Support for implementation of Student Learning Initiatives
Terms 1 and 2, 2006

Dear Colleagues,

A focus on improving student learning is a centrepiece of the Blueprint for Government Schools. Two years on from the announcement of the Blueprint there is a coherent suite of policies, guidelines and tools that have been developed to support schools in their central task of meeting the learning needs of all students and ensuring high quality outcomes for all.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards were released for validation from March 2005 and were supported by the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT), Curriculum Planning Guidelines and Assessment Advice. In August 2005, the New Student Report Card was released, which closes the loop between curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting. We now have a coherent and integrated suite of resources designed to support schools to achieve continued improvement in student learning.

With the broad range of support materials and resources now available, it is anticipated that schools and/or groups of schools will analyse their particular support needs and choose those resources best matched to the school's stage of implementation of student learning initiatives. To this end, the resources available have been developed to enable schools to choose the entry point through which they will engage with and use the materials.

In December 2005 Principals responded to an online survey which sought feedback on the value of the resources provided to support implementation of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Over 78% of schools responded to the survey. Your responses indicated that most schools have begun the process of familiarising themselves with the Standards and auditing their current curriculum. Many schools have moved further and over 85% of schools indicated that the Curriculum Planning Guidelines, PoLT and the Assessment Advice have been of value.

Your responses to the FS1 survey have been analysed and used to inform the development of the following resources to be made available during Terms 1 & 2, 2006.

Victorian Essential Learning Standards
2005 was a year of validation for the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. The validation has concluded and the revised standards are now available at http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/index.html. The Standards may be downloaded by domain and by level.

Copies of a new Student Learning DVD will be sent to all schools at the end of Term 1, capturing the revised standards and other resource materials, including the Curriculum Planning Guidelines, the Principles of Learning and Teaching, Assessment and Reporting advice and sample units of work.

Curriculum Planning Guidelines
The Guidelines are being updated constantly with new material. Phase 3: Implementation contains stories from schools about their experiences and practice in relation to the FS1 initiatives. Over 80 schools were involved in trialling and developing materials to support
schools to implement the FS1 initiatives. Their comments, samples, stories and new tools have been added to the Guidelines.

- Curriculum Planning Modules
  In response to feedback from schools, we have developed professional learning modules which focus on curriculum planning. These modules will be available online from the start of Term 2 to help schools with planning curriculum to suit the needs of their students. Module 1 will look at Whole School Curriculum Plans and Module 2 will look at Curriculum Plans for particular programs or groups of students.

**Principles of Teaching and Learning P-12 (PoLT)**

- PoLT training program
  Schools and clusters are now invited to register to participate in the PoLT training program in 2006. Training will commence in Term 2. Clusters and individual schools may register. Training will cater for participants from schools new to PoLT and also schools already implementing PoLT who wish to build capacity by involving additional staff.

  PoLT training materials have been updated in 2006 to reflect links to a number of other initiatives; in particular implementation of the Standards, development of a Performance and Development Culture and connections to School Strategic Plans and Annual Implementation Plans.

  Briefings on the training program will be held in all regions throughout February and principals for schools registered for PoLT training are encouraged to attend. Principals wishing to know more about the program are also welcome. Details on the briefings and dates and venues for the training program are available at [http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/polt/polttraining.asp](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/polt/polttraining.asp).

- PoLT Online Professional Learning Resource
  An on-line Professional Learning Resource for use by individual teachers, professional learning teams, whole school groups or clusters in all Victorian schools will be available in March. The resource may be used by schools who have already done PoLT training and that wish to explore the Principles in more depth, or by schools who wish to familiarise themselves with the Principles. It includes theory, practical suggestions, vignettes of practice, opportunities for reflection, links to further information and glossaries.

**Assessment Advice**

- Progression points for English and Mathematics
  Progression points have been developed to assist teachers in making on-balance judgements about student progress for the purposes of reporting to parents using the New Student Report Card. The progression points may also be used as a guide to monitor student progress and further support discussions about curriculum planning.

