An Analysis of Education Reform in Manitoba:
The K – S4 Education Agenda for Student Success

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The *Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success* (2002) is a document produced by the government of Manitoba’s Department of Education, Training and Youth, which outlines a set of priorities designed to “…strengthen programs and improve practices for the benefit of children and their families (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p.1). In describing the rationale for the school change initiatives presented in the Agenda, this document refers to several challenges and issues facing education today. It points out that despite increases in the overall level of education of the general population during the past several decades, there still remain large numbers of people who proceed through life without reasonable education and credentials. In particular, concerns are voiced about the current educational status of aboriginal people, people with disabilities, visible minorities, and less educated adults. The document describes the changing characteristics of parents and families resulting from an increasingly diverse yet better educated population, and how the public’s expanded access to knowledge through formal and informal means has led to increased pressure to recognize both informal and prior learning experiences. The effects of the continuously changing labour market on education and training needs is another factor which is cited as a reason for educational change. In addition, the pressure exerted by community groups to be involved in planning education and training in Manitoba has required that attention be given to developing decision making processes which are more participatory and inclusive.

The Agenda states that “…current educational research served as the foundation upon which the K-S4 Agenda was developed” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth,
Over the past two decades, many national, provincial and state governments have adopted education reform or school improvement as priorities. As a result, much research exists about such reforms, including a body of normative literature that can be used to guide and assess these improvement efforts. Our primary purpose in writing this paper is to compare the reform priorities outlined in the Agenda to this normative literature to determine how adequately they reflect the current research in school improvement. We also offer our analysis regarding how well the actions proposed in the Agenda will contribute to improved student success.

Development of the Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda

In the 2000 – 2001 school year, the Manitoba government began consultation on the K – S4 Agenda for Education. Education Minister Drew Caldwell outlined the government’s 6 education priorities in July 2000. These priorities are:

1. Advancing student success – improving outcomes especially for less successful learners.
2. Schools, families and communities – strengthening links by improving collaboration among schools, families and communities.
3. School planning – strengthening school planning and reporting
4. Professional development – improving professional learning opportunities for educators.
5. Learner transitions – strengthening pathways among secondary schools, post-secondary education and work.
6. Education research – linking policy and practice to research and evidence.
In March 2001, the government released a discussion paper titled *An Education Agenda: Kindergarten to Senior 4*. This was followed by seven regional sharing sessions. For these meetings, school divisions were invited to send teams that included students, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members and other community representatives. At these meetings, there was discussion of the *Agenda* as well as local concerns and initiatives related to the 6 priorities, with more than four hundred people participating in this consultation process. These regional sessions culminated in a provincial conference in May 2001. Over two hundred fifty people from across the province came together to talk about public education. About half of those present had also attended a regional meeting, while the other half included not only educators but also a wide variety of people from business, community groups, faculties of education, universities and colleges and others with an interest in education.

In October 2001, in order to facilitate an understanding of the *Agenda*, the Minister of Education met with trustees, superintendents, teachers, parents and students. All of these discussions were aimed at building a consensus regarding the content and direction of the *Agenda*.

In 2002, the Department of Education continued to work closely with school divisions to embed the priorities into school and division planning processes with a clear focus on student outcomes. The Department’s website has been redesigned to provide comprehensive information on the status and plans for each of the priorities. On May 11, 2002, a provincial conference on the *K–S4 Agenda: Building Effective School*
Communities was sponsored by the Department with over one hundred fifty Manitobans participating in a discussion of the six priorities.

Research and the Manitoba K – S4 Education Agenda

In the Agenda, thirty-two citations are listed describing the research which supports the overall directions and recommended actions for educational change in Manitoba. In the following section of this paper, the research citations listed in the Agenda in support of these priorities will be described and compared to additional research sources we have located that were not referred to in the K – S4 document.

