. On the other hand, in the 1970s the debates gradually became more of a fundamental nature. A systematic overview of the ‘competing paradigms’ in social and educational research and the contrasting and positivist and naturalist axioms have been given by Guba and Lincoln (1985). In a later paper (1989) they identify three interconnected fundamental questions which determine the paradigm – set of basic beliefs which the researcher follows: ‘What is there that can be known?’ - Ontology, ‘What is relationship of the knower to the known?’ – Epistemology and ‘What are the ways of finding out knowledge?’ – Methodology. Thus usually when somebody talks about paradigms in educational research they refer to positivism and confront it with interpretism or constructivism. The assumption is that a particular method follows from the general methodological positions, which themselves follow from part of the ‘meta-theoretical positions’ as seen by Platt (1986).

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4.5 The Shift in Debate.

The tendency to bind different epistemological positions with particular methodologies has been widely criticised in the methodological literature. Hammersley (1992) and le Compte (1990) argue that none of the differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies outlined earlier take the form of diametrically opposite practices, but rather make up a continuous scale on which qualitative and quantitative studies are not at all simply positioned. A second point made to support their position is that there has been a lot of qualitative researchers who hold quite clearly realist ontological position as well as qualitative researchers whose ontological position is nearer to idealism and relativism than to realism. Therefore it can be argued that there are major differences in philosophical and methodological preferences within the camp of qualitative researchers as well as in the camp of quantitative researchers and that research practice is much more complicated than that proposed by the paradigm view. Howe (1988) has argued that the two exclusive epistemological paradigms which incompatibilists seem to have to offer do not exhaust the possibilities and that pragmatists 'would clearly reject the forced choice between the interpretivist and positivist paradigms'. This position is also supported by Hammersley (1992a) writing that 'even an expansion to six paradigms would still not satisfactorily cover potential, or even actual range of methodological views to be found amongst educational and social researchers'.

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Bryman contends that while epistemological and ontological commitments may be associated with certain research methods such as the frequently cited links between a natural science epistemology (in particular, positivism) and social research, or between an interpretivist epistemology (for example phenomenology) and qualitative interviewing – the connections are not deterministic. He concludes that research methods are much more ‘free floating’. This idea will be explored in describing and evaluating the different strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research.

4.6 Qualitative Research.

There are various assumptions of the qualitative design. Qualitative approaches are characterised by mainly narrative analysis focussing on the meanings that actions have for people, their experiences and structure that surround them. Data is usually collected by ethnographic - conversation, un-structured/semi-structured interviews, life histories and observation or participatory methods such as – focus groups and discussions, much of which is non-numeric. Qualitative researchers are primarily concerned with the process rather than outcome or products. The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument rather than through inventories or questionnaires. Qualitative research involves fieldwork where the researcher goes to the people, setting site or institution to observe or record behaviour in a natural setting.

Qualitative research is descriptive and the focus is on the process. This process is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions concepts, hypotheses and theories from detail.

Schutz draws attention to the fact that, unlike the objects of the natural sciences, the objects of the social sciences, people, are capable of attributing meaning to their environment. The researcher is able to study the psychological dimensions in human beings through verbally analysing human behaviour. Consequently it is possible to investigate the natural human behaviour and its mental dimension. The epistemology underlining qualitative research involves two issues:

(1) .... face-to-face interaction is the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being, and
(2) .... you must participate in the mind of another human being (in sociological terms, 'take the role of the other') to acquire social knowledge.

Thus 'seeing through the eyes of the people being studied' is shown through two studies – Fielding (1982) and Armstrong (1993). Fielding carried out research on members of the National Front, a British extreme right-wing political party. In the process of 'telling it like it was for them' he could reproduce an account from which outsiders could understand the ideology is persuasiveness to people so placed. Armstrong carried out ethnographic research on football hooliganism.

He describes his work as located in 'verstehende' sociology – trying to think oneself into the situation of the people one is interested in. This stance in

seeking to see through the eyes of one’s participants is in tune with interpretation.

However Bryman reminds the researcher of the risk of ‘going native and losing sight’ of what is being studied. 21 This can happen if a researcher becomes too wrapped up in the world view of the people they are studying.

The researcher is also able to encompass interpersonal, social and cultural contexts of education more fully than in quantitative research. Thus the researcher is able to provide more richer wider-ranging description than in the quantitative research approach. Carr and Kemmins (1986) say that qualitative research approach is ‘to provide a form of therapeutic self-knowledge which will liberate individuals from the irrational compulsions’. 22 Many qualitative studies provide a detailed account of what is going on in the setting being investigated. Geertz (1973) recommends thick descriptions of social settings events and individuals. 23 However, Lofland and Lofland warn against ‘descriptive excess’ where the amount of detail overwhelms or inhibits the analysis of data. 24 The propensity for description can be interpreted as a manifestation of the naturalism theory. Hammersley and Atkinson describe this as ‘A style of research that seeks to minimise the intrusion of artificial methods of data collection. The meaning implies that ‘the social world should be as undisturbed as possible when it is being studied’. 25 Qualitative research tends to view social life in terms of process. Pettigew explains this process as ‘a sequence of individual and collective

events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context'. 26

Participant observation which is a key feature of ethnography is instrumental in generating this feature. Ethnographers are usually immersed in a social setting for a long time, frequently years. A sense of process into the understanding of social life can also be achieved through semi-structured/unstructured interviews by asking participants to reflect on the processes leading up to or following on from an event. Hammersley and Atkinson under the heading ethnographic interviewing suggest that the style, structure and even the questions asked should be a product of interaction between the researcher and the informant. 27 It is important however, that the researcher has the time and ability to both manage the research and engage in the production of high quality findings.

The preference for seeing through the eyes of the people being studied is linked to flexibility and lack of structure in qualitative research. This flexibility and lack of structure means being open to the unexpected and not imposing the researcher’s assumptions on the study. Keeping structure to a minimum is supposed to enhance the opportunity of genuinely revealing the perspectives of the people you are studying as a result the research strategy that tries not to delimit areas of enquiry too much and to ask fairly general rather than specific research questions.

Ethnography with its emphasis on participant observation, is particularly well suited to this orientation where researchers as far as possible, are able to share the same experiences as their subjects and ‘to see things as those involved see things’.

The long-ranging collected data with no preconceived concepts will be subsequently formulated into more specific research questions that can possibly be re-examined using a different research method.

The unstructured or semi-structured interview is another prominent method in the qualitative researcher’s armoury. They tend to be flexible responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview. The interviewer may need to adjust the emphasis in the research as a result of significant issues that arise in the research. Structured interviews on the other hand, are typically inflexible and standardise the interview format. In qualitative interviewing the researcher is interested in rich detailed answers. Also the interviewee may be interviewed on more than one occasion. Flexibility is most important in qualitative interviewing. Richardson et al (1965) remind the researcher that each interviewee is different. 28 Parsons likens this unstructured interview to ‘the probing or directed techniques adopted by the psychoanalyst’. 29 He also cautions the researcher that ‘the technique may be valuable in early stages of the explanatory work but requires a high level of interviewer expertise and in-depth understanding of the objectives of the survey.’ 30 The compromise is the semi-structured interview where the interviewer has ‘considerable flexibility over the range and order of questions within a loosely defined framework.’ 31 Quantitative researchers sometimes criticise qualitative research for being too impressionistic and subjective. Qualitative research in education maintains that the researcher’s subjectivity is central. In consequence the researcher’s viewpoint and value judgements are

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., p 80.
deeply connected to the research. In this view, the relationship of the researcher
and what is being researched is impossible to separate. What a researcher chooses
to study is related to his/her value judgement.

There is a belief that research facts and researcher's value judgements or
interpretations of the research cannot exist separately. In other words facts and
the researcher's viewpoint are inextricably intertwined with each other. That is to
say that the researcher is considered 'an insider to the research'. Philosophically,
this view is based on a 'subject – subject relationship' in which human reality is
subjective. 32 Solute states that when a researcher deals with ethical issues, the
qualitative research approach in education is strongly affected by the researcher's
viewpoint. 33 However, pre-survey qualitative research can ensure that the survey
instruments are focused on priority issues and can accommodate local conditions.
Furthermore, qualitative research when used subsequent to quantitative research
such as a questionnaire can indicate the direction of causalities between variables
and explain the linkages between different processes in detail.

A further weakness of the qualitative approach is the problem of generalisation.
Because the researcher's unique viewpoint is central to the research, it is hard to
generalise to other research settings.

Firestone (1987) shares this sense stating that the weakness of the qualitative
research approach in education is that the theoretical model developed for one
project is difficult to generalise to other research 34 projects.

33 Solute, J.F. (1990). The Ethics of Qualitative Research in E.W. Eisner and A. Peshkin (Eds.) Qualitative Inquiry in
Researcher, 16 (7), 16 - 21.
Eisner and Peshkin ask the questions - Is it possible to present research values with the unique situation of the qualitative research approach? When there are not generalisations on the research, how can research knowledge be accumulated? Nonetheless Silverman (1984, 1985) has argued that some quantification of findings from qualitative research can often help to uncover the generality of the phenomena being described. In the course of his observational research on doctor-patient interactions in National Health Service and Private Oncology Clinics with a simple constructed coding system for recording his observations of interaction he was able to bring out the differences between the two systems. He was able to show that patients in private clinics were able to have a greater influence over what went on in the consultations. However, Silverman warns that such quantification should reflect research participants' own ways of understanding their social world.

Findings from qualitative studies alone are less likely to influence policy as they lack the legitimacy of science and precision numbers. However, if qualitative data is used in conjunction with quantitative data they can complement one another. Through sequencing the careful selection and ordering of different methods maximises their contributions to the overall study and improves the data that is collected at each stage.

4.7 Quantitative Research.

There are general assumptions of the qualitative design. Quantitative research in education emphasises the discovery of existing facts by employing neutral scientific language. Philosophically, this view is based on a ‘subject-object relationship’ where human reality is able to be isolated and exists independently from the researcher’s subjectivity. The results of the data are therefore presented numerically in an objective way. The research goal of a quantitative approach is a discovery of universal value. This means that the research value is universally applicable regardless of time, place, culture and other factors. This concept is linked to the generalisability of research. The main tools of research are standardised questionnaires that come from a sampling frame that indicates it is representative of a broader population (ideally the national population and also sub-national units such as regions, cities, towns, ethnic groups, gender groups).

The quantitative research approach endlessly pursues facts. Quantitative research in education has thus attempted to discover existing facts under the research belief that the research act must be a neutral activity from the researcher’s subjective viewpoint. Thus Smith places quantitative research as a ‘journey of facts’. Questionnaires and unstructured interviews are usually the main instruments of research. Many research projects are guided by either a hypothesis or research questions.

39 Ibid.
Verma and Beard describe a hypothesis as follows:

A tentative proposition which is subject to verification through subsequent investigation. It may also be seen as the guide to the researcher in that it depicts and describes the method to be followed in studying the problem. In many cases hypotheses are hunches that the researcher has about the existence of relationships between variables. 40

Alternatively research questions are formulated after reviewing literature and identifying 'gaps' and identifying questions that need to be answered.

Measurement in qualitative research allows the researcher to delineate differences between people in terms of the characteristics in question. It also gives a consistent device or yardstick for making distinctions and provides the basis for more precise estimates of the degree of relationship between concepts. 41 Terms such as reliability and validity are widely used in qualitative research as proponents of this research claim both internal and external validity using this approach. Both reliability and validity are contentious terms. Le Compte and Goertz (1984) explain this clearly:

Distinctions are commonly drawn between internal and external validity. Internal validity is the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality. External validity is the degree to which such representations may be compared legitimately across groups. 42

This may not always be possible in studies. Regarding reliability they claim that no researcher studying the social world can achieve total reliability. They describe it as:

the extent to which studies can be replicated. It assumes that a researcher using the same methods can obtain the same results as those

of a prior study. This poses an impossible task for any researcher studying naturalistic behavioural or unique phenomena. 43

In contrast to qualitative research the use of mathematical statistical analysis reduces ambiguities and thus it is possible to be generalised. This is possible provided the sample is a representative sample of the population it is supposed to represent, a microcosm of the population. However Bryman cautions that findings can only be generalised to the population from which the sample was taken. 44 He explains how the concern to generalise is often so deeply ingrained that the limits of the generalisability of findings are frequently forgotten or sidestepped.

There are many weaknesses nevertheless in this approach. One weakness of the quantitative approach in education is that the researcher's viewpoint is not considered in the explanation of the research. Even though there are psychological issues which affect the research results, the quantitative research approach does not pursue a connection of the human mind. In addition, the quantitative research pays no attention to the individual differences of the subjects. Shuy (1978) states that the quantitative analysis is less comfortable for linguists when it is used to generalise linguistic differences. 45 Whereas, the qualitative approach involves wide-ranging description.

A further weakness is that quantitative research fails to distinguish people and social institutions from the 'world of nature' as seen by Schutz. 46 One of the

43 Ibid., p 332.
The tenets of positivism is that the principles of the scientific method can and should be applied to all phenomena being investigated. This theory ignores the fact that people interpret the world around them unlike molecules, atoms and electrons.

In analysing relationships between variables a static view of social life that is independent of people is portrayed. Blumer argues that studies that aim to bring out the relationship between variables omit the process of interpretation or definition that goes on in human groups. This was seen as one of the strengths of the qualitative approach which reveals the combination of an interpretivist epistemological orientation where an emphasis on meaning from the individual’s point of view and a constructionist ontology where an emphasis was placed on viewing the social world as a product of the individuals rather than something beyond them.

4.8 Implications for this Research.

As can be seen from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative research the paradigm debate implies necessary connections between philosophical positions and research strategies. Therefore if qualitative and quantitative research is taken to represent divergent epistemological positions or paradigms, they are likely to exhibit incompatible views about the way in which social reality ought to be studied.

If true, this position should lead to high personal consistency and sustained choice of the same kinds of research strategies. Furthermore, the paradigmatic account should pose many problems in regard to the possibility of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches or elements of these approaches. The discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of these two approaches would suggest that greater prominence should be given to the strengths of data collection and data analysis techniques with which both qualitative and quantitative research are associated with and sees these as capable of being fused. Bryman states that the technical version about the nature of qualitative and quantitative research essentially sees the two research strategies as compatible. Bottery outlines this decision as follows:

The decision over whether to use a quantitative or qualitative approach should be based on technical issues regarding the suitability of a particular method to handle a particular research question. Thus whilst a researcher may prefer to use one approach there is little problem in using either or integrating them, other than reasons of time, money and inclination. 49

Bryman (1988) concludes that 'there seems to be a tendency for writers to shuttle uneasily back and forth between epistemological and technical levels of discourse'. 50 In addition to analytical accounts some empirical work related to this issue are relevant. Snizek (1975, 1976) conducted in the United States a systematic study of 1,434 articles published in nine major sociological journals from 1950 – 1970 with the aim of clarifying the exact relationship between those authors' theoretical approaches and their methodological techniques.

His conclusion was that there is no relationship between theory and method and contrary to expectations writers with a realist theoretical position tended to use methodology which was less empirical than those with a nominalist theoretical position. Nonetheless a small empirical study, which seems to favour the paradigmatic view is Firestone's study where he concluded that there is a rhetorical connection between method types and paradigms. But he left it open how tight or consistent this link between paradigm and method is and suggested that 'one's method is not as rigorously determined by the choice of paradigm as the purists suggest'. Here Firestone acknowledges that although qualitative and quantitative research is underpinned by epistemological considerations research methods are not exclusive to either approach. The writer would contend that research methods should be 'free floating'. By respecting the different strengths that different approaches can bring to an analysis a researcher is able to avail of the best and most suitable tools of research and therefore the methodological and analytical rigour that each different approach or discipline specifies. A more provisionalist approach ensues as proposed by Bottery where the debate becomes 'less of a quantitative qualitative divide, and more one of an underpinning provisionalist epistemology for both approaches.

4.8.1 Mixed Methods.

Creswell and Plano Clark define mixed methods research as 'a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of enquiry'.

As a methodology the philosophical assumptions guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in the research process. Also as a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. The concept of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provide a fuller understanding of research problems, than either approach alone. 54 Authors such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a) have advocated for mixed methods research as a separate methodology or design and have called it the 'third methodological movement'. 55 This means that in the evaluation of research methodologies, mixed methods now follows quantitative approaches and then qualitative approaches as the third movement.

A typology of mixed methods has been suggested by methodologists writing about mixed methods research. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003b) noted that they have found nearly forty different types of mixed methods designs in the literature. 56 Creswell, Plano Clark, et al. (2003) have summarised the range of these classifications. 57 However, four major types of mixed methods designs are apparent because of similarities – the

Triangulation Design, the Embedded Design, the Explanatory Design and the Exploratory Design. The most common and well-known approach to mixed methods is the Triangulation Design. 58 Morse states that the purpose of this design is 'to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic' to best understand the research problem. 59 This concept of using a multi-method approach in collecting data, information or evidence is described by Cohen and Manion in triangulation 'the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of same aspect of human behaviour'. 60 However, Bryman points out that it is important to understand that 'multi-strategy research is not intrinsically superior to mono-method or mono-strategy research while the multi-method approach provides more and more varied findings which are inevitably a 'good thing', the following points need to be considered.

- It must be competently designed and constructed.
- Multi-strategy research must be appropriate to research questions.
- Adequate resources must be available. 61

Cohen and Manion in advocating triangulation caution that 'exclusive reliance on one method, may bias or distort the researcher’s picture of the particular slice of reality she is investigating. 62 Furthermore ‘triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more

than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.63

The researcher in this study has decided to use triangulation where one can use both a questionnaire and interview to study the same issue The Interaction of School and Community in Voluntary Secondary Schools, Community/Comprehensive Schools and Community Colleges/Vocational Schools. This is important when analysing and reporting on different views and attitudes gleaned from surveys. Triangulation may thus be achieved by cross checking questionnaires with interviews.

The implications of the debate for the conduct of research are significant. Primarily the debate highlights the nature and complexity of actual research practice.

It highlights the growing preparedness by researchers to think of research methods as techniques of data collection or analysis with which qualitative and quantitative research are associated and sees these as being capable of being fused. Accordingly, it is the concrete research problem rather than the philosophical position which determines methodology or overall strategy of the study. The researcher thus decided to undertake research based on this pragmatic philosophy. Creswell and Plano Clark advocate that in pragmatism, the approach may combine deductive and inductive thinking, as the researcher mixes both qualitative and quantitative data. In addition it draws on many ideas, including

63 Ibid, p 233.
employing what works, using diverse approaches, and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a) formally linked pragmatism and mixed methods research by arguing that:

1. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods may be used in a single study.

2. The research question should be of primary importance – more important than either the method or the philosophical worldview than underlies the method.

3. The forced-choice dichotomy between post positivism and constructionism should be abandoned.

4. The use of metaphysical concepts such as truth and reality should be abandoned.

5. A practical and applied research philosophy should guide methodological choices.

Depending on the nature and complexity of the problem the strategy can be either qualitative or quantitative or a combination of both. In addition, within each strategy there is a possibility to use data gathering methods usually associated with the same approach or to combine the techniques of both types. Alternatively there is also the possibility to use both qualitative and quantitative data within each study regardless of the overall strategy of the research or the concrete data gathering techniques. Hence qualitative and quantitative approaches to educational enquiry are not taken as mutually exclusive and competing paradigms, but rather as approaches which are useful in different ways and therefore have the potential to complement each other. Having selected the topic


of study: The Interaction of School and Community: An Analysis and Comparative Study of voluntary secondary schools, community/comprehensive schools and community colleges/vocational schools the research methods were chosen mindful of the debate. It was decided to use the self-completion questionnaire to explore specific issues outlined in the research questions and literature review and a follow-up semi-structured interview to access perspectives on issues arising from the analysis of the questionnaires. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used within the different methodologies. This should lead to richer and deeper research findings thus combating the weakness of one approach with the strengths of another.

4.9 Survey and Interview Population.

The second prerequisite to the survey design was the population on which the survey would focus. The researcher decided that questionnaires would be administered to all second-level schools in Cork City and County which would be representative of all school sectors. This was 87 schools in total. The questionnaire was sent to principals, as only they would be equipped to address all sections of the questionnaire. However, follow-up interviews were conducted among the following, representatives of the major stakeholders in the education process.

The researcher felt that the questionnaire would elicit definite factual information in an organised formal manner but still wide-ranging in context. Consequently the researcher would get a good overview of all sections in the study. Subsequently the interviews could be used for skilful follow-up on information
already furnished in the questionnaire and for probing in areas that needed further clarification. The interviewees were chosen on the basis of offering different perspectives on practices across all school sectors as the interviewees were involved in planning and directing policy in their own sector:

- Three Principals.
- PRO of National Parents’ Council (Post Primary).
- Chairperson of Commission on School Accommodation.

The principals were selected after an in-depth analysis of the questionnaires had been completed. In this sample study 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools were disadvantaged, 44% of community/comprehensive schools and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools were disadvantaged. The researcher decided to interview a principal from the community/comprehensive sector, the sector in the middle. The school chosen was also a city school. The second school chosen was from the community college/vocational sector. This was chosen because it represented a more rural, small town setting and it also represented one of the two Public Private Partnership Schools in the area to date.

The third school chosen from the remaining sector was a voluntary secondary school but moreover a fee-paying school. It was hoped that the three schools chosen would offer a broad spectrum of school practices which would enable the researcher to study the interaction of school and community under different circumstances. The PRO of the National Parents’ Council was chosen as legislation in Ireland places parents at the centre of the educational process and
the researcher wished to see was this being realised. In addition it was felt that
the Chief Executive of School Accommodation would represent State policy
thinking on the future structure and development of schools. Further major
stakeholders in the education process were considered such as: Chief Executive
Officer of the Vocational Education Committee, Head of Conference of Religions
in Ireland, Chief Executive of Community and Comprehensive Schools in Ireland,
representatives of Business and the Chief Executive of the National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment. However, as the questionnaires, the main research
method enabled the researcher to explore relationships between variables and
draw inferences from the results it was felt that interviewing people in three key
areas would elaborate in the areas that needed probing. Furthermore, the
researcher could only take five days out of school to conduct interviews so the
interviewees had to be carefully chosen.
4.10 Questionnaire : Design and Format.

According to Davidson the ideal questionnaire possesses the same prerequisites as good law:

> It is clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. Its design must minimise potential errors from respondents and coders, and since people's participation in surveys is voluntary, a questionnaire has to keep engaging their interest, encouraging their co-operation and eliciting answers as close as possible to the truth. 66

The researcher used clear guidelines in designing the format and structure of the questionnaire. The first phase entailed translating the general purpose of the survey to a specific aim which was to examine if schools were interacting with their community. The second phase of the planning involved itemisation of subsidiary topics and specific information requirements relating to each of the subsidiary topics which were formulated. 67 Finally these questions were tested on deputy principals to check that they were eliciting the required information.

4.11 Central Aim and Subsidiary Topics of Survey.

A chart was used to plan this section of the study.

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### Summary of Survey

<table>
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<th>Central Aim</th>
<th>Subsidiary Topics</th>
<th>Information to be measured</th>
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<td>D: Central Aim</td>
<td>Demographic Participation.</td>
<td>1 – 8 Size of school.</td>
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<td>Subsidiary Topics</td>
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<td>LCA</td>
<td>44-49 Catering for all aptitudes and learning styles. \Catering for at-risk students. \Public perception of programme. \Qualifications and vocational choices in careers. \Work experience in community. \Preparation for employment.</td>
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<td>Board of Management and Parental Involvement.</td>
<td>50-65 Board Membership. \Parents' Associations. \Role of school, parents and community. \Parent involvement in School Development Planning. \Home-school-liaison links. \Partnership consultation. \Inclusive policies. \Child – learning supports. \Involvement in Adult Education.</td>
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<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>66-72 Adult Education provision. \Possible reasons for lack of Adult Education enrolment. \Demand for certain courses. \New courses. \Number of courses.</td>
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<td>Business Community Issues.</td>
<td>73-75 Sponsorship. \Involvement of business expertise. \Business guiding.</td>
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<td>General Community Issues.</td>
<td>Schools as Community learning centres. \Building community spirit. \Community groups. \Structure rethink. \State support. \In-career development for teachers. \Mission Statement. \State support. \Empowering schools. \Collaboration between partners. \School focus on community. \Role of principal.</td>
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Having identified the major topics to be explored, resultant planning involved identification of variables to be measured relating to the various topics. The researcher was conscious at all times that the aim of the survey was to obtain information which could be measured. Patterns would thus emerge from this information, enabling comparisons to be made. 68

Questions 1 – 20 were designed to collect demographic data specific to each school. Question 1 on enrolment, Question 2 on age of school and Question 3 on location were designed in such a way as to explore possible different practices in small as opposed to larger schools or rural or urban location. Would the size of the school have implications for the delivery of a comprehensive curriculum or programme provision? Identifying the type of school in Question 4 would allow comparisons to be made between different schools and whether one type of school had more interaction with community than another. Question 10 was designed in order to examine the interconnection between community and disadvantaged schools. Question 15 and Question 16 were designed in order to study competition between schools and methods of recruiting students. Question 17 and Question 18 were designed to gain information on retention rates in both junior and senior cycle and to highlight the important role of community involvement if retention rates were found to be low. Question 20 would investigate the involvement of parents in parent-teacher meetings. The second section was designed to find out if schools were delivering a comprehensive range of subjects and programmes. Question 25 would investigate the influence of the various partners on option subject planning.

The third section was designed to assess flexible learning styles: the role of different partners, the raising of social awareness, the interaction between the school and the world of work and the accommodation of both academic and vocational student needs.

Section 4 was designed to examine school structures and the critical role of parents. This would include home – school – liaison links, inclusive policies and learning support. Section 5 was designed to examine the role of adult education and courses on offer in the local community. Question 69 was designed to see what new courses were offered to cater for the changing needs of society. Section 6 focused on the role of business through sponsorship and to see if there were possible reciprocal relationships. The final section focussed on the meaning of community and opinions were sought on a range of community-related issues including Mission Statement, State support, the need for in-career development for teachers, and the important role of the principal as a community builder.

4.12 Piloting the Questionnaire.

Established literature recommends piloting the questionnaire. 69

Piloting the questionnaire is done in order to test its format, to elicit potential difficulties and possible misinterpretations, to obtain an estimation of anticipated finishing time and to carry out a preliminary analysis. Adjustments can be made to increase precision and clarification of instructions. During January 2007 the

69 Ibid., pp 127 - 128.
questionnaire was piloted among eight deputy principals. Deputy principals were chosen because they would be familiar with all aspects of the school, had direct access to files and in this case all were involved in School Development Planning. They also had acted as principals on several occasions. The first and second section sought empirical information on Demographic and Curricular Data of the sample. The sections of programmes, Board of Management and Parental Involvement and Business issues were presented as a Likert Scale which asked respondents to indicate their strength of agreement or disagreement with a given statement on a five-point scale. The Adult Education Section sought further empirical data. The Department of Education and Science guidelines for schools were used to format some of the questions. Schools design their own schedule of courses and therefore it is difficult to design questions to acquire in-depth knowledge in this area. Adult Education is a wide ranging study on its own.

4.13 Encouraging a High Response Rate.

1. A good covering letter explaining the reasons for the research was sent to all principals in the sample. The researcher stressed the importance of this study and why principals were selected. They were also assured of confidentiality. (Appendix C2).

2. Community involvement in education was a topical issue in Ireland receiving much cover in the media. Therefore, it was hoped that this would encourage interest and thus the response rate would be high.
3. The questionnaire was short and the sections had a natural flow. Instructions were clear. This questionnaire could be completed in twenty minutes.

4. The researcher had delivered a paper ‘Partnership Building : Relationships with Staff’ at the Annual Conference of Community and Comprehensive School Principals in 2001 so it was hoped that this would encourage principals to get involved in this project.

5. Stamped addressed envelopes were included in questionnaire and follow-up phone calls were made within three weeks.

6. The timing of the survey was important and the questionnaire was sent out at the beginning of February after the Christmas rush and before practicals for State Examinations started.

4.14 Achieved Sample.

The initial response was 40% and questionnaires were returned within three weeks. The researcher then did follow-up phone calls and encouraged principals to return questionnaires if they had not previously done so. At the end of March 2007 43 completed questionnaires had been returned, giving a response rate of 49.4% which was quite good. After the analysis had taken place one blank questionnaire was returned and 3 fully completed questionnaires but they were too late to be included.
4.15 Analysis of Data.

The programme used for analysis was SPSS and Windows 2007. Frequencies were run for all variables for the purpose of data cleansing. Where a mistake was suspected the questionnaires were cross-checked. This was completed on 16th April 2007. The researcher studied all the data and then decided on the cross tabulations needed to examine the association between categorical variables. The cross tabulations were completed on the 4th May 2007. The results in Chapter 5 are presented in tables using Word for Windows 2007.

4.16 The follow-up Interview.

There are three kinds of face-to-face interviews commonly distinguished: the structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview. The structured interview is based on a carefully worded interview schedule and frequently requires short answers or the ticking of a category by the investigator. They are typically inflexible because of the need to standardise the way each interview is dealt with. 70 In the unstructured interview there may be just a single question that the interviewer asks and the interviewee is then allowed to respond freely, with the interviewer simply responding to points that seem worthy of being followed up. Unstructured interviews tend to be very similar in character to a conversation. 71

The semi-structured interview on the other hand is where the researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an

71 Ibid.
interview guide but the interviewer has a great deal of leeway on how to reply. 72

This type of interview was favoured by the researcher as it allows the respondents to express themselves at some length but offers shape to the interview to prevent aimless rambling. The semi-structured interview would thus allow the researcher to get a deeper and more rounded picture of the respondents’ opinions, experiences and attitudes. The structured interviews would be too inflexible because of the need to standardise the way each interviewee is dealt with. 73

As the interviewer and respondent were face-to-face the researcher, as interviewer, was able to probe and clarify matters that came to light in the analysis of the questionnaire. This approach also allowed the researcher the opportunity to double back and alter wording. 74 The interview guide in this instance was based on some of the questions on the questionnaire which had already been administered to principals but was supplemented by extra questions which came to light in the analysis. The prior examination of the questionnaire enabled the researcher to focus questions on definite areas that needed probing, thus eliminating redundant items; as a result the questions were more focused and objective. As the interviewees represented different partners interview plans had a section focusing on issues relating to the individual different partners. The researcher was mindful of Fox’s advice that an interview plan or framework serves as a reminder to the interviewer of areas to be covered while still allowing the researcher to move off on tangents which show promise of providing useful information to the research questions. 75 In preparing the qualitative interview

72 Ibid., p 314.
73 Ibid., p 313.
Lofland and Lofland suggest asking yourself the question 'Just what about this thing is puzzling me'? They suggest that this can be applied to each of the research questions or it may be a mechanism for generating some research questions.

The researcher was mindful of Kvale's list of criteria of a successful interviewer.

- Knowledgeable: thoroughly familiar with the focus of the interview.
- Structuring: gives purpose to interview.
- Clear: ask simple short questions.
- Gentle: lets people finish, gives interviewer time to think.
- Sensitive: listens attentively.
- Steering: knows what you want to find out.
- Challenging: deals with inconsistencies.
- Remembering: relates to what has been previously said.
- Interpreting: clarifies and extends meaning.

To these Bryman added two more important criteria which the researcher used.

- Balanced: does not talk too much or too little.
- Ethically sensitive: sensitive to the ethical dimension of interviewing and treats answers confidentially.

Bryman reminds the researcher that qualitative research is nearly always recorded and then transcribed. The researcher was aware of the need to be highly alert

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79 Ibid., p 321.
and to follow-up interesting points so as not to rely totally on note taking so an IC Sony recorder was used with prior permission of the interviewees. It was very small and unobtrusive. However, the researcher was also aware that transcribing was very time consuming so the interviewer transcribed soon after each interview to relieve the pressure of transcribing all interviews at the end.

4.17 The Interview Guide.

The Interview Guide (Appendix C3) was prepared after the analysis of the questionnaires. A carefully worded interview guide was assembled allowing more latitude for probing in areas that needed clarification arising out of the analysis of the questionnaires. The researcher was happy that the questions were focussed and objective. It was not intended however, to restrict the interviewee’s responses. Three separate interview guides were prepared for the different stakeholders in education being interviewed, although the topics were mainly the same. The central questions in forming the interviews were the same as those in forming the questionnaire.

