



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND
WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**Unfolding opportunities: a baseline study
of school business relationships in
Australia**

Appendices to the Final Report

Appendix three – Literature Review

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1 Introduction

1.1 *Purpose and scope*

This report was prepared for a project commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to provide an analysis of the current nature and extent of school-business relationships across Australia.

The project has its origins in the 2020 Summit held in Canberra in May 2008. One of the outputs of the Summit was a proposal for a coordinated partnership program between schools and business, specifically targeting the top 200 Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) companies for increased involvement in education.

While it is generally recognised that the last decade has seen substantial growth in school relationships with business entities, there is limited systematic information about the nature and extent of these activities, the factors that motivate schools and business to form and sustain relationships, the means by which such relationships are established, and the benefits that accrue to both schools and business.

The literature review informed the development of the analytical framework, survey design, and data analysis for the project. It provided background and contextual information for the final project report, and the overall conclusions of the project.

1.2 *'Relationships' and 'partnerships'*

In both the national and international literature, the term 'partnerships' is the most commonly used term encompassing a range of relationships involving schools and business. The working definition used for the project framework follows the first half of the definition used by the Conference Board of Canada (2003 p6), that is:

...partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships between employers, educators and/or other stakeholders as partners – including, for example, communities, labour, or governments – designed to enhance learning for students and other learners.

It is generally understood that the term 'partnership' implies a higher order and more formal relationship between a school and a business. However, for the purposes of the project, and for the survey in particular, it was critical to ensure that the participating schools reported the many possible forms of relationship, and that none were excluded on the grounds that the relationships were not formally recognised as partnerships. Therefore, while the project report tends to use the term 'relationships' as a generic descriptor, we have generally used 'partnerships' throughout this literature review to reflect the most common usage in the sources.

2 Overview of the sources

It is important to note from the outset that the literature on school-business relationships overlaps with studies and reports on partnerships more generally. In this report, we draw on findings and observations from a range of research and publications on generic issues for partnerships that we integrate with those specifically concerned with school-business partnerships. The resources referring to policy and practice focused on school-business partnerships sometimes overlap with school-community partnerships. There are also overlaps with the generic school effectiveness literature, which was not explored beyond that referred to in the school-business sources.

Since government policies and initiatives have multiple goals it is inevitable that the findings of reports and guidelines for good practice in school-business partnerships include observations that apply more generally to effective project management and policy implementation. We have also included community-based initiatives attempting to meet a range of objectives, in some cases where the school-business partnerships are not necessarily a central component of the program.

The review covers both Australian and international literature with particular reference to:

- government policies
- evidence of the impact and benefits of partnerships
- characteristics of effective partnerships
- obstacles to successful partnership development.

2.1 *Types of publications and resources*

The web-based searches produced more than 80 sources from the Internet relevant to school-business relationships, and a small number of hard copy publications. However, most of the sources are focused on reports of activities involving not-for-profit and community-based organisations working with corporate and business partners. The bulk of the work is in the form of guidelines and practical resources. In most instances the observations and recommendations are generalisable to school-business partnerships.

There is an abundance of what is sometimes referred to as 'grey literature', that is, reports produced by organisations such as sponsoring bodies or program agencies that are mostly anecdotal accounts of activities and outcomes. While often intended as promotional, these reports are nonetheless useful guides to the range and nature of local initiatives, despite the absence of independent evaluations of program effectiveness and impact. They rely heavily on accumulated experience and

observations from project leaders and sponsors and tend to draw on previous accounts from similar sources.

2.1.1 Government policy documents

Australian policy documents informing the literature review provide the recent and emerging policy framework of the Australian Government covering a number of interrelated initiatives.

The sources include:

- COAG National Partnerships on Youth Attainment and Transition
- MCEETYA Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- MCEETYA Four Year Plan 2009-2012
- DEST Evaluation of Career Advice Australia (2007).

The references cover a range of Australian Government websites concerned with partnerships generally, and school-business partnerships in particular.

2.1.2 Policy analysis, research and critiques

There appears to be very little independent scholarly research directly on the subject of school-business partnerships. In the 1990s, following a period of intensive activity involving partnerships for employability, an extensive review of literature found little formal research had been conducted on reform-model school-business partnerships (Cobb & Quaglia 1994). A Scottish study around the same time concluded that there was little consensus about the focus or meaning of education-business links, and observed that there was no evidence for the impact of such partnerships on the economy or on learning outcomes (Turner 1994).

The area has not attracted substantial interest from Australian educational and policy researchers, even in recent times. A search of the annual conference papers of the Australian Association for Research in Education for the last three years found only a few papers concerned with school-business relationships, and just one directly focused on the subject (Hay & Kapitzke 2008).

Most of the research cited in this report, including that conducted for the various national bodies listed below, leans towards interviews and focus groups with a heavy reliance on surveys of opinion, reports of current practice, and self-reported evaluations. While many of these are very useful, in some instances there is little indication of the nature of the research undertaken or the sources of data. For example, a 'Strategic Issues Paper' prepared by the Australian National Industry Skills Committee (NISC 2008) claims to be based on research, but details of the methodology and sources of information are not provided: the observations and conclusions are of a

general nature with a mix of information and advice possibly gathered from program websites.

It is not uncommon for reports to refer to research without attribution. For example, a joint project of the Council of State Schools Association and Australian Parents Council in conjunction with DEEWR, reports on its website that:

Research has shown that where effective partnerships exist, the quality of schooling improves, students enjoy more satisfying educational experiences, and communities are strengthened. (Family-School and Community Partnership Bureau 2009)

There has also been little systematic mapping of activities at an international level, the notable exception being the Conference Board of Canada 2003 Partnerships report on issues and trends using findings from the global business-education-community partnerships survey.

It is noteworthy that an Ernst and Young report suggests that 'historically, corporations have been weak in measuring the impact of their education efforts.' (2007, p. 20) This is also a problem for philanthropic efforts:

The philanthropic sector is troubled by the lack of substantial evaluative literature about the impact of its grant-making. Most of the evaluative literature is produced by and aimed at the sector itself, with success often measured by compliance rather than achievement. (Black 2009, p. 30)

A UK review of the quality and findings of research into the involvement of business in education by the National Centre for Social Research (NCSR) confirms our observations. The review, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, examined available research literature on the impact of education links with employers from a range of international sources and concluded that:

There is no shortage of literature on employers and/or business involvement in education. Much of this literature, however, was excluded from the scope of this review because it is largely anecdotal, programmatic, or not evaluated to even modest scientific standards. (NCSR 2008, p. 28)

However, the UK review points to some promising work in progress evaluating the 'Time to' programs in Northern Ireland.

2.1.3 National reports

While some of the national reports we examined offer rich accounts of programs and provide useful practical guidelines, the quality of the findings in relation to the effectiveness and outcomes of partnerships is again somewhat patchy. We considered the following studies and reports to be amongst the most useful for the purposes of this

study. In the main they are the outcome of investigations designed specifically to shape policy and practice.

1. **Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). *NAB Schools First initiative (2008)***. This report provides both a context and an evidence base from diverse sources for the Schools First Awards initiative. It focuses on the concept of social capital and its relationship to school-community partnerships and school improvement. It also provides an outline of several effective school-community partnerships, and reviews national and international award schemes. The report cites a number of examples of research that indicates ‘that partnerships between schools, families, and communities strongly and positively affect student achievement’, and summarises characteristics of effective school-community partnerships.
2. **Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (Australia). *Relationship matters: not-for-profit community organisations and corporate community investment (2008)***. This study was commissioned by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The study sought to ‘... understand how to better facilitate business engagement with not-for-profit organisations (NFP), and optimise the contribution of business to the work of the NFP sector.’ It examines: barriers to corporate community partnerships developing further in Australia; the differences between not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) and corporations; and identifies positive and negative factors at play in these partnerships.
3. **Center for Corporate Citizenship, Boston College. *Enduring partnerships: resilience, innovation, success (2004)***. This report examined four successful long-term corporate and NFP partnerships to discover the factors that contribute to sustainable partnerships and those that hinder success. The four corporates involved were not focused initially on philanthropy but were motivated by business needs and opportunities. Although only one of the partnerships in the study is involved in school education the findings about enduring partnerships from the other cases are highly informative.
4. **Ernst & Young. *Best in class: how top corporations can help transform public education (2007)***. This white paper provides an overview of the types of strategic corporate interventions that are most successful at having a positive impact on the US K-12 education system. The report was based on interviews with over 25 senior leaders from corporations, private foundations, national and local nonprofits, business associations, and districts and schools, as well as a review of over 50 reports, articles, and studies.

5. **National Industry Skills Committee (Australia).** *Fostering effective links and partnerships between businesses and schools: a strategic issues paper (2008)*. This is a useful report on partnerships between business and schools in Australia although, as noted earlier, is lacking in details of the methodology and sources of data. The report identifies critical success factors, as well as key inhibitors, and looks at strategies to improve schools-business partnerships. It includes an overview of existing partnerships and programs in Australia, and suggestions as to how to grow the number of school-business partnerships.

2.1.4 Practical resources

There is a considerable and growing array of websites providing practical resources in the form of guidelines, toolkits, case studies and references. Many of the websites are forums for discussion, and some draw on their own research and evaluation or provide examples of funded projects with assessment and commentary. The diverse nature of sponsor organisations and funding sources for the resources and guidelines is instructive: they represent different starting points and interests ranging from government departments focused on labour markets, to philanthropic organisations concerned with children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The following is a selected sample of these resources we examined. The full list with websites is provided in the bibliography of this report.

1. **Australian Business Community Network.** The network was established in 2004 by a group of business leaders to get businesses more involved in the community, and to create a more sustainable community <http://www.abcn.com.au/>. The focus is on resources on education and providing mentoring, partnering and supporting programs to those students and schools that would benefit most.
2. **Business/Education Partnership Forum (US).** <http://www.biz4ed.org/> This website is targeted at education and business leaders interested in building effective community-school partnerships. It provides a comprehensive list of resources, case studies, evaluations, outreach programs, partnership practices, websites, and partnership reports available on subscription. It also includes case studies, an assessment of outcomes, challenges and rewards.
3. **Business in the Community (UK).** <http://www.bitc.org.uk/> Described as an ‘evidence-driven organisation’ the Council has conducted research and provided reports over almost 30 years across a range of corporate responsibility issues, with a particular focus on both the challenges for and the impact on business and the community and environment. The Council attempts to draw together activities and research in a ‘landscape of business-

education links (that can be) complex and confusing, with mutually overlapping and competing initiatives.’ The education strategy of the Council focuses on three themes: employability, enterprise, and leadership and management skills.