Priority 1: Advancing Student Success

The Agenda includes the statement that “Every child has the capacity to succeed in school and life” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 3). To support this statement, the document refers to research which shows that particular characteristics of schools can promote success regardless of the background of the student (Levin, 1995). In our search of the literature on school restructuring, we located sources which similarly put forth the premise that “…essentially all students can be educated to some relatively high level of functioning” (Conley, 1997, p. 49). Conley explains that in order for this to occur, the notion of intelligence as a unidimensional construct distributed throughout society in a manner reflective of a bell-shaped curve must be set aside, because this notion assumes by definition that there are educational winners and losers. Danielson (2002) agrees with Conley on this point. Alternative views of intelligence, such as multiple intelligences (Gardner, as cited in Conley, 1997) can “…help educators
rethink what it means for students to be successful; success can occur in many different arenas yet still be validated by the school” (p. 51). In our search, we also encountered the work of Brooks & Brooks (as cited in Louis, Toole & Hargreaves, 1999) who stated that “Many proposed instructional reforms require replacing exclusively traditional views of cognition and school social relations with more constructivist ones” (p. 264).

Research by Stoll & Fink (1996) is cited in the Agenda as stating that the single largest factor affecting student academic growth is the classroom teacher’s effectiveness, and that the first students to benefit from improved teacher effectiveness are the lower achieving students. Our examination of the literature reveals support for these conclusions, as demonstrated by the work of Brophy (1986), which indicates that teacher knowledge and skill level significantly affect student achievement. The Agenda refers to the work of Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) to support the claim that “…less successful learners benefit from additional supporting factors such as time spent on learning, opportunities to meet learning goals and quality of teaching” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 3). The Agenda continues by referring to the work of Fullan (1993), which indicates that stronger collaborative relationships among students, teachers and other partners will be needed in order to change instructional practice and the culture of teaching. The Agenda lists several classroom practices designed to improve outcomes, such as “…differentiated instruction, collaboration to encourage students to work together and the advancement of authentic assessment practices” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 3). Our search of the literature located the work of Marzano, Pickering & Pollock (2001), which identified 9 categories of instructional strategies that improve student achievement. These include (a)
identifying similarities and differences, (b) summarizing and note taking, (c) reinforcing effort and providing recognition, (d) assigning homework, (e) using non-linguistic representations, (e) fostering cooperative learning, (f) setting objectives and providing feedback, (g) generating and testing hypotheses and questions, and (h) providing cues and advance organizers.

Priority 2: Schools, Families and Communities

The positive connection between student success and the involvement of families and communities with schools is emphasized in the second priority of the K-S4 Agenda. The works of Dryfoos (2000), Maeroff (1998), and Oakes & Lipton (1990) are cited in the Agenda as offering evidence regarding the power and significance of the student-family-community connection. Additional evidence is provided in sources we located, such as Horn & Chen, Keith & Keith, and Shartrand et al., (all as cited in Danielson, 2002). The work of these authors confirms that, as stated by Danielson, “students learn more when parents are actively involved in their education – when parents read to them, limit their television viewing, supervise how they spend their time, and take an interest in their progress at school” (p. 30).

The Agenda refers to the work of Epstein (1995) to stress the need for improved communication between home and school, and cites Blank, Bruner, Chang & Potapchuk (1996), and Sergiovanni (1994) when making the point that “Community schools can affect not only educational outcomes but other outcomes as well, such as improved social behaviour and healthy youth development, better family functioning and parental involvement, access to support services, enhanced school climate, family and
neighbourhood life (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p.4). In our literature search, we found sources supporting this belief, such as the work of Davies (1991), and Sanders & Epstein (1998). Davies asserts that “…parent involvement can make a powerful contribution to efforts to reform urban schools and to achieve our national aim of providing a successful school experience for all children of all backgrounds and circumstances” (p. 376-377). In discussing the recent trend towards parental and community participation in the educational process, Sanders & Epstein note that:

…there is a strong, common desire to make schools more effective institutions of learning. Concurrent with this goal is the realization that schools neither exist nor function in a vacuum. In order for schools in any nation to effectively educate all youth, families and communities must become partners in the process. (p. 482-483)

*Priority 3: School Planning*

The *Agenda* refers to “…a growing interest on the part of many people for an expanded role in shaping the institutions that affect their lives” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 5), and cites the work of Comer, Haynes, Joyner & Ben Avie (1996) to emphasize the value of educators and parents building stronger relationships with one another to increase the chances for student success. Our search of the literature uncovered sources which also mention the changing relationship many people feel regarding large institutions in society, and their corresponding expectation to be involved to a greater degree in decisions affecting their lives (Conley, 1997, p. 305). The work of Levin & Riffel (1997) is cited in the *Agenda* as reinforcing the notion that
school staff, parents, students and community members should be involved in school planning and reporting activities. The conclusions of Earl & Lee (1998) are referred to in the document as evidence that “…school planning builds a sense of common purpose among school staff, parents, students and community engaging in processes intended to change school practices to improve student outcomes” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 5).