4.18 Reliability and Validity.

Because of the small sample the results of the interviews do not claim reliability and validity in the statistical sense. They do however, represent three important stakeholders in education and do explain relevant issues that impact on the interaction of school and community.
4.19 Recruitment and Venues.

All interviewees were contacted by phone initially. The purpose of the interview was explained and the request for an interview was made. A letter was then sent to those who consented with an outline of the topics to be discussed, thanking them for agreeing to partake and assuring them of confidentiality. A time; date and venue was arranged with a follow-up phone call. The principals were interviewed in school in Cork. The Chief Executive of School Accommodation was interviewed in the Department of Education and Science, Dublin and the PRO of the National Parents’ Council was interviewed in a hotel adjacent to her place of residence. This was done over five days – April 25th, May 15th, May 21st, May 22nd and May 28th, 2008. The interviews took 30 minutes and in one case 40 minutes.

4.20 Piloting.

The piloting of the Interview Guide was done by the same group who piloted the questionnaires. It was suggested to keep the same sections as the questionnaires and this should be used in introducing the different areas to the interviewees. This suggestion was found to be useful and was applied in each interview.

4.21 Ethical Issues.

Ethics and morals play an important part both in educational and scientific research. The researcher at all times followed correct ethical procedures. In designing the questionnaire and interview guide great care was taken when phrasing the research questions. The methods employed in collecting the
information and in conducting the research were ethically correct. Full information was disclosed about the research, all necessary permissions were sought and received. Names were not written on returned questionnaires protecting the anonymity of the participants. The broad aspects of the interviews were sent out to interviewees prior to interview and no relevant information was withheld. In the analysis of both the questionnaires and the interviews all data was dealt with sensitively and carefully. Transcripts were sent to the people who did interviews. The presentation and reporting of the research was done respectfully and responsibly. Thus the researcher undertaking this study satisfied the wide range of rules and responsibilities associated with conducting educational research.
Chapter Five
Research Results.

5.1 Sample Survey: Overview.

The survey was distributed to principals in all second-level schools in Cork City and County, 87 in total. All sectors of second-level schools were represented—voluntary secondary, community school/comprehensive and community college/vocational school. 43 completed questionnaires were returned, 1 blank and 3 were returned after the analysis had taken place. This gives a response rate of 49.4%.

All percentages quoted in this piece of research are based on the numbers who responded to the questions. In this chapter the research questions and related issues are tested. The results are presented with the aid of tables, are illustrated with figures and in each case N represents the total number of schools surveyed.

Section 1 of the survey investigated Demographic Data from the schools that constituted the sample.

Section 2 sought information on the delivery of a Comprehensive Curriculum and Range of Programmes, of Flexible Learning Styles and the Accommodation of both Academic and Vocational Needs.

Section 3 examined School Structures and Learning Policies.

Section 4 investigated the Role of Adult Education.

Section 5 focussed on the Role and Extent of Business Relationships.

Section 6 sought opinions on a range of School – Community related issues.
5.2 Profile of Respondents:

Demographic Data.

Table 5.2.1 How many students are enrolled in your day school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Pupil Numbers</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-399</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-499</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-599</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-699</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700-799</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800-899</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-999</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000+</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The enrolment pattern in the sample is quite varied. In the community college/vocational school sector 20% of the schools are under 200. In the community and comprehensive sector 11.1% of the schools have less than 300 pupils while in the voluntary secondary sector 45.9% of schools have an enrolment of less than 300 pupils which is very significant. While the figures here would be in line with national figures, the report The Allocation of Teachers to Second Level Schools raised the matter of viability of a school. The report suggested that a school with an enrolment under 250 might be regarded as below the threshold of minimal viability.

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The Commission on School Accommodation in *Planning School Provision Three Praxes* indicated that from their studies a school needs an enrolment of about 400 pupils to offer the full range of secondary courses, including Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Applied. The Steering Group noted the desirability of neighbouring schools currently in competition for students and offering a similar educational programme, moving towards a more complementary arrangement in curriculum provision terms rather than duplication, and co-operation rather than competition which would benefit students. It was noted that there were instances where neighbouring schools reconciled timetables to enhance their complementarity. The literature review, Chapter 3, page 74, refers to the importance of having pathways crossing ‘academic’ and ‘vocational programmes’. This ‘dual system’, addressing a wider student body by means of alternative institutional structures and modes of delivery, involving voluntary and private sectors alongside State provision could not operate in schools with under 400 pupils. This number is also in line with the Department of Education document *Community School* (1970).  

---


Table 5.2.2  How long is your school founded?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Founded</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% Growth in type of school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Community/Comprehensive</td>
<td>Community College/Vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 25</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 +</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The age profile of the schools in this sample represents the general national trend with just 4.3% growth in the voluntary secondary sector, 28.6% in the community/comprehensive sector and 66.7% in the community college/vocational sector in the last twenty five years. What is quite noticeable is that 95.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 77.8% of community/comprehensive schools and 60% of community colleges/vocational schools are well-established schools of 26 years and over.
Table 5.2.3 Which of the following best describes the geographic location of your School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite Town</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village/Rural</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

As Cork is the second largest city in Ireland with a population of 481,295. It is indicative that a large number of schools would be located in the city. In this sample 37.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 44.5% of community/comprehensive schools and 10% of community college/vocational schools have cited city location. A high number of schools are located in towns with 41.7% in voluntary secondary schools, 33.3% in community/comprehensive schools and 50% in community college/vocational schools. A further 12.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools and 30% of community college/vocational schools are situated in satellite towns. This statistic is not surprising as the satellite towns such as Carrigaline (10,969) and Ballincollig (16,308) have an upward population trend. Just 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools and 10% of community college/vocational schools are situated in a village or rural setting. The community college/vocational school and the community/comprehensive sectors are the largest providers of education in

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6 Ibid.
the satellite towns. Population composition of households, births, transport, land rezoning and residential development are indicators for school demand. Schools proceed through a cycle of upsurge and growth, stability and, in some instances decline.

Table 5.2.4 In which sector is your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Comprehensive School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43 (a)

The above results show that voluntary secondary schools are the largest sector with 55.8% of schools, followed by community college/vocational schools with 23.3% of schools, community/comprehensive schools with 20.9% of schools. The Department of Education and Science national statistics for 2006 – 2007 show that, 53.8% are voluntary secondary schools, 33.8% are community colleges/vocational schools and 12.4% are community/comprehensive schools. Therefore this sample would be representative of the different sectors at national level.

National Figures compared with Thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Comprehensive School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43 (b)

Table 5.2.5 What is the religious affiliation of your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>voluntary secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Ireland</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-denominational</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-denominational</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The figures here are indicative of the national pattern. 91.7% of the voluntary secondary schools are Roman Catholic and 66.7% of both community/comprehensive schools and community colleges/vocational schools are multi-denominational. There are 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools and 11.1% of community/comprehensive schools who are Church of Ireland. The non-denominational schools are also represented with 22.2% in the community college/vocational school sector.
Table 5.2.6 Which of the following best describes your School, Greenfield, Amalgamation of 2 Voluntary Secondary Schools, Amalgamation of 1 / 2 Voluntary Secondary Schools and VEC or Public Private Partnership School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Origin</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/ Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgam of 2 Voluntary Secondary Schools</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgam of 1/2 Voluntary Secondary Schools and VEC School</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Private Partnership School</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The national pattern in school origin is also evident in this sample with 80% of voluntary secondary schools, 33.3% community/comprehensive schools and 72.7% of community college/vocational schools greenfield. What is interesting in this study is that amalgamations have taken place across all sectors. It is interesting to note that amalgamations have taken place between local voluntary secondary schools and vocational schools. This is part of the ongoing rationalisation scheme in Ireland. Different catalysts have resulted in these amalgamations – withdrawal of patron or school management from active educational service; local community requesting better facilities for students; or the Department of Education in response to an application for capital grant or major refurbishment to a particular school.

Public Private Partnership Schools are also represented in 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools and 9.1% of community college/
vocational schools in this sample. In 1999, the Irish Government launched a programme of public private partnership to address the country’s acute deficit of physical infrastructure. A contract for five second-level schools was signed. The building of these new schools reflect changes in school design and provision of facilities and are likely to be ongoing.

Several agencies including the OECD and the ESRI conduct research on the issue of school design to reflect teaching and learning methodologies and community expectations. This is reflected in Chapter 2 in The International Perspective, page 13, the OECD Conference (1998) *Under One Roof*.

**Table 5.2.7  What category best describes your school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Category</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Community/</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>College/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Sex Male</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Sex Female</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coeducational</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
Table 5.2.8  What percentage of pupils are female/male?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Female</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;10%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% +</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Response reflects only co-educational schools.

The results show that 26.1% of voluntary secondary schools are single sex male and 52.2% are single sex female. 88.9% of both the community/comprehensive sector and the community college/vocational sector are co-educational. The likelihood is that this figure for co-educational schools will change in the coming years because of rationalisation and resulting amalgamations but it reflects the national trend currently. The low numbers for females in some co-educational schools might be due to recent amalgamations.
Table 5.2.9 What % of parents avail of the free book scheme?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Parents using Free Book Scheme</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/ Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39%</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% +</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.10 Is the School categorised as 'disadvantaged' by the Department of Education and Science?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantaged?</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/ Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The survey shows that in 25% of the voluntary secondary and community/comprehensive school sector and in 44.5% of the community college/vocational sector over 50% of parents are claiming free books. This is a significant number. This would indicate that the family income is below a certain threshold and that the family is in need of extra support for educational purposes. *Retention Rates in Second Level Schools* refers to a vital national
statistic that more than half the pupils in poorer areas are dropping out of school before the Leaving Certificate despite the new programmes on offer and the interventions for the marginal pupils being offered by the present educational system.  

The general criteria for selecting schools for disadvantaged status are – parents in receipt of unemployment benefit, rural deprived background, medical card, literacy and numeracy problems and early school leaving. The high percentage overall in this sample is of note. This represents 20.8% in voluntary secondary schools, 44.4% in community/comprehensive schools and 70% in community college/vocational schools. Certain schools are designated disadvantaged under the Disadvantaged Area Scheme 1990/91. This scheme is intended to respond to the effects of socio-economic deprivation in second-level schools.

It provides teaching assistance and extra funding to these areas and currently extends to 210 schools nationally. Perhaps the most focussed scheme under this system is the Home – School – Community - Liaison Scheme which is discussed in the literature review, Chapter 3, page 104. Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan also reminds us that ‘too many of our students are turning away from schools physically or turning out of them emotionally’.

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Table 5.2.11 Is the school fee paying?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Fee paying?</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.12 If your school is not fee paying does it have an annual contribution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution Fee</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.13 What is the annual contribution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Contribution Fee</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under €100</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over €100</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.11 shows that only 12.5% of schools in this sample are fee-paying. The fee-paying schools are in the voluntary secondary sector. This would be representative of second-level schools at national level as free
education is available to all schools who wish to avail of the scheme since 1976. In this survey sample the majority of schools charge a contribution fee to cover extra curricular activities. This fee is under €100 in 83.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 77.8% of community/comprehensive schools and 85.8% of community college/vocational schools. The Government under present legislation (1998) is a partner in education though it currently lags behind other nations when it comes to spending on second-level education.

Despite the fact that Ireland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, it comes joint-last out of 29 OECD countries surveyed when it comes to spending on second-level education relative to GDP per capita.\(^\text{11}\) This results in under-funded schools that are forced to charge a contribution fee. The assertion may be therefore sustained that the Irish Government is a passive rather than an active partner and this will be further tested as public schools replace religious funded schools in the future.

**Table 5.2.14 Are there other second level schools in your catchment area?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Secondary Schools in Area</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2.15 How would you best describe the competition for school students in your area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competition for Students</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Strong</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

A substantial number of schools in all sectors have other second-level schools in the area. This gives rise to competition. Swan in the literature review, Chapter 3, page 86, related to a level of interest and the level of interaction of school and community as far back as 1967. Therefore competition is indicative of community interaction especially from parents. The majority of these schools are voluntary secondary in urban areas where the population is high and there is usually accessible choice. This may be so also where there is an ageing population where a catchment area may be shared by different schools. With the advent of Whole School Inspections on the web-site and high points required to enter third level colleges, competition for students in the community is a challenge for schools.  

12 School Inspection Reports are available on the Department of Education and Science website since 2006.
Table 5.2.16 Which of the following methods do you use to recruit students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/ Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word of Mouth</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper / Advertisement</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile of School in local paper</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Days</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Nights</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit feeder Schools</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochure / Prospectus</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The results of this survey show a variety of collaborative community methods which are used in recruiting new students across all sectors. Word of mouth features strongest in voluntary secondary schools, community colleges/vocational schools and to a lesser extent in community/comprehensive schools. It is interesting to note 60% of community college/vocational schools put an advertisement in the paper as compared to 29.2% of voluntary secondary schools and 33.3% of community/comprehensive schools. A profile of the school in the local paper was important with 70.8% of voluntary secondary schools and 88.9% of community colleges/vocational schools. Open days also ranked highly 100% in both community colleges/vocational schools. The leader in the parent nights was the community/comprehensive schools with 88.9%. All of the community/comprehensive schools visited feeder schools followed closely by the other sectors. The school brochure or prospectus was also
valued highly. Only one school reported no recruitment method and an additional form of recruitment was through past pupil network and induction days. Today parental choice of school in a competitive market and parental rights as enacted in the *Education Act* (1998) all contribute towards more open, collaborative links between parents and school. School is seen as a more 'community of place' today. Prendergast in the literature review, Chapter 3, pages 45 – 46, referred to community building where people share visions and aims, have a sense of belonging, are allowed to contribute and have a say in where things are going and are recognised.
Table 5.2.17 What is the retention rate in Junior Cycle?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Junior retention rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+%%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 43\]

Table 5.2.18 What is the retention rate in Senior Cycle?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Senior retention rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+%%</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 43\]

In the White Paper, *Charting our Education Future*, (1995) the Government set out five principles to underpin education policy – quality, equality, partnership, pluralism and accountability and these should be the guiding principles where education serves the individual, the social and economic well being of society and enhances quality of life.\(^{13}\)

All second-level schools in this sample state that over 80% of pupils complete the junior cycle. The findings in senior cycle are quite different and what is significant for this study is the different retention rates in different sectors. The voluntary secondary schools report retention rates of 95.8% with 88.8% in community/comprehensive schools and 80% in the community colleges/vocational schools. The Department of Education and Science (2005) *Retention Rates in Schools* reports that 81.3% stay on to do the Leaving Certificate. Just one sector in this survey is slightly below this national average. This can be compared to the national statistic that 1 in 12 of the country’s 720 second-level schools have drop out rates of 50% or more before Leaving Certificate and 1 in 20 student’s drop out before even taking the Junior Certificate. The report further cited that the best retention rates are in voluntary secondary schools 82.4%, community/comprehensive schools 76.1% and 67.6% in community colleges and vocational schools. The most significant finding in the report was that more than half the pupils in poorer areas are dropping out of school before Leaving Certificate. In tackling the school completion rates the whole culture of the school must be addressed. This will not just require financial resources from the Government but also a cultural change involving the recent established Welfare Board, parents, business and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) if students are to be persuaded of the benefits of continuing education.

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In this regard policies such as Home – School – Community Liaison Schemes, Early School Leavers Initiatives, Stay in School Retention Initiative, School Completion Programme, Traveller Education, Children at Risk, Disadvantaged Area School Scheme and Support Teacher Project need ongoing support and extensive funding if the retention target of 90% which the Government has laid down is to be reached. This vision represents a response to the challenge of inclusion and equity faced by many educational systems in the developed world. The challenge is to ensure that the intermediate education system of Ireland, which has its roots in the Intermediate Education Act 1878, cited in Chapter 3, pages 51 - 52, and which was designed to identify a minority of high achievers who were at the same time conformist in their disposition of thought can be reshaped to meet the needs of a broader more diverse group of learners today.

15 The Home – School – Liaison Scheme was introduced in Ireland in 1990 / 1 to respond to socio-economic deprivation in primary and second-level schools. It provides teaching assistance and extra funding for schools designated as areas of disadvantage. The scheme currently extends to 210 schools at post-primary level. However, due to financial government restraints, no further posts have been allocated since 1995 to this scheme.

16 In-school activities include homework support, learning support and peer and adult mentoring. Out-of-school activities include after school clubs, community based activities, structured holiday provision and educational excursions.

17 Aimed at keeping students in school up to the Leaving Certificate operated on a multi-agency basis and establishes cross-community links.

18 Involves tracking, after school support and family support.

19 Outreach for children and families to successfully participate in life of school.

20 Community, State Agencies and Government departments organise youth projects.

21 Extra capitation grant per pupil to school for extra resources and extra staffing.

22 Support Teacher targets most disruptive pupils and teaches or counsels individually or in small groups.
Table 5.2.19 What percentage of your intake are international students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International intake</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5%</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10%</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The most notable change in Ireland's social and economic landscape between the censuses of 2002 and 2006 has been the growth in the number of foreign nationals living and working in the country. Between 2002 and 2006 the population of foreign nationals aged over 15 almost doubled, from 190,000 to 367,000. Foreign nationals now account for more than one in nine of all adults living in Ireland. ²³

This in turn, has implications for the school population. The results show that in 83.3% of voluntary secondary schools they have between 1 – 5% of international students and in 16.7% of schools they have 6 – 10%. The pattern is different in the other sectors where in 50% of community/comprehensive schools they have 1 – 5% of international students, in 25% of schools 6 – 10%, in 12.5% of schools 11-15% and in a further 12.5% of schools 16-20% of international students is recorded. In 70% of community colleges they have 1 – 5% of international students and 30% of their schools

report an intake of 6 – 10%. All schools in this sample are catering for international students. There is anecdotal evidence that some voluntary secondary schools are not willing to take international students. This may explain how their enrolment of international students is lower than other sectors. The Department of Education and Science has referred to this in their guidelines for school admissions. 24

Post-primary schools are facing unprecedented challenges in the area of inclusion, the most significant relate to catering for significant numbers, as are evident in this sample with widely varying cultural backgrounds, prior learning and language abilities. The challenges in the area of language learning and intercultural education are significant. As the Rampton Report 25 in the UK has stated:

A ‘good’ education cannot be based on one culture only, and where ethnic minorities form a permanent and integral part of the population, we do not believe that education should seek to iron out the differences between cultures, nor an attempt to draw everyone in to the dominant culture.

Planning for Diversity, The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005 – 2008 26 prepared by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform guides education plans. The new curricula provide ample opportunity to extend children’s awareness of their environment in the wider world, to learn about the lives of people in other countries and of their contribution to art, history, music and drama to mention a few. The Civic, Social and Political Education Programme was designed for the preparation of students

for active, participatory citizenship as a process, which must be shared by
the whole school including parents. Aspects of the curriculum are
designed to foster a respect for human dignity, tolerance and the respect for
values and beliefs of others, and a celebration of diversity. Additional
teaching and resources are provided to schools.

Under the *Education Act* 1998 each school board of management is required
to prepare a School Plan and included are issues of equality, of access and
participation. Existing curricula can be mediated and adapted to reflect the
emergence of an expanding multicultural society particularly in the area of
assessment.
Table 5.2.20  What percentage turnout was there for parent teacher meetings in both Junior and Senior Cycle in the last two years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Turnout Junior Parent/Teacher meeting</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 40%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%+</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Turnout Senior Parent/Teacher meeting</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 40%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%+</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Relationships with parents are now a more important part of schools staffs' responsibilities. The acknowledgement of parents as central partners in the education system as outlined in the *Education Act* ensures that parents have access to records kept by the school relating to the progress of a student in his or her education.\(^\text{30}\) Lagadec reminds us that 'communication does not

simply mean being able to send messages, it also means being able to receive them'. 31 Thus the partnership process in education is moving away from the more discrete, rather self-contained character of the secondary school as it existed over many generations. The turnout for parent teaching meetings at both junior and senior cycle is interesting across the different sectors. In the voluntary secondary sector there is a high turnout with 83.3% of parents in the highest category and 16.7% in the category 70 – 80%. In the senior cycle there is a lower turnout of 79.2% in the category 80%+. There is a 4.2% turnout in the category 60 – 69%. In the community/comprehensive school sector in the junior cycle there is a 77.8% turnout in the category 80%+ and 22.2% in the category 60 – 69%. However, in the senior cycle there is a slight drop in attendance with 66.7% in the category 80%+, 11.1% in the category 70 – 80%, and the category 60 – 69% has an attendance of 22.2%.

The most significant percentage turnout figure is in the vocational/community college/vocational sector, with just 40% in the 80%+ category, 20% in categories 70 – 80% and 60 – 69%, 10% in the categories 50 – 59% and under 40% in junior cycle. This turnout is almost mirrored in the senior cycle.

Traditionally voluntary secondary schools would be associated with the middle class where educated parents are ‘demand driven’ and wish to be

informed about their child’s progress and to assist in the learning process. However, in this sample 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools are disadvantaged. *Parents as Partners in Schooling:*\(^{32}\) focuses on the point that in socially and economically disadvantaged areas support for education is weak and interventions are urgently needed in order to combat marginalisation. These interventions have been discussed in Questions 10 and 18. The community schools’ guiding ethos is that schools should be part of the community and accordingly they would foster a consciousness of the community at large, its needs and possibilities for integrated projects. They first opened in 1972. In this sample 44.4% of the schools are disadvantaged (Table 5.2.10) and this may explain the lower turnout at parent teacher meetings than the voluntary secondary sector. The low to poor turnout in the community college/vocational sector may be explained by the fact that 70% of the schools in the sample have disadvantage status.

This is also coupled with the fact that vocational schools traditionally served the poorer and less able sector of society. This sector however also comprises community colleges which were set up in the late 1970’s as the VEC response to the development of community schools in order to attract the more able pupil. A major conclusion from the data here is that there is a necessity for meaningful interventions through practical measures and through re-education and re-orientation in attitudes to address the non-involvement of parents. Despite educational theory emphasising the role of parent, educational practice has lingered behind in some sectors.

Curriculum and Course Data.

Table 5.2.21 Which of the following option subjects are available in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art, Craft &amp; Design</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science / Local Studies</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mat. Technology (Wood)</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Graphics</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental &amp; Social Studies</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboarding</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Studies</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
Which of the following Option subjects are available in your School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Greek</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Studies</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew Studies</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Maths.</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics &amp; Chemistry</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Science</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Economics</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Drawing</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Studies</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art with Design Option</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art with Craftwork Option</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Studies</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education (Leaving Cert.)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

182
In the literature review, Chapter 3, pages 65 – 66, the comprehensive debate draws attention to the necessity of having a broad-based curriculum to provide a more holistic education for students: This rationale is based on educational, social and economic arguments. The researcher examined firstly option subjects at junior cycle, French is the major language offered in all sectors and just 10% of community colleges/vocational schools do not offer French. German is offered in 75% of voluntary secondary schools and in 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools. This drops to 30% in community colleges/vocational schools. There would be a tradition in the more academic voluntary secondary schools of teaching both French and German. However, this trend in German would represent national trends. Spanish is taught only in 25% of voluntary secondary schools and Italian in 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools. This would be in line with national trends also. Typewriting is offered in just 16.7% of voluntary secondary schools, most likely to weak band students. Art, Craft and Design is offered to all in the community/comprehensive schools, in 90% of community colleges/vocational schools and in 87.5% of voluntary secondary schools. Business Studies is offered in all voluntary secondary and community/comprehensive schools and in 80% of community colleges/vocational schools.

Junior Science and Local Studies is directed more towards weaker pupils and it is offered in 33.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 33.3% of community/comprehensive schools and a higher 60% in community colleges/vocational schools. Music is offered in 79.2% of voluntary
secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60%
of community colleges/vocational schools. The demand for Music wasalways highest in the voluntary secondary sector but because of such a choice
in optional subjects today this would be in line with the national trend.
The results in Materials Technology (Wood) are significant in that only
37.5% of voluntary secondary schools offer this subject as opposed to all of
the other sectors. This would reflect the more academic nature of those
schools that traditionally did not offer this subject. The vocational or generic
aspects of education are not being addressed by those schools. This trend
will most likely change with further rationalisation of schools. This aspect of
education is being further highlighted, by the voluntary secondary, once
again only offering Technical Graphics in 33.3% of their schools and a
surprising 90% in community colleges/vocational schools. Some of those
voluntary secondary schools are very small and may not have the manpower
to teach this subject.

Home Economics is offered in all sectors. 90% of community colleges/
vocational schools offer this subject and 88.9% of community/comprehensive
schools. This is surprising as most of those schools would have been built in
the last 30 years and facilities for Home Economics would be good. This
subject is offered in 70.8% of voluntary secondary schools and this again
would most likely be in the more academic schools or through lack of
facilities in an older school. Another practical subject Metalwork is offered
in only 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools. This figure clearly illustrates
that the holistic curriculum is not being offered in these schools. The OECD
Review of National Education Policy (1991) stated that the weight of the classical humanist tradition was enormous in second-level education and called for a much more powerful parallel system of technical/vocational schools or a restructured general secondary education curriculum. 33 This call has still gone unheard in this sector.

Science is offered in all voluntary secondary schools, where it is offered in 90% of community colleges/vocational schools and in 88.9% of community/comprehensive schools. The Science and Local Studies option is being offered in the others as the sample has shown. Junior Certificate Technology is a new course and is offered in 25% of voluntary secondary schools, 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools and in just 20% of community colleges/vocational. This course is based on the use of computers in technology and the Department of Education and Science have not yet supplied all the technology to schools which would account for the low take-up in schools.

Environmental and Social Studies is a subject to suit the weaker students. It is offered in 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools and 11.1% of community/comprehensive schools. It is a modified version of the Geography course. Since Geography is now offered at ordinary and higher level, thus catering for the lesser able student, the majority of schools do not offer this subject. Keyboarding is offered in 4.2% of voluntary

secondary schools and 10% of community colleges/vocational schools again to facilitate the weaker students. In recent years the option list has widened with different levels in all subjects so Keyboarding has nearly been discontinued. Computer Studies is offered in all sectors, 70.8% in voluntary secondary, 70% in community college/vocational schools and 55.6% in community/comprehensive schools. These figures indicate that roughly 30% of schools do not offer Computer Studies which is a significant number in the light of the importance and high ranking of Information and Communication Technology. What will happen if ICT qualifications become a requirement or a university expectation, for example to enable students to follow courses and provide coursework online? This is likely to happen, as already in England a level 2 pass in ICT is a requirement for the proposed Matriculation diploma (Chapter 2, page 25). Other new subjects that have been introduced such as PE (pilot course) and Religious Education are only offered in 4.3% of voluntary secondary schools. Latin is now only offered in 4.3% of voluntary secondary schools.

**Senior Cycle.**

In Ireland Senior Cycle education (16 – 18) aims to prepare students for life in a rapidly changing society, and to integrate developments in the area of vocational training with general education policy. It encourages and facilitates students to continue in full-time education during the post-compulsory period by providing a stimulating range of programmes suited to their abilities, aptitudes and interests.
The objectives are to develop each student's potential to the full, and equip them for work or further education. Moreover Lynch in Chapter 2, pages 21 – 22, cautions that failure to equalise access to, participation in and benefit from education means that much of the talent and ability available in society is under-utilised and disorientation and detachment develops among those who are excluded. Thus findings in this section must be assessed with the foregoing literature in mind.

All schools in the voluntary secondary sector and community/comprehensive sector offer History except for the community college/vocational sector which offers it in 90% of schools. A similar picture is presented with Geography. Latin is available in just 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools. Greek or Classical Studies are not offered. French is offered across all sectors. German is offered in 70.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and in 30% of community colleges/vocational schools. This would reflect the national averages, German being the second language offered. Spanish is offered in 29.2% of voluntary secondary schools and in 11.1% of community/comprehensive schools. Italian is offered in 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools and in 10% of community college/vocational schools. Applied Mathematics is offered in 45.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60% of community colleges/vocational schools.

Physics is offered in all community/comprehensive schools and in 95.8% of voluntary secondary schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools. The lower percentage in this last sector may reflect some of the older schools in this

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sector emphasising more technical and applied studies or mainly due to inability of small schools to deliver a full-range of comprehensive subjects. All schools in the voluntary secondary and community/comprehensive sector offer Chemistry with the exception of the community college/vocational who offer it in 70% of schools. The combined Chemistry and Physics course is offered just in 20% of community colleges/vocational schools. This subject is not offered widely nationally. Agricultural Science is offered just in 37.5% of voluntary secondary schools and 50% of community college/vocational schools. Traditionally more rural students attended vocational schools. Whitaker (1958) in his 'Programme for Economic Expansion' remarked that vocational schools catered for large areas of rural Ireland and in so doing gave something of a missionary character to their work. He was referring to Winter Farm Schools where part-time education was provided for farmers after normal school hours. This tradition continued on during normal school hours. Biology is taught in all schools voluntary secondary and community/comprehensive sectors but in 90% of community colleges/vocational schools. Agricultural Economics is taught just in 4.2% of voluntary secondary schools and 10% of community colleges/vocational schools. This would be a minority subject nationally. What is most significant in this sample is that only 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools offer Engineering and only 33.3% of this sector offer Technical Drawing. This is a very significant finding where 55.8% of the student population attend these schools.
One would expect that the voluntary sector would cater for vocational subjects and vocational demands in the local community. The researcher recalls a structural weakness in the provision of education enunciated by the then Minister for Education Patrick Hillery in (1963) in that voluntary secondary schools and vocational schools were being constructed as separate and distinct entities with no connecting link between them. The Minister's answer to this problem was direct State provision of a post-primary building, a new principle in Irish education, aligning the school system more closely with the needs of the community. The curriculum of the school would be more 'comprehensive' combining the academic subjects of the secondary schools with the more practical subjects previously offered only in vocational schools (Chapter 3, pages 75 – 76). Although the comprehensive school, launched in 1963 and the community schools in 1972 address this comprehensive idea, the present segregated system of schools in unable to cater individually for the delivery of a holistic education. The ongoing rationalisation of schools may address this matter in time. Construction Studies is also offered in 33.3% of voluntary secondary schools while 90% of community colleges/vocational schools offer it and it is offered in 100% of community/comprehensive schools.

Accounting is offered in 91.7% of voluntary secondary schools, in 100% of community/comprehensive schools and in 70% of community colleges/vocational schools. Business Studies is offered in all community colleges/vocational schools in 95.8% of voluntary secondary schools and in 88.9% of community/comprehensive schools. Economics would be a less popular subject nationwide and in this sample it is offered in 33.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 33.3% of
community/comprehensive schools and in 20% of community colleges/vocational schools. Music is offered in 83.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60% of community colleges/vocational schools. Art with Design is offered in 66.7% of voluntary secondary schools, 55.6% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60% of community colleges/vocational schools. Art with Craftwork is offered in 50% of voluntary secondary schools, 88.9% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60% of community colleges/vocational schools. Home Economics is lowest in voluntary secondary schools with 66.7%, 88.9% in community/comprehensive schools and 90% in community colleges/vocational schools. This would reflect the longstanding training in this sector for the service industries in both day and night courses.

The above figures for Computer Studies are interesting. One might expect a higher percentage. This may reflect the fact that Computer Studies is not an examination subject in the Leaving Certificate and therefore it is not a high priority in schools. In the optional Transition Year Programme students do the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), however this is also optional.

Computer Studies is offered in 62.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60% of community colleges/vocational schools. However, the researcher is aware that this is a small sample of this school sector so this may not reflect the national trend. The research findings here suggest that Computer Studies in senior cycle is not a priority. The level of Computer Studies in this sample suggests that Government investment is needed in order to
cater for technological requirements of the future:

Our students will leave school as capable independent learners, able to use ICT confidently, creatively and productively, able to communicate effectively, able to work collaboratively and to critically evaluate, manage and use information. 36

The NCCA articulated this vision of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy for all students in the discussion paper *Curriculum Assessment and ICT in the Irish Context* (2004). Guiding principles from that discussion paper outlined the role of ICT as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum. This *Framework* is a cross-curricular ‘scaffold’ for planning and teaching with ICT. A developmental initiative with a small number of schools by the NCCA is being conducted presently. In addition, the expansion of the initiative through working with partners such as the National Centre for Technology in Education will provide multiple perspectives on the *ICT Framework* in practice.

