



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school

Completed by:

Kirsten J. Hancock and Stephen R. Zubrick

Telethon Kids Institute

University of Western Australia

for the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA

June 2015 (Updated October 2015)

ISBN: 978-1-74052-337-0

Contents

Contents.....	2
Executive Summary.....	4
Background.....	4
How do we define disengagement?.....	4
Why is disengagement important?.....	5
What are the risk factors for disengagement?.....	5
How many Australian students are 'disengaged'?.....	6
What do students have to say about engagement?.....	7
What do teachers have to say about engagement?.....	7
What do parents have to say about engagement?.....	7
What does the literature say about disengagement interventions and programs?..	8
Integration of main themes.....	8
Background.....	10
Introduction.....	10
Terminology.....	11
Literature review methodology.....	11
Outline of literature review.....	13
What does disengagement mean?.....	14
Dimensions of disengagement.....	15
Disengagement is both a process and an outcome.....	17
Contexts beyond school are important for understanding disengagement processes	18
Impacts of disengagement for children and young people.....	22
Impacts of disengagement at school.....	22
Post-school impacts of disengagement.....	23
Risk factors associated with student disengagement.....	25
Summary of risk factors associated with disengagement.....	26

What does disengagement look like for Australian students?	27
Year 12 retention and attainment rates in Australia	27
Summary: Year 12 retention and attainment as indicators of disengagement	32
Unproductive classroom behaviours as indicators of disengagement - The Pipeline Project	32
Student attitudes, belonging and connectedness as disengagement indicators – findings from PISA	35
Patterns of absence for Western Australian students.....	38
Summary of Australian disengagement indicators	40
What do students, teachers, and others have to say about engagement?	41
What do students have to say about engagement?	42
What do teachers say about engagement?	48
What do parents have to say about engagement?	51
What does the literature say about interventions, programs and potential educational reform?	54
Promoting early years engagement.....	55
Programs for disengaging students	57
Re-engaging early school leavers and alternative pathways.....	61
Discussion – Integrating themes	63
What do schools expect of parents of children and young people attending their schools?	64
What do parents of children and young people expect from the schools their children attend?.....	67
Can schools create the meaningful relationships that disengaged or disengaging students say they need?	68
Is the reform agenda for education addressing the needs and expectations of children and young people who are disengaged or at risk of doing so?	70
Conclusion	73
References	74

Executive Summary

Background

This literature review on student disengagement was commissioned by the Commissioner for Children and Young People of Western Australia. The brief was to provide an overview of current evidence on the profile, extent, and impact of disengagement in children and young people from school, along with evidence of programs and strategies to reduce disengagement and promote re-engagement.

The review first examines international literature to determine how disengagement can be defined and understood, and then narrows the scope of the literature to examine student disengagement in Australia to address the following questions:

1. Why does disengagement matter?
2. What are the risk factors associated with disengagement?
3. How many Australian students are disengaged?
4. What do students, teachers and others have to say about disengagement?
5. What does the literature say about interventions and programs addressing student disengagement?

It then describe the themes emerging from the review in a discussion that identifies the integrative questions that focus on what schools and families expect from each other in terms of engaging students.

How do we define disengagement?

Disengagement has been defined and redefined many different ways, both within and across disciplines. 'Disengagement' is typically used interchangeably with 'engagement', where each term represents two ends of the same continuum. The concept could therefore be defined according to engagement, (i.e. how do we characterise engaged students?) or disengagement. This review focuses on disengaged students.

The literature shows that disengagement is a nuanced and multifaceted construct, and defining disengagement coherently was no simple task. The following concepts were identified as being core to understanding the complexity surrounding disengagement in children and young people:

- Students can be disengaged at different levels (e.g. with content, in class, with school, and/or with education as a whole).
- There are different types or domains of engagement (e.g. emotional, behavioural, and cognitive).
- Where levels of disengagement intersect with types of disengagement, different indicators of disengagement can be identified (e.g. behavioural disengagement with class content may be indicated by poor classroom

behaviour; emotional disengagement with school in general may be indicated by poor school connectedness). Disengagement can therefore be indicated and measured in multiple ways.

- Disengagement is both a process and an outcome. For example, student absenteeism may reflect disengagement from school, but it is also a risk factor for other disengagement indicators such as early school leaving.
- Contexts beyond the educational setting (i.e. family) are an integral part of disengagement processes for children and young people.

Why is disengagement important?

Disengaged students are at risk of a range of adverse academic and social outcomes. Most forms of disengagement, such as absence, disruptive behaviour, and poor school connectedness, are associated with lower achievement, which has significant implications for the school experience for students. Importantly, the engagement-achievement relationship tends to be reciprocal, cyclical and reinforced over time, meaning that while low achievement may be represented as an adverse outcome of disengagement, it can also contribute to the process. Early school leaving is more often the end-point of a long process of disengagement over time. Therefore, it is important to identify problems with disengagement early.

Disengagement also has implications for the lives of young people beyond the compulsory school years. For a significant minority of students, the end-point of disengagement culminates in school dropout, which has implications for life course trajectories once young people leave school. Students who leave school early are at greater risk of unemployment, low income, social exclusion, risky health behaviours, and engaging in crime. When the young people go on to have their own families, their ability to support their children at school is diminished and the children are also faced with an increased likelihood of disengagement. Of course, not all young people who ever disengage from school will end up on such a pathway, however, engagement at school remains a significant issue for the intergenerational persistence of disadvantage.

What are the risk factors for disengagement?

Student disengagement is strongly associated with the home and family context and the degree to which parents can economically, socially, and emotionally support children and young people to engage at school. A large volume of both Australian and international research consistently shows that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience markers of disengagement.

Children and young people at risk of experiencing one or multiple indicators of school disengagement include:

- students living in families with limited resources, including human, psychological and social capital, income or time
- students who arrive at school with limited school readiness
- students who do not form a connection with school, peers or teachers
- students with frequent absences or who are not achieving well
- students with chronic illness, disability or mental health issues
- Aboriginal students
- students living in more remote areas
- students living in areas of concentrated disadvantage (independent of family-level disadvantage)
- students attending schools with a concentration of disadvantaged students.

How many Australian students are 'disengaged?'

There is no 'one indicator' to measure the prevalence of student disengagement, but single markers may be used as indicators of different types of disengagement. In this report, Year 12 completion rates, unproductive classroom behaviours, surveys of student attitudes and school connectedness, and student absence rates are examined. Using these indicators it was found:

- about 25 per cent of students do not complete Year 12, though this varies from state to state and by demographic characteristics.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data show that of the 25 per cent who do not complete Year 12, the most common reason for not doing so was because they either got or wanted a job or apprenticeship (35%). A further 25 per cent said it was because they did not like school, and 9 per cent said it was because they did not do well at school.
- about 20 per cent of students are consistently disengaged when considering classroom behaviours. These students may find their schoolwork uninteresting, are inclined to give up on challenging tasks, will look for distractions and opt out of class activities. These disengaged students typically perform one to two year levels below their productive counterparts on achievement measures.
- an measures of attitudes and connectedness, over 90 per cent of 15 year-old students believe that investing effort would lead to success at school and 95 per cent believe that trying hard at school is important and will help them get a good job. However, 25 per cent of 15 year-olds also say that school has not prepared them for life after school and 10 per cent believe school has been a waste of time. Over one-fifth (22%) feel they do not belong at school.

- between 72 and 75 per cent of primary school students attend school at least 90 per cent of the time. By Year 10, only half of students attend school this frequently.

Taken together, the majority of Australian students are engaged at school, attend regularly, see the value education provides for their future, and achieve above benchmark levels. About 10 per cent of students might be regarded as having low engagement, another 7 per cent or so have very low engagement, and another 3 per cent have persistent, serious disengagement with additional challenges such as mental health distress. This would suggest that overall about one in five students (20%) could be considered to have some level of disengagement with school.

What do students have to say about engagement?

The literature is notable for the general absence of student experiences, voices, guidance and participation in defining and addressing engagement with school. The common thread running through the studies is what students say about relationships. These are the key to engagement as seen by students.

- Students cited personal safety, being listened to and being respected as leading requisites for their engagement at school.
- Students less often cite their family as being instrumental to their school engagement (some do), instead most locate the responsibility in the classroom and/or school setting.

What do teachers have to say about engagement?

There is no clear consensus among teachers about the nature of student disengagement or engagement and what will make a difference.

Teachers clearly see they have a dominant role to play in creating the conditions for student engagement. Most (but not all) of what they cite as important for engagement is linked firmly with: pedagogy, curriculum, streaming and setting the context for expectations and responsibilities.

While students see relationships as foundational to their ongoing engagement or to becoming engaged and maintaining engagement, teachers are much less likely to cite relationship formation and maintenance as instrumental to the student engagement process.

What do parents have to say about engagement?

While there is a large literature attesting to the importance of parents to the educational experience and engagement of their children, direct studies of parent views of student engagement and disengagement are largely absent.

Most of this literature is based upon studies of parental engagement in schools rather than studies of parental attitudes, values and behaviours directly related to the engagement of their children in school.

What does the literature say about disengagement interventions and programs?

The sheer number of indicators of disengagement, and the risk factors associated with them, poses a significant challenge when it comes to assessing best practice principles for reducing the risk of disengagement from school.

Broadly, approaches to addressing student disengagement can be grouped into one of three developmental periods. The key features of successful programs are briefly noted:

1. **Programs that promote and facilitate engagement in the early years** – Examples of successful programs include intensive early childhood education programs that provide a comprehensive range of early education, parenting and family supports and services that target children from early in childhood through to the early primary years and which boost the skills of children prior to entering school.
2. **Programs for disengaging students who are still at school but at risk of leaving early** – Largely in the domain of secondary schools, the key features of these programs were that they provide opportunities to develop practical skills, provide flexible or individualised learning programs tailored to student interests, or they developed adult-student relationships through mentoring.
3. **Programs that help disengaged students re-engage with school or complete Year 12 or equivalent through other pathways** – These programs need to allow for a diversity of interests and goals, allow flexibility, have quality teachers who understand the circumstances of their students and respect them (i.e. build relationships), and work in combination and coordination with support services that help disengaged young people with their broader wellbeing.

Integration of main themes

At the outset, education systems, schools and teachers understand the significance of student disengagement and want to implement strategies for preventing its occurrence, for identifying those students at risk for disengaging, and for addressing problems when they occur. The review identifies multiple obstacles for implementing disengagement strategies.

First, addressing disengagement requires resources and this is a significant challenge for educators. The creation and operation of strategies to address student

disengagement requires a significant proportion of the education effort and budget for a relatively small proportion of students.

Second, education systems have evolved higher expectations of parents and families to 'ready' their children for school and socialise them with academic and learning values and behaviours. Some families are not equipped with the resources (including time, income, and human, social and psychological capital) to do this.

Third, there is a struggle to position responsibility for student disengagement. Families and family circumstances are predominately cited by teachers as the causal basis for student disengagement. Parents (i.e. families) are seen by schools as the critical, if not the primary source, of a student's school engagement.

For students, however, disengagement is about disaffection. Students uniformly indicate that their engagement with school is founded on relationships at school – with both friends and teachers. For students, the causes for disengagement are largely seen to be at school – not typically at home with or in the family.

Therefore, student views of the causes of their disengagement do not support the school view of the causes of their disengagement.

Relationship formation is central to the engagement pathway for students. Without this, excellence in pedagogy, curriculum flexibility, and policy, while necessary, will not be sufficient to re-engage the disengaged or disengaging student.

Background

Introduction

Few would deny the transformative power of education in changing the capabilities of individuals to choose lives that they value. Throughout the world, education and learning are sought after and revered. The importance of the opportunity to partake in education, and indeed, the requirement that children and young people do so is not questioned. It is recognised as a fundamental human right that is essential for the exercise of all other human rights. It is a right that is enforced through the implementation of laws requiring children to enrol and attend school, with a pervasive societal expectation that they participate and 'make use' of the opportunity.

While schools constitute a major Australian institution of considerable stability, the broader policy setting that governs educational expectations has undergone striking change (te Riele, 2012). In 1980, high rates of student retention to the end of Year 10 (91%) were achieved at which point only relatively few students (35%) progressed onwards to complete Year 12 (Department of Education Employment and Training, 1993). Following the introduction of targeted policies by the federal government, by 1990 Year 12 retention rates had increased to 65 per cent (ABS, 1993) and by 2011 had continued to rise to 84 per cent for females and 75 per cent for males (ABS, 2011b).

During this period, the age at which children enter school has also undergone change. The lower boundary of entry to school has been particularly affected through changes to policies for and about early child care and the commencement of kindergarten and pre-primary. While there is volatility in expectations about starting ages and which aspects are compulsory, most Australian children are eligible for preschool in the year they turn four years of age. Some children will arrive at preschool when they are as young as three and a half years. The variability in expectations and regulations means that some children in Australia will start Year 1 with considerably more preparation than other children.

With these changes, compulsory education has therefore been extended from around 10 or 11 years to around 13 or 14 years for the majority of young people. These policy changes, coupled with the significant resources invested in education, have sent a powerful signal to families, young people and communities about educational expectations that are seen to influence their onward life prospects. Much of this policy is based on the assumption that children are not only expected and required to go to school, but that these policy signals are the motivating prompt to do so. In other words, requiring children to be at school and 'in education' is all that is needed to provide the necessary engagement and to stay there.

Undoubtedly there is more to this dynamic, but it brings into focus the purpose of this review. Families and educators alike understand that the onward benefits of education are achieved, not by just 'having to go' to school, but through learning experiences that develop identity, enable autonomy, deepen mastery, and recognise the need for individuality and choice.

Beyond the mere mandate to be at school, most children and young people also understand these processes and engage with them, and with school, to achieve the onward benefits of school. Many students do not.

This review is about educational disengagement for children and young people – its forms, processes, and outcomes. It draws upon and reviews an expansive and poorly integrated literature largely subsumed under the title 'school engagement'.

Terminology

This review examines the profiles of students who disengage, along with the processes, extent and impact of disengagement. The literature reviewed often uses the term 'disengagement' interchangeably with 'engagement', where each term represents two ends of the same continuum that could be termed a continuum of engagement (or disengagement). In addition, as in Section 2, disengagement can occur in multiple forms in multiple settings and particular terms may be used as indicators of disengagement (e.g. truancy). This review attempts to use a consistent terminology throughout, but acknowledge that as the broader literature uses multiple terms in multiple ways, the terminology that it uses will also change to reflect what is represented in the literature.

Literature review methodology

The purpose of this review was to summarise the published literature on the impacts relating to disengagement from school on the wellbeing of children and young people in Australia, and for young Western Australians in particular. The review was to document evidence of the profile and extent of children and young people who are disengaged or at risk of being disengaged from school, views from students about disengagement, and best practice principles for reducing the risk of disengagement from school.

To address these aims, the literature review was conducted in three parts.

First, the most relevant and recent international literature describing the concept of disengagement, and how it is defined and conceptualised in order to generate a definition and conceptual framework of student disengagement was sought.

This definition and conceptual framework was then used to conduct a systematic search of relevant literature relating to disengagement of Australian students. A number of education research databases were searched, including ERIC (via Ovid)

and A+ Education (via Informit), along with other appropriate databases such as Psycinfo (Ovid), Australian Public Affairs Full Text (APAFT), the Humanities and Social Sciences Collection, Australian Family and Society Abstracts Database (Informit). Google and Google Scholar searches were also conducted to identify relevant 'grey literature'. Reference lists of the sourced literature were also examined for additional relevant material. Searches were generally limited to Australian literature and sources of information published between 2010 and 2015, however, documents of particular relevance for this review that were published prior to 2010, or studies from New Zealand, Canada, the United States or the United Kingdom, were considered for inclusion on a case-by-case basis.

Search terms around engagement included the following terms:

- engagement, disengagement, re-engagement, connectedness, belonging identification

These terms were crossed with:

- student, classroom, school, education
- cognitive, behavioural, emotional, active, passive

This approach allowed for all combinations of student engagement, school disengagement, school connectedness, cognitive engagement, behavioural disengagement etc.

Additional searches were conducted for the following specific terms:

- marginalised students
- return to learning (this largely returned papers relating to adult education)
- classroom flow
- attendance, absence, suspension, dropout, exclusion and retention rates

This search strategy, limited to Australian material published since 2010, returned over 800 search results. These results were refined by:

- assessing the relevance of the material from the title
- assessing the relevance of the material from the abstract
- removing search results relating to higher or tertiary education (over half)
- removing search results pertaining to engagement in particular subjects (Science, Maths, English) or interventions aimed at improving engagement in specific subjects
- removing search results pertaining to the development of scales that measure student engagement, unless there were results of particular interest in the validation of such scales
- removing studies that could not be sourced online.

Following this process, 113 publications were shortlisted for review. Of these, less than half were relevant for addressing the aims of the review.

Finally, the reference lists of the sourced material were reviewed and additional Google searches were conducted to address topics that were not adequately addressed in the initial search. For example, the terms given above revealed very few studies evaluating the impacts of interventions or programs aimed at promoting engagement or re-engaging disengaged students. Consequently, additional searches were required to address these gaps.

Outline of literature review

Student disengagement has been studied extensively over many years.

Over these years different academic disciplines and fields of study have developed different concepts of disengagement, what these concepts include and exclude, and how disengagement manifests in different behaviours depending which aspects of school a student engages with, or disengages from.

First, a broad and detailed international literature is examined to determine how disengagement can be broadly defined. This definition is then used to structure the remainder of the review, narrowing the scope of the literature review to Australian studies, mainly published since 2010, to understand student disengagement in the Australian context.

Several markers of engagement and disengagement are then examined, including Year 12 attainment, classroom behaviours and school connectedness, to address what disengagement looks like for Australian students and to understand the profile and scale of disengagement for children and young people in Australia.

A review of the Australian literature that examines student disengagement from the perspective of students, teachers, schools, families and communities, identifying similarities, differences and gaps in these views is then provided.

It reviews evaluations of programs that aim to prevent or slow the disengagement process, and programs that aim to re-engage young people with education, and briefly highlight the characteristics of successful programs and how these characteristics are reflected in findings from other sections of the review.

Finally, the review concludes by highlighting and integrating the themes emerging from the review and the integrative questions that are yet to be addressed.

What does disengagement mean?

