Professional Practice and Performance for Improved Learning:
Professional Learning and Support for School Leaders and Teachers

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VICTORIA
AS A LEARNING
COMMUNITY

State Government
Victoria

Contents

1.   Introduction

'We know that our profession will be the driver of real improvement in outcomes; that it can only do this if it has the responsibility and flexibility to make locally appropriate decisions; and that the right types of accountability and support need to be in place for improvement to be widespread and sustainable.'

Extract from *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community, p. 1*

Over the next eighteen months, a number of policies will be implemented in schools. In addition to the Government's commitments following the 2010 election, *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community*, *From New Directions to Action: World Class Teaching and School Leadership* and the *Vision for Languages Education* set out an ambitious reform agenda for education. Key elements have already commenced and build on Victoria's strong track record of leading and implementing significant education reform over the past twenty years.

Reform proposals extend across teaching and learning, leadership, governance, accountability, resources and partnerships towards a common goal of seeing Victorian students reach the very highest levels of learning within the next ten years.

At the centre of this vision for Victoria's education system is student learning, and an understanding that learning is about:

- what students learn (curriculum)

- how students learn and how we help them learn (pedagogy)

- how we know students are learning, where they are up to in their learning (assessment)

- the feedback we give to students and their families on learning progress and what they need to learn next (reporting).

Improvement in student learning is only possible when this understanding is shared. To ensure students are given the best chance to thrive and succeed in a globalised economy and society, focused, collaborative effort is required. Collaborative effort and collaborative practice will ensure we are:

- *Shifting the achievement curve* – Ensuring that every student is challenged and supported to meet their potential, no matter what their stage on the learning journey, based on a deep understanding of their individual learning profile and the next steps they require

- *Facilitating a self-improving system* – Establishing mechanisms and practices that enable educators to hold themselves and each other to account through their professional interactions and support transparent accountability to the broader community

- *Supporting collaboration and networks* – Supporting formal and informal arrangements that facilitate exchange of practice, ideas, opportunities and resources across school boundaries, and draw on the broad range of expertise available within the learning community

- *Supporting leadership and professional practice* – Developing the expertise and professional capabilities of principals and teachers to deliver quality education for children and young people, and lead improvement in outcomes

- *Maximising access and inclusion* – Providing quality learning opportunities for all students, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged are effectively engaged.

These objectives are clear in Victoria's school reform agenda.

With this work, Victoria will improve the opportunities for all learners without exception. In doing so, the education system takes the next step in making Victoria a global leader in education, for a vibrant economy and society.

2. Overview

'To achieve the gains in student learning that are at the heart of our aspirations to be a world leading school system, teachers and principals will need to rigorously assess their own performance and set themselves ambitious goals to develop their skills and improve student learning.'

Extract from From New Directions to Action: World class teaching and school leadership, p. 14

This paper is part of a series that fulfils the Government's vision as outlined in *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community*, *From New Directions to Action: World class teaching and school leadership* and *The Compact: Roles and responsibilities within Victorian government school education*.

To assist the system to realise exceptional learning outcomes for all students, a new approach to professional practice and performance is being implemented in Victorian Government schools. This series of papers provide:
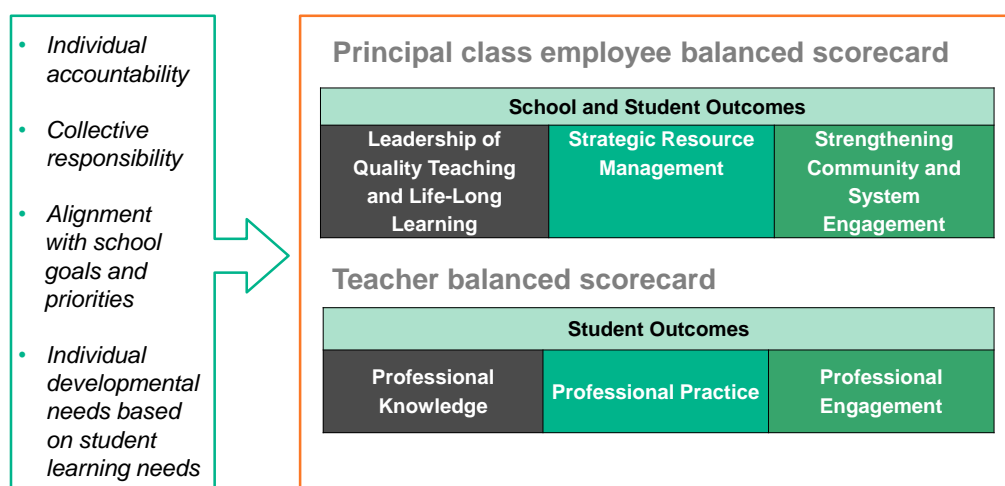
- an overview of professional practice and performance