The purpose of the initiative is to engage with teachers, to gain feedback on the accessibility, usability and feasibility of the *ICT Framework* and their experiences with it in their classrooms. 37 This information will then be used by the NCCA in a report to the Department of Education and Science.

The vision in the *Strategic Plan* of the NCCA (2003–2005) is as follows:

A key role in shaping a world-class education system that meets needs of all learners, supports their participation in communities and society, and contributes to the development of the knowledge society in Ireland. 38

Is this vision being realised in the area of Physical Education? Physical Education is offered in 79.2% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/

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comprehensive schools and in 70% of community colleges/vocational schools. The researcher is aware of the points race in Ireland and curriculum overload but the balance in the curriculum is absent if this subject is not available in senior cycle in all schools? However, proposals to restructure the senior cycle represent a response to the challenge of inclusion and equity and to the challenge to ensure that an education system originally designed to serve the needs of an élite few can be re-shaped to meet the needs of a broader, more diverse group of learners. The re-balancing of the senior cycle curriculum will present students with greater degrees of flexibility by the inclusion of a range of short course options. One of the new courses envisaged is Sports Studies. 39

This course extends significantly the sports focus of some elements of the Physical Education subject and has a strong connection with the student’s participation in Physical Education. Another option envisaged is Health Education and Promotion, 40 where health is seen as a resource for everyday life, a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources as well as physical and mental capacities. Both of those courses should ensure that the school is catering for the needs of the full community.

Religious Education is a new subject which can be taken at Leaving Certificate examination level. It is only however taken in a small number of schools in 4.2% of voluntary secondary schools, 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools and in 20% of community colleges/vocational schools. On the other hand, Religious Education is offered in 87.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and in 70% of community colleges/vocational schools.

40 Ibid, p 35.
Table 5.2.22 The following programmes are offered in this school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Year offered</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaving Cert Vocational</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leaving Cert Applied</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Leaving Cert</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 43\]
This section looks at the availability of four optional programmes as the literature review advocates the 'dual system' of learning combining both the academic and vocational in meeting the needs of the wider student body. These courses also involve the wider local community. The Transition Year Programme is offered in 95.8% of voluntary secondary schools in all community/comprehensive schools and in 70% of community colleges/vocational schools. The lower percentage in this sector may reflect the lower numbers who stay on to do senior cycle in those schools. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is available in 70.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 77.8% of community/comprehensive schools and in 90% of community colleges/vocational schools.

The Leaving Certificate Applied is an alternative Leaving Certificate Programme to cater for weaker students. It is offered in 30.4% of voluntary secondary schools who would traditionally have more academic students, although this is changing in inner city schools. Community/comprehensive schools offer it in 66.7% of their schools and community colleges/vocational schools in 70% of schools. Aspects of these courses will be analysed further in later questions.

The Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) programme was introduced in 1985 to provide appropriate education and training for young people to bridge the gap between school and work. These courses also provide an alternative route to higher education. Pupils may repeat their Leaving Certificate in order to raise their points and so continue on to Third Level. Students who do the Leaving
Certificate Applied may do a diploma before going on to Institutes of Technology for further study. Table 5.2.22 shows that only 4.3% of voluntary secondary schools offer this programme and 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools. It is offered in 80% of community college/vocational schools. Traditionally the vocational sector was involved in this programme which was formerly called 'continuing education' for the less academic students. Nationally the numbers participating on PLC programmes have increased steadily over the last ten years from over 12,000 students in 1989/90 to 24,337 in 1999/2000. 41

Falling numbers in the 12 – 18 year age cohort have enabled some schools to look at providing further education opportunities other than the conventional second-level student. These courses in the past decade came to provide an important progression route for about 14% of all school leavers each year. Additionally they have become an important re-entry route for adults returning to learning. The White Paper on Adult Education makes the point that 34% of PLC students are aged 21 and over. 42

42 Ibid.
Table 5.2.23 The School has Information Nights for parents before choosing option subjects/programmes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Nights</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.24 Parents may make appointments with guidance counsellor if they require information or guidance in choosing options?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent may consult guidance counsellor</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The Education Act 1998 requires that schools must ensure that ‘all students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices’. In response the Department of Education and Science in a guidelines document in 2005 set out the following:

The development and implementation of a school’s guidance plan is a whole school responsibility. It should involve the guidance counsellor/s in the first instance, as well as all other relevant members of management and staff of the school. Parents and students must be seen as an essential part of this process and representatives of the local community, especially local business, NEPS and other relevant agencies should also be consulted and actually involved as appropriate.

The survey shows that parent information nights are available in 75% of the voluntary secondary sector, in 88.9% of the community/comprehensive sector and in 77.8% of community college/vocational sector. Parents may make appointments with the guidance counsellor in all sectors. It is surprising that information nights are not a priority in all schools, ensuring that parents are active participants in all aspects of both planning and delivery of the learning process. Findings from the National School Leavers' survey indicate that parents play a crucially important role in advising young people on post-school educational and labour market choices. 45 Therefore all parents should be made aware of the nature and effects of educational choices of their children. Consequently schools should be encouraged to involve parents in their guidance programme, for example, by holding information evenings for parents on guidance issues.

Table 5.2.25 The Option Programme is influenced by the following – Teachers, Parents, Local Business Community, Economy prospects or Other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College / Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Business</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Community</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy Prospects</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Schools today have become much more aware of the community dimension of their work and are increasingly aware that they no longer have a monopoly of educational expertise. This idea of partnership and co-operation is enshrined in legislation in Ireland and in most other OECD countries.

Thus roles and relationships have to be negotiated between schools, parents, local agencies, the business, and local communities as well as with Governments. According to the principals in this survey, teachers’ influence on option programmes is 62.5% in the voluntary secondary school sector, 55.6% in the community/comprehensive school sector and 50% in the community college/vocational school sector. Parents also have an active involvement in programme planning, 58.3% in the voluntary secondary sector, 55.6% in the community/comprehensive sector and 50% in the community college/ vocational sector. It is clear that the Business
Community have a very small influence, 4.2% in the voluntary secondary sector and 11.1% in the community/comprehensive sector with no influence in the community college/vocational sector. Perhaps the community/comprehensive schools because of their foundation ethos have built up stronger co-operative relationships with the business community that is evident in this survey. Successive Governments in Ireland have seen the development of human capital as a key element in ensuring the country’s continuing economic progress. As a result, the benefits of fully participating in processes, having the overall goal of enhancing and modernising education and training programmes are evident in school planning in this survey. Economy prospects influence 16.7% of the voluntary sector, 22.2% of community/comprehensive school sector and 20% of the community college/vocational sector.
Table 5.2.26 The School has a Student Council?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School has Student Council</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Monaghan reminds us that ‘in seeking to value and develop the young person who is at the centre of the school community, we cannot dodge the question of collaboration with students’. The research findings here are significant in that student councils are the norm in all sectors with the exception of the voluntary secondary who do not have a student council in a minority of 8.3% of schools. The role of the Student Council is firmly endorsed in the Education Act (1998).

A Student Council shall promote the interests of the school and the involvement of the students in the affairs of the school in cooperation with the Board, Parents and Teachers.

This greater degree of participation on the part of the students could bring about ownership of their work, increased responsibility for their own performance and greater pride in their achievement.

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One of the central aims of the Civic Social and Political Education Course in junior cycle is to develop active citizens. Students need to acquire a sense of belonging, a capacity to gain access to information and structures where they live. This in turn may give them confidence to participate in democratic society in the wider community. 48

Programmes.

Transition Year Programme.

Table 5.2.27 The Transition Year Programme gives students an opportunity to be flexible learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYP Flexible</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Tables 27 – 49 have been adjusted to three categories for ease of reading.

Non response reflects schools not involved in programme.

Table 5.2.28  The Structure of the Programme allows a broad range of learning experience with an emphasis on personal development including social awareness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Range of Learning Experiences</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The motivation for the introduction of this programme grew out of a concern with the overly academic nature of senior cycle education. This is well captured in a speech by the Minister for Education Richard Burke in 1974:

Because of the growing pressures on students for high grades and competitive success, educational systems are becoming, increasingly, academic treadmills. Increasingly too, because of these pressures, the school is losing contact with life outside and the student has little or no opportunity 'to stand and stare' to discover the kind of person he is, the kind of society he will be living in, in due course, contributing to its shortcomings and good points. 49

Consequently the Transition Year Programme was first introduced in 1974 as a bridge for students to move from a state of dependence to a more autonomous and participative role with regard to their own future.

As a result schools had the flexibility to realise the aims of senior cycle with a particular emphasis on the intellectual, social and personal development of the student, self-directed learning and providing young people with experience of adult and working life. There is agreement across all sectors endorsing flexible learning styles, with emphasis on personal development and the opportunity to be involved in helping the less well-off members of our society through fundraising and voluntary work.

### Table 5.2.29 Work Experience may later help students to choose subjects appropriate to their future careers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience helps</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The responses to this question varied across the sectors. In the voluntary secondary sector 4.3% disagreed, 8.7% were undecided and 87% agreed.

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In the community/comprehensive school sector all agreed. In the community college/vocational sector 12.5% were undecided and 87.5% agreed. The ESRI Study of the Transition Year Programme defines work experience as ‘career sampling’ where students get to try out jobs they might be interested in working at in the future. In such cases, the work experience is seen as an opportunity for students to think about their future aspirations and inform their long-term career choices. On the other hand work experience involved working in their usual part-time jobs or even choosing placements where they felt they were likely to be ‘kept on’ as paid part-time workers. In general it was felt by those interviewed in the study that the work experience was positive. Students were able to make informed subject choice for Leaving Certificate and had an increased awareness of possible careers. These findings would concur with the results of this survey. Any hesitation or indecision on the part of the principals may be due to school drop-out amongst their disadvantaged students where they obtained jobs during work experience.

Table 5.2.30 Students become more aware of social problems through being involved in fundraising.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness of Societal Problems</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Within every school there are a range of worthwhile practices such as fundraising for the less better off in society. Students share a sense of responsibility and have a feeling of shared concern, or of common endeavour. In the voluntary secondary sector there was 91.3% agreement, 88.9% agreement in community/comprehensive schools and 87.5% in community colleges/vocational schools. The flexible nature of this programme allows for the provision of a broad range of learning experiences with an emphasis on personal development including social awareness.
Table 5.2.31 Students have an opportunity to hear guest speakers from local community not available to other year groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guest Speakers</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

It is noteworthy in the survey of the high priority given to guest speakers across all sectors. Just in 8.7% of voluntary secondary schools this is not the case. This could be due to lack of suitable personnel in the community or a more curtailed schedule due to small numbers in class.

Table 5.2.32 The Local Community are willing to provide work-practice places.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community provides work places</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
Table 5.2.33 The Course is difficult to run because the local community cannot offer job placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community cannot provide work placement</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.34 The majority of students have to travel outside local area for job placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs are outside local area</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
The ESRI survey of the Transition Year Programme (2004) reveals that the majority of schools 97% offer all Transition Year students work experience, with a very small number of schools providing work experience for only some students or none at all. The results of this survey show that principals in 95.6% of the voluntary sector, 88.9% of community/comprehensive schools, and in 100% of community colleges/vocational schools sector feel the local community are willing to provide work-practice. The benefits of work experience are discussed in Question 29.

The OECD Publication *Schools and Businesses: A New Partnership* discusses the purpose and benefits of school – work partnerships. This is discussed in the International perspective, Chapter 2, page 18. Question 33 is linked very closely with Question 32. All sectors disagree (Table 5.2.33) that the community cannot offer job placements. Question 34 (Table 5.2.34) questions the need of students to travel outside local area to attain a job. Once again the majority disagree with 8.7% in voluntary secondary schools undecided and 33.3% in community/comprehensive schools also undecided. These two sectors have disadvantaged students and perhaps the work places on offer are not suitable for all students. The ESRI Study (2004) also mentioned that some students were precluded from participating in work experience because of behavioural problems.

Table 5.2.35 The TYP in school is highly rated by parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents rate TYP highly</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

There is a relatively positive response to this question. In the voluntary secondary sector where 82.6% of principals stated that this course is highly rated by parents, 75% in community/comprehensive schools and 75% in community colleges/vocational schools. Nonetheless there is a minority in the three sectors undecided and 12.5% in one sector who disagrees. These results may be compared to the ESRI Survey (2004). It was noted that the levels of discontinuation in vocational schools was 45% which would explain some of the dissatisfaction among parents in the survey in this sector. Designated disadvantaged schools were almost three times as likely to discontinue this course as non-disadvantaged schools.

44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools are deemed disadvantaged in the survey so this could explain the low rating by parents or maybe lack of interest entirely.

53 Ibid., pp 30 - 31.
The most commonly cited reason in the ESRI survey for discontinuation was lack of student demand and interest in the three-year cycle. This would be more noticeable in a disadvantaged area with low parental guidance. Another reason given was the more appropriate Leaving Certificate Applied course which will be borne out in this survey (Questions 44 – 49). The lack of parent support was reported in 10% of schools in the ESRI survey.

Table 5.2.36  The TYP is important for engaging with the Vocational dimension of the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYP engages with vocational dimension</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The Transition Year Programme is an optional one year programme offering the potential for the holistic development of young people as flexible learners, active citizens and future workers. The NCCA in Developing Senior Cycle Education: Consultative Paper on Issues and Options describes the Transition Year Programme, the LCVP and LCA

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as being involved with the 'vocational dimension' of the curriculum, with outreach to community and business sectors and with key skills associated with communication, ICT, enterprise and problem solving skills of students. The results of this survey are generally in agreement with this opinion. In voluntary secondary schools 78.3% agree while 17.4% disagree and 4.3% are undecided, in community/comprehensive schools 75% agree, 12.5% disagree and 12.5% are undecided and in community colleges/vocational schools there is 100% agreement. Schools in all sectors are involved in the LCA and LCVP so the reason for disagreement or indecision may be due to the fact they feel other courses cater better for the vocational dimension of education.
Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

Table 5.2.37 This course encourages the business and social sector to engage in school life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCVP encourages interaction of school with business and social sector</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Non response reflects schools not involved in programme.

Coolahan describes the aim of the LCVP as follows- ‘to blend academic and vocational elements so as to prepare participants better for the changing social, work and business environment’. Students are required to take five Leaving Certificate subjects as well as three link Modules – Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. Consequently this programme seeks not only changes in the curricular content studied, but also and more particularly, in the teaching and learning strategies employed.

These include active learning, students assuming more responsibility for their own learning, engagement in cross-curricular activity, employment of resource-based learning and using the wider community as a learning resource. The findings here show that in the voluntary secondary sector 83.4% agree and 16.7% are undecided. In the community/comprehensive schools 85.7% agree and 14.3% are undecided and there is 100% agreement in the community college/vocational school sector.

The Report *In Support of Change: An Evaluation of the LCVP In-Career Development Programme* refers in particular to how the LCVP Support Service in Ireland has helped schools develop an extensive network of relationships with employers, enterprise boards, partnerships, training agencies and community bodies. \(^{56}\)

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\(^{56}\) Ibid., p 55.
Table 5.2.38 The LCVP Programme is an intervention in the Leaving Certificate (established), which enhances the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCVP intervention in Leaving Cert.</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

As is clear from the above table the vast majority of principals endorse this statement. In the voluntary secondary sector 94.4% agree and 5.6% disagree, in the community/comprehensive school sector there is 100% agreement, in the community college/vocational sector 88.9% agree and 11.1% are undecided. This endorsement is encouraging for future change in education as internationally pathways crossing ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ programmes are becoming clearly articulated, presenting learners with the option of mixing and matching in order to develop more individualised learning programmes and paths. Consequently policy and research literature on vocationally oriented education has laid great emphasis on ‘transferable skills’:

- Basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Generic skills such as ‘core skills’ of problem solving, communication and autonomous learning and ‘work-related’ skills such as time-keeping, industrial practices and customer relations.

- Intellective skills such as ‘thinking skills’ including conceptualising, risk-taking and connecting.\(^57\)

The re-balancing of the senior cycle at present by the NCCA is being underpinned by ‘key skills’ which were first brought to the fore by the LCVP, TYP and LCA.

### Table 5.2.39 The LCVP prepares learners for further education and the world of work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCVP prepares learners for education and work</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p 22.
Table 5.2.40 The LCVP linking with employers in the community is beneficial to the future careers of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link with employers</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Chapter 3 of the White Paper provides a description and account of the second-level education system:

To encourage and facilitate students to continue in full-time education during the post-compulsory period by providing a stimulating range of programmes suited to their abilities, aptitudes and interests.....to develop each student’s potential to the full, and equip them for further work or further education. 58

This aim is firmly endorsed in the results of this survey in Table 5.2.39. In the voluntary secondary sector 94.5% agree and 5.6% disagree. In the community/comprehensive sector and the community college/vocational sector there is 100% agreement.

The OECD study *Schools and Businesses: A New Partnership* discusses the purpose of partnership in providing a continuing link with work through a real learning vocational setting which encourages the school to have a wide range of activities, Chapter 2, page 18. In the voluntary secondary sector 72.2% agree while 27.8% are undecided. In the community/comprehensive sector 85.8% agree and 14.2% are undecided. In the community college/vocational sector 77.8% agree and 22.2% are undecided. Overall there is a higher level of agreement.

Table 5.2.41 The School through LCVP establishes ongoing partnerships with specific employers in the form of twinning or sponsorship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing Partnerships with Employers</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
Table 5.2.42 Interaction between the School and the world of work is important today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Work Interaction</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ N = 43 \]

Table 5.2.43 School Community Partnerships have helped this school to develop an extensive network of relationships with employers, enterprise boards and training agencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Work Partnerships beneficial</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ N = 43 \]

The NCCA’s *Overview Advice* (2004)\(^{59}\) underpinned investment in change as an essential supporting strategy for the implementation of Senior Cycle reform.

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Funding the improved outreach of schools that will enable the site of learning in areas such as those of enterprise education, work related initiatives and school-community links add increased costs to education. Thus schools need to depend more and more on the wider supportive community. This is borne out in this study, Table 5.2. In the voluntary secondary sector 61.1% agree, 16.7% disagree and 22.2% are undecided. In the community/comprehensive sector 85.7% agree and 14.3% disagree. In the community college/vocational sector there is 100% agreement. It would seem quite likely that schools in disadvantaged areas would benefit less from twinning and sponsorship so this could have a bearing on the responses to this statement. The response to Question 42 is supportive across all sectors. Schools who get involved in this programme do so because of their belief in cross-curricular learning and school/work transfer of learning. In Question 43 development of extensive relationships with employers, enterprise boards and training agencies is explored. In the voluntary secondary school sector 70.6% agree, 11.8% disagree and 17.6% are undecided. In the community/comprehensive school sector 85.7% agree and 14.3% are undecided, while there is 100% agreement in the community college/vocational sector. The researcher is aware that in this study 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools and 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools are disadvantaged and the absence of industry could explain the response. On the other-hand in the community college/vocational sector 70% are disadvantaged but the small numbers engaged in LCVP most likely are in more advantaged areas. It is outside the parameters of this survey to ascertain what areas the schools are in who partake in this programme.


219
Leaving Certificate Applied Programme.

Table 5.2.44 The LCA caters for those whose aptitudes, needs and learning styles are not catered for in the Leaving Certificate (established).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA caters for special needs and aptitudes</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Non response reflects schools not involved in programme.

Table 5.2.45 The pre-vocational nature of LCA caters for those who would otherwise drop out of school after Junior Certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA caters for would be dropouts</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The Leaving Certificate Applied, introduced in 1995, is a discrete, educational programme offered under the umbrella of the Leaving Certificate. The programme is pre-vocational by nature, and aimed mainly at those who do not wish to proceed directly to Higher Education and for those whose aptitudes, needs and learning styles are not fully catered for by
the Leaving Certificate (established). Participants in this programme are predominantly engaged in work and study with an active, practical, task-based ‘orientation’. What is of note is the response to the statement in Table 5.2.44. With the exception of one school, which is undecided, there is a strong endorsement for this programme across all sectors. The high retention levels in schools in this sample, Questions 17 and 18, also show that the needs of this student cohort are being catered for with this programme. *The Early School Leavers Forum Report* further endorses this programme in that it caters for the diversity of needs of most of the disadvantaged students.

Towards 2016 Ten - Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement talks about adapting education and training systems in response to competency requirements, more flexible pathways in education and training, developing measures to combat early school leaving and enhancing attendance and retention.

In this survey there is agreement across all sectors (Table 5.2.45), 88.9% in the voluntary secondary sector, 100% in the community/comprehensive school sector and 85.7% in the community college/vocational sector that the pre-vocational nature of the course caters for those who may have dropped out of school early. This result concurs with the findings of Boldt (1998) that the course contributed in a significant way to national education policy by retaining young people who would otherwise have left school at 15, in full time education.

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Table 5.2.46 The public perception of the programme as one for ‘weaker’ students curtails the number of students taking this programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA perceived as for weaker students, thus damaging it</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 43\]


One of the findings was that the public perception of the programme is one for ‘weaker students’. This resulted in lack of parity of esteem with other Leaving Certificate Programmes nationally under the same umbrella. This reality was sometimes further exacerbated by lack of recognition of the programme, in particular cases, by employers and education and training institutions. Though the programme has been amended, the above perceptions are borne out once again in this survey. In the voluntary secondary sector 77.8% agree while 22.2% disagree, in the community/comprehensive school sector 50% agree while 16.7% disagree and 33.3% are undecided and in the community college/vocational sector 85.7% agree while 14.3% disagree.

Table 5.2.47 The course contributes in a significant way to education policy by retaining people in full education who would otherwise have left school at 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA keeps pupils at school</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ N = 43 \]

In Ireland it is the National policy as set out in the Education White Paper (1995) that 90% of the age cohort 15 – 18 complete the full secondary education cycle. \(^{66}\) In the voluntary secondary sector 77.8% agree and 22.2% are undecided, there is 100% agreement in the community/comprehensive schools and the community college/vocational sector. This would be in line with Boldts' findings reported in Question 45.

Table 5.2.48 The participants in LCA are gaining qualifications and making vocational choices about career options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants gaining qualifications and making career choices</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The overall positive response to this statement is in line with the general satisfaction level of this programme as education has a key role to play in the acquisition of social capital and access to career opportunities and life choices.

The results concur with the study *Unlocking Potential* that found that students taking LCA are gaining a qualification and making vocational choices regarding employment and the pursuit of further education and training. Moreover the evidence of destination surveys of graduates undertaken by the NCCA between 1997 and 2000 show that approximately 89% proceed to work or further education on completion of the programme.

Table 5.2.49 Community aspects of the LCA prepare students more fully for employment and for their role as participative enterprising citizens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA prepares students for responsible citizenship</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

In the *Creative Age: Knowledge and Skills for the New Economy* (1999) Seltzer and Bentley offer their views of the changes needed to learning environments and to curriculum in order to accommodate the kinds of directions and learning in the future.

In their vision of education in the future, it is clear that schools as places of learning will be characterised by greater flexibility in curriculum provision, greater variety of learning environments, greater levels of outreach to the world of work and to the community and greater integration with other learning institutions providing opportunities for lifelong learning. 69 These community aspects of educational thinking are clearly evident in the LCA programme. In the voluntary secondary sector 77.7% endorse this statement

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while 22.2% are undecided, in the community/comprehensive sector 66.6% agree while 16.7% are undecided and 16.7% disagree. There is full agreement in the community college/vocational sector. The negative responses to this statement may be due to difficulties managing community aspects of the programme on account of organisational constraints with formal school settings.

**Board of Management and Parental Involvement.**

**Table 5.2.50 The School has a Board of Management.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School has Board of Management</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_N = 43_

*The Education Act* states that:

It shall be the duty of a patron, for the purpose of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a Board of Management, the composition of which is agreed between patrons of school, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister...... where a patron determines that the appointment of a Board in accordance with subsection (1) is not practicable, the patron shall inform the parents of students, the teachers and other staff of the school and the Minister of the fact and the reasons thereof at the time of such determination and thereafter if a Board is not so appointed, the patron shall from time to time or as requested by the Minister, inform the parents, teachers and other staff and the Minister of the reasons thereof.\(^{70}\)

\(^{70}\) *Education Act.* (1998). op cit., Part IV 14(1) and 14(8).
This survey shows that there is a Board of Management in all schools across all three sectors except in 17.4% of voluntary secondary schools. This finding is very significant, however the absence of a Board of Management in any school is surprising. Prendergast (2003) sees partnership leading to community building, where people share visions and aims, have a sense of belonging, are allowed to contribute, have a say in where things are going and are recognised, Chapter 3, pages 45 - 46. This important process cannot take place when the structure is not in place in schools? Moreover, the following questions indicate the important and enriching community building that is part of normal school – community life.
### Table 5.2.51 Parents are among the partners represented on the Board of Management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents on Board of Management</th>
<th>Type of School ( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N = 43 \)

**Note:** Non response in voluntary secondary schools reflects schools where parents are not on Board of Management.

This survey shows that in 100% of voluntary secondary schools, and community college/vocational schools and in 88.9% of community/comprehensive schools parents are represented. In one comprehensive school parents are not represented. The *Education Act* advocates that it is the duty of the patron to ensure that a school is managed in a spirit of partnership and where practicable the composition of the board be agreed. \(^{71}\) Up until 2007 the Church of Ireland were unwilling to allow parents and teachers on the Board of Management in comprehensive schools.

The *Education Act* states that the owner is also the patron. Church of Ireland comprehensive schools were originally voluntary secondary but under rationalisation they became public schools thus owned by the State. The Church of Ireland was not happy that the Minister for Education or the State was now the patron, and it had concerns about safeguarding the Protestant ethos. This matter has now been resolved and the full spectrum of partners will be represented on the Board of Management in the future. \(^{72}\)

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Table 5.2.52 Parents in this school are always willing to serve on the Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents willing to serve on Board</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Tables 52 – 65 have been adjusted to three categories for ease of reading.

The British Educationalist Wolfendale (1983) called for greater participation of parents, so that they would exercise their rights as citizens and have a greater share in educational decision-making. In most countries parents have acquired more rights as stakeholders but formal opportunities must translate into actual involvement?

In voluntary secondary schools 80.9% of principals agree that parents are always willing to serve on the Board. However 9.6% disagree. In the community/comprehensive school sector 77.8% agree with 11.1% who disagree. In community colleges/vocational schools 80% agree as opposed to 10% who disagree. The high percentage of parents willing to engage in school decision-making is of note. The negative involvement would be indicative of possible disinterest amongst a sector of society at large.
Table 5.2.53 The School has an active Parents' Association that is representative of the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Parents' Association</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The level of engagement of school and community is high. In the voluntary secondary sector 87% agree, with 13% who disagree. In the community/comprehensive sector 100% agree. In the community college/vocational sector 80% agree, 10% are undecided and 10% disagree. Voluntary secondary schools would not have a strong involvement with parent's associations traditionally in Ireland. The Religious Orders were very strong and as the literature review shows they were in 'loco parentis' Chapter 3, page 58. The comprehensive and community school ethos was that schools should be part of the local community, Chapter 3, page 95. Some of the community colleges grew out of vocational schools who served the less able and poorer sector of community and this group did not have a strong tradition of engagement with schools. This may explain the small negative response to this question in this sector.
Table 5.2.54 Family, School and Community have a role to play in the intellectual, emotional and social development of young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role for Family, School &amp; Community</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Findings in this question show that principals are open to a more partnership collaborative, form of learning. In voluntary secondary schools 95.7% of principals agree with this statement, and a small minority 4.3% disagree. In the community/comprehensive school sector 100% agree. In the community college/vocational sector 100% agree. It is very important that principals as school leaders, foster and reinforce strong cultures of collaboration interdependence and are willing to incorporate external alliances. Stoll and Fink remind us that pupils are not only members of families and schools, but they are also part of community groups, church’s teams, clubs and gangs. An integrated approach means recognising all the influences at work, which aim to bring coherence to the multiple messages young people receive. 73

Table 5.2.55 The school today has a much broader socialisation task than in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broader Socialisation Task</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

It is of note that the findings are generally consistent across all sectors. In the voluntary secondary sector, 91.4% agree, there are 4.3% undecided and 4.3% disagree. In the community/comprehensive school sector 88.9% agree and 11.1% undecided. In the community college/vocational sector 100% agree. Increased second-level participation in education poses many challenges for schools. Ireland has become much more multicultural, involving new demands for pluralism and tolerance with a greater diversity of cultures, language and religion. Families may be disadvantaged, insecure or in need of special psychological services. While the Education Act is underpinned by the principles of quality, equality, partnership, pluralism and accountability, the structures to support these principles are only slowly being put into place such as welfare and special needs supports. Perhaps the principals who are undecided in this survey have concerns about being able to meet the challenges posed by society today.
Table 5.2.56 This school promotes co-operation between the school and the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Promotes School/Community Co-operation</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Hargreaves and Fullan advise that good connections with community are complex and take time to build rather than being initiated at the stroke of a pen, and that they rest on a deep understanding of what educational purposes the connections will serve. Findings in this survey show that 95.7% of voluntary secondary schools agree with promoting school/community co-operation while 4.3% are undecided. In community/comprehensive schools 88.8% agree while 11.2% are undecided. This result is unexpected as the whole philosophy of community schools was built around more community involvement as the literature review outlines. In community colleges/vocational sector 100% agree. It is true to say that in the past schools largely evolved by keeping the outside world at bay but since the idea of partnership was more formalised with the advent of the Green Paper on Education (1992) the educative community was born. The results overall show that schools are engaging with community by promoting co-operation.


This survey has shown that with the exception of one school, all have parents on the Board of Management.

The findings here in relation to voluntary secondary schools are more varied with 86.4% who agree. However one must take note of 9.1% who are undecided and 4.5% who disagree. On the other hand the findings in the community/comprehensive sector show that 100% agree. In community colleges/vocational schools 90% agree while 10% disagree. Since the enactment of the *Education Act* 1998 the National Parents’ Council is a statutory body and engages in the training of parents to help them play a more active role in the education of their children.

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Table 5.2.57 The Parents’ Association promotes the interests of the students in the school in co-operation with the Board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Association Promotes Interest of Students</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 43\]
There is anecdotal evidence that some schools are reluctant to encourage Parent Associations. There is evidence here where parents are not seen as working in collaboration with the school. This would be reasonable in any social study. This matter is further discussed in interview with PRO of National Parents’ Council.

Table 5.2.58 The parents are involved in drawing up the School Plan, the School Behavioural Code and School Policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents involved in plan, code and policies</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

As a result of the *Education Act* 1998 parents are entitled to be involved in the School Plan which sets out, the long-term vision of the school, its goals, action plans and its policies and procedures. 77

In voluntary secondary schools 95.5% agree that parents are involved in school planning while 4.5% disagree.

In community/comprehensive schools 100% agree. In community colleges/vocational schools 90% agree and 10% are undecided. The results in this survey clearly show the role parents play in the delivery of school policy. Charting Our Education Future, White Paper on Education presents the argument that:

Schools in common with most organisations, can derive benefits from engaging in a systematic planning process. This process of planning offers an excellent opportunity for engaging the Board of Management, the Principal, Staff and Parents in a collaborative exercise aimed at defining the school’s mission and putting in place policy which will determine the activities of the school.  

Table 5.2.59 The Home – School – Community – Liaison Scheme involves parents more intimately as partners in education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liaison scheme makes parents partners</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Response rate reflects mostly schools involved in scheme by being disadvantaged or those who engage a Home – School – Community - Liaison person themselves in voluntary secondary schools.

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The Home – School – Community – Liaison Scheme needs to be extended to all schools to cater for ever-changing needs of today’s society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total N = 43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The underlying philosophy of the HSCL Scheme is one that seeks to promote partnership between parents and teachers. The purpose of the partnership is to enhance the pupil’s learning opportunities and to promote their retention within the education system. Essentially the scheme seeks to develop the parent as prime educator. 79 The responses to this statement are interesting (Table 5.2.59). In the voluntary secondary sector 84.6% agree and 15.4% are undecided. Question 10 (Table 5.2.10) shows that only 20.8% are disadvantaged in this sector. In the community/comprehensive sector 100% agree and in the community college/vocational sector 85.7% agree and 14.3% are undecided. In these two sectors only the schools involved in the scheme responded. In this sample study 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools have disadvantaged status.

