

Building the Skills of the EDUCATION WORKFORCE

to enhance the teaching– learning relationship

The school education community recognises the importance of leadership and a highly skilled workforce in maximising the teaching–learning relationship to achieve improved learning outcomes for students in the government school system.

Consultation, data and research have shown the Victorian government school workforce to be both highly skilled and dedicated.

Continuous development and improved student outcomes at both the school and system level has at its core an understanding of the need to continue to enhance the teaching–learning relationship. A strong teaching–learning relationship requires high-quality teaching and leadership that focuses on students' learning needs. The Government is committed to developing the teaching–learning relationship in all Victorian schools and is investing heavily in the development of school leaders and teachers to achieve this.

Excellent workforce development practices already exist in the Victorian government school system.

The challenge now is to ensure that these excellent practices are adopted and embraced across the whole system, a challenge that is the focus of the Government's workforce plan, to be implemented over the next 3–5 years. This plan includes strategies on ***Building Leadership Capacity, Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture*** and ***Teacher Professional Development*** to assist teachers and principals at all career stages – beginning teachers, high-performing young teachers with leadership potential, experienced teachers, first-time and experienced principals.

> FLAGSHIP STRATEGY 3:

Building Leadership Capacity

The Government recognises the critical role and responsibilities of principals in improving the educational outcomes of students in their schools. As educational leaders in our communities, principals have a major influence on the capacity of their teachers and the quality of the teaching–learning relationship. Within the system we must provide principals with the support they need to develop a culture of high performance and continuous improvement in schools. By investing in leadership development, the Government will ensure that school leaders are equipped to meet the demands and challenges of their role within the system.

To ensure we have the best leaders in our schools who will rise to the challenging role of principal, we need to make certain that the process for selecting principals in Victorian government schools is rigorous. The current process has been criticised and may have discouraged potential applicants and inhibited the movement of school leaders across the school system.

To ensure we recruit the best possible candidates as school principals, this Government will develop, by 2005, an ***improved principal selection process***. The major elements of this initiative will include:

- modern recruitment practices rather than basing selection decisions largely on the results of interviews
- principal representation on selection panels
- tailoring of selection criteria to reflect the differing needs and characteristics of schools, including key goals and targets, and the expectations and requirements of the system
- proactively encouraging applicants with the required profile to participate in the selection process
- encouraging more contact between candidates and the employing school to facilitate two-way communication.

Effective and focused school leadership has a crucial role to play in developing teacher growth. Consequently the need for a well-resourced longitudinal leadership development program must be put in place urgently.” (Principal)

The capabilities of our current school leaders require continuous development. In some schools, mentors and coaches are successfully providing professional development services to government school principals. All principals would derive significant benefit if this support was made available across the system.

From 2004 the Government will establish a **mentoring program for first-time principals and a coaching support program for experienced principals**.

There is scope to improve leadership performance management procedures across the system. This must link to leadership development processes, performance appraisal, contract renewal, school performance data, improvement plans and student outcomes. The consultations and research strongly identified a need for consistency in approach and outcomes in order to improve the effectiveness of performance management and enhance the contribution of the principal's role.

To achieve this, the Government will **introduce a balanced scorecard approach to principal performance management** that reflects the multiple responsibilities of the role and functions of principals. Principals will receive a broad range of feedback on their performance, including feedback from parents and teachers. In addition to the measurement of student achievement, the new approach will measure other key components of school performance, such as staff development, parent relations, and educational leadership. Targeted coaching and mentoring will support leaders' skills in these areas. This balanced scorecard recognises that no one measure is sufficient and that measures such as student learning, teacher effectiveness and parent relations can be leading indicators of school performance.

We must ensure that the principals and leaders in our schools have the necessary skills and attributes to drive school development and improve student outcomes. To

ensure this, the Government will also introduce two initiatives to identify and develop teachers with high leadership potential and to develop the leadership capabilities of existing principals.

From 2004, the Government will implement an **accelerated development program for high potential leaders**. This initiative will cater for teachers with at least five years experience. Participants will benefit from exposure to leadership responsibilities, tailored professional development, and mentoring. Participants will move between schools during the program. The program will help address future leadership supply issues, improve succession management and promote mobility and learning across the system.

Additionally, the Government will implement a **development program for high performing principals**. This program will target the retention of outstanding leaders in the government school system by providing high performing experienced principals with a range of development opportunities. These include mentoring of existing principals and aspirant principals, placements in challenging schools or other settings, and tailored professional development.