There is no single, universally accepted definition of disengagement or engagement. The concept of student disengagement has been discussed and debated for many years, with definitions changing from study-to-study, review-to-review, and text-to-text.

For example, in the *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement* (Christenson et al., 2012), five chapters are dedicated to simply defining (dis)engagement. There is a vast literature available to draw upon, student disengagement is conceptualised, described and measured in many different ways across different disciplines. As a result, there is also a great deal of confusion around the way terms and concepts are used in the literature, where the same term is often used to refer to different things, and different terms are often used for the same construct (Reschly and Christenson, 2012).

For the purpose of this review, a lengthy discussion around the merits of one definition over another or how definitions have evolved over time is avoided. Some researchers view engagement and disengagement as being separate constructs, each with their own continua (Skinner et al., 2008), and others view engagement as one engagement continuum, from engaged to disengaged (Reschly and Christenson, 2012). Either way, two definitions could be offered; one for engagement, or one for disengagement. As this review is largely concerned with disengagement, it adopts Finn and Zimmer's definition of disengaged students, and then use this definition as a framework from which disengagement can be described in more detail:

Disengaged students are those who do not participate actively in class and school activities, do not become cognitively involved in learning, do not fully develop or maintain a sense of school belonging, and/or exhibit inappropriate or counterproductive behaviour. All of these risk behaviours reduce the likelihood of school success. Disengaged students may have entered school without adequate cognitive or social skills, find it difficult to learn basic engagement behaviours, and fail to develop positive attitudes that perpetuate their participation in class, or they may have entered school with marginal or positive habits that become attenuated due to unaddressed academic difficulties, dysfunctional interactions with teachers or administrators, or strong ties to other disengaged students (Finn and Zimmer, 2012, p. 99).

From this definition, it is clear that disengagement is a nuanced and multifaceted construct. It would be inappropriate, and likely impossible to point to a student and label this student as wholly engaged or disengaged. Instead, the definition of disengagement highlights that several aspects need to be considered in order to fully understand what the construct means. This review identified four key concepts, which are described further in the following sections:

1. Students can be disengaged at different levels (e.g. in class, with school, with education, see 2.1).
2. There are different types or domains of disengagement (e.g. emotional, behavioural, and cognitive, see 2.1).
3. Disengagement is both a process and an outcome (see 2.2).
4. Contexts beyond the educational setting (i.e. family) are an integral part of disengagement processes for children and young people (see 2.3).

Dimensions of disengagement

Student disengagement may be understood as having two intersecting dimensions, each with a number of concepts within them. A conceptual framework to represent these intersecting dimensions has been developed, which is shown in Figure 1. The first dimension represents the level of disengagement, or the object (who or what) from which disengagement has occurred. These include:

- education systems
- schools
- classrooms, peers and teachers
- content.

Students may be disengaged at all levels or none, or from some levels but not others. For example, a student may have a positive attitude towards school and education in general, but finds classwork boring, or may struggle with the way that classroom material is traditionally delivered.

The second dimension represents domains of disengagement. As displayed in Figure 1, the literature has largely converged to define three domains, including affective or emotional disengagement, behavioural disengagement, and cognitive disengagement (Appleton et al., 2008, Fredericks et al., 2004, Lawson and Lawson, 2013).

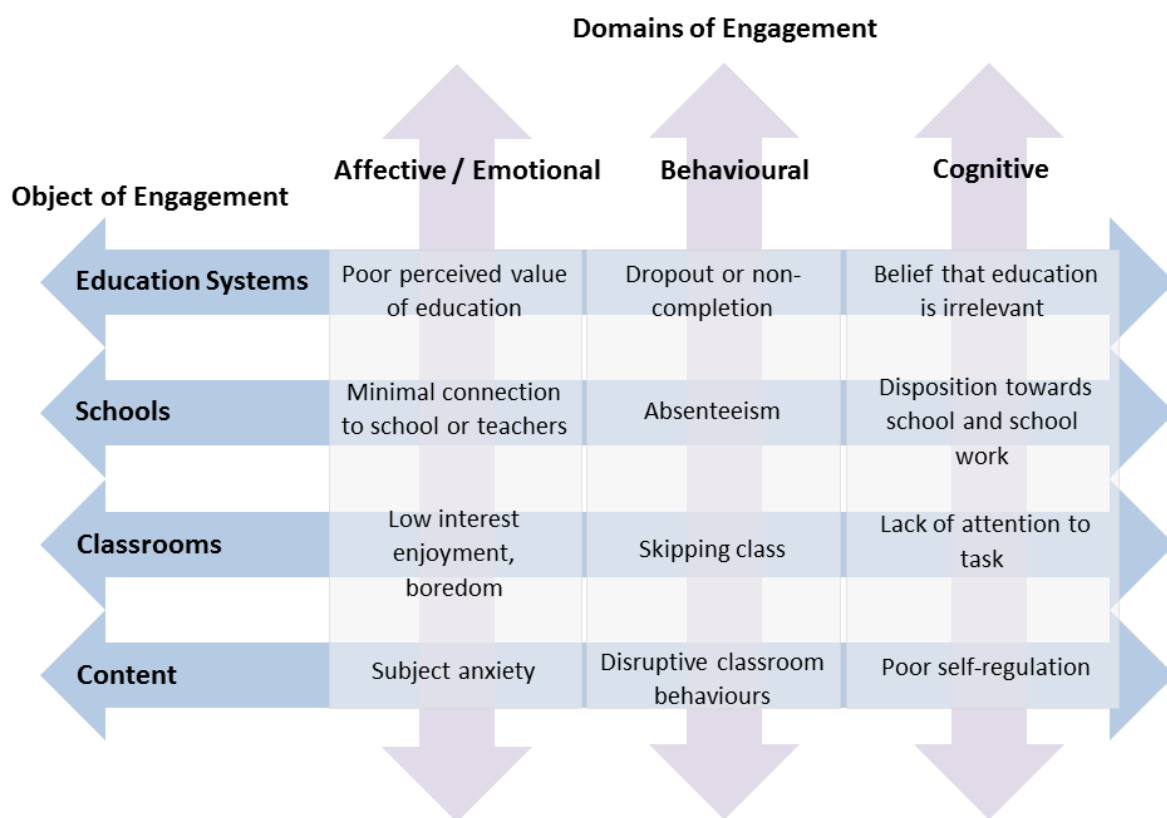
Affective or emotional engagement describes students' social, emotional and psychological attachments to school. At the classroom content level, research in this area examines students' levels of interest, enjoyment, happiness, boredom and anxiety during academic activity. At the classroom and school level, the focus is on feelings of belonging, connectedness, identification and relatedness to their school peers, teachers and the school overall.

Behavioural engagement is broadly defined according to student conduct, particularly as they relate to attainment outcomes (Finn and Zimmer, 2012, Rumberger and Rotermund, 2012). Behavioural engagement may be shown as prosocial conduct, such as spending time on homework or participating in extracurricular activities, however the concept is more commonly defined by behavioural disengagement indicators including absenteeism, truancy, suspensions, disruptive classroom behaviour and early school leaving.

Cognitive engagement broadly describes students' psychological investments in academic tasks, their dispositions towards schoolwork or persistence in the face of academic difficulty. Some research focuses on students' thoughts about school, while other research focuses on students' engagement in the learning process, how they think about ideas and concepts and how they use different strategies to master content (Lawson and Lawson, 2013).

Where the domains of disengagement intersect with the levels of disengagement, indicators of disengagement (or engagement) can be identified. Within this framework, any number of indicators can be identified as markers of disengagement, and each indicator would be measured in different ways. Examples of these indicators are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual diagram of engagement, with examples of forms of disengagement.



Within each of the domains of engagement, indicators may also be thought of as active or passive forms of engagement and disengagement. Active engagement would describe students who actively participate in classroom and school activities, whereas passive engagement may describe students who are generally compliant

and accepting but not actively involved in the learning. Passive disengagement describes the behaviours of students who sit quietly in class, but are not contributing or completing work. Other students might act out in class, calling out, and being disruptive to other students, or be aggressive or violent. These types of behaviours are often labelled as active disengagement.

Disengagement is both a process and an outcome

Much of the academic research about student engagement and disengagement emerged from a desire to understand why some students leave or drop out of school early. With early school dropout associated with a range of adverse life outcomes and wellbeing (as addressed in Section 3), student disengagement is often discussed with a focus on early dropout. However, as Reschly and Christenson (2012) note, early school leaving is more than just an event concluding a school career. Instead, early school leaving is the end-point of a long process, conceptualised by the Participation-Identification Model (Finn, 1989) where:

Participation → school success → identification with school (leading to completion)

Non-participation → poor school performance → emotional withdrawal (leading to dropout)

While these processes are presented as linear process, the relationships are more accurately described as reciprocal, cyclical and reinforced over time. That is, as students withdraw emotionally from school (emotional disengagement), their participation declines (behavioural disengagement), leading to poorer academic performance. This cycle continues over the student career, culminating in such disaffection with school that a young person may leave school entirely.

For example, a younger student may experience a period of illness and be absent from school for a period of time (non-participation). During this time, they miss out on some classroom instruction, and they fall behind their peers (poor performance). The student has increasing difficulty following what happens in class, and as a result becomes frustrated or disinterested in learning (emotional withdrawal). Having disengaged cognitively and emotionally from learning, the student has further absences from school and falls further behind, until eventually they see little point in returning to school.

In this example, absence is itself an outcome of disengagement, but it is also part of the process to longer-term outcomes and impacts. Similarly, having low achievement is an outcome of disengagement as measured by absence, but low achievement is also a predictor of further disengagement.

Contexts beyond school are important for understanding disengagement processes

So far, this review has discussed student disengagement as something that occurs within the context of school, and as a process that is largely driven by the student, where it is incumbent on the student to do the engaging. However, the contexts in which students live and learn are integral to how engagement occurs. One critical context, clearly, is the school. The other is the family and home environment.

What exactly do families provide to the educational experience of children and more particularly towards their engagement or disengagement with and from school?

It was widely thought that schools provide physical resources, policies and practices that, when combined with family input, determined academic outcomes (Levine, 1980). This 'education production theory' is based on a belief that the school's contextual resources were largely finance driven (e.g. income for physical resources and educational environments) and other school inputs were essentially policies and practices that regulated the school environment. The education production theory has had a prevailing influence on how schools and education systems have historically defined their contribution to child development: Principally in the form of material and educational 'resources'.

This view is also seen in more contemporary findings about the role of families in schooling as seen by teachers. Reviewing discussions with classroom teachers about unproductive student behaviour from focus group participants Angus et al. noted:

There was agreement (among teachers) . . . that much of the unproductive behaviour that teachers deal with in classrooms can be explained by out-of-school factors. Teachers gave examples of students from families which failed to support their children's education, and the difficulties this created for all concerned. They also pointed to the adverse effect the broader social context has had on childhood, the family and schools as institutions (Angus et al., 2009, p. 73).

What is the family input to which teachers and educators refer? Not surprisingly families have several potential contributions to make towards a child's engagement with school and education.

Families provide 'human capital' in the form of knowledge, skills and experience about how the world works (Becker, 1993, Brooks-Gunn et al., 1995). They include such things as a caregiver's own education and training, their employment, their culturally-acquired knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and aspirations for children, and values and traditions concerning parenting and family life. Some children are intrinsically advantaged by the social capital of the families into which they are born. Some families accrue more favourable human capital in terms of both biology (DNA)

and family culture in the form of education, skill and practical know-how (Becker and Tomes, 1986).

Families also have access to 'psychological capital' resources that can be used on behalf of children and young people. Psychological capital includes parental mental health, the level of family cohesion, the perceived level of family support and the level of stress and conflict within the family. The establishment of a non-threatening and non-violent emotional climate and levels of control or coercion are also critical components of psychological capital. Many of these factors are strongly associated with child wellbeing. Other resources include a sense of personal control, self-direction and autonomy, and the availability of others to provide emotional support. An important aspect of psychological capital is self-efficacy, which refers to how well individuals believe that they can manage and meet the demands and tasks of daily living.

Families also have 'social capital' (Coleman, 1990, Putnam, 1995) which refers to the specific processes among people and organisations, working collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust, that lead to accomplishing a goal of mutual social benefit (Wood, 1999). It does not refer to individuals, the means of production or to the physical infrastructure, but involves interactions among people through systems that enhance and support that interaction

Of course, families also supply income, which is a critical resource that may be used on behalf of children, whether one sees it as the primary measure of the economic base of the family or as defining a standard for basic subsistence and survival (Hauser et al., 1997, Ross and Roberts, 1999). Income can be used to purchase other resources including time that can be spent in activities that influence child development such as music lessons, or child care. Income can also be used to purchase education in the form of schooling as well as in the form of specific materials and opportunities.

Finally, time is a commodity that is frequently characterised along dimensions of both quality and quantity; it is also understood by its value in economic and social terms. Time as a resource for children generally refers to the time that caregivers have available for themselves and other family members. It should be noted here the distinction between the quantity of time available for family members and the quality of the time used for family members. Caregivers frequently state that while the quantity of time available to them to care for family members in actual hours and minutes may be small, their use of this time (i.e. its quality) may be directed to achieve quite particular outcomes for individual family members, for example in contributing to learning new skills and competencies, and receiving recognition or feedback. However, there also may be a point where the quantity of time available to give care to oneself and others becomes so restricted that this erodes the quality component (Zubrick et al., 2000).

These child development 'resources' (e.g. time, income, and human, social and psychological capital) are differentially distributed across and within families. For example, mothers and fathers contribute different resources (i.e. human capital and income) in the education of their children (Downey, 1994). This is seen when the academic performance of students from lone-mother families is compared with that of students from lone-father families. Generally, children from single-mother families do less well academically owing to lack of economic parental resources (i.e. lower income) and children of lone-father families do less well academically owing to lack of interpersonal parental resources (i.e. less contact with school and less knowledge about their child's friends). Both the economic and interpersonal resources of the parents contribute to improving the likelihood of academic competence in their children. This is not to say that a lone parent can't provide both of these resources but it may be one of the reasons why academic outcomes of children in one parent families appear at first sight to be lower than those of students in couple families. It is also why these same differences disappear when the data are adjusted for family income and structure.

Hill and Tyson (2009) used meta-analytic techniques to synthesize the results of the existing empirical literature (50 research reports) to determine the extent to which parental involvement is positively associated with achievement outcomes in middle school. They found that school-based parental involvement was positively related to academic achievement but that a specific type of parental involvement that they termed 'academic socialization' was most strongly linked to academic achievement during middle school. Home-based involvement showed a much more inconsistent pattern of effects. Academic socialization entailed:

. . . parents' communication of their expectations for achievement and value for education, fostering educational and occupational aspirations in their adolescents, discussing learning strategies with children, and making preparations and plans for the future, including linking material discussed in school with students' interests and goals (Hill and Tyson, 2009, p. 758).

Finally, while this might lead to the belief that parents must 'show up' at school in order to deepen their own child's engagement and sense of values about school, this may not be the case. Studying parental involvement in school, McWayne et al. (2004) classified types of involvement as supportive home learning, direct school contact, and inhibited involvement. They found that supportive home learning involvement (e.g. talking about school and structuring the home environment to support learning) showed clear positive effects on child math and reading achievement. Inhibited involvement (e.g. time constraints and competing responsibilities) were negatively associated with achievement. Measures of direct school contact (e.g. attending parent meetings and talking to the teacher) were not linked with achievement outcomes.

It appears most likely that parent engagement asserts its principal effect through changing and instilling the attitudes and values children have with regard to schooling and the effort that it requires. This produces an apparent cycle of effects that could be called 'endogenous' – that is, engaged students have engaged parents and vice versa.

On the face of it, the contribution that families make towards engaging their children in and with schooling and learning is indisputable, and if all parents had these values, skills, and resources, the work of schools, much less the students themselves, would be greatly improved. Not all families can or will contribute in this way however. Not all families are 'engaged' with school and with education. There are several social and demographic characteristics associated with diminished family capacity to engage in a child's schooling: (a) ethnic and minority status, (b) poverty, (c) aggressive behaviour, (d) family problems, (e) inconsistent discipline/parenting, (f) physical abuse, (g) substance abuse, (h) living in a high crime area, and (g) a family culture of delinquency (Quinn et al., 2005).

Impacts of disengagement for children and young people

To outline why disengagement matters for children and young people, this review describes the impacts of student disengagement from two perspectives. First, it looks narrowly at why disengagement matters for children and young people while they are still at school. Then broadens this perspective to examine the long-term implications of being disengaged.

Impacts of disengagement at school

As noted in Section 2.2, disengagement is both a process and an outcome. Because engagement represents a direct pathway to learning, disengagement provides barriers to achieving learning outcomes, in addition to other potential adverse outcomes for children and young people.

The following list provides examples of social and learning outcomes for a number of disengagement indicators:

- Students who are disengaged in class, whether this is indicated by non-participation or behaving disruptively, have lower levels of achievement (Angus et al., 2009).
- Higher rates of absence, particularly unauthorised absences, are associated with progressively lower levels of achievement on standardised literacy, numeracy and writing tests. These patterns are observed for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (Hancock et al., 2013).
- Higher rates of absence are also associated with higher levels of social and emotional wellbeing problems for young children in kindergarten (Gottfried, 2014)
- Students with diminished school connectedness, the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included and supported by others at school, are at greater risk of a wide range of outcomes including poorer health and wellbeing, increased negative affect, elevated risk of anxiety or depressive symptoms, lower levels of achievement, and increased risk-taking behaviours such as substance use, and reduced violence (Dornbusch et al., 2001, Resnick et al., 1993, Shochet et al., 2006, Shochet et al., 2011, Bond et al., 2007).

Different disengagement indicators are often correlated or occur at the same time. For example, data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children shows that 10 to 11 year-old children who are more frequently absent also have less positive feelings towards school and their teachers (Daraganova, 2013).

Disengagement behaviours can also be seen in parallel forms in early and later years. Research studies have shown that:

- engagement levels are highly consistent from year-to-year (Gottfried et al., 2001)
- engagement levels are consistent from the early years of primary school to the middle years (Gottfried et al., 2007) and into high school (Gottfried et al., 2001)
- attendance patterns indicate that attendance rates are highly consistent from year to year, and can be seen from entry into school (Hancock et al., 2013)
- while most students' engagement declined over time (between 10 and 16 years in this particular study), individual students retained their relative position amongst other students. That is, the most engaged students at age 10 were also the most engaged students at age 16. Similarly, the most disengaged students at age 10 were also the most disengaged students at age 16 (Wylie and Hodgen, 2012).
- earlier disengagement is one of the strongest predictors of early school leaving (Rumberger and Lim, 2008, Alexander et al., 1997).