In the international perspective, Chapter 2, page 17, Bastiani calls for understanding and support for home school partnerships which are endorsed by the principals in this survey sample. In this survey principals were asked for their opinions on extending the HSCL scheme to all schools, Table 5.2.60. In the voluntary secondary sector 78.9% agreed while 15.8% were undecided and 5.3% disagreed, in the community/comprehensive school sector 100% agreed and in the community college/vocational sector 87.5% agreed while 12.5% were undecided. In a recent programme launched in 2005 Delivering Equality of Opportunity in School (DEIS) a renewed emphasis is being placed on the involvement of parents and families in children’s education in schools participating in this project. An additional €1 million will be made available for financial support for 150 second-level schools participating in the project and 100 second-level schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage will be targeted from the HSCL and School Completion Programmes services, where they are not already in receipt of these services. 80 Though this survey shows that this partnership scheme should be extended to all schools it is not considered under current planning.

Table 5.2.61  Schools should work in partnership with parents and guardians by engaging them in ongoing consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools should consult with parents/guardians</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.62  By working in partnership with parents and guardians schools ensure that policy formulation recognises the realities of students' lives in the wider community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognise reality of students' lives in community</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

239
In the concluding comments to the National Education Convention (1993) the Secretary General stated – 'I think that the convention represents a distinctive landmark in relation to them (parents and communities). I believe that their central – stage place has become more assured and that many productive linkages can be forged which will give new emphasis to the education system'. 81 This partnership process was further outlined in a White Paper (1995) *Charting our Education Future* and endorsed in the *Education Act* 1998 (Chapter 3, pages 99 – 110). There is wide recognition for this partnership dimension in education in this survey, Table 5.2.61. There is a 100% agreement with this statement with the exception of the voluntary secondary sector where there is agreement amongst 91.4%. This may be related to Question 50 which shows that 17.4% of schools in this sector do not have a Board of Management.

As a result of the *Education Act* (1998):

- The National Parents’ Council is a statutory body.
- Parents have a statutory right to establish Parents’ Associations.
- Parents’ representatives have a statutory right to participate in Boards of Management.
- Parents are entitled to be involved in the School Plan which sets out the long-term vision of the school, its goals, action plans and its policies and procedures.
- Parents have the right to access their children’s school records.

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• Parents have the right to appeal to the Board of Management against actions taken by the Board.

• Parents will be consulted in relation to assessment of the psychological needs of their children. 82

Table 5.2.62 shows that in the voluntary secondary schools there is 91.3% agreement, in community/comprehensive schools there is 88.9% agreement and 100% agreement in community colleges/vocational schools. As this survey has shown a wide range of measures have been introduced to address issues related to educational disadvantage but it is difficult to ensure that the realities of all students’ lives are addressed in the wider community.

82 Government of Ireland. (1998). Education Act. op cit., (IV); (VI); (IX).
Hargreaves and Fullan stress that successful partnerships are a two-way street where all parties realise they have something to learn. In terms of education they must demonstrate how they will help improve teaching, learning and caring. Furthermore they must be actively committed to social justice by agitating for changes that favour all pupils, not just the highest achieving or more privileged ones who promise the biggest success and corporate return. Finally they must be genuinely reciprocal so that partners are open to learning from and being influenced by each other. 83 This is what the researcher defines as engagement. In line with previous questions there is very high support for this statement. In voluntary secondary schools there is 87% agreement, 88.9% in community/comprehensive schools and 100% in community colleges/vocational schools acknowledging the mutual and complementary benefits of engaging partnerships.

Policy makers are turning to schools for solutions to help in relation to social issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy makers look to schools for solutions</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>86.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The literature review, Chapter 3, page 44, discusses the many challenges for schools today. This in itself necessitates a rethinking of the respective roles of schools and consequently a requirement of an educational system with 'breath' and 'excellence'. A major approach must be to provide the diverse student population with the motivation to learn and the confidence that they can learn. In the voluntary secondary sector 86.3% agree that policy holders are turning to schools to help in relation to social issues, while 4.6% are undecided and 9.1% disagree, in the community/comprehensive school sector 77.8% agree while 22.2% are undecided, in the community college/vocational sector 70% agree and 30% are undecided. The Government, as main policy maker and member of the partnership must now engage with the evidence regarding reform strategies being developed by the NCCA. This means investing in the right long-term solutions that will make a difference. The analysis of Questions 84 and 85 also clearly calls for more investment from Government.
Table 5.2.65 The need to support a child’s learning encourages parents to attend adult education courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To support child parents Adult Ed</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The response to this statement is varied. In the voluntary secondary sector 40.9% agree, 36.4% are undecided and 22.7% disagree. In this sector only 16.7% of schools provide Adult/Continuing Education. In the community/comprehensive school sector only 22.2% agree, 66.7% are undecided and 11.1% disagree. All of the schools provide Adult/Continuing Education. In the community college/vocational sector 22.2% agree, 55.6% are undecided and 22.2% disagree. In this sector 90% of schools provide Adult/Continuing Education. Conaty reminds us that marginalised pupils are generally young people from families of the unskilled and the unemployed working-class, with a history of educational failure. 84

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Hence interventions such as the Home – School – Community – Liaison Scheme which has already been dealt with in Questions 10, 59 & 60 and Adult Educations classes are educational interventions. The results of this survey would be in line with the OECD Education at a Glance (2005) which showed that despite recent initiatives in Ireland, adult participation in lifelong learning remains relatively low, ranking 6th out of 11 other OECD countries. Though many of the barriers to the education progress of children are caused by issues outside the education system, the future challenge of the education system is to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning and community-based education and training through eliminating barriers to participation in education for welfare dependent families.

Adult/Continuing Education.

Table 5.2.66 Do you provide Adult Education in your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School has Adult/Continuing Education</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.67 If no, is it because of lack of facilities, no demand or another school providing in the area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why no Adult Education?</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No demand</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other school providing</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Non response reflects schools who do not participate in programme.

Table 5.2.66 shows the number of schools offering Adult/Continuing Education. The low provision of 16.7% is striking in the voluntary secondary sector. Traditionally voluntary secondary schools did not provide this type of education. The Vocational Education Act (1930) assigned the task of developing a suitable system of ‘continuing education’ to the vocational committees, a task which was taken up by vocational schools and community colleges as they evolved throughout the country. Later community and comprehensive schools emerged as providers as it was part of their ethos to educate the wider community. However, with the advent of lifelong learning and community approach to learning the voluntary secondary schools engaged in a pilot programme of Adult Education under the direction of the Department of Education and Science, the ASTI and Joint Managerial Body.

An evaluation of the programme (1999)\(^{87}\) showed how a relatively small investment had yielded major returns in terms of course provision, numbers participating, engaging schools in the process and in building relationships between the schools, parents and wider communities where the schools are located. Thus in order to facilitate start-up, a grant of £5,000 was available to cover costs of equipment and materials under the National Development Plan.\(^{88}\) The White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life* (2000)\(^{89}\) sets a comprehensive framework of State-funded and self-funded programmes to address the low levels of educational attainment of Irish adults. Table 5.2.67 shows that 64.7% of those schools not catered for in the voluntary secondary sector are being catered for by another school which is good, 29.4% state lack of facilities as the reason for non provision and 5.9% state there is no demand. There is a 100% provision in both the community/comprehensive school sector. In the community college/vocational sector there is very good provision with 90% and Table 5.2.67 shows that another school is catering for the other 10%. In addressing the partnership concept of home, school and community there is a growing consensus that in re-educating and re-orienteering attitudes, the lifeline is through adult and community engagement.


The Unesco Report, *Learning The Treasure Within : Educating for the Twenty First Century* (1996) emphasised lifelong learning as the guiding principle for education in the new century, 'a key to the twenty first century, learning throughout life will be essential for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery of the changing time-frames and rhythms of individual existence.'

Table 5.2.68 Please indicate approx. total enrolment for 2005 - 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total enrolment 2005 - 2006</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-74</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-450</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450-800</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801-1400</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1401-2000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2500</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2501-3000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: These enrolment categories are those laid down by the Department of Education & Science.

Table 5.2.68 clearly illustrates the enrolment trends. The voluntary secondary sector clearly show a low enrolment with 75% of schools in the lowest category 1 – 74 and 25% in the category 75 – 450. Even though this sector are being encouraged to get involved in Continuing Education both provision as was shown in Table 5.2.67 and numbers participating are very low. The

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community/comprehensive school enrolment is quite varied with 11.1% in category 1 – 74, 33.4% in category 75 – 450, 11.1% in category 450 – 800, 22.2% in category 1,401 – 2,000 and 11.1% in category 2,001 – 2,500 and 11.1% in the category 2,501 – 3,000.

Though the community college/vocational school would traditionally be the longest established the enrolment is still small 25% in category 1 – 74, 62.5% in category 75 – 450 and 12.2% in category 801 – 1,400.

Table 5.2.69 Please give approx. percentage of enrolment in the following courses:
Personal & Social Development including Professional courses and Hobby and Leisure courses of an academic or practical nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% enrolment Personal &amp; Social Development</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community/ Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

(a)
These are the two main enrolment categories. A lifelong learning agenda redefines the school as one of many agencies and learning sites involved with the learner in a much more fluid and less specific way than has been the case traditionally. The strong commitment to lifelong learning by the schools in this sample study is evident from the number of courses offered in response to Question 72 and further new courses as outlined in Question 70. The number of schools and percentages are shown in Table 5.2.69.

Only four schools in the voluntary secondary sector are involved in Adult Education provision. In the Personal and Social Development one school has no enrolment in this category, one school has an enrolment of 10%, another an enrolment of 20% and the third 80%. Alternatively in the Hobby and Leisure section one school has a 100% enrolment, another school 90%
enrolment, the third 80% enrolment and the fourth school 20% enrolment.

In the community/comprehensive school sector there are nine schools involved and participation in the Personal and Social Development is varied from 10% in the first two schools to 60% in the last two schools. Equally there is much variation in the Hobby and Leisure courses from 40% in the first two schools to 90% in the ninth school. In the community college/vocational sector there are nine schools involved. One school has no enrolment in the Personal and Social section, the second 30%, third and fourth have 40% enrolment, fifth 50% enrolment, sixth, seventh and eight 60% and the ninth 100% enrolment. In contrast the Hobby and Leisure has two schools with no involvement, three with 40% enrolment, one with 50% enrolment, two with 60% and one with 70%.

There is wide variation between the different sectors regarding Personal and Social Development and Hobbies and Leisure. Possible reasons for this variation will be followed up in the interviews. Courses in Adult Education are further discussed in Interviews.
**Table 5.2.70** List up to any 5 new courses that have been introduced because of changing community needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare/Special needs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 43\]

Chapter 2, page 10, refers to the White Paper on Education and Training—*Teaching and Learning—Towards the Learning Society*. Here it is clearly stated that education and training whether acquired in the formal education system, or on the job or in a more informal way, is the key for everyone controlling their future and their personal development. Thus Adult/ Continuing Education is essential for adapting to evolving requirements of the labour market and life styles. ICT is one of the subjects introduced because of changing community needs. The NCCA in its *ICT Framework: A Structured Approach to ICT in Curriculum and Assessment* states that students should leave school as capable independent learners, able to use ICT confidently, creatively and productively, be able to communicate effectively, able to work collaboratively, and to critically evaluate, manage and use information. Some former students may not have acquired such up-to-date training in ICT and with the buoyant economy in Ireland it is understandable that professional courses such as ICT are in high demand to meet the needs of the local economy. The second most important

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programme is English as a foreign language.

The most notable change in Ireland’s social and economic landscape between Censuses 2002 and 2006 has been the growth in the number of foreign nationals living and working in the country. Between 2002 and 2006, the population of foreign nationals aged over 15 years almost doubled, from 190,000 to 367,000. Foreign nationals now account for more than one in nine of all adults living in Ireland. Since language and literacy proficiency has long been recognised as playing a key role in integration, it is important that parents are afforded the opportunity to improve their language skills in order to support their children’s development. Planning for Diversity – The National Action Plan Against Racism states that education is one of the most important ways of combating racism and developing a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland. One of the key challenges is the development of intercultural education at Adult and Further Education level. The third programme listed was Childcare/Special Needs. In 2004 the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act was signed. The Act highlights the role of parents in education in moving forward. Data supplied by the Department of Education indicates that there are 5,322 students in community colleges/vocational schools, 3,443 in community/comprehensive schools and 1,208 in voluntary secondary schools. As this figure is significant it is important to see the Adult/Continuing Education sector taking an active role in supporting parents of students with special needs.

Parenting and Self Development were also listed.

**Table 5.2.71** How many years have you been operating Adult/Continuing Education in your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years operating Adult/Continuing Education</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.71 is significant in that it shows the longstanding tradition of providing Adult/Continuing Education to the local community with the exception of the voluntary secondary sector. However, 25% of this sector were catering for their community before the start-up was helped by the Department of Education and Science as outlined in Question 66. Therefore this was funded by the Religious Orders themselves. 50% have been running adult courses for 6 – 10 years and 25% for 1 – 5 years. Question 67 has already shown that the vast majority of other schools were served by Adult Education in other schools in the locality. The founding ethos of the community/comprehensive schools was to serve the adult population.
The results show that 22.2% are 31–35 years in operation, 33.4% 26–30 years, 22.2% 21–25 years, 11.1% 16–20 years and 11.1% 6–10 years. The community college/vocational schools, the founding fathers of continuing education, report that 25% are in operation for more than 40 years, 12.5% for 26–35 years, 25% for 16–20 years, 12.5% for 6–10 years and 25% for 1–5 years.

Table 5.2.72 How many courses are on your Adult Education Programme per year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses per year Adult Education</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–30</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41–50</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91–100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121–130</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161–170</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

It is clear from the above figure that the community/comprehensive school sector offer the widest range of courses. 100% of voluntary secondary schools offer less than 20 courses. The community/comprehensive schools ranges from 11.2% offering 161–170 to 22.2% offering less than twenty courses. In the community college/vocational school sector 62.5% of schools offer less than 20 courses and 37.5% offer between 20 and 30. It is not possible to list or compare courses as each school has their own prospectus which is updated and amended each term.
Business Community Issues.

Table 5.2.73 The School has formal links with local business through sponsorship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal links with business by sponsorship</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Is business a supportive partner or a self-seeking pariah? In reply there are many reasons why educators should be wary of business connections but committed partnerships between schools and the corporate community can yield remarkable benefits and in reality, relationships between schools and the business world are already expanding. In this study 73.9% of voluntary secondary schools have formal links with business through sponsorship, 55.6% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools. Chapman and Aspin however caution that developing partnerships with business should not compromise or interfere with the core values of the institution Chapter 2, page 20.
Table 5.2.74 Local employers and business support the school in terms of
(a) teaching materials (b) workplace visits (c) work experience
placements (d) job offers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business supports</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
<td>Community College/ Vocational School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
(a)

Note: Tables 74 and 75 have been adjusted to three categories for ease of reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business supports</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
<td>Community College/ Vocational School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43
(b)
In the voluntary secondary schools 26.3% agree that the school is being helped in terms of teaching materials, 21.1% are undecided and 52.6% disagree. On the other hand, 100% agree regarding support with workplace visits. 95.7% agree that business supports work placements, and 4.3% are undecided. 76.2% agree that business supports job offers, while 9.5% are undecided and 14.3% disagree.
In community/comprehensive schools just 37.5% agree regarding teaching materials, 25% are undecided and 37.5% disagree. 88.9% agree with support for workplace visits while 11.1% disagree. 87.5% agree and 12.5% disagree that there is support for work placements. Regarding support with job offers 75% agree, while 12.5% are undecided and 12.5% disagree.

In the community college/vocational sector 20% agree with support in teaching materials, 20% are undecided and 60% disagree. With support through workplace visit 90% agree and 10% are undecided. 100% agree that there is support with work placements. 80% agree with support through job offers and 20% are undecided.
Table 5.2.75 Co-operation between school and local industry / business eases the transition from school to work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-operation helps school/work transition</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The interdependence and integrated nature of learning is evident in all sectors generally in this sample. In the voluntary secondary schools 78.3% agree that co-operation between business eases transition from school to work, there are 13% who are undecided and 8.7% who disagree. In community/comprehensive schools 83.3% agree while 16.7% are undecided. In community colleges/vocational schools 90% agree and 10% are undecided. At a time of rapid change in an economy it is inevitable that attention turns to the issue of whether the final years of second level education experience will result in young people making successful transition into further education, work and living.
General Community Issues.

Table 5.2.76 Schools are ‘community learning centres’ offering a variety of programmes and learning methodologies to a diverse range of students across all age groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools serve all ages</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Tables 76 - 93 have been adjusted to three categories for ease of reading.

There is a strong awareness among principals in this survey of the need for schools to be ‘community learning centres’. In the voluntary secondary sector 91.6% agree, in community/comprehensive schools 88.8% agree. In the community college/vocational sector 100% agree or strongly agree. The diversity in student participation demands flexibility. Levin and Riffel propose the idea of the school as a ‘community learning centre’. This is also proposed by De Gues (Chapter 2, page 12) and is further endorsed in the preamble to the Education Act 1998.\(^{96}\)

The low percentage of disagree or undecided in this survey may reflect the fear that schools are becoming dumping grounds for social and economic problems that are really other people’s responsibility.

The school is a very appropriate centre for building 'community spirit', offering facilities for sports, meetings, adult education and other forms of personal and social development.

![Table 5.2.77](image)

Prendergast sees partnership in education leading to building community where people share visions, aims and have a sense of belonging, are allowed to contribute and have a say in where things are going and are recognised, Chapter 3, pages 45 - 46. The figures here are generally consistent that the school is very appropriate for building 'community spirit' where 83.3% agree in voluntary secondary schools, 88.9% in community/comprehensive schools and 100% in the community colleges/vocational schools sector.

The 16.7% undecided in the voluntary sector may correspond with lack of facilities and unavailability of adult education as shown in Question 66. Lack of facilities in any school would mitigate against the opportunity for building 'community spirit'.
Table 5.2.78 It is important for this school to be involved with Voluntary Organisations in the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School involved with voluntary groups</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Attempts to promote students’ understanding and commitment to responsible participation in civic and political society are evident in this survey. In voluntary secondary schools 95.8% agree with the importance of involvement in voluntary activities with 88.9% in community/comprehensive schools and 100% in community colleges/vocational sector.

The results of Question 28 and Question 30 also corroborate these findings. The whole idea of partnership in education calls for the capacity to acknowledge feelings and be compassionate to those who are perhaps in need of extra care.
Table 5.279 This school is regularly used by Community Sports Associations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School used by community sport groups</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

O'Connor in the literature review, Chapter 3, pages 95 – 96, dealt with the idea of the community school fostering a consciousness of the community at large, its needs both recreational and educational. The above figures show the adoption of his proposals with 62.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and 80% of community colleges/vocational schools being used for recreation and sport. The lowest rate in voluntary secondary schools may denote lack of facilities.
Table 5.2.80 This school is regularly used by other community groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School used by other community groups</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The OECD Report 1998 *Under One Roof* states the three themes related to its work programme as:

- Improving the quality and sustainability of educational facilities thus contributing to the equality of education;
- Ensuring that the best possible use is made of very substantial sums of money which are spent on constructing, running and maintaining educational facilities;
- Giving early warning of the impact on educational facilities of trends in education and in society as a whole. 97

Facilities are used by other community groups in 58.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 77.8% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools. This trend is reflected in the previous question.

---

Table 5.2.81  The most cost effective use of school buildings is more intensive use of facilities by the wider community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community should use facilities more</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Views of the principals in this question are at variance with the political and economic thinking of the OECD which advises Governments on the planning and location of schools. 54.1% of voluntary secondary schools agree with the statement, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools. There may be a political struggle here for the voluntary secondary schools as the majority of those schools are privately owned by Religious Orders and in order to improve their facilities they most likely would have to be subsumed into the State sector. It is difficult to explain 33.3% of community/comprehensive schools being undecided as it is part of their founding ethos to serve the community. On the other hand, they may be indicating lack of funds from the Government in order to run schools. Perhaps they do not want the responsibility of having to manage the hiring of facilities to make ends meet.
The community colleges/vocational sector are locally managed by the Vocational Education Committee and hiring of school facilities is not the responsibility of the principal.

Table 5.2.82 If the schools are to be fully used by members of the community their structures need to be rethought.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rethink for greater community use</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Today schools are encouraged to have structured links with their local communities and the latter are urged to regard their schools as central to quality of life of the communities. It is clear from the above figures that the different sectors have a different opinion on suitability of school structures. In the voluntary sector 83.4% agree, 8.8% are undecided and 8.3% disagree, while 71.4% agree in the community/ comprehensive school sector and 28.6% are undecided. In the community college/vocational sector 60% agree while 10% are undecided and 30% disagree. Hargreaves and Fullan raise the challenges posed to active and co-operative learning in a series of episodic subject periods.
Allied to this is the isolation of teachers in classes which insulates them from fellow teachers, student teachers parent helpers and other resources in the community. Recent structural changes in the senior cycle programme such as Transition Year Programme LCVP and LCA involve a more radical approach to learning, combining work and study with structured linkages between the two experiences. The NCCA in its Proposals for The Future of Senior Cycle Education in Ireland states that while a reformed senior cycle, across all schools, will offer a diverse range of programmes, offering flexible learning possibilities for all learners, full-time students, part-time learners and returning learners, there is still a need for strategic re-orientation of schools. Hyland endorses this re-orientation and stresses the need for a more modular system of course delivery to recognise the reality that a growing number of students are working part-time. The Back to School Initiative provides adults with opportunities to return to learning and provides re-entry for ‘upskilling’ in line with the emerging needs of the workplace. This initiative attempts to provide courses such as the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate for adults on a part-time basis, offering flexible modular blocks at morning, evening and weekend. In the past voluntary secondary schools were designed specifically for academic learning so it is understandable that they need their structures to be rethought in order to cater for the inclusive community today.

The other two sectors were designed with more community use in mind. Therefore the 28.6% of indecision on the part of the community/comprehensive sector is surprising. There is no doubt that establishing new infrastructures and cultures of learning will involve long scale, ongoing cultural changes with co-operation and shared responsibilities between the school and the local community.

Table 5.2.83 The school building is suited to all ages and to people with special needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools suited to all ages and needs</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The figures in this question are related to the previous question. In the voluntary secondary sector only 41.7% are in agreement that the school building is suited to all age groups and special need students. In the community/comprehensive schools there is 87.5% agreement and 100% agreement in community colleges/vocational schools.
With lifelong learning becoming a reality and ensuring access for students with special needs school buildings need to be more flexible in design and multi-purpose to meet varied needs of children and adults. This is a task for the Commission on School Accommodation in future planning. This issue is discussed further in interview with the Executive Chairperson of the Commission.

Table 5.2.84 Planned investment by Government is needed in order for schools to become 'community learning centres'.

| Government invested needed | Type of School | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                            | Voluntary Secondary School | Community/ Comprehensive School | Community College/ Vocational School |
| Disagree                   | 0.0             | 0.0             | 0.0             |
| Undecided                  | 4.2             | 12.5            | 10.0            |
| Agree                      | 95.8            | 87.5            | 90.0            |
| Totals                     | 24              | 8               | 10              |

N = 43

There is general agreement for the sentiments of this statement with 95.8% of the voluntary secondary schools in agreement with the statement, compared to 87.5% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools.
In the early nineteen sixties the OECD commissioned report *Investment in Education*,\(^{102}\) the first empirical study in the history of the State proved to be a catalyst for the restructuring and modernisation of the secondary system of education. It advocated setting up the Educational Research Centre in 1966 to conduct experimental research studies of qualitative aspects of the education service. The State up-graded vocational schools, gave capital grants to voluntary secondary schools and took the major initiative of establishing two new types of post-primary schools – comprehensive and community school. Legislative developments by the Government such as the *Education Act* 1998, *The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act*\(^{103}\) 1999, *The White Paper on Adult Education, Learning for Life 2000, Teaching Council Act* 2001,\(^{104}\) *The Education Welfare Act* 2002 and *Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act* 2004\(^{105}\) have all brought about major need for investment and structural changes by the Government. Meanwhile, spending on education lags behind other nations, with Ireland currently ranked joint-last out of 29 OECD Countries when it comes to spending on second-level education.\(^{106}\) This certainly is at odds with the Forfás *Annual Competitiveness Report* 2005 which maintains that high levels of investment in education lead to a number of other personal and social benefits, including increased social inclusion, lower crime, reduced welfare and better health.\(^{107}\)


The Department of Education and Science needs to deliver a comprehensive range of supports to teachers and schools to help them understand and serve the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Table 5.2.85

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government must support disadvantaged needs</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The strong agreement across all sectors of the need for extra supports to serve the needs of the disadvantaged communities is indicative of the level of needs in those areas. A recent report *Retention Rates in Second Level Schools 2005* shows disturbing dropout rates in schools:

- 24 schools have pre Leaving Cert drop out rates of 60% or more.
- 36 schools have drop out rates of 50% - 60%.
- 37 schools suffer 40% - 50% drop out rates.
- Nationally 1 in 12 of 720 second-level schools have drop out rates of 50% or more before Leaving Certificate.
- 81.3% nationally complete Leaving Certificate.
- 50% of drop out’s are in poorer areas despite new programmes.

---

Though the retention rate in schools in this survey is above the national average the requirements of the disadvantaged are a major concern of principals in the sample. Though the Irish Government, and in particular the Department of Education and Science have focused on the needs of the marginalised as reported in Questions 59 and 60 the alteration of school structures and practices, a more enlightened and positive way of viewing both marginalised pupils and their families and effective schooling is called for. The Home – School – Liaison Scheme initiated in 1990 by the Department of Education and Science is a commitment to develop the parents as prime educators in addition to seeking to preamble change in school attitudes and behaviours so that parents and teachers can work in partnership to help realise the potential of ‘at risk’ pupils. However, this only serves 20% - 25% of schools. Welling holds the view that the ‘emphasis should be on habilitation rather than rehabilitation, on self determined change rather than on the cure of some supposed disease’. 109

Table 5.2.86  Empowering schools to respond flexibly to the needs of their learners in the community, has a positive influence on learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexibility positive</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

In voluntary secondary school there is 100% agreement with this statement. However in community/comprehensive schools 12.5% are unsure and in community colleges/vocational schools 10% also have reservations. The necessity of schools to connect more effectively with the wider community is well expressed by De Gues in the *Living Company*. He focussed on the ability to change with changing needs in society, thus being more flexible in order to cope with the diversity in schools, Chapter 2, page 12. This may entail what Hargreaves and Fullan describe the ‘new professionalism’ as collaborative not autonomous; open rather than closed; outward – looking rather than insular; and authoritative not controlling, Chapter 2, page 37.
Recent legislation in Ireland is empowering schools to respond more flexibly to the learners in the community but previous Questions 83 and 84 show that further supports are needed in order to allow true engagement. Reservations by some school principals could be that they feel it is difficult to respond effectively at present because of lack of resources, or, that schools alone cannot solve the multifaceted problems of society. Nonetheless, with the proper supports and a more integrated approach involving all partners in the community, this might be overcome.

Table 5.2.87 Collaboration between the partners in education produces important benefits for all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners' collaboration important</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community/ Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The results here are decisive and very important as they embrace the partnership vision in education. In the voluntary secondary sector 37.5% agree while 62.5% strongly agree. In the community/comprehensive schools sector 25% agree while 75% strongly agree.
In the community college/vocational sector 20% agree and a further 80% strongly agree. The philosophical framework, the definition of partnership was succinctly delineated in the literature review, Chapter 3, pages 108 - 109. The multi-lateral consultation which resulted in a consensus for change by all partners in education and a commitment by Government to legislate, provided a framework within which a true partnership can operate, thus re-orientating education. Ownership of the partnership process is evident from the level of agreement about the statement above. However, it is clear from this study that in order to embrace fully the partnership vision strategies and practical measures need to be put in place. Thus, partners need to be enabled and supported in the roles ascribed to them in order that they are able to engage fully in the process of community building.
Table 5.2.88  Equality of outcome in education is achieved by adopting an integrated and coherent partnership approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coherent partnership for equality in education</th>
<th>Type of School %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Lynch in *Equality of Education* points out that it is extremely important that all people have access to education, and can participate and benefit from it on equal terms, so that they are not excluded from the process of wealth generation in society. Moreover, she stresses that failure to equalise access to, participation, in and benefit from, education means that much of the talent and ability available in society is under - utilised and disorientation and detachment develops among those who are excluded, Chapter 2, pages 21 - 22. In the previous question there was strong agreement of the partnership approach to education. In the voluntary secondary schools 95.9% agree that equality of outcome in education is achieved with a partnership approach and 4.1% are undecided.
In community/comprehensive schools 75% agree and 25% are undecided.
In community colleges/vocational schools 90% agree and 10% are undecided.
The reservation on behalf of some schools is understandable. It is difficult to predict learning outcomes because of the challenges facing schools to address inclusion and equality which are inextricably linked to a changing culture of schooling. Ericson and Elleth in *Taking Student Responsibility* speak of the leadership rôle of the student as one of responsibility for their own learning within the context of shared responsibilities by parents, educators, the State and society at large.  The NCCA in developing new programmes is aware that students will take greater responsibility for learning choices, activities and achievements and consequently schools will need to facilitate a wider range of experiences, opportunities and environments. In a study *Comprehensive Schooling in Ireland, 1989*, Barber concluded that community schools offered greater formal equality of educational opportunity than other sectors rather than actual educational opportunity. He contended that actual equality of educational opportunity would require reform of the process of schooling and instruction. The broad range of curricular provision both in junior cycle and senior cycle, the wide range of programmes available, as evidenced in this sample study, in tandem with recent legislation, shows that second-level education today is constructively engaged in mapping out new directions and developments in order to cater for the needs of all students today.

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Table 5.2.89 The School is the focus of the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School is focus of community</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Community/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The figures here indicate different perspectives in the various school sectors with regard to the school being the focus of the community. In the voluntary sector 58.3% agree and 41.7% are undecided. In the community/comprehensive school sector 62.5% agree while 12.5% are undecided and 25% disagree. In the community college/vocational sector 80% agree, while 10% are undecided and 10% disagree. Community is a word that is constantly in sociological or and educational literature and it is not without ambiguity. The two types of community as identified by Tönnies and Cooley are *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. The former is the close-knit community with much face to face interaction, where people are known, not just by name, but in their circumstances and relationships. Added to this Cooley describes further major characteristics of ‘primary groups’ as ‘face to face association, the unspecialised character of that association, relative performance, the small number of persons involved and the relative intimacy among the participants.’

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The family would be an example of such a group. On the other hand, *gesellschaft* is the model of community that one finds in institutions where human association is characterised by formal organisational structures, for example a school. Alternatively Sergiovanni defines community as ‘a collection of individuals who are bonded together by natural will’ and who come to share ‘common sentiments and transitions as part of a tightly knit web of meaningful relationships’. \(^{114}\) For the purpose of this study the writer defines community as the stakeholders in the local school system, often referred to as partners, named in the preamble to the *Education Act* 1998. Conaty also explains that education is an ellipse in which there are two foci – the home and the school. This ellipse itself remains centred in the community. \(^{115}\) Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that school could be seen as the focus of the community. This theory would explain those in agreement with the above statement. On the other hand, the Irish Constitution reiterates the rôle of parents ‘as primary and natural educators’, \(^{116}\) and those who disagree or are undecided would possibly see the home as the focus of community.


Table 5.2.90 The word 'community' is central to the Mission Statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word community central to mission statement</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

The rationale underpinning the *Education Act* is partnership.

