

# Strengthening student support services

A discussion paper  
for consultation

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Stakeholders now have an important opportunity to have their say in shaping future directions of student support services.

## Preface

By international standards, Victoria's school system performs highly and students are achieving well above average. Significant improvements in teaching and learning have also been undertaken in recent years and there is now considerable opportunity to build on these achievements with the impending release of the Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform.

The next stage of reform will focus, amongst other things, on ensuring all children and young people are supported to achieve their best, irrespective of factors such as cultural background or geographic location. There will be particular attention given to promoting improvement in government schools and reducing the effects of disadvantage on learning and development.

The student support services program enhances the capacity of schools to meet the needs of students with additional learning or wellbeing needs by providing access to school and community-based specialist support professionals. The Victorian Government recognises the importance of the student support services program and, in May 2008, announced an additional \$33 million over four years for the enhancement of the program in the 2008–09 State Budget.

The establishment of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) brings together the areas responsible for the health, development and education of children and young people from birth to 18 years of age. This provides a significant opportunity to improve service continuity and for the allied health workforces to work closely together in regions.

It is timely to consider the structure and delivery of the student support services program in the context of the new reforms and directions of the education and early childhood system. This discussion paper has been prepared to seek the views of schools and the school community, student support services staff and education and early childhood stakeholders to assist in the development of an enhanced service delivery model. This discussion paper seeks to:

- describe the key features of the student support services program
- discuss the changing context in which student support services is operating
- identify issues that have been raised about the current program
- signal proposed components for inclusion in a strengthened student support services program
- prompt discussion and feedback about the characteristics of a strengthened model.

Stakeholders now have an important opportunity to have their say in shaping the future directions of student support services.

An additional \$33.2 million over four years has been committed by the Victorian Government, commencing in the 2008-09 financial year.

## Background to the student support services program

The student support services program was established to support the wellbeing of students with additional learning or wellbeing needs and to strengthen schools' capacity to keep these students connected with education by providing specialist support and assistance to schools. Student Support Services Officers (SSSOs) comprise psychologists, guidance officers, speech pathologists, social workers and visiting teachers.

The 1998 *Framework for Student Support Services in Victorian Government Schools* (the *Framework*) sought to enhance the provision of student services and welfare support to schools and their communities and to recast student support services in line with devolution of authority and responsibility to schools. It established the broad policy and operational framework for the delivery of programs and services that support schools to respond to the wide variety of issues affecting the wellbeing of students. The *Framework* provided an integrated service model comprising a continuum of intervention and support with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

The *Framework*, which proposed that optimum service delivery for vulnerable students would be provided through partnerships between schools, school clusters and service providers, has guided the work of student support services. Networks and schools are currently working within agreed local service delivery arrangements and partnerships that allocate student support service resources to meet identified local student support needs.

In 2006–07, \$50.7 million was provided through the student support services program to regional offices, and then to networks, for the delivery of the program. In one region, and in a small number of networks in other regions, this funding is paid directly to schools to purchase services from private providers. Some student support services funding is used by regions, with the agreement of networks, to fund roles such as school improvement staff, curriculum consultants and emergency management positions. An additional \$33.2 million over four years has been committed by the Victorian Government, commencing in the 2008–09 financial year, to strengthen the program.

SSSOs are part of a range of services to support children, young people and their families provided by DEECD, other government departments and the community services sector.

Within the student support services program, psychologists, guidance officers and social workers are involved in student and family intervention, group work, crisis response, consultation to student wellbeing and other school staff, and the provision of early intervention programs in schools. Psychologists and guidance officers are also involved in the assessment of individual students and associated report preparation. Speech pathologists provide leadership for schools and teachers relating to oral language learning. They undertake assessment and the preparation of reports, conduct speech therapy with individual students and, in some networks, support school staff to deliver speech and language programs. Visiting teachers provide specialised support to students and staff for students with hearing, physical, health or vision impairment. This may include direct work with individual students or more general advice about good pedagogy for students with these impairments.

SSSOs are part of a range of services to support children, young people and their families provided by DEECD, other government departments and the community services sector. The development of stronger links between student support services and early childhood services to create a more seamless service continuum is a high priority. It has also been supported by bringing these two programs together within the same department.

