



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training



HIGH DEMAND  
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS



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ISBN: 0 642 77557 5

ISBN: 0 642 77558 3 (web version)

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## Foreword



While parents are the first and most significant influence on a child's development and learning, schools play a critical and supporting role in ensuring that children acquire the skills and knowledge they need to grow into responsible citizens.

Parents invest much time and effort in reviewing schools before deciding where to send their children, in order to be confident that the schools meet their aspirations. What are they looking for in a school? What defines school effectiveness for them? These are critical questions for parents.

Previous research on 'choices in schooling' conducted by my Department has identified a number of features sought by parents in choosing schools for their children. These include high quality teachers, a secure environment, the academic reputation of the school, and good school facilities. Parents also emphasised their desire for schools to develop not only their children's academic skills, but also their "life skills", and provide discipline and values.

This research examines the factors influencing parents' decisions to enrol their children at 20 high demand government schools. The factors which attracted parents to enrol their children in these schools included: the school's reputation; good communication between the school and parents, especially in terms of reporting school progress, and addressing student performance issues; high levels of interaction with parents and the community; the quality and commitment of the school's leaders and teachers; the school's culture and values; the level of care and support offered to students; and unique school organisational responses to meet students' needs.

The schools selected for this research represent but a few examples of the many highly effective schools across Australia.

This research will help school policy makers seeking to attract enrolments to better understand what they need to do to encourage parents to enrol their children in their schools. It will also help parents to understand what makes a school a high demand school.

It is with great pleasure that I present the Summary Report to you. The full report can be found at <http://www.dest.gov.au/highdemand>.

BRENDAN NELSON

## Contents

Foreword.....	iii
Executive Summary.....	v
1. Background.....	1
2. Project sample and methodology.....	2
2.1 The selected schools.....	2
2.2 Research methods and questions.....	5
3. Commentary and discussion.....	7
3.1 Varieties of high demand schools.....	7
3.2 Discussion of high demand characteristics.....	8
3.3 Information strategies used by high demand schools.....	13
3.4 Determinants of high demand characteristics.....	15
4. Conclusion.....	18

## Executive Summary

This report is based on the 2004 DEST project, High Demand Government Schools, which was prompted by the Department's priority policy interest in quality schooling and 'choices in schooling'.

Using the local knowledge of State Education Departments and the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), 20 high demand schools were chosen from across five states. Most were capital-city secondary schools offering classes to Year 12, although a few non-metropolitan and primary schools were also included.

Although the schools have average student populations of about 1100, there is great variation in size. The smallest schools have 200 to 300 students, the largest over 2000. The schools frequently report having 50% or more of teachers with over ten years' experience. They occupy a range of demographic situations, including some in areas of high growth and others of population decline. While a quarter of the schools have more than 25% out-of-area enrolments, others restrict their out-of-area enrolments due to their policy priorities or their very popularity. Most of the schools are non-selective, apart from a small number with area-based or gender-based restrictions. Several have quite diverse student populations.

Phillips KPA Pty Ltd undertook staff and parent interviews at the 20 schools. The reports of these interviews form appendices 1 and 2, which are available online at <http://www.dest.gov.au/highdemand>. The researchers identified the distinguishing characteristics of the high demand schools, and the determining factors of these characteristics by studying the perceptions of staff (service providers) and parents (choice makers and users).

While the methodology is limited by its use of small-scale qualitative research, and in its possible biases in staff perceptions and in the selection of parent groups, a general correspondence nevertheless emerges between the staff and parent views. This enables a thematic (rather than staff-vs-parents) approach for the ensuing discussion.

The project suggests that there is no single formula for the high demand school, but rather that they fall into several overlapping varieties. Many high demand schools rely primarily on their reputation for academic results, while some are valued for their capacity to innovate, for tradition and appearance, for servicing particular student groups with distinction, and (particularly smaller schools) for meeting regional or community needs.

For teachers and parents at a number of the schools, the reputation hinges primarily on consistently high-quality academic outcomes. Parents aspiring to such schools, which in this project are usually established medium or larger sized high schools in capital city suburbs, expect that their own children will follow the school reputation and perform well.

The 'reputation' of a high demand school, it should be emphasised, is not monolithic, and differences between such schools are more those of degree than kind. For example, where academic reputation is said to be paramount in the school choice, this will usually be underpinned by parental considerations such as broad subject choices, pastoral care, co-curricular strengths, and convenient location. Conversely, where the key reputational consideration is tradition and appearance, service to particular student groups, or the ability to meet regional and community needs, this will often be accompanied by considerations of quality of offerings, high-quality leadership and teaching, and exceptional learning opportunities and pathways.

Apart from 'academic reputation', considerations of 'values and culture' (such as the active promotion of a safe and supportive learning environment) and 'leadership and teaching' (exemplified by attributes such as enthusiasm, high expectations and innovation) are important determinants of high demand in government schools.

Whatever the content of school mission statements, senior staff tend to characterise the values of their high demand schools as being ‘caring, respectful and inclusive’. This implies that the school listens to students in its decisions and its operations, and that there is a degree of convergence between school and home values. A number of the schools have evolved pastoral care systems, student mentoring, or student career programs, that give practical effect to the values of ‘caring’. It is these practical demonstrations of listening and caring that tend to make an impact on parents.

In notable instances in this study, ‘leadership and teaching’ refers directly to the influence of a particularly effective school principal, but equally often it refers to the school leadership team. The focus of the leadership team, the common purpose of staff and the school community, and an individual sense of responsibility among staff, are recurrent comments in the schools studied. Parents value these attributes as providing an environment that will maximise the academic and personal growth of their children.

Parents at the high demand schools value high-quality teaching and caring teachers. They also like extra learning opportunities, broad subject choices, and schools that promote vocational training pathways as well as academic routes.

A majority of the schools have adopted innovative organisational and teaching practices such as campus redesign and renewal, junior and senior school arrangements, split shifts, and curriculum reform. Parents at three schools liked the junior-senior school arrangements, and at two schools liked the idea of students being organised into ‘pods’ or ‘principal learning areas’. But, generally speaking, parents are more inclined to make positive comments about the more traditional aspects of ‘teaching and leadership’.