While engagement issues often come to the fore in high school settings with a particular concern on early school leaving, engagement is a persistent and progressive feature of a student's career at school. Given that engagement is essential for learning, it is important to pay attention to indicators of disengagement early.

Post-school impacts of disengagement

As outlined above, disengagement clearly matters for students' social and academic development across their school career. Disengagement also has important implications for the lives of young people outside of school, for their families and communities more broadly.

For a significant minority of students, the end-point of disengagement throughout school culminates in early school leaving, or school dropout, which often has implications for life course trajectories once young people leave school. For example, students who leave school early are at greater risk of:

- becoming and staying unemployed (Rumberger and Lamb, 2003)
- lower average income levels (ABS, 2009a, 2009b, ABS, 2010)
- social exclusion, at three times the rate of those who complete Year 12 (Azpitarte, 2012)
- risky health behaviours, such as smoking, being overweight and low levels of physical activity, along with poorer health and mental health outcomes (ABS, 2011a, Currie, 2009)

- engaging in crime, and consequently, being arrested and incarcerated (Pettit and Western, 2004).

As early school leavers go on to have their own families, their ability to support their own children at school is diminished, and another generation of young people is faced with an increased likelihood of disengagement. The intergenerational persistence of disadvantage means that disengagement matters not only for the wellbeing of individuals, but for future generations of children and young people. Of course, these individual and family trajectories are not predetermined. Not all young people who ever disengage will end up on these pathways, and many families can be lifted from a cycle of entrenched disadvantage. Disadvantaged students and families simply have more obstacles to overcome to reduce the likelihood of poor outcomes over the life course.

Beyond the lives of students and their families, school disengagement matters for communities and broader society. In addition to improved employment prospects, higher levels of education are also associated with raised levels of civic and social engagement, better health and life satisfaction and reduced levels of crime (McLachlan et al., 2013).

These factors, along with the acquisition of the basic skills that are needed to 'make it', translate to adults leading economically productive lives. A recent OECD report (OECD, 2015) suggested that 17 per cent of Australian youth do not possess basic educational skill levels, and that if all students left school with at least basic skills, the economic benefit of every school student achieving basic skills is calculated as worth 130 per cent of current GDP. The authors suggested that even in rich countries like Australia, the return for eliminating extreme school underperformance is such that the economic benefit would pay for the entire school system.

Risk factors associated with student disengagement

As noted earlier in this review, student disengagement is strongly associated with the home and family context and the degree to which parents can economically, socially, and emotionally support children and young people to engage at school. It has also briefly discussed student disengagement in the context of intergenerational disadvantage. Here, it is reiterated and the risk factors commonly associated with indicators of student disengagement are explicitly stated.

A large volume of both Australian and international research consistently shows that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience markers of disengagement including higher absence rates (Hancock et al., 2013), lack of interest at school (Thomson et al., 2013), poorer classroom behaviours (OECD, 2012), and early school leaving (Rumberger and Lamb, 2003).

Likewise, children in disadvantaged families are less likely to enrol in preschool programs (ABS, 2012), are developmentally vulnerable and show less school readiness upon entry to school (Australian Government, 2013, Edwards et al., 2009), and have significantly lower levels of achievement, on average, across all years of school (Hancock et al., 2013).

Across these studies 'disadvantage' may be otherwise termed low socio-economic status, and can be indicated by the following measures, either alone or in combination together, and can relate back to the sources of family or parent capital summarised in Section 2.3:

- low income
- low levels of education
- low occupational status
- unemployment
- disability, poor health or poor mental health

There are multiple and varied processes underlying the relationship between family disadvantage and children's school engagement and achievement (McLachlan et al., 2013). The home learning environment is the foundation for a student's success at school. Disadvantaged families may lack the necessary resources (i.e. time, income, and human, social and psychological capital) to prepare their children for entering school or to support them over their school careers. Experiencing disadvantage is often associated with increased stress and conflict within families (or diminished psychological capital), which is also associated with poorer outcomes for children, irrespective of household income level (Gray and Baxter, 2010).

Contributing to the home learning environment, Australian research has shown that the educational aspirations of students and their parents is also the most important factor explaining the gap in school completion rates between low and high socio-

economic status (SES) students (Polidano et al., 2013). For example, at age 15, low SES students were less likely to want to complete school (75% and 90% for high SES), but this was also reflected in parent attitudes. Only 58 per cent of low SES students said their parents wanted them to go on to post-school student, compared to 73 per cent for high SES students. This pattern was also reflected in research from the United Kingdom relating to nine year-olds, where 37 per cent of low SES mothers and 81 per cent of high SES mothers expected their child would go to university (Goodman and Gregg, 2010).

Summary of risk factors associated with disengagement

Taken together, children and young people at risk of experiencing one or multiple indicators of school disengagement include:

- students whose families provide limited educational support or who do not value education
- students living in families with limited resources, including human, psychological and social capital, income or time
- students who arrive at school with limited school readiness
- students who do not form a connection with school, peers or teachers
- students with frequent absences
- students who are not achieving well
- students with chronic illness, disability or mental health issues
- Aboriginal students
- students living in more remote areas
- students living in areas of concentrated disadvantage (independent of family-level disadvantage)
- students attending schools with a concentration of disadvantaged students.

Again, many of the factors above are indicators of disengagement (e.g. absences), but as disengagement is both a process and an outcome, each can lead to further and compounding disengagement through school.

What does disengagement look like for Australian students?

Given the complexity in defining and conceptualising what disengagement is, it would take a large and overwhelming research study to adequately capture all of the nuances of student disengagement. As Lawson and Lawson (2013) acknowledge, the majority of quantitative studies on disengagement examine just one indicator at a time. Studies that examine more than one indicator are highly unusual.

To capture the extent of student disengagement in Australia (and Western Australia) this review draws upon four main sources of information published since 2009 that have examined specific indicators of student disengagement, including:

1. Year 12 retention and attainment rates from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which are examined using numerous data sources (see 5.1)
2. the Pipeline Project, which followed 1,300 Western Australian students over four years, covering Years 2 to 11, asking their teachers to identify unproductive and disengaged classroom behaviours (see 5.2)
3. an international study from the Organisation of Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) of 15 year-olds in 2012, which collected data on student attitudes, connectedness and sense of belonging at school (see 5.3)
4. a 2013 study of student attendance and absence patterns of Western Australian students and their achievement on NAPLAN tests (see 5.4).

Together, these studies examine disengagement with the classroom, with peers, and with school. These studies are largely descriptive and provide some figures on the extent of the 'problem' of key disengagement indicators in Australia.

Year 12 retention and attainment rates in Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics periodically releases data to the public that includes information on Year 12 retention or completion rates. How such retention is defined varies according to the data source underlying the release. Three information sources are reviewed here.

Year 12 Apparent Retention Rate

The Apparent Retention Rate is most commonly cited in Australian research relating to school retention. This rate is a measure of the proportion of full-time school students who have stayed at school for a designated year and grade of education, and is expressed as a percentage of the respective cohort group that those students would be expected to come from. For example, an Apparent Retention Rate for Years 10 to 12 in 2010 would measure the proportion of Year 10 students in 2008 that had continued to Year 12 in 2010.

The Year 7/8 to Year 12 Apparent Retention Rates in 2014 (ABS, 2014) were as follows:

- 84 per cent for all students. This represented a continuing increase overall from 72 per cent in 2000, 75 per cent in 2005 and 78 per cent in 2010.
- 87 per cent for females and 80 per cent for males.
- 81 per cent for students at government schools, 84 per cent for Catholic schools and 92 per cent for Independent schools.
- 59 per cent for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students. This figure has increased from 36 per cent in 2000, 40 per cent in 2005 and 47 per cent in 2010.

The Apparent Retention Rate provides a reasonable approximation of the proportion of students who go on to enrol in Year 12, but it does have some limitations.

As the estimates are based on cohorts or whole groups of students, not individuals, it is impossible to account for students progressing at a faster or slower rate than one grade a year, students who move interstate or international migration or who move between sectors, or changing enrolment policies around age or grade structure between states and territories. The rates can also be influenced by unexpected increases in the population. For example, the 2014 Apparent Retention Rate for Western Australia increased by seven percentage points, however this increase also coincided with a 5 per cent increase in the population aged 14 to 18 years between 2009 and 2014.

Year 12 attainment for 20–24 year olds

Year 12 attainment rates are based on the proportion of people, usually aged 20 to 24 years, who have a Year 12 or equivalent attainment. These rates are largely based on ABS surveys, including the ABS Surveys of Education and Work.

Attainment rates are also used broadly within government, for example, the Council of Australian Governments' National Education Agreement (2009) aims to achieve a Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for 20 to 24 year-olds of 90 per cent by 2015.

As a wider range of information is collected in surveys, it is possible to examine how Year 12 attainment rates vary for different groups of young people, something that is not possible for the Apparent Retention Rates. Some of these figures are provided below. The proportions of 20 to 24 year-olds with a Year 12 attainment were as follows (ABS, 2011a):

- 71 per cent in 2001 up to 78 per cent in 2010. Much of this increase can be attributed to policy changes in school leaving age.
- For females the rate increased from 75 per cent in 2001 to 83 per cent in 2010, and for males 67 per cent to 73 per cent.

- The 2010 Year 12 attainment rate was 81 per cent for people living in major cities, 67 per cent for those in inner or outer regional areas and 64 per cent for people living in remote or very remote areas.
- The attainment rates vary widely between states, from 59 per cent in the Northern Territory, 70 per cent in Western Australia and 86 per cent in the Australian Capital Territory.
- People with a disability or who were restricted by a long term health condition such as asthma or a mental health condition (accounting for 22 per cent of all 20 to 24 year-olds) 62 per cent had attained Year 12, compared with 78 per cent without these conditions. Year 12 attainment for those with a profound or severe disability was 46 per cent, and 73 per cent for those with a mild or moderate disability.

Although the Year 12 retention and attainment rates are based on different source data and are measured different ways, it is interesting to note that the attainment rate of 78 per cent matches the 2010 Apparent Retention Rate. An updated Year 12 attainment rate would likely reflect the increase in apparent retention that occurred between 2010 and 2014.

Reasons for leaving school early

While early school-leaving may reflect problems with engagement and disaffection, 2009 data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Education and Training showed that a substantial proportion of young people leaving school early do so for reasons that are not necessarily related to disaffection or disengagement with school (ABS, 2009b). For young people aged 15 to 24 years who did not complete Year 12, the most common reason for not doing so was because the respondent either got or wanted a job or apprenticeship (35%). The next most common reason was they did not like school (26%), and 9 per cent because they did not do well. Other reasons included own ill-health or disability (8%), personal or family reasons (7%) or changing to another type of study (4%). These data indicate that school disengagement factors are just one aspect of why students leave school early, and alternative pathways into other educational options appear to be valid pathways for young people. That is, while some students who leave school early may be at greater risk of the adverse outcomes we highlighted earlier, others will pursue alternative pathways into further education and employment.

Australian Longitudinal Census Dataset

The two sources of data described above provide an indication of Australian trends relating to Year 12 retention and attainment, suggesting that within the past five years around 80 per cent of students continue to, and complete, Year 12. In 2014, the ABS undertook a project to match individuals from the 2006 Census to the 2011 Census, with the data becoming available to researchers in early 2015. This data allows researchers to examine Year 12 attainment of a more narrowly defined group

of young people (19 to 20 years) and how attainment rates differ according to their circumstances when they were aged 14 to 15 years at the 2006 Census. Though this is previously unpublished data, some preliminary results are provided here about Year 12 attainment for young people aged 19 to 20, by a selected range of individual and family characteristics collected five years prior, see Table 1 (ABS, 2015).

Consistent with the other ABS estimates, and with the risk factors summarised in Section 4.1, Year 12 attainment for 19 to 20 year-olds was typically lower for males, young Aboriginal people, and those living outside of major cities. Additionally, Year 12 attainment was lower for young people who in 2006 were:

- more limited in English proficiency
- living in rented accommodation
- living in households with lower levels of income, where others were unemployed, or where there was no internet connection
- living with a male or female parent who was unemployed
- living with male or female parents who themselves had lower levels of high school completion. However, young people whose parents did not go to school had higher attainment rates overall – for example, 91 per cent of young people whose father did not go to school had Year 12 attainment. While this was a very small group of people (less than 1%), this is an interesting finding which warrants further examination. For example, this group may include people who migrated to Australia from countries with limited educational opportunities
- born in Australia and other Oceanic countries. Higher rates of Year 12 attainment were observed for young people born outside of Australia.

These factors highlight some of the risk factors identified earlier (e.g. parents with lower levels of education and income) as well as other potential risk factors such as housing instability (for those living in rented homes), lack of internet (possibly limiting students' ability to complete assignments, but also reflecting a lack of resources in the home) and other social exclusion factors such as limited English proficiency. Students with limited English proficiency are likely to struggle with reading and communication, limiting their ability to achieve in class which in turn may lead to disengagement and disaffection.

Table 1: Percentage of 19 to 20 year olds with Year 12 or equivalent attainment in 2011, by selected individual and family characteristics in 2006.

Characteristic	Percentage	Characteristic	Percentage
All 19–20 year olds	75%		
Gender		Aboriginal Status	
Males	70%	Not Aboriginal	76%
Females	80%	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	49%
Male Parent Labour Force Status		Female Parent Labour Force Status	
Employed	78%	Employed	77%
Unemployed	72%	Unemployed	66%
Not in labour force	72%	Not in labour force	72%
Male Parent Highest Year of School		Female Parent Highest Year of School	
Year 12	87%	Year 12	85%
Year 11	76%	Year 11	73%
Year 10	70%	Year 10	68%
Year 9	65%	Year 9	55%
Year 8	64%	Year 8	67%
Did not go to school	91%	Did not go to school	78%
English Proficiency		Housing Tenure	
Very well	88%	Owned outright	82%
Well	80%	Owned with mortgage	77%
Not well	77%	Rented	64%
Not at all	60%	Other	82%
Type of Internet Connection		Household Income	
Broadband	79%	Less than \$25,999	65%
Dial-up	74%	\$26,000 to \$51,999	69%
None	58%	\$52,000 to \$88,399	73%
Other	62%	\$88,400 and above	82%
Country of birth			
Oceania	74%		
Not Oceania	90%		

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Longitudinal Census Dataset CURF data 2015.

Oceania includes Australia, New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia (excluding Hawaii).

Summary: Year 12 retention and attainment as indicators of disengagement

Together, the ABS sources show that the likelihood of progressing through to Year 12, or attaining Year 12 or equivalent, is lower for disadvantaged students, whether it is defined by housing tenure, income, parent education or parent labour force status. These estimates do not account for students who experience multiple or compounded disadvantage, where wider disparities may be observed. As noted early, school completion is strongly associated with other positive trajectories into further education and employment. The lower rates of Year 12 attainment among disadvantaged young people increases the likelihood of experiencing life-long and intergenerational disadvantage. Improving Year 12 attainment rates for young people in disadvantaged families or communities is therefore worthy of attention.

However, it is also worth noting that while there are disparities in school retention by various demographic factors, the proportion of students with Year 12 attainment rarely exceeds 90 per cent (for example, those attending Independent schools). Thus, even for more advantaged groups of students, around 10 per cent do not complete Year 12. While students from advantaged backgrounds are less likely to experience the risk factors associated with early school leaving (e.g. disability or mental health issues), it is only a reduced risk. A proportion of these students will still experience risk factors such as disability or mental health problems. If Australian Government aims for 90 per cent Year 12 (or Certificate III) attainment by 2020 (Council of Australian Governments, 2013), then multiple perspectives will be required, not just those focusing on disadvantaged families.

Unproductive classroom behaviours as indicators of disengagement - The Pipeline Project

Study background

The Pipeline Project (Angus et al., 2009) tracked almost 1,300 Western Australian students for four years between 2005 and 2008, commencing with four groups of students in Years 2, 4, 6 and 8. Over the course of the study, 412 teachers in 31 schools provided information on a range of student behaviours, along with the results of standardised literacy and numeracy tests. The students in the Pipeline study were not representative of the broader student population as a whole. Lower SES students and schools were deliberately over-sampled to ensure the relevance of the study to the schools involved. This design means that the findings relate to a sub-population of students, and the prevalence of disengaged behaviours for the population of Western Australian students is therefore likely to be lower than those reported in the study.

Teachers completed behaviour checklists that signal various aspects of disengagement, which were grouped into 10 categories of unproductive behaviours:

Aggressive	Impulsive
Non-compliant	Unmotivated
Disruptive	Unresponsive
Inattentive	Unprepared
Erratic	Irregular attendance

Using this information, the project aimed to address three questions:

1. To what extent does classroom behaviour explain why students fall behind and fail to meet acceptable standards in literacy and numeracy?
2. If student classroom behaviour does influence academic performance, what forms of classroom behaviour are most significant?
3. Are the students whose behaviour has contributed to their underperformance likely to ever catch up?

Project findings

The Pipeline project examined how unproductive classroom behaviours could be grouped together, and identified four main types of student behaviour. These included:

- **Productive** (60%) – These students, the largest group, behaved productively and according to expectation in class.
- **Disengaged** (20%) – These students were disengaged with instruction, but were not aggressive or non-compliant. They were students who, for example, found their schoolwork uninteresting, were inclined to give up on challenging tasks, looked for distractions, failed to prepare for lessons, and opted out of class activities.
- **Low-level disruptive** (12%) – This group were mainly disruptive in class, but otherwise did not show disengaged or aggressive behaviour.
- **Uncooperative** (8%) – This group were mainly defined as aggressive and non-compliant but were also unproductive in the other categories.

Noting that students could change their behaviour from year-to-year, Angus et al. also examined how consistent classroom behaviours were over the four years.

- Around 40 per cent of students were consistently productive, and 20 per cent were consistently unproductive over the four years. The remaining 40 per cent of students fluctuated from year-to-year.
- Only around 3 per cent of students were consistently and seriously unproductive, and included students with identified mental health problems.