- guidelines for the new school accountability framework

- guidelines for the enhanced performance and development cycle for government school principals, teachers and education support staff

- professional learning and support for school leaders and teachers (this paper), and;

- proposed changes to school governance arrangements.

Some of these papers have already been released. To access the *Professional Practice and Performance for Improved Learning overview and school accountability framework* papers, click here. The papers that comprise this series will be added to the Department's website, as they are released.

The school performance framework focuses on the characteristics that matter most to student outcomes – namely, the role of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and reporting – to establish a more consistent and structured cycle to school self-evaluation, review, planning and reporting. It is supported by a structured cycle of evidence-based planning and evaluation that formalises accountabilities between principals and their staff, teachers and their peers, and education staff and teachers.

Complementing the school performance framework, the performance and development process will be enhanced for all staff working in a Victorian government school (as shown in Figure 1 below). These changes are intended to raise the quality of reflection, feedback and support for professional practice. In doing so, they will address inconsistent performance between classrooms, both within the same school and between schools, by introducing explicit performance standards for principals, teachers and education support staff, as well as guidance on the evidence that should be used to measure and quantify effectiveness in these roles. A further paper detailing guidelines on performance and development was released in Term 1, 2014.

Figure 1: The balanced scorecard approach

- *Individual accountability*
- *Collective responsibility*
- *Alignment with school goals and priorities*
- *Individual developmental needs based on student learning needs*

Principal class employee balanced scorecard

School and Student Outcomes		
Leadership of Quality Teaching and Life-Long Learning	Strategic Resource Management	Strengthening Community and System Engagement

Teacher balanced scorecard

Student Outcomes		
Professional Knowledge	Professional Practice	Professional Engagement

A critical component of this new approach is its emphasis on practice nurtured through professional development and peer support. It is clear from research into performance-based accountability systems that if they are to achieve their policy objectives – that is, to improve the quality of the schooling experience for all students and increase the performance of schools – such systems need a 'strategy for investing in the knowledge and skill of educators.'[1] Within a high performing school, school leaders are required to harness and align the human, financial and intellectual resources within their school community, with locally-determined goals and priorities.[2] However, for many schools some assistance will be needed to establish an understanding on what improvement needs to occur and to execute the range of actions necessary to succeed. Without a strategy for developing knowledge and skills within schools, performance-based accountability systems only reveal which schools are more prepared than others to respond to policy changes; they would not result in significant improvement in those schools facing the most complex circumstances[3], where effective teaching can make the most significant difference for students.

This paper outlines the opportunities available for the profession to continue to build the capabilities that result in improved teaching practice and student learning outcomes. Practical information, including links to resources and professional learning programs and courses, is provided in this paper to stimulate discussions with school leadership teams and among peer groups about their priorities for professional learning.

Structure of this paper

There are many ways to improve schools but, according to McKinsey and Company, three policy goals are common to all school systems that perform consistently well. High performing education systems aim to raise the education standard for each student, and to improve the quality of teachers. They also develop the capabilities of all instructors who enable learning to take place,[4] which is the purpose of this paper.