In the literature review Prendergast relates to the three core values of partnership and sees this partnership leading to community building when people share visions and aims, have a sense of belonging, are allowed to contribute, have a say in where things are going and are recognised, Chapter 3, pages 45 - 46. Therefore the views of principals here are very important for the whole raison d'être of the *Education Act*. In the voluntary secondary sector 87% agree that 'community' is central to the Mission Statement and 13% are undecided. In the community/comprehensive school sector 85.7% agree and 14.3% disagree. In the community college/vocational school sector there is 100% agreement. It is difficult to explain the indecision or the disagreement on the part of the various sectors since the word 'community' appears in literature describing the core values of those schools.
Treston in speaking about ethos describes the core beliefs of the school community, its covenant and charter. Flynn defines school culture as ‘core beliefs, values, traditions and symbols which provide meaning to the school community and which shape the lives of students, staff and parents’. McClelland further makes the point that there is no recipe for building community but it represents ‘a corpus of hard work and devotion to duty on the part of the members of the school and parochial community’. It would appear that one school in the community/comprehensive school sector is rejecting the extended and more expansive nature of community as laid down under the Education Act. Overall, the findings are significant as it is clear that schools are engaging with the community guided by their Mission Statements.

Table 5.2.91 To engage with the Community there is need for ongoing in-career development for the teaching staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community engagement needs in-career staff</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Table 5.2.91 clearly shows the wide support for provision of ongoing in-career development for the teaching staff. In voluntary secondary schools 95.7% agree, in community/comprehensive schools 87.5% agree and in community colleges 90%. The Education Act 1998 underpins the new envisaged partnership approach to education into the future. Schools consequently are encouraged to have structured links with their local community and the latter are urged to regard their schools as central to the quality of life in communities. The role of the teacher is paramount in the delivery of this partnership approach but support systems are needed to enable teachers to discharge their new duties and be enabled to embrace the vision fully.

For our schools to do better than they do we have to give up the belief that it is possible to create the conditions for productive learning when those conditions do not exist for education personnel.\footnote{Sarason, S. (1990). *The predictable failure of educational reform*. San Francisco: Jossey – Bass. p 13.}

**Table 5.2.92** The school principal today should be leading the way to redefine collaboration so that it encompasses alliances with groups and individuals outside the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal should lead community liaison</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
<td>Community Comprehensive School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Hargreaves and Fullan contrast the principal of the last decade (1987 – 1997) as one who was urged to develop collaborative cultures within schools to the principal of this decade (1998 – 2008) who should be
leading the way to redefine collaboration so that it encompasses alliances with
groups and individuals outside the school. 123 The researcher through this
statement gains insight into the role of principal as seen by the principals
themselves. In the voluntary secondary sector 79.2% agree with the role as
articulated by Hargreaves and Fullan, while 8.3% are undecided and 12.5%
disagree. In the community/comprehensive school sector 87.5% agree and
12.5% are undecided. In the community college/vocational sector 90% agree and
10% are undecided. The 20.8% indecision in the voluntary secondary sector may
reflect caution with regard to embracing the partnership approach and this could
be reflected in the more traditional closed nature of these schools. The positive
attitude however of the overall majority is decisive. The boundaries of the
collaborative culture must be redrawn to include parents and the extended
community. Hargreaves and Fullan call this re-culturing which involves
changing the norms, values, incentives, skills and relationships in an
organisation to support people to work differently together. The goal is to create
more collaborative work cultures. 124 The cumulative evidence is that pupils
learn much better where principals, teachers and others develop a professional
learning community among themselves, focus on improving teaching and
learning, examine and act on assessment data in relation to what pupils are
learning, and connect with external communities and resources to support them
in their efforts. 125

124 Ibid., p 128.
p 128.
Table 5.2.93 List any new initiatives that have been introduced in your school in the last five years towards developing a more partnership/community approach to education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Voluntary Secondary School</th>
<th>Community Comprehensive School</th>
<th>Community College/Vocational School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaisce</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Further Education</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Sponsorship</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise awards</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Book</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Tidy Towns Committee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 43

Note: Non response reflects those schools who did not introduce new activities in above time-frame.

Many worthwhile initiatives have been introduced in the last five years in developing a more partnership/community approach to education. It is difficult to analyse the results as the number of schools who responded to this question was very low in both the voluntary secondary sector and the community/comprehensive sector.
Summary

Demographic Data

- The enrolment trend in this study is quite varied. In the voluntary secondary sector, 45.9% of schools have an enrolment of less than 300, 11.1% of the community/comprehensive sector and 20% of the community college/vocational sector.

- 95.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 77.8% of community/comprehensive schools and 60% of community colleges/vocational schools are long established, 26 years or over.

- A large number of schools are located in city or towns while 12.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools and 30% of community colleges/vocational schools are located in the new satellite towns.

- The voluntary secondary schools are the largest sector, with 55.8% of schools, followed by community colleges/vocational schools with 23.3% of schools and community/comprehensive schools with 20.9% of schools.

- The majority of the voluntary secondary schools are Roman Catholic 91.7% while 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and community colleges/vocational schools are multi-denominational.

- 80% of voluntary secondary schools are greenfield, 33% of community/comprehensive schools and 18.2% of community colleges/vocational schools.
Amalgamations have taken place in all sectors but the highest number are in the community/comprehensive sector.

- 70% of the community colleges/vocational schools are disadvantaged, 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools.

- Only 12.5% of all schools are fee-paying and these are in the voluntary secondary school sector.

- Most of the schools report varying levels of competition from other schools. 25% of voluntary secondary schools report strong competition, 37.5% of community/comprehensive schools and 62.5% of community colleges/vocational schools.

- A variety of collaborative community related methods are employed in recruiting students – word of mouth, newspaper advertisement, profile of school in local newspaper, open days, parent nights, visiting feeder schools and brochure/prospectus.

- The retention rate in junior cycle is 80%+ in all schools while 95.8% of voluntary secondary schools and 88.8% of community/comprehensive schools report 80%+ in senior cycle.

- All schools have an intake of international students.
• The turnout for parent teacher meetings in junior cycle is 80%+ in 83.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 77.8% in community/comprehensive schools and 40% in community colleges/vocational schools. It is 80%+ in senior cycle in 79.1% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% in community/comprehensive schools and 40% in community colleges/vocational schools.

Curriculum and Course Data.

• In junior cycle the broad-based curriculum which provides a holistic foundation for students’ subsequent education is not being addressed across all sectors, in particular Business Studies, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork and I.C.T. Furthermore, the objective of senior cycle which is to develop each student’s potential to the full, thus equipping the student for work or further education is not being realised in all sectors. Only 8.3% of voluntary secondary schools offer Engineering and only 33.3% offer Technical Drawing and or Construction Studies. Computer Studies is offered in 62.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and in 60% of community colleges/vocational schools. Physical Education is not being offered in all schools in more than 20% of all schools.

• The Transition Year Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme are offered in the majority of schools. The Leaving Certificate Applied is only offered in 30.4% of voluntary secondary schools compared to 66.7% in community/comprehensive schools and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools. The largest sector offering the Post Leaving Certificate course is the community college/vocational school with 80%. All of these programmes involve the co-operation of the wider community.
• The partnership approach to education is shown clearly in choosing option programmes. Parents have an active involvement in planning across all sectors with the Business Community having a very small influence.

• Student Councils prevail in 91.7% of voluntary secondary schools and in all schools in the other two sectors.

Programmes.

TYP

• The merits of the Transition Year Programme, in enabling student’s to become flexible learners is endorsed by the majority of principals.

• Work experience is a positive intervention in this programme.

• The broad range of learning experiences such as personal development and social awareness are endorsed by all principals.

• Local community are willing to offer work-experience in a large majority of the schools surveyed.

• The majority of parents rate this programme highly.

• This programme is engaging with the vocational dimension of the curriculum with outreach to community and business sectors and engaging with the key skills in ICT and Enterprise.
LCVP

- The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes is firmly endorsed as a programme incorporating the business and social sector in school life.

- Schools agree that this programme enhances the Leaving Certificate programme overall, where pathways crossing ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ are clearly articulated.

- This programme prepares learners for further education and the world of work.

- In the voluntary secondary sector 72.2% agree that linking with employers in the community is beneficial to future careers of students, 85.8% in the community/comprehensive sector and 77.8% in the community college/vocational sector.

- Interaction between school and the world of work in endorsed across all sectors where cross-curricular learning and school/work transfer of learning is involved.

- An extensive network of relationships with employers, enterprise boards and training agencies in a majority of cases is developed.
LCA

- There is a strong endorsement of this programme across all sectors. Furthermore, the high retention rates in the schools offering this programme are discernible where the diverse needs of all pupils are catered for adequately. The pre-vocational nature of this course caters for those who may have dropped out of school early.

- Nonetheless the perception of this programme as one for 'weaker students' thus lowering its status is borne out in this survey. In the voluntary secondary school 77.8% agree while 50% agree in the community/comprehensive schools and 85.7% in the community colleges/vocational schools.

- Participants in LCA gain qualifications and make vocational choices about career options. The results of this study are in line with a previous study *Unlocking Potential- A Study and Appraisal of the LCA.* (1998).

- The community aspects of this course prepare students more fully for employment and for their role as participative enterprising citizens.
Board of Management and Parental Involvement.

- There is a Board of Management in all schools across the different sectors with the exception of 17.4% of voluntary secondary schools.

- Parents are represented on Boards in all schools with the exception of one comprehensive school.

- Though the *Education Act* clearly outlines the importance of parents as partners on the Board of Management the survey shows that in a minority of schools parents are not willing to serve on the Board.

- Overall, the level of engagement of parents with schools is high.

- There is very strong support for the concept that family, school and community have a role to play in the intellectual, emotional and social development of young people.

- Increased second-level participation in education poses many challenges for schools and consequently schools have a much broader socialisation task than in the past.

- A very high majority of schools promote co-operation between school and the community.
• Parents today are encouraged to play a more active role in the education of students in co-operation with the Board. In the voluntary secondary schools 86.4% of the Parents’ Association promotes the interests of the students in the school in co-operation with the Board, while 90% in community colleges/vocational schools and 100% in community/comprehensive schools.

• There is strong agreement that parents are involved in drawing up the School Plan, The School Behavioural Code and School Policies.

• The Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme is strongly endorsed as part of the partnership process of engaging parents.

• The survey also shows that the Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme should be extended to all schools.

• There is wide recognition for the partnership dimension in education where parents and guardians are consulted on an ongoing basis. This is in line with statutory rights under the Education Act (1998). Through working with parents schools ensure that policy formulation recognises the realities of students’ lives in the wider community.

• The concept of successful partnerships as being reciprocal where both partners are open to learning where each is being influenced by each other is firmly acknowledged across all sectors.
• There is disagreement or indecision regarding parents attending Adult Education courses in order to support a child’s learning. Adult Education could be seen as an education intervention where families of the unskilled or those who had a history of educational failure could get a second chance. However, this is not visible in the survey.

**Adult/Continuing Education.**

• There is no provision for Adult/Continuing Education in 83.3% of the voluntary secondary sector and in 10% of the community college/vocational sector.

• 27.8% of voluntary secondary schools report that they lack facilities. A further 5.9% state there is no demand and 64.7% say that other schools are all providing adult/continuing education in the area.

• The largest enrolment is in the community/comprehensive sector. The community college/vocational sector have a small enrolment. The voluntary secondary sector has the smallest enrolment overall. There is a wide variation between the different sectors regarding the two main enrolment categories Personal and Social Development and Hobbies and Leisure.

• ICT, Spanish, English, Childcare/Special Needs, Pilates, Investment and Parenting are courses introduced because of changing community needs.
• Adult Education courses have been run in some voluntary secondary schools for the past ten years, in the community/comprehensive schools for 35 years and in the community colleges/vocational schools for more than 40 years. The community/comprehensive schools offer the widest range of courses today.

Business Community Issues.

• In this study 73.9% of voluntary secondary schools have formal links with businesses through sponsorship, 55.6% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools.

• Schools are supported by business in terms of teaching materials, schools receive workplace visits, are facilitated through work placements and are supported through job offers.

• The interdependent and integrated nature of learning between schools and business is evident with a high majority of all schools in agreement that co-operation between school and local industry/business eases the transition from school to work.
General Community Issues.

- There is a strong awareness of the need for schools to be ‘community learning centres’ across the different sectors.

- The school is also seen as being an appropriate centre for building ‘community spirit’ offering facilities for sports, meetings, adult education and personal and social development with agreement in 83.3% of voluntary secondary schools, 88.9% in community/comprehensive schools and 100% in the community college/vocational sector.

- Attempts to promote students’ understanding and commitment to responsible participation in civic and political society are endorsed in this survey.

- Schools in this survey are fostering a consciousness of the needs of the larger community through sharing their recreational facilities. The facilities are used in 62.5% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and 80% of community colleges/vocational schools. The schools are also used by other community groups.

- The views of some of the principals are at variance with the political and economic thinking of the OECD which advises Governments on the planning of schools and advocate that the most cost effective use of school buildings is the more intensive use of facilities by the wider community. 54.1% of voluntary secondary schools agree with this statement, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools.
There is broad agreement across all sectors that school structures need to be rethought in order to cater more fully for use by community members. Today all schools are involved in new programmes catering for the more diverse learning community.

The study shows in one sector in particular, the voluntary secondary sector, there is a need for buildings to be adapted and be made more flexible to meet needs of all children and adults today.

Investment by the Government in helping schools to become ‘community learning centres’ is critical across all sectors.

There is strong agreement across all sectors 97.6% for extra supports to serve the needs of the disadvantaged communities, 37.2% of all schools are disadvantaged in this study.

There is very strong support for the philosophy of empowering schools to respond more flexibly to the learners in the community thus allowing the process of true engagement to take place as envisaged in the Education Act (1998).

Collaboration between partners in education is endorsed in all sectors. However, it is clear from the study that in order to embrace fully the partnership vision strategies and practical measures need to be put in place.
• Principals strongly agree that equality of outcome in education is achieved by adopting an integrated and coherent approach. Curricular innovation and recent legislation show that second-level education today is constructively engaged in catering for the needs of all students.

• There are different perspectives in the various sectors with regard to the school being the focus of the community. In the voluntary secondary sector 58.3% agree. In the community/comprehensive sector 62.5% agree and in the community college/vocational sector 80% agree.

• The word ‘community’ is central to the Mission Statement in a high majority of all schools.

• There is wide support for ongoing in-career development for staff in order to engage with the community.

• The role of the principals as seen by the principals themselves is evident in this survey. In voluntary secondary schools 79.2% see themselves as leaders in collaborating with members of the wider community, 87.5% in community/comprehensive schools and 90% in community colleges/vocational schools. Various initiatives have been introduced in the last five years towards developing a more partnership/community approach to education.
5.3 **Discussion with Principals.**

**Demographic Data and Policies**

5.3.1 **Introduction.**

The three Principals interviewed in this study represent different categories of schools; Principal I a community school, Principal II a community college and Principal III a fee-paying voluntary secondary school. The community school is 35 years old, the community college 6 years (but was an amalgamation of a voluntary secondary and a vocational school) and the voluntary secondary school is 58 years in existence. The community school is located in the city; the community college in a small rural town and the voluntary secondary school is also located in the city. The enrolment in the community school is 330 pupils, community college 551 pupils and the voluntary secondary school 400 pupils. The analysis of the survey shows that 45.9% of voluntary secondary schools have under 300 pupils and 11.1% of community/comprehensive schools while 20% of community colleges/vocational schools have under 200 (Table 5.2.1). The community school represents an area of declining population, 10% in last census. The community college, though a relatively new school, is also in a declining population area, 0.7% in last census while the voluntary secondary school in city centre has declining population of 3%. The voluntary secondary school is limited because of an old building and also has a policy to retain maximum of 400 pupils in order to cater for 'individual needs of students'. Both the community school and the

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community colleges accept all pupils from their catchment area. They report that approximately 85% of the local community attend the local school. Both schools also report competition from other schools in the surrounding areas. On the other hand, the voluntary secondary school has no defined catchment area. While they accept some pupils from the catchment area, their enrolment is subject to enrolment policy, ‘daughters of past-pupils, sisters of current pupils and then by date of application’. The community school and community college are both co-educational schools and the voluntary secondary school is a single sex female school.

5.3.2 In promoting your school what are the major selling points for this school? Small school; Good results; Sports facilities; Comprehensive curriculum or Other.

In the questionnaires over 70% of all schools have other second level schools in their catchment area (Table 5.2.14) and have strong or very strong competition for students (Table 5.2.15). As a result the researcher wished to find out what influenced parents in choosing a particular school for their children. All three schools cited ‘good results’ and ‘small school’. The community school Principal states that:

The average for students would be 400 + points in the Leaving Certificate at the same time there are a number of students who do extremely well in the Leaving Certificate Applied but they are students who come in very weak. The intake at the moment spans between average to above average student and also extremely weak. We take in two very disparate groups and that is a huge challenge for teachers. Therefore we sell ourselves on getting good results given our intake. There is also a very wide curriculum, with a huge choice in subjects both practical and academic.
The community college Principal refers to:

Comprehensive curriculum, care of the student, good learning support, respect for the individual, positive attitude of staff and high expectations and respect.

The voluntary secondary school emphasises:

We take care of individual needs. This is a fee-paying school and there is no doubt that 'good results' are very important.

But the Principal makes the point that the ‘individual needs’ of the student are catered for also. All schools refer to the importance of the sporting dimension to parents. The Principal in the community school describes the facilities in the school:

The sports facilities are a big attraction, pool and gym is ultra modern and there is planning permission in for an astra turf pitch.

Correspondingly the Principal in the community college describes the recreational facilities in that school:

Being a Public Private Partnership school we have a fitness suite, excellent gym, outdoor pitch, five outdoor basketball courts and the location of the school is excellent just next to the swimming pool. This belongs to the town but we use it.

On the other hand, the voluntary secondary school has to rent all facilities:

We have no sports facilities, we have to rent out everywhere, for example a tennis club, basketball courts and hockey pitch. We had a hall which we had to knock, to facilitate prefabs while we are doing up the rest. We are very limited in that perspective.
Though the voluntary secondary school in this interview sample has no sports facilities itself, it still manages to provide facilities because of the importance of sport in the life of the student. The lack of sporting facilities as highlighted in this school would not be typical of other voluntary secondary schools.

5.3.3 Which of the following student enrolment methods do you use?

profile of school in local paper; open days for students and parents;
parent information nights; visiting feeder schools; use of brochure/prospectus or other.

The results of the survey show a variety of collaborative community methods which are used in recruiting new students across all sectors. The enrolment procedures are limited in this voluntary secondary school because of their admissions policy:

We have an enrolment procedure and if we looked for students it would go beyond the admissions policy.

It is the researcher's opinion that this would only relate to fee-paying voluntary secondary schools. The survey shows that 45.9% of voluntary secondary schools have under 300 pupils (Table 5.2.1) and thus they would be actively recruiting new pupils. Both the community school and the community college engage a range of enrolment methods similar to those in the survey (Table 5.2.16).
The community school cites the links with primary school as most important:

We have a lot of contact with the primary schools in the area. The two most effective are the links with the primary school teachers and therefore they are giving informed advice to the pupils and bringing the students in and letting them see the facilities and how it is run. There is also an open day and if there is a musical there is a matinee for the primary schools. Sometimes a basketball blitz is organised or soccer blitz and refreshments are served afterwards in the school.

The Principal of the community college states:

I don’t know which really is the most effective, a mixture of everything.

5.3.4 Is your school involved in the Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme/DEIS? If DEIS, how does it contribute to school in terms of additional supports.

Both the community school and the community college are disadvantaged but at different levels of the disadvantaged scale. The survey shows that 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools are disadvantaged and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools. Just 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools are disadvantaged (Table 2.10). The community school is very disadvantaged and it is entitled to all the supports:

As disadvantaged we are involved in DEIS and we have a Home-School-Liaison person. We are entitled to 0.5 full-time teacher equivalent but in this school we have it as a full-time post. You cannot operate this scheme on a part-time basis. There are little or none additional supports from this scheme. We have the School Completion Programme, additional grants but not huge by any standards, hundreds of euro not thousands. It is not well organised and this school has not been included in any meetings. Two additional hours of guidance was the most significant new resource but there are two whole time guidance teachers in the school already.
It is clear from the above comments that the State one of the partners in education, is not responding adequately to the needs of the community. The community college though disadvantaged get very little support:

Though it is disadvantaged we do not have a Home-School-Liaison Scheme and it is not involved in the DEIS scheme (School Support Programme). We are involved in the old School Completion Programme. We get funding under this programme but we were not upgraded to the new DEIS scheme.

Consequently this school cannot engage with the needs of the local community due to lack of supports.

5.3.5 Is the retention rate influenced by programmes; subjects; family circumstances; social norms or other?

The survey shows the high retention rate at both junior and senior cycle in this study. The retention rate in the voluntary secondary sector is 100% in both junior and senior cycle. The retention rate is influenced by programmes, subjects, family circumstances and social norms. The community school reports a retention rate of 85% in junior cycle and even higher in senior cycle. The Principal gives the following explanation:

The choice of subjects helps for example practical subjects, construction studies where the emphasis on academic is not as great. Family circumstances are changing, parents are putting more value on education and more and more parents want their children to go on and do the Leaving Certificate. A lot of work is put in by school staff and there is a good atmosphere in the school. In the recent Whole School Inspection we were lauded for the caring atmosphere of the school. A lot of students find the school a safe place to be and furthermore a pleasant place. Therefore they are not inclined to leave.
The comment by the Principal about school being 'a safe place' that 'they are not inclined to leave' is a good example of positive interaction between the school and community. The community college also has a high retention rate in junior cycle and 'higher in senior cycle because of a range of programmes and subjects on offer'. A special mention is made of the Schools Completion Programme, which is suited to the weaker pupils and those who might drop out early.

5.3.6 What % turnout is there for Parent Teacher meetings?

Table 5.2.20 shows the turnout of parents for parent teacher meetings. The survey shows a drop in percentage at senior cycle. In the voluntary secondary school the turnout is 100%. This does not reflect the survey findings and it is the researcher's opinion that the full turnout is because this school is fee-paying and this is reflected in parent attendance at meetings. The community school Principal explains that attendance drops for non-exam classes. The community college Principal remarks on a very low turnout for Transition Year. The Principal in the community school comments on measures taken to encourage parents to attend:

Lots of different measures have been taken varying times, different formats, the Home-School-Liaison would work very hard on encouraging parents to attend and they are always openly welcomed in and be very open to parents coming in. With parents out working it is very difficult. There has been no dramatic difference in attendance with the varying times of meetings such as later in the evening.
The Principal in the community college has also taken measures to improve attendance:

We would ask any parents who cannot attend to re-arrange a meeting. They are usually not willing to do that. We have changed the format of the Transition Year evening totally to make it more of a presentation but still the turnout was abysmal. Now we are going to tie it in with options for senior cycle. We had it at the end of year as a review so now we are going to have it in March to see if it works because the turnout for options was very poor also.

It is evident from the interviews interventions are being put in place to try and address non-attendance at parent teacher meetings.

5.3.7 In what areas of School Planning have the Student Council a voice?

Today, collaboration with students is important and is firmly endorsed in the Education Act 127 (1998). The survey shows (Table 5.2.26) that Student Councils are in all but a minority of 8.3% schools. The three Principals in the interviews engage the Student Council in policy formulation. In the voluntary secondary school the Student Council is involved in:

Every policy other than policies relating to staff. Matters are voted on and policies adopted.

In the community school:

The Student Council are involved as much as possible, regular meetings to talk about cafeteria food, organisation of events such as debs, green schools. They are also consulted on policy, have an input into the discipline policy.

In the community college:

They are involved in all areas, anything that affects them – school policies, development student issues, if they had recommendations in terms of say provision in the canteen, study.

**Curricular and Course Data**

5.3.8 Which of the following programmes are offered in this school?

Junior Cert Schools Programme; Transition Year; Leaving Certificate Applied; Leaving Certificate Vocational; Post Leaving Certificate; Back to Education; Adult Education; School Completion Programme or Other.

When studying programme provision there is a huge variation in what is being offered in this voluntary secondary school and the community school and community college. The voluntary secondary school is fee-paying and reflects the more academic school of today. It is catering for highly motivated pupils and their diversity must be respected. The Principal explained that the founders ‘wanted to set up a school of excellence to cater for a particular niche in the market in the city for girls’. The Principal then explained the decision to remain fee-paying with the advent of free education in 1967:

In 1967 with the advent of free education you had to make a choice whether you went into the free education or not. The decision for this school to remain a fee-paying school was that all the other schools in the area did and they automatically took the catchment area with them. The intake of this school was broader than that and if they went into the free-education scheme they would be limited. So it wasn’t viable to join the free education system.
Because of the student intake in this school the wide range of programmes such as Junior Cert Schools Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational, Post Leaving Certificate, Back to Education Adult Education and School Completion Programme are not required by parents. Both the community school and the community college are catering for the wider spectrum of student needs. The Principal addresses the issue of Adult Education:

We never had Adult Education because of the limitations of space, because we have evening study for the students. Being city centre we do not have grounds and parking. There are a lot of schools around that already provide these facilities very amply.

The voluntary secondary school in this interview shows how contrasting different schools can be. Both the community school and the community college offer all of the programmes listed above.

5.3.9 Which of the following influence subjects/programmes in the school - Teachers; Parents; Local business; Economy prospects; Student preference or Other?

There was broad agreement across the three sectors with regard to influence on subjects/programmes. Teachers, parents and students were the main influence. With regard to business influence the Principal of the voluntary secondary school makes the following comment:

The business community interest would be related to programmes such as Transition Year and Mini Company, they would not influence the programmes or subjects on the timetable for other year groups.
The Principal of the community college relates that:

Business and economy prospects would not affect programmes. Local business cannot really dictate what subjects are on offer.

The survey (Table 5.2.25) reflects the same opinions regarding the influence of local business.

**Board of Management and Parental Involvement.**

5.3.10 How does the Parents’ Association promote the interests of the students in the school in co-operation with the Board?

The survey shows that in most schools parents are represented on the Board of Management (Table 5.2.51) and in the majority of schools there is an active Parents’ Association representative of the community (Table 5.2.53). The Principals in the three sectors give a very clear picture. The Principal of the voluntary secondary school explains:

First of all by existing and being very vibrant. Secondly that we meet regularly every three to four weeks and I meet the Parent Council. They also take an interest in all aspects of pupil welfare. I give a Principal’s report to that meeting. We do not have a Board of Management but a Manager. If there are things of interest people can bring them up as well and we look at all aspects even uniform. It is through this body that all aspects of the school are validated such as a Religious Education policy at a recent meeting. Also the Student Council at different levels validates matters on behalf of the students.
The Principal in the community school explains that system:

Parents often organise talks. They would link closely with me. I would be invited to attend their meetings and would attend. The fact that they are actively involved and that they feel they can come to a group of parents with a concern. All of this involvement makes school important in the lives of students. It is important that as many parents as possible are involved.

5.3.11 How much of an input do parents have in drawing up the School Plan, the School Behavioural Code and School Policies?

The survey shows that parents are involved in drawing up action plans and policies in schools and the researcher through the interview was able to get further detailed information on how this operated. The Principal in the community school explains:

They are consulted along the same lines as the Student Council perhaps through a working party for example when the Code of Discipline was revised. The involvement of the School Plan would be through their representatives on the Board.

This is further collaborated by the Principal in the community college:

They are involved if for example we were drawing up a policy, we have a working group and it goes to staff, it goes to students and it goes to parents for their input and consideration.

In the voluntary secondary school the Principal explains that it is through the Parent Council that all aspects of the school are validated and also that the Student Council validates matters on behalf of the students.
5.3.12 Do you think the Home-School Liaison Scheme has a role to play in all schools today?

In the survey a high majority of Principals agree that this scheme should be extended to all schools (Table 5.2.60). All Principals in the interview explained their reasons. The Principal in the voluntary secondary school explains:

Yes, there is a need for a Home-School-Liaison scheme in all schools because of the way society is changing. Just because it is a particular type of school does not mean that children do not have the same problems as anywhere else, society has changed a lot, family set up has changed, and children need to be understood. It could be said that the children of more wealthy families need it more. It is essential at all levels. Chaplaincy and welfare are so important. People are needed that are not tied down in class to talk to pupils and to give parents time in an informed capacity. The social and health area are very important. I really believe in it, it is very essential.

The Principal of the community school makes the following comments and this scheme is in operation in that school:

Every school should be afforded a Home-School-Liaison person. To be offering half a whole time equivalent of a teacher is not satisfactory. Many of these teachers do far more than twenty-two hours, sometimes it includes night work and the benefits we have seen should be afforded to all schools.

The Principal in the community college has the following to say:

Yes, I think that every school should have a Home-School-Liaison Scheme. Our School Completion Programme does a lot of that, it links in with family and takes part in home visits. It is unfortunate that we do not have the Home-School-Liaison as well.
5.3.13 Has the school links with local business through sponsorship?

The survey shows that 73.9% of voluntary secondary schools, 55.6% of community/comprehensive schools and 90% of community colleges/vocational schools have links with business through sponsorship (Table 5.2.73). The interview with the Principal of the voluntary secondary school explains:

It is nice to have the children’s work endorsed by outside agencies. There is value in it. We also get involved in a lot of the quizzes that are run by major companies that are linked to subject areas. That is very interesting because the children can see relevance. We also get involved in environmental projects such as debating. It is very vibrant from that perspective. A line in our Mission Statement is nurturing for life so that really makes the whole thing come to life. We ask the children to go beyond the subjects that they are learning, like science and look at subjects from the broader perspective. They should also be aware of the arts and culture. From a general knowledge point of view, they will be happier people by the end of it.

The community school is not linked through sponsorship but through work experience and workplace visits. The community college is also involved ‘with a local major industry through the Schools and Business Programme’.
5.3.14 Do local employers support the school? Have School – Community business links helped this school develop?

In the survey the researcher explored the areas of involvement of business in terms of teaching materials, workplace visits, work experience placements and job offers, Table (5.2.74(a)), (5.2.74(b)), (5.2.74(c)) and (5.2.74(d)). Schools reported workplace visits and involvement with work experience placements.

The Principal of the voluntary secondary school explains the local business support including parental support:

They do by work place visits, work experience and job offers. We have a new computer room and parents would look for sponsorship. 90% of the computers have come through parents. Parents also offer financial sponsorship. We are lucky that parents are in a position to do this but we are very grateful. A lot of the businesses where the girls would go to at lunchtime might sponsor events, like different clubs, associations and societies that are in the school. We don’t seek it; it comes from the interaction with different bodies. Sometimes when the girls go out on work experience they are very impressed how they operate. Through discussion with them they would offer various sponsorships.

The Principal in the community college describes how the business links help:

Yes, you can look at it both ways. We are supplying them with a capable and efficient work force. The input of this major local company has been substantial in terms of time from the company. All of this is organised through Schools and Business Programme. In terms of community links you would have a link with the hospital, the day-care centre and different fundraising events in the town.
The fee-paying school because of parental contacts does seem to be able to gain more sponsorship than the community college. However they are both interacting with the business community. The interaction of the community school is more in line with the community college. Because it is a very disadvantaged area the Principal explains that:

Pupils go all over and outside the local area when doing work experience. There is a small industrial estate here and they are very good in taking our students.

**Adult and Continuing Education.**

5.3.15 Approximately what percentage of your enrolment would be parents of students in the school?

The survey shows that Adult/Continuing Education is offered in 16.7% of voluntary secondary schools, in 100% of community/comprehensive schools and in 90% of community colleges/vocational schools (Table 5.2.66). The voluntary secondary school does not offer Adult Education because of ‘limitations of space’ and ‘there are a lot of schools around that already provide these facilities amply’. What is interesting is that in the community school only 10% of the enrolments are parents of students in the school. The Principal explains that the area is now a ‘grey community’. There is a ‘Back to Education Scheme’ in the area offering various courses during the day, free of charge and this has an influence on the small adult education intake in the school.
There is a similar picture in the community college. The Principal explains:

We would like to increase numbers in the Adult Education Section. We are anxious that people would come to us and let us know what courses to put on. In terms of competition there is the Back to Education Centre which is also run by the VEC and sometimes they have courses for free when we were offering a paid course. They are paid for by the State. We are targeting different people also. The School is pretty full with the day timetable to make any facilities available during the day.

5.3.16 What courses have been put on in the last five years which might help parents to support a child's learning?

5.3.17 What new courses have been introduced in the last five years because of changing community needs?

The survey (Table 5.2.70) shows the different courses in all the sectors. What is most noticeable from the interviews is that both schools are interacting with the local needs of the community. The community school Principal explains:

There is a fantastic reservoir of skill in the area, the Arts, some artistic courses. One of the most successful has been Screen-printing. The other popular courses are in the area of computers, computer development and Tsai Chi. There is wide interest in IT and Art in this area.