Other factors that staff and parents associate with high demand include parental involvement with the school, which promotes a sense of connectedness with and support for the school in respect of the values and academic standards that the school expects of its students; the school’s community involvement; diverse co-curricular activities and programs; location and proximity (to transport or home); and industry and university-TAFE (Technical and Further Education) linkages. Several schools are registered training organisations, so that students study at school for nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificates. Size of school also matters, but more in the sense that smaller schools appeal for their security and their community linkages, larger for their economies of scale and breadth of subject choices.

The project also explores promotional strategies which may contribute to high demand. The finding is that ‘word of mouth’, and the image of the school in the eyes of the community, make more of an impact than the school’s own direct promotional efforts, although these can be useful in informing and validating parental opinions and choices.

Once a school has created a reputational ‘brand’, high demand appears to have a self-fulfilling nature. If the local community knows that a school ‘has to turn people away’, this in itself fuels further demand. Also, high demand creates its own culture of striving and success, so that teachers and parents come to expect that new students (as well as new teachers) will want to live up to the school’s established and known performance record.

# 1. Background

Research on ‘choices in schooling’ has been identified as a crucial element of the broader policy development process on ‘quality schooling’ – a strategic priority for the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The Department has already been involved in a range of research on parents’ schooling choices.

A key ‘choice’ issue, but one that is little explored, is why some government schools are in high demand by parents, and what makes these schools so attractive.

Previous (in-house) research, on parent and community attitudes, has identified a list of highly sought-after features of schools. This includes high quality teachers, a secure environment, the academic reputation of the school, and good school facilities. There have also been Australian and international studies on policies and practices of high performing schools.

However, these studies have not been focused enough to identify specific factors which can explain high demand for some Australian government schools, as compared with other Australian schools.

This summary report is based on the staff and parent reports from the DEST project, ‘High Demand Government Schools – Interviews and Focus Groups’, conducted by Phillips KPA Pty Ltd.

The project interviewed senior staff and parents at 20 identified high demand government primary and secondary schools chosen from across Australia. It sought to gain insights from the views of staff and parents as to the characteristics that lead to high demand for enrolments in particular government schools.

## 2. Project sample and methodology

### 2.1 The selected schools

The research involved interviews and focus groups in 20 government schools, all but three being secondary schools, identified as being in high demand across five states of Australia.

These ‘high demand’ schools were chosen with assistance from State Education Departments and the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO). Schools were chosen on the basis of local knowledge of enrolment trends of government schools in each state. Table 1 provides an overview of the participating schools.

**Table 1 - School Profile**

School Name	State	Metro Location	Type	Size of School Population*	Co-Ed	New/Upgraded Infrastructure – no more than 15-years-old
Bundamba State Secondary College	QLD	Yes	Secondary	Medium	Yes	Yes
Calamvale Community College	QLD	Yes	Combined	Large	Yes	Yes
Kelvin Grove State College	QLD	Yes	Combined	Large	Yes	
Mountain Creek State High School	QLD	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	Yes
Mount Waverley Secondary College	VIC	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	
Ogilvie High School	TAS	Yes	Secondary	Large	No	
Reece High School	TAS	No	Secondary	Medium	Yes	Yes
Wodonga Primary School	VIC	No	Primary	Medium	Yes	
Beaumaris Primary School	WA	Yes	Primary	Medium	Yes	Yes
Richmond Primary School	SA	Yes	Primary	Small	Yes	
Rossmoyne Senior High School	WA	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	Yes
Salisbury High School	SA	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	
Canterbury Girls’ Secondary College	VIC	Yes	Secondary	Medium	No	
Northland Secondary College	VIC	Yes	Secondary	Small	Yes	Yes
Kenmore State High School	QLD	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	Yes
Murtoa P12 College	VIC	No	Combined	Small	Yes	Yes
St Helena Secondary College	VIC	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	Yes
Sunnybank State High School	QLD	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	
Toowoomba State High School	QLD	No	Secondary	Large	Yes	
Shenton College	WA	Yes	Secondary	Large	Yes	Yes

\* Size of school population is an arbitrary description for the purposes of comparison: Small – Under 400; Medium – 400 to 1000; Large – Over 1000.

The distribution of the schools involved in the study is:

Queensland - seven;

Victoria - six;

Western Australia - three;

South Australia - two; and

Tasmania – two.

Of these schools, 16 are in metropolitan areas (12 secondary schools, two combined schools, and two primary schools) and four are in non-metropolitan or regional areas.

Altogether, 15 are secondary schools, two are combined schools and three are primary schools. With the exception of Reece and Ogilvie in Tasmania, which offer classes between Years 7 and 10, the secondary schools offer classes to Year 12. Ogilvie, and Melbourne's Canterbury Girls' Secondary College, are girls-only schools.

The average school population is about 1100 students, although there is wide variation. The largest, Brisbane's Mountain Creek State High, has over 2000 students. The three smallest schools in the study have 200 to 300 students.

Not all of the participating schools gave detailed teacher information but, commonly, there appears to be one teacher per 12 to 15 students. There is often a significant majority of female teachers. A number of the schools have cadres of special support (or, non-teaching) professionals such as guidance officers, counsellors, psychologists, health nurses, and chaplains.

At least half of the schools - and not all provided comparable data - indicated that more than 50% of their teachers have better than ten years' professional experience. In a few instances, more than 50% of the teachers have been teaching at the school in question for over ten years. Table 2 provides an overview of the teaching profiles at the schools.

**Table 2 - Teacher profile**

School Name	Number of Teachers	Teachers with > 10 years experience (%)	Proportion of female teachers (%)
Bundamba State Secondary College	65	60	63
Calamvale Community College	119		78
Kelvin Grove State College	95	97	60
Mountain Creek State High School	145		60
Mount Waverley Secondary College	135	55	
Ogilvie High School	135	53	
Reece High School	50		58
Wodonga Primary School	39		
Beaumaris Primary School	35	80	
Richmond Primary School	15		75
Rossmoyne Senior High School	132	37*	53
Salisbury High School			
Canterbury Girls' Secondary College	61	Majority	82
Northland Secondary College	35		51
Kenmore State High School	81	56	67
Murtoa P12 College	33		58
St Helena Secondary College	99	50*	61
Sunnybank State High School	88	74	69
Toowoomba State High School	102		48
Shenton College			

\* Proportion of teachers with over ten years experience at that school

## High Demand Government Schools

The schools occupy a range of city, suburban or country locations, in various demographic situations. Some are in higher socio-economic status areas; others have a mix of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, or a high proportion of Indigenous students. Following the trend in Australian universities, a few of the schools attract numbers of international students, including fee-paying students.