As Conley (1997) points out, the movement towards involving more stakeholders in school planning presents its own set of difficulties, since the resulting redistribution of power can increase stress and conflict. The *Agenda* states that “An important trend in public education is an increasing requirement for consultation and collaboration with the expectation that such approaches will foster capacity at the local school level (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 5). Our search of the literature located a list of elements developed by David (as cited in Conley, 1997) which should be in place to ensure that issues of student learning and school improvement are effectively addressed when schools, families and communities are planning together. These elements include:

- A well-thought-out committee structure
- Enabling leadership
- Focus on student learning
- Focus on adult learning
- Schoolwide perspective
- Long-term commitment from the district or state
- Curricular guidance in the form of broad learning goals or standards against which student learning is measured
Opportunities for learning assistance

Access to information on student learning, budgets, legal requirements, etc. (p. 306)

The focus in the School Planning priority is primarily upon the need, as outlined in the *Agenda*, for “…schools and divisions to gather and use data to plan appropriately and involve the broader community in discussions about student success and school improvement” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 5). The *Agenda* appears to base this belief on the work of Lewington and Orpwood (1993), which is cited in the document.

While we do not disagree that the appropriate use of locally gathered data is important in developing successful schools, we observe that the focus of the *Agenda’s* School Planning priority is restricted rather narrowly to data collection dealing with outcome measurement, and to aligning school plans with school division and provincial level planning. This appears to be a contradiction to the ideas of Sergiovanni (1992) which the *Agenda* cites. Sergiovanni highlights the distinction between school effectiveness which is based on broad goals and processes rather than simply the results of achievement tests. We shall discuss the implications of this contradiction later in this paper.

**Priority 4: Professional Development**

The *Agenda* refers to the work of Fullan (1993) to underscore the strong correlation between increased student learning and improved teacher learning. The *Agenda* cites Darling-Hammond (1994) when stating that “Students learn more from
teachers who have strong academic skills and classroom teaching experience, are teaching in the field in which they are trained, and who participate in high quality professional development programs” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 6). We found confirmation for this viewpoint in the comments of Reynolds & Griffith (2002), including their opinion that “We need to devote more attention to exploring ways we can improve how teachers learn because if we can help teachers learn better, students will benefit” (p. 40). We found that Miller (1998) also offers support for teacher development, as evidenced by her declaration that:

…schools engage children and young adults in rigorous academic work that encourages them to “use their minds well” (Sizer, 1984) and to make connections between ideas and their applications in the world beyond school. Ultimately, such a conception of learning depends on teachers – not on schedules, grouping procedures, or policy manuals. It is teachers who provide the support and challenge that promote learning; it is teachers who encourage improvement through the feedback they provide; it is teachers who present materials and ideas that engage student interest; and it is teachers who safeguard the academic integrity of the work that gets done in school. (p. 529)

In the K-S4 document, professional development is viewed as something which “…can be built into school planning with learning focused on the development of team building, conflict management and collaborative planning skills” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002. p. 6). Statements in the Agenda point out that an increased emphasis on student understanding and ability to apply knowledge is necessary, and that
teachers require appropriate training to remain knowledgeable about learning theory and pedagogy.

Our search of the literature regarding teacher professional development uncovered the work of David Hopkins (1998), who notes that it is critical to “…recognize the importance of staff development, since it is unlikely that development in student learning will occur without development in teachers’ practice” (p. 1045). Hopkins explains that the curriculum, no matter how good, does not impact directly upon student learning, but rather has to be mediated through a process of instruction.

**Priority 5: Learner Transitions**

The Agenda refers to the work of Sizer (1992) to support the contention that “How students perform academically is key to successful transitions from early, middle and secondary years into post-secondary education and work” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 7). The Agenda notes that successful student transitions require commitment from the school, support from the community, as well as academic preparation, opportunities for career exploration and work experience.