These students behaved in a way that seriously undermined their prospects of satisfactory academic progress. This number was equivalent to fewer than one student per class on average.

- Students who were identified as disengaged, low-level disruptive or uncooperative all achieved at lower levels than productive students. While the uncooperative students generally performed at the lowest level, there was very little difference in achievement between the three non-productive groups. In this case, the type of disengagement appeared to matter little to achievement, only if they were disengaged at all.
- These non-productive students performed at a standard between one and two year levels below their productive counterparts. Productive, engaged students not only achieved at higher levels, but maintained their standing over the four years. Disengaged students generally did not catch up.
- Of students who significantly improved or deteriorated during the study, teachers said these changes were largely related to either the experience of a traumatic event, and then the resolution of the event (if appropriate), or through a determined effort by both teacher and student.
- Boys were more likely than girls to be disengaged and behave unproductively, and more likely to be uncooperative, however these gender differences did not translate to differences in overall achievement.

The study also examined how classroom behaviours changed from the start to the end of the year. The study showed that students who started the year exhibiting unproductive behaviours had generally improved towards the end of the year. Despite the improvement within the year, the proportion of students behaving unproductively did not change across school years. The authors suggested that:

...each year constitutes a new cycle during which teachers strive to enhance the classroom behaviour of their students, achieving more successes than failures. Then in the following year a new cycle commences, usually with a new teacher and sometimes a freshly constituted class of students, who together spend a large part of the year negotiating, then adopting, more acceptable norms of behaviour (Angus et al., 2009, p. 43).

The Pipeline Project also conducted focus groups with teachers to obtain their views on student disengagement, we examine these views in a further section of the review relating to teacher perspectives more broadly.

Summary: unproductive classroom behaviours as indicators of student disengagement

The Pipeline Project (Angus et al., 2009) provided valuable insight into the various disengaged behaviours that occur in the classroom and at school more broadly. However, many different types of (disengaged) behaviours were examined. Using a definition of any of the behaviours in order to be identified behaving unproductively sets a very high standard for behaving appropriately or being engaged in the classroom. Therefore, assuming that 40 per cent of students were 'disengaged' likely overstates the extent of disengagement of these students. It is probably more appropriate to consider the 20 per cent who were consistently unproductive, and the 3 per cent who were consistently and seriously unproductive, as the students who are likely to be disengaged from school. Considering this was a sample skewed towards low-SES schools, the results of this study suggests that the majority of students are largely engaged, with a small group, no higher than 20 per cent, behaving in ways that might cause concern.

Moreover, students who were generally compliant and cooperative, though disengaged, constituted about a fifth of the student cohort. The majority of these students did not have (identified) mental health problems requiring access to psychological and medical services. Instead, these students found their schoolwork uninteresting, were inclined to give up on challenging tasks, looked for distractions, failed to prepare for lessons, and opted out of class activities. This is a substantial number of students and represents a significant challenge for schools.

Student attitudes, belonging and connectedness as disengagement indicators – findings from PISA

Project background

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is managed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). PISA aims to measure how well 15 year olds are prepared to use their knowledge and skills such that they can meet real-life challenges. In 2012, half-a-million 15 year old students in 65 countries participated in the assessment. In Australia, 775 schools and 14,481 students participated. The sample was representative of the broad Australian population of students.

As opposed to standardised literacy and numeracy tests, PISA aims to assess how well young people can apply their knowledge and skills to real-life problems and situations. In 2012, the focus was on mathematical literacy and how well students could address real-life problems with mathematical skills. In addition to mathematical literacy, students in 2012 answered a questionnaire about their background, and attitudes towards school, in addition to their motivation towards learning maths. Questions relating to student attitudes were also collected in 2003,

which allows us to examine change in attitudes towards school over time. Here, the following measures are examined as indicators of student engagement and disengagement:

- students' attitude towards school and the value of working hard
- students' sense of belonging at school
- how many students skipped class
- how many students skipped days of school

The value of working hard and investing time

Questions relating to investing time into their schoolwork showed:

- just over 90 per cent of students believed that investing effort would lead to success at school
- more than 40 per cent of students said that family demands or other problems prevented them from putting time into school work. The figure was higher for Aboriginal students (53%) than non-Aboriginal students (41%).

With respect to attitudes towards school learning, the vast majority had positive attitudes about working hard at school:

- 95 per cent of students agreed that trying hard at school will help them get a good job.
- 96 per cent agreed that trying hard will help them get into a good university.
- 97 per cent agreed they enjoyed receiving good grades.
- 96 per cent agreed that trying hard at school is important.

Attitudes towards school

Despite students' beliefs about working hard at school, a lower proportion of the students had a positive attitude about their school:

- 75 per cent disagreed that school has done little to prepare them for adult life after leaving school. Put another way, 25 per cent of students thought that school hasn't prepared them for life after school.
- 10 per cent believed that school had been a waste of time.
- 83 per cent agreed that school had given them the confidence to make decisions.
- 90 per cent agreed that school has taught them things that could be useful in a job.

Connectedness with school and sense of belonging

Similarly, many students appeared to have a poor connection with their school and other students:

- 15 per cent of students felt like an outsider or that they were left out of things at school.
- 16 per cent did not make friends very easily.
- 22 per cent felt they did not belong at school.
- 15 per cent felt awkward and out of place at school.
- 8 per cent believed that other students did not like them.
- 12 per cent felt lonely at school.
- 20 per cent were not happy at school.
- 31 per cent disagreed that things were ideal at their school.
- 21 per cent were not satisfied with their school.

Many of the same questions relating to sense of belonging and attitudes towards school were also asked of 15 year-olds in the 2003 PISA survey, allowing an examination of how these constructs may have changed over time. The composite measures of students' sense of belonging at school showed that Australian 15 year-olds sense of belonging declined between 2003 and 2012, from 0.05 (slightly above the OECD average) to -0.15 (less than the OECD average). The decrease of 0.21 points between surveys is a sizable decrease. Similarly, on measures of attitudes towards school, Australian students' scores decreased from 0.26 in 2003 to 0.09 in 2012, a decline of 0.17 points, though still above average at both times. The decline in attitude towards school was four times the decline seen across other OECD countries.

Skipping class and school

Students were also asked how frequently they arrive late at school, skipped classes or skipped whole days of school. While Australian students were close to the OECD average with respect to arriving late at school (25% of students arrived late at least once in the two weeks prior to assessment) or skipping a class (13.5% admitted to doing this in previous two weeks) twice as many Australian students reported skipping entire days of school (31%) as students in other OECD countries (15%).

Summary: student attitudes, belonging and connectedness

Together, the findings from the most recent PISA study suggests that the vast majority of 15 year-olds in Australia recognise the value of school and that working hard is important for their future, but their actual educational experiences are not living up to their expectations.

On average, over 20 per cent of Australian students felt they did not belong, were not happy or were not satisfied at school. Students' sense of belonging and attitude towards school appeared to have declined between 2003 and 2012.

Patterns of absence for Western Australian students

Student absence is often considered a marker of disengagement and a significant risk factor for poor achievement at school.

While most students experience some necessary absence from school for episodes of illness or family emergencies, other absences, particularly those which are unauthorised, may reflect broader engagement problems with school. To examine absence patterns in Australian students, we refer to the Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts report (Hancock et al., 2013), which examined patterns of absence over time, how these patterns varied for different student groups, and how absence related to achievement.

Project background

The study was based on the enrolment, attendance and achievement records of around 400,000 Western Australian students enrolled in the public school system over the period 2008 to 2012. While the report draws on the information from Western Australian students, the state and year-level attendance rates were consistent with published data from other states. Similar patterns of results would be expected in other states and territories, with the exception of the Northern Territory.

Main findings

- Attendance patterns for students were highly consistent across each year of primary school (around 92%). Most students had a similar level of attendance from year-to-year. Between 72 and 76 per cent of primary students attended school at least 90 per cent of the time. By Year 10, only half of students attend at least 90 per cent of the time.
- Attendance rates for all student groups declined in the first year of secondary schooling, and continued to decline thereafter.

Consistent with previously published research, the following student groups had poorer attendance at school:

- Students in school with a lower socio-economic index.
- Students living outside of major cities. Only 40 to 45 per cent of students living in very remote areas regularly attend school in the primary years, and only 30 per cent attend regularly by Year 10
- Aboriginal students – the unauthorised absence rate for primary Aboriginal students varied between 10 to 15 per cent, compared with around 3 per cent

for non-Aboriginal students. The rate of unauthorised absence was around five times higher for Aboriginal students across all year levels.

- Highly mobile students. Of students who attended five or more schools over the period, only 40 per cent attended school regularly in primary school, and only 20 per cent attended regularly in high school. Moving school is disruptive and will have likely implications for engagement. Moves that occur during a semester are more disruptive than moves that occur at the end of a term or at the end of the year.
- Students whose parents had lower levels of education and occupational status.

For each of the groups identified above, the disparities in absence rates were evident from Year 1, and clearly influenced by factors prior to school entry. The gaps remained throughout primary school and became progressively wider in high school.

Students' absence patterns were also compared with their achievement levels. Consistent with previous research, the results showed that:

- every day of additional absence from school was associated with declines in average achievement levels. This pattern was evident for students across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- unauthorised absences (those absences where a reason for the absence was unacceptable or could not be established) was a much stronger predictor of poor achievement than authorised absences such as illness. Unauthorised absences reflect more than just time away from school, but also behavioural and engagement issues. Distinct gaps in unauthorised absence rates between advantaged and disadvantaged students were evident from Year 1. That young children were having unauthorised absences possibly reflect differences in parental attitudes about attendance, but also potential engagement issues with the child, for example school phobia or school refusal.

Summary of Australian disengagement indicators

Together, the four sources of data reviewed above provide a consistent description of disengagement indicators for Australian and Western Australian students.

- The majority of Australian students are engaged at school, attend regularly, see the value that education provides for the future, and achieve above benchmark levels.
- While most students see the value in attending and working hard, there is a significant minority of between 10 to 20 per cent who do not enjoy school, do not feel connected with their school, and are dissatisfied with their school. This is not necessarily a new or emerging pattern in Australia, with a 2001 Australian report also suggesting that disengaged young people often saw education as offering the potential to open their future prospects but frequently felt devalued by their schools (Australian Centre for Equity through Education & the Australian Youth Research Centre, 2001).
- Students with attendance, engagement and achievement problems are more likely to be from lower SES backgrounds, and Aboriginal students. These issues also start early on at school, and while secondary schools often deal with the worst fall-out of disengagement, the pathway into disengagement starts early and is largely due to student and family factors. These patterns are also consistent with the broader international literature.
- The academic outcomes for students who are disengaged (whether actively or passively disengaged) are substantially lower than for otherwise engaged students. While there are some exceptions, all indicators of disengagement are associated with lower levels of achievement.
- It appears to be very difficult for disengaged students to make up lost time. Once they fall behind it is very hard to catch up.
- Despite improvement to Year 12 retention rates, it appears that the connectedness that students have with their school has decreased since 2003. This decrease may help to explain the slide in Australia's standing in the international ranks over the same period. It may also be that with the increase in student retention beyond Year 10 over the period that the 2012 PISA study included more disengaged students than in previous years.

What do students, teachers, and others have to say about engagement?

In almost two decades, even though we have learned much about the kinds of educational experiences that engage students in their learning... major reforms in secondary schooling have not been realised. It seems that, over the years, bureaucratic, 'top down' strategies for change have had very little influence, overall, in producing more engaging educational experiences in secondary schools, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This indicates that educational engagement is a critical equity issue (Callingham, 2013, p. 4).

As previously noted, the vast majority of students appear to be engaged in schooling and with education as a whole. Their levels of engagement may vary from weak to strong, but at a broad population level most Australian students fare well across multiple indicators of engagement, though a significant minority are not doing so well.

In the quote above, Callingham (2013) gives particular voice to what is problematic about disengagement – disengagement concentrates diminished life prospects in a sub-population of Australian students. This sub-population contains a disproportionate number of students who are disabled, have serious mental illnesses, and are deeply disadvantaged with respect to material, social and emotional support. The current configuration of Australian education and schooling leaves these students behind and deepens the likelihood of ongoing disadvantage, social exclusion, and disenfranchisement (Azpitarte, 2012, Gonski et al., 2011, Stokes and Turnbull, 2009).

The Australian social contract still has a central tenet that education should be a game-changer for all children. In this regard educational institutions, schools and their staff have a fundamental responsibility to implement approaches that establish and sustain engagement and reduce the likelihood of disengagement. Does it matter how families support their children and develop their attitudes towards school, that they provide material and financial supports, and that they participate themselves in the education of their children? Of course it does. However, what is the position of schools and teachers where families cannot, or will not do this? This is where significant effort and institutional 'will' is required to deliver more creative solutions and choices that are more responsive to the experiences of these students.

The challenge here is more than just hoping that 'kids will like school,' or in thinking that broad-based universal policies or 'wellbeing' strategies aimed at whole-of-school populations will necessarily deliver school connectedness, or school engagement, 'for all'. Yes, these programs have their place, but, the developmental ramp that

produces a disengaged student is a long one and it is occupied by influences that are more than just the sum of the student's endowments and those of their family.

In the following sections we review and summarise some of the principal findings from qualitative and quantitative studies of school engagement and disengagement from three perspectives: students, teachers, and families.

What do students have to say about engagement?

School engagement and disengagement research is notable for the general absence of student experiences, voices, guidance and participation in defining and addressing it.

The vast majority of what is available about disengagement is generated on and about students rather than by and for them. Among the scant Australian literature there are some excellent qualitative studies that contribute significant insight into school engagement and disengagement as experienced and told by students themselves.

The studies of student perspectives tend to fall in one of two camps – those which seek the perspective of students who are still participating in school processes and willing to talk about issues of engagement, and those who are seeking the voices of students who have left school and are re-engaging through alternative education pathways. The common thread that binds these studies together is what students have to say about relationships – particularly with their teachers, but also their peers and families.

Students who are at school

The studies of students who are still at school are typically concentrated on students in the middle years, around Years 6 to 8. One exception is a small study by Jackson and Cartmel (2010) who interviewed eight Year 1 students in a disadvantaged area in Queensland and asked children what they liked and disliked about school. The key theme was that enjoying school was about friendships. If the students had friendships from preschool they were more optimistic and had reduced anxiety about starting school. For students who did not already have friends, making friends eased their concerns about starting school. The authors noted that simply giving children a choice about their desks was a priority for the children as they established and maintained friendships. For children who were uncertain about their knowledge of school or what it involves, having friendships increased their motivation to attend and engage in the school environment in the first year.

For these young children, the social aspect is the most meaningful part of attending school. As children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds are at greater risk of having a negative perception of school, resulting in more difficult transitions and early disengagement from school (Australian Government, 2009), undertaking

school transitions with friends, or making friends upon school entry is likely to enhance children's enjoyment and their positive perceptions of school.

In a study of older children in the middle years of school, Carrington et al. (2010) used a 'students as researchers' model to examine the views of around 120 students across four lower socioeconomic schools about engagement and disengagement. The main themes of engagement centred on the following issues:

- **Pedagogy** – Students said they are engaged when they were having fun, when teachers make learning interesting and when there was a disciplined classroom environment. Conversely, students were disengaged when class is boring, when there is an undisciplined environment and also when their class involves too much writing.
- **Content** – This theme related to whether or not students like the subject, as well as the difficulty of the content. Classes that were too easy or too difficult were not engaging.
- **Teacher** – Students were disengaged if they did not like the teacher. All of the students said they were engaged when they like the teacher. Some students disengaged in class if the teacher talked too much.
- **Self or peer issues** – This was an issue for fewer students than the themes above. Some students felt disengaged if they were in a class without friends or if they felt like they were being left out. Students were engaged when they were in a class with friends and if they felt happy.
- **Personal issues** – A few students indicated that personal issues like tiredness, hunger or issues going on at home prevented them from being engaged.

As with other studies, the theme of relationships was of critical importance to the students. Even when students commented on being bored, sometimes this boredom was more than just disinterest in a topic, but were bored as a result of feeling alienated or devalued. Thus, the social aspects of learning are very important for children and young people.

In further work, Carrington et al. (2013) detail a student research project conducted by students in schools to examine school engagement. The data reported are from student participation in a school research project call 'STAR – Students and Teachers Achieving Re-Engagement', involving four secondary schools serving low socio-economic communities. The students designed and executed the research project then shared their findings in a presentation to students and teachers at the end of the year. Four underlying factors relating to students' concepts and voices about engagement at school were identified: (1) Interest in learning, (2) Group interaction, (3) Student-teacher relationships and (4) Desire to do well at school.

In the later years of secondary schooling, Rahman (2010) conducted a qualitative study with 36 Aboriginal senior secondary students in South Australia on factors

which facilitate improved learning, achievement and school completion. The study particularly sought the perspectives of students who were successful and determined to complete Year 12, but who had also experienced barriers to achieving success. These students typically recognised the value of working hard academically and demonstrating positive attitudes towards education. All had a desire to succeed and achieve, and all were supported and encouraged by their families to do well at school.

The students identified the following factors as being important for supporting their retention through Year 12:

- regular school attendance
- support from home, school and others
- a comfortable and happy home environment
- well developed and planned career aspirations
- positive schooling motivations
- positive peer and teacher relationships
- a positive cultural identity
- a culturally supportive environment
- school enjoyment and the perceived value of school

When asked about what sort of changes were needed for more students to succeed, the students indicated that the following were required:

- more cultural input and inclusivity
- more Aboriginal teachers
- inclusion of Aboriginal studies as a core subject

Some students perceived that other students left school before completing Year 10 because the learning system was not flexible enough and there was no room for a tailored approach. The students pointed to role models of other Aboriginal students achieving well as being inspiring. Students also commented that teacher effectiveness was very important for promoting engagement in class. Effective teachers were identified as those who go the extra mile for their students, who care for and counsel students, and those who are reliable.

In a quantitative study, Bodkin-Andrews et al. (2010) conducted two surveys, six months apart, with 1,234 secondary students (10% Aboriginal) across four schools in New South Wales. This study examined how academic self-concept (confidence about school) related to other engagement indicators including school aspirations and absenteeism. The results found very similar patterns for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Most students reported positive levels of academic self-confidence and school aspirations, and low levels of disengagement, though Aboriginal students reported lower levels of engagement than non-Aboriginal students. Examining which measures at Time 1 predicted other measures six months later at Time 2, Bodkin-Andrews et al. found for Aboriginal students that academic

self-concept is a large driver of later disengagement and school aspirations, but the reverse pattern was not observed (that is disengagement and school aspirations at Time 1 was not related to academic self-concept six months later). These results suggest that particularly for Aboriginal students, efforts that promote academic confidence among Aboriginal students is worthy of attention.