Some schools are in rapidly-growing suburbs, others in areas of static or declining population. While the majority have been established for a number of years, a few are quite new (or, in relatively new buildings).

A quarter of the schools have significant (25% or more) out-of-area enrolments. In other cases, high demand schools have to restrict out-of-area enrolments as a matter of policy or because they are operating at full capacity. The schools are usually non-selective, apart from area and gender-based restrictions. A few have quite diverse student populations, cater to special needs groups, or have significant Indigenous enrolments.

There is no rule as to the organisation and pedagogical practice of the schools studied. A few are quite traditional in their approach, with policies and practices that would not be unfamiliar to non-government schools. The majority, however, have adopted innovative organisational and teaching practices, such as infrastructure renewal, separate campuses, sub-schools or student 'pods', split shifts, and reformist curriculum practices. Table 3 provides an overview of policies and practices at the schools.

**Table 3 - Characteristics**

School Name	Innovative Organisation	Curriculum Innovation	Alternate Pathways	'Strong Parent/Community Involvement'	'Strong Links to Industry TAFE/Universities'	Caters to special needs, high potential, Indigenous students, etc	Active School Council
Bundamba State Secondary College	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calamvale Community College	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes
Kelvin Grove State College	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Mountain Creek State High School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
Mount Waverley Secondary College	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Ogilvie High School				Yes			Yes
Reece High School	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes
Wodonga Primary School	Yes		n/a	Yes	n/a		Yes
Beaumaris Primary School	Yes		n/a	Yes	n/a		Yes
Richmond Primary School				Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes
Rossmoyne Senior High School			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salisbury High School		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

School Name	Innovative Organisation	Curriculum Innovation	Alternate Pathways	'Strong Parent/Community Involvement'	'Strong Links to Industry TAFE/Universities'	Caters to special needs, high potential, Indigenous students, etc	Active School Council
Canterbury Girls' Secondary College		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Northland Secondary College		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Kenmore State High School	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes
Murtoa P12 College			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
St Helena Secondary College	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Sunnybank State High School	Yes	Yes				Yes	
Toowoomba State High School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shenton College	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	

## 2.2 Research methods and questions

### 2.2.1 Research methods and limitations

PhillipsKPA Pty Ltd was selected to organise and undertake interviews with senior staff, and parent focus groups, at the 20 schools identified as 'high demand'. PhillipsKPA produced individual reports on each of the interviews and focus groups.

These individual reports have been analysed for this summary report. With the permission of the schools involved, they are available as appendices 1 and 2, online at <http://www.dest.gov.au/highdemand>.

The research sought to identify the distinguishing characteristics of the high demand schools and the determining factors of these characteristics. This required a study of perceptions, through the interviews and focus groups, of both the staff (that is, the service providers) and the parents (the choice-makers and users).

Limitations with the methodology should be noted. Firstly, as this is qualitative research, there is no control group of schools that are not in particularly high demand with which to compare results. Factors that parents and staff claim to be distinguishing features of the school cannot be verified, by comparing across a large number of other schools. Secondly, parent focus groups are not necessarily representative of the school's parent population as a whole. Thirdly, staff perceptions are potentially biased, or may not accurately reflect what parents (the users) actually perceive to be the distinguishing characteristics of a school.

Despite these limitations, this project reveals a general similarity (albeit with differing emphases) between staff and parent views on the high demand characteristics.

Partly for this reason, the following discussion of these characteristics is principally thematic, rather than being divided into 'staff' and 'parent' sections. Key themes emerge clearly from the data. Complementary

pictures can be drawn of how the schools polish and present themselves in the marketplace, and how the parents make choices in response to those presentations. These are discussed in chapter 3.

### 2.2.2 Key research questions

The key research questions in this project, for the school staff and the parents respectively, are:

For staff:

What do senior school staff perceive as the distinguishing characteristics of their schools?

What are the practices and policies of these schools regarding, for example, curriculum, instruction methods, assessment, professional development, enrolment, staffing, funding, promotional activities, and how do staff see these impacting on demand?

For parents:

What are the key drivers that influence parents' decisions to choose a particular school over others?

What attracted parents to enrol their children in a particular school?

What features of the school do they care most about?

## 3. Commentary and discussion

### 3.1 *Varieties of high demand schools*

This section provides a brief commentary on the types of schools that may emerge as ‘high demand’ schools, and where such schools might fit into their socioeconomic, demographic and regional marketplaces.

Granted, the selected schools are not a controlled sample, but rather the result of state-based experts choosing an illustrative range of ‘high demand’ schools, through their local knowledge of school types and school enrolment trends.

Accepting these limitations, the project results suggest that, as might be expected, no one ‘recipe’ will produce a high demand school. Rather, the chosen high demand schools appear to fall into several overlapping, yet distinctive, varieties.

Each of these high demand varieties could be said to represent the intelligent response of educational leaders and planners to the particular needs of a market segment. These market niches appear to be based on factors such as high academic abilities and aspirations, the school’s capacity to innovate, expressed parental and social preferences as to schooling norms, particular sets of student or demographic needs, or particular regional or community needs.

For example, some schools represent a reputational ‘brand’ of schooling which is attractive to parents and children because of an expectation, and a proven record, that able students can be nurtured and motivated to produce fine academic results. Not surprisingly, these schools tend to be in the suburbs of capital cities, where there are sufficient catchments and concentrations of parents and children in search of the specialty they offer.

Other schools rely on an appeal to those seeking academic performance and high standards, but also present an appeal to educational innovation and a broad range of opportunities. In part, this may follow logically from the newness of the facility itself (Calamvale, QLD) or from a need or a wish to be attractive in the marketplace to out-of-area students (Kelvin Grove, QLD).

Several schools, including Bundamba (QLD), have in their presentation some concepts of (family) tradition, pride in appearance and discipline. Of course, schools that promote their high academic reputations as central to the ‘brand’ may also value their traditions highly.

Bundamba, Salisbury High (SA) and Sunnybank High (QLD) are examples of ‘regeneration’, where a particular leader has come in and, perhaps aided by changing demographics and infrastructure renewal, lifted the performance of a previously underperforming school or turned around its declining enrolment levels. ‘There is no longer,’ it is said of Bundamba in regard to its competitors, ‘a drift to private schools.’

