Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
National Partnership Schools Principals’ Forum
Friday 4 June 2010
Melbourne Convention Centre
## National Partnership Schools Principals’ Forum

**Friday 4 June 2010**

Location: Room 2.1, Level 2, Melbourne Convention Centre, South Wharf

Raising awareness, stimulating discussion and generating actions for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes in National Partnership Smarter Schools, DEEWR Literacy and Numeracy Pilot Schools, and DEECD School Improvement Model Schools (SIM).

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<td>8.30 – 8.55am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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| 9.00am – 9.30am | Acknowledgement of country. Shared Endeavour: A vision for today and beyond | **Dr. Stephen Brown**  
Executive Director, Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat  
DEECD  
**Digital Story 1** - Yarra Junction P.S. |
| Room 2.1      |                                                                             |                                                                                       |
| 9.30am – 11.00am | “Every School A Great School” ..... not just a slogan, but an aspiration for the next stage of educational reform, in which each student has the opportunity to reach their potential. | **Professor David Hopkins**  
Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University of London  
**SMS Global responses from participants** |
|               |                                                                             |                                                                                       |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Morning Tea                                                                  |                                                                                        |
|               |                                                                             |                                                                                       |
| 11.30am – 1.15pm | Knowing your data and what to do with it. Responding to your data, monitoring your strategies and preparing for the future. | **Dr. Sara Glover**  
Executive Director  
Portfolio Coordination, DEECD  
**Digital Story 2** – Euroa Secondary College  
**Digital Story 3** – Moe (Elizabeth St.) P.S.  
**Table Discussion**  
**SMS Global responses from participants** |
| Room 2.1      |                                                                             |                                                                                        |
| 1.15pm – 2.00pm | Lunch                                                                      |                                                                                        |
| Level 2 Foyer |                                                                             |                                                                                        |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Moral purpose at the centre of literacy and numeracy improvement.           | **Carmel Crévola**  
C & H Breakthrough Consultancies  
The guiding principles for literacy and numeracy improvement.  
**Digital Story 4:**  
Mahogany Rise P.S.  
SMS Global responses from participants |
| Room 2.1      |                                                                             |                                                                                        |
| 3.30pm – 4.00pm | Ensuring that every student has the opportunity for success.                | **Professor David Hopkins**  
Panel Discussion                                                                 |
|               |                                                                             |                                                                                        |
| 4.00pm – 4.30pm | Departure tea and coffee (not obligatory)                                   |                                                                                        |
| Level 2 Foyer |                                                                             |                                                                                        |
Welcome to the Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat's inaugural forum for schools participating in the Smarter Schools National Partnerships and DEEWR Literacy and Numeracy Pilot schools.

To the principals of more than 400 schools represented here today, I trust that you will find the forum informative and engaging as we continue our efforts to create and sustain improvements in literacy and numeracy.

Literacy and numeracy are fundamental learning skills and Victoria has invested heavily in this important area, with more than one billion dollars allocated over six years to improve literacy and numeracy in government schools.

This is strengthened through the Federal Government’s investment in the Smarter Schools National Partnerships.

The combined investment of $279 million to support further improvement in government schools is testament to the value placed on ensuring children are literate and numerate and have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

I am invigorated by the commitment I have already seen from regions, principals, professional learning teams and teachers who are leading programs to drive literacy and numeracy improvement in their schools.

Their efforts are yielding results, with Victoria ranked among the highest performing states and territories in the second annual NAPLAN tests and students across all year levels performing better than the Australian average in reading, writing, numeracy, as well as grammar and punctuation.

While these results are encouraging there is more work to be done, particularly in low-socio-economic areas and for students who require additional support.

There is clear evidence of the need to focus effort early on the students that need support, and for that support to be closely monitored and sustained as students progress through school.

Today you will hear from international experts including Carmel Crévola and Professor David Hopkins who are both pioneers of educational improvement. Dr. Sara Glover will also lead a discussion on using and interpreting data for teaching and learning improvement.

The forum is aimed at developing an understanding of literacy and numeracy improvement targets, sharing best practice and raising awareness of strategies to improve student literacy and numeracy outcomes.