4. **Council for Corporate and School Partnerships (US).** <http://www.corpschoolpartners.org/> The Council was founded in 2001 – with the support of the Coca-Cola Company – as a forum for exchange of information and ideas about business/school partnerships. It commenced with research on successful partnerships, interviewing almost 300 school board members, superintendents and other school administrators and more than 50 business executives from large, medium and small businesses. The key focus was on how successful business partnerships are structured, implemented and evaluated. From that research the Council created a series of guiding principles for business and school partnerships. The website also provides guidelines such as: ‘How to Guide for School-Business Partnerships’; ‘Developing Goals and Objectives’; and a ‘Self-Assessment Tool for Partnership Improvement’.
5. **Daniels Fund (US).** <http://www.danielsfund.org> Daniels Fund is a philanthropic organisation involved in a variety of programs including education grants and scholarships that support non-traditional students, such as students from juvenile justice facilities and former foster care youth. The website identifies seven strategies for successful school-business partnerships. These were developed from research funded on best practice, reviews of more than 40 websites, interviews with educators, business leaders and partnership experts. The Fund conducted focus groups of principals, business representatives and stakeholders, to develop the seven key strategies.
6. **Dehavilland Associates (US).** <http://www.dehavillandassociates.com/> This consulting and communications firm serves the field of business-education partnerships. In 2006 DeHavilland Associates launched the Business/Education Partnership Forum, a free online service for anyone involved in building business education partnerships. It includes a monthly newsletter plus links to resources and organisations working in the area of partnerships. DeHavilland also organise an annual conference for professionals working in the field to share case studies and best practice.
7. **National Education Business Partnership Network (NEBPN) (UK).** <http://www.nebpn.org/> This is a membership organisation based in the Institute for Education Business Excellence which aims to drive quality and consistency of work-related learning provision in schools in the UK. Members are Education Business Partnership Organisations (EBPOs) which

broker work experience placements for students. The NEBPN also provides professional development placements for teachers to give them first hand experience in the workplace.

8. **New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development** <http://www.nzbcscd.org.nz/guide.asp> This is a comprehensive website with details and guidelines for a range of partnerships i.e. governance, mentoring, education enhancement activities, vocational, scholarship and sponsorship partnerships. The website 'responds to a need identified by NZBCSD members for a comprehensive document for businesses interested in developing partnerships with schools.' The business and school partnerships guide is written by business leaders for New Zealand business decision-makers. Partnerships can be recorded and shared through the 'Successful Business and School Partnerships' project database on the website.

3 The nature and purposes of school-business relationships

The diversity and complexity of relationship arrangements is widely commented upon in the literature. This section identifies some of the core elements that characterise school-business relationships to provide some conceptual clarification for the discussions that follow.

3.1 *The purposes of school-business relationships*

Most of the school-business relationships reviewed from the major sources are, as indicated earlier, founded on a set of interrelated and overlapping purposes, but the mix varies. Ultimately, the differences between the purposes of programs are largely a matter of emphasis and focus. They can be separated out for analysis around four main themes:

1. Improving human capital resources and national productivity;
2. Building the capacity and social capital of communities and individuals;
3. Enhancing educational opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and,
4. Improving school performance and student achievement.

While many other purposes of the relationships are significant, such as increasing revenue for both schools and business, the above four are given the greatest amount of attention in the literature, guidelines and resources.

3.1.1 Improving human capital resources and national productivity

In the Australian context improving human capital resources and national productivity remains a policy priority. Clearly, this is a major component of the school-business relationships, and high on the priority list for both schools and business, involves preparing young people for the workplace. This also applies to the majority of relationships activities identified by the international respondents to a survey conducted by the Conference Board of Canada (2003, p. 10), for example:

- workshops, conferences, tours, exchange programs, classroom visits, assemblies, workplace visits, science fairs, guest speakers
- work experience programs, internships, skills training, part-time and full-time job opportunities
- mentoring, job-shadowing, apprenticeship, and on-the job training

- recruiting, training, school to career information, guidance
- curriculum support, teacher development, teacher placements.

The partnerships also aim to improve employee morale through volunteer work as well as enhancing and supporting employee recruitment and retention.

3.1.2 Building the capacity and social capital of communities and individuals.

Partnerships also serve to build capacity and social capital as a means of improving outcomes for schools, students and their communities. An ACER review of the literature points to the significance of both networks and resources:

Over the past twenty years there has been a growing interest in the concept of social capital by researchers in a range of disciplines, including education. While much of the research has focused on the structural dimension - that is, on analysing social networks and the people who comprise these - social capital also refers to 'the resources that are created by the existence and character of those links, such as information sharing and trust' (ACER 2008, p. 8).

This is particularly relevant when it comes to school-community partnerships because it goes beyond the mere fact of these linkages to focus on their characteristics and the tangible benefits they can bring. From their review of the research, Bullen & Onyx (ACER 2008, p. 8) identified several characteristics of social capital including: networks based on 'voluntary and equal' associations; reciprocity and trust; social norms that provide a form of informal social control; pooled/collective resources; and the active and willing engagement of individuals and groups.

3.1.3 Enhancing educational opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds

Businesses with an interest in social responsibility practice are particularly attracted to partnerships involving students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Public schools in lower socio-economic areas face special challenges in meeting the needs of students, families and communities. In many areas these problems have persisted over generations to the point where the problems are sometimes considered intractable.

There is general agreement in the reports from the countries surveyed that schools cannot address these problems alone: they often do not have the resources or capacity to go beyond responding to the immediate issues of the day. Clearly, there is overlap here with the movement to improve school performance and student achievement, but the difference in starting point needs to be recognised and understood. This sets up a different set of dynamics for school-business partnerships.

3.1.4 Improving school performance and student achievement

There are two areas of related stakeholder interest in improving school performance and learning outcomes: raising the academic performance and capability of students; and enhancing educational opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The purposes are focused at different levels of outcome, from ‘boosting’ student test scores to enhancing their overall achievement and the quality of their educational experience.

3.2 Stakeholder motives

3.2.1 Schools

Historically, schools have been motivated to partner with business to increase their funds and resources by developing new income streams. Schools are motivated by the possibility of finding more sustainable ways of operating. However, the policy context now has placed greater pressure on schools to improve student outcomes more directly through their business relationships.

This raises issues of capacity building. Caldwell (2005), arguing for a new enterprise logic in public education, refers to the need for public private partnerships to support reforms accomplished in ‘self-managing schools’, that is, schools to which there has been decentralised significant authority and responsibility while continuing to operate within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities’ (p. 6). Amongst the ten essentials in the ‘new enterprise logic of schools’, Caldwell includes the following:

- Schools cannot achieve expectations for transformation by acting alone or operating in a line of support from the centre of a school system to the level of the school, classroom or student. The success of a school depends on its capacity to join networks or federations to share knowledge, address problems and pool resources.
- Networks and federations involve a range of individuals, agencies, institutions and organisations across public and private sectors in educational and non-educational settings. (Caldwell 2005, p. 6)

Schools are now working strategically with business to improve student learning experiences and outcomes in core developmental areas, particularly with respect to student retention, academic achievement, employability, and career aspirations.

Another major motivating factor for schools is the improvement of local school communities, simultaneously raising the school profile in the community. When schools become more actively engaged with high profile business operations, particularly local employers, they deepen their ties with the community as well as enhance their own reputation as community leader.

3.2.2 Business

In the US and Canada, business has traditionally been motivated to enter into partnerships with schools to improve commercial opportunities through marketing activity, to sell services and products directly to students and their families. More recently 'cause-related' marketing associated with the work of not-for-profit organisations has emerged as an important sense of reputation building in relation to sensitive issues such as environmental sustainability.

Surveys of employers point consistently to business wanting students to gain a good general education with emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and the development of generic and specific employability skills. Also critical is the transition from school to the world of work and beyond, and the provision of industry experience and skills to students while they complete their studies.

Other business motives centre on improving the quality of the workforce and the desire to become an employer of choice. This is achieved in the first instance with a profile as a responsible corporate citizen that potentially results in attracting loyal and values oriented workers. The ongoing school-business connections are also said to raise worker morale through volunteer and charitable activities. Moreover, by working with schools in work placements and assisting with curriculum design and delivery, business creates opportunities to skill and cultivate students as potential workers. Improving communities and schools has particular significance for corporations in regional Australia faced with issues of staff recruitment and retention:

...corporations such as resource companies operating in rural locations engage in partnerships with the local community with the explicit intention of making the locations more liveable to attract employees to the operation, or to reduce tensions caused by disruption and any unwelcome impact' (CCPA 2008, p. 27).

A more holistic approach from business is evident in the most recent US survey reports. The findings suggest that the involvement of business in education is increasingly motivated by concerns about the declining academic performance of school students. The Ernst and Young (2007) report found business leaders referring to three major focus areas, teaching and learning, human capital, and systems and structures: 'It is the interaction between the different areas that holds the most promise for improving public education in a more systemic and sustainable level.' (Ernst & Young 2007, p. 5).

Table 1 gives an overview of areas where, according to business partners, corporations should focus their attention to lever improvement.

Table 1: Public Education Focus Areas and Leverage Points

Teaching and Learning		Human Capital	
Inside the Classroom	Outside the Classroom	Teachers	Organisational Leadership
>Curriculum	>After- and before-school programs	>Recruitment	>Principal/superintendent / administrator/school board quality and development
>Testing	>Access to and support for higher education and work	>Quality development	>Non-profit leadership effectiveness
>Student achievement		>Retention	
> Teaching approaches			

Systems and Structures			
Policy	Community Engagement	Support Services	Organisational Units
>Federal	>Parent/guardian/other adult involvement	>Data/quality assurance/accountability	>Charter schools
>State	>Business initiatives	>Financial management and oversight	>District structures
>Local		>Other services	>Nonprofits

Source: Ernst and Young (2007, p. 5)

In Australia, the NISC review reports that: ‘business gets involved in school partnerships because there is a tangible link with future business sustainability’ (2008, p. 3). The business case for relationships in Australia is centred on:

- Workforce planning and sustainability at a company, industry and regional level by:
 - addressing the company’s own future skill/recruitment needs
 - reducing national skill shortages by providing school-based apprenticeships and other technical skill experiences
 - contributing to local/regional economic development needs.
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) motives, including:
 - building community relationships and engagement by assisting schools to develop specific work related programs that enhance the curriculum and a range of authentic learning environments by students

- building social capital through education, recognising the social and economic costs to the community and hence, their own businesses of failing to address young people’s early disengagement with education.
- Direct commercial outcomes using the relationships and support for schools as part of marketing and brand identification.

3.2.3 Brokers

The main reasons that schools work with intermediaries and brokers are to secure funding and to assist with finding partners and matching opportunities. Brokers are also able to leverage resources and expertise (CCPA 2008, p. 74).

There are two types of brokers involved: government established and supported, and not-for-profit foundations. Brokers are either set up specifically for the task or formed as a flow-on from other initiatives. Philanthropic organisations and grantmaking bodies have used their standing and expertise to great effect in the new school-business environment.

According to the NISC (2008, p. 2), the majority of partnerships in Australia have been developed and nurtured by brokerage services that facilitate links between business and schools. This facilitation process includes developing initial personal relationships that not only takes time but also requires skills and resources to maintain. Brokers are also adept at assisting in creating and implementing specific programs since most of their activity has typically been centred on projects and programs. In addition, the brokers are able to facilitate the sharing of good practice across networks as well as monitoring progress and outcomes.

Brokerage services to support school-business partnerships have also been established in many State/Territory jurisdictions. The most developed is the Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks. There are currently 31 such networks in operation: they have helped set up partnerships involving over 3,250 businesses and providing some 12,750 students with on-the-job, work based learning experiences.