  Progression points have been developed for English and Mathematics in the Discipline-based Learning strand. There are progression points for each of the dimensions in English: Reading; Writing and Speaking and listening and in Mathematics: Number; Space; Measurement, chance and data; Structure and Working mathematically. [http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/progression_points/about_PP.asp](http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/progression_points/about_PP.asp)

  They are designed to be used in conjunction with the Assessment Maps being developed by the VCAA.

- Assessment Professional Learning Modules
  This set of five modules, which will be made available online at the start of Term 2, focuses on enhancing teacher professional knowledge, skills and understandings around the DE&T
Assessment Advice. Each module includes learning activities, background reading and facilitator’s notes. The modules include strategies to effectively use assessment to drive teaching and learning and assess within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

The modules are designed to be used flexibly. A matrix will be provided to support schools/teachers to identify which components of the package will best meet their needs. Further details regarding the assessment professional learning modules can be accessed online at http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/assessment/assess_PD_modules.asp

- Assessment tasks and tools
Assessment tools, tasks and advice to support assessment of student achievement in the non-discipline based domains and across multiple domains are currently under development. They will be made available online in Term 2 on the Assessment and Reporting website

FS1 Professional Learning Package
This package, comprising the Curriculum Planning Modules, Assessment Professional Learning Modules and the PoLT Online Resource, has been primarily designed to support schools/clusters to develop professional learning programs that assist teachers to implement curriculum programs that integrate the Standards, pedagogy and assessment.

A three day training program for school curriculum/professional learning leaders, focusing on how to use the package to plan the professional learning that bests meets the needs of their school will be held in all regions in Term 2. Dates and information about how to register will be forwarded to schools during Term 1.

New Student Report Cards
Reporting Briefings for schools concerning the implementation of the New Student Report Cards in 2006 will be held in each region during Term 1. A list of dates, times and locations for these briefings can be accessed via the Assessment and Reporting website at http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/assessment/support.asp. Schools will receive an invitation to these briefings from their Region later this term.

Briefings will include an update on support, including software roll-out and training, and information and advice on using progression points and assessment maps. DE&T software will be available for schools in Term 2 with training for schools completed by late April.

Schools should also note that new, introductory PowerPoint presentations for schools to use with staff and parents have been recently placed on the Assessment and Reporting website at http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/assessment/support.asp together with updated question and answers. These include a focus on specific aspects of the New Student Report Card, such as the A-E scale.

Between now and May we will also be providing advice on organising and producing comments for those sections of the Report Card that may be less familiar to schools and further sample reports, including for example, reports for students following an ESL program.

For further information relating to the implementation of the New Student Report Cards, schools can direct enquiries via email to the following address: assessment.reporting@edumail.vic.gov.au

FS1 Evaluation
A four year longitudinal evaluation of Flagship Strategy 1 is commencing this year. The evaluation will occur over this period in recognition of the time taken to plan, implement, embed and ultimately measure improvement in student learning. The successful tenderer
for the evaluation was a consortium from Queensland University of Technology, Australian Council for Educational Research and James Cook University. The evaluation will draw on multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data including teacher surveys, school self-audits and detailed case studies. The evaluation will seek to identify ‘stages’ in the implementation of such initiatives while acknowledging the multiple pathways that schools follow when implementing changes in their practice.

Schools will be selected on a random basis to participate in the evaluation with details currently being finalised with the project team. As the evaluation will commence this term some schools can expect to be contacted by the project team in the next few weeks regarding their participation. Your support is sought in this process. The intention is that involvement will benefit the school and provide insight into support required by schools as they continue the process of implementing the Student Learning initiatives.

Regular updates on the process and findings of the evaluation will be made available through the FS1 newsletter.

Communication
The Office of Learning and Teaching will continue to produce regular FS1 Newsletters to keep schools informed about the roll out of the above resources and to keep you updated with new developments.

The information outlined above will also be made available in various formats over the coming weeks to enable schools to keep their communities informed of the latest developments. Additional material and information will be distributed to schools in the next two weeks and a double page insert is scheduled to appear in the Education Times in the first week of March.

The Office of Learning and Teaching looks forward to working collaboratively with schools during 2006 and beyond as we continue to improve the learning outcomes of students in Victorian schools.

Dr Dahle Suggett
Deputy Secretary
Office of Learning and Teaching

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