

School review panels - what are they about?

Every four years, government schools undergo a year of self-evaluation, review and planning. There are four types of review:

- Negotiated review
- Continuous improvement review
- Diagnostic review
- Extended diagnostic review.

Review panels are always held in continuous improvement, diagnostic and extended diagnostic reviews and may also be held in negotiated reviews.

What is a review panel?

Members of the school community come together for a day to discuss with an independent reviewer the performance of the school since its last review and to consider its future directions. Based on this discussion, the reviewer prepares a report to assist the school in developing its new strategic plan.

Panel members usually comprise of the Principal, members, the Regional Network Leader, members of the leaderships team, staff body, parents and other stake holders.

What is the reviewer going to ask me?

The reviewer will be exploring three student outcome areas: student learning (e.g. literacy and numeracy), student engagement and wellbeing (e.g. student safety, attendance and connectedness to school), and student pathways and transitions (e.g. destinations after leaving school or the movement of students into, through and exiting the school). There are no set questions reviewers will ask of a panel member. However, a broad question underpinning school review for consideration includes *What are the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement?*

How can I make a contribution as a school council representative or teacher?

The value of inviting a range of people to be part of a panel is the ability to access a diverse range of views. Each person's perspective is valued and helps form a more complete picture of the school.

Panel members should feel free to contribute from their own perspective, knowledge and experiences. It is a valuable opportunity to add a parent or teacher perspective to the discussion. It is not expected that all panel members will be experts on every facet of the school.

Panel members may like to think about:

- Where is the school now in terms of student outcomes?
- What is this based on?
- Where does the school need to be in four years?

Panel members should also feel free to ask questions about any aspects of the discussion on the review day. In particular, teachers may wish to comment on their interpretation of the staff opinion survey and parents may wish to comment upon the findings of the parent opinion survey.

What preparation is required?

It is important that all panel members have had some involvement in the school self-evaluation process and have read the self-evaluation report. This will ensure they have a broad understanding of the school's goals and targets, key issues and potential directions for the future.

How will I find out about the outcomes of the review?

Reviewers provide a presentation of the review report to meetings with the staff and school council, thereby assisting them in their work to develop the new school strategic plan. The school principal ensures that the outcomes of the review report are shared with other members of the school community, including students and parents. This could occur through parent forums or newsletters.

How long will the review take?

A continuous improvement review is conducted over one full school day (7 hours). A diagnostic or extended diagnostic review will also include a one-day review panel, which is informed by other focus groups or interviews with the school community held by the reviewer during the fieldwork days.

Who are reviewers?

School reviewers are engaged by the Department to provide independent advice on school performance and school improvement strategies.

Their expertise in data analysis, knowledge of the Victorian education system and access to an evidence-base of what works in school improvement, provides a fresh perspective on school data, interpretation and innovative strategies for school improvement.

How do I find out more?

School principals ensure school staff and school council are briefed on the upcoming review, the nature and purpose of the review, and their potential involvement in the review.

For further information, talk to your school principal or visit:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/review.htm>