Finally, a qualitative study of residential mobility showed that stability in housing tenure can be a significant barrier to engagement for some young people. Rowe and Savelsberg (2010) interviewed eight young people aged 18 to 23 who between them had lived in 26 homes throughout secondary school, including private and public rental accommodation, community housing and home ownership. All homes were located in low socio-economic areas. Within the eight students, two groups could be identified. The first group experienced multiple residential moves and high levels of school mobility, and the second group also frequently moved house but did not need to change schools. The group that experienced school mobility all had worse experiences of school retention, poorer relationships with family, teachers and peers. None of the group had undertaken further education or employment, and all had mental health issues.

The young people who frequently moved schools indicated that they struggled with a sense of belonging at school and often found school a hostile place where they struggled to make positive connections:

I had to go to special ed classes just to catch up because of my situation, not because I was dumb but the teachers treated us like we were trouble in that class. It was hard to keep making new friends and pick up where I left off because I was constantly moving house and school so I just gave up (Rowe and Savelsberg, 2010, p. 40).

For students who frequently moved house but could remain at the same school, the experiences were more positive

It was good [not having to change schools after moving house], yeah much easier to continue with my classes and all the same people. My work ed coordinator was great, he helped me get into the courses I needed to do what I wanted and that made it easy to finish Year 12. He still pops in to my work now to see how I'm getting on (Rowe and Savelsberg, 2010, p. 40).

For these students, insecure housing resulting in school mobility had serious consequences on their ability to form relationships, resulting in feelings of isolation, no sense of belonging, purpose or hope.

On the other hand, other recent research examining the school experiences of young people who are homeless shows that a substantial proportion of young people will first turn to school supports such as counsellors, teachers and principals when they

first become homeless or after running away from home. For young people whose risk of disengagement with school is more strongly connected to family issues than with the school, schools can be seen as a safe and familiar place where they can get help (Thielking et al., 2015). Schools are an important resource for young people.

Students who are re-engaging with education

Smyth and Robinson (2014) interviewed 100 young people aged 14 to 15 years enrolled in a re-engagement program in Victoria. Using global ethnographic techniques to analyse narrative accounts from these previously disengaged young people about their experiences of school and more particularly the re-engagement program, the authors generate concise 'portraits' of the experience of these students. Not all of their responses to the re-engagement program were positive – but the vast majority were positive about the student experience of engagement:

I now get an opportunity to work on stuff. Everyone is treated equal and I find it better. We are learning different kinds of things in different ways. The teachers can actually have a joke [here], but the teachers at high school couldn't. It's safer and I've got more control over my life. In high school the teachers controlled you, but here we get that sort of freedom. You get more say about what you can do [Ryan], (Smyth and Robinson, 2014, p. 230).

Black et al. (2010) sought the perspectives of 13 young people who were enrolled in a basic literacy and numeracy skills course at TAFE. All of the students, aged 18 or younger, had all left and were disconnected with school and were undertaking the course as part of a flexible pathway to achieving Year 10. The students talked about having disliked being talked down to by teachers and that schools had 'pushed' them out by asking them to leave. Other students did not have behavioural problems but had difficulty coping in the school system, truanting so often they saw little point in staying. School was not something that worked for them, so they sought an alternative pathway. Most of the students had plans for what they wanted to do next, typically training or further education, and some students even went back to school to complete Year 12.

The students saw three aspects of the course as being particularly significant:

1. **Relationships with their teachers** – The students were able to develop relationships with adults they could trust and who treated them with respect. Some students recognised that these relationships allowed them to relate better with other authority figures, including employers.
2. **Individualised and flexible learning environment** – The structure of the course meant that students took responsibility for their own learning, and teachers were on hand to assist them where necessary. The course was all assignment based and had no exams. If students did struggle, they did not

face any stigma or put downs, contributing to the course being a safe environment for the students.

3. **Relationships with peers** – Both the students and teachers observed that forming friendships with the other students was important. By attending TAFE, some young people were able to avoid former bad influences. Teachers noted that if students could form friendships when they entered the class, their prospects of success were improved.

If they don't form a friendship almost straight away, then they are not going to last (Black et al., 2010, p. 111).

Overall, the interviews indicated that attending alternative education pathways such as this one is not always a seamless process. While many students do not complete the program, the social aspects were attractive and the classes helped students to reconnect with the learning process, other adults, and the community.

Summary of the student experience – relationships are key

It would seem that mutual respect, trust and the important connection that teachers and students make with each other are as significant as any pedagogical techniques or methods in enabling some of the most disaffected students to reconnect with learning (Black et al., 2010, p. 111).

The dominant finding from students themselves is that relationships are of central importance to sustaining engagement at school. Whannell and Allen (2011) found that poor teacher-student relationships were significantly associated with student emotional engagement at school and with their subsequent decisions to leave school before completing Year 12. This consistent observation is noted by Eccles and Roeser (2011) who review international studies finding that student perceptions of differential treatment by their teachers has a significant cumulative and negative effect on their motivation and achievement.

The views of young people about the significance of their peer relationships to their school engagement should also be noted. Whannell and Allen (2011) found that there was no evidence in their findings that poor peer relationships contributed to school attrition. However, many other studies have found strong associations between experiences of bullying and victimisation and school engagement (Lester et al., 2013). Kim et al. (2011) compared the strength of individual level factors (motivation), school climate factors (teachers and school grounds) and peer relationships finding that the most significant predictor of high school dropout was the quality of students' affiliations with their peers.

Finally, it is also important to appreciate that having friends and being engaged at school are not necessarily predictive. Vickers et al. (2014) noted that belonging

arises when academically engaged students are connected in friendship groups that support respectful relations with teachers. Entire peer groups can be disengaged and nonetheless offer substantial support to group members.

On balance though, engagement as reported by students directly, and through studies that measure their experience return compelling evidence that relationships, with teachers and with peers, matter to engagement.

Finally, students spend thousands of hours at school and little is asked of them about what it is like. When students are asked their views they provide effective, experienced, valid, and compelling descriptions of engagement and disengagement processes. Their accounts are significant for their focus on the school context as the 'site' of their engagement or disengagement. While any cursory reading of these findings would suggest significant challenges in the family and personal lives of these young people, their accounts were notable for the consistent focus on the experience of school to their lives and futures. Whatever the reality of the policy context might be, the resounding and converging message from young people experiencing engagement or disengagement is that relationships – with peers and with teachers – are foundational to the engagement experience. These students cited personal safety, being listened to and being respected as leading requisites for their engagement at school.

What do teachers say about engagement?

Teachers' views on engagement are more common in the literature, and they have plenty to say. These views are reviewed here, and conclude this section by comparing these views to those of students. Whereas the views of students broadly rested on the value of relationships, and to a small degree on pedagogy, more diverse views are generally captured in the literature relating to teacher perspectives.

The Pipeline Project (Angus et al., 2009) was introduced earlier in the review to document results of a study of unproductive classroom behaviours. This study also sought the views of 29 teachers in participating schools and their thoughts about disengaged behaviour. The following points summarise their views:

- Teachers believed that behaviour in schools is an increasing problem, but there are many factors outside of their control contributing to the problem. Children burdened by substance abuse in the home, for example, were more likely to be absent or late, and when they did attend school, were often tired.
- Some teachers reported problems with parents being able to apply 'tough love' with their children or being able to adequately discipline their children. On the other hand, some children were not provided with enough care for them to function in the classroom. Some children were caught up in the

conflicts between divorcing parents, and some teachers thought some parents did not recognise the value of schooling.

- In these sorts of cases, teachers were frustrated with some support agencies who would only become involved in extreme cases of neglect or abuse, and staff turnover issues in these agencies was also perceived as a problem.
- Teachers believed that they more commonly need to use more coaxing, persuading and negotiating now than in the past.
- In tandem with a reliance on negotiation to persuade students to behave appropriately in the classroom, more students now expect to be rewarded for their cooperation, that is, expectations about entitlement to rewards have increased over time. Teachers believed that these sorts of interactions make it difficult for students to develop a love of learning, or to experience the satisfaction from the sense of achievement as its own reward.

Harris (2010) conducted structured interviews with 20 English teachers about ways of facilitating student engagement. Teachers fell into one of three categories of how they thought engagement could best be facilitated:

1. **Delivery** – The teacher prescribes activities, and then intends to maintain order within the classroom and get students to participate. Structure is required so that students know how to participate in activities.
2. **Modification** – Teachers modify activities to cater for student interest, motivation and ability. Teachers intend to make activities achievable and interesting to students so that they will more readily participate and succeed.
3. **Collaboration** – These teachers would collaborate with students to construct learning activities that were suited to student purposes, with the intent to develop student thinking skills that enable them to learn.

Other insights from teachers included:

- Some teachers believe that students are more motivated to avoid punishment than to achieve success, and in turn this influences teaching practices and disciplinary methods. Teachers saw controlling and improving behaviours as a major part of the challenge of engaging their students.
- There is an expectation of mutual participation by students and teachers, where each is expected to bring something into the classroom. Teachers were willing to modify their teaching methods and be flexible as long as they could get students to achieve what they wanted. In this sense, students did not have a meaningful say in what was being learned.
- With a range of student abilities in the class, learning tasks need to be structured to be challenging and achievable across a range of skill levels. This is difficult to achieve, so teachers will teach to the middle and help out the students on either side.
- While teachers recognise that giving control of learning to students could be of benefit, they find it difficult to relinquish the power or turn over the control.

Notably, one teacher commented:

Cultural change will be needed if teachers begin to honestly reflect on their pedagogy and its effectiveness. Because at the moment if we see a classroom where students aren't working, teachers see it as the students' problem and the students as the reason. They don't see it as their own (Harris, 2010, p. 144).

Sullivan et al. (2014) reported on teachers' views about student behaviour, and highlighted the importance of increasing levels of student engagement through changes to policy, pedagogy and resources. The authors noted that the most prevalent unproductive student behaviours reported by teachers were talking out of turn, avoiding doing schoolwork and disengaging from classroom activities. Over two thirds of teachers reported disengaged behaviours on at least an 'almost daily/daily' basis. Importantly, this research reveals that of all the unproductive behaviours that occur in classrooms, disengaged behaviours are extremely prevalent and teachers consider them difficult to manage. The theoretical framework underpinning this study suggests that disengaged student behaviours have more to do with factors within a teacher's control than with those located within the student.

Chapman et al. (2014) found that teachers uniformly believed that student connectedness was important with regard to reducing problem behaviour. In the eyes of the teachers she studied, student engagement was contingent on providing students with 'greater levels of fairness, of feeling valued, supported, and belonging, as well as greater involvement and engagement in school and school activities'. Teachers stated that these factors were associated with reduced student risk behaviour.

The work by Sullivan et al. (2014) and Chapman et al. (2014) is notable in that teachers in both studies acknowledge that engagement (and conversely disengagement) is not merely a process 'internal' to the student and solely driven by the student. While the focus of each article is upon problematic student behaviours, the findings on teacher views about disengagement as part of these problems show that teachers understand the importance of teacher behaviours as well as the need for educational pedagogies and arrangements that extend beyond typical classroom teaching and school infrastructures. These elements were simultaneously acknowledged to be the responsibility of teachers (and schools) as well as being challenging to create and arrange.

The teacher views captured above were from all of those who work with students who are still at school. Chodkiewicz et al. (2010) interviewed two teachers who worked with students who 'occupy an unnamed space between school and adult-focussed education'. These are youth who cannot inhabit anything resembling a school-type space, but are not yet self-directed adult learners. These teachers worked with a class of 12 young people attending an inner city youth centre, half

were Aboriginal, and all had dropped out prior to Year 10. The students had struggled with behavioural issues, alcohol and/or drug issues and lived in a housing estate. Most students attended the youth centre as way to 'get a piece of paper to help them move on with their lives'. The teachers perceived the youth outreach centre as a way for students to re-engage with learning and feel safe. Importantly, these teachers recognised that students are not simply 'empty vessels' to fill with literacy and numeracy skills, but are people who lead individual and complex lives in which different forms of literacy and numeracy are practiced. The teachers also stressed the importance of flexibility, both in learning and in teaching, as a way of re-engaging young people with learning.

Summary of the teacher experience – no broad consensus

Our review of teacher's experience of engagement and disengagement largely parallels the findings of Angus et al. (2009):

With regard to disengagement, there was no consensus on how best to respond to it. Teachers were divided as to whether they can make a difference by modifying their pedagogy, changing the curriculum, streaming students according to their ability, or raising expectations that students must take responsibility for their own learning. (Angus et al., 2009, p. 73).

Teachers clearly see that they have a dominant role to play in creating the conditions for student engagement. Most (but not all) of what they cite as important for engagement is linked firmly with the educational enterprise: pedagogy, curriculum, streaming and setting the context for expectations and responsibilities. For the vast majority of students this would appear to be effective.

The modal experience for teachers is one of predominately working with students who are engaged. Diverting their personal teaching resources away from the engaged students toward students that are struggling to become and stay engaged, must less those that are actively disengaging or disengaged, is a very difficult task for teachers.

Finally, while students see relationships as foundational to their ongoing engagement or to becoming engaged and maintaining engagement, teachers are much less likely to cite relationship formation and maintenance as instrumental to the student engagement process.

What do parents have to say about engagement?

While many studies documented the views of students and teachers about student engagement, disengagement and re-engagement processes, no studies seeking the views of parents or families about these processes were encountered. When the overwhelming narrative from both students and teachers is that responsibility for

engagement ultimately rests with 'others', including parents, parent perspectives are notably missing. What do they think their role is?

When asking students about engagement, they point to how well teachers can relate to students, how teachers could make learning more interesting and the suitability of school environments. Some students pointed to other factors like whether they were excluded by peers or had support from their families. Similarly, when examining the views of teachers, while many recognised that students may not respond to the curriculum or a particular teaching style, a common view was that engagement was an issue with the student – that they were lazy, problematic, or a distraction to 'normal' engaged students. Teachers also recognised that many students with engagement problems often had issues at home that affected how they were at school during the day. The overwhelming view of teachers was that student disengagement is a student, and particularly, a parent or family problem.

The absence of the parent voice is therefore a notable gap in the literature. If parent perspectives on student engagement were sought, what would they say? If the theme of engagement being the responsibility of 'others' is followed, it is possible they might say that schools are responsible for engaging students. If a student is struggling at school, would it likely be the 'fault' of the school, the teacher and/or the student?

Students and teachers are expected to view parents as integral influences on engagement, because they are. As noted earlier, families are instrumental in engaging children in school through setting expectations about school and education, and through seeking opportunities to extend and enrich these experiences. At a generic level the effects of parental involvement in school on the achievement of their children are well documented and impressive (Raftery et al., 2012). These reviews show effect sizes that range from .43 to .74 meaning that an effective intervention to improve parental engagement with school could on average shift the distribution of children's achievement by at least one half of a standard deviation. This is a moderate effect size that would represent a significant shift in achievement outcomes.

It is beyond the scope of this review to examine or discuss in detail the social or economic factors that prompt parents to support the education of their children or constrain them from doing so. Nor does this review attempt to discuss the topic of parent engagement in schools (as opposed to parent perspectives of student engagement), as this is a separate, and large, literature base. However, where parents value education and see it as instrumental to their child's onward life prospects, then these values are transmitted via 'academic socialisation' to their child through parental supports, expectations and opportunities. The support for schooling that a child receives at home is, on balance, more influential to the child's school engagement than having their parents engaged 'at school' per se. Certainly, school-based parental engagement is shown to be helpful, but it is not a necessary input in

the presence of home-based parental engagement. When parents are not, or cannot, be engaged with their child's schooling then the reasons for this are often varied and complex and do not invite easy remedies. There are considerable societal forces that operate to diminish parental engagement for many families and there are specific circumstances that, for all intents and purposes, exclude a significant proportion of families from engagement with schooling and education more widely.

Summary of the parent experience – mostly missing

Direct studies of parent views of student engagement and disengagement are largely absent. There is, though, a large literature attesting to the importance of parents to the educational experience and engagement of their children. However, most of this literature is based upon studies of parental engagement in schools rather than studies of parental attitudes, values and behaviours directly related to student engagement. Schools certainly see parents as being important to student engagement. In fact, schools and teachers regularly locate the cause of student disengagement, and the responsibility for it, with the family. In contrast, students less often cite their family as being instrumental to their engagement, instead locating the responsibility in the classroom and/or school setting.

What does the literature say about interventions, programs and potential educational reform?

As noted several times, student disengagement can manifest in many different forms and can be influenced by multiple and varied factors. The sheer number of indicators of disengagement, and the risk factors associated with them, poses a significant challenge when it comes to assessing best practice principles for reducing the risk of disengagement from school.

For student absence for example, there is no single solution or intervention that will successfully address absence rates, given that the reasons why students have many absences are multiple and varied. Students might be frequently absent because of transport issues, bullying at school, school phobia, because they are disinterested in learning, or because they have a caring role at home. Different interventions would be required for the different causes of the absence, and the interventions are likely to change depending on the age of the student. Broadening this example to include other forms of disengagement, it is not possible in this review to comprehensively examine the best ways of reducing disengagement or for re-engaging young people who have disengaged.

Additional difficulties in evaluating 'what works' for preventing disengagement and re-engaging disengaged students are highlighted in comments in the 'Gonski' report on school funding (Gonski et al., 2011), where it is noted that an estimated \$4.4 billion was spent by governments on programs for disadvantaged students in 2009-10 (Rorris et al., 2011). As disadvantaged students are often at risk of disengagement indicators, it is likely some of this funding was intended to improve school engagement for at-risk students.

Yet despite this expenditure, a lack of nationally consistent data and evaluation approaches means there is little understanding about the effectiveness of the programs that the funding supports. Put simply, while many programs and initiatives may be implemented in relation to student disengagement, few of them are evaluated, and fewer still evaluated well. As a result, it is hard to know what works, and equally as important, what does not work.