The Agenda emphasizes the importance of monitoring the access students have to various educational pathways, since “…the percentage of high school completers who enrol in post-secondary education in the fall immediately after high school is influenced by the accessibility of higher education and the value the high school completer places on post-secondary education compared with other pursuits” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 7).
Senge (as cited in Reyes, Wagstaff & Fusarelli, 1999) observes that “perhaps for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create far more information than anyone can absorb, to foster far greater interdependency than anyone can manage, and to accelerate change far faster than anyone’s ability to keep pace” (p. 194). To provide a quality education to deal with this changing nature of society, Goldberger & Kazis advocate a reform agenda based on the following four design principles:

1. High school should be organized around nontracked, thematic programs of study designed to prepare all students for entry into both higher education and high-skill employment through intellectually rigorous practical education.

2. Selection of a career-focused program of study in high school should be based on general interests and should not be a high-stakes career decision.

3. Work-based learning should be an integral part of the core curriculum for all students, since it yields benefits that school-based education alone cannot provide.

4. The integration of secondary and post-secondary learning environments is critical to the development of rigorous programs of career-related education.

(As cited in Conley, 1997, p. 229)

Priority 6: Educational Research

The Agenda recognizes that developing an understanding of education issues, and strategies to address these issues, is enhanced by the use of appropriate research. Based on the work of Kohn (1998), the Agenda suggests that “Educational research recognizes that measures of student success and school effectiveness extend beyond high test scores”
The K-S4 document defines learner success as having more to do with the understanding of ideas and possessing an interest in learning. Following the suggestions of Schmoker (1996) and Pipho (1998), the Agenda emphasizes the value of data collection and analysis at the local school and division levels in establishing a foundation for school improvement efforts, since such data may yield “evidence that challenges existing perceptions or success or … discrepancies that raise questions about what is happening and why (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 8).

We found support for the use of research as a strategic approach to school improvement in Bruce Joyce’s work. Joyce specifically describes both research and action research as ‘doors’ which can “…unlock the process of school improvement” (as cited in Hopkins, 1998, p. 1043). Karen Seashore Louis (1998) also recognizes the importance of research in the development and utilization of knowledge associated with school improvement. She indicates that “…teachers’ practitioner knowledge is constructed… through both reflective practice (Schon, 1983) and through more disciplined inquiry, such as action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) (p. 1077).

Principles of Authentic School Improvement

Hopkins (2002) analyzed the work of several well recognized scholars in the field of school change and improvement, such as Hargreaves, Fullan, Lieberman, and Hopkins (1998). He then synthesized these recent research findings on school change into a series of approaches to school improvement which he refers to as suggested principles of authentic school improvement. Hopkins notes that these principles “…stand in contrast
to ‘target setting’ and ‘high stakes accountability’ reform strategies, and short-term quick fix approaches” (p. 79). His principles indicate that authentic school improvement programs should be:

- Achievement focused – they focus on enhancing student learning and achievement, in a broader sense than mere examination results or test scores;
- Empowering in aspiration – they intend to provide those involved in the change process with the skills of learning and “change agentry” that will raise levels of expectation and confidence throughout the educational community;
- Research based and theory rich – they base their strategies on programs and program elements with an established track record of effectiveness that research their own effectiveness and connect to and build on other bodies of knowledge and disciplines;
- Context specific – they pay attention to the unique features of the school situation and build strategies on the basis of an analysis of that particular context;
- Capacity building in nature – they aim to build the organizational conditions that support continuous improvement;
- Inquiry driven – they appreciate that reflection-in-action is an integral and self-sustaining process;
- Implementation oriented – they take a direct focus on the quality of classroom practice and student learning;
• Interventionist and strategic – they are purposely designed to improve the current situation in the school or system and take a medium term view of the management of change, and plan and prioritize developments accordingly;

• Externally supported – they build agencies around the school that provide focussed support, and create and facilitate networks that disseminate and sustain “good practice”;

• Systemic – they accept the reality of a centralized policy context, but also realize the need to adapt external change for internal purpose, and to exploit the creativity and synergies within the system. (p. 79 – 80)

Hopkins (2002) states that while these principles are based on an analysis of many school improvement programs, not all programs will embody all of these characteristics. He suggests that these principles may be used “…as a standard against which to assess a wide range of school improvement practice” (p. 80). Since we also feel that these principles provide a useful benchmark for the assessment of school improvement practice we shall apply these principles to the Agenda document in order to analyse how well the actions proposed in the document will contribute to student success.

