Creating Strong Communities: Full Service Schools

Executive Summary

As any parent and teacher knows, raising and educating healthy children is not a one-person job. They need the support of a community – from health professionals to childcare workers to local governments – to do their job well.

Evidence both in Australia and internationally shows that schools that work with parents are likely to achieve the greatest success.

WA Labor wants to build strong, vibrant school communities which support teachers and families to give every child the best possible start in life.

But schools in predominantly low socioeconomic areas are increasingly having to cope as non-academic factors—such as hunger, safety, poverty and health—spill into the classroom, affect learning, and create challenges well beyond what teachers and schools should be expected to handle alone.

This consultation paper explores the Full Service School model as a way of addressing the complex needs of vulnerable children and families today. Roseworth Primary School in Girrawheen is a successful example of a school which has reinterpreted the traditional model of a school to better meet the needs of its community.

There is a significant social return on investment for governments and communities which support children to become well educated, skilled and healthy. For example, our analysis shows that the cost effectiveness of reducing a single teen pregnancy is estimated to be $27,000 a year. Investing in parenting programs and avoiding children going into care can save the State Government an estimated $39,000 per child per year.

These are wise investments that are good for children, families and the community.

Recommendations

There are strong economic and social arguments for WA Labor’s proposal for Full Service Schools.

We recommend that the WA Government take the successful Roseworth model and extend it further by providing schools in low socioeconomic areas with services such as:

- Afterschool activities, like sport, music, tuition and specialist clubs
- Childcare, plus out-of-school and vacation care
- Training in life skills, such as parenting support, the prevention of teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, and social and relationship skills
- TAFE and VET services
- Targeted and specialist health services, such as speech pathology and psychology
- Classes to reintegrate early school leavers
- Alternative curriculum, including part-time community-based projects.

This consultation paper was written for WA Labor by Dr Tony Buti MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Education, and Member for Armadale.

We welcome comment and feedback on this consultation paper. Please send it to: Dr Tony Buti, 2898 Albany Highway, Kelmcott, WA 6111 or tony.buti@mp.wa.gov.au by Friday, 25 September 2015.
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Introduction

Leadership, teacher quality and teaching methodology are crucial elements of a quality education.

But there is an increasing realisation that academic development is also being affected by external factors, such as family circumstances, poverty, health, cultural differences and student engagement. Schools and teachers are increasingly having to deal with influences beyond the school gate.

It is important that principals, teachers and support staff are not left to fend for themselves because at its core “teaching is a team sport”.

WA Labor has long recognised the importance of a coordinated and collaborative approach to the development of children, particularly during early childhood. For example, in our direction statement on early childhood development, WA Labor recommended boosting numbers of child health nurses, improving parenting skills, establishing childcare centres on school sites, better high school health programs and a more coordinated ministerial and public service approach to child development.

This consultation paper further develops the work of this direction statement by exploring the model of Full Service Schools, which go far beyond the traditional educational mandate of schools to deal with the complex needs of modern families.

It will first explore current models of Full Service Schools in the United Kingdom and Australia, using the successful example of Roseworth Primary School in Perth.

Next, it will present the options for a new model of Full Service School in Western Australia which provides a broader range of social services and also builds stronger links between schools and their local communities.

Finally, it will present the potential social and economic benefits of Full Service Schools.

What are Full Service Schools?

Full Service Schools, also known as extended schools, have been successful both in Australia and overseas in not only boosting educational and social outcomes in children but also providing crucial early intervention services in predominantly low socioeconomic areas.

While there is no one agreed definition, the following explanation has wide appeal:

“Schools that provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of children, their families and the wider community.”

The full service model provides extra third-party and government services to students and the community to complement the educational mandate of schools.

At its most ambitious, the model puts the school at the centre of a hub or precinct that offers multiple services for the whole community.
Some UK schools now offer community childcare, parental and family support, referral to specialist support services, access to information and communications technology, sports and arts facilities and lifelong learning opportunities for the whole community.

A 2007 report on the evaluation of the UK’s FSES system found that the initiative was improving student achievements and creating positive outcomes for families and local people, especially those facing difficulties. “The FSES approach was commonly associated with improved school performance, better relations with local communities and an enhanced standing of the school in its area,” the report found, noting that other non-FSES factors also contributed to these outcomes.