The community college Principal explains what they do:

What we do is try and get suggestions from people to see what they want and then we try and find tutors in these particular areas. The tutors come in to open night, present their case and if enough sign up for it we would run that course. We do not have a lot of international students so therefore we do not have the demand for English courses.
5.3.18 How is this school catering for the multi-cultural society that is increasing in our schools today?

The survey shows that Principals in all sectors support strongly the need for schools to be 'community learning centres' (Table 5.2.76). What is happening in the schools is explained by all Principals. The Principal in the voluntary secondary sector explains how the schools provide 'extra English classes above and beyond what the Department give'. The Principal in the community school describes how the school is 'coping'. Matters of concern are 'difficulty when you get a large intake of students with no English', 'we probably need to put more systems in place and be a little more practical in the integration element'. Initiatives put in place by the Principal are working with the parents through interpreters and providing English classes at night. The Principal in the community college describes how they are coping with the 'alternative community' in the area and how they have 'to do an awful lot of work in terms of inclusion and respect'.

All of the Principals are aware of the broader socialisation task than in the past.
5.3.19 Do you see the Government as an active or delegating partner in education today?

All three Principals label the Government as a ‘delegating partner’. The Principal in the voluntary secondary school explains:

Delegating partner and an example of that is the whole Board of Management structure, where things have been dumped on schools, extra responsibilities and the funding has decreased. The very fact that voluntary secondary schools receive less of a capitation grant than community/comprehensive schools and vocational schools is very wrong. Maybe they say there are historic reasons for it, that is why they are historical, in the past. That all needs to be looked at.

The Principal in the community school describes the partnership as ‘delegating, totally delegating without resources’.

5.3.20 Is your school building catering for the needs of teenage / adult population including special needs?

In the survey Principals were asked for their opinions on this matter, Table 5.2.83. In the voluntary secondary sector 41.7% agree, in the community/comprehensive sector 87.5% agree and 100% agree in the community college/vocational sector. The voluntary secondary school has a very old building without a lift so the Principal explains how ‘physical difficulties would be a problem because of the stairs’.
The point is made that ‘there is no issue with the school, the issue is the building’. The community school is suitable because it is all at ground level and the community college Principal explains how the school was built recently ‘with all those needs in mind’.

5.3.21 Is the school regularly used by community groups?

Questions 5.2.79 and 5.2.80 in the survey address the question of school use by members of the community. This matter is addressed in more detail in the interviews and one can compare the different sectors. In the voluntary secondary school the Principal explains the use:

It is used for voluntary groups and resident associations, music and drama. When we had the hall groups came here to practice during festivals because we were so central. We have other voluntary groups within the school faith and light who give respite to parents. If asked we try and help out. It might not be regular but when requests are put in we help out inside the confines.

Though this school is old and has building restrictions there is varied use of the school by the community. The community school Principal stated that they facilitate group meetings at night and during the day. This Principal in former questions made reference to the different groups using the school in the area of sports and adult education. The Principal in the community college explains the drawbacks to Public Private Partnership:

Again because this school is Public Private Partnership there is an issue here. While the school is available to the school, up to 16.00 every day. After that we have a bank of 350 hours in the year that we can use. Therefore we try and have night classes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night so that minimises the draw on the bank of hours available to us.
It is up to the private company to rent out school facilities to the local community, outside of those hours. Uptake has been very poor, as it seems the hall is expensive enough where as there are two other halls in the town, which have built up a tradition, and they are a bit cheaper it seems.

Public Private Partnership schools restraints need to be examined especially if that school has facilities which the community wish to use at an affordable price.

5.3.22 The political and economic thinking of the OECD would be more intensive use of school buildings by the wider community. What are your views on this?

This question is somehow related to the previous question but the views of the Principals are significant. In the survey (Table 5.2.81) the results vary in the different sectors so attitudes and explanations of the Principals in the interviews are important. The Principal in the voluntary secondary school explains:

I totally agree when you are getting public funding. When we get financial help to renovate the building I see no reason not to offer the building and give something back.

It is quite likely that the reservations on the part of some Principals in this sector in the survey could be to do with lack of facilities. The Principal in the community school has a lot to offer:

I totally agree. This is a fantastic facility with sports complex. The complex is being used and it is run as a commercial enterprise and it makes a profit. The school building should be used in a similar way. At the end of the exams here most of this building is handed over to a language school.
There are lots of nights, weekends and there is an expensive building with facilities and nobody is using them. Schools should be available to use as a resource.

The Principal in the community college refers to the constraints of twenty-five years:

This is a community college and the community do not have open access. This is disappointing. Before amalgamation the vocational school in particular would have been at the heart of the community with people coming and going for all sorts of meetings and that is not happening now. This Public Private Partnership agreement lasts for twenty-five years.

5.3.23 Do you see the word community as central to the Mission Statement?

The findings in the survey suggest that over 80% of the cross-sector schools are in agreement that community is central to the Mission Statement. The comments by all three Principals endorse this concept:

Voluntary secondary school:

As long as it is not confined to the spatial dimension only, community is the whole spirit thing. Our whole school is a community in itself. We would also see it from the religious side as well. We have a lot of feeder schools covering a large area.

Community school:

Yes, although it is not in our Mission Statement. Our Mission Statement is – ‘Together we learn, together we care and together we share’. We don’t mention the word community but we operate very much as a community and have a vision of ourselves very much as a community and a family within the walls but also part of the wider community outside.
Community college:

The Mission Statement includes as its aims:

Care: To have a happy and safe community, that nurtures and cares for each individual. To have respect for oneself and others at all times.

Spiritual: To foster Christian values and beliefs, while recognising the diversity of individual beliefs and practices.

Growth: To develop the full potential of each individual in the school community. To encourage each other to make full use of the gifts given to us.

Self-Esteem: To be proud of ourselves, our college and our community.
To celebrate our own traditions and respect the traditions of others.

Excellence: To be a centre of excellence.
To strive for excellence in all that we do.
To match academic achievement with personal growth and development.

Community: To be one staff, one student body, one community.
To work together for the benefit of all.
To be at the heart of our local community.

5.3.24 Is your school responding to the needs of the local community?

The difficult question is to ask school Principals to assess their own school but the Principals were all very frank in their replies.
In the voluntary secondary school the Principal responds:

Some but not all because of the nature of the school. We are not responding to boys. We would not be able to take everybody who wants to come. Anything that is feasible, reasonable and that we can do in the confines of the structure. We work very closely with the local residents association. There are English language schools in the area and a very different community. We are city centre and different structures that we have to cater for.

The community school Principal responds: 'in as far as we can'. Finally the Principal of the community college replies:

Yes, our recent Whole School Evaluation said we were.

All Principals approached this question differently but the answers were frank.

5.4 Discussion with PRO of National Parents' Council.

Demographic Data and Policies

5.4.1 Introduction:

Education has always been a co-operative endeavour between the home and the school. Parents and schools have a complementary role in ensuring a collaborative process as enshrined in the Education Act (1998). The Irish Constitution recognises the central and primary responsibility of parents in the education of children.

Nonetheless, it is only in recent times that this responsibility has manifested itself in formal co-operation between parents and the school community. The National Parents’ Council (Post-Primary) is an umbrella body representing elected parents from all sectors of post-primary education and therefore this interview looks at the interaction of school and community from the parent perspective.

5.4.2 Many schools in this area have competition from other schools. What criteria, do parents use when selecting schools?

The Parent Representative listed three criteria – results, special needs and sports. The parent explains:

If parents feel that a school has a good track record with students and overall they get good results they will send their children to that school. They are supported in their learning and at the end of the time they get good points to go to university.

Interestingly this was also cited by Principals in all schools as a major selling point for their school (5.3.11). The second point is also very important with the advent of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 130 (2004). The issue of coping with students with disabilities and putting strategies in place to cater for them is very topical in Ireland today.

The Parent Representative makes the point:

The second whole area of special education needs, matching the student with the special education needs to a school that can give the extra resources and back-up that the student needs to make it in mainstream is important.

It is most likely that the National Parents' Council would be involved with the other partners in campaigning for extra resources for special needs students.

The third point is sport which was also mentioned by the Principals. The parent outlines the importance of sport:

Sport would also play a major part in area of choice of school. ‘The people with interest in the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) would look to schools with good sporting success and facilities.

5.4.3 In your opinion would one large school cater more efficiently for the full range of student needs? Is there a need for a diversity of schools?

While acknowledging the advantage of the larger school in offering a wider choice of subjects the advantages of the smaller school are made:

The big school can be less personal than the small school. In relation to parent choice some parents might prefer a smaller school so that children would be more a person than a number.

This would be in line with what the Principals reported (5.3.11).
5.4.4 Is the Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme catering adequately for the needs of disadvantaged children?

5.4.5 Should this scheme be expanded to all schools to cater for the changing needs of society today?

5.4.6 Is the new DEIS catering adequately for the needs of the disadvantaged?

The Parent Representative makes the point that every school today has disadvantaged students and therefore every school needs a Home-School-Community-Liaison person:

Where schools have it, it is definitely catering for students and their parents but it needs to be rolled out to every school.

The parent refers to the needs of the changing family today:

There are constantly greater pressures on parents. Also today both parents are working in families. It is important that there is someone in the school who will meet them and discuss problems if necessary.

These sentiments are echoed in the responses of the Principals (5.3.11).

The problems associated with the DEIS programme are very understandable.

It is slow to get off the ground and there are a number of reasons for that. First of all Principals don't like using the word 'disadvantaged' because they feel it will be a reflection on their school and parents might not want to send their children to that school. They might actually loose students being classified as a DEIS school. As well as that it is a culture.
The Principal in the interview in the community school is willing to get involved but finds 'there are little or no additional supports'. The Parent Representative makes the following suggestion:

Therefore we need to build up this bond with the school through the Home-School-Liaison element of the DEIS. This is taking longer to roll out. Principals like to have an 'extra pair of hands' in the school and the DEIS co-ordinator can give students extra support. Unless there is a very serious problem there could be a reluctance on the part of the Principal to let the co-ordinator go out to discuss the matter with the parents. During the DEIS training co-ordinators are advised to tread softly and slowly. It is a very good programme that will gain momentum as the years go by and hopefully more schools will come into the scheme.

5.4.7 In your opinion is the timing and organisation of parent teacher meetings facilitating attendance at both Junior and Senior level?

5.4.8 What measures could be taken to improve attendance?

Though times of meetings have been adjusted there is still a problem with turnout at meetings:

It is not. While meetings are now scheduled some in school time and others outside we are still not getting to the cohort of parents that you want to get and that is the parents of students who have difficulties or the students that are marginalised. As well as that parents say that the old situation was better where the meeting for exam students was held between seven and nine at night or you could go into school and you had a whole day to meet teachers. There is for and against. You will only tease out those policies by sitting down with a cohort of parents and seeing what is more advantageous.
The Principals in both the community school and the community college make similar points and many of the remedies are also discussed by the Principals (5.3.6). They are making alternative arrangements as suggested by the parent:

Perhaps there is a role there for the Home-School-Community-Liaison person that they could go out and meet the parents who do not attend.

Finally the parent refers to a much-quoted reason:

One could be if they had a bad experience themselves they are certainly reluctant to come near the school in relation to their children.

Curricular and Course Issues.

5.4.9 Are schools offering a broad based curriculum catering for both academic and vocational needs of children?

5.4.10 Are there any subjects in particular that you feel are not being catered for in any of the school sectors?

The parent being in the vocational sector acknowledges that that sector is catering for the mixed student community. However, the point was made that despite the wide range of courses on offer:

Schools are under pressure from parents and a lot of parents still look upon academic success as being very important. There is a reluctance to encourage children to go and take up an apprenticeship or go into the work place where there is continuous training. One of the things that we need to explain to young adults going out into the world is that education does not finish with the Leaving Certificate but that it is a lifelong process and they can go back as adults and continue education and that they should never be reluctant to embrace further education.
The survey shows the availability of music at both junior and senior cycle (Table 5.2.21). Drama is a non-exam subject and the availability is not shown in the survey. Perhaps the Parent Representative here is addressing the optional area of music and drama in schools and there is an acknowledgement that this area has improved:

Over the years we have found a shortfall in the area of drama and music. It was parents who came on board encouraging Principals to cater more for this area. Then you have the availability of staff and the size of the school to take into account. These were areas that we were very worried about. Now that has changed and that is a good thing.

The facilities in the Science area are clearly an issue:

Not all schools have the state of the art laboratories. It is important to get students in as much practical work as possible. This lack of facilities is killing the whole area of science and children are exhausted from writing. They are watching the teacher doing the experiments but only when they can do them themselves does it become really interesting. That is an area that needs to be developed more in schools. This has a bearing on the uptake of science subjects at Leaving Certificate. When children go to third level their time in the laboratory is extensive in comparison to second level.

There is no doubt that laboratories play a major role in advancing the sciences and this area needs to be addressed. The survey shows a very high number of schools offering this subject in junior cycle (Table 5.2.21).

Also in senior cycle Chemistry, Physics and Biology are offered in a high majority of all schools (Table 5.2.21) so good laboratory facilities are essential in teaching and promoting these subjects.
5.4.11 In senior cycle the following programmes are available to schools – Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational and Post Leaving Certificate Courses. Are the appropriate courses being offered in all schools to cater for the diversity of needs of students today?

The survey shows the schools that offer Transition Year, the Leaving Certificate Vocational, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Post Leaving Certificate. Table 5.2.22 also shows the breakdown in each sector. The Parent Representative explains the situation with Transition Year:

Transition is not available in all schools. It is voluntary in some schools but there is a cut-off point where maybe 20 or 24 students are accepted. Parents are sometimes very disturbed because they wish their children to mature a bit more. Sometimes if the students have difficulties they would like them to do Transition Year where they would be encouraged to grow up and mature before 5th year. In some schools this course is obligatory.

The reasons for numbers being lower in the other programmes is also explained:

In relation to the Leaving Certificate Vocational and Applied parents are traditional in their thinking and are slow to make changes and would like them to do the Leaving Certificate (established) or the Leaving Certificate Vocational. It is only when the student fails to make it into third level and do their particular course that Post Leaving Certificate Courses are considered.
5.4.12 Physical Education is very important for both physical and mental wellbeing of students. Are all schools catering adequately for the needs of the students in this area?

The survey shows that in senior cycle Physical Education is offered in 79.2% of voluntary secondary schools, 66.7% of community/comprehensive schools and in 70% of community colleges/vocational schools (Table 5.2.21).

The parent explains:

There is a misconception about what physical education means. Some schools have a great name for games so it has a panel of students who are good at games who get a lot of physical education. The rest of the schools might not and there is a tendency to drop physical education in favour of facilitating an exam subject, particularly coming up to exam time. This is a time when children should be really out there exercising and keeping fit. This is where there is a misconception between physical education and sport. The Parents’ Association in one school paid someone to come in and do modern dance to give them some form of activity.

The researcher in the analysis of the survey refers to the new Sport Studies subject envisaged in the re-balancing of the senior cycle which should address this issue.
Board of Management and Parental Involvement.

5.4.13 The Education Act states that Boards of Management should be set up where possible. Is this the practice?

5.4.14 Are parents on Boards of Management involved in drawing up the School Plan, School Behavioural Code and School Policies?

5.4.15 In what specific areas are parent associations active in schools? Are there any other areas they would like to get involved in?

The Parent Representative clearly endorses the results of the survey (Table 5.2.50) showing Boards of Management in the majority of all schools and explains why a small number are not set up:

The schools that might have a difficulty could be fee-paying schools as they sometimes have a different structure.

This is true of the voluntary secondary school featured in this interview where the Principal explains how a Manager manages the school. What is interesting is the extent of involvement of parents on Board of Managements in drawing up the School Plan, School Behavioural Code and School Policies:

No, except where parents are involved for a long time in an active capacity. In some schools parents feel that Boards of Management are just rubber stamping decisions that are already taken. That is unfortunate as in the Vocational sector where I work we got a say, availed of it and appreciated it. That is also true for the School Plan, the Behavioural Code and School Policies. However I meet parents who say they just rubber stamp.
This would contradict what the Principals say in the survey (Table 5.2.58) and the Interviews (5.3.10). While the observations of the Parent Representative are significant, because of the small number of both Principals and Parent Representatives being interviewed the observations may not have reliability.

There is anecdotal evidence that parents mainly are involved in fundraising and this is borne out in this interview:

The one that always comes to mind where parents are active is fundraising. Some feel that that is not their role but it is part of our role because you are doing something for the overall good of the school.

The Parent Representative also outlines the areas where parents could get involved:

I feel parents could also get involved in the whole area of games and coaching. There are parents who are very talented in the community, particularly in the area of art and drama and I feel there could be a role there for them. There could also be a role in relation to the resource area where they could work with groups of students on shared reading or a reading programme and encourage young people to read. Another area could be the area of mentoring, where they could mentor first year students, perhaps with students who are finding it difficult to settle in. The new procedures now for checking/clearance out people may put people off.

All of the areas outlined show an engaging sense of community and the points are very worthwhile and show commitment to the concept of collaboration between school and community.
5.4.16 In your opinion does the school promote co-operation between school and the local community?

5.4.17 Family, school and community have a role to play in the intellectual, emotional and social development of young people. What is your opinion?

5.4.18 Would you regard the school as the focus of the community?

In the survey the majority of the Principals agree that they should be leading the way in community liaison (Table 5.2.92). The Parent Representative is frank and realistic in answering:

A lot depends on the Principal. A lot of schools have great contact with the community. The young people are involved with their club and their school in sport. Outside of that they are not involved as they should be. The school children should be the centre of the community. The community should be feeding into the school and the school reaching out to the wider community. Another matter is that schools are closed for 180 days when the community could be making use of the school particularly art and craft, woodwork, and metalwork. On the other hand they do cater for the community through night classes and the whole area of lifelong learning. It is important that the school and community work hand-in-hand.

On the other hand both have responsibilities:

In reality the school day is short and children spend a lot more time in the community than in the actual school so the home and community have a big influence on them. In this respect home and community have a responsibility to look after them and people should not be knocking on the school door to solve all problems. It is a two-way process. That is very important.
The different roles of the partners are further discussed and a word of caution is included:

We expect too much from the school in the sense of solving all of society’s ills. The community should be playing a larger part in the development of young people and leave the school free to concentrate on the academics.

This relates to an earlier response where parents still regard the school as having a greater academic role to play than perhaps social or emotional (5.4.2). The survey shows how the Principals see the school as the focus of the community (Table 5.2.89). This interview refers us to the Danish model:

Where the school is the focus of the community and the community revolves around the school.

This model is advocated in the interview. The survey analysis explores this matter in full.

5.4.19 Are information sessions held for parents?

If so, do they aid the process of subject choice?

The survey shows that schools have Information nights for parents on choosing option subjects (Table 5.2.23). The interviews with the Principals also showed that every assistance was being given to parents that attend (5.3.6). The Parent Representative gives an overview of what happens:

The schools are very good; teachers are very good at giving their time, with open nights. All matters are explained fully to first year students. Again exam students are catered for and they are also helped in choosing subjects for senior cycle.
A note of caution is added for both schools and parents:

Schools need to focus children on looking at their subject choices because what they take in first year more than likely will influence their future career choice. While the information is available not every parent turns up. Parents need to be aware of the significance of subject choice for future career options.

Adult Education.

5.4.20 The need to support a child’s learning encourages parents to attend Adult Education courses in the local community. What is your opinion?

5.4.21 Adult Education programmes address local community needs. What is your opinion?

5.4.22 Are there any areas that you see as not being addressed?

The response to supporting a child’s learning through Adult Education in the survey is varied (Table 5.2.65). Thus this question was asked again at interview:

Yes, where a parent gets involved in night classes or courses or in any ways gets involved in further education it is leading by itself.

The interviewee gives an example:

There are schools where you have parents sitting alongside children doing Leaving Certificate.
When addressing local needs the interviewee makes the following remarks:

Maybe, not always. Sometimes the courses on offer are not suited to what people want today. One area not catered for in some places is DIY. Modules that lead to a Certificate or Diploma, which may lead to a Degree, are available in places. Courses on offer depend on demand. If the people seek a course and if the local VEC or school see a need for a course then they will run it.

One area that is not being addressed is:

Parenting courses. The challenges for new parents are getting serious. Course on behavioural management for both teachers and parents are important.

The programmes for Adult Education are different in all schools so feedback from different areas would reflect different needs. The interviews with the Principals also show that efforts are being made to address local demands (5.3.16).

**General Community Issues.**

5.4.23 Are school buildings today suited to all ages and to people with special needs?

5.4.24 The most cost-effective use of buildings is more intensive use of facilities by the wider community. What is your opinion?

In relation to schools being suitable for people with special needs the survey shows that Principals in voluntary secondary schools in particular are not happy with facilities. This is not acceptable today (Table 5.2.83).
The interviewee makes the following points:

No. In a report to the Education and Science Committee of the Dáil a few years ago I discussed the matter that schools were not user friendly for people in wheelchairs or with physical disabilities. There were some schools with three stories which were not wheelchair friendly at that stage. If you are building a new school facilities are put in. Otherwise classes may have to be facilitated at ground level in older schools. Lifts need to be installed in older schools, at present this is only done on a need.

The views of the Principals are varied in relation to intensive use of the school with 43.1% in agreement only. The views of the Principals interviewed were very positive and this interview is also very positive:

Definitely closing schools early until nine o’clock the following morning is a waste of space when it could be used by the wider community. Schools could be used as meeting places, the PE hall could be used by the wider community, metalwork room, home economics area. One would need a very good maintenance plan because everything must be right for children the next day. Extra maintenance is needed as a support structure.

It is obvious that the Parent Representative is aware of maintenance problems and mentions it as a caveat to any difficulties arising.

5.4.25 In your opinion are schools catering for the multi-cultural society that is increasing in our schools today?

This matter is discussed by all Principals (5.3.17). The survey also shows that schools are committed to the idea of being ‘community learning centres’ (Table 5.2.76).
This interview stresses the 'limitations' and challenges ahead in coping with a multi-cultural society:

Yes within limitations because there seems to be a certain amount done in relation to language. Having language teachers in primary schools will support the transition from primary to post-primary. With people now coming in to the post-primary system without English as their first language it is very difficult. Schools will have to become more flexible. One needs the support of the Department of Education and Science here to finance schools. At the moment there is serious cutting back in the Department and that is worrying. In the area of integration the support of parents is important and if there is a language barrier here parents could become marginalised. The existing Parents’ Association might find it difficult to involve people if there is a language barrier.

5.4.26 Do you see the Government as an active or delegating partner in education today? Are your views taken on board? Are you treated as equal partner?

Both the survey (Table 5.2.84) and the interviews with the Principals (5.3.18) show the Government must play a more active partnership role in education today. The Parent Representative acknowledges the work of the Government in relation to providing language provision:

Yes within limitations because there seems to be a certain amount done in relation to language. Having language teachers in primary will support the transition from primary to post-primary. With people now coming in to the post-primary system without English as their first language it is very difficult.

However more finance is needed:

One needs the support of the Department of Education and Science here to finance schools. At the moment there is serious cutting back in the Department and that is worrying.
The interviewee states that it should be an active partnership but because of issues questions how active that partnership is:

It can be very difficult to get permission to do something from the Department of Education and Science, it might be easier to get forgiveness. At times when schools have gone with initiatives it is because you have a proactive Principal who took it upon himself to take the reins and go with the support of his staff on a particular issue. It takes people like that in the system who will challenge and get on with things. The Department of Education and Science monitors standards but if new initiatives are good for school and students they should support it.

There is a resounding no when asked are parents treated as equal partners:

The opinion is no. I believe that parents have a voice, although a lot of parents feel that they are not looked upon as an equal partner particularly in relation to funding. If parents want something they just keep 'harassing' the Department and eventually it will work but it has to be kept up. We are in principle and in law equal partners. At the moment there is the minimum of funding for the National Parents' Council. The five bodies are working together very well but still waiting for funding to put a strategic plan in place.

5.4.27 The school Principal should be leading the way in forming alliances with groups and individuals outside the school. What is your opinion on this statement?

The survey shows the overall support of Principals themselves as leaders in community (Table 5.2.92). The Parent Representative is very definite on this issue:

Definitely a proactive Principal is able to get everybody in the community on board. If a Principal wants a Parents' Association in a school it will be effective and it will succeed. The younger Principals are very effective and see the parents as an asset.
5.4.28 Equality of outcome in education is achieved by adopting an integrated and coherent partnership approach. What is your opinion?

The survey shows that the majority of Principals agree with this statement though it must be said not all Principals answer this question (Table 5.2.88).

The Parent Representative explains the importance of an integrated partnership:

As far as we are concerned we are equal partners, we provide the children who are the clients of the system. It is not a situation of them and us; it is a case of ourselves and the team of the wider school community working together for the benefit of the young pupils who will be in turn the taxpayers of tomorrow and the providers. The partnership is important and that that partnership is equal in education.

5.5 Discussion with Executive Chairperson of Commission on School Accommodation.

5.5.1 Introduction

The Commission of School Accommodation was set up by the Minister for Education and Science in 2000 in order to proactively plan for educational provision. A steering group, representative of the partners in Education, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Finance conduct research and issue reports in relation to School accommodation. To date four major reports have been completed *Amalgamation of Second Level Schools* ¹³¹ (2001), *Planning School Provision Three Praxes* ¹³² (2002),

Criteria and Procedures for establishing and maintaining provision through the medium of Irish in Second Level Schools or Clusters of Schools (2004) and Criteria and Procedures for the Recognition of New Second Level Schools (2004). Issues relating to accommodation and school provision which came to the fore in the survey are explored in discussion with the Executive Chairperson.

5.5.2 Today schools face the challenge of providing a varied curriculum and range of programmes that suits students of all types of ability, strengths and interests. This research has shown that a high percentage of schools in a sample study of Cork City and County have less than 400 pupils (Table 5.2.1). Are these schools able to cater for the needs of all students in the local community?

In addressing the needs of all pupils the Executive Chairperson explains what ‘the ideal size’ might be:

That is a debatable point, personally speaking a school of less than 400 is getting dangerously near a situation where if there was a fall the spread of subjects would fall dramatically, proportionally it would fall. That invites another question which could be put as a supplementary question - that is, what is the ideal size school to enable you to have a spread of subjects and in that regard somewhere in the region of 600, as it has all the economies of scale and has the capacity to enhance the Principal and Deputy Principal as ex-quota. You get plusses when you go over 500. In that regard it is more important what you get in terms of staffing. You have the capacity to meet almost any curricular needs, within proportion.

The point is made that ‘the higher up you go the greater the spread of subjects’ however there may be a price to pay ‘the reality is you may lose something in going for a bigger school’.


The Parent Representative also refers to a disadvantage of the bigger school being ‘less personal’ and that parents might prefer a smaller school so ‘that children would be more a person than a number’. Nonetheless the Executive Chairperson outlines what is practice in developing areas today:

It is now the practice almost in developing areas that schools would invariably be around 800+. That would be to cater for the huge areas that are developing in areas like East Meath, North Drogheda and Kildare. The same would be true around Cork but to a lesser extent. This is going to be a feature of Ireland which is called the outer-belt.

The Census 2006\textsuperscript{135} for Cork City shows a decline in population of -3% with a more gradual increase in the suburbs and towns.

5.5.3 \textbf{Is amalgamation of smaller schools the way forward in order to cater for the wider needs of the community?}

With the survey showing a high percentage of schools in this area with under 400 pupils (Table 5.2.1) the researcher discussed the possibility of amalgamations between some schools in order to cater for the wider needs of the community. The Executive Chairperson explains the issues:

That might be too radical because it depends on the location. You have two things. On the one hand you have curricular needs and on the other hand you have the diversity of type. Both issues are quite distinct but not unrelated. Looking into the future there is a need to preserve options in school-type. This would refer to faith schools, be they Catholic, Protestant or other denominations and State schools. In that regard with the complimentarity of type people would be given the choice. This choice is very important. It is not easy to manage because you inherited a pattern of schooling and then if you are moving towards meeting diverse needs you have to do it in a gradual and ordered way.

\textsuperscript{135} Government of Ireland. (2006). \textit{Census, op cit., Cork City.}
The two areas of ‘curricular needs’ and ‘diversity of type’ are important dimensions to any form of schooling. This matter is further explored in relation to the patron:

The biggest problem is the intent of patrons. Really the patrons of schools are the only ones that can initiate amalgamations or open schools. That is in relation to existing providers. On the one hand, you have the needs of the area and on the other hand you have the concerns of patrons. Then you have the concerns for diversity. All those merged are complicated factors not just for amalgamation but also in terms of school type.

5.5.4 A high percentage of schools in this area are well established, over 25 years old. Have these school buildings been sufficiently upgraded over the years to meet the needs of all age groups including students with special needs?

This matter was also discussed in interview with Principals and Parent Representative (5.4.23) and (5.4.24) and some reservations were outlined. The Executive Chairperson explains the upgrading process:

The short answer is no. Many of the traditional schools were two storeys and in some cases three storeys. Laterally lifts have been put into some of these. From that point of view they are not easy to adapt or change but they are always in some prime locations and sometimes in locations that are most conducive to holding their catchment area. In others they are too remote with all the consequences. Upgrading is very important. Upgrading depends on location type and make. A technical assessment determines what upgrading can be done.
5.5.5 From 1992 – 2001 fifty-six new schools were established. What circumstances led to their origin? Amalgamations, Change of patron, New school due to population rise or Private to State.

The survey shows that only 4.2% of voluntary secondary schools, 22.2% of community/comprehensive schools and 40% of community colleges/vocational schools have been founded in the last 25 years (Table 5.2.2b). Nationally between 1992 – 2001 there were only fifty-six ‘new schools’. The circumstances which led to these schools is discussed:

A combination of amalgamations in the earlier one’s where small schools were established. The range and where they are built varies greatly and depends on circumstances. In many instances new schools are being built in the developing areas. Amalgamations take place where maybe there are one, two or three schools and they are all dropping in enrolment. In order to enhance and make them more viable coming together makes sense. There is also a mixture and in some areas the people decide that they want to stand-alone and others may wish to amalgamate. Those that amalgamated in the past, got priority in terms of getting buildings. The greenfield schools are now priority plus as new schools are in existence. This is not simple as you have the other matter of diversity of type and that is becoming more of an issue to meet the needs of a changing population.

The changing nature of school patrons in Ireland is further outlined and concerns of lack of option of faith schools:

The generosity of the religious orders to move forward for the sake of the students in their area is amazing. They have amalgamated into community schools and community colleges in order to cater for curricular needs of the community and create greater harmony within communities. In the developing areas there really isn’t a great choice of patrons because the patrons tend to be State schools and VEC schools. Then there is concern that the faith schools may not be getting an option. There may be faith schools in the proximity. The solution may be to enhance the facilities in the nearest faith schools. There are very few private schools left.

\[136\] A school is considered to be ‘new’ when it receives a new roll number though they may result from (a) amalgamations (b) change of patron of existing school (c) newly established (d) existing private school obtaining State recognition (Commission on School Accommodation, March 2004. p 13).
5.5.6 Does the initiative for a new school in an area come from the local community or the trustees/patron?

5.5.7 In deciding on the patronage of trusteeship of a school does the Department of Education and Science engage in discussion with local community?

5.5.8 What format does this take – Public meeting or Other?

5.5.9 The White paper (1995) mentions ‘diversity of school type’ in general terms. Are parents and parent groups seeking increasing diversity in school type today?