Broadly, approaches to addressing student disengagement can be grouped into one of three developmental periods:

- programs that promote and facilitate engagement in the early years
- programs for disengaging students who are still at school but at risk of leaving early
- programs that help disengaged students re-engage with school or complete Year 12 or equivalent through other pathways

The next section briefly examines some of the relevant literature. For each of the developmental periods above, it is apparent that the programs that are successful

for improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of disengaging from school address one or more of the risk factors that have been highlighted elsewhere in the review. These include:

- providing support for disadvantaged and socially excluded families (e.g. through full-service schools)
- schools or programs that provide flexible learning opportunities
- schools or programs that foster the development of lasting and supportive relationships with adults
- schools or programs that provide opportunities to build on the strengths of young people, rather than addressing weaknesses or implementing punitive strategies.

Promoting early years engagement

It is well established that students who enter school without the social or cognitive skills needed to learn are at risk of falling further behind their peers and becoming disengaged. Programs that promote the development of social and cognitive skills in the years prior to school entry may therefore be valuable to at-risk students once they start school. Some early education programs may be implemented outside the school environment. For example, research has shown that disadvantaged young children who persistently participate in a playgroup up to age three have higher socio-emotional and cognitive skills at age 4 to 5 years relative to disadvantaged children who never participated in a playgroup (Hancock et al., 2012), and research from the United States and Australia indicates that high quality early education and child care programs have the potential to reduce the gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children upon entry to school (Harrison et al., 2012, Magnuson and Waldfogel, 2005).

The most commonly cited examples of early education programs are the Perry Preschool and Abecedarian projects. Evidence from these programs supports the argument that education-centred early intervention programs can offset the negative effects that growing up in a disadvantaged family can have on child development, and by extension, school engagement. The Perry Preschool project developed in the 1960s, for example, included weekly home visits by program staff, a low teacher-child ratio of one adult for every five or six children, high quality teachers qualified in early childhood education, and a rich school learning environment in preschool. The program also included home visits with parents to enhance parenting strategies for caregivers. The participating children were followed up over time. Over a 15-year follow-up, program participants scored higher on standardised school assessments and had fewer behaviour problems than similar children who did not participate in the program (Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, 1983). At age 40, participants committed fewer crimes and had higher monthly earnings on average (Schweinhart, 2003).

Other long term intensive early childhood education programs have been proven to have an effect on high school graduation. The Chicago Child Parent Centre Program (CCPC) was a centre-based comprehensive range of early education, parenting and family support targeting children from early in childhood through to their early primary years. The focus of the CCPC was on vulnerable families living in high-poverty neighbourhoods (Reynolds et al., 2002).

Longitudinal evidence found that CCPC participation was associated with cognitive gains at school entry and higher achievement scores during elementary school (Reynolds et al., 2002). In a follow-up study, at age 20, children who received CCPC intervention experienced higher rates of high school graduation by age 20 than a control group (Reynolds et al., 2011). Reynolds et al. (2011) identified the following components as being key to the positive results:

- Structured and diverse language-based instructional activities to promote academic and social success.
- Intensive individualised learning in preschool and kindergarten.
- Multi-faceted parent programs, including parent room activities, volunteering in the classroom, school events, educational courses and outreach activities
- Investing in skill development of staff.
- Health and nutrition services, such as health screening, speech therapy and nursing services.
- A comprehensive program that supported children's transition to school through small class sizes (less than 25 children), use of teacher assistants, and coordination of instructional activities by a school leader.

In Western Australia, the Challis School-Community model adopts some of the same principles, and more, to help improve the educational opportunities for disadvantaged young children before entering school. The Challis Early Childhood Education Centre provides developmental support to children aged 0 to 3 years and their parents. Located on school grounds, the Challis Centre is known as a 'full-service' school that coordinates a range of child and family services on a single local site and provides support to parents and children from birth. The Challis centre is located in Armadale, an area characterised by extreme disadvantage, in 2005 around 40 per cent of students in the Armadale area were vulnerable on one of more areas of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) (Telethon Kids Institute, 2014). Following the implementation of the Challis model, in 2012 the AEDI results showed a 40 per cent reduction in the prevalence of developmental vulnerability, particularly in the areas of language and cognition. Additionally, children attending the Challis centre from birth (receiving a 'full dose') performed better than the state average on the Performance Indicators in Primary School assessment, which measures academic progress from the beginning to the end of pre-primary (Telethon Kids Institute, 2014).

With the turnaround of early student achievement levels for highly disadvantaged young children, the Challis centre is a noted success story in Western Australia. While it is too soon to examine the longer-term outcomes for children attending the Challis centre, the Department of Education has funded and opened 16 Child and Parent Centres across Western Australia, that are based on the Challis Model. Having only been established in 2013, it is too soon to determine how effective the centres have been at promoting school readiness for vulnerable young children.

Programs for disengaging students

This literature review encountered some studies that focused on different teaching practices with the aim of engaging students who may be struggling. There was a large literature on how to promote engagement for particular subjects, for example, articles where teachers note the use of visual aids when delivering material (Callow, 2010, Callow, 2012). High quality teaching and pedagogy is clearly important for aspects of cognitive engagement in the classroom, with particular material.

There is also a large literature, particularly in the United States, relating to truancy programs that are not reviewed here. In Australia, legislative and punitive approaches are sometimes considered for addressing truancy and poor attendance, for example, penalising parents by implementing fines, or withdrawing social security payments under the Improving School Enrolment and Attendance through Welfare Reform Measure (SEAM). However, trials of SEAM indicate that punitive measures are not effective at improving attendance rates, and have little deterrent effect (Dickson and Hutchinson, 2010). The recent Remote School Attendance Strategy was developed to provide school attendance officers to work with schools, families, parents and communities to address the very low attendance rates achieved in remote and very remote areas, particularly for Aboriginal students, in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. Again, as the program was only implemented in 2014, there is little systematic information available to determine the effectiveness of the program.

Perhaps more relevant for this review are programs that are aimed towards preventing disengaged students from leaving school altogether. A number of programs were identified through this review, and these are noted here. However, programs that have not been evaluated were generally not captured in the literature search. The key features of the programs are that they provide opportunities to develop practical skills, provide flexible or individualised learning programs tailored to student interests, or develop adult-student relationships through mentoring.

Mentoring

Brooker (2011) conducted a research review on the effectiveness of youth mentoring interventions on a range of student outcomes, including engagement. The review found that when mentoring interventions have a positive impact, they do so

when the mentoring relationships are characterised by trust and regular mentor input. In these cases, quality mentoring relationships impact most positively on youth social-emotional outcomes and on youth attendance and engagement with school. Interventions with multiple components, including cognitive behavioural training or specialist tutoring demonstrate stronger outcomes. Mentoring programs as interventions are least effective with young people with significant behavioural issues or drug dependency, but they do have a protective influence in risk taking behaviour and depression. Mentoring interventions are promising for the school participation and engagement of young mothers, Aboriginal young people and youth from other minority racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Larmar (2010) evaluates the Kids Hope Australia program, which provides mentoring and guidance for students at risk of disengaging from school. Responses from teachers suggested that program participation was associated with improvements in general classroom behaviour, self-regulation and motivation for school work, academic achievement and greater social inclusion. However, there was no control group, and given the results of other research indicating that student behaviour improves over the course of the school year (Angus et al., 2009), it is difficult to determine from this study if the improvements would have occurred irrespective of program participation. The authors also examined whether larger advances were made for students who had engaged in the program for a longer duration of time, but found no difference. Overall, the findings of the program are limited.

Developing alternative skills and flexible learning programs

Developing alternative skills and flexible learning programs

Big Picture Education Australia

Since 2005, Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) have been working to implement Big Picture Academies' across Australia. The academies are characterised by the following features (Hayes, Down, Talbot & Choules, 2013):

- A focus on educating one student at a time.
- Learning that is based on each student's unique set of interests, needs and capabilities around which personalised learning plans are designed. Student's take ownership of their learning.
- Having small schools that allow for the development of a community of learners, where each student is well known by at least one adult, and where students are connected with the broader community.
- A belief that learning occurs when students are active participants in their education, when they have a personalised course of study with participation from teachers, parents and mentors, and where school-based learning is mixed with experiences outside of school.

The features of the academies are consistent with and address the main issues voiced by students about the relevance of content, flexibility in how and what they learn, and quality teacher relationships. The implementation of the program ranges from within-school academies, to whole school programs, where schools may adopt some of all of the program features. According to a BPEA information sheet, there are 44 schools across Australia using this learning design, with 1633 teachers trained in the program and 4550 students re-engaged with learning (BPEA, 2015).

BPEA have produced several research reports to evaluate the impact of their program, which mainly focus on the experiences of participating students, teachers and parents. One report included visits with six BPEA schools in three states, resulting in interviews with 26 students, 20 advisors and 17 parents or carers (Hayes, Down, Talbot & Choules, 2013). While students enrolled in BPEA schools for a range of reasons, most students reported that the different learning environment meant they felt more motivated, were learning more and felt more supported. Again, they reiterated that the relationships formed through the program were important for them and their learning. Teachers in the program were supportive of the program and recognised that students responded to a different way of learning, but also acknowledged that the program placed large demands on their time and sometimes led to exhaustion. Parents generally had positive experiences associated with their child's enrolment in BPEA, found it suited their child's needs and appreciated the input from teachers and opportunities to become involved. Some parents struggled with the concept of flexible learning, or felt that the communication from the teachers could have been improved (Hayes, Down, Talbot & Choules, 2013).

Quantitative data evaluating the implementation of BPEA is more limited and generally isolated to the performance of individual schools. This is understandable given the limited metrics available to assess engagement (or change in engagement) and the small size of the academies. Additionally, because various academies may implement the program in different ways, there will also be differences in the way that student progress is monitored. However, the information sheets and research reports that BPEA have produced so far point to improved levels of attendance, achievement and attainment among their students (Bonner, 2014; Down & Choules, 2011; Vickers & McCarthy, 2013). For example, Yule Brook College in Western Australia showed better than average progress on NAPLAN scores between Year 7 (2010) and Year 9 (2012) compared to similar schools, and particularly for numeracy, grammar and punctuation (Vickers & McCarthy, 2013). Other data indicates that students at Yule Brook College had more positive attitudes towards school, teachers, family and learning than students at other schools (Down & Choules, 2011).

Hands On Learning has been implemented in Victorian and Queensland schools for over 10 years, and has invested in a number of different evaluations. The program

aims to re-engage students in the middle years (Years 7 to 10), who have disconnected with school in a setting that facilitates alternative education and pastoral care. Students are referred to the program by school wellbeing staff, year level coordinators and school leadership teams, and spend time with local artisans and teachers on practical or creative projects such as new building structures, kitchen gardens or paintings. Students participate for one term per year for up to four years, and participate in the normal curriculum on other school days. The projects provide a platform for students to engage, build confidence as well as develop long term relationships that help young people to develop skills such as collaboration, problem solving, communication and resilience.

In terms of effectiveness, some reports suggest that the program improves attendance:

Hands On Learning reports that participants have better outcomes in relation to attendance, retention and unemployment post-program than the (Victorian) state average (e.g. Hands On Learning students had attendance rates at school of between 93 and 95 per cent and the Hands on Learning program of around 99 per cent). Further, the proportion of Hands On Learning students who leave school at Year 10 and are unemployed is lower than the state average. Improvements in areas such as students' self-esteem, awareness of their own skills and interests, engagement with the school and community, and group skills have also been reported (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2010, p. 16).

Researchers from the University of Melbourne surveyed 500 Hands On Learning students and 3,500 non-participating students and found that students enrolled in the program were more likely to say that they felt included, listened to, use, improve or learn new skills, that they enjoyed school or felt like they did something that mattered (Hands on Learning, 2015).

Hands On Learning has also been evaluated by Deloitte Access Economics. They estimated that:

The net benefit of providing HOL to students between 1999 and 2012 is \$1.6 billion in present value terms, representing a \$12 return to every \$1 of investment in ensuring Year 12 completions (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012, page i).

However, this estimate is based on an assumption that, because they were on the cusp of disengagement, in the absence of the intervention they would have definitively dropped out. These students may still have found other pathways to reconnect with school (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012).

Re-engaging early school leavers and alternative pathways

Earlier, this review described the perspectives of students and teachers involved in alternative school programs such as TAFE, and do not repeat those findings here (Black et al., 2010, Smyth and McInerney, 2014)

Clayton et al. (2010) examine a range of approaches taken by schools and TAFE institutes to provide vocational skills for young people aged 15 to 19 years. They undertook case studies and focus groups of nine educational institutions, drawn from different states and territories, that have successfully retained young people in study and provided them with pathways to further study or employment. Focus groups included program coordinators, teachers, support staff and external stakeholders such as employers and community agencies. Notably, students were not interviewed. A number of key findings were consistent across the case studies, and broadly reflect the findings we observed in other studies:

- Programs need to be diverse. Diversity in that some programs are designed to attract and retain young people into further study or employment, whereas others provide an alternative pathway to Year 12, apprenticeships, further education or the employment opportunities. Importantly, while many programs are aimed towards students who are at risk of not persisting with education, some students are attracted to the programs because they are highly motivated and see value in gaining vocational qualifications in combination with a high school certificate.
- Programs need to be flexible. Flexibility was important for a range of programs, and included flexibility in timetabling, length of class times, program curriculum and the timing of support. The authors note that diversity and flexibility are critical factors in attracting, engaging and retaining young people in the programs. Students also had flexibility to try different things until they found something that suited their interests and strengths.
- That quality teaching is important. Teachers were aware of the need to adapt and alter to meet new challenges and keep up with the changing nature of their students. They acknowledged that if students find the work boring, they will stop attending, so identified that developing engaging material was important.
- Vocational education is generally valued by students and staff involved in the programs, but is typically less valued in more traditional educational environments.
- The programs do not work in isolation, and coordinated support for students is critical. Students will often have many support needs and will require a range of support systems, not just to learn, but also in the personal arena to support their wellbeing more broadly.

- Barriers to engagement, retention and transition included the status of VET, logistical problems, the high costs of supporting the programs and associated funding issues, and a lack of data to accurately monitor engagement, completions and transitions to further study or employment.

Discussion – Integrating themes

At the outset, education systems, schools and teachers understand the significance of student disengagement and want to implement strategies for preventing its occurrence, for identifying those students at risk for disengaging, and for treating it when it occurs.

Many educators engage in these strategies across all fronts. Any examination of programs that are explicitly structured to help students who have significantly disengaged from school, or who have left education entirely, illustrates the challenge involved. These programs, schools and settings require exceptional staff. Staff that are capable of establishing relationships with students who may be deeply disengaged, who have histories of failure and who may be resistant and sceptical of the value of the opportunity or the likelihood of their success. The teachers working in these settings require well-established and extensive resources in the form of training opportunities, creative curricula, and tailored pedagogies. Above all, the educators in such programs require persistence – often in the face of no immediate reward. There is little doubt that educators working at the ‘pointy end’ with deeply disengaged students understand the critical value of forming significant relationships with these students.

The description above is attendant on the costs and expenses entailed in funding re-entry, ‘second-chance’ or return-to-education pathways for these students. This is an expensive enterprise. Metaphorically, the creation and operation of strategies to address student disengagement require ‘90 per cent of the education effort and budget for 10 per cent of the students.’ While this undoubtedly overstates the challenge, it does illustrate the dilemma for education authorities: If the vast majority of students are engaged with school should we divert increasingly limited teaching resources and educational talent away from them to address those students who are struggling to become engaged or who are disengaged?

There is no easy answer to this question. In the broader context, the complexities involved in answering this question are part of the reason why education systems have evolved higher expectations of parents and families to ‘ready’ their children for school and socialise them with academic and learning values and behaviours. If only it were this easy! In this regard, there is a struggle to position responsibility for student disengagement.

Of course, a focus on deeply disengaged students has the advantage of (at least) highlighting the actions that have been taken to address some of their needs. However, the phenomenology of disengagement shows student disengagement to be a continuum that varies from high to very low and that it is probably normally distributed. At any point in time, about 10 per cent of all students might be regarded as having low engagement, perhaps another 7 per cent have very low engagement

with another 3 per cent having persistent, serious disengagement with additional and significant challenges (e.g. notably mental illness/mental health distress). This would suggest that overall about one in five students (20%) could be considered to have some level of disengagement with school. Short of waiting for students to self-identify as 'disengaged' through their behaviour, attitude and performance, what are the practical options for addressing the spectrum or continuum of disengaged students?

Our review illustrates the difficulty in answering this question. There is a 'measurement' literature focussed on how to measure engagement and disengagement, its types, and distribution. There is a large practise literature based in educational systems, policies, schools and classrooms. Educational pedagogy and philosophy also occupy a particular research focus. The most extensive literature on student disengagement is focussed on teachers and their experiences of it. Students, in contrast, are accorded a small, mostly qualitative literature that reveals their knowledge and experience about engagement and disengagement. While we found a large literature on community engagement of families/parents in schools, the more vital studies of parental knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours about their children's own engagement (or disengagement) are very scant indeed.

What is evident from the literature is a lack of integration of teacher, school, student and parent perspectives to reconcile their differing assumptions and expectations about student engagement.

The literature suggests that there are four critical integrative questions that need to be addressed:

1. What do schools expect of parents of children attending their schools?
2. What do parents of children expect from the schools their children attend?
3. Can schools create the meaningful relationships that disengaged or disengaging students say they need in order to become more engaged or re-engaged?
4. Is the reform agenda for education – and particularly for the K to 12 epoch – addressing needs and expectations in a way that is more relevant to the circumstances of children and young people who are disengaged or at risk of doing so?

What do schools expect of parents of children and young people attending their schools?

Mandatory schooling was once thought to be a period that covered about 10 years of a child and young person's development. Now, this period has been extended beyond 12 years to encompass (at least) a preschool year along with a final two years (Years 11 and 12) of secondary schooling. While greater flexibility is available for students in Years 11 and 12 the educational expectations for children and young

people to be present and at school have been extended and regulated as never before. This is a legislated expectation and one that parents have not questioned. It forms a tacit agreement between two institutions – the family and the school.

Schools, of course, are central institutions for communities, their neighbourhoods, and the residents that live in them. When in session, they exert an immediate influence on the rhythm of a community. Volumes of street and road traffic increase to this rhythm. Local shops and stores depend upon it. Workplaces, child care providers, and community facilities all interact to the pace dictated by the operations of the local schools. Families particularly must juggle to balance the demands of employment and child care arrangements with schooling. Through these arrangements it can be readily claimed that communities experience 'engagement' with the schools (Warren et al., 2009).