Closer to home, initial experiments with full service models began in 2008, when all Australian State and Territory governments entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to progress six Commonwealth Government-funded national collaboration projects (National Partnerships, or NP). WA was selected to lead the Extended Schools Models, with a small number of schools receiving funding to work with NGOs such as The Smith Family to develop Community School Hubs, but, with the change of Federal Government in late 2013, the program was discontinued.

Some schools developed successful 0-4 year-old programs with parents attending with their babies. A cluster of schools in the Midland region have used the funding to provide extended services, including assisting young locals in their transition to tertiary education and employment. However, the majority of schools have used their funding to enhance existing programs and accelerate improvement strategies that were already in place.

Outside this now-defunct NP program, some other schools have experimented with full service models. These include Neerigen Brook Primary School, Gwynne Park Primary School and Westfield Park Primary School which promote a full-service culture and philosophy and engage with other agencies and local community organisations.

Then there is the Challis Early Childhood Education Centre (CECEC) and Challis Primary School (recently the Early Childhood Education Centre has merged with and been absorbed by the Challis Primary School) which focuses mainly on extended services as an early intervention mechanism. Their programs aim to empower parents to become actively involved in their child’s education.

The CECEC has been a significant influence on the State Government’s program of Child and Parent Centres (CPCs). The government announced that there will be 16 CPCs operational at WA public schools by 2017. There are more than 700 public schools across WA. The CPCs operating in 2014 provide playgroups, therapeutic services like speech and occupational therapy, as well as parenting classes.

Other schools offer extended services on a more informal basis. Many WA public schools are in contractual arrangements with before- and after-school childcare providers on school sites, while others also provide children’s activities like dance and sporting classes.

But there is the potential to offer so much more. We need to take these existing models and learn from the UK’s experience and improve on them.

Before continuing to examine the rationale for Full Service Schools, we should discuss and highlight probably the most comprehensive attempt at creating a Full Service School in Western Australia.
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Roseworth Primary School

Located in one of the lowest socioeconomic areas in the Perth metropolitan area, Roseworth Primary School in Girrawheen is the amalgam of three schools, with its current buildings opened in 2010.

The school runs a number of extended services through partnerships (with Edith Cowan University, The Smith Family, Fogarty Foundation), co-located services at the school (such as a dental therapy centre, child health centre, child and parent centre), school-initiated services (including a 0-3 year-old playgroup, adult learning program, breakfast club and the Roseworth and Parent Program – a six-week program engaging parents and students in fun, structured, research based activities) – and Department of Education services (Classroom Management Strategies Team, School Psychology Service).

The Vice-Chancellor’s Fellow in the Melbourne University Graduate School of Education, Maxine McKew, twice visited Roseworth while researching a book on education and was impressed. McKew, also a former media commentator and federal politician, wrote: “The point is, all Australian schools, most certainly our public schools, would benefit from having a Roseworth makeover.”

“Central to the school’s success in altering its culture and operational approach was Metcalf’s [the Roseworth principal] early realisation that the traditional educational resource base was not going to be enough to make the major adjustments that Roseworth needed. He set out to identify some key external partners who could help him build the capacity of both his leadership and teaching teams, and to provide essential community services.”

This search for external partners has led to productive collaboration, as well as practical and financial assistance from The Smith Family, Edith Cowan University’s Education faculty and the Fogarty Foundation.

The multi-faceted full service philosophy and program at Roseworth has changed the culture of the school. It is now a vibrant place, with a decrease in bullying, where students are fitter and attend school more frequently than in the past and where there is more engagement with the parents. McKew writes that Roseworth “has gone from being a ‘sad little place’ that struggled to retain good staff, to a school that now attracts some of the State’s most accomplished professionals”.

But what about academic progress?

If one examines NAPLAN data, the year 7 students who have been exposed to the full service philosophy for the longest period showed the best results, ranking substantially above schools of similar socioeconomic demographics in reading, grammar and numeracy and close to average in writing and spelling. Year 3 and 5 students recorded minimal gains and remain below all other schools, but “[w]ith the concentrated effort now going into early intervention with preschool children, the hope is that this will begin to reverse as children move through the early primary years.”