Northland Secondary College, a small college in suburban Melbourne, has developed special excellence in education for Koorie children, for children with special or difficult family situations, and for those who aspire to a variety of post-school pathways into university, TAFE and vocational training. Developed relationships with local industry and firms, and with local Aboriginal and community groups, are a feature.

Murtoa P12 College (VIC) and Richmond Primary (SA) are examples of schools that have used their small size, to ‘brand’ themselves as excellent schools partly through their high degree of identification and integration with the local region or community. ‘We are all one family,’ reads one comment about Richmond, ‘where everyone knows everyone and we work hard together so all students can achieve success.’

### 3.2 Discussion of high demand characteristics

There are many ways to characterise the factors influencing demand for a particular school. In order to answer the key research questions, this report seeks to explain high demand for these particular government schools on several levels:

Demand, it may be argued, is fuelled by

- 1) the reputation of a school (for instance a good academic reputation or reputation for innovation),
- 2) the intrinsic characteristics or features of the school which staff identify and to which parents are attracted.

Reputation, and high demand, may be generated and perpetuated by

- 1) communication and promotion of these characteristics and features (e.g. through the media and word of mouth), and
- 2) through a self-fulfilling attraction where high demand creates its own attractiveness and its own 'success' for the school.

After considering and comparing staff-parent views across the selected schools, it is instructive to discuss the characteristics and features that influence staff and parents in terms of an overview (reputation), academic factors, values and culture, leadership and teaching, and other factors (parental involvement, community involvement, co-curricular depth, location and proximity, and established industry, university and TAFE linkages).

It may be useful to conduct further research on the relative importance and complementarity of these (or other) factors, how schools can nurture and maintain the vitality of high demand factors over time, and reasons why staff and parents may weight these factors similarly or differently.

#### 3.2.1 Overview of high demand characteristics (reputation)

In overall terms, the 'reputation' of a school is the most important factor that staff identify to explain high demand, and the most important factor that parents relate to in investigating and choosing that school. The successful 'reputation' of a high demand government school may be likened to a successful 'brand' in a particular region's marketplace of government and non-government schools.

As suggested in chapter 3, the schools studied in this project have reputations of various overlapping kinds.

For the majority of teachers and parents at a number of the schools, reputation primarily means consistent, high quality academic outcomes, in some cases implying matriculation scores significantly above state-wide averages.

Secondary schools inclining towards this kind of reputational brand include Shenton College and Rossmoyne High (WA), St Helena College and Mount Waverley College (VIC), Canterbury Girls (VIC), Kenmore State (QLD), and Ogilvie High (TAS). This group includes both single-sex schools participating in the project, namely Canterbury and Ogilvie.

Similar in kind, but with an 'innovative' approach to organisation and teaching, are other Queensland secondary schools such as Calamvale, Kelvin Grove, and Mountain Creek. Although Beaumaris Primary (WA) is a primary school, it has a reputation based on above-average academic performance. This school has the luxury of being able to select its own staff on merit, rather than having them assigned centrally by the Education Department.

Parents and pupils at a number of the above schools expect that the majority of students are being prepared primarily for pathways into university. '... 46% of [Mount Waverley] Year 12 students in 2003 obtained an ENTER score of above 80, which ranks them in the top 20% of students in the state.' And '[Shenton] College performs well in annual media reports on college rankings for Tertiary Entrance Examinations.'

At other participating schools, where students are more often being prepared for a variety of university, TAFE and vocational training pathways, good reputation encompasses a broad range of positive characteristics. Such schools 'allow for the needs of a wide variety of students to be met'.

These include schools showcasing concepts of tradition, appearance and discipline (Bundamba, Toowoomba HS, Wodonga PS), schools that have 'regenerated' from previous periods of underperformance, and smaller schools that have developed special excellence in catering for particular regional or community needs (Northland College and Murtoa P12 College in Victoria, Richmond PS in Adelaide).

Again, it is to be emphasised that the 'reputation' of a high demand school is not a monolith. Differences between such schools are more a matter of degree than kind. For example, in a school where academic reputation is important, this will usually be underpinned by (parental) considerations such as subject choices, pastoral care, extra-curricular activities, and practical issues of transport and proximity. If school traditions, or significant community and regional services, feature in the reputation, that would often coincide with considerations of quality of offerings, high quality of leadership and teaching, exceptional learning models, and vocational pathways.

Further research could be conducted on how these distinctive, but complementary, high-reputation 'brands' are developed and maintained over time.

### 3.2.2 Academic factors

For many schools, no single factor makes parents decide to enrol their children there. It is often 'the whole package' which attracts them and it is difficult to rank factors in that package in a precise order of importance.

Bearing this in mind, some factors are more commonly cited than others as being important in the decision to enrol children at a particular school. At the schools studied, the most common 'major' factor cited by leadership teams is a reputation for high academic achievement. The parent focus groups for those same schools will often also emphasise the importance of academic performance

Schools where this factor is vital could be said to include Mount Waverley College, Ogilvie High, Beaumaris PS, Rossmoyne High, Canterbury Girls, St Helena College, and Shenton College. Organisationally, these schools tend to have populations of around 1000 students, and often deploy themselves into sub-schools or junior and senior schools.

The perception of high academic achievement is the drawcard for aspiring parents at many of these schools. At one, staff commented that 'parents are highly conscious of league tables when they are published in newspapers'. The perception of high achievement leads to a high expectation on the part of parents that their own children will be able to do well. The school will go to considerable lengths to fulfil these expectations.

Where this high-performance consciousness exists, the level of care and the school culture are still important to parents, and the 'whole package' attracts them to the school. For example, Ogilvie High is a long established single-sex school known for academic excellence. 'Parents,' comment the staff, 'are keen for their children to be successful, and they want to know that they will be safe.' Correspondingly, an Ogilvie parent comments, 'old fashioned values are explained to students in a way that is accepted and understood.'

Within the limitations of the methodology, Ogilvie and like schools suggest that the academic reputation is built up gradually, but that once established, it is a valuable and durable asset. In Perth, for example, the new and purpose-built Shenton College quickly assumed such a reputation, in part as a carry-over from the wide community esteem for the two senior high schools that it merged into one.