DEECD also provides funding for a range of other student wellbeing programs. These include Student Welfare Coordinators in secondary schools, Primary Welfare Officers in high-needs primary schools, Primary and Secondary School Nurses, the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) (including the Language Support Program), alternative education settings, the School Focused Youth Service program, and equity funding for schools with populations of disadvantaged students.

## Why is a strengthened model being proposed?

### The changing context

It is a decade since the integrated service delivery model outlined in the *Framework for Student Support Services* was initiated. In this time significant changes have occurred within the government schooling system and the broader policy environment. A number of key policies, actions and initiatives have particularly affected the context in which the student support service program operates.

In November 2003 the Victorian Government launched the *Blueprint for Government Schools*. The *Blueprint* outlined the strategies aimed at providing all students, irrespective of the school they attend, where they live or their social and economic status, with a high-quality school education and a genuine opportunity to succeed. The *Blueprint* created a sense of urgency about the differential quality of the educational experience in government schools and was the catalyst for generating a systemic response. A clear school improvement agenda was implemented, including the introduction of the Effective Schools Model, which defines eight factors that have an evidence-based correlation with improved student outcomes.

The *Accountability and Improvement Framework for Victorian Government Schools* was developed to strengthen the school improvement agenda. This Framework contains significant focus on student outcomes. It recognises that there are differences between schools and that there must be flexibility to allow schools to be responsive to the needs of their local communities and create innovative solutions catering for the diversity of students in their community.

In May 2007 the PSD Assessment Service was established to identify students with intellectual disability and severe language disorder with critical education needs requiring support through the PSD program. The outsourcing of student assessment services has enabled SSSOs to concentrate more on the delivery of services to students and has reshaped the way speech pathologists, psychologists and guidance officers are able to support schools and networks.

In August 2007 the Premier announced the Victorian Government's decision to bring together early childhood services and school education. This recognises that children's development is a continuous process from birth to adulthood. The establishment of DEECD has broadened the responsibility of the Department for children and young people from birth to 18 years of age. It has also created an opportunity to improve the coordination of service provision and collaboration between schools, student support services and early childhood intervention services at the network level to support vulnerable students.

Ensuring that the right support services are available in a local area, and that these services are well coordinated and targeted at those children and families with the greatest need, will be a priority for the education and early childhood system.

In April 2008, discussion papers on early childhood development and school reform were released for consultation as a precursor to development of a *Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform*. These discussion papers reinforce the conviction that every child can thrive, learn and grow to achieve their potential. While it is recognised that some young people start from a position of disadvantage, it is possible to overcome this disadvantage by having high expectations for all children and supporting those who are vulnerable.

In line with this vision, the next stage of the school improvement process will be guided by the understanding that systemic responses clearly targeted at areas of high need and low performance are required in order to improve student outcomes. Ensuring that the right support services are available in a local area, and that these services are well coordinated and targeted at those children and families with the greatest need, will be a priority for the education and early childhood system. Effective partnerships between schools, early childhood services, local government, health and community services can enhance the quality of student support and benefit schools, students and their families.

We know that some students require additional or more flexible learning and development opportunities and that some groups of students and their families face particular disadvantage due to a range of challenges, including disability or developmental delay, low socioeconomic background, being an Indigenous person, or a refugee. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be behind in learning and development. The student support services program is an important and valuable resource to assist schools to meet the needs of these students.

### The case for change

Following the implementation of the *Framework* in 1998, the student support services program has been subject to review and analysis.

- In 2000, the *Public Education – The Next Generation (PENG)* report identified the need for a review of the current delivery of student support services in the context of the development of networks to achieve a more equitable and transparent model for service delivery. This review was completed in 2002.
- In 2004, KPMG undertook a review of student support services to provide a deeper understanding of how operational expenses for the program were allocated, managed and accounted for at the regional level.
- During 2006 and 2007, significant information was collated by the Office for Government School Education about the delivery of the student support services program. This also included consultations with a number of key stakeholders.

This work established that SSSOs are recognised as a key resource for networks and schools, and that service arrangements and partnerships have been developed over time to meet local and community needs. However, other key issues were identified relating to:

- differences in service delivery and management models
- a need for statewide program guidelines and accountability mechanisms
- the requirement for stronger connections and partnerships with other programs and services
- management and administrative requirements associated with the SSSO program
- the need for a career structure and professional support for SSSOs
- the importance of alignment between the student support services program and the school improvement agenda.