The first step towards realising this goal of building capability is to define what effective teaching looks like. While instructional practice is centrally controlled in some school systems, it is not an approach in 'good to great' systems, where mechanisms for peer accountability prevail.[5] The following section of this paper outlines the concept of effective teaching practice and provides an overview of the evidence-based tools and resources that will be made available in 2014. The development and implementation of the Victorian Professional Practice Framework challenges the tacit assumption that teachers should learn the skills and knowledge needed for improvement in isolation from their peers. It recognises and applies evidence that learning from peers is one of the most effective ways to learn.[6]

The second step to improving instruction is to provide opportunities to develop the capability and knowledge to deliver quality instruction consistently. Principals and school leaders have long been considered important to improvements in student achievement; however, the analysis by Robinson and colleagues on the differential effects of leadership types revealed that the average effect of instructional leadership was three to four times greater than that of transformational leadership.[7] Effective instructional leaders create the environment for both staff and students to achieve their academic and social goals. Section 4 of this paper considers effectiveness of school staff in leadership positions and outlines some of the opportunities available for school leaders at all stages of their career to develop foundational skills or continuously improve their capabilities as pedagogical leaders.

3.   What is effective teaching practice?

Victoria's vision is for excellent teaching to be the standard in every school, fostered through career-long learning and development. Schools ensure there is a shared understanding of what good teaching looks like and how it is measured.

The transformative influence of an effective teacher is an experience many learners understand on a personal level. Empirical evidence of the impact of an effective teacher on the outcomes of their students is also plentiful. Meta-analyses by researchers such as Marzano, Pickering and Pollock have begun to quantify the average effects of specific instructional strategies. More recently, Hattie's synthesis elaborated six factors and their associated variables and determined the relative effect on achievement outcomes.[8] When properly implemented, instructional strategies such as identifying similarities and differences, summarising and note taking, and reinforcing effort and providing recognition can result in percentile gains of between 29 and 45 points in student achievement.[9] Sanders has also looked at what he argues is the cumulative effect of effective teachers, focusing on what happened to students whose teachers produced high achievement versus those whose teachers produced low achievement results over a number of years. He discovered that students with an effective teacher three years in a row scored an average at the 96th percentile in their mathematics assessment at the end of the fifth grade, compared to the 44th percentile for those students with an ineffective teacher over the same period.[10]

While Sanders argues that effective teachers are 'effective with students of all achievement levels, regardless of the level of heterogeneity in their classrooms,'[11] theorists continue to assert the importance of effective teaching to the human capital agenda. Good teaching is 'especially important for students who derive little educational motivation or support at home.'[12] Given the common appeal to educators' sense of moral purpose to drive success for all students,[13] both arguments present a compelling case for supporting teachers to be effective in their role.

If highly effective teachers provide learning experiences that meet the needs of all students, the personal and professional qualities of an effective teacher can elaborate the policy vision. Studies show that verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, certification status, ability to use a range of teaching strategies skillfully and enthusiasm for the subject characterise more successful teachers.[14] Effective teachers demonstrate their effectiveness by:

- understanding that all students have the capacity to learn

- personalising teaching to meet the needs of individual students

- building meaning and understanding rather than simply completing tasks

- providing a challenging curriculum that is connected to students' lives

- placing a strong emphasis on formative feedback

- enabling students to be active participants in their learning

- encouraging cooperation among students

- connecting learning to the wider community outside the school.[15]

Given the growing body of knowledge about the impact of effective teachers on children and young people, and of the characteristics and practices considered desirable across the profession, policy needs to responsive. Leading education systems and research show that the following levers are critical. These are:

Quality preparation of teachers

Quality pre-service teacher education provides the groundwork for major improvements in the quality of teachers by improving their preparation and, thus, their effectiveness as practitioners, once they commence their career in a school. However, while teacher education is considered an important component in boosting teacher quality and school performance,[16] many early career teachers experience a difficult transition from student to teacher, with some first year teachers bringing about a negative impact on learning.[17] Perceptions of graduates exiting initial teacher education programs indicate some are competent in specific skills (e.g. collaboration), but not others (e.g. understanding differences among students.)[18]

Evidence to inform teaching practice

Evidence-based teaching practice, nonetheless, has a significant impact on student outcomes. It is believed that some cases of learning difficulty and related under-achievement can be attributed to inappropriate or insufficient teaching, rather than to deficiencies pertaining to students' cognitive difficulties, or their socioeconomic background.[19]

Evidence can, and should, be synthesised from a range of sources, including quantitative and qualitative research, peers[20] and students,[21] and should enhance learning acquired through formal training.