Independent business-led foundations and not-for-profit organisations also have a major role in brokering partnerships. Sometimes the focus is very specific, for example, helping to establish a one-on-one partnership between a specific company and school, while sometimes the aim is to roll out a particular program or programs across a number of schools and businesses:

Partnership brokers may facilitate and guide the partnership process by interpreting one party to another or negotiating agreements. A broker’s specific technical expertise and familiarity with the local or sectoral culture may also be useful when developing a community business partnership. (CCPA 2008, p. 73)

The CCPA observes that brokers often play an important role in matching not-for-profits and business, using their expertise to establish aligned relationships. They build trust between the partners, reveal underlying interests, and widen the options for solutions. Overall their value lies in achieving agreement between the partners that satisfy interests and adds value to organisations (CCPA 2008, p. 73).

The growth and refinement of social responsibility practice has been supported by an increasing number of brokers ('quality intermediaries') that link schools to companies and foundations. A significant role of the intermediaries is mediating the power balance to ensure that partnerships are not only effective but also equitable. Elsewhere, Black makes the point that:

The focus on partnership and place-based solutions that has begun to change the way that government does business has also informed a more strategic philanthropy that strengthens structures at the community level to build capacity and bring about lasting change. This has seen philanthropy working in partnership with government, the corporate sector and local change-makers or social entrepreneurs. (Black 2008, p. 55)

However, it is important to note that there is currently, in Victoria at least, a patchiness of involvement with a considerable amount of ad hoc and localised activity (Black, 2009 p. 36).

A recent US survey conducted by the Grantmakers for Education organisation, *Benchmarking: trends in education philanthropy 2008*, examined the enterprise of education philanthropy to assess current practice, changes over the past few years and expectations for the period ahead (2008, p. 3). Results from an online survey of education-grant-making organisations indicate the following trends in approaches to grant-making:

- More clearly articulated strategies with a sharper focus on outcomes;
- A drive to build constituencies and public will, and to influence public-policy changes;
- Scepticism about school districts as agents of change;
- Sensitivity to larger forces and trends;
- A desire to collaborate; and,
- Interest in fundamental policy change.

The report identifies the following education activities as examples of those typically funded in the current context: teacher professional development; out-of-school and after-school programs; reading literacy skills; high-school reform; and effective school and district leadership. In effect, the grant-making bodies are covering the full gamut of school commitments.

The benchmarking respondents came from a diverse range of grant-making organisations with private foundations making up 35 per cent, family foundations 28 per cent, corporate foundations and giving programs 12 per cent, community foundations and public charities both 9 per cent and operating foundations 3 per cent.

There are notable differences in the recent funding priorities between types of grant-making organisations in the US. The greatest differences in the funding priorities lay not so much with what they are most interested in, but what they are least interested in.

Corporate funders are very active in school districts and committed to investments in the communities in which they are located. They also have a strong interest in career readiness and workforce issues, as well as a strong involvement in maths/science/technology knowledge programs. The top five issues of interest to corporate funders are:

- High-school reform, including college and career readiness;
- Mathematics, science, and technology knowledge;
- Teacher professional development;
- Out-of-school and after-school programs; and,
- Reading literacy skills.

The education issues least supported by corporate funders are alternative models for training and credentialing new teachers; charter schools and networks; family, community and social supports; and arts education (Grantmakers 2008, p. 13).

Family foundations are most interested in:

- Reading and literacy skills;
- Teacher professional development;
- Out-of-school and after-school programs;
- Charter schools and networks;
- High-school reform including college; and,
- Career readiness.

They are less focused on college success and retention and education of English-language learners and immigrants.

The top five issues of interest to community foundations are:

- Out-of-school and after-school programs;
- Family, community and social supports;

- High-school reform, including college and career readiness;
- School-district performance; and,
- College access.

Community foundations give a fairly even spread of support across all areas of education issues (Grantmakers 2008, p. 13).

The increasing number of brokers in Australia is driven partly by their potential to support smaller not-for-profit organisations and schools that need to outsource due to capacity constraints or sheer inexperience. The Foundation for Young Australians, recently joined together with the Education Foundation, is one of the high profile philanthropic organisations fostering school-business initiatives. Their focus is on improving educational outcomes and life chances for young people.

Recent research for the Victorian Government explored trends in corporate and philanthropic activity in school education (Black 2009). Although the data sources are limited, the observations of participating partners provide an indication of trends and likely impact. A key observation was that their involvement has shown both proven and potential benefits for the educational outcomes of students in Victorian government schools 'particularly students whose outcomes are lower than desired' (Black 2009, p. 3).

4 Australian programs and policy initiatives

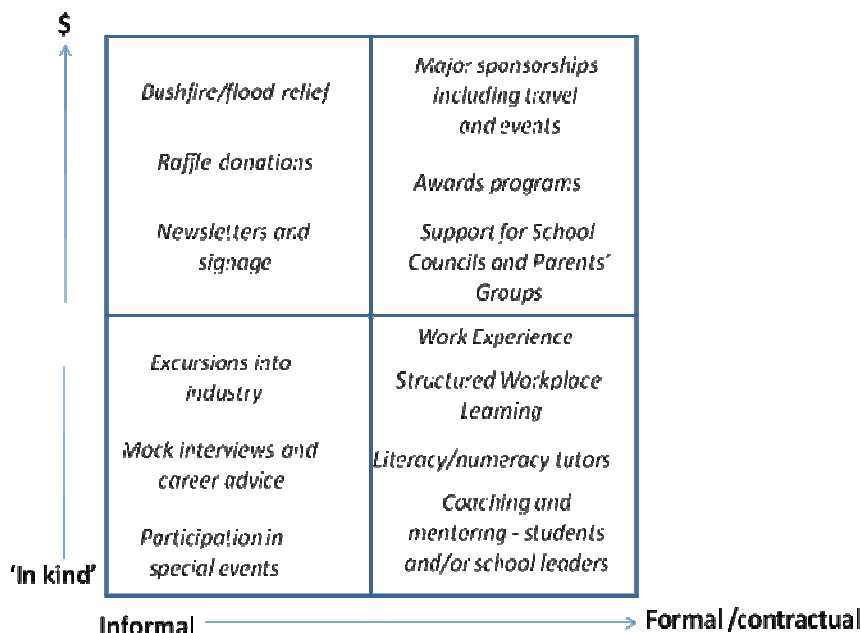
4.1 *Origins of relationships in the Australian context*

The relationship between schools and the business sector in Australia has until recently been somewhat distant. Exceptions have centred on schools undertaking excursions into industry and tapping into local business predominately to support fundraising activities. Moreover, while some schools, particularly high profile independent schools, have long been the beneficiaries of more substantial relationships through private bequests, in most other instances, it is voluntary community services organisations that have the longest history of established partnership and support arrangements with schools.

Programs such as the “Lions Youth of the Year Quest” and “Rotary International Exchange” have been impacting on successive generations of students with their endeavours to foster qualities such as leadership, citizenship and cultural awareness.

Figure 1 shows four quadrants that characterise the traditional forms of school-business relationships in Australia. The figure indicates financial inputs on one scale, from in-kind support to donations and direct funding, and the level to which relationships are formalised on the other scale.

Figure 1: School-business relationships in Australia



While still important to schools and business, the quadrants on the left of the figure generally characterise the traditional relationships between schools and business. These show where schools have been the recipients of donations of goods, funding or time from business with few, if any, formal agreements being in place or expectations of any outcome for business other than a desire for acknowledgment as a promotional benefit in return. Indeed, in many instances the promotional benefit may be viewed as simply an incidental bonus, particularly for businesses supporting local schools, being altruistically motivated to “do something for local kids.”

The emergence of the corporate sector as major players in Australian schools has been a much more recent phenomenon. It is worth noting that major Australian companies have had a presence in schools for many years – often in the form of educational project materials related to particular industries. The recent and growing interest has been prompted by the convergence of five trends:

- The increasing sophistication in marketing. The full spectrum of activity is brought into play to expose new products to key market segments, from philanthropy to ‘push marketing’ through donations or discounted sales.
- The increasing infrastructure and operating cost of education, often beyond the level of resourcing provided by governments, cannot meet rising community expectations of schools. This most obviously occurred with respect to IT where businesses often have in-house resources and expertise directly relevant to the needs of schools.
- The emergence of schooling as its own market place where individual schools increasingly seek to establish a competitive edge over other schools.
- The emergence of school based management as a structural form of systemic organisation now gives greater autonomy at the local level and therefore provides fertile ground for business relationships to be formed out of mutual interest.
- Prioritisation of school to work based on concerns regarding Australia’s economic competitiveness and reforms, initially arising from the reports by Finn, Mayer and Carmichael in the 1990s and strongly supported by a range of reports from peak industry organisations.
- The increasing propensity for businesses to position themselves as ‘good’ corporate citizens.

The shift in the last decade is clear since it is now:

... impossible to provide an accurate total estimate of the number of existing school business partnerships in Australia because there are so many organisations involved in this process and some businesses can be involved in multiple school partnerships. (NISC 2008, p. 1)

The 2008 Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (CCPA) investigation of not-for-profit community organisations and corporate community investment in Australia is instructive. It aimed to understand how to better facilitate business engagement with not-for-profit organisations and optimise the contribution of business to the work of the not-for-profit sector. It also examined ways to strengthen partnerships and relationships between the not-for-profit and business sectors, as well as leveraging the modus operandi of the not-for-profit sector to enhance interactions with large businesses. (CCPA 2008, p. 2).

New and emerging stakeholders such as industry peak bodies and philanthropic trusts are taking a proactive role in redefining the nature of school-business partnerships, motivated by a broader recognition of the importance of corporate citizenship:

...corporate community partnerships continue to grow rapidly in Australia. NFPs indicated they partner with business to secure a funding source that is often more reliably available over time than funds available from government...about 70 per cent of NFPs...indicated partnerships with business improves what they do...' (CCPA 2008, p. vi).

The growing interest in school-business partnerships is a logical extension of this trend. The CCPA report identifies several reasons for the enhanced role of non-government actors in Australia:

- There is a prevalence of problems that require multiple programs, agencies and layers of government, but are also difficult for governments to resolve on their own.
- The resolution of issues can benefit from the experience and knowledge of actively engaged business and not-for-profit stakeholders.
- Australia now has more sophisticated and informed not-for-profit organisations, business organisations and communities. (CCPA 2008, p. 17).

The major trends in Australian not-for-profit partnerships identified by the CCPA survey are of particular relevance to the future of school-business partnerships.

- Public company and government business enterprise sectors have moved from a concept of philanthropy to a much more strategic approach.
- There is a substantially greater focus on a business case for social contributions, characterised by the language of corporate social investment, and community investment, or as a component of sustainability.
- The link to strategy that is most often now sought in at least the larger public companies is 'enlightened self-interest'.

- Of the Australian businesses surveyed, 44 per cent said they sought generalised benefit for their companies, and that a focused business case was required or assumed.
- Positive benefits are seen to arise from what companies see as an enhanced community ‘licence to operate’, becoming an employer of choice in a competitive labour market, and broadening the perspectives of employees through external community activities.
- Enhanced brand awareness through sponsorship, and cause-related marketing provide more direct commercial benefits. Companies are also increasingly finding other points of mutual interest with not-for-profit organisations such as assistance with sustaining biodiversity, financial literacy, technology-enabling for the underprivileged, and training Indigenous labour in remote communities.
- An increasing number of companies are contributing funds under matched giving programs where staff determine the direction of the giving, or via one-off grants or matching programs to support staff who are actively engaged in community activities.