The additional funding available through the 2008–09 State Budget provides a significant opportunity to ensure student support services are available where most needed while maintaining current program resources in other areas. The appointment of additional SSSO staff in areas of greatest need will extend the capacity of the program to meet unmet demand and respond to the changing context and needs of students.

A transparent and consistent resource allocation mechanism that improves statewide consistency in relation to how students are supported is currently being developed by the Office for Government School Education. This will take into account the higher rates of disadvantage in some areas where greater support is required to achieve good learning outcomes. Within regions, resource allocation methods will link to network school improvement structures and have the capacity to respond to local needs, issues and information.

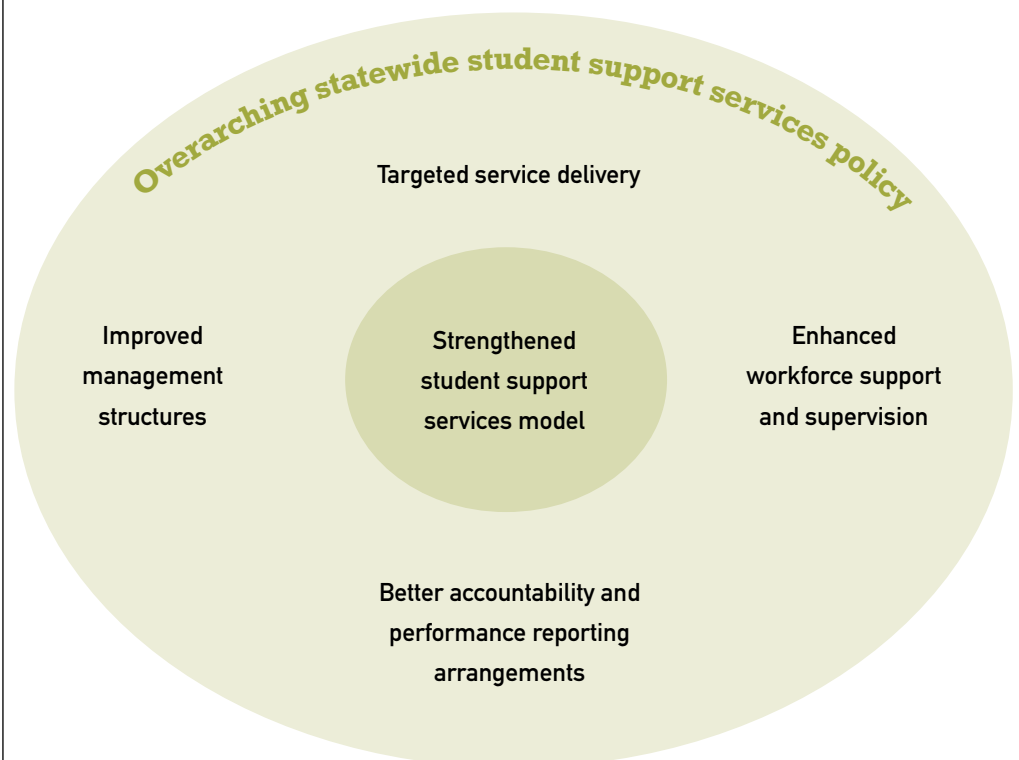
The changing context and the themes and issues relating to the structure and delivery of student support services indicate that new thinking needs to be undertaken about how to optimise the benefits of the program. In addition, the experience gained over the past decade about the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of the current variety of arrangements for delivering student support services to students in need also provides a valuable platform for exploring new ways to strengthen the program.

This discussion paper provides an opportunity to express your views about the proposed components of the model.

## What should a strengthened model include?

At the core of a strengthened student support services program should be clear components that address the issues outlined in previous reviews and analysis of the program. This discussion paper provides an opportunity to express your views about the proposed components of the model and to help shape the directions of the remodelled student support services program. In the scheme suggested below, each component links to and builds on the others:

1. Overarching statewide student support services policy
2. Targeted service delivery
3. Improved management structures
4. Enhanced workforce support and supervision
5. Better accountability and performance reporting arrangements



# 1.

## Overarching statewide student support services policy

It is important to be clear about the purpose and functions of student support services and to provide strong theoretical and practical guidelines for the program. *The Framework for Student Support Services* outlined four interrelated levels of student wellbeing activity: primary prevention, early intervention, intervention, and restoring wellbeing. The development of a new statewide policy for student support services can build upon the *Framework* and provide specific direction about the role and functions of SSSOs. Such policy should underpin a service delivery model, accountability and performance reporting, program management, and workforce support and supervision, as outlined in later sections of this discussion paper. It is also essential that the work of SSSOs is clearly linked to broader early childhood and education policy, objectives and operational directions, particularly the school improvement agenda.