Collaborative practice

Du Four and Marzano both advocate collaborative teams as an effective approach for teachers to improve their practice.[22] Collaborative practice involves teachers and school leaders learning continuously in their schools from one another, developing new teaching strategies, designing curriculum, moderating student assessment and monitoring student learning.[23] It subverts the assumption that the conditions of work – that is, working in a classroom with students – necessarily limits their exposure to their peers doing the same work. It is also a corollary to accountability systems, which can create incentives for schools to focus on teaching and learning, and heighten the sense of accountability between teachers, for the outcomes of all students.[24]
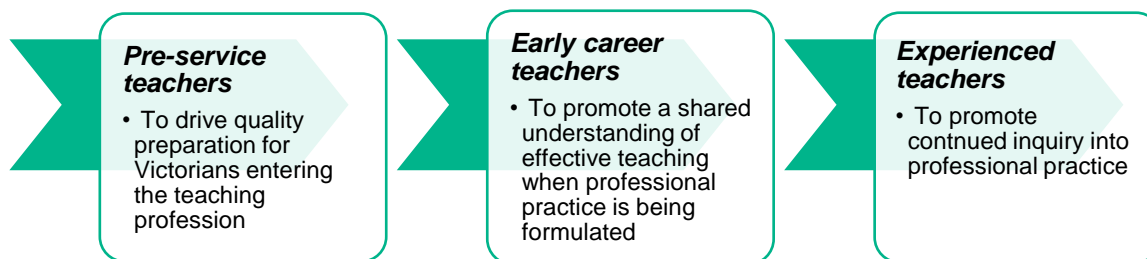
These areas provide a guide for action. Of course, the challenge of realising effective teaching practice must also be met by school leaders, namely principals. The practices of effective school leadership are outlined in Section 4 of this paper, alongside a range of actions the Department is taking to assist principals to enact them.

Support for teachers

Victoria as a Learning Community and *From New Directions to Action: World class teaching and school leadership* set high expectations for leaders and teachers to improve teaching practice, curriculum, assessment and reporting and ultimately student achievement, engagement and wellbeing.

To assist schools to meet these expectations, the Department will make available a range of tools and best practice examples for teachers at each stage of their career learning. The suite of activities comprising the Victorian Professional Practice Framework is outlined in more detail below.

Figure 2: The Victorian Professional Practice Framework

Pre-service teachers	**Early career teachers**	**Experienced teachers**
• To drive quality preparation for Victorians entering the teaching profession	• To promote a shared understanding of effective teaching when professional practice is being formulated	• To promote continued inquiry into professional practice

3.1   Supporting pre-service teachers

The Department is promoting a closer interaction between university and school sectors, and more direct involvement of teachers in pre-service preparation. From 2014, the Department is establishing twelve Teaching Academies of Professional Practice. Each academy will be comprised of a leading school, a network of other schools and at least one university. Training and incentives for supervising teachers will also be provided.

The Department will be consulting with a range of stakeholders throughout 2014 on the design and location of the Academies.

3.2   Early career teachers

Teaching practice models

Towards Victoria as a Learning Community highlights the importance of school communities reaching agreement about what constitutes effective teaching practice in their school. A suite of practical, evidence-based tools and resources will be provided for schools to support the implementation of their chosen teaching practice model. Providing these tools will drive leaders and teachers to talk and learn together about teaching practice, and to develop a shared vision about what quality teaching looks like in the classroom.

The Department has been collecting some of these tools and resources over the last eighteen months. They will be quality assured and trialled in selected schools during 2014 and shared with teachers and school leaders through an online portal.