It is also important to note the trend towards companies exhibiting the following major characteristics:

- Clear policies or frameworks are established and agreed by senior management and the Board within which specific plans for community engagement or investment are established.
- There is a strong trend to fewer, deeper, relationships with not-for-profit organisations.
- Companies, and in many cases not-for-profit organisations, have sought increasingly to formalise these relationships in partnership agreements, memoranda of understanding or strategic alliances.
- In determining the direction of not-for-profit support from the myriad of opportunities and requests, major businesses are aligning their engagements with their specific company or industry issues and competences.
- This is often closely associated with the linkages companies want to establish with community groups or activist organisations most interested in their industries.

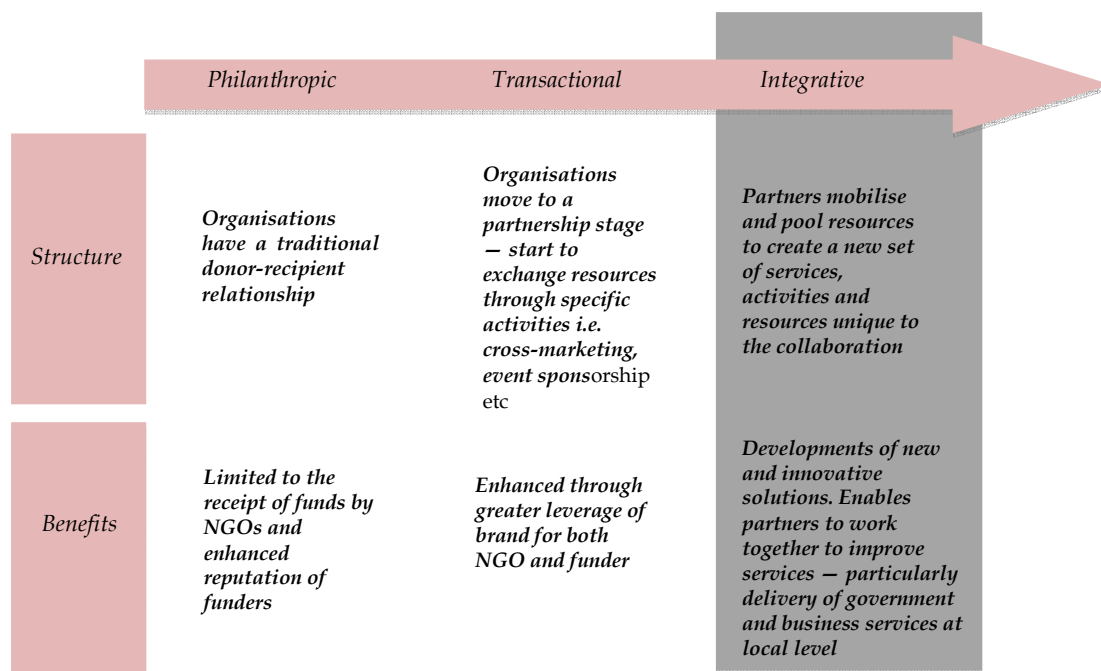
Perhaps the most significant overarching shift in corporate motives and orientation identified by the CCPA study concerns the strategic importance attached to partnerships with not-for-profits and, presumably, schools:

...business engagement with the community was described as ‘corporate community investment’ because it reflects engagement with the community

as a core business activity, and the fact that it is accorded strategic importance in the business sector’ (CCPA 2008, p. 1).

The CCPA reports that there is a general trend towards collaboration in the direction shown in Figure 2 (Austin 2002 in CCPA 2008, p. 19). The research suggests that most not-for-profit and business relationships in Australia are in the philanthropic to transactional stage, with some significant collaborations being integrative.

Figure 2: Three stages of business and community collaboration



4.1.1 Examples of current activities in Australia

The following thumbnail sketches are intended as indicative of the kinds of school-business partnerships currently operating in Australia.

NAB Schools First (<http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/>)

The *NAB Schools First* initiative is an example which focuses on building community capacity and social capital as a key step in improving school performance. The program is aimed at improving student learning by building partnerships and getting local communities involved in schools. It is Australia’s largest corporate sponsorship in schools to date operating as a joint initiative between the National Australia Bank (NAB), the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the Foundation for Young Australians, and aims to recognise and promote school-community

partnerships. The NAB will provide \$15 million over 3 years for awards to schools that devise programs to improve student performance.

The awards are intended to encourage schools to think creatively about the kinds of partnerships they might build with their local community. Importantly, the criteria for judging the success of programs is taken to mean improved outcomes for students, including, for example, improved attendance, better academic performance, or student engagement with learning (ACER 2008, p. 23). The awards criteria can be used either for existing partnerships or adapted for proposed partnerships.

It is important to note that while the Schools First program is an example of business involvement in education at the high level, the partnerships being awarded do not necessarily have to involve business.

In 2009, 1552 applications were received, with 88 school and community partnerships awarded funding. Twenty schools received \$25,000 each to develop their school-community partnership as 'Seed Funding Award' winners and 68 existing school-community partnerships received \$50,000 each as 'Impact Award' winners, with one of these from each state or territory winning an additional \$50,000 as the state or territory winner.

The Pilbara Education Partnership (<http://www.bhpbilliton.com>)

Enhancing educational opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is a major focus of the Pilbara partnership. In August 2005, BHP Billiton Iron Ore joined with the Western Australian Government in one of the largest partnerships of its type to improve educational opportunities available to students in the host communities of Port Hedland and Newman in the remote Pilbara region. Over three years, the Company and the State Government injected A\$3 million into a range of initiatives designed to address some of the education challenges faced by the region, such as attendance and achievement rates, quality of facilities, information and communication technologies and training opportunities.

The Pilbara Education Partnership supports the delivery of a comprehensive range of education services, ranging from the provision of information and communication technologies and videoconferencing, to after-hours tutoring services preparing students for university entrance. Based on community needs, the decision to support such an expansive educational initiative was made as part of the employee attraction and retention program, following extensive social research that identified education as a priority issue.

As well as providing funding support, BHP Billiton Iron Ore works with public schools and community organisations to provide mentoring, educational enrichment opportunities, assistance with homework and work experience placement.

The Australian Business and Community Network (<http://www.abcn.com.au/>)

Primarily concerned with building the capacity and social capital of communities and individual leaders, the Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a partnership of highly committed national business leaders and companies working on mentoring and coaching programs. The aim of its Partners in Learning program is to link business and educational professionals so that they can share experiences, solve problems and explore leadership challenges together. The program provides a unique opportunity to make a difference, not only to the individual partners, but also to the schools and businesses involved and the wider community. Since 2005, over 4,000 mentors have participated in ABCN programs with schools in areas of high need to broaden the horizons of students and support educators.

Two key needs led to the development of the Partners in Learning program. Initially, the NSW Department of Education and Training expressed a need for businesses to collaborate with school principals. At the same time some business leaders were looking for opportunities to develop an understanding of the challenges facing many Australian youth, as well as the broader community.

According to the website, a principal or deputy principal comes into contact with up to 50,000 students during their career, which means leadership skills are critical to their role. Likewise, for business leaders, the development of Australia's youth and the access and insights to the broader community that working with schools enables, is critical to ensuring a sustainable future for Australia. Under the Partners in Learning Program, a business member and an educator from a primary or secondary school are matched according to their personal and professional profiles. The partners in learning agree to meet at the school/office a minimum of eight times during one year (two times each term) for about two hours each time. The purpose of these meetings is to promote sharing of expertise, develop management and leadership skills, explore solutions to challenges, and expand personal skills.

McPherson's Printing Group Structured Workplace Learning

(<http://www.careeradviceaustralia.gov.au/casestudies/>)

The purposes of this project include both improving human capital resources, as well as enhancing educational opportunities for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. McPherson's Printing Group in Maryborough Victoria is involved in educating young people in its region, contributing to both business and community growth. Since 2002, McPherson's, in partnership with Maryborough Regional College and the Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network, has offered a themed Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program focused on the printing industry. Students in this program complete a hands-on rotation of structured workplace learning in different areas at McPherson's. They also undertake a Certificate II in Vocational Studies (Printing and Graphic Technology) and are assessed to industry standards by RMIT University.

In the classroom, the students take Victorian Certificate of Education units in English and mathematics, and do VCAL personal development appropriate to their course. The printing industry offers many career opportunities. Trainees can remain on the production side—as an employee or owner of their own business—or move to customer service, sales, administration or management. Many senior executives in companies supplying goods and services to the printing industry began their careers as trainees or apprentices in printing (CAA website).

Northern Territory Saville Hotel Work Experience

(<http://www.careeradviceaustralia.gov.au/casestudies/>)

This Northern Territory program has multiple purposes, primarily improving human capital resources, and enhancing educational opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Darwin students get to do a one-week work placement in the hospitality industry due to a strong partnership between the Saville Park Suites and YouthWorX NT Local Community Partnership. Students in certificate courses in tourism, hospitality and business have the opportunity to go on these placements as part of their Vocational Education and Training in Schools studies. Before being classed as ‘work ready’, students have to complete a certain amount of their course, get a senior first aid certificate and go through an occupational health and safety program.

Students usually do their placement in the final week of the school term or during the holidays. Trainers give students and their supervisors training plans or logs that explain the competencies the students need to gain during the placement. The trainer or a member of the YouthWorX NT team visits the students and their employer during the work placement to talk about the students’ performance and progress. After the placement, the students, the employer and the visiting supervisor all complete evaluations on how it all went (CAA website).

4.2 *Recent policy initiatives and programs*

The Careers Advice Australia (CAA) initiative, established in 2006, targeted young people from 13-19 years of age to assist them to achieve a successful transition through school, and from school to further education, training and employment. The key outcomes identified for the CAA initiative were improved career choices by young people, and increased school engagement. The initiative increased industry and employer engagement in schools, and career development, as well as increasing awareness of the range of vocational education and training opportunities. Two related outcomes were the improved quality and availability of career and transitions education, and the development of effective Local Community Partnerships providing coordinated career and transition support.

After 2006 Australian Government Local Community Partnerships (LCPs) became incorporated, not-for-profit, community-based and locally operated organisations contracted by the Department of Education, Science and Training to provide a strategic

approach to the implementation of career and transition programs. Under the CAA initiative, LCPs were funded to implement the following three programs from January 2006 to December 2008:

- 1. Structured Workplace Learning.** This program aimed to enhance young people's employability skill by facilitating the provision of structured learning opportunities to students in a real or simulated workplace.
- 2. Career and Transition Support.** This program aimed to help young people move through school and on to further study, training or work successfully. The LCPs assist by assessing the information and opportunities delivered in the local community, and look for ways to help the schools, businesses and providers to provide appropriate services for the young people.
- 3. Adopt a School Program.** The aim here was to build links between businesses, students, teachers and broader school community through activities that increase knowledge and opportunities for careers and further education. It encompassed a suite of activities that benefit all young people with a disability, young people 'at risk' of not making a successful transition from school to further education and employment, and those with all levels of academic achievements.

4.2.1 National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (2010-2013)

A number of new initiatives have been created to improve national educational and employment outcomes. In April 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) recognised the need to support young people to improve their employment and career prospects. The Australian, State and Territory Governments agreed to a Compact with Young Australians to support them to stay in, or return to, an education or training pathway.