There are a large number of services working to provide support to children, young people and their families within the community, including services within schools, all levels of government and community service organisations. There has also been significant expansion in recent years of student wellbeing and health staff within schools such as Primary Welfare Officers and Secondary School Nurses. Other programs, including the School Focused Youth Service, the PSD Assessment Service and the Language Support Program, have also impacted upon the role of SSSOs. It is imperative to provide greater clarity about how the role of student support services fits within the broader spectrum of services and personnel providing support and intervention to students and their families.

### Proposed components for inclusion in the strengthened student support services model

#### Overarching statewide student support services policy

- Develop comprehensive Guidelines for Student Support Services to define the role and work of SSSOs and establish clear linkages with the directions and priorities of DEECD. Student support services should be strongly connected to network school improvement planning and intervention.
- Clearly define the role of student support services in relation to the range of available child and family support services and student wellbeing staff in schools. There should be more detailed information within the Guidelines about the specific expertise and functions of SSSOs and how they can contribute to school strategic planning and whole-school approaches to student wellbeing, particularly prevention and early intervention activities.

It is imperative to provide greater clarity about how the role of student support services fits within the broader spectrum of services and personnel providing support and intervention to students and their families.

- Strengthen the capacity of schools to respond to students with additional learning or wellbeing needs. This should be a clearly defined function of student support services and may involve providing teaching and learning advice, strategies and resources to schools and teachers, and contributing to the development of student wellbeing structures and processes within schools. Other important capacity building mechanisms are the delivery of professional learning for school and student wellbeing staff, provision of secondary consultation when issues arise, and the development of connections between schools and local service providers who may be able to provide timely and ongoing support to students and their families.
- Formalise planning mechanisms for individual students and their families who require intervention support. A key role for SSSOs is to provide expertise in the development of student support plans for students with disabilities, behavioural issues or other needs to ensure ongoing support is available once student support services involvement has reduced or ceased. Guidelines for student support services could include advice on how SSSOs can assist in the development of ongoing, evidence-based strategies and student support plans, including identifying and facilitating the involvement of other services.

## ? Focus questions:

**How could formal guidelines for student support services enhance the program?**

**What are the key considerations in implementing student support services guidelines in your network or region?**

# 2.

## Targeted service delivery

Essential to a strengthened student support program is an optimum service delivery model to ensure students and schools with the greatest need receive support which also maximises the number of students benefiting from additional assistance. It will be important to establish consistent key elements of an effective service delivery model while retaining some flexibility to accommodate local needs.

The challenge is to ensure that student support services are meeting the needs of school communities, and students with additional learning and wellbeing needs in particular. We know that there are higher rates of disadvantage in some schools and in some areas and that greater support is required to overcome this disadvantage in order for students to achieve their potential. Student support services should be better targeted to those students and schools who have the greatest need and should contribute to the school improvement work being undertaken in networks.

There can also be changes over time in networks and regions with regard to rates of disadvantage and the need for additional assistance from student support services. An effective service delivery model must be able to identify and respond to these changes.

Better coordinated service provision and partnerships between schools, student support services, Early Childhood Intervention Services and community services at the regional and network level enhance the capacity of student support services to reach a greater number of students. There are some excellent examples in regions of partnerships with organisations such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, community services organisations and Community Health Centres to deliver services and programs to school communities. Many programs identify and intervene early with groups of students and families to prevent the development of more complex difficulties and the subsequent need for more intensive intervention in the future.

### Proposed components for inclusion in the strengthened student support services model

#### Targeted service delivery

- Develop and implement a service delivery model which identifies and targets need and matches student or school needs with the expertise of members of the network student support services team. In some regions and networks it may be necessary to purchase additional professional services to increase the capacity of the existing student support services team or where specialist expertise is required. An innovative example is used by the Grampians Region whereby a referral triage model is employed that prioritises needs, responds in a timely manner and allocates referrals to the most appropriate SSSO team member. The structure of this model appears in Appendix 1.