A paper on instructional models is also being developed for release in 2014. The paper will provide a stimulus for discussions within school leadership teams and for school leaders engaging their community about the effectiveness of their teachers.

Teacher mentor support program

To promote collaboration among teachers and a preference towards collaborative practice, the Department will continue and build on existing mentor opportunities.

Presently, the Teacher Mentor Support Program provides an opportunity for teachers from the government and non-government school sectors to develop the requisite knowledge and skills to be a mentor. Delivered jointly between the Department and the Victorian Institute of Teaching, the program encourages more experienced teachers to work with early career educators.

Participants in the program develop an understanding of:

- their role as mentor of a beginning teacher

- the learning needs of their beginning teacher

- the key mentoring skills, functions and processes required to support their mentee

- how to conduct effective professional conversations with their beginning teacher.

The program operates as a two-day program between February and June each year. In 2014, the two-day program will be delivered in 30 locations across Victoria.

Tools for collaborative professional learning

In mid-2014, the Department will also provide tools to support teachers and leaders to establish collaborative professional learning. The tools will help them to:

- establish effective professional learning team structures across their schools

- allocate time for teachers to collaborate and work in professional learning teams

- ensure teams function effectively including goal-setting and conflict management advice

- build the capacity of teachers to confidently lead professional learning teams.

While collaborative professional learning is the most effective way to build overall school capacity, adult learners do have different learning preferences. Some skills may be more effectively developed through professional learning tailored to individual needs.

3.3   Experienced teachers

Teacher-led research

The Teacher–Led Research program seeks to improve teaching practice by enabling teachers to delve into their practice. Data inquiry into practice enables teachers to identify their own professional learning needs and to measure and report on the impact of their learning on student outcomes.

In 2014, successful applicants for the Department's Teacher-led Research program will be provided with up to 40 days to conduct their research project.

The Teacher-Led Research program has been informed by the Evidence-Based Professional Learning Cycle, based on the work of Helen Timperley.

Learner voice and agency

To promote greater use of evidence across the teaching profession, the Department will seek to make it easier for teachers to access the evidence they need. During 2014, the Department will provide resources to assist teachers to utilise student voice effectively. The Department will seek to co-construct these resources in consultation with the profession.

As part of the performance and development process being implemented this year, teachers and principals will be encouraged to seek and respond to student voice, to drive their performance and development process.

Classroom observation of teaching and learning

Observations are most effective when conceived as collaboration between colleagues who both benefit. For the teacher being observed, classroom observation can provide feedback that might not be readily available when other assessment methods are used. For the teacher who is observing, the experience can provide an opportunity to learn and adapt methods from another colleague.

To support leaders and teachers to implement effective classroom observation in their schools, in 2014 the Department will provide:

- reliable and developmentally appropriate classroom observation tools that can be used to provide teachers with feedback on the quality of student learning, professional knowledge and practice, assessment and feedback to students

- a range of different types of observation tools, some that are inclusive of multiple and varied aspects of teaching practice, and others focused on specific teaching practices

- guidelines for standardising administration procedures, such as observation and training protocols.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) tools and resources to support classroom observation will be included in this suite of resources.

4.   What is effective leadership practice?

To a considerable extent, effective teaching practice relies on effective school leaders focused on improving student outcomes. According to Linda Darling-Hammond, school leaders realise success through at least two ways; firstly, they select teachers and support and develop their skills and knowledge.[25] Central to this task is increasing quality practice across the school in a consistent and coherent way, and determining what capabilities teachers need to develop so that all students, regardless of what class they attend, are engaged in quality learning.

Secondly, leaders also influence learning outcomes 'through processes that affect the organisational conditions of the school.'[26] While Elmore defines this as the 'guidance and direction of instructional improvement,'[27] there is also a strong argument for the need for distributed leadership given the growing complexity and intensity of the principal role.