The 2009 COAG agreement is based on a Compact with young people that provides incentives to stay in, or return to, an education or training pathway. The Compact entitles all 15 - 24 year olds to a place in school, training or higher education, and all under 17 year olds must be engaged full time in school, training or employment. Amongst other things, COAG agreed to strengthen national youth participation requirements, lift the level of qualifications, and cooperate to provide efficient and effective career and transition services to young people (COAG 2009, p. 8).

The Compact is now supported by all Governments in the form of a National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.

As of 1 January 2010, existing youth, transitions and career programs have been consolidated into two new programs: School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers); and Youth Connections.

Under the new arrangements, partnership brokers will aim to create and improve partnerships between community, business and industry, and schools. Their primary objectives are to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, lift attainment and improve educational outcomes.

To achieve national coverage, 114 Youth Attainment and Transitions Service Regions (Service Regions) have been established. It is important to note that there are different requirements for Partnership Brokers in each State and Territory to ensure that their operation remains complementary to the transitions support arrangements which may exist in each jurisdiction.

5 International policy and practice

This section provides an overview of the origins and trends in school-business partnerships from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, with particular emphasis on the diverse and increasingly complex range of contexts, motives and objectives as the backdrop to current forms of school-business partnerships in Australia and recent policy developments.

5.1 *United States*

In 1992 more than 200,000 businesses in the United States had partnerships with over 40,000 elementary and secondary schools. These relationships had emerged as a response to the growing realisation that increasing demands on schools to do more to prepare students for the world of work could not be met by schools acting alone. Most school-business partnerships in the US were at that time characterised essentially as one of two types:

- **Employability and career awareness.** These partnerships focus on students as future workers and cover a wide spectrum of activities such as mentoring and workplace learning.
- **Corporate sponsorship.** Known more commonly in the US from the 1990s as ‘adopt-a-school’ programs these partnerships typically focused on the student as consumer. They involved commercial activities that provided schools with money, goods or services in exchange for the opportunity to advertise or sell products to students and their families. (ERIC 2001, p. 6)

Schools were aware that they could not meet growing challenges on many fronts with their limited and declining resources. They turned to businesses for resources; ‘from cash and computers, to educational materials and career mentorships’. In return, businesses received direct commercial benefits such as vending machine rights and advertising space. They also saw mutual advantages in creating skilled labour resources (ERIC 2001, p. 5).

By 2000, US corporate involvement in schools had expanded at a ‘phenomenal rate’ with an estimated 95 per cent of schools involved in some kind of partnership or activity with business and 43 per cent engaged in joint activities with corporate foundations (CCSP 2001). However, the arrangements are increasingly complex and raise significant management issues:

Schools need the outside to get the job done. These external forces, however, do not come in helpful packages; they are an amalgam of complex and uncoordinated phenomena. The work of the school is to figure out how to make its relationship with them a productive one’. (Fullan 2000, p. 20 in Black 2008)

In the last few years partnerships have attracted intensified interest as governments and corporations grapple with global challenges and the perceived declining profile and performance of the US:

The idea of business-school relationships is not new. However, the confluence of several powerful currents—corporate advocacy on education policy, cash-strapped public schools, privatization of public schools, and the pervasiveness of marketing geared toward young children—has made it a hot-button issue. (Werstein Hann 2008)

To this can be added other pressures commonly identified in policy documents such as global competition for skilled labour and the need to improve national productivity. The 2007 Ernst & Young 'White Paper' describes the situation as 'challenging' drawing attention to the US ranking 24th out of 29 in mathematic scores among developed countries, and noting that 30 per cent of students do not finish high school – higher in the case of minority students. In 2007, the US Chamber of Commerce called for action: 'America is at risk of being left behind if it doesn't improve its education system. There are warning signs everywhere...' (Ernst & Young 2007, p. 2).

The new forms of partnerships emerging in the US are extremely diverse in form and scope covering almost every kind of activity concerned with social and economic improvement and community development. A key difference with the other Anglophone countries is that: 'In the US, the trend in government approach to not-for-profits has been to encourage social enterprise and innovation but with little direct intervention by the state' (CCPA 2008, p. 14).

5.1.1 Examples of activities in the United States

The following two examples from the US are from the K-12 Partnership Reports, an online newsletter of the Business/Education Partnership Forum (<http://www.biz4ed.org/>). The first program focuses on increasing the interest and participation of high achieving students in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects, while the second focuses on providing flexible learning opportunities for low achievers and at risk students to help them to graduate from high school and go on to post-secondary education.

The Gowan Achievement Project (Arizona)

The main focus of this project was on human capital resources. The Arizona Gowan Company, which offers crop protection products and services, with offices around the world and 500 employees in the Yuma area, had a difficult time recruiting employees to the area. A perception existed that schools were focused on bringing underperforming students to grade level but not meeting the needs of students at or above grade level. The company also wanted to ensure the preparedness of the local workforce in the future.

The Gowan Achievement Project piloted with 90 children in grades 4, 5, and 6 in Crane School District who were performing at or above grade level. Children were placed in classes with master teachers, given laptops with wifi access, experienced a math and science intensive curriculum, and participated in special activities such as field trips that emphasise STEM careers and industries.

Gowan underwrote the pilot program, including the cost of all technology and US\$10,000 grants for master teachers; it also helped design the program, participates in the hiring of the master teachers, has representatives on an advisory board, and participates in the program through classroom visits and field trips. Crane manages operation of the program. A test/control model was established to evaluate impact. Students from the program outperformed their peers in mathematics by a 2:1 average percentage gain per student, and by 8:1 in science. Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) scores for 4th grade science show 93 per cent proficiency for students in the program versus a statewide average of 53 per cent.

Simon Youth Foundation

This project is typical of the hundreds of US school-business partnerships focused on educational opportunities for at risk students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Simon Youth Foundation (SYF), created by Simon Property Group, currently has 24 sites in 11 states. Secondary partners for the foundation include CVS Pharmacy, numerous postsecondary institutions, and retailers within Simon malls. The challenge was to help teens at risk of dropping out of high school to stay in school, earn a high school diploma, and pursue postsecondary opportunities.

The solution was to take advantage of empty space in company-owned malls to house satellite schools. Partnering districts provide teachers and equipment and pay utilities. SYF covers rent, fits out the site to make it appropriate for school use, facilitates partnerships with other organisations, provides professional development opportunities, and offers scholarship opportunities to students who graduate. Partners like CVS and local retailers offer internship and job shadowing opportunities; postsecondary institutions can match scholarships and help to highlight postsecondary opportunities open to graduating students.

The reported outcomes were that ninety-one per cent of entering seniors graduated; 60 per cent of those went on to some kind of postsecondary institution. Since its founding, SYF has served 14,000 at risk students, 5,000 of whom have graduated.

5.2 United Kingdom

Early initiatives in school-business partnerships in the UK were not sustained in the same ways as in the US. For example, one study reported in Scotland that despite an 'enormous amount of time, money, and energy' spent on developing education-business links in the 1980s, the initiatives were ultimately high profile but short-term

(Turner 1994). One of a number of patterns of partnership development observed from the mid-1970s, when these schemes first burgeoned, was that cycles of economic optimism and pessimism influence policy and lead to either long-term or short-term reforms. It was argued that education-business links have greater impact when they are part of long-term reforms.

Caldwell (2007) reports that England has advanced considerably in comparison to Australia in terms of business partnerships in education. In England, business partnerships with schools in conjunction with government funding, has enabled 2700 state secondary schools to change from standard comprehensive schools to a specialist schools model. In Caldwell's view:

...there is clear evidence that specialist schools outperform non-specialist schools and the impact becomes stronger the longer a school remains in the program. This is one of the most significant developments in secondary education in any country (Caldwell 2007, p.1).

5.2.1 Examples of activities in the United Kingdom

A search of websites confirms the recent surge of interest and activity in the UK. The examples selected here illustrate the sorts of national approaches supported by government and business interests.

The UK National Education Business Partnership Network

(<http://www.iebe.org.uk/>)

This program is focused on capacity building for educators. The Network recently announced that it has re-formed into the Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE). The new professional body will provide a unique accreditation and network to promote partnerships in the education business sector operating as brokers or practitioners in schools, colleges or in business. It aims to build capacity and drive quality, innovation and professionalism across the sector. Although there is strong commitment from employers to work with schools, a recent survey by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) found that 7 out of 10 employers have links with secondary schools, 70 per cent of businesses reported a lack of time and resources as a barrier to them getting further involved.

The Lancashire Education Business Partnership

(<http://www.lebp.co.uk/>)

The Lancashire Education Business Partnership provides another illustration of the current level of interest in capacity building and human capital development in the UK. Its website claims it is the largest education business partnership in the UK. It focuses primarily on creating career development opportunities for around 40,000 young people every year. Through its programs and links with over 20,000 businesses and 400

schools in the region, it helps young people make informed choices about their careers. The programs include:

- Continuous professional development (CPD). A program providing opportunities for professionals from the education sector to spend time in a business related to their subject area.
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). An initiative that links four academic subjects together and relates them to industries in the real world.
- Student Transition to Employment Programme (STEP TO WORK). A program that gives young people, age 14-16, an opportunity to enhance their learning by undertaking a structured work placement over an academic year.

Business in the Community

(<http://www.bitc.org.uk>)

The work of the Business in the Community project covers a wide range of purposes. The organisation describes itself as 'evidence-based'. It appears to fill a major gap in the otherwise inadequately researched area of school-business partnerships. Over the last 27 years, Business in the Community has conducted research across a range of corporate responsibility issues, with a particular focus on both the challenges for, and the impact on, business and the community and environment in which it operates.

Recent studies include:

- **The Positive Return of Responsible Business.** Independent analysis of participants in Business in the Community's CR Index and their financial performance highlights the 'Positive Return of Responsible Business', demonstrating an outperformance on the stock market of their FTSE 350 peers by between 3.3 per cent and 7.7 per cent in each of six years.
- **School Governance.** This study, conducted with Bath University, reviewed the arrangements for school governance, as well as analysing what can be learned from the business and public service sectors about governance and how those insights might enhance school governance.

'Time to' Programs in Northern Ireland

The purpose of these programs, developed by Business in the Community, is firmly centred on improving school performance and student achievement. 'Time to Read', 'Time 2 Count', and 'Time to Compute' are unique award-winning mentoring programs that link children at Key Stage 2 in primary schools (8-11 years of age) with an individual adult mentor—a positive role model from the world of work. The programs provide companies, businesses, and public sector organisations in Northern Ireland with an opportunity to use their employees to impact positively on outcomes for children, and to be active in supporting schools in their local communities.

Although the focus of the programs may be on improving children's reading, literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills, according to the project website, evidence suggests that the support of a volunteer for a set time each week during the school year also impacts very positively on each child's confidence and self-esteem, on their enjoyment of learning, and on their ability to interact with an adult.

The Northern Bank's Time 2 Count program started in 2001 with 20 Northern Bank staff providing a weekly mentoring service to Key Stage 2 pupils in eight primary schools located throughout Belfast. The program was structured to engage the business sector in a meaningful way to complement the curriculum and to add value to the way mathematics is taught in the classroom.