St Helena (VIC) and Rossmoyne (WA), however, are examples of senior high schools established on 'greenfields' in periods of suburban growth since the 1960s, in more recent times than Ogilvie or Canterbury Girls. Both these schools, too, have painstakingly built up reputations for academic performance.

A simplistic perception might be that the academically-oriented school will tend to emphasise university links and pathways, and play down other pathways to education and employment. Rossmoyne, however, is also a Registered Training Organisation, facilitating structured workplace learning for over 100 of its 1500-plus students. 'While VET may not be a prime driver [of Rossmoyne] it is just another example of the school meeting individual needs of students who go on to be successful.'

### 3.2.3 Values and culture

After 'academic factors', another important feature or characteristic of high demand schools appears to be that of 'values and culture'.

Parents in the focus groups mention 'values and culture' in relation to their enrolment decisions at more than a dozen schools - a little more often than they mention 'academic factors' or 'leadership and teaching'. However, once parents have enrolled their children, 'leadership and teaching' (see the next section) comes into its own as the factor which most often remains in high regard.

The PhillipsKPA team identifies strong evidence of values and culture in the mission statements or planning statements of certain schools.

For example, 'Rossmoyne [one of the highly academic schools] students will develop a sense of self-worth through the pursuit of high standards, thereby enabling them to fulfil their potential and contribute to the development of our society.' At Kelvin Grove, an 'innovative traditionalist' as it were, 'innovative teaching and learning takes place within an environment that has strong traditional values of work ethics, with a strict uniform code and a firm discipline policy'. A new principal at Sunnybank State HS undertook a whole-school process of strategic study, renewal and reform, 'mapping' from values, beliefs and principles into leadership and curriculum renewal.

In other instances, PhillipsKPA does not record a definitive statement of mission and values, but the school leadership teams have emphasised these aspects in the interviews. Staff believe, for example, that their school has a 'caring, respectful culture', an 'empowered, respectful culture', or a 'caring and inclusive school environment'.

In high demand schools, this implies that (without abandoning clarity and discipline) the school listens to and includes students in its decision-making and operations, and that, ideally, there is a congruence between values in the students' school and home environments.

In about half of the 20 high demand schools, the school has structures and services in place that give practical effect and outcomes to the school values and the idea of 'caring'. That is to say, there is evidence of developed pastoral care systems, student mentoring, student welfare services, student career programs, or evolved discipline policies and practices. 'We get positive feedback [about Salisbury HS pastoral care] and know the word is out there, and this is why people want to bring students to our school.'

In their own comments, it is these practical aspects of listening and caring that parents tend to remember and remark upon when they are talking about school values and culture. Parents value a friendly and caring culture which is 'like a family', showing that the school is 'really interested in students as people'. At Toowoomba HS, they 'listen to kids and treat them fairly – not just one or two teachers, it seems to be fairly universal.'

Particular aspects of the school's student services, welfare, or discipline, were mentioned by parents in the focus groups from Mountain Creek HS, Beaumaris Primary, Richmond Primary, Rossmoyne

HS, Canterbury Girls, St Helena College, and Sunnybank HS. ‘Teachers walk the talk [at Beaumaris], modelling values for students ... I heard about the school and its student services support and did everything to enrol my student here. I can’t believe how my daughter has changed and how the students are here. It’s like a private school, no, it’s better.’

For parents, then, highly esteemed ‘values and culture’ imply that the school’s declared, expressed values coincide with the way it behaves towards parents and children in its everyday operations.

Revealingly, in a smaller community, parents are sensitive to the way in which students learn and express the values of the school, even on occasions when the school is not there to watch them. ‘When you see groups of young people on the weekend, you can always tell the kids from Murtoa [P12 College]. Nine times out of ten they are the ones who are doing the right thing.’

### 3.2.4 Leadership and teaching

Leadership and teaching aspects are another important underlying determinant of high demand characteristics, in the enrolment decision and especially in the experience with the school post-enrolment.

In some instances, for both staff and parents, ‘leadership’ includes a reference to the particular style and influence of the principal. These schools include Bundamba College, Richmond Primary, Sunnybank HS, and Shenton College. Just as often, it refers to the broad influence of the school’s senior executive, or leadership team.

A strong leader can have a pervasive influence over staff, enabling successful operation of various facets of the school that lead to high demand. The arrival of the current Bundamba principal in the late 1990s is seen as a key event in the school’s turnaround. A new principal at Sunnybank presided over a successful strategic renewal of a struggling high school. At the inception of the new Shenton College, (the principal’s) ‘her vision was really important. It helped get the college where she wanted it to be, which ultimately is what we [the parents] want it to be.’ At the small-sized Richmond PS, the principal’s friendly and open manner impresses parents, influencing ‘the whole culture of the school’.

The focus of the leadership team, the common purpose of staff and the wider school community; and an individual sense of responsibility among staff, are recurring themes among the high demand schools studied. ‘The principal and the leadership team,’ comments one parent about Salisbury HS, ‘are huge drivers in giving the school its positive image, which influences enrolment choice because they are very approachable.’

Parents at the high demand schools say that they value high-quality teaching and caring teachers. As already noted, more than half of the high demand schools have significant proportions of highly experienced teachers, which may reflect the quality of teaching delivered by these schools. Professional development of teachers is considered to be as important as years of teaching experience. Time invested in, and types of, professional development vary considerably from school to school.

Parents and students also value extra learning opportunities, broad ranges of subject choices, and those schools (i.e. Bundamba, Salisbury and Northland for example) that offer TAFE and vocational training (VET) pathways as well as traditional academic pathways. ‘RMIT [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, a ‘dual sector’ Victorian university and TAFE college] recommended me to come here,’ says one Northland student, ‘if I wanted to do one of their [design studies] courses.’

In some cases, parents linked the (large) size of a school to the breadth of subject offerings. In other instances, their school was big enough to have broad offerings, yet small enough to be comfortable. The three small schools were valued for their closeness to the local region or community. It appears that large or small size is not taken on its own to be a fault or a virtue, but rather is assessed realistically by parents in the broader context of the school’s reputational ‘brand’.