Consultations with schools, principals and teachers have highlighted the ongoing need to reduce the administrative workload of schools and school leaders to allow them to focus on their core responsibilities of improving student learning. This is particularly an issue in smaller schools. To address this need, the Government will continue to work on streamlining administrative demands. This process will be informed by the findings of the principal workload study currently underway.

Small schools are particularly challenged by their lack of scale. We will work with small schools to expand **local administrative bureaus for networks of small schools**. This will occur from 2004 to 2005.



> FLAGSHIP STRATEGY 4: Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture

This Government believes that the pursuit of continuous improvement and learning is essential for teachers and students to reach their potential. Continuous improvement already drives our best schools and it is our expectation that all schools will embrace this concept.

Research shows that a good performance and development system in schools improves student learning outcomes by identifying the specific areas where a teacher's performance can be improved and by providing targeted professional development to do so.

In 2004 the Government will introduce an **accreditation scheme for performance and development culture schools**, with the objective of having all schools accredited by 2008. Schools with a focus on a performance and development culture will improve teacher effectiveness and therefore student outcomes by emphasising better performance management and creating an environment of continuous improvement.

Accreditation for a performance and development culture will be a key performance objective for all principals. The proportion of schools in their region that have achieved accreditation will be a key performance measure for Regional Directors and Senior Education Officers. The accreditation criteria will include:

- Multiple sources of feedback for teachers, including feedback from parents and students on the quality of the teaching-learning relationship
- Customised plans to meet individual teacher development needs
- Quality professional development to address those needs
- Induction and mentoring for beginning teachers.

The accreditation process will be largely internal and then be externally verified by teams or panels of expert educational practitioners.

! CASE STUDY

Leadership feedback at Glen Waverley Secondary College

Glen Waverley College has what is regarded as a 'world's best practice' example of managing effective leadership feedback. A feedback group is selected for each leadership team member, comprising their closest colleagues. The group convenes at year-end to review the leadership team-member's performance. Using an external facilitator, the group highlights the leader's strengths and areas for development. The facilitator documents the outcome and presents it to the leadership team member and the principal. The materials are fed directly into the leadership team member's annual review and their performance plan for the following year.

> FLAGSHIP STRATEGY 5: Teacher Professional Development

There are many excellent professional development practices for teachers across the system. However, there are not enough opportunities to share these between teachers. The Government considers teacher professional development to be central to improving student learning, and is committed to providing teachers with significant opportunities for professional renewal and development. To achieve this, the Government will invest \$5m each year from 2004 to enable **460 teachers to undertake teacher professional leave**, for periods ranging from four to ten weeks. Regional offices will convene panels and select teachers to undertake this professional learning leave.



“ Teaching is not a job just anyone can do. It demands a high level of training and skill, and a knowledge of quality performance.” (Teacher)

The professional leave will provide teachers with flexible opportunities to enhance their classroom practice. Teachers, in consultation with their principals and Regional Offices, will be able to submit proposals for their professional development which must be linked to improved teaching performance – for example, they may choose to undertake an intensive short course, participate in mentoring, or shadow a colleague working in an education or related professional field.

This leave will provide the means for teachers to further develop high-order skills and expertise. This will help them become more creative, innovative and flexible classroom teachers. It will allow teachers to learn from one another. A key requirement of participants will be that they bring their learning back to their school and also to other schools so that the benefits can be shared across the system.

Teachers need support at the start of their careers. Research has shown that induction and mentoring processes that provide beginning teachers with effective, collegial professional development improve teacher retention in Victorian government schools. These are already working well in a number of schools. From 2004 the Government will adopt a systematic approach to ensure good practice in teacher induction through the introduction of an **induction program for beginning teachers**. Existing **mentoring programs** for beginning teachers that ensure individuals are supported by a trained teacher mentor will complement the induction program.

! CASE STUDY

Mentoring of new teachers at The Grange P-12 Primary Campus

Each new teacher is assigned a mentor who has three to four years experience. Using larger classrooms, the mentor and the new teacher ‘team teach’ in both classes at Years 1 and 2. Jointly responsible for the teaching, learning and assessment of these students, they prepare teaching plans together and form a professional learning team for all professional development. The model is well supported by both the new and experienced teachers in the school.