The Executive Chairperson makes the point that in the developing areas the ‘thrust comes from a combination of the local community and the Department of Education’. Furthermore discussions on the patronage of the school are initiated by the local community asking the Department when they will get a school. The point is made that ‘the prime concern is to get a school not necessarily a patron’. The changing society in Ireland is brought to the fore in the way schools are now being planned and set up:

It was the norm to hold a public meeting in the early 70’s late 80’s. The demand and population change increased so dramatically that schools were then put in to meet the demand. Today it is very hard to keep up to demand while population increased for a while it has now accelerated out of all proportion. There may have to be rationalisation in areas where the numbers are very low including areas in Cork. This rationalisation is a big concern in the area of providing a diversity of schools. Most schools have empathy with religious schools and there will be a spirit of accommodation prevailing. This is complex because Ireland was a homogenous society for so long. Value-based education is very important in Ireland but this can be more than just religious based and there is no such thing as a value-free school.
Diversity of school type is much debated in Ireland today because of inward migration. The *Education Act* (1998) on the recognition of schools requires:

In the case of a proposed school and having regard to the desirability of diversity in the classes of school operating in the area likely to be served by the school, the needs of students attending or likely to attend the school cannot reasonably be met by existing schools. 137

The *Education Act* does not provide a definition for *diversity in the classes of school*. In addition the White Paper (1995) in its section on ‘Diversity of Schooling Provision’ mentions diversity in general terms of diversity of school type:

.... it seems likely that parents and parent groups will seek an increasing diversity of school types in the future. 138

The Department of Education and Science categorise second level types in three groups – voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive and vocational/community college. However, within these groups there can be significant diversity (Appendix B). In the above-mentioned section of the White Paper diversity is equated with ‘schools reflecting different ethical or cultural traditions’.

The issue of diversity will no doubt be guided by respect for difference within the confines of State resources.

However, there is no doubt but there is a change in the face of Ireland today and consequently there will be demands for new schools to cater for emerging needs.

5.5.10 What members of the local community are involved – Parents, Business, Public representatives, Voluntary groups, Teachers, Management bodies or Other?

5.5.11 Which group is most dominant?

The Executive Chairperson outlines the role played by interest groups in the community:

There is a much more proactive business community now that are anxious in developing communities that there would be an educational base. They are very supportive of initiatives in established schools. The Chamber of Commerce have been at the forefront in an area in which I was a Principal. Their concern was to develop an involved educated community. The reality now is that you can have readymade families coming into communities and numbers did not grow naturally as in the past. There is no advance warning. These are very diverse communities now which is good and there are huge numbers coming from different countries. It is beginning to ebb now but nonetheless they have to be catered for. Local representatives are very active in trying to ensure that schools are in place almost ahead of any other facility. You would also have other voluntary groups but parents are the prime educators of children and they play a very strong part in campaigning for schools in their local communities. The start of a school comes out of a need. In the past there were many people interested in taking possession of a school but now it is the reverse. The only patron you can rely on to come on board is the VEC. There will be more Community Schools but they will not be numerous.
5.5.12 Is the recent development of all-Irish second-level schools due to a Government initiative to promote the use of the Irish language or due to local demand in the community?

The Executive Chairperson explains the context of the recent development of all-Irish second level schools:

A report was done on this. The demand for all Irish education has increased. It has increased enormously at GaelScoileanna level (first level). It has not been so great at second level, there is not as much demand but nevertheless what is happening is there is a demand where there is a cluster of GaelScoileanna. There is a greater awareness and a greater concern by the public to try and preserve the Irish language and in many instances they seek the GaelCholáiste (second level). It is the natural successor to the GaelScoil.

There has to be a balance between the rights of people who want to be educated through Irish with the balance of the economy to meet the needs of second level schools. In an ideal society the two would complement one another. This is not an ideal situation at the moment because finances are scarce enough. For that reason they may be slowing down.

5.5.13 In the next ten years what will influence the development of new schools in your opinion - New housing due to population rise/shift, education through Irish, migration, other minority groups or other?

When studying school provision in Ireland one must take account of the unique history, sensitivities and dynamics of each individual case.

Nonetheless the desired outcome is a school that serves its students well and that receives full support from parents and the wider community. Therefore the researcher wished to learn what would influence the development of new schools.
The Commission already conducted four major studies as already outlined, and therefore these studies present a framework of key issues, a model for the process and recommendations for the future. The Executive Chairperson explains the issues:

A combination of peripheral growth around the cities, second-string developments in other words people are moving out of cities. Cost factors are very important, people cannot afford to live in the city and apartment living is not working in Ireland. Dublin is full of unoccupied apartments because they are not conducive to children because of lack of facilities. We are creating an incredible complex. People are selling apartments and moving out there by dividing the established schools and increasing the demand for other schools elsewhere. Education through Irish will have some bearing on the development of schools, it is a movement which is laudable but will grow in proportion. Migration is a major factor. Some schools are being established by minority groups who have a large body of people. The Muslims have established primary schools to meet their needs and a post-primary is inevitable.

5.5.14 In designing schools are issues such as teaching and learning methodologies taken into account?

5.5.15 Are there any other issues that influence the design?

5.5.16 Two Public Private Partnership schools were built in this area. Are the facilities in these schools superior to those built by the Department of Education and Science?
5.5.17 Examples of good practice in school design and construction, which facilitates the integration of services on one campus, are being put forward by the OECD. Would this be a positive step towards engaging the school and community more closely in Ireland?

In Planning School Provision Three Praxes (2002) changes in school design and provision of facilities are referred to as ongoing. Research is conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to reflect teaching and learning methodologies and community expectations. Thus on-going change in design and facilities means that school capacity today is not a rigid figure. This is confirmed by the Executive Chairperson and the Public Private Partnership Schools are given as examples of good practice:

The PPP schools must be looked at here. They are models for teaching and learning. There is more of an awareness now of the needs of schools. The design of schools has improved dramatically. The people who build schools are anxious to see how they are working. There is feedback all the way to the architects. Some of the lateral schools are amazing, catching light and evoking atmosphere that was lacking to date. The designers are being influenced by Europeans and are aware of other practices.

The idea of 'integration of services' was another topic discussed:

The answer has to be yes campus like arrangements. One could envisage sharing primary and post-primary facilities, sharing grounds with different entrances. Sharing with other facilities in Ireland might not happen because of the tradition of schools being built on their own. Secondly there is a resistance to 2000 children coming into the one campus every morning. Even our bus system with schools is small.

5.5.18 Is there a community dimension to schools today?

The community dimension of the school was once again discussed and it is important to get the point of view of a planner:

Firstly all schools should have a community dimension. The schools that interact with their communities and in particular that interact with their feeder primary schools have a better chance of developing a community spirit. Inclusive school leadership/management is important where all are involved. Tradition in Ireland is very complex, great changes are occurring in all sectors.

Though there is a strong tradition in Ireland of schools with different ethos and structures it was acknowledged that ‘great changes are occurring in all sectors’ guided by the concept of partnership as enshrined in legislation.
Chapter Six

Conclusions.

6.1 Introduction.


The partnership or community dimension of education is thus enshrined in legislation. The challenge is engagement. This study focuses on the main partners in the education process guided by the research questions:

1. As educators are schools going out into the community with empathy and interacting with the community?

2. Are there varying levels of interaction across the different sectors – voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive and community college/vocational?

3. What factors enhance or hinder the formation of meaningful and strong proactive relationships and partnerships in local communities today?

This chapter presents the main conclusions and recommendations that emerge from a detailed questionnaire containing 93 questions in association with interviews conducted amongst five key partners in the education process. This study was conducted in second-level schools in Cork City and County.

6.2 Demographic Data: The Issues.

The comprehensive statistical demographic data in this study provides detailed information on the current and projected positions in relation to school provision and composition. This information is particularly relevant in assessing the level of interaction between the different schools and communities. The enrolment trend in this study is quite varied and one would have to question the viability of some schools in the future. In the voluntary secondary sector 45.9% have less than 300 pupils and 11.1% of community/comprehensive schools and 20% of community colleges/vocational schools have less than 200 (Table 5.2.1). The Commission on School Accommodation propose a possible ideal size of 600 for existing schools in order to meet the diverse curricular needs of Irish society today. In the developing areas this would invariably be around 800+. Thus existing schools with an enrolment of under 400 would find it very difficult to provide an enhanced educational environment for students with an efficient
supply of resources. Providing students with a broad curriculum and as much access to subjects as possible is a complex factor in school organisation and planning. Consequently the current and projected enrolment size of a school is a significant factor in planning the educational programme.

Major studies have been carried out in relation to school accommodation under the Commission on School Accommodation and the steering group is comprised of representatives of the various partners in education, including the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Finance. Amalgamations have taken place in a number of schools in this study (Table 5.2.6) but there is no doubt that this process will continue. The major objective of an amalgamation is that a school is sufficiently large to provide a curriculum that suits students of all types of ability, strengths and interests. However, each amalgamation has major implications for the communities involved. One must take account of the unique history, sensitivities and dynamics of the individual case. There is need for collaborative proactive planning involving the patrons of schools. Good decisions for schools depend on collaborative rather than competitive decision-making. While striving to enhance curricular provision the Commission must also strive to maintain diversity of type of school. On the one hand you have ‘faith schools’, Catholic, Protestant or other denominations and alternatively State schools who are generally multi-denominational or non-denominational (Table 5.2.5). With this complimentarity of school type people are given a choice of school. Diversity of school type is a much-debated topic in Ireland today because of inward migration. Thus the issue of diversity will play a major role in future rationalisation of schools or in decisions to build new ‘greenfield’ schools.
The Action Plan for Education Inclusion (DEIS 2005) has been drawn up in cooperation with the partners in education. The chief objective of this plan is that all young people will derive maximum personal benefit from the education system. Actions include a concentration of literacy and numeracy, strong links between the home, school and community, schools working co-operatively and added value from links between education and other services. Therefore supports and second-chance provision in tackling educational and social disadvantage is much more of a priority today in Ireland. In this study 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools have disadvantaged status (Table 5.2.10). The effective implementation of this scheme, The Home-School-Liaison Scheme and other interventions are needed in tackling disadvantage and addressing shortcomings where there has been less success to date. These special efforts should help everyone to reach their full potential.

While welcoming the major achievements made over recent years in raising the retention of students to completion of senior cycle, the number of early school leavers, while they only represent a relatively small group, is a concern. The economic and social consequences are still very real for those young people, both for the individuals themselves and for society as a whole. This is all the more urgent given the increased key role that education has now come to play in our knowledge-based economy. While in this survey all second-level schools state that over 80% of pupils complete the junior cycle the completion rates drop in senior cycle and there are differences between the sectors (Tables 5.2.17, 5.2.18). Therefore there is great onus on the second-level education system to realign with
the broader more diverse group of learners today. This will require the active support and involvement of all stakeholders including young people, parents, teachers, the social partners and the wider community at large.

The most notable change in Ireland's social and economic landscape between the Censuses 2002 and 2006 has been the growth in foreign national living and working in this country. Ireland has a long experience of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. This can be seen for example, in the way in which bilingualism in Gaeilge (Irish language) and English has played an important part in Irish life as well as in the long-standing presence of the traveller community and of minority religious groups but in recent years this diversity has been added to through immigration. The survey shows the international enrolment across all sectors. The term 'interculturalism' usually expresses a belief that we are all personally enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures, and that people of other cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other. As education not only reflects society but also influences its shaping and development it has an important contribution to make in facilitating and developing intercultural skills, attitudes, values and knowledge in the community at large. Schools today are one of the institutions that have a role to play in the development of an intercultural society.
6.3 Curriculum and Course Data.

As the end of the first decade of the 21st century approaches the interaction between school and society remains complex and challenging as the school-going population becomes more diverse. Thus there is a need for constant re-aligning of the curriculum in order to connect more effectively with the wider community. Hence there is a consequent requirement for an education system with ‘breath’ catering for both academic and vocational needs and above all a system of ‘excellence’. This study highlights areas of the curriculum not being catered for in the junior cycle across all sectors thus the holistic foundation for student’s subsequent education is not being catered for adequately (Table 5.2.21). Senior cycle education has the responsibility to prepare students for life in a rapidly changing society and to integrate developments in the area of vocational training with general education policy. Furthermore a key objective is to develop each student’s potential to the full, and equip them for work or further education. Curriculum provision in senior cycle raises some serious issues (Table 5.2.21). Firstly there is a need for a more comprehensive curriculum across all sectors combining the more academic approach to education of the voluntary secondary schools with the more practical subjects offered in the two State sectors. The present segregated system of schools, some of which have very low enrolments are not able to cater individually for the delivery of a holistic education. The ongoing rationalisation of schools may address this issue. Secondly the study highlights the urgent need for interventions and investment in the area of ICT. It is envisaged by the NCCA that students would leave schools as independent learners able to communicate effectively, work collaboratively and critically
evaluate, manage and use information. Thirdly it is clear that Physical Education because it is not a core subject, as in other European countries, is not receiving parity of esteem with other subjects on the curriculum. Meanwhile health is seen as a resource for everyday life, a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources as well as physical and mental capacities. It is hoped that the re-balancing of the senior cycle curriculum will address this issue.

6.4 Programme Provision.

The programmes: Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Vocational, Leaving Certificate Applied and Post Leaving Certificate are clearly involved in the 'vocational dimension' of the curriculum, with outreach to community and business sectors, with key skills associated with communication, ICT, enterprise and problem solving of students. Availability of these courses in the three sectors reflects different needs in the different sectors. Perhaps the unavailability of programmes in some schools reflects the non-catering of student needs (Table 5.2.22). The study endorses the broad range of learning experiences of the Transition Year Programme in particular, the intellectual, social and personal development of the student, self-directed learning and experience of adult and working life. Work experience, is seen as 'career sampling' and generally positive, catered for within the community. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme involves constructive partnerships between the school and the business community. The large number of schools involved in this programme is an endorsement of education where pathways crossing 'academic' and 'vocational' programmes are articulated. This presents learners with
options of mixing and matching learning styles in order to develop more individual learning programmes and paths.

Though the Leaving Certificate Applied is offered under the umbrella of the Leaving Certificate, the programme is pre-vocational and aimed mainly at those who do not wish to proceed directly to Higher Education. Moreover their aptitudes, needs and learning styles are not fully catered for in the Leaving Certificate (established). There is a strong endorsement across all sectors of this programme but what is of note is the low percentage of voluntary secondary schools offering this course. It is not feasible to ascertain from the study the reason it is not offered more widely. However, the high retention rates in this survey would suggest that the LCA is catering for the lesser able students who may have dropped out of school. Similarly the NCCA conducted destination surveys between 1997 – 2000 which show that 89% of those who complete LCA proceed to work and further education.

Finally the Post Leaving Certificate Programme is to provide appropriate education and training to bridge the gap between school and work. This programme is mainly offered by the vocational sector. Additionally these programmes have become important re-entry route for adults returning to learning achieving the objective of life-wide and lifelong learning.

6.5 Parental Involvement.

Parental partnership in education is endorsed in the *Education Act* 1998. The survey shows that the vast majority of schools have the important structure of a Board of
Management to enable this process to develop. There is a relatively high commitment on the part of parents to get involved in the Parents’ Association. Bearing in mind the level of disadvantage in this study the lack of involvement may be related to this issue. The reinforcement of collaborative and interdependent thinking amongst principals as leaders adds to the added-value concept of parental involvement. This is significant in view of the much broader socialisation task that lies ahead in the future, catering for a greater diversity of cultures, languages and traditions. The survey also shows schools engaging generally with the community by promoting co-operation.

With regard to major school policy such as School Plan, the School Behavioural Code and School Policies the survey shows a high level of involvement by parents collaborated by the interviews with principals in each sector. Nonetheless this is refuted strongly by the parent body with the phrase ‘rubber stamp’ rather than active involvement. However, this comment would need to be followed up in a further study focussed on parent opinions and the two studies would have to be analysed and crosschecked.

6.6 Adult/Continuing Education.

Lifelong learning is seen as a key to advancement in the 21st century where learning throughout life will be essential for adapting to the evolving requirements of the labour market and for better mastery of the changing time frames and rhythms of individual existence. Hence the wide provision of Adult/Continuing Education as seen in this study will have a greater role in extending the learning
chain from infancy to old age. However, one of the challenges for Government is bringing about improvements and expansion of lifelong learning opportunities through improved facilities thus not compromising any sector and the surrounding community. Enrolment in Adult Education is rather low and varied in all sectors which would suggest that facilities are not being used to capacity. However, it is beyond the remit of this study to follow this up further. Courses in ICT provide up-to-date training for members of the community in the fast changing information society. English as a foreign language reflects the changing Irish society today. Moreover education is one of the most important ways of combating racism and developing a more inclusive, intercultural society. Childcare/special needs reflects the emerging more inclusive Irish society being catered for through Adult/Continuous education.

6.7 Business/Industry Issues.

The importance of a range of relationships between school and the business/industry world is clearly evident in this survey. Today business or industrial links are a matter of rhetoric of school – community relations or of school seeking philanthropic benefits from these links. Such partnerships are seen as much more as a matter of joint endeavours where positive collaboration and effective working can function as rich sources of community and lifelong learning. The need for this new approach to building partnerships between educational institutions and the business and industrial world arises from the increasing recognition of the part of both business and education and training is now the critical resource for any kind of growth and development in the economy, society and community.
Sponsorship, workplace visits, work placements and job offers show the interdependent and integrated nature of learning today where active business and industrial involvement in education and training is put on a rational, coherent and purposive basis. In so far as they have an interest in learning and make opportunities available and accessible there will be a role and a responsibility for business and industry in promoting learning and providing opportunities for it.

6.8 General Community Issues.

6.8.1 Schools as 'Learning Centres'.

There is a strong commitment to the idea that schools are 'learning centres' offering a variety of programmes and learning methodologies to a diverse range of students across all age groups. In such an environment we are forced to evaluate and reassess the role of the school in society, in offering a range of learning opportunities to the community. In that context schools review organisation, the nature of curriculum content and modes of delivery, the design and location of places of learning and the integration of new information technologies into the overall educational enterprise.
6.8.2 Schools building ‘Community Spirit’.

School is seen as very appropriate for building ‘community spirit’ offering facilities for sports, Adult Education and other forms of personal and social development. Schools today do more than just prepare people to make a living. They prepare people to live full lives, to participate in their communities, to boost their initial education, to enjoy leisure, develop their interests and capabilities and motivate members of the community to respond to opportunities offered to them thus promoting community engagement. In return for the school resources and facilities artists and craftspeople can provide activities, exhibitions and performances for students and members of the entire community.

6.8.3 School structures need to be rethought.

Today schools are envisaged as ‘community learning centres’. The majority of schools call for a structure rethink. The diverse and complex nature of the school today with a proliferation of curriculum and programme targets, sporting to voluntary activities, partnerships including parents, business and industry, work experience and a highly heterogeneous student population challenge the school to deliver a high quality education within the existing context. More flexible time frames will have to replace a series of episodic subject periods if active and co-operative learning using new technologies is to be realised. Today teachers’ formal responsibilities are with whole classes, but many of their
tasks in assessment and pupil-centred learning are with individuals and small groups including special needs students. In catering for a more diverse range of learners as envisaged full-time, part-time and returning learners there is a need for a strategic re-orientation of schools in order to respond flexibly to the needs of all learners in the community (Table 5.2.86).

6.8.4 Government Investment.

There is a strong consensus for planned investment by Government. This is in line with the Forfás Annual Report 2005 which maintains that high levels of investment in education lead to a number of other personal and social benefits including increased social inclusion, lower crime, reduced welfare and better health. Though major reforms as reflected in recent legislation have been welcomed investment still lags behind other OECD countries. If the Government is really interested and committed to substantial improvement for all pupils, it must engage with the evidence regarding reform strategies and be accountable in the area of finance and put this investment beyond their own needs for political survival. By showing integrity they may paradoxically gain greater political support in the future. The Government is seen more as a ‘delegating partner in the education process without resources’.
6.8.5 Comprehensive Supports for Teachers in addressing disadvantaged needs in the community.

Both the survey and the interviews call for better supports in dealing with the disadvantaged. Significant emphasis has been placed on addressing inclusion issues particularly since the late 1980s with additional supports to vulnerable groups, by means of legislation and promoting parental involvement through forging closer ties between school and community and curricular reform. However, rates of educational underachievement and early school leaving remain higher for pupils from disadvantaged communities than other pupils. The DEIS programme needs to be more widely and comprehensively rolled out in order to prioritise and effectively address the needs of young people from the disadvantaged communities.

6.8.6 Collaborative Integrated Partnerships.

This study clearly embraces the partnership vision in education. Today treating relationships with parents and the wider community as powerful inclusive learning relationships is essential. It is clear however that in order to embrace the partnership vision strategies and practical measures need to be put in place. Thus partners need to be enabled and supported in the roles ascribed to them in order to fully engage in the process of community building. Formal policies, such as legislation are not enough to enable communities to engage with one another. It is easy to pass legislation,
announce policies and prescribe new curricula and programmes. What is
needed is building new structures thus enabling the community to improve
and adjust to more innovative and co-operative ways of learning and thinking.

6.8.7 The School as the focus of Community.

Opinions as to the school being the focus of the community differ in this
survey. This is not surprising as the Irish Constitution reiterates the role of
the parents as the primary and natural educators. Accordingly the home is
the focus of the community. In addition the interrelatedness of home,
community and school is vital to the all-round development of the young
person. In reality the school day is short and children spend more time at
home and in the wider community than in school. Therefore home and
community have responsibilities. Wolfendale’s view of schools is apt with
the foregoing in mind. He concludes that schools ‘are an insufficient
provider of what only the community in toto should be offering towards
the fullest development and educational opportunity of every child ..... and
cannot contribute maximally ..... without recourse to children’s caretakers
and without the incorporation of the wider community network’. 9

Wolfendale’s quotation serves as a summary statement on home-
community-school based learning which is central to effective education.

6.8.8 **Community is central to the Mission Statement.**

The general acceptance that the community is central to the Mission Statement is important for the whole *raison d'etre* of the *Education Act*. Nonetheless the non-acceptance of this theory questions community building on behalf of the major partners in the process. Prendergast relates the three core values of partnership and sees this partnership leading to community building when people share visions and aims, have a sense of belonging, are allowed to contribute, have a say where things are going and are recognised. Therefore those not seeing community as central to the Mission Statement could be seen as not party to the all important partnership process enshrined in legislation and which is a strong theme running through educational literature today.

6.8.9 **Ongoing in-career development for teaching staff.**

The study clearly shows the support for ongoing in-career development for staff. Bearing in mind the high level of disadvantage in this area the need is even more pertinent. The new approaches to teaching and learning as envisaged in the new partnership enshrined in the *Education Act* 1998 involve the need to reshape learning experiences so that pupils and parents are more engaged. These developments are deeply integrative. Learning, assessment, technology, collaboration across pupils, teachers, communities, and business partnerships are all tightly interwoven. This change cannot be foisted on teachers. Teachers must have the opportunity to become better learners
themselves through high-quality professional learning experiences and opportunities. Professional learning can no longer be seen as peripheral to classroom teaching. Teachers more than anyone are essential to the creation of a better learning society. It can no longer be seen as an optional luxury for those who choose to do postgraduate studies themselves professional learning must be made integral to the task of teaching, with time for it built in by the system. Only then will teachers be able to deal effectively with the numerous new challenges they face in engaging with the community today.

6.8.10 The Principal must lead the way.

The positive attitude of the majority of the principals themselves to being leaders in redefining collaboration so that it encompasses alliances with groups and individuals outside the school is decisive in itself. The negative response or indecision may reflect more traditional closed nature of schools but this is a small minority overall. This re-culturing involves changing norms, values, incentives, skills and relationships in an organisation to support people to work differently together. Structural change is part of successful reform so that timetables become more flexible in order to cater for work experience and team-teaching or parents nights try and accommodate better attendance or perhaps that computers become an integral part of every classroom. Such structural changes are built on over years where there is a will and commitment to change and developments for a more community focussed education.
6.9 General Conclusion.

This study has shown that there are many factors in the Irish context which provide a favourable framework for the interaction of school and community in the voluntary secondary school, in the community/comprehensive school and in the community college/vocational school. The International study, Chapter 2 and the literature review, Chapter 3 show that a key role in shaping a world-class education system that meets the needs of all learners, supports their participation in communities and in society. Legislation in Ireland also supports this concept. However, addressing the needs of a diverse group of learners with a range of learning interests, dispositions, aptitudes and talents including learners with special needs is a major challenge today. Nonetheless, the study shows that the majority of schools are engaged in responding to social change and new needs. In this study 20.8% of voluntary secondary schools, 44.4% of community/comprehensive schools and 70% of community colleges/vocational schools are disadvantaged. Additional home – school – liaison support is requested in order to have the adaptability and flexibility to respond to the changing pupil clientele. Effective school systems must also cater for the broader more inclusive programme and curriculum provision across all sectors. This study shows a high level of involvement of parents. Though the provision of Adult Education is high the enrolment is low and varied in all sectors which would suggest that school facilities are not being used to capacity by the wider community. School business partnerships highlight that students get work-based learning experiences relevant to their interests and curriculum. There is a strong commitment to the idea that schools are ‘learning centres’ and appropriate for building ‘community spirit’.

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Nonetheless, the majority of schools call for a structural rethink. This suggests that schools have many constraints to contend with in organisational terms facilitating a more flexible learning environment in catering for the needs of all learners in the community today.

There is a strong consensus that planned investment is needed by Government, being a partner in the education process. In the difficult and uncertain economic climate of today this investment is unlikely to be realised. The Government Budget 2008 \(^{10}\) has cancelled grants for major programmes such as Transition Year Programme, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied. Curriculum development has been curtailed and finance to support services has also been discontinued.

Collaborative partnership integration is endorsed though there is strong agreement that partners need to be supported in their new roles in order to truly engage with community. Opinions as to school being the focus of the community differ in this survey. The researcher quotes Wolfendale \(^{11}\) who explains the vital roles of all partners. There is general acceptance that community is central to the Mission Statement.

Ongoing in-career development for teaching staff is the most effective way which allows teachers to relate learning to their daily activities in the classroom, the school and in the community. Finally the positive attitude of the majority of


principals to themselves as leaders in engaging with the wider community is a decisive statement.

While this study just focused on school practices in one county nonetheless the detailed study using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews is wide ranging and definitive for Cork City and County. A wider study of schools throughout Ireland would be difficult because of numbers though this study could be repeated in other counties. The three research questions have also been addressed. Schools are going out into the community with empathy interacting with the community. There are varying levels of interaction across the different sectors. The study also highlights the factors that enhance or hinder the formation of meaningful and strong proactive relationships and partnerships in local communities today.
Chapter Seven

Reflections and Further Related Research.

7.1 The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that help or hinder the interaction of school and community. These insights suggest a number of issues for consideration by members in the partnership process: pupils, teachers, parents, patrons/trustees/owners/governors, management bodies, local community (including voluntary, social and business sector) and the State. Looking to the future, proposals in this study may help to rebalance and restructure educational thinking which would provide new opportunities for the inclusion of development education, content and methodologies within the curriculum. Schools today provide vital supports to enable development education to flourish and so enhance the life of the whole community.

The primary objective of this study was to assess the interaction of school and community in Cork City and County. The cross-sector study of the largest County in Ireland and second largest city allowed the researcher to compare and contrast practices of community interaction. The main objectives of this study were to explore:

- As educators are schools going out into the community with empathy and interacting meaningfully with their constituents?
- Are there varying levels of interaction across the different sectors – voluntary secondary, community/comprehensive and community college/vocational?
• What factors enhance or hinder the formation of meaningful and strong relationships and partnership in the local communities today?

The questionnaire was sent to principals as the researcher felt that only they would be equipped to address all sections which were factual and wide-ranging in context. Consequently the researcher would get a good overview of the interaction of school and community. However, as in all surveys respondents do not answer all questions. This was so in this survey to a small degree but it had no significant bearing on the results. Follow-up interviews were conducted amongst partners offering different perspectives, three principals, one from each sector, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the National Parents' Council and the Chairperson of the Commission on School Accommodation representing government thinking. The number of interviews had to be confined to five because the Department of Education and Science only allows five days for personal leave including study or research. This time was used to travel and conduct these comprehensive interviews.

7.2 A follow-up study should include focus group discussions with parents, students, teachers and management in order to consider the practical implications of the ideas presented in this study. A number of schools drawn from each sector could be studied. Though the interview with the PRO of the National Parents' Council in this study was wide-ranging it was only one voice. It is important to give an opportunity to a wider range of partners to examine, evaluate, criticise and judge what is happening in the school in the local community. This would be helpful in adapting and re-shaping the direction of ongoing development and supporting change if needed and making partners active, agents of change. The National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment in Ireland have conducted on-line surveys amongst members of the public on new courses in second level education and published findings on their website. This is a good idea but a researcher would need sponsorship for such an extensive survey.

7.3 Whole school evaluation is a process of external evaluation of the work of a school, carried out by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science. The process is designed 'to monitor and address the quality, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the education system provided in the State by recognised schools and centres for education'. These reports are available on the Department’s website since 26 October, 2006. On checking the website on 21 January, 2009 only one second level school in Cork City and County had been released on the website and therefore a valuable source of information was not available for this study. However, analysis of these reports could be included in future studies as they would be a major source of information in evaluating the quality of educational provision in the different communities.

7.4 An in-depth study could also be conducted in the area of Adult/Continuing Education. This study showed that although courses were available and schools were committed to Adult Education attendance figures generally were low. Therefore further study could address structural and organisational issues in order to engage the community more actively.

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7.5 This study focused on school practices in Cork City and County and was wide-ranging and definitive. It could be repeated in other counties or the Department of Education and Science could commission a similar study nationwide. The interview population could be broadened to include representatives of all the major stakeholders in the education process. This could be an on-line survey. A nationwide study because of the large sample, could therefore claim reliability and validity in the statistical sense. Today the school-going population is becoming more diverse and challenging therefore taking stock is an important element in informing and directing future planning. The study should use both qualitative and quantitative methods in dealing with important issues such as: demographic participation curricular and course data, programmes, board of management and parental involvement adult education, business issues, school ethos, mission statement, collaboration between partners and the school as the focus of the community.

7.6 The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has the remit to advise the Minister for Education and Science on issues related to educational planning which were addressed in this study. Therefore studies like this highlight whether educational experiences of young people have undergone the radical shifts envisaged by the innovative programmes and syllabi which have been developed over the last ten years by the NCCA. Educational legislation in Ireland envisages that schools as places of learning will be characterised by greater flexibility in curriculum provision, greater variety in learning environments, greater levels of outreach to the world of work and to the community and greater integration with other learning institutions providing opportunities for lifelong learning. This
study was designed to inform on the foregone aspects of educational practice. As
schools represent the most important site of educational change the Department of
Education and Science in conjunction with the NCCA need to undertake ongoing
studies to prepare for how impending changes will be facilitated.

It is hoped that this research has laid the foundation for future research in this
area. In addressing change and how these changes can fit in with and adapt the
organisation and culture of the school Fullan commented that:

Without a direct and primary focus on changes in organizational
factors it is unlikely that [single innovations or specific projects]
will have much of a reform impact, and whatever impact there is
will be short lived..... school improvement efforts which ignore
these deeper organizational conditions are 'doomed to
tinkering' .... Strategies are needed that more directly address the
culture of the organization. 2

2 Fullan, M. (1988). 'Change process in secondary schools: Towards a more fundamental agenda'. University of
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APPENDIX A

EDUCATION ACT, 1998

AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMON GOOD FOR THE EDUCATION OF PERSON IN THE STATE, INCLUDING ANY PERSON WITH A DISABILITY OR WHO HAS OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, AND TO PROVIDE GENERALLY FOR PRIMARY, POST-PRIMARY, ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING; TO ENSURE THAT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IS ACCOUNTABLE TO STUDENTS, THEIR PARENTS AND THE STATE FOR THE EDUCATION PROVIDED, RESPECTS THE DIVERSITY OF VALUES, BELIEFS, LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONS IN IRISH SOCIETY AND IS CONDUCTED IN A SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS, PATRONS, STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF, THE COMMUNITY SERVED BY THE SCHOOL AND THE STATE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE RECOGNITION AND FUNDING OF SCHOOLS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT THROUGH BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT; TO PROVIDE FOR AN INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS; TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AND TO MAKE PROVISION FOR IT, AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS.