Also, it is important to consider the organisational matrix in which teaching takes place, and the views of staff and parents about these advertised organisational features. As listed at table 1, a majority of the schools have adopted innovative organisational and teaching practices, such as campus renewal, sub-schools, split shifts, and curriculum reform:

- Calamvale, Reece, Northland, Kenmore and Shenton have had major infrastructure renewal or occupy new campuses
- Mount Waverley and Toowoomba have separate campuses for junior and senior high
- Calamvale, Kelvin Grove, Mountain Creek, Mount Waverley, Reece, Beaumaris PS, Canterbury, Kenmore State, St Helena, and Toowoomba divide into two to three junior and senior sub-schools
- Calamvale deploys large student groups into 'pods' over three-year spans, while Reece puts children with a single teacher in a 'Principal Learning Area' each day
- Mountain Creek and Sunnybank (QLD) operate split shifts, meaning that junior and senior high overlap, for part of the day only, on the same campus
- Queensland schools (Calamvale, Kelvin Grove and Mountain Creek) are trialling a trans-disciplinary approach of 'new basics' and 'rich tasks'.

In the case of Calamvale, Mount Waverley and Toowoomba, parents clearly endorse the positive impact of these subschool innovations on their children's education. (At this point, it is to be noted that, as a matter of course, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory organise their post-primary schools into four years high school plus two years college.)

Reece HS staff note that the new campus (replacing the old one destroyed by fire) has won an international design award for its facilities and innovative learning environments.

In most other instances, parents' positive comments are weighted more towards traditional 'leadership and teaching' aspects, and indeed the 'academic' and 'values and culture' aspects.

### *3.2.5 Other factors associated with high demand*

Other factors associated with high demand, mentioned by staff and parents alike, are items such as parental involvement, community involvement, co-curricular activities, location and proximity, and industry or university linkages.

Strong parental involvement (see table 3) may be observed at most of the high demand schools, apart from a few where demographic or other factors make it difficult. This usually comprises an active School Council and Parents and Citizens Group, and quite often an active tradition of classroom volunteering. Some of the schools get good value out of Friends, Former Students, and Alumni groups, or from a tradition of regular school conferences or community events. Open school-to-home communication channels are important.

Parent focus groups mention this aspect, although the anticipation of parental involvement is not their top priority in enrolment decisions. 'You just can't keep us away,' comments a Richmond PS parent, 'because [Richmond] parents enjoy helping.' 'There is good class-home communication,' a Rossmoyne HS parent approves, 'and teachers are prompt to follow up on queries and concerns.'

To Mount Waverley College parents, community involvement was recognised in the school's positive profile in the local media, and the good ambassadorship of students when they are spotted in the local environment. Staff of Reece HS say that the Devonport (TAS) community has good knowledge of the range and quality of school programs. Small schools, such as Northland and Murtoa in Victoria, make a point of community-group linkages and special community events.

A central location, with close proximity to homes and transport systems, is valued by parents, being mentioned at half a dozen schools. Established links to universities and industry groups or employers are also valued.

In a number of schools, the university links are not merely pro forma, but extend to students being able to make formal use of university facilities (e.g. Mount Waverley, Shenton College) or do university courses while still at school (e.g. Kelvin Grove, Canterbury Girls).

Links to industry groups and employers are vital for schools that want to facilitate structured workplace learning (e.g. Rossmoyne), successful vocational courses, or school-based apprenticeships (e.g. Bundamba, Northland, Salisbury, and Toowoomba). ‘Through the quality of our teaching [at Northland] and relationship with industry we will be virtually guaranteeing an apprenticeship for any student who completes one of our courses.’

Several of the schools are also Registered Training Organisations, which assists senior students who want to study for nationally recognised Certificate I to IV courses in the Australian VET system while still at school.

Staff, and occasionally parents, mention co-curricular programs as a useful supporting factor for high demand of their school. Sometimes these programs are a varied menu of cultural and sporting activities, while on occasion the school will have a particularly strong tradition in one aspect of culture or sport.

Co-curricular programs at Rossmoyne include sport, music, dance, drama, and society and environment. Canterbury Girls, an older school, has similar sporting cultural activities, but also a strong ‘house’ system with student leadership opportunities. Ogilvie High has a well-entrenched and much-loved musical and choral program. As well as the usual cultural activities, Toowoomba’s sporting program has an established record of getting students into state (and other) representative teams.

‘Size of school’ is sometimes mentioned as another attractive feature in the enrolment decision but, as noted above, this applies to smaller and medium schools as well as large. Smaller schools tend to appeal because of their social cohesiveness and community linkages, larger because of their economies of scale and breadth of offerings.

One quite specific attractant is that of single-sex schools, two girls’ schools being included in this study. Parents like the fact that their daughters are able to develop across a range of attributes and ‘there is no pressure to do things or not do things based on gender’.

### 3.3 *Information strategies used by high demand schools*

The PhillipsKPA research also explores school promotional strategies which may contribute to high demand.

The schools employ various means of promoting their attributes and success to the wider community. Some stratagems are fairly routine, such as school prospectuses, open days, community events, and school tours. Others are more innovative – e.g. employing a Community Liaison Officer, using billboard advertising, liaison and promotion in local ‘feeder’ schools, and maintaining attractive up-to-date websites that can galvanise prospective local and overseas students.

However, according to both staff and parents, by far the most effective medium for communicating information about a school is word-of-mouth. Although this information may not be as detailed or as accurate as the information in a prospectus, it has a more powerful effect in the community and on parents. Perception matters. In many cases, word-of-mouth lays the groundwork for schools, and encourages parents to make further inquiries at the school. ‘We don’t need to advertise in local papers or spend money on letterbox drops,’ note St Helena staff. ‘Instead, we focus on the local primary school and giving information to people who tour the school.’

The image presented by students in the community, and their behaviour off school premises and outside school hours, is another important way that a school advertises itself (for better or worse). The unsupervised behaviour of students at the local shopping centre or when they are in 'mufti' on the weekend forms a lasting impression in the minds of parents and the community.

An important aspect of the school image is the wearing of school uniforms. Many of the schools have a strict school uniform policy, or at least a clear dress code. This comes across as a positive factor in both the staff and parent reports, that is, having pride in the school uniform and not acting in a way which would bring it into disrepute.

Media stories are probably the next most important factor, after the word-of-mouth factor, and the presence of the school in the community. The leadership team at Northland believes that 'high demand schools are largely a product of media influence'.