The results of the full service model at Roseworth Primary School are encouraging from a cultural and student performance aspect, adding weight to the full service philosophy. But what is also clear is that often it is difficult to improve student attainment, particularly at schools situated within lower socio-economic regions. It is submitted that the full service model needs to be deep and wide and in most cases go further than what has already been tried in Western Australia and Australia, even further than what has so far been on offer at Roseworth.
Our Proposal for Full Service Schools

WA Labor sees an opportunity to expand on these successful models of Full Service Schools to strengthen the links between schools and their communities.

While the services provided may vary between schools, a comprehensive Full Service School would offer many of the core services shown in the following diagram. In addition, a range of variable services dependent on the school will be offered.

*Figure 1: Core and variable services provided by Full Service Schools*

Source: The Foundation for Young Australians, Literature review and background research for the National Collaboration Project: Extended Service School Model, 2010.
Our intention is that these services would help to create students who regularly attend school, are safe, and ready and better able to learn and behave. Parental support and learning should create more engaged and equipped parents and extended services will hopefully assist in creating healthier lifestyles for students and parents.

Some of the services which could be offered at primary and secondary schools include:

- Parenting support;
- Afterschool activities, like sport, music, tuition and specialist clubs;
- Health services, such as speech pathology, child psychology and health clinics;
- Childcare;
- Family and adult learning in subjects such as information and communications technology, creative writing and home budgeting and financial management; and
- Training in life skills, such as the prevention of teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, and social and relationship skills.

The Full Service School model is underpinned by active collaboration between the schools themselves and community groups, sporting clubs, NGOs, Local Government Authorities and even businesses. This collaboration can extend beyond the provision of added services to the sharing, co-locating or joint use of physical facilities. The opening of school grounds and facilities to community groups itself helps build and reinforce intra-community engagement.

Another issue worthy of a comment is adult education or what historically was called night school. Night school was a common feature of many of our high schools up to at least the mid-1980s. Whilst cognisant of the need not to duplicate services provided by the TAFE sector, there is no reason why schools cannot provide their facilities for the running of educational services for adults of all ages. This will provide educational benefits to those involved and may better link parents of school aged children with the schools their children attend and also provide a conduit to greater interaction between schools and the community.

Obviously if schools are to allow greater community access to their facilities, security, safety, privacy and insurance issues need to be addressed. These are not insurmountable obstacles and with goodwill and vision they can be addressed through formulation of Memorandum of Associations between relevant parties (and, if necessary, legislative reform).

Benefits of our proposed broad model of Full Service School include the revenue generated by extended services being offered at the school, as well as a significant social return on investment (SROI). The SROI would include, but not be limited to, improved

### SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- **$27,000**: annual saving by avoiding a teenage pregnancy
- **$39,000**: annual saving on keeping a child from going into care
- **$6800**: annual saving for reducing a secondary student’s alcohol abuse
- **$7960**: saving for each time a young person is prevented from reoffending
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educational outcomes for students and parents, a better skilled workforce, better use of school facilities for community activities, closer family and community relationships with local schools and coordinated delivery of social and health services to students and the school community.

To illustrate the potential SROI of Full Service Schools, we have compiled a table showing the Net Present Value (NPV) of the short term and lifetime benefits using a range of Australian and international values ascribed to health and welfare outcomes. Entitled Monetised Benefits to Families and the Community of Services, the table estimates all benefits in 2014 dollars. The health and welfare outcomes include: increased employment and average income, improved health, decreased crime and more resilient families.

Why do we need Full Service Schools?

To address children and young people’s needs so that schooling can be effective

As already discussed, social research clearly indicates that geographic location, education, employment, healthy living conditions and social support networks all strongly influence the ability of families to provide the best environment for their developing children. Social, personal and school factors each have a bearing on a child’s achievement, life chances and wellbeing.

Many of today’s children have complex needs to be addressed so that schooling can be effective. Non-academic factors—hunger, safety, health, and other issues—spill into the classroom, affect learning, and create challenges well beyond what teachers and schools should be expected to handle alone.

The long standing tendency has been for the focus of education reform to be predominantly inside the school and focused on standards, testing, and teacher quality. But as shown by the complex issues above, academic development needs to be complemented by a focus on external factors that influence student achievement. Schools need assistance and resources to address external issues and work together with other institutions or agencies with responsibilities for children.

Evidence both in Australia and internationally shows that schools that work with parents are likely to achieve the greatest success.13 Parents are the first and most important teachers in a child’s life and they are the most important influence on a child’s learning, development and wellbeing outcomes. Inter-generational learning is a natural extension of the schools in many cases.