Student support services should be better targeted to those students and schools who have the greatest need and should contribute to the school improvement work being undertaken in networks.

- Establish student support services as an important part of school improvement teams. The flexibility to respond to schools with the highest need is a key aspect of the school improvement agenda and must be an important element of the student support services model. This could involve the flexibility to mobilise student support services resources to provide additional targeted support to specific schools at particular times.
- Identify mechanisms to determine and regularly review student support services resources provided to schools, networks and regions. The service delivery model must ensure that service provision and resource allocation take into account changes in populations of students and their families with higher rates of disadvantage and need for additional support. The model must be responsive to these changing demands.
- Increase the focus on partnerships with internal services such as Early Childhood Intervention Services and external organisations such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Family Support Services providers, Local Government services, Community Health Centres and local community service organisations. The service delivery model must include capacity for SSSOs to work closely with other services and to arrange or jointly deliver early intervention programs for vulnerable children and their families.

## ? Focus questions:

**What would a responsive service delivery model targeted at need look like in your region or network?**

**What elements of the Grampians model could be implemented in your region or network?**

**In what practical ways could we improve service partnerships and increase the focus on jointly delivered programs?**

# 3.

## Improved management structures

A strengthened model of student support services needs to have effective program governance and management. There is a need to strengthen the central, regional and network coordination of the student support services program and the management of SSSO professional streams.

As part of the 2008–09 State Budget funding enhancements for student support services, a statewide coordinator position will be implemented to work on development, improvement and support of the program. Regional and network coordination will also be important features of management structures. This will ensure oversight of all the available resources within a region or network to achieve student support and school improvement and the participation of student support services in regional and network strategic planning.

### Proposed components for inclusion in the strengthened student support services model

#### Improved management structures

- Implement a student support services statewide coordination position to undertake the development and improvement of the program following feedback from the consultation process. This role should also provide support to regions and networks in the enhancement of their own program governance and management structures.
- Establish arrangements for the administration and support of the student support services program within the region. This could include designated responsibility by a senior regional staff member for resource distribution, program functioning and performance.
- Formalise network student support services coordination positions which could encompass line management, work-function supervision, resource coordination, purchasing of additional professional services where required or necessary, and performance management responsibilities for SSSOs within a network or group of networks. There should be strong linkages between network coordination positions and senior school improvement positions.
- Formalise student support services professional stream leadership positions within regions with responsibility to disseminate relevant information and materials to SSSOs, offer consultation to staff regarding professional practice issues, ensure professional supervision opportunities and contribute to professional learning forums.
- Establish regional management arrangements for services such as visiting teachers and emergency management coordinators to ensure appropriate service coordination, equitable access across the region, support and the provision of professional learning opportunities for staff in these roles.

There is a need to strengthen the central, regional and network coordination of the student support services program and the management of SSSO professional streams.

## ? Focus questions:

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What would you see as the key features of an improved student support services management structure and what would this look like in your region or network?

How should services such as visiting teachers or emergency management roles be managed?

# 4.

## Enhanced workforce support and supervision

A major determinant of the success of any program is the quality of the people delivering the service. The recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce is essential to the delivery of high-quality student support services. It will be important to ensure that there are strong support and supervision arrangements in place for SSSOs as these are factors that contribute significantly to staff satisfaction and retention.

A well-supported student support services workforce should have access to a career structure that provides prospects for leadership roles over time, information and professional learning forums which extend their skill set and expertise, professional supervision opportunities, and the sharing of innovative and best practice across the region and the state. As proposed in the 'improved management structure' section, the formalising of professional stream leadership positions that already exist in many regions could be one element of enhanced student support services workforce support and supervision.

SSSOs should not only be connected to management and leadership structures, but also to each other as a small team of professionals delivering services to numerous and wide-ranging schools in a network. The placement and location of SSSOs should be considered as part of a strengthened program to ensure the development of a team culture, peer support, informal learning and mentoring opportunities, the sharing of information and the capacity to work together.