As institutions schools are essentially monolithic in their community engagement attitude. In fact, schools typically define their school staff and their students and their families as a 'school community'. While indeed it makes sense to define the community as a school, in reality, both the staff and students may have no particular attachment to the local neighbourhood in which the school is positioned. Many students, much less the staff, travel considerable distances to be at a particular school. Schools occupy a position of authority and along with the rigors of the school day, its demands on teachers and students, the hours of operation, and the annual schedule of holidays, bravery is required on the part of those who approach schools seeking engagement.

Not surprisingly, community engagement tends to occur around schools rather than through them and with them. A given family can be highly engaged with the local school while at the same time be living in a community that is, at best, only marginally engaged with the local school. These distinctions are subtle. There is an extensive literature about community engagement, as distinct from school and student engagement. While community engagement is outside the scope of this review we would note that within Australia there has been considerable enthusiasm for school-community partnerships (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2008) as well as school-business relationships (Lonsdale et al., 2011). Lonsdale and Anderson put the case as follows:

Highly effective schools have high levels of parent and community engagement. 'Community' here includes parents, business and philanthropic organisations, and various services and not-for profit groups. How 'engagement' is defined and what it looks like in practice will vary from school to school. But, as the growing body of research makes quite clear, support from those beyond the school gates is an essential part of preparing learners for the twenty-first century (Lonsdale and Anderson, 2012, p. 1).

On the surface of it, this has great appeal. However, there are institutional arrangements that make this extremely challenging in terms of addressing student disengagement.

Families and family circumstances are predominately cited by teachers as the causal basis for student disengagement. Parents (i.e. families) are seen by schools as the critical, if not the primary source, of a student's school engagement. In the eyes of the school, student engagement is mediated at home through academic socialisation – the parental transmission of values, beliefs, and expectations about school and learning. This may involve the provision by parents of material benefits that enrich the home learning environment and extend learning opportunities and that robustly enable school 'readiness' and then, support the onward learning pathway by setting standards for school behaviour and school work more generally.

Just exactly how school expectations about the role of families in preparing children for school have come about is not fully evident.

A half a century ago it was probably enough for parents to expect that their child attend school. Now, however, the social contract between families and schools has changed – and in ways that are not made explicit. Parents are seen to be instruments of school readiness and partners in the educational enterprise. Some of this is undoubtedly caused by the move towards students (aka families) as 'consumers' of education. Educational choice is promoted; many families make active choices and plans about where their children will go to school and in which sector (government, private, Catholic). Parents are provided increasing amounts of performance information to guide their choice about schools (e.g. MySchool) and many schools actively promote their services and perceived advantages.

School expectations of families have also been tacitly altered through the lowering of the developmental boundary for early childhood education and care. While there are many advantages associated with kindergarten and pre-primary participation – particularly for more disadvantaged families and students – the act of lowering this boundary has blurred the distinction between what was traditionally thought to be family responsibilities for child care and the school responsibility for education. It has also triangulated other providers into the educational context – particularly where childcare is concerned. In this regard, school 'readiness' falls within a disputed zone – particularly for children who are not ready. There are parents who understand the importance of what they do for their children in preparing them for school. But what about the students of parents who cannot or will not do this?

In summary, schools expect parents to have children 'ready' to attend school and expect parents to be involved. What constitutes 'ready' is largely opaque and the nature of involvement is largely influenced, as will be seen below, by a range of circumstances that increasingly constrain the range of what parents can do.

What do parents of children and young people expect from the schools their children attend?

Australian family life has changed. There has been a decline in male labour force participation, increases in participation by women, a general shift towards part-time work and larger proportions of men and women in casual work. In the face of changes in levels of labour force participation, and in the presence of social policies that increasingly require work for social benefits and the demand to secure income through paid labour for use later in life, fewer families have a choice about whether a parent will stay at home to child rear, and fewer families are making such a choice (Zubrick et al., 2005). These pressures have transmitted family expectations onward into child care settings and to schools.

The scale of these social transformations over recent decades has historical parallels with the societal transformations in the 1800s, which occurred in response to the industrial revolution. At that time, the social forces of urbanisation and the move of men's work from the home to industrial production resulted in the demand for education outside the home. The societal accommodation to meet this need was the creation of the institution we now know as public schooling (Muller et al., 1987). The current move of women's work from the home to the workplace is producing an unprecedented demand for non-parental care of young children and the need for creating an equivalent societal accommodation.

Amid these changes, the vast majority of Australian parents feel that they are doing a good job of parenting and report high levels of satisfaction in their parenting role (Zubrick et al., 2008). Findings show the principal threats to the role of parenting are: 1) work – and the resultant disruption in predictable patterns of care for children, where parents must balance their needs for and choices to work with their family responsibilities; 2) declining levels of social support, particularly as these relate to proximity and availability of family relatives (particularly grandparents) in the infancy to early toddlerhood period; 3) the availability of wider friendships and community supports as their child moves out of the home; and 4) relationship difficulties within the couple family (Zubrick et al., 2008). These are the principle influences on parent's expectations about school.

Parental expectations of schools can be seen in the choices that many of them make about what school their child attends and where it is located. About two-thirds of Australian children attend government schools (ABS, 2014). This means that one-third of Australian families are making decisions and choices for their children to attend non-government schools. In addition, within the government sectors, a significant proportion of parents make decisions about which government school their child attends. While living circumstances and location along with school catchment areas operate to constrain the range of choice parents may have in the government school their child attends, any casual social gathering of parents will reveal the stress and effort parents may go to in order to choose or influence where

their child enrolls. Many parents have a comprehensive expectation about schooling, schools and 'what to look for'.

Berthelsen and Walker (2008) studied Australian parents' expectations of and involvement in their child's early primary schooling. Most parents (99%) expected that their child would complete their secondary schooling and 41 per cent of parents expected that their children would obtain some form of post-secondary qualification (e.g., post-graduate qualification, university degree, or vocational course). High proportions of parents agreed with statements that their child's school made them aware of chances to be involved in their child's schools (~85%). Teachers report that parents were most likely to have been in direct contact with them (95%). To the extent that schools communicate their expectations of parents, most parents understand that their encouragement and support of their child's learning at home is beneficial and required.

In summary, parental expectations about the schools their children attend is primarily revealed in 1) the choices that (some) parents are able to make about the school their child attend and what it has to offer by way of educational expectations and opportunities; and, 2) their acknowledgment of what they understand to be their responsibilities to see that they, as parents, have (some) contact with the school that their child attends. Parents also expect (and need) regularity in the operations of schools.

Finally, there is a feature of schooling about which parents are not invited to have expectations. In the balancing of work-family commitments, the dependable and routine operation of the school is essential. The set school hours, weekly routine, annual holidays and pupil-free days produce at best a volatile schedule for families where parents are required to maintain work schedules. Parents do not see themselves as having influence over the operational features of the education system, and yet, these features are the source of some of the most stressful aspects of their child's schooling that they have to manage and for some families, they prohibit engagement either to a minimal level or altogether.

Can schools create the meaningful relationships that disengaged or disengaging students say they need?

Student views of the causes of their disengagement do not largely support the school view of the causes of their disengagement. For students the causes for disengagement are largely seen to be at school – not typically at home with or in the family. Students uniformly indicate that their engagement with school is founded on relationships at school – with both friends and teachers. For students disengagement is about disaffection. Teacher-student relationships particularly have a cumulative effect over time and poor relationships predispose to onward disengagement if measured by school leaving. This is not to discount the necessary programs and opportunities that schools and teachers implement for disengaged students, but

these alone are not likely to be sufficient for re-establishing or maintaining engagement. This is highlighted by the previous observations on students entering TAFE – relationship formation was critical to 'lasting' at TAFE. In short, engagement is a form of attachment – and this attachment starts with the relationships available to a student at school. Teachers and friends are instrumental to this.

With disengaged or disengaging students the requirement for a meaningful relationship is more easily said than done. As noted in the opening of this section, teachers are understandably focused on progress for the vast majority of students who are engaged. Attempts at engaging disengaged students can be rebuffed if not actively rejected. The school routine, with its changing curriculum, program of study, annual cycle with new classes and teachers militates against sustaining relationships. For students less skilled at forming and maintaining relationships with teachers this can weaken their onward attachment and engagement with people and places such as the school.

Ultimately, as much as education systems, schools and teachers might wish for students to arrive ready to learn, be or become engaged, and stay so, this is not happening for a small but significant number of them. There are family circumstances that prohibit parents from supporting much less preparing their children for school. Children themselves may have real limitations in their abilities that set limits on their levels of engagement. Whatever the basis for these circumstances the onward responsibility for assisting children and young people to engage with school, and to address the needs of those who are disengaged rests with education systems.

This literature review clearly reveals that education systems and schools understand this obligation. What is most challenging for schools is to realise that student engagement is founded upon relationships with teachers and peers. For students who are disengaging or disengaged this is a critical ingredient. They want their teachers to treat them like adults, to respect them, and to create safe and fair environments. Ironically for deeply disengaged students who are in programs to assist their re-entry or re-engagement, there is a high likelihood that the educators and staff they are in contact with understand the critical nature of establishing supportive, mentoring and sustained relationships that then enable the education and training opportunities provided through this intervention.

Can schools create the meaningful relationships for disengaged students that they say they need? Certainly this happens – for some. But for children and young people in typical classrooms who are either at risk of disengagement or not as deeply disengaged the pathway here is less clear. Schools have approaches for this and many would say that there is a plethora of interventions. But it is not evident that at a more universal level there is the will much less the capacity for schools to systematically act upon this and the costs relative to the benefits are largely unknown. What can be said though is that relationship formation is central to the

engagement pathway for students. It is likely that without this, excellence in pedagogy, curriculum flexibility, and policy – while necessary – will not be sufficient to re-engage the disengaged or disengaging student.

Is the reform agenda for education addressing the needs and expectations of children and young people who are disengaged or at risk of doing so?

No summary of the context of student engagement or disengagement would be complete without some comments on educational reform. While a review of ongoing Australian educational reform is outside of the scope of this literature review, there are some features of education systems as institutions that are central to enabling or constraining responses to student engagement.

Teachers work within the institutional arrangements of schools and the wider educational system. These institutional arrangements take the form of legislations, regulations, associations, procedures, agreements and expectations. What any given teacher may be able to do to respond to student engagement or disengagement may be prompted, facilitated or constrained by these institutional arrangements. In this regard, responses by school systems and educational institutions have a bearing on student engagement or disengagement.

Davis and McPartland (2012) have written comprehensively on how internal high school reforms can be aimed at the following six dimensions of student motivation and engagement.

- Ensuring positive reward and recognition (e.g. good grades, respect and recognition from teachers, and timely grade promotions and graduation). For example, students who work hard but continue to receive poor grades may believe they will never improve no matter how hard they try, and therefore feel discouraged and alienated.
- Embedding intrinsic interest in more learning tasks so students get a sense of accomplishment and self-improvement from their classroom activities.
- Strengthening functional relevance of the curriculum and program of studies so students appreciate how working hard at their studies can pay off for personal interests and career goals.
- Establishing a positive climate for learning with good adult-student relationships so students look forward to coming to school each day in a safe, serious and sensitive environment.
- Exploring and reinforcing personal non-academic strengths at school so that a fuller range of human talents can also flourish in high school along with the strictly academic subjects and pursuits.

- Establishing a positive climate of trust in school governance and fairness of disciplinary rules so students feel part of a shared community with appropriate responsibilities and decision making opportunities.

Table 2 summarises the dimensions of student engagement along with the associated school reforms suggested for engagement to be achieved. These reforms indicate the scale of reform required by school systems and illustrate that while there are many inputs and avenues for teachers to produce these reforms, institutional reform provides the necessary framework and infrastructures for them to do so.

While an audit of the Western Australian setting is not intended in this review, many of the reform elements in Table 2 are evident in the Western Australian setting. For example, Early Learning and Care Centres and Child and Parent Centres in low socioeconomic communities have been established (Barratt-Pugh et al., undated) with the express intent of lifting educational participation of more vulnerable families. The Best Start program is a flexible, family friendly program targeted at Aboriginal families with children up to five years and is aimed at early school integration and engagement (Commissioner for Children and Young People, 2012). At a broader level, organizations such as Big Picture Australia are seeking to change the discourse of educational expectations – for families, students and educators (see [Big Picture](http://www.bigpicture.org.au) - www.bigpicture.org.au).

Table 2: Dimensions of student engagement and associated high school reforms¹

Dimension of student motivation or engagement	Associated high school reforms
1. Accessible Immediate Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Different course sequences without tracking– Levels of focused extra help– Multiple criteria for grades and recognition
2. Embedded Intrinsic Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Thinking skills for problem solving and influence– Content literacy and disciplinary thinking– Project-based learning
3. Direct Functional Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Career Academies or majors– Integration of academic and career education
4. Positive Interpersonal Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Small learning communities– Interdisciplinary teacher teams– Adult mentors and advisors
5. Alternative Talent Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Career and nonacademic skill explorations– Elective courses– Extracurricular activities
6. Shared Communal Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Firm and fair rules– Student participation in decision-making– Trust and self-regulating norms

¹From (Davis and McPartland, 2012)

In considering educational policy and more particularly educational reform there is a clear call for more options and greater flexibility in meeting the needs of disengaged or potentially disengaged students. There is an ongoing effort to address needs in the pre-primary and early years that have the intent of improving engagement for vulnerable families. There is, however, a noted concern over the proliferation of re-engagement programs and 'second chance' schools and that these detract from the need to reform mainstream schools to include options for these students rather than see them disperse into other programs (McGregor and Mills, 2011, Smyth and Robinson, 2014).

In summary it is not possible to judge how initiatives in educational reform are altering student engagement or addressing disengagement. Educational reform is an ongoing process within Australia and in Western Australia. Just how these reforms are designed and implemented with specific reference to addressing student engagement, or more particularly disengagement, is less clear.

Conclusion

This review has attempted to detail the contexts and influences that currently affect levels of school engagement and disengagement for children and young people, their families and their teachers and schools. That disengagement occurs is not disputed by any of these parties. What is less clear are the changing expectations about school readiness and the basis for a child or young person's onward attachment and engagement with school, and more particularly learning. These differing expectations have resulted in a struggle between schools and families to position the responsibility for student engagement and disengagement. While this probably overstates this circumstance, it does point to the need for more integration of student, parent and school expectations and a more inclusive pathway for solutions.

Certainly what is needed is more open dialogue – particularly with students in combination with educators and parents. This dialogue needs to involve students, families and educators widely but there is also a need to insure a focus on the voices and experiences of disengaged and disengaging students in combination with their families and educators. These dialogues need open discussions that invite participant views about their expectations of school, their experience of it, and what is working for them and not. Better research that combines the perspectives of students, parents and teachers would also be welcome.

References

ABS 1993. Schools Australia, 4221.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS 2009a. Disability, vocation and education training, 4438.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/4438.0~2009~Main+Features~People+aged+15%E2%80%9324+years?OpenDocument>

ABS 2009b. Education and training experience, 6278.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Source data cited in ABS, 2009a.

ABS 2010. Are young people earning or learning? Australian Social Trends, March 4102.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS 2011a. Australian Social Trends March, 4102.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS 2011b. Schools Australia 4221.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS 2012. Childhood Education and Care, Australia, 4402.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS 2014. Schools Australia, 4221.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS 2015. Australian Longitudinal Census Dataset, findings based on use of ABS CURF data (Table 1). Canberra, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ALEXANDER, K. L., ENTWISLE, D. R. & HORSEY, C. S. 1997. From first grade forward: early foundations of high school dropout. *Sociology of Education*, 70, 87-107.

ANGUS, M., MCDONALD, T., ORMOND, C., RYBARCYK, R., TAYLOR, A. & WINTERTON, A. 2009. Trajectories of classroom behaviour and academic progress: a study of engagement. Mount Lawley: Edith Cowan University. Link:

http://www.bass.edu.au/files/5413/9925/8294/Pipeline_Report_Dec_2009.pdf

APPLETON, J. J., CHRISTENSON, S. L. & FURLONG, M. J. 2008. Student engagement with school: critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Journal of School Psychology*, 45, 369-386.

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION & THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH RESEARCH CENTRE 2001. Building relationships: Making education work: A report on the perspectives of young people. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH 2008. Schools first: Final Report. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT 2009. Investing in the early years: a national early childhood development strategy, an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT 2013. Australian Early Development Index, 2012: A summary report. Canberra: Department of Education.

AZPITARTE, F. 2012. On the persistence of poverty in Australia: a duration analysis based on HILDA data. Melbourne: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research.

BARRATT-PUGH, C., BARBLETT, L., STAMOPOULOS, E., KNAUS, M., TARGOWSKA, A. & TEATHER, S. undated. Child and Parent Centres on Public School Sites in Low Socioeconomic Communities in Western Australia: A Model of Integrated Service Delivery. Available:

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/curriculumssupport/earlychildhood/detcms/navigation/initiatives/child-and-parent-centres/> [Accessed 3 June 2015].

BECKER, G. S. 1993. *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis With Special Reference to Education.*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

BECKER, G. S. & TOMES, N. 1986. Human capital and the rise and fall of families. *Journal of Labour Economics*, 4, S1-S39.

BERTHELSEN, D. & WALKER, S. 2008. Parent's involvement in their children's education. *Family Matters*, 79, 34-41.

Big Picture Education Australia (2015). Personalising learning: What our research shows. Available at:

http://www.bigpicture.org.au/files/sum074_infographic_brochure_v5lr.pdf

BLACK, S., BALATTI, J. & FALK, I. 2010. Reconnecting young people with learning : a social capital approach in VET. *International Journal of Training Research*, 8, 103-115.

BODKIN-ANDREWS, G. H., DILLON, A. & CRAVEN, R. G. 2010. Bangawarra'gumada - Strengthening the spirit: causal modelling of academic self-concept and patterns of disengagement for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 39.

BOND, L., BUTLER, H., THOMAS, L., CARLIN, J., GLOVER, S., BOWES, G. & PATTON, G. 2007. Social and school connectedness in early secondary school as predictors of late teenage substance use, mental health and academic outcomes. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 40, 379.e9-357.e18.