Leadership and management are considered to be integrated. Central to the role of the principal, Ken Leithwood states: 'Integrating what are sometimes considered to be leadership and management practices, therefore avoids a fundamental misunderstanding of the work leaders need to do in order to focus the commitments, energies and talents of the people in their organisations in service of their shared goals'.[28]

Taken in totality evidence indicates school leaders need to build the organisational contexts which support the provision of direct assistance to the instructional improvement efforts of the staff.

Leithwood cites 'getting the most education value for students from the resources already available' as a primary challenge for achieving a school's vision and goals. Successfully achieving this challenge requires the ability to:

- secure an appropriate spread of resources

- manage the budgetary processes

- allocate funding for school improvement

- distribute resources that are aligned with school goals and priorities

- manage school structures, policies, routines and standard operating procedures

- redesign organisational structures through self-evaluation, organisation and management of people and resources in order to build capacity across the workforce and deploy cost-effective measures [29]

- review the allocation and spread of resources and finances as school priorities change over time

- oversee the effective allocation and accountability of resources

- build staff member's sense of accountability.[30]

Principals also have the responsibility to build the capacity of their staff to exercise leadership. 'Distributed leadership' means principals enlist the support of other school leaders – their leadership team, middle leaders or colleagues in other schools – to create professional learning communities that motivate teachers to improve teaching practice. Research shows that effective principals distribute leadership amongst their leadership team and to 'middle leaders' – those teachers who often, but not always, have formal positions of responsibility for leading year-levels, learning areas, student-wellbeing and other aspects of the school's work. Distributing leadership motivates and helps to secure the commitment of all school leaders to the school's vision and priorities.[31]

While distributed leadership may not be possible in some cases - small rural schools, for example – an OECD study from 2008 suggests that opportunities for distributed leadership may exist across schools, such as in a network or cluster.[32]

Evidence-based content frameworks provide further guidance on the leadership and management capabilities and practices of effective principals. They enact a particular set of practices that:

- set directions and expectations – build and communicate a shared vision; set short-term goals; set expectations for high performance and ensure agreed evidence based teaching practices are used in all classrooms

- build relationships and develop people – stimulate growth in the capacities of staff, identifying and developing sustainable leadership capability and a culture of leadership within the school; model the school's values and practices and life-long learning through their own professional practice; build trust amongst and between students, staff and parents; contribute to the operation of a self-improving system by engaging with other schools, networks and educational research to share effective practice

- lead performance and development – including effective professional learning and regular and multiple forms of feedback to support all staff to achieve high standards of practice and develop leadership capacity

- develop the organisation to support desired practices – through the development of a culture of effective teaching and provide structures which support staff to collaboratively improve the quality of their teaching practice; productive relationships with families and the wider community

- strategically manage the human, financial and physical priorities of the school in support of the school's vision

- improve the teaching and learning program – staff the teaching and learning program; support improved teaching practice; monitor student learning and school improvement progress; build consistency of practice; and promote the use of evidence-based practice, through the establishment of an integrated and whole-school, student-centred approach to engagement, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting, and well-being

- secure accountability – encourage and support peer accountability; support staff to meet external accountability requirements[33] [34]

A New Zealand analysis of a range of studies on leadership supported these practices. It found that effective leadership practice involved establishing goals and expectations, resourcing strategically, ensuring quality teaching, leading teacher learning and development and ensuring a safe and orderly environment.[35]

In responding to this vision for effective leadership, it is important to consider how the system can and should determine what leaders need at particular points, and provide professional learning and development to meet those needs. Internationally, the best education systems identify and nurture talented leaders.[36] They create transparent and formalised leadership development pathways from identification of aspirant leaders through to senior leadership roles, including the principalship. More proactive guidance of the careers of potential leaders would assist them to undertake targeted leadership development, and gain more leadership experience through new roles both within their school and outside.

Given that a broader definition of 'leader' has increasingly been employed in research, policy responses must recognise the highly contextual nature of leadership. Depending on their background, prior experiences, and their school context, school leaders need different types of support.[37] A useful approach is to consider the different career stages of a leader (see Figure 3 below) as a basis for formulating a systemic policy response. It should recognise that leadership development is important at all career stages, not simply to prepare teachers for the principalship.