### Proposed components for inclusion in the strengthened student support services model

#### Enhanced workforce support and supervision

- Establish student support services management and leadership roles for SSSOs and provide opportunities for advancement into more senior roles within the program.
- Develop professional learning programs for SSSOs to provide knowledge and skill development opportunities. This could include statewide and regional learning forums and formal regional and network induction processes.
- Provide professional supervision opportunities for SSSOs outside of regional and network work-function management arrangements. There should be capacity for stream-specific professional development, such as learning forums, provision of secondary consultation for stream staff, and individual, peer or group supervision, as appropriate.
- Develop regional and network agreements relating to the physical location of SSSOs which provide for the strengthening of a supportive team environment and improved connections between student support services staff.

SSSOs should not only be connected to management and leadership structures, but also to each other as a small team of professionals delivering services to numerous and wide-ranging schools in the network.

## ? Focus questions:

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How might the proposed professional support and supervision arrangements be implemented in your region or network?

Are there other options for possible inclusion in a strengthened student support services model that should be considered?

# 5.

## Better accountability and performance reporting arrangements

A strong student support services program must include robust accountability and performance reporting arrangements.

The student support services program provides an extremely valuable role in supporting schools and students who require additional assistance in order to remain engaged with education and achieve positive results. It is important that the impact of the student support services program is able to be understood and measured. A strong student support services program must include robust accountability and performance reporting arrangements. Ongoing enhancement of the program can only be undertaken if service effectiveness and improvement opportunities can be identified.

As part of the forthcoming Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform, a further strengthened accountability and improvement framework will be developed which assesses school performance against three major outcome areas – student learning, student engagement and wellbeing, and pathways and transitions. It is therefore essential that there be clear connections between effectiveness measures for the student support services program and the school improvement framework.

### Proposed components for inclusion in the strengthened student support services model

#### Better accountability and performance reporting arrangements

- Develop consistent statewide student support services program performance effectiveness measures. These should be linked to the school accountability and improvement framework, particularly the student learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes and measures.
- Establish a data collection system for student support services to collate important data about the services being provided to schools and students. This would enable statewide, regional and network performance reporting to occur more readily and identify opportunities for program improvement.

### ? Focus questions:

What are appropriate effectiveness measures for the student support services program?

What information do current regional or network student support services data collection systems capture and how could these be enhanced within a statewide system?

## How to contribute your views

The issues and options outlined in this discussion paper form a starting point for conversations about what a strengthened student support services model might look like and provide an opportunity for you to contribute to re-shaping the program. Following the consultation period, which will conclude on **Friday 26 September 2008**, the Office for Government School Education will develop the specifications for an enhanced program model.

We value your ideas and feedback on the focus questions posed within this paper and on any other aspects of the paper or the student support services program. You may wish to provide feedback at one of the regional consultation opportunities or directly with key stakeholder groups. Alternatively, you can provide direct comment using the feedback sheet provided in Appendix 2. Contact details for feedback are:

**Email:** [student.support.feedback@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:student.support.feedback@edumail.vic.gov.au)

**Fax:** (03) 9637 2030

Please mark for the attention of the Student Support Services Project Manager

**Mail:** Student Support Services Project Manager  
Student Wellbeing and Support Division  
Office for Government School Education  
GPO Box 4367  
MELBOURNE 3001

## Appendix 1: Grampians student support services model

The Grampians Region model is based on the integration of student support services with the work of regional school improvement officers (student wellbeing and curriculum) and partnerships with other government services and non-government community service organisations. The model caters for:

- school and system improvement
- the four-tiered student wellbeing model as outlined in the *Framework for Student Support Services* – prevention, early intervention, intervention, and restoring wellbeing
- coordination with early childhood services (DEECD).

The student support services program in Grampians Region is viewed as an essential part of a range of programs and initiatives in the region aimed at:

- catering for diversity
- enhancing student participation (retention)
- promoting inclusive practices and providing pathways for young people
- supporting the Region's Student Engagement Strategy.

There are currently three networks within Grampians Region – Highlands (Ballarat), Central (Ararat) and Wimmera (Horsham). Student support services funding is allocated to the networks according to student numbers, the Student Family Occupation (SFO) index, distance and travel issues, and resources required. Principal Network Groups recommend to the Regional Director the mix and match of SSSO staff required in each network.

The Grampians student support services model comprises:

1. a referral system in each network
2. regional and network governance and management structures
3. service delivery components
4. professional supervision and performance management structures.