Analysis of the K – S4 Agenda

Hopkins (2002) comments that “…recent trends in international education reforms mark a return to large-scale educational change, and a growing interest in accountability-driven reforms” (p. 34). He observes that most accountability-driven
reforms flow from government down to the school level, have a narrow focus, and are accompanied by a lack of debate. He also criticizes most reforms for not creating systems in which the policy makers themselves are held accountable.

As we mentioned earlier in this paper, Hopkins (2002) has effectively synthesized the work of several recognized scholars in the area of school change and improvement, thereby providing us with a series of principles of authentic school improvement which provide a suitable framework for analysis of the actions and priorities in the Agenda. In this section of our paper we will attempt to apply this framework to the K – S4 Agenda in order to analyse how well the document meets the criteria established by these principles.

*Principle 1: A Focus on Achievement.*

Hopkins (2002) indicates that school improvement reforms should focus on enhancing student learning and achievement in a broader sense than just examination results or test scores. However, Action 1 of the Agenda describes the release of an annual report on student achievement by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. This annual report is based on the following student outcome measures: (a) performance on international assessments (PISA), (b) performance on national assessments (SAIP), (c) performance on Manitoba assessments, (d) performance on high school courses, (e) grade promotion and retention, and (f) high school completion (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p.8). These measures reflect a narrow focus of achievement, since all 6 of the data sources are based either directly or indirectly on standards tests.

In the annual report *A Profile of Student Learning: Outcomes in Manitoba,* (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002), the inequities which exist in student achievement across the education system in Manitoba resulting from geographic location,
ethnicity, disability or gender are acknowledged. The document states that:

Both PISA and SAIP have found statistically significant differences in achievement by gender and socio-economic background. Manitoba data shows that students in northern areas of the province do not perform as well as students from southern Manitoba. It is further known that Aboriginal students and students who require special assistance are less likely to achieve high levels of performance. (p. 8)

Daniel, Edge & Griffith (2002) note that “educational reforms that focus narrowly on educational outcomes tend to downplay the relationship between social class and educational outcomes…”, since, “…educational accountability measures rely on students’ or schools’ standardized test scores and ignore the social context in which the scores are embedded” (p. 36). The emphasis placed on accountability measures in Action 1 of the Agenda perpetuates the inequities mentioned in the government’s own annual report. Therefore, we do not believe that the Agenda meets the criteria of maintaining a broad focus on student achievement that goes beyond mere standards assessment.

Principle 2: Empowering in Aspiration

This principle describes how those involved in the change process should be provided with the skills that will enable them to cope with change, and to build confidence in the educational community. While the Agenda provides lots of information for parents, as outlined by Priority 2, Actions 6, 7, 8, and 9, in the form of reports, website updates and annual conferences, they do not provide support for skill-building about the change process itself which would facilitate “change agentry” (Reynolds & Griffith, 2002, p. 79).
In Priority 4, which addresses professional learning opportunities for teachers, we find that Actions 13, 14 and 15, offer a very limited focus of professional development by concentrating primarily upon curricular issues. While the K-S4 document recognizes that there are demands for teachers to change, we find there is little evidence of professional development being offered to support this demand.

**Principle 3: Research Based and Theory Rich**

This principle suggests that strong school improvement programs base their strategies on elements which have a foundation in research, and which connect to other bodies of knowledge and disciplines. Our review of the literature cited in the Agenda reveals a thorough and comprehensive summary of the research relevant to the directions outlined in the document. In addition, Priority 6 encourages educational partnerships between the universities, school divisions and schools by facilitating a linkage between policy and practice to research and evidence. The current focus on action research has been initiated and supported by the actions outlined by the Department. We believe this is a positive orientation which supports the intent of this principle.

**Principle 4: Context Specific**

School improvement programs ideally should pay attention to the individual features of each school situation and build strategies based on the uniqueness of each particular context. While the department is providing support for school plans through Priority 3, Actions 10 and 12, the focus of these school plans is being narrowed inappropriately by the requirement that schools follow a planning template provided by the government. School plans must “…focus on improving learner success and furthering the 6 priorities” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 14). We
believe that this type of restriction for school planning activities will prove counter-
productive to the school improvement efforts of individual schools, by creating barriers
to a school’s efforts to plan in a more context specific manner.