Figure 3: Career stage leadership development

Pre-appointment through to principal roles					
Emerging leaders	Middle leaders	Aspiring principals	New and early stage principals	Experienced principals	System leaders

Viewed through this lens, the evidence pointing to policy gaps is compelling:

Emerging leaders

While systematic approaches to identifying and supporting potential leaders into leadership roles are common in other jurisdictions, and are considered 'critical to the overall capacity of the system,[38] current efforts are not intentional. An absence of clear pathways may lead to high potential candidates not stepping into senior leadership roles, or leaving the system.

Middle leaders

Middle leaders are critical to school improvement; unlike principals, who are strategically positioned to set the direction for a school, middle leaders are also influential because of their close proximity to classroom practice. Middle leaders typically lead an aspect of teaching and learning across the school, monitor and evaluate performance, and lead and build teams that implement change. They can help to create a focus on learning and contributing to the culture that supports it.[39] However, Helen Timperley has noted that teachers' discomfort assuming the role of expert, and their diffidence about providing feedback to others teachers and identifying areas for further learning highlight the importance of professional development strategies that enable teachers to learn how to foster and sustain teacher leadership.[40]

Aspiring principals

Preparing principals for their first role is considered a 'strategic necessity' by Tony Bush.[41] In spite of this, and the generally high satisfaction with available development opportunities, many first time principals feel they are unprepared for the demands of the role.[42] While a large number of high performing education systems have dedicated preparation programs, Victoria does not.

New and early stage principals

A principal's first appointment is an important and demanding stage of their career. The provision of sustained and purposeful support is critical, and enables principals to be accountable for quality teaching practice within their school, and improved student outcomes.

All highest performing education systems provide support for new principals. Most programs last one or two years and include mentoring, formal training sessions, and opportunities to network with other new principals.[43]

Experienced principals

Experienced principals need different skills and knowledge than early career principals. Coaching is an ideal leadership development for experienced principals because it can be personalised, and directed towards solving context-specific problems and issues.

Serving principals should also be encouraged to coach teachers with leadership potential and early career principals. This model has been successful in other jurisdictions[44] and has been shown to help experienced principals sustain a commitment to their work, support less experienced leaders, and contribute towards a self-improving system.[45]

System leaders

System leaders are, by definition, effective school leaders; according to David Hopkins, they share characteristic behaviours and skills that represent the actions of the best educational leaders.[46] In this respect, the policy gap may pertain to the mechanisms available to facilitate the skills and knowledge of system leaders to be shared across a number of schools, rather than their professional learning needs per se.

Support for school leaders

School leaders are important agents for improving the quality of teaching in our schools, to lift the performance of Victorian students to world class levels. *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community* and *From New Directions to Action: World class teaching and school leadership* make a significant commitment to support school leaders to lead and sustain the changes necessary to improve outcomes for all students in their school.

The Department, through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership (Bastow), will provide support for principals to develop and extend the practices of successful leadership. There are a number of leadership development courses and programs available. Bastow plays an important role in quality assurances, ensuring school leaders and teachers access quality professional learning support and evidence based leadership development. Bastow courses also emphasise the application of new skills and knowledge in the workplace, to develop mastery.

4.1   Emerging leaders

The Impact Program was trialled in 2013, and is designed to engage and stimulate emerging leaders to shape the future of learning. Over two years from 2014, and in conjunction with the delivery of the existing Changemakers program delivered by Bastow, the capacity of up to 400 high potential leaders will also be developed.

More information on the Impact and Changemakers programs, including enrolling for 2014, can be found here and here.

To progress a more deliberate approach to identifying and support emerging leaders, the Department is also introducing a talent identification management system which recognises how principals, school improvement partnerships, and the Department can work in complementary ways to identify and support high potential leaders. The system will:

- identify and track the leadership development and career transitions of high potential 'change leaders'

- incorporate ongoing, specialised support and career advice, including support to prepare for principal selection panels when vacancies arise

- provide a short-term placement for high potential leaders so they can shadow senior leaders in the government, business and community sector and gain insights to diverse leadership contexts and styles

- provide resources to support principals and other school leaders to identify, nurture and support potential leaders in their school, network and region.