To avoid service and infrastructure duplication and address gaps in provision

In this period of tight budgets, educators, community leaders and policymakers are more aware than ever of the need to use scarce resources efficiently and effectively. The concept of schools that offer extended services and facilities to address the complex issues facing many students and for use by the entire community
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creates an opportunity to ensure that duplication of services by different agencies is reduced/eliminated. It relies on agencies planning more holistically in the context of each other’s services rather than in isolation using a ‘silos’ approach. Integrated services available through the school increase the efficiency and convenience with which services are made available and may free up resources that can go towards additional services and fill identified gaps in services provision that relate to local community needs.

Evidence of the pressure on governments at all levels to provide the services and facilities we have come to expect is all around us. For example there is currently a severe shortage of public open space/playing fields in many Perth suburbs and regional areas. A 2013 Curtin University study into provision of active open space and playing fields across Perth and Peel found some councils were already under strain maintaining existing ovals and were investigating replacing pitches with synthetic grass. Yet most schools have sporting and recreation facilities that are effectively non-performing assets outside of school hours.

Financial pressure on local government will make it increasingly difficult to provide sporting, community, social and recreational amenities

Some of the key areas of local government expenditure could be partly relieved if facilities (including sports and recreation) and programs at Full Service Schools were also available for community use. Currently community, social, recreation, culture and education services and facilities provision accounts for one-third of typical local government expenditure (see figure 2). Some of the cost of providing and maintaining such facilities and services could be provided by Full Service Schools.

Figure 2: Sources of local government expenses that Full Service Schools could contribute to

![Graph showing sources of local government expenses that Full Service Schools could contribute to]

Figure 3: Perceived benefits of full service schooling, survey responses

Benefits of Full Service Schools

The UK experience and experiments with Full Service Schools in Australia have shown many beneficial outcomes, including the following list outlined in the 2007 UK FSES Evaluation Final Report and further illustrated in figure 3 (from the 2012 TNS Australian Extended School Models Summation Report).

- Benefits to the child – such as increased attendance and decreased suspension rates, enhanced educational outcomes, better preparedness on school completion and transition between primary and secondary, a reduction in risk behaviours, improved social and relational aspects and, improved teacher relationships (among others).

- Benefits to parents – such as providing them with greater flexibility to balance their family and work commitments by facilitating easier access to support services.

- Benefits to teachers – such as the facilitation of classrooms in which children are more willing to engage, teachers are able to focus more on their roles as educators, and a reduction of competing demands on school staff as a result of broader access to wider support services for children.

- Benefits to community – such as an increased sense of community connectedness and safety, and the building of social capital. Also a better use of existing school resources such as sports and recreation facilities for the whole community.

- Increasing parental engagement – which was described as essential to the model being able to function adequately and deliver the outcomes that are desired.

Additional economic benefits that have been documented include:

- the full service model is a cost-efficient model of addressing social issues in the long term;

- improved potential career opportunities for students as a result of them not “slipping through the net” and a subsequent potential reduction in social inequality and welfare dependency;

- benefits for local business (as a result of a better-skilled workforce);

- increased skills and employment of parents who volunteer at the school as part of the full service model;

- greater connections with the community leading to improved business performance; and

- generation of income for the school.
Conclusion

Former UK Education Secretary Ruth Kelly described the full service model as a “demanding, but exciting vision”. This is a vision that WA Labor is keen to develop to build on the work already being done in some schools much more broadly.

Full Service Schools enable an holistic approach to education which can provide for a whole community. The broadening of the school mandate to incorporate provisions for social, familial and psychological needs uniquely positions Full Service Schools to cater for the range of student needs.

Our model is uniquely placed to address pastoral issues to better position children psychologically and socially to achieve academically. The provision of extended services on school campuses allows greater intra-community engagement. More intra-community engagement can strengthen community ties and improve the wellbeing of parents and local residents. Parental engagement in the educational process is entrenched by the full service model.

Full Service Schools can unite governments, government departments, Local Government Authorities and community groups to better cater for the needs and achievements of students, their parents and the community. A properly funded model can also provide much-needed support for schools and the teaching profession to meet the increasing demands presented by having to contend with factors on the other side of the school gate.