The website indicates that systematic evaluations of Time 2 Count have shown that teachers from all participating schools have reported positive feedback on their experience of Time 2 Count and the impact that the project has had on the children involved. The program had been a very positive experience for all the volunteers supporting the children.

'Time to read - a ten year review', published by Business in the Community, evaluates the *Time to Read* program in Northern Ireland. A mentoring program which links business volunteers with primary schools, it aims to promote fluency, comprehension and an enjoyment of reading. The review looks at a number of qualitative evaluations of the program conducted between 2006 and 2009, which all conclude that *Time to Read* is considered worthwhile in terms of:

- Building self-esteem in children;
- Increasing their confidence; and,
- Engendering enthusiasm for reading

(Business in the Community 2009, p. 21).

Part of the review looked at evidence from other research, including the SMART program in the US, a volunteer reading program where the business community was targeted for recruitment. The SMART program was evaluated over a two-year longitudinal study, and found that children 'in the experimental group scored higher than children in the control group on most (reading) measures... A follow-up study indicated that children maintained these gains after leaving the programme. By fifth grade, SMART participants are 60% more likely to reach the state benchmark reading competency level than similar students who did not participate in the programme.' (Business in the Community 2009, p. 15).

5.3 *Canada*

In the late 1990s partnerships between the business and education sectors were a growing phenomenon in Canada. The contributing factors for the dramatic increase in school-business partnerships during the latter half of the 1990s included the continuing decline in government funding for education, and a contention that schools should focus on preparing students for the world of work. The Conference Board of Canada estimated then that there were as many as 15,000 to 20,000 such initiatives and that provincial and territorial governments made partnerships a priority. A Council of Ministers of Education report on information technologies in elementary and secondary schools lists the formation of partnerships to share equipment acquisition, networking, and resource development costs as one of the key themes running through government vision statements on technology in education (Froese-Germain & Moll 1997).

Canadian partnerships took on diverse forms, from school-to-work programs to private companies running schools on a for-profit basis. Other types of arrangements included:

- The matching of specific businesses and schools;
- Commercial ventures within schools, a notable example being the Toronto Board of Education's contract with soft drink vendor Pepsi-Cola;
- Workplace schools such as the school approved by the Calgary Board of Education operating out of a telephone company building for the children of company employees;
- School sponsorships of charities and other non-profit organisations which have commercial implications;
- Business-related curricula and business involvement in the development of curricula; and,
- Privatised management of publicly-funded schools and school divisions/boards.

At that time, one high school – Gordon Graydon Memorial Secondary School in Mississauga – reportedly had partnerships with some 78 corporations, among them Apple Canada Inc., Canon Canada Inc., Royal Bank of Canada, Bank of Montreal, Nesbitt Burns Inc., and a number of Bell Canada companies. The companies, acting as 'mentors', donated time and equipment to the school's new and experimental International Business and Technology (IBT) program.

Notwithstanding the early involvement and debate reported above, the level of activities and research in Canada appears currently somewhat limited at a national level. The Conference Board of Canada, an independent, not-for-profit applied research organisation, is a key sponsor of business-education partnerships. It aims broadly to build national leadership capacity by creating and sharing insights on economic trends, public policy and organisational performance.

In 1990, the Conference Board of Canada established the National Business and Education Centre, now known simply as Education and Learning. Education and Learning has expanded its focus to cover the full range of education and learning that affects individuals and organisations in Canada. The website notes that the Education and Learning group has grown to include strategic research in public education, employability skills, innovation through learning and workplace learning outcomes. The Board has worked with the Business-Education Partnerships Forum to provide guidelines identifying the benefits of employee involvement in partnerships. The guidelines also include a matrix identifying the kinds of skills developed by a partnership activity as well as operating principles for business-education partnerships.

5.3.1 Examples of activities in Canada

A search of provincial government activity provided a number of examples of recent and ongoing projects. Ontario and Alberta are cited by a number of sources.

Ontario

Ontario has focused strongly on building the capacity and social capital of communities and individuals with a particular emphasis on resolving social capital issues. The Ontario Business Education Partnership (<http://www.obep.on.ca>) is aimed at enhancing experiential learning opportunities for students through community based not-for-profit organisations across Ontario committed to advancing business-education co-operation in support of workforce and economic development. Titled ‘Passport to Prosperity’ the program has supported educators and employers in developing experiential learning opportunities for high school students as a cost-effective solution to recruiting, training and retaining young workers.

A province wide campaign, ‘Passport to Prosperity’ seeks to provide communities with the tools and resources to respond to their local workforce development needs and contribute to the growth of the local economy. Its mission is to ensure that every employer in Ontario sees the value of connecting to the future workforce by engaging high school students in meaningful work experiences and skills training. The work experiences vary in length, depending on the type of program that students select and the level of time and effort employers are willing to provide. School-work opportunities include workplace tours, job shadowing, mentoring, cooperative education, school-work transitions, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

The major partners supporting Ontario’s school-work initiatives include: the Provincial Partnership Council, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO), Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade, the Ontario Business Education Partnership, and TVOntario.

Alberta

The Partners in Education program (<http://education.alberta.ca>) is a broad range approach to community consultation and involvement with the school system. The Community/Business strategy primarily involves business:

- Working with schools to create a rich learning environment, responsive to community needs;
- Contributing volunteer time and resources to school programs, extra-curricular activities and fundraising initiatives;
- Serving on school councils; and,
- Creating partnerships in the development of specific programs, such as work experience and study programs.

Alberta's High School Completion Framework is targeted at gaining the active involvement of parents, businesses, local communities and youth to reach the province's goal of ensuring 82 per cent of students complete high school within five years of starting Grade 10. It is based on five strategies: personalised learning, successful transitions, collaborative partnerships, positive connections and tracking progress.

6 Impact and benefits of partnerships

This section reviews the limited available research on the impact of partnerships and provides a synthesis of the various benefits for the stakeholders from a selected set of reports, resources and forums.

The distinction between impact and benefits is made in two respects. First, impacts can be positive, negative or neutral, and should be measurable in some form by systematic investigation, although not necessarily quantified. The benefits identified in the literature are often hypothetical or based on collective judgement.

6.1 *Impact of partnerships*

Evidence on the impact and outcomes of school-business partnerships is very limited indeed. A review of measurable impacts by the UK National Centre for Social Research (NCSR 2008) found that few studies have actually attempted to measure the impact of education links with employers solely or mainly in terms of student attainment, and not surprisingly of the 161 reports reviewed, only 15 met robust criteria for quantitative research. From these 15 studies the UK review did conclude that:

There are positive impacts of employers' involvement with education. However, there have been only a few studies that provide us with evidence of a measurable improvement in grades, or other measures of student attainment (NCSR 2008, p. 3).

Overall, the limited evidence shows positive impacts in terms of student preparedness for work, and developing job and work skills. NCSR describes positive impacts such as developing job and work skills, and improving attitudes and behaviours. They also report some evidence of positive impacts on students' academic attainment from evaluations of the following programs:

- **'Business Involvement in Mathematics'**. A program for Latino students in Salinas, California. Communication and exchange of ideas between teachers and the business community about the curriculum and teaching was a key contributory factor to the positive impacts that were sustained over the course of the programme. Positive impacts included significant improvement in test scores particularly for lower achieving students who were involved in a blended approach of traditional teaching and a contextual approach (real world opportunities).
- **'Business Mentoring in Schools in England'**. The key finding was that for mentoring to be effective it should be part of a whole-school approach to raise attainment, and that there should be clear selection criteria for students receiving mentoring.

- **'Increased Flexibilities for 14 - 16 Year Olds Programme in England'**. Having employers as visiting speakers, and having them on the steering group of the partnerships, contributed to students gaining higher qualifications.
- **'Re-inventing Education Program'**. Having IBM employees working with schools as an actual work assignment, rather than as an extracurricular activity was key to the success of the initiative in US high schools. The report cites an analysis of student test scores by the Education Development Centre at two case study schools in West Virginia over three years; it indicates a relationship between high use (more than 10 instructional hours) of a Learning Village lesson and an increase in student outcomes. It also suggests that: 'where there was a greater professional development push and higher use of lessons, students outperformed the control group (random selection of students from the county where the school is located) in every test category.' (Education Development Center, 2004:7).

The literature review revealed a mixed bag of other qualitative and quantitative insights into the impact of partnerships generally. In line with the NCSR report, most of the findings refer to outcomes other than academic performance.

Most are concerned with school-community relationships. There are parallels and potential lessons that may apply to school-business notwithstanding the differences in motives of community and business partners. For example, in an intensive study of two schools, Hands (2005) identified several unintended benefits from school-community partnerships: both schools involved had raised their profiles in the community, students' social capital had increased by being exposed to the expertise and knowledge of others in the community, and the community opportunities led to employment for some students after the partnership activities finished. Overall, there was a renewed focus on civics and citizenship among students.

In addition to improved academic performance, Michael, Dittus & Epstein (2007) found that family and community involvement in schools is linked strongly to better school attendance, better quality school programs, improved student behaviour and discipline. Anderson-Butcher, Stetler & Midle (2006), while focusing on school-community partnerships, found that partnerships between schools and other organisations, including business partners, play an important role in addressing some of the non-academic barriers to learning such as poor peer relations, family conflict, and negative community norms. Examples of what Anderson-Butcher & Ashton (2004) call 'ripple' effects include, for example, gains in parenting and work-related skills and experiences, and teachers knowing which services they should talk to when there are concerns. There is also likely to be greater shared accountability for outcomes, increased professional skills, and more streamlined and efficient services.

Anderson-Butcher & Ashton (2004) also draw on earlier research to identify a wide range of benefits derived from different kinds of collaboration – interagency, inter-professional, intra-organisational, family-centred and community-based. These benefits are said to include: better professional understanding of student issues, better psycho-education programs and activities, less duplication of services, improved academic achievement, better attendance and reduced levels of misconduct and suspensions. ‘Local businesses provide internships, occupational ladders, and training for students exploring career options’ (Anderson-Butcher 2004).

Similarly, a survey of urban students, school staff and business partners on their school-business partnership experiences and student outcomes concluded that:

Students with higher level exposure to school-business partnerships reported higher levels of developmental assets and positive developmental outcomes, including better grades, better school attendance, and more academic motivation. The most impactful partnership experiences emphasised the building of relationships between students and caring adults. These relationships engaged, affirmed, and activated students’ inner resources for school success (Scales *et al* 2005, p. 145).

A finding of a more generic nature from this particular study is that promoting students’ broad physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being can pay academic and other developmental dividends.

6.2 *Benefits of partnerships for schools*

While research findings on the benefits of school-business partnerships are limited, accumulated experience of program processes and outcomes has produced a reasonably coherent set of observations on the benefits and costs of partnerships. The nominated benefits are generally gathered from interviews with stakeholders, or generated by stakeholder workshops and focus groups reflecting on their activities. For the most part, the benefits listed have face-validity, but again, it should not be assumed that they are supported by systematic research on program outcomes. Some of the benefits described in the various reports are only loosely or indirectly attributable to school-business partnerships, and others appear to be somewhat hypothetical although plausible.