## 1. A referral system in each network

The network-based student support services model and referral systems ensure that all students and schools are supported on the basis of need in a timely and responsive manner. Requests for SSSO support are made via a coordinated referral system which includes telephone referral consultation and intake, referral triage, and case management. This system matches service provision to demand or need. Referrals to other services are able to occur at the point of intake, as appropriate.

Weekly team meetings occur to discuss referrals and allocations, although a more immediate response is provided if this is needed. Referrals are able to be allocated to the most appropriate SSSO to provide the service, taking into account the need to balance workloads. There is also flexibility to fill service gaps through interagency initiatives and partnerships and the purchasing of services, if required.

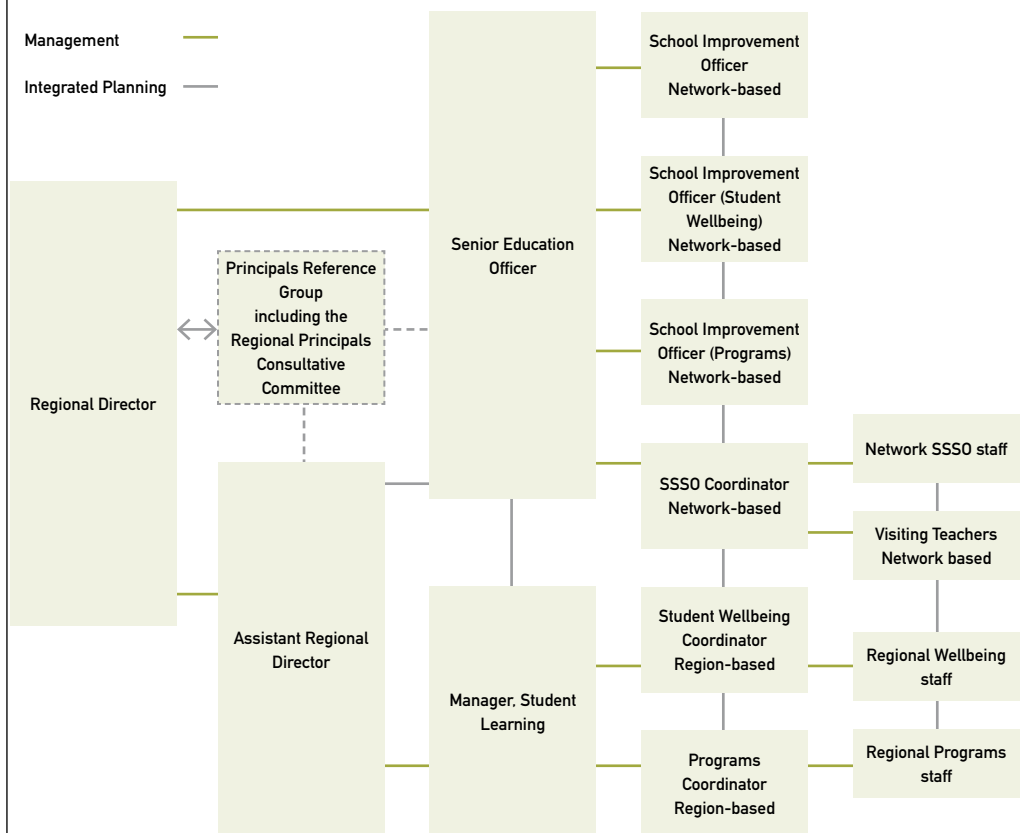
## 2. Regional and network governance and management structures

The Assistant Regional Director has responsibility for the overall management, accountability and resource distribution for the student support services program in Grampians Region. Network Student Support Services Coordinator positions report to Senior Education Officers, who also manage School Improvement Officers.

The three networks are represented on a Principals Reference Group (PRG), which meets regularly with the Assistant Regional Director, Senior Education Officers and Program Managers. The Regional Principals Consultative Committee is a smaller group within the PRG that has a student support services focus and provides advice to the region to ensure consistency and equity of student support services across the region.

The Network Student Support Services Coordinator positions are responsible for coordination of the program and SSSO staff within the network, including visiting teachers. The coordinators are also involved in school improvement planning and activities and provide advice to the Senior Education Officers. The region provides management training for these positions.