I look forward to continuing our work to support schools funded under the Smarter Schools National Partnerships and DEEWR Literacy and Numeracy Pilots and implementing strategies that deliver demonstrated improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Dr Stephen Brown
Executive Director
Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
Guest Speakers

Carmel Crévola

Carmel is an independent international literacy consultant, author and researcher. She works extensively in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA. Her focus is on helping systems align their assessment processes, instructional practices and instructional leadership at the school, district and system levels. She has pioneered new approaches to data-driven literacy instruction and has lead several large-scale school reform initiatives in Australia and the United States. She has 23 years classroom experience K–9, has been a school principal and director of the Reading Recovery training program at the University of Melbourne.

Carmel is a passionate educator working at all levels to bring about sustainable change and improving achievement outcomes for all students. Her primary area of interest and research is Oral Language and implications for teacher instructional language and literacy success. For the past four years she has directed the Self Identification/ Oral Language Project in Northern Ontario working with the Northern Ontario Educational Leaders (NOEL) and their eight school boards K – Grade 2. Carmel is an author of numerous articles and publications, and co-authored *Breakthrough* (Corwin Press) with Michael Fullan and Peter Hill in 2004 and the latest publication of the *Breakthrough DVD Professional Learning Kit* (2009). She is currently developing a web-based model of professional learning in both Canada and England. She has an ongoing writing project focusing on a theory of oral language and the resulting implications for classroom instruction across the years of schooling and across the curriculum.

Professor David Hopkins

David Hopkins is Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University of London; where until recently, he held the inaugural HSBC iNet Chair in International Leadership. He is a Trustee of Outward Bound, holds visiting professorships at the Catholic University of Santiago, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Universities of Edinburgh, Melbourne and Wales and consults internationally on school reform. Between 2002 and 2005 he served three Secretary of States as the Chief Adviser on School Standards at the Department for Education and Skills. Previously, he was Chair of the Leicester City Partnership Board and Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Nottingham. David was previously a tutor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education, a Secondary School teacher and Outward Bound Instructor. He is also an International Mountain Guide who still climbs regularly in the Alps and Himalayas.

David has published over 30 books on educational issues, his most recent being ‘Every School a Great School’. “Every school a great school” is not just a slogan, but an aspiration for the next stage of education reform, in which each student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Website: [www.davidhopkins.co.uk](http://www.davidhopkins.co.uk)
Dr. Sara Glover
Executive Director, Portfolio Coordination
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Sara Glover was appointed Executive Director, Portfolio Coordination in May 2010.
Sara’s substantive role is as General Manager of the Data, Outcomes and Evaluation Division in the Office for Children & Portfolio Coordination, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

This division aims to increase access to and strategic use of data to support quality decision-making and offers a powerful evidence base on the safety, health, development, learning and wellbeing of children and young people. The division monitors how children and young people in Victoria are faring, undertakes analysis to inform policy, strategy and improvement, and provides data profiles at a state, regional, local government, community, network and provider level.

Prior to joining the Department in July 2004, Sara was the Director of Education and Training and a principal researcher at the Centre for Adolescent Health at the Royal Children’s Hospital/University of Melbourne for eight years. Her research primarily focused on the important connection between school environments and young people’s health, wellbeing and engagement in learning.
Dr. Stephen Brown
Executive Director
Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Overview
Dr. Stephen Brown was appointed the inaugural Executive Director of the Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat in December 2009. The Secretariat will coordinate literacy and numeracy policy and programs, and assist schools to improve student achievement. A major priority for the Secretariat will be to oversee the new six to 18-month rolling literacy and numeracy strategy in schools involved in the Smarter Schools National Partnership projects.

Prior to his appointment to lead the Secretariat, Stephen was Regional Director of Hume Region, which covers a large area of North East Victoria and consists of 162 schools and more than 300 early childhood services. Under Stephen’s leadership, Hume Region developed a reputation for high performance and a culture characterised by a focus on placing students at the centre of decision making, the development of learning communities between schools, a clear focus on improving student outcomes and the development of the instructional leadership capacity of principals.

The incorporation of Children and Youth Services into the DEECD framework was a key focus for Stephen’s work as Regional Director. Creating a seamless framework of support for children and their families, particularly in the 0 – 8 area, is a significant piece of work which will ultimately benefit children, their families, their schools and the community.

Stephen holds a Master of Arts (London University), Graduate Diploma of Educational Administration, Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Bachelor of Arts and in 2009 completed a Doctorate of Education. The title of Stephen’s thesis was “The Theory And Practice Of Managing Organisational Redesign Within A Public Sector Agency”. Stephen places ‘the child at the centre’ of his educational endeavours.