'Good news' stories about the school are a powerful means of attracting parents. Most schools studied benefit from the positive publicity of media stories about their achievements and successes. Some schools actively pursue a relationship with the media, from which positive stories are produced, while others are happy to let the media come to them. 'Our loudest advocate is the media,' comments the Rossmoyne HS leadership team, 'that picks up on our achievements and makes them public. We don't need to spend much money here: it's done for us.'

Success seems to have its own momentum. The more the success, the more the media wish to report it. One school had not always had such a high reputation as it currently enjoyed, and parents regretted that some news stories about the school were still negative. For them, information they had gained from word-of-mouth was more positive, and evidently overcame the negative press.

Word-of-mouth and media stories are the most important means by which parents first hear about a school and form a good opinion. Promotional material produced by the school appears to supplement and validate what the parents have already learned from their own observations or inquiries, rather than it being a major influence on choice in its own right.

Once a school has created a valuable reputational 'brand', high demand appears have a self-fulfilling nature. That is, as a school gains a reputation for being a 'good' school, or successful or desirable in some way, this reputation then creates its own momentum.

First, as reputation grows, people are attracted to the school for this very reason. If the school is difficult to get into, so goes the reasoning, it must be worth the effort. 'It is difficult to beat the combination of demographic trends going your way and building on it,' comments a St Helena College staffer. 'Once you have won the supermarket discussion [regarding the best school in the area] it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.' This is reinforced by a parent at the same school, who says 'there is knowledge in the local community that St Helena has to turn people away. This creates demand.'

Second, high demand creates high expectations and a culture of success within the school. Teachers and parents talk about the children's desire to perform to the expectations placed on them – not to let the school and the teachers down. The reputation may not be based entirely on reality, but it becomes a reality through the expectations that are created. Parents' high expectations when they come to the school, especially where there is a history and expectation of academic success, reinforce the culture of success already in the school. As one Salisbury parent said, 'I heard about the school and its achievements from others and the media. I just wanted my kids to be here and I'm glad they are'.

It would also be natural, for example, to want to perform well in a school like Ogilvie High that 'experiences ongoing high demand for enrolments'. And, as the leadership team report states, it 'retains a strong tradition of former scholars achieving a high profile within Tasmania, including three Rhodes Scholars and a former student being elected as the first female member of the Legislative Council'.

### 3.4 Determinants of high demand characteristics

The previous section discussed the key characteristics identified by parents and school leadership groups as leading to high demand. This section attempts to draw out some of the underlying policies and practices adopted by schools which generate these key characteristics which make the schools attractive to parents.

As previously mentioned, leadership was often the most important underlying determinant of high demand characteristics. Common across most schools was a strong leader whose influence over staff enabled successful operation of various facets of the school that led to high demand. Leadership styles were different but generally involved a certain amount of enthusiasm, high expectations, innovation and personal involvement in the school community.

The focus of the leadership team; common purpose of staff and the wider school community; and, an individual sense of responsibility among staff were recurring themes among the schools studied.

Two further important factors enabling effective operation and attractiveness of the school are the timetabling and structure of the school. Staff generally perceived their school to have a distinctive and effective timetabling system and/or structure that sets it apart from other schools. Parents' views reflected staff views particularly in the schools with a sub-school structure. For instance, one school in the study has a sub-school structure in the middle school. These sub-schools are set up to be semi-autonomous units as far as decision making and governance are concerned and are responsible for the monitoring of behaviour and progress of students, communication with parents and provision of pastoral care.

These factors all had the common element of teachers and students working together to build relationships over time. For instance, some of the schools had instituted structures where the same group of teachers remained with students throughout their schooling. As teachers were not required to get to know a new intake each year and students were not being taught by a variety of teachers as they progressed through their schooling, they were able to build trust, understanding and a sense of common purpose.

A further example of teachers and students working together occurs in those high schools that have a split-shift timetabling system. Mountain Creek staff report that '...students in Years 10, 11 and 12 (senior school) attend school from 7.25 a.m. to 12.55 p.m. each day, and those in Years 8 and 9 (middle school) attend from 10.25 a.m. to 4.05 p.m. This provides sole access to school facilities for each group for part of each day, and in the middle the two shifts overlap with all students present at the same time. This system decreases the numbers of students on campus across the day and provides a less crowded, calmer and more settled environment for student learning. Senior staff believe this system makes a major contribution to improved working conditions for both students and teachers, promotes positive student-teacher relationships and ultimately leads to better learning outcomes for students.'

'[The] organisation of the school day also deliberately allows senior students the opportunity to take part-time employment, complete homework, enrol in other educational programs or pursue recreational interests—all while they are completing senior studies and without disrupting these study patterns. Options and pathways are thereby broadened considerably.

The split-shift system also allows better and more efficient use of expensive and scarce resources such as student centres, performing arts theatres, science laboratories, home economics kitchens, workshops for manual arts and art, and the whole array of expensive information and communication technology resources.'

While many parents at Mountain Creek took some time to accept the benefits of these innovations, some parents considered them to be crucial to teaching quality and a high level of care in a school of that size and diversity (2090 students in 2004).

At Reece, students spend approximately two-thirds of each day with the one teacher (‘principal teacher’) in the one classroom (‘principal learning area’). This reduces the amount of movement and disruptions to learning thereby facilitating closer student-teacher relationships and a stable environment. As staff stated ‘through longer periods of interaction with students, teaching and learning has a deeper focus than that which is normally experienced in a 40 or 50 minute lesson. Through this, teachers gain a more comprehensive understanding of students as learners, which is in turn reflected in the positive regard parents have for the school: they comment that we really know their kids.’

Parents reflected this view: ‘We really liked the concept of the Principal Learning Areas and the fact that the students have the one teacher for most of the day.’

It is not only the organisation of the school day but the facilities themselves that are conducive to a stable environment. ‘We often have a number of people visiting our school who comment that our set up is just like a primary school, and our response is always the same – isn’t that great!’

Staff also point out that the school ‘was purpose built for the way we teach’ and has won an international design award for innovative learning environments. They believe that parents are attracted to the school because of its facilities. This is at least partly reflected in parent views. According to the parent focus group report:

‘The Principal Learning Areas are regarded to be key factors in minimising bullying across the school. Each Principal Learning Area has its own exit door which leads to the school ground. As a result, disruptions normally experienced in passageways and locker areas do not occur. When students go out, they are immediately outside – all classes have different exit points so there is no congestion.’