*Principle 5: Capacity Building in Nature*

This principle suggests that school improvement programs should aim to
build the school organization in such a manner that continuous improvement is
supported. The *Agenda* refers to the collaborative processes experienced by schools
which have been involved with organizations such as the Manitoba School Improvement
Program. However, by restricting the planning activities of the schools to the parameters
outlined in the 6 priorities, the ability of schools and their educational partners to support
continuous improvement is hampered.

*Principle 6: Inquiry Driven*

This principle of school improvement emphasizes that reflection-in-action
is an integral and self-sustaining part of the reform process. Our interpretation of this
principle is that school personnel need to be involved in localized research inquiries
which stem from the interests and needs of students, teachers and community. Priority 6
of the *Agenda* discusses linking policy and practice to research and evidence, but remains
very vague regarding how this may be accomplished. There is no comment in the
*Agenda* regarding the need for practitioners to engage in reflective practice.

*Principle 7: Implementation Oriented*

School improvement programs should take a direct focus regarding the
quality of classroom practice and student learning. We believe that the *Agenda* structures
a strong focus in this area, as evidenced by the theme of student success which underlies
the entire document. As stated in the document, “The Agenda represents a collaborative effort on the part of all education partners to strengthen programs and improve practices for the benefit of children and their families” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002 p.1).

**Principle 8: Interventionist and Strategic**

This principle states that school improvement programs are designed to improve the current situation in the school and take a medium term view of the change process. The *Agenda* describes the 6 priorities and 27 actions as being planned for implementation over a four year term, which fits with the guideline suggested by this principle for a medium term view. As stated in the document, “The Manitoba K – S4 Education Agenda for Student Success provides guidelines to allow everyone interested in public education to work together to make our schools as good as they can be” (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2002, p. 17). The document describes educational change as being a process of learning requiring evaluation to keep what is effective and to change what is not.

**Principle 9: Externally Supported**

The focus of this principle is on the building of agencies around the school to offer support, create networks, and sustain good practices. However, as a result of the requirement that school planning activities adhere to the government template for planning in order to receive funding, opportunities to create supportive networks outside of the guidelines are minimal. While other agencies are mentioned in the Agenda as possible sources of support for schools, these examples also must adhere to the narrow framework outlined in the *Agenda*. 
**Principle 10: Systemic**

The essence of this principle is that school improvement programs must accept the reality of the centralized policy context within which they operate, but they must also be able to adapt external change for internal purpose. We suggest that this presents a real challenge for Manitoba schools and their communities. In a climate of accountability to external forces including the government, business and post-secondary institutions, our schools are faced with realities such as a mandated curriculum, standards assessments and examinations, school planning templates, curriculum focussed professional development learning, and limited resources. Negotiating and managing effective school reforms amidst such a context requires creativity, persistence, and commitment.

**Conclusion**

Our purpose in writing this paper has been to examine the *Manitoba K-S4 Education Agenda for Student Success* (2002) to determine how adequately it reflects the directions suggested by current educational research literature in the area of school improvement reforms. We have attempted to provide a comparison of the research base cited in the *Agenda* as being the foundation for the document’s Priorities and Actions to other research sources available. We have also offered our analysis regarding how well the 27 Actions proposed in the *Agenda* will contribute to improved student success. The scope of the changes suggested by the 6 Priorities and the 27 Actions contained within the *Agenda* is significant, perhaps even overwhelming. Our analysis of this document has led us to believe that although the *Agenda* cites an extensive range of literature sources to provide the rationale for its focus and direction, deficiencies exist in
the level of support offered to students, teachers, parents and the community as a whole by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. We have attempted to outline the nature of these deficiencies by referring to the 10 Principles of Authentic School Improvement designed by Hopkins (2002). Our conclusion is that the *K – S4 Agenda* document meets a few of the criteria suggested by these principles, but in many areas is found lacking. The primary criticism we offer regarding the *Agenda* is reflected in the following statement from a participant in a study conducted by Daniel, Edge & Griffith (2002):

> …there seems to be a very political commitment to separating out accountability and development. I think that is a total mis-conceptualization of the process. If you separate out accountability and development I don’t think you can do anything. You have to have pressure and support. The separation makes it too severe. They [schools] are assessed but then schools can’t find their way through. They don’t know how to develop. It is very difficult to get together the summative and the formative, the monitoring and reporting side and the developmental side. (p. 35)
References


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