He is a recipient of many awards including an ACEL National Fellowship (2004); ACEL Queensland Fellowship (2003); ACEL Nganakarra Award (2007); an Australian Institute of Management (AIM) Professional Manager of the Year State Queensland State Finalist and Regional winner (2000); Education Queensland Australia Day Award holder for educational excellence and a scholarship holder/graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership program. In 1989 Stephen was awarded a Rotary International Foundation Scholarship that enabled him to study for his Master of Arts degree at London University’s Institute of Education. In 2009 Stephen was awarded one, of only two, Presidential Citations from ACEL for his contribution to educational leadership. In 2007 Stephen completed the ANZSOG (Australia and New Zealand School of Government) Executive Fellows Program.
Case Study 1 –
Yarra Junction Primary School

Background

Yarra Junction Primary School is a semi-rural school located on the Warburton Highway, 65 kilometres east of Melbourne in the Upper Yarra Valley. The school has a proud history of providing education for more than 100 years and is considered a cornerstone of the local community. It is funded under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership.

The Story

Yarra Junction Primary School principal Christopher Thomas has followed the research linking socio-economic factors to student achievement, but strongly believes that every child can succeed, given the best teaching and learning opportunities.

The school’s philosophy of “High Expectations – No Excuses” encapsulates his thinking about academic performance.

Christopher, who has been principal of the semi-rural school for nine years said “stripping off the layers to determine exactly what needs to improve”, setting high expectations and upskilling teachers are central to improving student outcomes.

“We have created a culture of high expectations, with a focus on learning and evaluating as we go along,” Mr Thomas said.

Whole school teaching and learning programs are rigorous, innovative and stimulating. Each child is comprehensively assessed and individual learning takes place in all teaching settings.

The whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy improvement and learning “at the point of need”, has resulted in some very pleasing student achievement data.

In 2009, the Year 3 and Year 5 reading and numeracy student performance was substantially higher than statistically similar schools and the national average.

The school focus is to build the capacity of staff through professional learning, coaching and the rigorous use of data.

“The coaches work on teacher practice with a focus on teaching the skills not the task,” Mr Thomas said.

The leadership team recently received the Outstanding School Leadership Team Award at the Victorian Education Excellence Awards 2010.

“Data is a big part of our workshops along with directing teachers to improve their instructional capabilities.

“It doesn’t matter what our students come in with (knowledge), it’s what they walk away with that counts.”
Case Study 2 – Euroa Secondary College

Background

Euroa Secondary College is a small rural school located 150km north-east of Melbourne. The school has around 350 students and prides itself on its close links with families and the local community. Despite drought and challenging economic conditions resulting in some families leaving the area, the school continues to perform better than expected in retention rates and the percentage of students undertaking senior studies. The school received funding under the DEEWR Literacy and Numeracy Pilot project.

The Story

Euroa Secondary College is part of a close-knit community where “every family matters”, according to principal Michael Bell.

The school’s focus on lifting literacy and numeracy performance is a three-way partnership between staff, students and the parent community.

“Every student, staff member and family matters and every individual adds value to the school,” Mr Bell said.

At the school level, literacy and numeracy intervention programs and ongoing professional learning has created a common understanding of the school’s charter and objectives with both staff and school council.

As part of the school’s professional learning focus, mathematics teachers attend training to assist in identifying student difficulties in numeracy learning and link these to appropriate teaching strategies. Numeracy coach Michelle Bootes works closely with teachers to identify students’ point of need and target support where it is needed.

Overall, student achievement at Euroa Secondary is in the central band compared with the middle 60 per cent of government schools and comparable to the median for all government schools.

Year 7 NAPLAN Reading outcomes exceed the state median and provide evidence of the success of the Reading Intervention program. Year 7 Numeracy outcomes are comparable to the state median. The Euroa Cluster of schools is working on improving numeracy and efforts continue to intensify personalised learning strategies.

The average VCE study score is similar to the state median throughout the past four years. Increasing numbers of students are opting to do VET and VCAL courses.
Case Study 3 – Moe (Elizabeth St) Primary School

Background

Moe (Elizabeth St) Primary School is located in Moe, Victoria, and has been servicing the community for more than 50 years. The majority of students are from the immediate vicinity with a significant number of ESL and Koorie students. The school caters to individual learning with a range of programs and a Koorie educator is also situated at the school. The school is funded under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership.