We have analysed the nominated benefits largely from the following six major reports and websites to extract the most commonly cited benefits:

- Australian Council for Educational Research
- Centre for Strategic Education
- Centre for Corporate Public Affairs

- Council for Corporate and School Partnerships
- New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development
- National Industry Skills Committee.

The benefits for schools focus primarily on the potential contribution of business to the achievement of schools' educational and other goals. The categories in the discussion that follows do not necessarily correspond with those of the source documents. The benefits described are a mix of those generic to community-business partnerships, and those specifically concerned with schools. Clearly, these overlap and there are mutual benefits as well as those that flow to either schools or to business. There are also the broader benefits that are presumed to improve national productivity and sustainability such as a better-educated and skilled workforce or the contribution school-business partnerships might make in the competitive international world of business.

6.2.1 Improved student learning experiences and outcomes

For schools, partnership program benefits for students include broadening student outlooks, raising aspirations, and improving academic skills and achievement. More specific work-related benefits include raising student awareness and understanding of current workforce environments, new opportunities for future education and employment, and increased levels of student engagement with learning.

Reports also refer to improved curriculum design with increased coherence between practical and theoretical work. These benefits are strongly linked to the assumption that the provision of real world experiences for students supports the work of the schools for example, learning to arrive to class on time, take mathematic classes, and respect others.

6.2.2 Increased funding and resources

The most commonly cited benefit for schools is the potential to develop new income streams, in one instance referred to somewhat obliquely as 'optimising' the 'constrained resources' of schools (NCIS). The funding benefits for schools can take a number of forms, including direct contributions from the corporate sector that provides either or both financial and in-kind resources. In addition, schools expect to benefit from access to other funding sources through exposure to corporate bodies and experience working with them over time. This opens up a range of new potential donors, including philanthropies and grant making bodies.

6.2.3 Capacity building

New sources of funding and resources also create possibilities for a different worldview on the part of schools, and more sustainable ways of operating. The reports and websites identify a range of capacity building benefits that flow from diversifying

funding sources. For example, the Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (CCPA) suggests the following potential benefits:

- **Reduced risk.** Diversification of funding reduces the impact of sudden or unexpected funding withdrawal on program development.
- **Maintaining strategic focus.** Schools with a diverse funding base and long-term partnerships are potentially able to spend less time looking for funds, and more time on achieving their core goals.
- **Increased scope of activities.** Long-term corporate funding from diverse sources may enable schools to increase the scope of their activities.
- **Exposure to corporate expertise.** This covers a wide range of sometimes unanticipated and incidental potential learning opportunities such as exposure to the internal reporting and external accountability processes of corporations. It also includes exposure to corporate management, leadership and communication skills.
- **Opportunity to benchmark.** Business partnerships enable not-for-profits to directly benchmark their methods and structures against those of business with the potential of improvements in efficiency.

(CCPA 2008, p. 43)

One of the widely nominated capacity building benefits of corporate leader involvement in schools centres on the leadership development of senior school staff resulting in the improved quality of school leadership and higher staff morale. This is achieved partly through skills transfer as part of program service delivery, and also by teacher access to industry training programs. In some areas of study, teacher access to up-to-date industry equipment and technologies can provide a considerable benefit. At all levels of the teaching workforce there are likely benefits in terms of improved teacher understanding of the current workforce needs and demands.

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) reports that its Partners in Learning program benefits teachers in a number of ways:

- Finding new ways of approaching old problems;
- Having the opportunity to develop networks with other industry professional through which they can share experience and learning; and,
- Gaining a better understanding of the corporate sector to the benefit of their students.

Overall, the Network program anticipates that the professional and personal development of the participants, and the synergy of their collaboration, will ultimately improve standards in the community, local education and business alike.

6.2.4 Improved community profile

A significant set of benefits nominated by some reports involves improvement in local school communities. It is argued that because these benefits are often indirect and incidental they are perhaps underrated. As schools become more actively engaged with high profile business operations, particularly local employers, they have the potential to deepen school ties with the community while improving public awareness of the school. Indeed, it is felt that effective partnerships are likely to enhance the reputation of the school as a leading partner in the community which in turn increases the social capital and capability of the community.

6.3 *Benefits of partnerships for business*

From the business perspective provided across the various reports, a consolidated set of the major benefits of partnerships for business include the following:

- **Awareness of challenges facing schools.** Business partners gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the current educational, social, economic and cultural demands of the contemporary school on students and their families. In the US context, business partners witness how school partners responsibly use resources provided through federal tax dollars, state funding and bonds.
- **Intrinsic rewards and staff morale.** Business partners receive the intrinsic satisfaction of knowing they have made a positive and worthwhile difference in the lives of students. It is widely reported that morale is boosted with a greater sense of social responsibility.
- **Enhanced community profile and standing.** Partnerships create and sustain a positive image of the business and industry in the school and community.
- **Financial impact.** Partnerships have the potential to increase company revenue through stronger support from customers, suppliers, shareholders and other stakeholders. Moreover, creating better schools contributes to the economic health of the community.
- **Staff recruitment.** A major benefit of partnerships extends to the ability of companies to attract and retain the best employees as a consequence of their demonstrated social responsibility.

Business executives emphasised the positive impact of school partnerships on the development of their existing employees in a number of respects, for example: employees learn more about the community in which they work and thereby learn about their current and future customers. Employees also gain new skills and a sense of responsibility from their interaction with educators and students. As we have noted previously, the opinion surveys suggest employee motivation and morale is boosted with a greater sense of social responsibility. Businesses can also benefit directly in

some cases where they have the chance to prepare future employees for the challenges of the world of work. In some instances, companies are able to go well beyond this, and have a direct influence on the preparation of employees through their involvement in the design and delivery of the school curriculum and structured workplace training.

6.3.1 Staff benefits

The benefits of school-business partnerships to employees have been explored in some detail by various surveys of business leaders most recently by the Council for Corporate Public Affairs (CCPA). Although this research is focused on business-community partnerships in general, when asked what major classification best characterises the organisation's activities (more than one response may apply), 39 per cent responded 'children', 38 per cent 'education and training' and 37 per cent 'youth' (2008, p.7).

It reports that 'the 2007 results from business indicated that more than 90 per cent of companies consider community activities (and partnerships with community organisations) are (inter alia) directed at building reputation, community trust and support' (2008, p. 24).

Volunteering

About 90 per cent of those surveyed also see the activities as beneficial for employee engagement, and as integral to strategy and the business model (CCPA 2008, p. 24). This includes corporate volunteers who also help corporations understand not-for-profit organisations: 76 per cent of executives agreed that volunteers positively affect their business and operational performance. From the business perspective, employee volunteer programs are desirable because they are seen to increase job satisfaction and retention, improve morale and team cohesion and facilitate a skills-transfer to the not-for-profit organisation:

Employee-volunteering programs are increasingly an important factor in attracting potential employees because of the social responsibility reputation of participating companies, and because they are seen as an opportunity to develop skills (CCPA 2008, p. 56).

Understanding schools

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) identified a further series of benefits to business participants concerning their perspectives on schools. One business partner commented that: 'It's been good to get a broader perspective and made me feel more strongly that this country could get so much out of more investment in education' (<http://www.abcn.com.au/>). Specifically the Partners in Learning program enables business partners to develop a greater understanding of issues facing schools and the education system and how business can help to support a positive change.

Lessons for business

It is useful to note that the business partners believed they learned new management techniques for dealing with conflict in their work with not-for-profits and that the experience expanded their understanding of leadership challenges and strategic development in a different context and a different level of priorities and outcomes (ABCN 2008).

7 Characteristics of effective partnerships

This section provides a synthesis of the observations on effective partnerships from diverse sources and contexts. It identifies common elements of successful corporate community partnerships with the characteristics organised around key themes considered as ‘critical success factors’ from the following sources:

- Australian Council for Educational Research (2008)
- Boston Center for Corporate Citizenship (2004)
- Carstarphen (1998)
- Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2008)
- Clark (1992)
- Council for Corporate and School Partnerships (2001)
- Education Development Centre (2004)
- NISC (2008)

Many of the characteristics of successful partnerships are common to general findings and guidelines on organisational or program effectiveness and the sustainable impact of innovations.

7.1 *Sustainable partnerships*

One of the most widely cited studies of effective business-community partnerships was conducted by the Center for Corporate Citizenship (CCC) at Boston College. The study examined the conditions and factors that produce enduring partnerships across four long-term major partnerships. These partnerships ‘utilise resources from the for-profit operating budgets to address a business opportunity or need in a way that also generates benefits for low to moderate-income individuals and/or communities’ (CCC 2004, p. 4). Importantly, each of the partnerships has withstood severe external changes involving economic climate, industry structure and government regulation: they have also been subject to many internal organisational and personnel changes (CCC 2004, p. 2). The lessons learned have implications for not-for-profits in general as well as for school-business partnerships. The major findings are as follows:

- The greatest differentiator found in the enduring partnerships was the ability of the company and nonprofit to create something that took on a life of its own – growing far beyond its original scope and early expectations.
- Taking an entrepreneurial approach to planning in the early stages lays the foundation for a durable partnership.

- Each partnership in the study proceeded with a series of shorter-term plans that did not lock the alliances into an unyielding course of action.
- In each case a shorter-term plan in the early stage allowed the partners to work on a more bounded, immediate, and manageable set of tasks.
- The plans provided a chance for partners to produce early results and build confidence with each successful task.
- The new possibilities and challenges affected the operating assumptions of the partnerships – the goals, the populations served, the stakeholders, the funding sources – and the partnership identity subsequently evolved in the process. (CCC 2004, p. 9-12)

The authors conclude that community-business partnerships aiming for a ‘thriving’ and long-standing relationship should in the first instance establish a bold, inspirational vision that stakes out the overall direction for the long term. An interesting suggestion is to treat the partnership like an incubating new venture from the outset. The authors also note that sustainable partnerships occur when participants plan for the short term, asking: What does the partnership need to achieve to survive its early stages? Where does it need to be heading to thrive for the long term? Perhaps the key piece of generic advice is for partners to remain open to challenges and opportunities that arise, using the ‘bold vision and goals to guide decisions, not a rigid plan’. (CCC 2004, p. 13)

A key success factor is the degree to which the partnership is institutionalised or integrated into the structure and culture of the participating organisations, that is: ‘Partnerships should not be allowed to become isolated within the headquarters or executive suites of each partner organization.’ (CCC 2004, p. 14) It is suggested that there are five key dimensions required of leaders to embed the partnerships:

1. Build multiple points of connection between the partner organisations.
2. Ensure internal organisational support: senior champions, torchbearers, and line operations.
3. Align the organisational operating assumptions.
4. Create supportive infrastructure and processes.
5. Integrate partnership benefits back into the organisation. (CCC 2004, p. 16)

The more parts of the business partner – legal, human resources, and research and development – that are aware of the partnership, contributing resources to it, and reaping benefits from it, generally the more stable the partnership.