4.2   Middle leaders

Like other school leaders, middle leaders need support to perform their roles effectively, and to be adept at working with people and establishing and motivating teams. The Department will provide opportunities for up to 200 middle leaders over two years from 2014 to build their capacity to drive successful team performance and improved classroom practice. The course content will focus on:

- knowing how to develop, improve and sustain high quality teaching within a team and how to use data and evidence to inform practice

- the importance of effective management structures, and processes and the role of team leaders in implementing whole school policies with their team in a consistent way

- how middle leaders can develop and lead an effective team with a culture of high performance and trust

- understanding how to design effective school-based professional learning opportunities for team members.

The Create program commences in Term 2, 2014. Information about the program and how to apply is available here.

4.3   Aspiring principals

From Term 2, 2014, the Department will commence delivering the Principal Preparation Program to prepare high potential leaders for their first principal position. The program will provide a capacity-building opportunity for up to 100 high potential leaders over two years.

A partnership with a Victorian university will mean that the program will become a formal, non-mandatory principal qualification, and those who successfully complete the program will be eligible for credits towards a postgraduate degree from the institution offering the program.

Consistent with exemplary principal preparation programs,[47] the program will be personalised and flexible to suit individuals' contexts and needs and include a rigorous selection process. There will also be a significant work-based learning and application, a placement in another school to observe a highly effective principal, coaching support and involvement in an online community.

The program will balance the management and operational aspects of the principalship with the development of capabilities that are required to succeed in the role.

Information on the Principal Preparation Program including future intakes is available here.

4.4   New and early stage principals

The *Professional Support for New Principals Program* provides sound, individualised support for new principals in Victoria. The program was extended in 2013 and strengthened by:

- matching new principals with experienced principals as their coaches (either accredited or working towards their accreditation)

- extending the program from twelve months to eighteen to ensure support is sustained over time

- introducing a three-day residential that will allow new principals to form strong and enduring support networks.

The program includes opportunities for new principals to visit high performing schools to observe and discuss best practice with their peers, and support for online professional learning groups to leverage the potential of peer-to-peer professional development. These measures will assist new principals in meeting the challenges and demands of the role.

This program will provide support for up to 260 new principals over two years from 2014. More information, including eligibility, is available here.

4.5   Experienced principals

Building on the initiatives that have provided coaching for principals in the past, coaching initiatives aim to build the capacity of principals to create and sustain highly effective professional learning communities that are focused on improving teaching practice, curriculum, assessment, and reporting.

Coaching will be provided for up to 90 school leadership teams. The intensity and duration of this coaching can be tailored to the needs and context of each school. At a minimum, participating schools will receive 28 hours of support over the course of participating in the program.

More information on coaching for leadership teams is available through Bastow here.

Up to 200 principals will have access to coaching to enhance their individual capacity and facilitate self-directed learning and development. More information on coaching for individuals and collegiate groups is available here.

The Department will also provide leadership coach training for up to 120 principals over two years from 2014, many of who could take up coaching roles in programs such as the *New Principals Program* above. This initiative will provide up to 37 hours of training, depending on the needs and preferences of the principal, and includes the opportunity to become an accredited leadership coach. Both types of coaching will be provided by a mix of professional coaches, and experienced and retired principals who have undergone coaching training.

Information on coach training is available here.

4.6   System leaders

During 2014, the Department will also be exploring approaches to providing support for up to 80 high performing principals to become system leaders. We will be consulting with stakeholders throughout the development of this approach.

5.   For further information

When the system sets high expectations for school improvement, it is also obliged to provide a level of support sufficient for schools to meet those expectations. This paper explains that support.

Some of the support outlined in the paper is under development, and will be provided from 2014.

Further information about the support for teachers can be directed to the Department's Teaching Quality Branch.

Information about the support for school leaders should be directed to the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership.

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