**Grampians Region student support services management functional relationships**



**3. Service delivery**

The integrated model of service delivery enables the provision of SSSO services and support, complemented by a systems improvement and programs approach. The program provides the following support within a network.

- i. Critical incidents response** – immediate support to critical incidents and recovery procedures. This can also be a region-wide response as required.
- ii. Case management** – including speech therapy, case work, visiting teacher service and occupational therapy.
- iii. Assessment** – PSD eligibility assessments with reviews and reappraisals. The statewide PSD Assessment Service conducts assessments to identify possible intellectual disability and severe language disorder.
- iv. Student engagement and re-engagement programs** – operate in each of the networks, e.g. LINKUP, Connect Ed, Central Connect and Community VCAL programs. To manage this process each network has established a reference group with appropriate student referral protocols, student engagement checklists and continuity of care processes to ensure students are maintained in or returned to educational programs.

- v. **Achieving Together** – a joint initiative of DEECD, the Catholic Education Office, the Department of Human Services and a range of welfare agencies in the region. The aim of the program is to enhance the health, wellbeing and education of all young people through significant improvements in the accessibility, responsiveness, continuity and effectiveness of education, health and welfare services for students and their families in the Grampians Region.
- vi. **Programs and school improvement** – SSSOs support a range of school improvement initiatives that promote inclusive schooling practices, therefore reducing referrals and allowing for more targeted intervention with high needs students. Programs include CAMHS & Schools Together Program (CAST), Students in Out of Home Care, Albany District Oral Language Framework (ADOLF), Speech Therapy Assistant Program (STAP), Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Learning Assistance Mentoring Program (LAMP), Restorative Practices, the MIPS+ Project, and the Check & Connect Program.

#### 4. Supervision and performance management

The Grampians model provides for supervision, peer support, induction and performance management processes. These contribute to SSSO job satisfaction and staff retention. This is of paramount importance, particularly for the more remote and hard-to-staff areas. Multi-disciplinary student support services teams are co-located in each network with a Student Support Services Coordinator. Currently, in the Highlands Network, SSSOs and early childhood services staff are located together within the regional office. In all networks, there are common planning and professional learning opportunities for these closely aligned staff groups.

The Network Senior Education Officer is the line manager for the program, with delegated responsibilities to the Student Support Services Coordinator.

The Coordinator facilitates team processes, supervision and performance management for the SSSOs within the network. The team approach enables individuals to develop an area of specialism which complements the array of services available to network schools, such as boys in education, social skills programs, autism, and family violence. Each SSSO also has one or more portfolio, program or project areas as part of their work.

**Important Note:** From Term 4, 2008, the Grampians Region will comprise of six networks (currently three). The student support services program will continue to operate as per the above model and be based in three main centres across the region, with services to be provided across networks.

## Appendix 2: Feedback sheet

If you wish to provide feedback directly to Student Wellbeing and Support Division, this feedback sheet may be useful. This feedback can be provided by:

**Email:** student.support.feedback@edumail.vic.gov.au

**Fax:** (03) 9637 2030

Please mark for the attention of the Student Support Services Project Manager

**Mail:** Student Support Services Project Manager  
Student Wellbeing and Support Division  
Office for Government School Education  
GPO Box 4367  
MELBOURNE 3001

The consultation period concludes on **Friday 26 September 2008**. All feedback must be received by close of business on this date.

### 1. Overarching statewide student support services policy

How could formal guidelines for student support services enhance the program?

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What are the key considerations in implementing student support services guidelines in your network or region?

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### 2. Targeted service delivery

What would a responsive service delivery model targeted to need look like in your network or region?

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What elements of the Grampians model could be implemented in your region or network?

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In what practical ways could we improve service partnerships and increase the focus on jointly delivered programs?

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**3. Improved management structures**

What would you see as the key features of an improved student support services management structure and what would this look like in your region or network?

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How should services such as visiting teachers or emergency management roles be managed?

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**4. Enhanced workforce support and supervision**

How might the proposed professional support and supervision arrangements be implemented in your region or network?

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Are there other options for possible inclusion in a strengthened student support services model that should be considered?

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**5. Better accountability and performance reporting arrangements**

What are appropriate effectiveness measures for the student support services program?

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What information do current regional or network student support services data collection systems capture and how could this be enhanced within a statewide system?

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**Do you have any further feedback or comments?**

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