7.2 *Critical success factors*

In addition to the findings of the Boston study, we have refined and consolidated 10 critical success factors from the lists featured in the various guidelines and toolkits. They include a mix of processes and outcomes. The list is not in priority order: the factors are included because they are the most commonly mentioned across the 8 primary sources and largely generated by surveys of stakeholder opinion. While they are not necessarily applicable to the Australian context, indeed some may not be at all appropriate, they nevertheless point to potentially relevant assessment criteria:

1. **Clear mission and goals.** Successful partnerships have a clearly articulated and shared mission focused on student achievement with specified short and long term goals.
2. **Sustainability.** The partnership has the program and flexibility to steer through unanticipated challenges.
3. **Program characteristics.** The program adds value to the school or students, is well-planned, viable and fits with available resources and organisational size. There is opportunity for ongoing learning, adaptability and flexibility allowing programs to evolve and the partnership to grow organically.
4. **Inclusiveness and participant commitment.** The program has high visibility. It provides opportunities for corporate volunteers to work directly with students.
5. **Value creation.** The values and approaches of the partners are compatible. The relationship creates value and benefits integral to the partnership itself. It establishes mutual trust and recognition of the various strengths brought to the partnership by each organisation.
6. **Capacity and capability.** The time commitment of partners is specified to ensure sufficient capacity to support the program. Appropriate professional development for teachers is provided.
7. **Leadership.** This is widely acknowledged as a critical success factor. Most of the elements are generic to innovation and change management, including:
 - visionary and committed leadership
 - willingness to cross traditional institutional boundaries
 - ensuring that the partnership has top-level institutional and business support and visibility
 - data and evidence are used as a basis for decision-making.
8. **Governance and communications.** Successful partnerships have clear communication of roles and responsibilities.
9. **Identity and recognition management.** This is often underestimated. Effective partnerships allow each partner to separate their individual reputation and

brand while integrating the mechanics of the partnership into the structure of the school and business.

10. **Accountability and risk management.** Effective programs have a documented and agreed risk management plan, and the capacity to anticipate and prevent problems. Risk management should be incorporated into the design and implementation of partnership agreements. Typical steps in risk management can be adopted including the assessment and categorisation of risks such as inconsistent organisational cultures, lack of resources, and sensitive issues (CCPA 2008, p. 42).
11. **Program measurement and evaluation.** Effective partnerships develop a plan to monitor progress and outcomes. They evaluate the partnership as well as the programs, and they commit to continuous improvement through flexible measurement and evaluation: 'For most long-term initiatives, evidence of impact plays a key role in securing funding and resources, in garnering internal support, and in building public awareness. From the corporate side, partnerships are often expected to produce demonstrable, and preferably quantifiable, returns that align with the company's overall business goals.' (CCC 2004, p. 22)

7.3 *Obstacles to effective partnerships*

The National Industry Skills Committee (NISC) strategic issues paper, *Fostering effective links and partnerships between businesses and schools* (2008), lists a number of factors that inhibit these partnerships organised around the headings that follow. They are not necessarily direct opposites of the factors that make for effective partnerships. The obstacles outlined in the issues paper include reference to the Australian context and cover a range of systemic and local issues. They include the following:

- **Communication and promotion.** Many businesses are still unaware of the possibilities of working with their local schools in partnerships. Employers need to hear about the different programs and how they can get involved. This needs to be done at a range of levels. Moreover, too many initiatives create confusion about which to engage with, lack of clear identification. For example, companies may have heard of a specific partnership by its organisational name but do not necessarily associate this with an overarching government funded scheme.
- **Setting, clarifying and monitoring objectives.** NISC points to potential tensions for partnerships in meeting both local partnership objectives and facilitating government objectives. There are also issues concerning the alignment of objectives and the management of government, industry and community expectations. Related is the challenge of balancing the need for innovation and flexibility with the need for accountability and responsibility.

Finally, a significant obstacle to objective setting occurs where there is limited evaluation data to support the identified business benefits.

- **Funding.** Despite the significant funding boost through the Career Advice Australia initiative, the NISC suggests that some stakeholders believe more funding is needed to implement this initiative effectively. For example, the AIG has recently proposed one coordinator for every 60 placements in the Structured Workplace Learning Program to ensure effective business engagement and quality workplace learning. It is also believed that funding cycles are too short for brokerage services.
- **Mistrust motive.** While many schools have established partnerships and alliances with businesses, NISC (and some US surveys) suggest that there is a culture in some schools that mistrusts business and its motives for engagement.

Other potential barriers at the everyday operational level of schools are identified by research conducted for the Daniels Fund, which looked at why some school partnerships are more effective than others. For example, leadership turnover: with the result that new principals and business leaders appear who are unfamiliar with the program, and may not buy in at first.

The Daniels Fund research also found that busy school staff may present an obstacle. Since most school liaison officers are not paid for extra duties related to the business partnership, it is sometimes hard to find a school coordinator to effectively manage the links between the school and the business partner. Business is often concerned with school staff resistance on a number of levels. Some teachers fear outsiders in their classrooms and may think the program is more trouble than it is worth.

According to some of the sources, getting business involved with schools is not necessarily the hard part. The difficulty is making sure they are involved effectively in a genuine partnership with effective management structures. The systemic obstacles cited include the lack of a specific policy framework to strategically guide and facilitate the process. In the Australian context NISC argues that the lack of coordination between Commonwealth and State/Territory initiatives and competition between different brokerage services is problematic, and that while some coordination may occur it is usually ad hoc. The new structures aimed at a nationally co-ordinated and consolidated approach address this issue.

7.3.1 Lessons from business

In the absence of a strong literature base on school-business relationships it is perhaps useful to consider some lessons from the experience of business-community relationships. The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs report puts the perspective of not-for-profits on the problems that business partners bring to partnerships. Not-for-profits believe that 'the business sector often does not clearly understand a number of

common characteristics of the not-for-profit sector. This creates challenges when establishing and maintaining a relationship with a NFP organisation' (2008, p. 22).

Common challenges that business are perceived not to grasp fully include the central importance of the not-for-profit core mission being prioritised above economic or financial concerns. This creates unrealistic expectations by corporations of how quickly the partnership can achieve a socially stated goal. There is also tension between the not-for-profit sector's long-term social world outlook and the (perceived) short-term three to five year economic outlook of corporations.

The shortage of not-for-profit funding and resources is obviously an obstacle to program implementation but this is a factor that draws business partners in the first instance. However, the constancy of the shortfall creates a significant psychological barrier to effective partnership development and sustainability.

A range of other obstacles relate to differences in organisational cultures. It appears that business partners find it difficult to deal with the inability, or perhaps reluctance, of not-for-profits to quantify their program successes or failures. It is suggested that business partners may also have difficulties in dealing with the multiplicity of internal and external not-for-profit stakeholders and the need for continual consensus building in voluntarist organisations.

Finally, it is suggested that there may well be an undervaluing of the not-for-profit contribution, leading to expectations that they should continue to look to increase value-add in a partnership (Berger *et al.* in CCPA 2008, pp. 22-23). Since the not-for profits act as intermediaries for schools and business, this suggests potential challenges in aligning three sets of organisational cultures.

From its investigation of not-for-profit and business partnerships the Centre for Corporate Public Affairs (2008, p. 36) reports concerns of executives in their efforts to achieve successful community-business partnerships. Again, some of these are likely to be relevant to executive perspectives of obstacles in the school sector, for example:

- Capacity constraints of not-for-profit organisations means they may be unable to meet business needs for accountability, for example: reporting, requests for placement of volunteers, and governance requests.
- Cultural gaps are significant with corporations not understanding fully the *modus operandi* and motivations of not-for-profit organisations. At the same time, not-for-profit organisations may not fully appreciate the need for funding accountability and employee engagement as part of corporate community partnerships.
- Businesses expect immediate results and may be disappointed by the time and process involved in setting up a partnership.

7.3.2 Volunteering issues

There are a number of issues concerning volunteers emerging as more businesses build these activities into employee paid commitments. Volunteer training and management is an issue for both schools and business. Schools may not make the commitment to train and use volunteers appropriately. About one-quarter of not-for-profit organisations participating in the CCPA survey indicated corporate volunteers present a challenge in terms of personal safety and behaviour, while 48 per cent stated they require substantial organisational resources. Not-for-profits were fairly evenly split as to whether corporate volunteering was a drain on their resources' (CCPA 2008, p. 56).

The CCPA research found that some not-for-profits are now charging businesses for access to their corporate volunteering services (for example, on a fee for service basis). A related development is that some not-for-profit organisations only offer volunteering opportunities to their established business partners' (CCPA 2008, p. 57).

7.3.3 Addressing the obstacles

A US research group, Mass Insight Education & Research Institute (2009), has recently proposed a new partnership paradigm. The report was developed from research on school turnaround strategies. It argues that a lack of coherence and alignment at the state and local level means that partner effort is too often fragmented or even a burden to schools. It suggests that 'projectitis' results in a plethora of partners who often get in the way of schools being able to channel their energies into coherent, radical transformation.

The authors argue that it is 'widely-acknowledged that low-performing schools in the US are more likely to be overburdened with poorly aligned initiatives and partnerships' (2009). Multiple partnerships, which can lead to inefficient or contradictory reform efforts that burden and confuse school leadership, are especially prevalent in schools that are already underperforming.

Mass Insight also argues that none of the current partnership types combine the required capacity, accountability and intensity and that the complexity of chronically underperforming schools, the need for urgent turnaround, and the political realities of working with districts and unions create the need for a new partner paradigm. Table 2 sets out the comparisons of the obstacles to success and proposes a new partnership paradigm. This is one of a number of emerging efforts to reframe the ways that school-business partnerships are created and managed.

Table 2: Current and proposed partnership paradigms

CURRENT LANDSCAPE	NEW PARTNERSHIP PARADIGM
Lacking coherence	Lead partner plays a coordinating function Supporting partners can have important parts to play in turnaround, where needs are broad and deep, but management of the various partner organisations is key.
Multiple, disconnected initiatives	Any initiative the school takes on fits tightly with advancing the organisational mission Non-aligned initiatives divert effort from the work of coherent transformation; the scale of challenge in turnaround schools demands that all resources be applied effectively.
Unclear lines of authority	Partner has authority (or shared authority) over key conditions Partners must be able to gain at least shared control over the conditions they need to implement transformation – particularly people, money, and time.
School, not partner, accountable for results	School and partner share accountability for results Lead partner needs to be a true, accountable partner in order for partnership to function in the best interests of students.
Expectations for who does what underspecified	Expectations transparent, clearly delineated in MOU A strong partnership must delineate who is responsible for what types of task, and set the metrics to be used to define success.

Source: Mass Insight Education & Resource Institute 2009

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Dehavilland Associates (US) <http://www.dehavillandassociates.com/>

Department for Education and Skills (DfES), UK <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk>

Education Alberta <http://education.alberta.ca>

Foundation for Young Australians <http://www.fya.org.au/>

Lancashire Education Business Partnership
http://nebpn.virtualschools.net/folders/news_and_views/press_releases/

NAB Schools First <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/>

National Education Business Partnership Network (NEBPN) (UK)
<http://www.nebpn.org/>

New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development (NZBCSD)
<http://www.nzbcSD.org.nz/guide.asp>

Ontario Business Education Partnership <http://www.obep.on.ca>

Pilbara Education Partnership <http://www.bhpbilliton.com>

Principals Australia
<http://www.pa.edu.au/servlet/Web?s=157573&action=changePage&pageID=121583747>

School Business Partnerships <http://www.sbpartnerships.com/>

Time to Programmes Northern Ireland <http://www.timetoni.com/>

UK National Education Business Partnership Network <http://www.iebe.org.uk/>