Bonner, C. (2014). Counting success. Available at:

http://www.bigpicture.org.au/files/sum073_counting_sucsess_bro_v3_crop.pdf

BROOKER, M. R. 2011. Youth mentoring as an intervention with disengaged young people: a literature review. Report for the Department of Communities Western Australia. Perth: Department of Communities Western Australia.

<http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/Documents/Youth/Literature%20Review%20on%20Youth%20Mentoring%20Final%20Report%2025%20October%202011.pdf>

BROOKS-GUNN, J., BROWN, B., DUNCAN, G. J. & ANDERSON MOORE, K. 1995. Child development in the context of family and community resources: an agenda for national data collections. Washington, DC: The National Academy of Sciences.
http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=4941&page=30

CALLINGHAM, M. 2013. Democratic youth participation : a strength-based approach to youth investigating educational engagement. *Youth Studies Australia*, 32, 48-56.

CALLOW, J. 2010. I'm way more interested : using visual texts to engage students from low SES backgrounds. *Scan*, 29, 28-34.

CALLOW, J. 2012. The rules of visual engagement : images as tools for learning. *Screen Education*, 72-79.

CARRINGTON, S., BLAND, D. & BRADY, K. 2010. Training young people as researchers to investigate engagement and disengagement in the middle years. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14, 449-462.

CARRINGTON, S., BLAND, D., SPOONER-LANE, R. & WHITE, E. 2013. Identifying engaging features of schooling : assessing the psychometric soundness of student-generated research. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17, 714-731.

CHAPMAN, R. L., BUCKLEY, L., SHEEHAN, M. & SHOCHET, I. M. 2014. Teachers' perceptions of school connectedness and risk-taking in adolescence. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 27, 413-431.

CHODKIEWICZ, A., WIDIN, J. & YASUKAWA, K. 2010. Making connections to re-engage young people in learning : dimensions of practice. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*, 18, 35-51.

CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) 2012. *Handbook of research on student engagement*, London: Springer.

CLAYTON, B., LEWANSKI, R., PANCINI, G. & SCHUTT, S. 2010. Enhancing the retention of young people to Year 12, especially through vocational skills. Australian College of Educators, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and TAFE Directors Australia.
<http://www.tda.edu.au/resources/Enhancing%20Retention%20Final%20Report%20inc%20cov.pdf>

COLEMAN, J. S. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2012. Building Blocks: Best practice programs that improve the wellbeing of children and young people. Perth: Commissioner for Children and Young People.

<http://www.ccyb.wa.gov.au/buildingblocks/files/BuildingBlocksFebruary2012.pdf>

CONSORTIUM FOR LONGITUDINAL STUDIES 1983. *As the twig is bent... lasting effects of preschool programs*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Erlbaum.

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS 2013. National Education Reform Agreement. Canberra: Australian Government.

http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/education/national-agreement_201412.pdf

CURRIE, J. 2009. Healthy, wealthy, and wise: Socioeconomic status, poor health in childhood, and human capital development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 47, 87-122.

DARAGANOVA, G. 2013. Is it OK to be away? School attendance in the primary school years. *The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Annual Statistical Report 2012*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

<http://www.growingupinaustralia.gov.au/pubs/asr/2012/asr2012e.html>

DAVIS, M. H. & MCPARTLAND, J. M. 2012. High school reform and student engagement. In: CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) *Handbook of research on student engagement*. London: Springer.

DELOITTE ACCESS ECONOMICS 2012. The socio-economic benefits of investing in the prevention of early school leaving. Deloitte Access Economics.

http://handsonlearning.org.au/DAE_investing_in_preventing_ESL_via_HOL_September_2012.pdf

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT 2010.

Pathways to re-engagement through flexible learning options. Melbourne: State of Victoria, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/segpolicy.pdf>

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING 1993. Retention and participation in Australian schools 1967-1992. Canberra: Australian Government Printing Service.

DICKSON, E. A. & HUTCHINSON, T. C. 2010. Truancy and the law in Australia: The Queensland example. *International Journal of Law and Education*, 15, 87-102.

DORNBUSCH, S., ERICKSON, K., LAIRD, J. & WONG, C. 2001. The relation of family and school attachment to adolescent deviance in diverse groups and communities. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 16, 396-422.

Down, B., & Choules, K. (2011). The secondary engagement evaluation project in low SES schools. Perth: Murdoch University. Available at: <http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/11839/>

DOWNEY, D. B. 1994. The school performances of children from single-mother and single-father families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 15, 129-147.

ECCLES, J. S. & ROESER, R. W. 2011. Schools as Developmental Contexts During Adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21, 225-241.

EDWARDS, B., BAXTER, J., SMART, D., SANSON, A. & HAYNES, A. 2009. Financial disadvantage and children's school readiness. *Family Matters*, 83, 23-31.

FINN, J. D. 1989. Withdrawing from school. *Review of Educational Research*, 59, 117-142.

FINN, J. D. & ZIMMER, K. S. 2012. Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter? In: CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) *Handbook of research on student engagement*. London: Springer.

FREDERICKS, J. A., BLUMENFELD, P. C. & PARIS, A. H. 2004. School engagement: potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 59-109.

GONSKI, D., BOSTON, K., GRENIER, K., LAWRENCE, C., SCALES, B. & TANNOCK, P. 2011. Review of Funding for Schooling - Final Report. Canberra: Department of Education. <http://www.appa.asn.au/content/gonski-report/Review-of-Funding-for-Schooling-Final-Report-Dec-2011.pdf>

GOODMAN, A. & GREGG, P. 2010. Poor children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour? London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

GOTTFRIED, A. E., FLEMING, J. S. & GOTTFRIED, A. W. 2001. Continuity of academic intrinsic motivation from childhood through late adolescence: a longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 3-13.

GOTTFRIED, A. E., MARCOULIDES, G. A., GOTTFRIED, A. W., OLIVER, P. H. & GUERIN, D. W. 2007. Multivariate latent change modeling of developmental decline in academic intrinsic motivation and achievement: childhood through adolescence. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 31, 317-327.

GOTTFRIED, M. A. 2014. Chronic absenteeism and its effects on students' academic and socioemotional outcomes. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 19, 53-75.

GRAY, M. & BAXTER, J. 2010. Parents and the labour market. *The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Annual Statistical Report 2010*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

<http://www.growingupinaustralia.gov.au/pubs/asr/2010/asr2010d.html>

HANCOCK, K. J., LAWRENCE, D., MITROU, F., ZARB, D., BERTHELSEN, D., NICHOLSON, J. & ZUBRICK, S. R. 2012. The association between playgroup participation, learning competence and social-emotional wellbeing for children age four-five years in Australia. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37, 72-81.

HANCOCK, K. J., SHEPHERD, C. C. J., LAWRENCE, D. & ZUBRICK, S. R. 2013. Student attendance and educational outcomes: Every day counts. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Education.

http://telethonkids.org.au/media/472779/final_report_2013.pdf

HANDS ON LEARNING. 2015. *New National Framework: Measuring what works to keep kids engaged at school* [Online]. Available:

<http://handsonlearning.org.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/New-National-Framework.pdf> [Accessed 7 June 2015].

HARRIS, L. 2010. Delivering, modifying or collaborating? Examining three teacher conceptions of how to facilitate student engagement. *Teachers and Teaching*, 16, 131-151.

HARRISON, L. J., GOLDFELD, S., METCALFE, E. & MOORE, T. 2012. Early learning programs that promote children's developmental and educational outcomes. *Resource sheet no. 15. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/uploadedFiles/ClosingTheGap/Content/Publications/2012/ctgc-rs15.pdf>

HAUSER, R. M., BROWN, B. V. & PROSSER, W. R. 1997. *Indicators Of Children's Well-Being*, New York, Russell Sage Foundation.

Hayes, D., Down, B., Talbot, D., & Choules, C. (2013). *Big Picture Education Australia: Experiences of students, parents/carers and teachers*. Sydney: Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.

http://www.bigpicture.org.au/files/sum067_experiences_report_v4.pdf

HILL, N. E. & TYSON, D. F. 2009. Parental Involvement in middle school: a meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 45, 740-763.

JACKSON, A. & CARTMEL, J. 2010. Listening to children's experience of starting school in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. *International Journal of Transitions in Childhood*, 4, 13-25.

- KIM, T. E., GENDRON, B., TORO, R. I. & FAIRBORN, S. K. 2011. Individual, peer, and school effects on math achievement and high school dropout. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 2, 256-260.
- LARMAR, S. 2010. Engaging children at-risk through World Vision Australia's Kids Hope Aus. program. *Journal of Social Inclusion*, 1, 23-41.
- LAWSON, M. A. & LAWSON, H. A. 2013. New conceptual frameworks for student engagement research, policy, and practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 83, 432-479.
- LESTER, L., WATERS, S. & CROSS, D. 2013. The relationship between school connectedness and mental health during the transition to secondary school: A path analysis. *Australian Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 23, 157-171.
- LEVINE, H. (ed.) 1980. *Education production theory and teacher inputs*, Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- LONSDALE, M. & ANDERSON, M. 2012. Preparing 21st century learners : the case for school-community collaborations. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research. <http://www.acer.edu.au/occasional-essays/preparing-21st-century-learners-the-case-for-school-community-collaboration>
- LONSDALE, M., DEERY, A., CLERKE, S., ANDERSON, M., CURTIN, E., KNIGHT, P. & BRAMICH, M. 2011. Final report: the benefits of school-business relationships. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research. http://research.acer.edu.au/policy_analysis_misc/8/
- MAGNUSON, K. A. & WALDFOGEL, J. 2005. Early childhood care and education: effects on ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. *Future of Children*, 11, 35-52.
- MCGREGOR, C. & MILLS, M. 2011. Sketching alternative visions of schooling. *Social Alternatives*, 30, 20-24.
- MCLACHLAN, R., GILFILLAN, G. & GORDON, J. 2013. Deep and persistent disadvantage in Australia. *Productivity Commission Staff Working Paper*. Canberra: Productivity Commission. <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/completed/deep-persistent-disadvantage>
- MCWAYNE, C., HAMPTON, V., FANTUZZO, J., COHEN, H. L. & SEKINO, Y. 2004. A multivariate examination of parent involvement and the social and academic competencies of urban kindergarten children. *Psychology in the Schools*, 41, 363-377.
- MULLER, D. K., RINGER, F. & SIMON, B. (eds.) 1987. *The Rise of the Modern Educational System: Structural Change and Social REproduction 1870-1920*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OECD 2012. Equity and quality in education, supporting disadvantaged students and schools. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/equityandqualityineducation-supportingdisadvantagedstudentsandschools.htm>

OECD 2015. Universal basic skills: what countries stand to gain. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. <http://www.oecd.org/edu/universal-basic-skills-9789264234833-en.htm>

PETTIT, B. & WESTERN, B. 2004. Mass imprisonment and the life course: Race and class inequality in US incarceration. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 511-536.

POLIDANO, C., HANEL, B. & BUDELMEYER, H. 2013. Explaining the socio-economic status school completion gap. *Education Economics*, 21, 230-247.

PUTNAM, R. D. 1995. Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal Of Democracy*, 1, 65-78.

QUINN, M. M., RUTHERFORD, R. B., LEONE, P. E., OSHER, D. M. & POIRIER, J. M. 2005. Youth with disabilities in juvenile corrections: a national survey. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 339-345.

RAFTERY, J. N., GROLNICK, W. S. & FLAMM, E. S. 2012. Families as facilitators of student engagement: toward a home-school partnership model. In: CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) *Handbook of research on student engagement*. London: Springer.

RAHMAN, K. 2010. Addressing the foundations for improved indigenous secondary student outcomes: a South Australian qualitative study. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 39, 65-76.

RESCHLY, A. L. & CHRISTENSON, S. L. 2012. Jingle, jangle and conceptual haziness: Evolution and future directions of the engagement construct. In: CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) *Handbook of research on student engagement*. London: Springer.

RESNICK, M., HARRIS, L. & BLUM, R. 1993. The impact of caring and connectedness on adolescent health and well-being. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 29.

REYNOLDS, A., TEMPLE, A., OU, S. R., ARTEAGA, I. A. & WHITE, B. 2011. School-based early childhood education and age-28 well-being: Effects by timing, dosage, and subgroups. *Science*, 333, 360.

REYNOLDS, A. J., TEMPLE, J. A., ROBERTSON, D. L. & MANN, E. A. 2002. Age 21 cost-benefit analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Centres. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24, 267-303.

- RORRIS, A., WELDON, P., BEAVIS, A., MCKENZIE, P., BRAMICH, M. & DEERY, A. 2011. Assessment of current process for targeting of schools funding to disadvantaged students. Report prepared for the Review of Funding for Schooling panel by the Australian Council for Educational Research.
<http://apo.org.au/research/assessment-current-process-targeting-schools-funding-disadvantaged-students>
- ROSS, D. P. & ROBERTS, P. 1999. *Income And child well-being: A new perspective on the poverty debate*. Ottawa: Canadian Council On Social Development.
- ROWE, P. & SAVELSBERG, H. 2010. How are young people's experiences of 'home' affecting their engagement with schooling and community? *Youth Studies Australia*, 29, 36-42.
- RUMBERGER, R. & LAMB, S. 2003. The early employment and further education experiences of high school dropouts: a comparative study of the United States and Australia. *Economics of Education Review*, 22, 553-556.
- RUMBERGER, R. & ROTERMUND, S. 2012. The relationship between engagement and high school dropout. *In: CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) Handbook of research on student engagement*. London: Springer.
- RUMBERGER, R. W. & LIM, S. A. 2008. Why students drop out of school: a review of 25 years of research. Santa Barbara: University of California, California Dropout Research Project. <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Assets/CSN/PDF/Flyer+-+Why+students+drop+out.pdf>
- SCHWEINHART 2003. Benefits, costs, and explanation of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program. *Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development*. Tampa, Florida. http://www.highscope.org/file/Research/PerryProject/Perry-SRCD_2003.pdf
- SHOCHET, I. M., DADDS, M., HAM, D. & MONTAGUE, R. 2006. School connectedness is an underemphasized parameter in adolescent mental health: Results of a community prediction study. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 35, 170-179.
- SHOCHET, I. M., SMITH, C. L., FURLONG, M. J. & HOMEL, R. 2011. A prospective study investigating the impact of school belonging factors on negative affect in adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 40, 586-595.
- SKINNER, E., FURRER, C., MARCHAND, G. & KINDERMAN, T. 2008. Engagement and disaffection in the classroom: Part of a larger motivational dynamic? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100, 765-781.

- SMYTH, J. & MCINERNEY, P. 2014. 'Ordinary kids' navigating geographies of educational opportunity in the context of an Australian 'place-based intervention'. *Journal of Education Policy*, 29, 285-301.
- SMYTH, J. & ROBINSON, J. 2014. 'Give me air not shelter': critical tales of a policy case of student re-engagement from beyond school. *Journal of Education Policy*, 30, 220-236.
- STOKES, H. & TURNBULL, M. 2009. Reimagining learning: Report for the Foundation for Young Australians. Melbourne: Australian Youth Research Centre, Melbourne School of Graduate Education, University of Melbourne.
http://web.education.unimelb.edu.au/ycrc/linked_documents/Reimagining%20Learning%20Final%20Report.pdf
- SULLIVAN, A. M., JOHNSON, B., OWENS, L. & CONWAY, R. 2014. Punish them or engage them? Teachers' views of unproductive student behaviours in the classroom. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39, 43-56.
- TE RIELE, K. 2012. Challenging the logic behind government policies for school completion. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 44, 237-252.
- TELETHON KIDS INSTITUTE 2014. A pathway from early childhood disadvantage for Australian children. Perth: Telethon Kids Institute for Minderoo Foundation.
<http://media.minderoo.com.au/2014/10/A-Pathway-from-Early-Childhood-Disadvantage-for-Australian-Children-Case-Study.pdf>
- THIELKING, M., FLATAU, P., LA SALA, L. & SUTTON, D. 2015. Couch Surfing Students: The Yarra Ranges Youth Homelessness Prevention Project. Swinburne University and the University of Western Australia Centre for Social Impact.
http://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/Yarra_Ranges_Youth_Homelessness_Prevention_Project.pdf
- THOMSON, S., DE BORTOLI, L. & BUCKLEY, S. 2013. PISA 2012: How Australia measures up. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.
<https://www.acer.edu.au/documents/PISA-2012-Report.pdf>
- VICKERS, M., FINGER, L., BARKER, K. & BODKIN-ANDREWS, G. 2014. Measuring the impact of students' social relations and values : validation of the Social-Relational Support for Education instrument. *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, 14, 71-92.
- Vickers, M., & McCarthy, M. (2013). Reviewing the Big Picture Learning Design. Big Picture Education Australia.
http://www.bigpicture.org.au/files/sum0067_review_v3_crop.pdf

WARREN, M. R., HONG, S., RUBIN, C. L. & UY, P. S. 2009. Beyond the bake sale: A community based relational approach to parent engagement in schools. *Teacher College Record*, 111, 2209-2254.

WHANNELL, R. & ALLEN, W. 2011. High school dropouts returning to study: The influence of the teacher and family during secondary school. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36, 22-35.

WOOD, L. 1999. Healthy communities: A review of relevant projects And feasibility for Healthway. Perth: Health Promotion Foundation of Western Australia.

WYLIE, C. & HODGEN, E. 2012. Trajectories and patterns of student engagement: Evidence from a longitudinal study. *In: CHRISTENSON, S. L., RESCHLY, A. L. & WYLIE, C. (eds.) Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*. London: Springer.

ZUBRICK, S. R., SILBURN, S. R. & PRIOR, M. 2005. Resources and contexts for child development: Implications for children and society. *In: RICHARDSON, S. & PRIOR, M. (eds.) No time to lose: The well being of Australia's children*. Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

ZUBRICK, S. R., SMITH, G. J., NICHOLSON, J. M., SANSON, A. V. & JACKIEWICZ, T. A. 2008. Parenting and families in Australia. Canberra: Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australian Government.
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/sprp34.pdf

ZUBRICK, S. R., WILLIAMS, A. A., SILBURN, S. R. & VIMPANI, G. 2000. Indicators of social and family functioning. Canberra: Department of Family and Community Services, Commonwealth of Australia.
https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/indicators_of_social_and_family_functioning_full_report.pdf