## APPENDIX B

### Comparison of models of second levels schools

The voluntary secondary school, the community college and the community school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voluntary secondary school</th>
<th>Community college</th>
<th>Community school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First established</strong></td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrument of governance</strong></td>
<td>Articles of Management (Catholic schools)</td>
<td>Vocational Education Acts 1930 - 2000</td>
<td>Deed of Trust for Community Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employer of staff</strong></td>
<td>Board of management/Manager of the school</td>
<td>Vocational Education Committee</td>
<td>Board of management of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron/Trustees</strong></td>
<td>Religious order/Diocese Private owner/governors</td>
<td>Vocational Education Committee</td>
<td>Usually, <em>one or two religious orders or the diocese</em> <em>VEC</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status of the board of management</strong></td>
<td>Executive board (where installed)</td>
<td>Sub-committee of the local Vocational Education Committee</td>
<td>Executive board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition of board of management</strong></td>
<td>4 nominees of the patron 2 elected parents 2 elected teachers</td>
<td>Usually, 3 nominees of the VEC 3 nominees of religious order or the diocese 2 elected parents 2 elected teachers (Some variations on this)</td>
<td>Usually, 3 nominees of religious order or the diocese 3 nominees of the VEC 2 elected parents 2 elected teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial contribution of trustees</strong></td>
<td>Contribution now capped at €50,000</td>
<td>Funded by the VEC</td>
<td>Contribution now capped at €50,000 shared by the trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reserved posts for religious</strong></td>
<td>Entitled to some</td>
<td>None, usually</td>
<td>Entitled to some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status of teachers</strong></td>
<td>Employees of the board of management/manager</td>
<td>Employees of VEC scheme; officer status under the VEC Act with protection in the event of appeal</td>
<td>Employees of the particular board of management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representative body at national level</strong></td>
<td>Joint Managerial Body</td>
<td>Irish Vocational Education Association</td>
<td>Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOM interaction with the Department of Education and Science</strong></td>
<td>Direct/indirect</td>
<td>Through the VEC</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethos</strong></td>
<td>Denominational; a few multi-denominational</td>
<td>Inclusive, e.g. religious education provided for all denominations</td>
<td>Inclusive, e.g. religious education provided for all denominations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>Range from academic to comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Community Research Project

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick ✓ the appropriate response.

1. How many students are enrolled in your day school?  
   - 100-199 [ ]  
   - 200-299 [ ]  
   - 300-399 [ ]  
   - 400-499 [ ]  
   - 500-599 [ ]  
   - 600-699 [ ]  
   - 700-799 [ ]  
   - 800-899 [ ]  
   - 900-999 [ ]  
   - 1,000 or more [ ]

2. How long is your school founded?  
   - 0-5 yrs [ ]  
   - 5-10 yrs [ ]  
   - 10-15 yrs [ ]  
   - 15-20 yrs [ ]  
   - 20-25 yrs [ ]  
   - Over 25 yrs [ ]

3. Which of the following best describes the geographic location of your school?  
   - City [ ]  
   - Town [ ]  
   - Satellite Town [ ]  
   - Village / Rural [ ]

4. In which sector is your school?  
   - Comprehensive School [ ]  
   - Voluntary Secondary [ ]  
   - Community College [ ]  
   - Other [ ]

5. What is the religious affiliation of your school?  
   - Roman Catholic [ ]  
   - Church of Ireland [ ]  
   - Multi-denominational [ ]  
   - Non denominational [ ]  
   - Other [ ]

6. Which of the following best describes your school?  
   - Greenfield [ ]  
   - Amalgamation of 2 Voluntary Secondary Schools [ ]  
   - Amalgamation of 1/2 Voluntary Secondary Schools and VEC School [ ]  
   - Public Private Partnership School [ ]

7. Which category best describes your school?  
   - Single Sex Male [ ]  
   - Single Sex Female [ ]  
   - Co-educational [ ]

8. If Co-educational, what percentage of pupils are female/male?  
   - Female [ ]  
   - Male [ ]  
   - 0-9% [ ]  
   - 10-19% [ ]  
   - 20-29% [ ]  
   - 30-39% [ ]  
   - 40-49% [ ]  
   - 50-59% [ ]  
   - 60-69% [ ]  
   - 70-79% [ ]  
   - 80-89% [ ]  
   - 90% or more [ ]

9. What % of parents / guardians avail of the free book scheme?  
   - 0-9% [ ]  
   - 10-19% [ ]  
   - 20-29% [ ]  
   - 30-39% [ ]  
   - 40-49% [ ]  
   - 50% or more [ ]

10. Is the school categorised as ‘disadvantaged’ by the Department of Education and Science?  
    - Yes [ ]  
    - No [ ]

11. Is your school fee paying?  
    - Yes [ ]  
    - No [ ]

12. If your school is not fee paying, does it have an annual contribution fee?  
    - Yes [ ]  
    - No [ ]

13. Is the annual contribution up to €20 [ ]  
    - €50 [ ]  
    - €100 [ ]  
    - over €100 [ ] per student?

14. Are there other second level schools in your catchment area?  
    - Yes [ ]  
    - No [ ]

15. If yes, how would you best describe the competition for school students in your area:  
    - None [ ]  
    - A little [ ]  
    - Strong [ ]  
    - Very Strong [ ]

16. Which of the following methods do you use to recruit students?  
    - Word of Mouth [ ]  
    - Newspaper / Advertisements [ ]  
    - Profile of School in Local Newspaper [ ]  
    - Open days for students and parents [ ]  
    - Parent information nights [ ]  
    - Visiting Feeder National Schools [ ]  
    - Use of brochure/prospectus [ ]  
    - None [ ]  
    - Other [ ]

17. What is the retention rate in Junior Cycle?  
    - Over 80% [ ]  
    - 80-70% [ ]  
    - 70-60% [ ]  
    - 60-50% [ ]  
    - Under 50% [ ]

18. What is the retention rate in Senior Cycle?  
    - Over 80% [ ]  
    - 80-70% [ ]  
    - 70-60% [ ]  
    - 60-50% [ ]  
    - Under 50% [ ]

19. What percentage of your intake are international students?  
    - 1-5% [ ]  
    - 5-10% [ ]  
    - 10-15% [ ]  
    - 15-20% [ ]  
    - Over 20% [ ]

20. What percentage turnout was there for parent/teacher meetings in both Junior and Senior Cycle in the last two years?  
    - Junior Cycle [ ]  
    - Senior Cycle [ ]  
    - Over 80% [ ]  
    - 80-70% [ ]  
    - 70-60% [ ]  
    - 60-50% [ ]  
    - 50-40% [ ]  
    - Under 40% [ ]
21. Which of the following option subjects are available in your school?

**Junior Cycle**
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Italian
- Typewriting
- Art, Craft, Design
- Business Studies
- Science with Local Studies
- Music (Junior Cert.)
- Materials Technology (Wood)
- Technical Graphics
- Home Economics
- Metalwork
- Science
- Technology
- Environmental and Social Studies
- Keyboarding
- Computer Studies
- Other

**Senior Cycle**
- History
- Geography
- Latin
- Ancient Greek
- Classical Studies
- Hebrew Studies
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Italian
- Applied Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Physics and Chemistry
- Agricultural Science
- Biology
- Agricultural Economics
- Engineering
- Technical Drawing
- Construction Studies
- Accounting
- Business
- Economics
- Music (Leaving Cert.)
- Art with Design Option
- Art with Craftwork Option
- Home Economics
- Computer Studies
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Religious Education (Leaving Cert.)
- Other

22. The following programmes are offered in this school?

- Transition Year Programme
- Leaving Certificate Applied
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
- Post Leaving Certificate Courses

23. The school has Information nights for parents before choosing option subjects/programmes? Yes ☐ No ☐

24. Parents may make appointment with guidance counsellor if they require information or guidance in choosing options? Yes ☐ No ☐

25. The option programme is influenced by the following? Teachers ☐ Parents ☐ Local Business Community ☐ Economy Prospects ☐ Other ☐

26. This school has a Student Council? Yes ☐ No ☐

27. The Transition Year Programme gives students an opportunity to be flexible learners.

28. The structure of the programme allows a broad range of learning experiences with an emphasis on personal development including social awareness.
# APPENDIX C1

## Community Research Project

**PROGRAMMES/Contd.... Please tick [ ] the appropriate response.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Work experience may later help students to choose subjects appropriate to their future careers.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Students become more aware of societal problems through being involved in fundraising.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Students have an opportunity to hear guest speakers from local community not available to other year groups.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>The local community are willing to provide work practice places.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>The course is difficult to run because the local community cannot offer job placement.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>The majority of students have to travel outside local area for job placement.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>The TYO in school is highly rated by parents.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>The TYO Programme is important for engaging with the vocational dimension of the curriculum.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LCVP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>This course encourages the business and social sector to engage in school life.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>The LCVP programme is an intervention in the Leaving Certificate (established), which enhances the programme.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>The LCVP prepares learners for further education and the world of work.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>The LCVP linking with employers in the community is beneficial to the future career of students.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>The school through LCVP establishes ongoing partnerships with specific employers in the form of twinning or sponsorship.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Interaction between the school and the world of work is important today.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>School community partnerships have helped this school to develop an extensive network of relationships with employers, enterprise boards and training agencies.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**LCA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>The LCA caters for those whose aptitudes, needs and learning styles are not catered for in the Leaving Certificate (established).</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>The pre-vocational nature of LCA, caters for those who would otherwise drop out of school after Junior Certificate.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>The public perception of the programme as one for ‘weaker’ students curtails the number of students taking this programme.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>This course contributes in a significant way to education policy by retaining young people in full education who would otherwise have left school at 16.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>The participants in LCA are gaining qualifications and making vocational choices about career options.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Community aspects of LCA prepare students more fully for employment and for their role as participative enterprising citizens.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX C1

### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50. This school has a Board of Management?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51. Parents are among the partners represented on the Board of Management?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52. Parents in this school are always willing to serve on the Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>53. The school has an active Parents’ Association that is representative of the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. Family, school and community have a role to play in the intellectual, emotional and social development of young people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>55. The school today has a much broader socialisation task than in the past.</td>
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<tr>
<td>56. This school promotes co-operation between the school and the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57. The Parents’ Association promotes the interests of the students in the school in co-operation with the Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>58. The parents are involved in drawing up the School Plan, the School Behavioural Code and School Policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. The Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme involves parents more intimately as partners in education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60. The Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme needs to be extended to all schools to cater for the ever-changing needs of today’s society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>61. Schools should work in partnership with parents and guardians by engaging them in on-going consultation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>62. By working in partnership with parents and guardians schools ensure that policy formulation recognises the realities of students’ lives in the wider community.</td>
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<td>63. In School-family partnerships both parties receive mutual and complementary benefits.</td>
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<td>64. Policy makers are turning to schools for solutions to help in relation to social issues.</td>
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<td>65. The need to support a child’s learning encourages parents to attend adult education classes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66. Do you provide Adult/Continuing Education in your school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>67. If no, is it because of Lack of facilities No demand Another school providing in area</td>
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<td>68. If yes, please indicate approx. total enrolment for 2005 – 2006.</td>
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<td>1 – 74</td>
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<td>75 – 450</td>
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<td>451 – 800</td>
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<td>801 – 1,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,401 – 2,000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

69. Please give approximate % of enrolment in the following courses:

i) Personal and Social Development including professional courses.  
   approx. % enrolment

ii) Hobby and Leisure Courses of an academic or practical nature.  
    approx. % enrolment
**APPENDIX C1**

### Community Research Project

**ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION.** Please tick the appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70. List up to any 5 new courses that have been introduced because of changing community needs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>71. How many years have you been operating Adult/Continuing Education in your school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>72. How many courses are on your Adult Education Programme per year?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>51 - 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>61 - 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>71 - 80</td>
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<tr>
<td>81 - 90</td>
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<tr>
<td>91 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BUSINESS COMMUNITY ISSUES.** Please tick the appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>73. The school has formal links with local business through sponsorship.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>74. Local employers and business support the school in terms of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) teaching materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>75. Co-operation between school and local industry/business eases the transition from school to work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**GENERAL COMMUNITY ISSUES.** Please tick the appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>76. Schools are ‘community learning centres’ offering a variety of programmes and learning methodologies to a diverse range of students across all age groups.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>77. The school is a very appropriate centre for building ‘community spirit’, offering facilities for sports, meetings, adult education and other forms of personal and social development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>78. It is important for this school to be involved with voluntary organisations in the community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>79. This school is regularly used by community sports associations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80. This school is regularly used by other community groups.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>81. The most cost effective use of school buildings is more intensive use of facilities by the wider community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Community Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL COMMUNITY ISSUES.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82. If the schools are to be fully used by members of the community their structure needs to be rethought.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. This school building is suited to all age groups and to people with special needs.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84. Planned investment by the Government is needed in order for schools to become ‘community learning centres’.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85. The Department of Education and Science needs to deliver a comprehensive range of supports to teachers and schools to help them understand and serve the needs of disadvantaged communities.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86. Empowering schools to respond flexibly to the needs of their learners in the community has a positive influence on learning.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87. Collaboration between the partners in education produces important benefits for all involved.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. Equality of outcome in education is achieved by adopting an integrated and coherent partnership approach.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89. The school is the focus of the community.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. The word ‘community’ is central to the mission statement.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. To engage with the community there is need for on-going in-career development for teaching staff.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. The school principal today should be leading the way to redefine collaboration so that it encompasses alliances with groups and individuals outside the school.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. List any new initiatives that have been introduced in your school in the last five years towards developing a more partnership / community approach to education.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your co-operation in completing this questionnaire.

Caitriona McGrath.
School – Community Research Project

Survey of Community and Comprehensive Schools, Secondary Schools and Vocational Schools and Colleges

A study of the interaction of school and community in Ireland today.

Dear Colleague,

Significant changes have taken place in Irish society and in the Irish economy since the mid 1990’s, reflective of wider global change. All aspects of the educational system were reviewed within a lifelong learning paradigm and legislation has given the partnership/community approach to education official recognition. A project to assess aspects of school and community interaction is being conducted by me, as part of my doctoral research.

Thank you for taking time to complete the survey. It should not take more than 20 – 25 minutes of your time. All responses are anonymous and only aggregated data, statistics and comments will be used in reporting the results of the survey.

You are encouraged to provide honest and considered answers to all questions. Your insights and observations are appreciated. If you have any queries about the survey please contact me (me@eircom.net). Please complete and return this survey in the reply paid envelope provided.

Go raibh maith agat,

Caitríona Mc Grath.

Como,
76 Frankfield,
Douglas,
Cork.
APPENDIX C3

EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF COMMISSION ON SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The Interaction of School and Community.

1. Today schools face the challenge of providing a varied curriculum and range of programmes that suits students of all types of ability, strengths and interests. This research has shown that 48.9% of schools in a sample study of Cork City and County have less than 400 pupils. Are these schools able to cater for the needs of all students in the local community?

2. Is amalgamation of smaller schools the way forward in order to cater for the wider needs of the community?

3. What obstacles if any are there to amalgamations?

4. A high percentage of schools in this area are well established, over 25 years old. Have these school buildings been sufficiently upgraded over the years to meet the needs of all age groups including students with special needs?

5. From 1992 – 2007 fifty six new schools were established. What circumstances led to their origin?
   Amalgamations
   Change of patron
   New school due to population rise
   Private to State
APPENDIX C3

6. Does the initiative for a new school in an area come from the local community or the trustees/patron?

7. In deciding on the patronage of trusteeship of a school does the Department of Education and Science engage in discussion with local community?

8. What format does this take?
   Public meeting
   Other

9. What members of the local community are involved?
   Parents
   Business
   Public representatives
   Voluntary groups
   Teachers
   Management bodies
   Other

10. Which group would be most dominant?

11. Is the recent development of all-Irish second-level schools due to a government initiative to promote the use of the Irish language or due to local demand in the community?

12. The White paper (1995) mentions 'diversity of school type' in general terms. Are parents and parent groups seeking increasing diversity in school type today?
APPENDIX C3

13. In the next ten years what will influence the development of new schools in your opinion?
   New housing due to population rise/shift
   Education through Irish Migration
   Other minority groups
   Other

14. In designing schools are issues such as teaching and learning methodologies taken into account?

15. Are there any other issues that influence the design?

16. Two public private partnership schools were built in this area. Are the facilities in these schools superior to those built by the Department of Education and Science?

17. Examples of good practice in school design and construction which facilitates the integration of services on one campus are being put forward by the OECD. Would this be a positive step towards engaging the school and community more closely in Ireland?

18. Will it happen?
APPENDIX C3

NATIONAL PARENTS’ COUNCIL

PRO (Second Level)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The Interaction of School and Community.

Demographic Data and Policies

1. Many schools in this area have competition from other schools. What criteria, do parents use when selecting a school?

2. In your opinion would one large school cater more efficiently for the full range of student needs?

3. Is the Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme catering adequately for the needs of disadvantaged children?

4. Should this scheme be expanded to all schools to cater for the changing needs of society today?

5. Is the new scheme DEIS catering adequately for the needs of the disadvantaged?

6. In your opinion is the timing and organisation of parent teacher meetings facilitating attendance at both Junior and Senior level?

7. What measures could be taken to improve attendance?
APPENDIX C3

Curricular and Course Issues

1. Are schools offering a broad based curriculum catering for both academic and vocational needs of children?

2. Are there any subjects in particular that you feel are not being catered for in any of the different school sectors – Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive or Community College/Vocational?

3. Physical Education is very important for both physical and mental wellbeing of students. Are all schools catering adequately for the needs of students in this area?

4. In Senior Cycle the following programmes are available to schools – Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational and Post Leaving Certificate courses. Are the appropriate courses being offered in schools to cater for the diversity of needs of students today?

Board of Management and Parent Involvement.

1. The Education Act states that Boards of Management should be set up where possible. Is this the practice?

2. Are parents on Boards of Management involved in drawing up the School Plan, SchoolBehavioural Code and School Policies?

3. In what specific areas are parent associations active in schools? Are there any other areas they would like to get involved in?

4. In your opinion does the school promote co-operation between school and the local community?
APPENDIX C3

5(a) Family, School and Community have a role to play in the intellectual, emotional and social development of young people. What is your opinion?

5(b) Would you regard the school as the focus of the community?

6. Are information sessions held for parents? If so, do they aid the process of subject choice?

Adult Education.

1. The need to support a child’s learning encourages parents to attend Adult Education courses in the local community. What is your opinion?

2. Adult Education programmes address local community needs. What is your opinion?

3. Are there any areas that you see as not being addressed?
APPENDIX C3

General Community Issues.

1. Are school buildings today suited to all ages and to people with special needs?

2. The most cost-effective use of buildings is more intensive use of facilities by the wider community. What is your opinion?

3. In your opinion are schools catering for the multi-cultural society that is increasing in our schools today?

4. Do you see the Government as an active or delegating partner in education today?

5. The school principal should be leading the way in forming alliances with groups and individuals outside the school. What is your opinion on this statement?

6. Equality of outcome in education is achieved by adopting an integrated and coherent partnership approach. What is your opinion?
APPENDIX C3

PRINCIPALS

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The Interaction of School and Community.

Demographic Data and Policies

1. Category of school?

2. How long is your school in existence?

3. What is the geographic location? City Town
   Satellite Town Village / Rural

4. What was the enrolment for school year 2006 - 2007?

5. Is the enrolment: increasing static decreasing ?

6. Do you accept all pupils in the catchment area?

7. Is your enrolment confined to your catchment area?

8. Approximately what percentage of the local community attend this school?

9. Which of the following best describes your school?
   Greenfield Amalgamation of 2 Voluntary Secondary Schools
   Amalgamation of 1/2 Voluntary Secondary Schools and VEC School or
   Public Private Partnership School
APPENDIX C3

10. Do you think that the different schools in this amalgamation had different attitudes to school ethos and community?

11. In promoting your school what are the major selling points for this school?
   - Small school
   - Good results
   - Sports facilities
   - Comprehensive curriculum
   - Other ______________

12. Which of the following student enrolment methods do you use?
   - Profile of school in local paper
   - Open days for students and parents
   - Parent information nights
   - Visiting feeder schools
   - Use of brochure/prospectus
   - Other
   Which is most effective? ______________________________

13. Is this school fee paying?   Yes           No

14. Is there an annual voluntary contribution fee?   Yes           No

15. Approximately what percentage would pay?

16. Is this school disadvantaged?   Yes           No

17. Is your school involved in the Home-School-Community-Liaison Scheme/DEIS?

18. What percentage of parents avail of free book scheme?

19. What is the retention rate?
   - Junior Cycle
   - Senior Cycle

20. Is the retention rate influenced by: programmes subjects
    family circumstances social norms other

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APPENDIX C3

21. What percentage turnout is there for parent teacher meetings?
   Junior Cycle
   Senior Cycle

22. Are there any measures that could be taken to encourage parents to attend meetings?

23. Do you have a Student Council?

24. In what areas of School Planning have the Student Council a voice?

Curricular and Course Data

1. Which of the following programmes are offered in this school?
   Junior Cert Schools Programme.
   Transition Year.
   Leaving Certificate Applied.
   Leaving Certificate Vocational.
   Post Leaving Certificate.
   Back to Education.
   Adult Education.
   Other.

2. Do you offer the following options in Junior Cycle?
   Materials Technology (Wood)
   Technical Graphics
   Home Economics
   Metalwork
   Technology
   Computer Studies
   Art Craft Design
   Business

   Senior Cycle:
   Engineering
   DCG (Technical Drawing)
   Construction Studies
   Accounting
   Business
   Economics
   Music
   Computer Studies
   Physical Education
APPENDIX C3

3. Does your present staff allocation allow you to offer the full range of programmes/subjects necessary to cater for the full spectrum of student needs?

4. Have you had any request from parents for subjects or programmes that are presently not on offer in your school?

5. Which of the following influence option programmes in the school?
   Teachers Parents Local business
   Economy prospects Student preference Other

6. Which of the following influence option subjects in the school?
   Teachers Parents Local business
   Economy prospects Student preference Other

Board of Management and Parental Involvement.

1. How does the Parents’ Association promote the interests of the students in the school in co-operation with the Board?

2. How much of an input do parents have in drawing up the School Plan, the School Behavioural Code and School Policies?

3. Is this school involved in the Home-School-Liaison Scheme?

4. What percentage of parents get involved and co-operate with this scheme?

5. Do you think this scheme has a role to play in all schools today?
APPENDIX C3

Adult Education.

1. Do you have Adult Education in your school?

2. Approximately what percentage of your enrolment would be parents of students in the school?

3. What courses have been put on in the last five years which might help parents to support a child’s learning?

4. What new courses have been introduced in the last five years because of changing community needs?

Business Issues.

1. Is local business supportive of the school?

2. Has the school links with local business through sponsorship?

3. Do local employers support the school in terms of:
   Teaching materials        Workplace visits
   Work experience            Job offers
   Other ____________________

4. Have School – Community business links helped this school develop?
   If so, how / in what way?
APPENDIX C3

General Community Issues.

1. How is this school catering for the multi-cultural society that is increasing in our schools today?

2. Do you see the school as having a much broader socialisation task than in the past?

3. Do you see the Government as an active or delegating partner in education today?

4. Are the range of supports adequate to cater for the needs of all students?

5. Is your school building catering for the needs of teenage / adult population including special needs?

6. Is this school regularly used by community groups?
   Which groups?

7. The political and economic thinking of the OECD would be more intensive use of school buildings by the wider community. What are your views on this?

8. What year groups/groups of students are involved in working with Voluntary organisations?

9. Do you see the word community as central to the Mission Statement?

10. Is your school responding to the needs of the local community?

11. Equality of outcome in education is achieved by adopting an integrated and coherent partnership approach. Do you agree?
School – Community Research Project

Survey of Community and Comprehensive Schools, Secondary Schools and Vocational Schools and Colleges.

A study of the interaction of school and community in Ireland today.

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. It should not take more than 30 minutes of your time. All responses are anonymous and only aggregated data, statistics and comments will be used in reporting the results of the survey. A copy of the transcript of the interview will be sent to you.

I will be in contact to arrange suitable time and date of interview. Please find enclosed outline of questions.

Go raibh maith agat,

Caitriona Mc Grath.

Como,
76 Frankfield,
Douglas,
Cork.

021-4363393
087-2868579
## APPENDIX D

### Second Level Schools in Cork City and County

#### 2006 – 2007

**Name:** Ashton School,  
Blackrock Road,  
Cork.  
**Role Number:** 81008W  
**Female Enrolment:** 244  
**Male Enrolment:** 279  
**Sector:** Comprehensive School

**Name:** Bishopstown Community School,  
Bishopstown,  
Cork.  
**Role Number:** 91397T  
**Female Enrolment:** 74  
**Male Enrolment:** 137  
**Sector:** Community School

**Name:** Christ King Girls Sec. School,  
South Douglas Road,  
Cork.  
**Role Number:** 626921  
**Female Enrolment:** 1001  
**Male Enrolment:** 0  
**Sector:** Voluntary Secondary School

**Name:** Christian Brothers College,  
Sidney Hill,  
Wellington Road,  
Cork.  
**Role Number:** 62520C  
**Female Enrolment:** 0  
**Male Enrolment:** 840  
**Sector:** Voluntary Secondary School

**Name:** Colaiste Stíofán Naofa,  
Tramore Road,  
Cork.  
**Role Number:** 71122O  
**Female Enrolment:** 472  
**Male Enrolment:** 404  
**Sector:** Community College/Vocational School
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<td>62580U</td>
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<td>Coláiste Chríost Ri, Capwell Road, Cork.</td>
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<td>Deerpark C.B.S., St. Patrick’s Road, Cork.</td>
<td>62540I</td>
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<td>Douglas Community School, Clermont Avenue, Douglas, Cork.</td>
<td>91396R</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>601</td>
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<td>Gaelcholáiste Mhuire, An Mhainistir Thuaidh, Corcaigh.</td>
<td>62531H</td>
<td>59</td>
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APPENDIX D

Name: Mayfield Community School, 
Old Youghal Road, 
Mayfield, 
Cork.
Role Number: 91400F 
Female Enrolment: 145 
Male Enrolment: 252 
Sector: Community School

Name: Mount Mercy College, 
Model Farm Road, 
Cork.
Role Number: 62661U 
Female Enrolment: 693 
Male Enrolment: 0 
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: Nagle Community College, 
Mahon, 
Blackrock, 
Cork.
Role Number: 71110H 
Female Enrolment: 17 
Male Enrolment: 203 
Sector: Community College/Vocational School

Name: North Monastery Secondary School, 
Our Lady’s Mount, 
North Monastery Road, 
Cork.
Role Number: 62530F 
Female Enrolment: 0 
Male Enrolment: 419 
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: North Presentation, 
Farranree, 
Cork.
Role Number: 626211 
Female Enrolment: 361 
Male Enrolment: 0 
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

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### APPENDIX D

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<th>Name:</th>
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<th>Name:</th>
<th>Scoil Mhurie, 2 Sydney Place, Wellington Road, Cork.</th>
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<th>Name:</th>
<th>St. Aloysius School, St. Maries of the Isle, Sharman Crawford Street, Cork.</th>
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APPENDIX D

Name: St. John’s Central College,  
Sawmill Street,  
Cork.
Role Number: 71121M  
Female Enrolment 627  
Male Enrolment 490  
Sector: Community College/Vocational School

Name: St. Patrick’s College,  
Gardiner’s Hill,  
Cork.
Role Number: 62730N  
Female Enrolment 198  
Male Enrolment 0  
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: St. Vincent’s Secondary School,  
St. Mary’s Road,  
Cork.
Role Number: 62590A  
Female Enrolment 460  
Male Enrolment 0  
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: St. Angela’s College,  
St. Patrick’s Hill,  
Cork.
Role Number: 62640M  
Female Enrolment 520  
Male Enrolment 0  
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: Terence Mac Swiney Community College,  
Hollyhill,  
Knocknaheeny,  
Cork.
Role Number: 71123Q  
Female Enrolment 214  
Male Enrolment 141  
Sector: Community College/Vocational School


### Appendix D

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<td>Ardscoil Uí Urmoltaigh, Droichead na Bandan, Co. Chorcai.</td>
<td>62050O</td>
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<td>Ballincollig Community School, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Bandon Grammar School, Bandon, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Beara Community School, Castletownbere, Beara, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>162</td>
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<td>Boherbue Comprehensive School, Boherbue, Mallow, Co. Cork.</td>
<td>81009B</td>
<td>174</td>
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<td>Carrigaline Community School, Waterpark Road, Carrigaline, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Christian Brothers Secondary School, Castleredmond, Midleton, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Christian Brothers Secondary School, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Coláiste Cholmáin, Mainistir Fhearmuir, Co. Chorcai.</td>
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<td>Coláiste Muire, Bishop's Street, Cobh, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Coláiste Na Toirbhirte, Ard Aoibhinn, Bandon, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Coláiste an Chraoibhin, Duntaheen Road, Fermoy, Co. Cork.</td>
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### APPENDIX D

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<td>Sector:</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Millstreet Community School, Millstreet Town, Co. Cork.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Number:</td>
<td>91390F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Enrolment</td>
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<td>Male Enrolment</td>
<td>141</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sector:</td>
<td>Community School</td>
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APPENDIX D

Name: Mount St. Michael,
Rosscarbery,
Co. Cork.
Role Number: 62470N
Female Enrolment  216
Male Enrolment  214
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: Nagle Rice Secondary School,
Doneraile,
Co. Cork.
Role Number: 62210K
Female Enrolment  170
Male Enrolment  203
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: Patrician Academy,
Mallow,
Co. Cork.
Role Number: 62330U
Female Enrolment  0
Male Enrolment  381
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: Presentation Secondary School,
Mitchelstown,
Co. Cork.
Role Number: 62421A
Female Enrolment  274
Male Enrolment  0
Sector: Voluntary Secondary School

Name: Rossa College,
Skibbereen,
Co. Cork.
Role Number: 71090E
Female Enrolment  93
Male Enrolment  76
Sector: Community College/Vocational School
## APPENDIX D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Role Number:</th>
<th>Female Enrolment</th>
<th>Male Enrolment</th>
<th>Sector:</th>
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<td>Sacred Heart Secondary School,</td>
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<td>Convent of Mercy, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Schull Community College,</td>
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<td>Colla Road, Schull, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Blarney, Co. Chorcai.</td>
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<td>Scoil Mhuire, Béal Atha an Ghaorthaidh, Co. Chorcai.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Scoil na mBráithre Christaí, Bakers Road, Charleville, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>Male Enrolment</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>St. Aidan’s Community College, Ballincolly, Dublin Hill, Cork.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Role Number:</td>
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<td>Male Enrolment</td>
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<td>Sector:</td>
<td>Community College/Vocational School</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>St. Aloysius College, Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Number:</td>
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<td>Female Enrolment</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>St. Colman’s Community College, Youghal Road, Midleton, Co. Cork.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Number:</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>St. Fachtna’s – De La Salle College, Skibbereen, Co. Cork.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Number:</td>
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<td>Sector:</td>
<td>Voluntary Secondary School</td>
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</table>
## APPENDIX D

| Name | St. Fanahan’s College, Mitchelstown, Mallow, Co. Cork. |
| Role Number | 71040M |
| Female Enrolment | 146 |
| Male Enrolment | 100 |
| Sector | Voluntary Secondary School |

| Name | St. Francis Capuchin College, Rochestown, Cork. |
| Role Number | 62460K |
| Female Enrolment | 0 |
| Male Enrolment | 241 |
| Sector | Voluntary Secondary School |

| Name | St. Goban’s College, Sheskin, Bantry, Co. Cork. |
| Role Number | 70930R |
| Female Enrolment | 211 |
| Male Enrolment | 239 |
| Sector | Community College/Vocational School |

| Name | St. Mary’s Secondary School, Convent of Mercy, Macroom, Co. Cork. |
| Role Number | 62320R |
| Female Enrolment | 319 |
| Male Enrolment | 0 |
| Sector | Voluntary Secondary School |

| Name | St. Mary’s High School, Midleton, Co. Cork. |
| Role Number | 62380M |
| Female Enrolment | 536 |
| Male Enrolment | 0 |
| Sector | Voluntary Secondary School |
### APPENDIX D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Role Number:</th>
<th>Female Enrolment</th>
<th>Male Enrolment</th>
<th>Sector:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Secondary School, Convent of Mercy, Mallow, Co. Cork.</td>
<td>62350D</td>
<td>544</td>
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<td>St. Peter’s Community School, Passage West, Co. Cork.</td>
<td>91391H</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>176</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Brogan’s College, Kilbrogan, Bandon, Co. Cork.</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>439</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary’s Secondary School, Convent of Mercy, Charleville, Co. Cork.</td>
<td>62450H</td>
<td>378</td>
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<td>Youghal Community School, Youghal, Co. Cork.</td>
<td>91513S</td>
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