

## **F-10: Democratic devolution of school governance: the Victorian model**

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Currently, school-based governance with community participation is becoming a common phenomenon in many school systems. This project examined the effectiveness of democratic devolution in the Victorian school councils, which have functioned as mandatory, corporate bodies since 1976. (1) The characteristics of more effective councils (2) devolution package and

autonomy (3) operational structures (4) processes of decision-making (5) extent of community participation and (6) the overall effectiveness, were studied using quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Empirical survey of 1992, included 965 councillors in 66 schools with 53% returns, followed by 75 interviews and collection of some archival material in 1993.

For data analysis SPSS software package was used. By using an effectiveness scale based on the perceptions of respondents, 18 more effective schools were identified. Findings revealed that over 93% of the respondents considered that the current composition, committee structure, and supply of information were either good, very good or excellent, while this level of satisfaction rose to 96% in respect of decision-making processes and overall functioning of the councils. Two thirds expressed their satisfaction with regard to the improvements to the teaching/learning environment, power and authority vested in councils, and time available for council business. Strongly positive comments by different categories of stakeholders and archival material confirmed the above findings of the empirical survey.

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