Years of teaching experience of staff may also be a factor in the quality of teaching at a particular school. Although this study is qualitative and we are not able to compare data on teaching experience with data from schools less in demand, there are some characteristics to note. In most schools which provided data on years of experience, more than half of their teaching staff had ten or more years of experience (12 schools). Fourteen schools reported that more than 80% of their staff had four or more years of teaching experience.

Professional development of teachers was also mentioned as being important or even more important than years of teaching experience. Time invested in and types of professional development varied considerably from school to school. For instance, at Sunnybank which has undergone dramatic reforms in recent years and experienced subsequent growth in demand, teacher professional development has been, and continues to be, the highest priority. The principal attributes the success of these reforms largely to this focus on professional development.

Another very important underlying factor that has been mentioned previously in this report and comes through in nearly all of the parent and school leadership groups is the role and importance of communication – not just between students and teachers as mentioned above, but also in terms of parent involvement and the broader relationships between the school, parents and the wider community.

A number of principals and school leaders mentioned the high level of parent involvement, in both formal (e.g. Parents and Citizens meetings) and informal settings such as sports days or musical recitals. Parent groups corroborated this, and there was a strong focus in most of them on the ‘positive relationships’, and ‘sense of connectedness’ they had with the school.

A small number of schools which experienced difficulty in engaging parents in formal structures and in their school were actively addressing this in other ways. Mountain Creek uses ‘the latest technology [which] allows each of the heads of sub-school to be immediately contactable by parents on mobile telephones, by fax and email’. Parents at Mountain Creek valued the schools ‘open door approach’ and

‘prompt follow up to queries and concerns through giving students and parents the mobile phone number of the sub-school head’.

Communication, in terms of reporting students progress to parents, was also often commented on. For example, one of the school’s attributes that Bundamba parents held in high regard was the ‘thorough processes for assessment and reporting, with the compulsory interviews providing a much valued reality check’.

At Reece, parents, students and teachers are involved in a three way reporting process. Parents are appreciative that ‘through triangulation all parties are aware of the messages being given and received’. As one parent stated ‘everyone knows where they stand and what is expected during the remainder of the year’.

Parents at St Helena were supportive of the College’s policy to insist on completion of all set assignments. As one parent said, ‘having been on the receiving end of a telephone call about a piece of work not being handed in on time, I think the school is doing the right thing; young people need to learn to meet their commitments’.

Another issue that was raised consistently by parents (as well as staff) in this study was the provision of a safe environment and the values espoused and encouraged in the schools. Bundamba parents ‘feel the principal and senior staff really listen to the opinions and views of parents, as well as those of the students, but are also able to be ‘clear and firm’ in their decisions and prepared to justify them on the grounds of ‘fairness’.

St Helena typify a number of schools that have specific anti-bullying programs as part of their drive to ‘build positive student relationships, developing respect for others and giving students the responsibility for the wellbeing of others’.

Toowoomba is another example – ‘Our behaviour management strategies work to eliminate disruption to learning and finding the best programs that suit and support development. We have a real focus on stamping out bullying on all levels.’ On two occasions each year the school invites parents and friends to attend ceremonies to celebrate the achievements of students who have displayed ‘excellent conduct and industry in all classes’. As staff commented ‘Gold and Silver level ceremonies give us the opportunity to recognise the significant cohort of our students who consistently work and behave in exemplary fashion’.

## 4. Conclusion

Research on 'choices in schooling', including why some government schools are in high demand, is crucial to the policy development process on quality schooling. The DEST project, High Demand Government Schools, studied 20 government schools to glean insights from staff and parents as to which characteristics lead to high demand in government schools.

For school staff, the research questions were what senior staff saw as distinguishing features of their schools, what were key organisation/curriculum/teaching policies and practices, and how practices impacted on demand. For school parents, key questions were what drivers influenced the decision to choose one school over others, what attracted parents to a particular school, and what features parents cared about most.

Although the schools were not chosen in a controlled sample, they do illustrate that there is no unique recipe for 'high demand government schools', but rather each represents a considered response to particular market and demographic niches. Many high demand schools, the study shows, rely primarily on their reputation for academic results. Others are valued for their capacity to innovate, for tradition and appearance, for meeting particular student needs, or for meeting regional or community needs.

Analysis of the PhillipsKPA project reports demonstrates a fair degree of correspondence (albeit with differing emphases) between the distinguishing high demand features as judged by staff and the distinctive high demand attractants as perceived by parents.

In interviews with staff and parents, the most common major factor is a reputation for high academic achievement. This leads parents to a high expectation that their own children will do well. Such schools are usually medium-size or larger high schools in the capital city suburbs. Many are old-established, but some are newer 'greenfields' schools with links to vocational training as well as university pathways.

'Values and culture' and 'leadership and teaching' are the other two most important determinants, cited by staff and parents alike. Parents in focus groups tend to mention the former more often than the latter in the enrolment decision, but once their children start attending the school, 'leadership and teaching' comes into its own as the factor which most often remains in high regard.

Staff often refer to the 'caring, respectful, inclusive' school culture, while parents relate strongly to schools where the expressed values are congruent with everyday behaviour, and which visibly maintain student mentoring and welfare services giving practical effect to the 'values' and caring.

In several cases, for both staff and parents, 'leadership' refers to the particular style and influence of a respected and highly effective principal. Just as often, it refers to the pervasive influence of the leadership team.

Parents value high demand schools which offer extra learning opportunities, have broad ranges of subject choices, and offer developed pathways into vocational training. They are less inclined to draw attention to other structural innovations for teaching, such as separate campuses, junior and senior schools, student 'pods' or split shifts, and curriculum restructuring.

Staff and parents also associate high demand with other factors such as strong parental involvement, visible community involvement, depth in co-curricular activities, location and proximity, and established industry and university-TAFE linkages.

In developing and maintaining high reputation, positive 'word of mouth' and a genuinely respected place for the school in the community seem to count for more than school publishing and promotional activities, which tend to validate existing parental opinions rather than determining the actual choice. Known high reputation and demand appear to have a 'self-fulfilling' element, in that they motivate parents and children to seek places at the school, and to aspire to live up to the school's established performance profile once the enrolment decision has been made.