Footnotes

1. D. Ravitch, an historian and assistant secretary of education under US Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, has stated that poverty is the main inhibitor to children learning. Refer to D. Ravitch, Reign of Error, Knopf, 2013.
3. Refer to WA Labor, The Health and Happiness of our Children: A new approach for the Early Years, November 2010, and WA Labor, Growing Children Well, October 2011. Both documents were prepared by the Hon. Linda Savage, formerly MLC for the East Metropolitan region.
4. UK Department of Children, Schools and Families, Extended Schools: Building on Experience, Department of Children, Schools and Families, p. 7.
7. In relation to reading, students at CECEC have achieved significant improvements in reading as measured by the PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) testing regime, administered by the University of Western Australia. Data from PIPS reading testing in 2008 and 2013 records students at CECEC significantly improving and performing better than comparable schools.
9. Ibid, pp. 43-44.
10. Ibid, p. 33.
12. SROI differs from conventional cost-benefit analysis in that it goes beyond simple costs and price and places values on social and welfare outcomes in addition to pure economic return.
## Figure 4: The monetised benefits of Full Service Schools for families, governments & the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Qualitative Outcomes</th>
<th>Quantitative Outcomes</th>
<th>Value of Intervention</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants &amp; Young Children</td>
<td>Child attains early literacy skills</td>
<td>Cost saving for school and parents by detecting a possible development delay or special need</td>
<td>Saving of $18,639 per year required to educate the average student with a disability</td>
<td>Australian CBA Methods for Early Childhood Intervention, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary &amp; Secondary Students</td>
<td>Student attends a quality after-school care program</td>
<td>Cost saving for parents for each child who attends publicly funded after-school care programs</td>
<td>Saving of $3,000 per year (annual average cost of an afterschool program, with UK data used in absence of Australian data)</td>
<td>UK New Economy &amp; Social Services Unit Cost Database, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Students</td>
<td>Student pursues and completes a higher education qualification</td>
<td>Projected higher-than-average income in the first year of full-time work after graduation from university</td>
<td>Income is at least $26,000 higher than someone with a vocational qualification in the first year</td>
<td>Department of Education, National Centre for Education Statistics (based on 2014 first-year median earnings of university graduates)</td>
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<td>Secondary Students</td>
<td>Fewer young people not in education or training after high school</td>
<td>Increased earnings and decreased welfare costs</td>
<td>Savings of $26,000 in welfare and associated costs per young person per annum</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year 12 Attainment &amp; First Year Income, 2011</td>
</tr>
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<td>Secondary School Girls</td>
<td>Student avoids teenage birth</td>
<td>Improved health education and employment outcomes for student, resulting in savings to government in healthcare and welfare payments</td>
<td>Saving of $27,000 for each avoided teenage pregnancy in lost earnings, health and welfare costs per year</td>
<td>Access Economics, The Benefits of a National Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Students</td>
<td>Reduction in recreational use of illicit drugs by student</td>
<td>Savings to government in justice, policing and healthcare costs; students enjoys improved education, work and relationship outcomes</td>
<td>Saving of $2789 per person (adjusted for inflation for five years between 2010 and 2015)</td>
<td>Access Economics, The Benefits of a National Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Students</td>
<td>Reduction in chronic alcohol use and/or regular binge drinking by student</td>
<td>Savings to government in justice, policing and healthcare costs; students avoids lost future earnings due to poor school performance</td>
<td>Saving of $6,800 per person per year</td>
<td>Dept of Health &amp; Aging, The avoidable costs of alcohol abuse in Australia and the potential benefits of effective policies to reduce the social costs of alcohol, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary &amp; Secondary Students</td>
<td>Student is prevented from reoffending</td>
<td>Cost saving in response cost for each young offender</td>
<td>Saving of $7960 for each avoided re-offence in police, judicial, administrative and potential incarceration costs (2007 estimate inflated to 2013-14 figures)</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Criminology, Recidivism in Australia: findings and future research (Research and Public Policy Series No 80), 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary &amp; Secondary Students</td>
<td>Student is prevented from going into care</td>
<td>Cost saving for child not going into Out of Home Care (OOHC)</td>
<td>Saving of $39,000 per child per year in OOHC costs</td>
<td>Boston Consulting Group, “NSW Government Out of Home Care Review Comparative and Historical Analysis”, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>