The Story

The student population at Moe (Elizabeth Street) Primary School is diverse with 20 per cent ESL and 10 per cent from Koorie background.

Acting principal Noelle Burdekin recognises that this poses a number of challenges for the students, including the development of oral language and the ability to converse with adults and share experiences.

Ms Burdekin says that “Oral language is such a crucial aspect of any sort of learning and it was something we knew we needed to address in a fairly strategic way.”

The school’s initial strategy focused on professional development for staff and working closely with the literacy co-ordinator and speech pathologist to provide specialised support to students based on identified need.

Involving the parent community through regular information in the school newsletter about the importance of oral language was an effective strategy the school adopted.

Promoting the importance of developing literacy skills from an early age was another effective strategy. This was achieved via two facilitated playgroups called Good Beginnings.

Students required time for talking in a structured and focused way around a very explicit teaching focus and as a result the principal and literacy coordinator established the Talking Time program to give students an opportunity to communicate and express their thoughts in small groups.

“The program has been expanded in 2010 to focus on auditory processing and our literacy co-ordinator has done the Royal Children’s Hospital auditory processing assessment on all our students,” Ms Burdekin said.

“While initial results were encouraging and Year 5 students were performing reasonably well, there was more work to be done, particularly at the Year 3 level.”
In Year 5, NAPLAN data for reading and numeracy found student performance was comparable to statistically similar schools.

“This year we will continue to strengthen our focus on using student needs to drive our planning,” Ms Burdekin said.

“Our aim is that every student is the best that they can be.”

Case Study 4 – Mahogany Rise Primary School

Background

Enrolments have grown by 20 per cent over three years at Mahogany Rise Primary School in Frankston North. The school’s guiding principle is to foster a culture of continuous academic and personal improvement and its processes are underpinned by the core values of responsibility, integrity, respect, care, cooperation, excellence and participation. The school is funded under the LOW SES School Communities National partnership.

The Story

Mahogany Rise Primary School principal John Culley was faced with a challenge on taking up the principal role four years ago, and welcomed the imminent Extended Diagnostic Review in order to strategically plan for improvement.

When he joined the Frankston North school, there was significant work to be done to improve student outcomes and keep students engaged with their learning.

“The data informed us that literacy improvement needed to be a focus across the school,” Mr Culley said. Over the last three years the school has built a strong foundation for ongoing improvement. A broad improvement agenda central to building teacher, student and community capacity has begun to deliver exciting results for Mahogany Rise Primary School.

The school employed a Teaching and Learning coach in that first year to work with teachers and students in Years 3 to 6. The coach provided feedback and helped teachers to understand some of the nuances of being a really good literacy teacher and a learner in their own classrooms.

“We had a really clear focus in each of the classrooms and that meant the students were engaged a whole lot more in their own education,” Mr Culley said.

“Teachers, students and parents developed partnerships and formed the Mahogany Rise leaning community.”

The school focused on developing students’ oral language skills and encouraging them to express their feelings, particularly through the social values program Tribes.
Case Study continued

Mr Culley said while there is still a way to go, staff are committed to the journey of continuous improvement.

“When they (staff) are talking about students – where they have come from and where they have got to go – there is a much more collaborative arrangement around that,” he said.

“The most overriding thing (for improvement) is that you have to have a clear vision and everyone needs to be committed to that vision and be very clear about that vision.”

“The core job of teachers every day is about teaching literacy so our students are literate in the 21st century.”

In 2010 the school is working to continue to embed best practice in the teaching and learning of the core foundational areas of literacy and numeracy.

Mahogany Rise Primary School student attendance, engagement and wellbeing data is similar to other schools on adjusted school performance. The school's student engagement and wellbeing achievements have been supported by a number of services, partnerships and programs.

This has included the appointment of a school chaplain, a strong partnership with both Ardoch Youth Foundation and Fusion Australia, and involvement of ‘The Song Room’.

The introduction of the Tribes Learning Community in 2007 has facilitated the explicit teaching of the whole school values of responsibility, integrity, respect, cooperation, care, excellence and participation. Similarly, the introduction of a program for the first 10 days of school each year, focusing on ‘rigour and routine’, has established a consistent set of management procedures in all classrooms.
Notes