PRIMARY MATHEMATICS   
AND SCIENCE SPECIALIST   
INITIATIVE

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PACK   
FOR COHORT FOUR (2017 - 2018)

Completed Expressions of Interest to be emailed to: vicstem@edumail.vic.gov.au

# WHAT IS THE PRIMARY MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SPECIALIST INITIATIVE?

The Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists (PMSS) initiative is a successful Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) program that upskills primary teachers in government schools to become mathematics or science education specialists. The Victorian Government has provided $27m to train 200 specialists over four years (2016-19), building on the success of the National Partnerships Mathematics Specialists initiative (2010-12) and the Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists initiative (2012-15).

The initiative aims to:

* increase student engagement and achievement in mathematics and science,
* increase teacher confidence and capability in teaching mathematics and science,
* increase understanding of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM),
* have a sustainable impact in schools beyond the life of the initiative’s funding.

Participating schools nominate mathematics or science as a key priority area. Each participating school will select either two mathematics or two science specialists from the schools’ existing staffing. The specialists will continue to work in their classroom and will work with other teachers to gain greater confidence and capacity in teaching mathematics or science. As a result, students will be more engaged in mathematics or science, leading to improved outcomes.

The fourth cohort of 100 specialists (2018-19) will commence their two-year commitment with an online session in February 2018 and face-to-face professional learning starting in March 2018.

**Expressions of Interest are to be submitted to the DET STEM Unit by emailing [vicstem@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vicstem@edumail.vic.gov.au).**

## Professional Learning

Over the two-year commitment, specialists will participate in 20 days of intensive professional learning, delivered by experts in the fields of mathematics, science and STEM education. The professional learning covers the following aspects:

* disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge in mathematics or science,
* understanding of high quality approaches for curriculum planning, delivery and assessment,
* knowledge and skills to use student data to inform planning and teaching, including the use of assessment tools,
* knowledge and skills to lead school-based professional learning and actively support colleagues to improve practice,
* knowledge of resources to support mathematics and science learning and teaching, and
* understanding STEM.

The professional learning will include online sessions for principals and specialists to support a clear understanding of:

* the aims of the initiative,
* the roles of specialists, principals and the Department,
* how to participate in the evaluation, and
* how to plan for sustainability beyond the life of the initiative.

## Implementation

If successful, two existing teachers from your school will work as mathematics or science specialists. Specialists will remain in their classes with a 0.5 FTE load, working with their students directly, and will be released 0.5 FTE. During this release time, specialists will work with:

* their school leadership teams,
* the other specialist within their school,
* the other teachers within their school, and
* the other specialists in other schools within the nominated cluster.

These collaborations will support school level improvement in teaching mathematics or science at the school level. Your school will receive salary funding to backfill these two teachers 0.5 FTE each through the Student Resource Package (SRP).

Your school will be required to:

* undertake a selection process to determine the most appropriate specialists,
* support the specialists in their role, including their participation in professional learning,
* release the specialists 0.5 FTE to undertake their role,
* commit to whole-school improvement in mathematics or science,
* commit to initiative processes, including funding accountability,
* participate fully in the collection and provision of data (whole school student assessments, teacher, specialist and principal attitude data) to the external evaluators,
* plan for sustainability beyond the life of funding, and
* reciprocally nominate at least one other school (which may include a FISO group or Professional Learning Community) that will submit an Expression of Interest in PMSS.

The PMSS model supports building the collaborative expertise of the specialists and strengthening the expertise in the school and within a group of schools.

## Funding

Funding will be provided to schools to support:

* 0.5 FTE salary for each specialist for two years (2018 and 2019) using a formula of Classroom Teacher Level 2-5, paid to schools through the SRP,
* 20 days professional learning for specialists facilitated by DET, and
* reimbursement up to $320 per day for accommodation and meals per specialist from schools more than 100kms from the CBD, administered through the Schools Targeted Funding portal.

## Eligibility

Schools must not have previously participated in any iteration of the PMSS initiative.

Schools must meet at least one of the following criteria:

* be in a rural or regional area (defined by Local Government Area) and/or
* have a high Student Family Occupation Education index score.

## Application Process

This initiative is only open to Victorian Government primary schools (including P-12 and special schools). Schools should complete the Expression of Interest by filling out the relevant details and addressing the selection criteria. Expressions of Interest will be assessed using responses to this criteria. Principals must endorse the Expression of Interest and if successful, implement the initiative as set out in the Expression of Interest.

Selection criteria

1. Demonstrated whole school commitment to building teacher capacity and improving student learning outcomes in mathematics or science,
2. Demonstrated commitment to using student data to inform planning and teaching,
3. Demonstrated capacity to provide structures to enable change and support a culture of success,
4. Commitment to active participation in the evaluation of the initiative, and
5. Commitment to sustainability beyond the life of the initiative.

DET will consider a spread of rural/regional vs metropolitan schools, balanced with the demonstrated ability of schools to embrace a whole school commitment to mathematics or science improvement.

A selection panel, comprising central office and regional staff will assess each Expression of Interest.

Any queries relating to the initiative or the Expression of Interest can be directed to Kate Parker, Manager, STEM Unit on 9097 7381 or parker.katherine.k@edumail.vic.gov.au.

## Important dates

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| 12 December 2017 | Expressions of Interest due  **Successful and unsuccessful schools will be notified as soon as the selection process has been finalised** |
| 9 February 2018 | Successful schools to provide names of participating specialists, by email to vicstem@edumail.vic.gov.au |
| February 2018 | Online session for principals and specialists |
| March/April/May 2018 | Ten days professional learning for specialists, in 4 and 3 and 3 day blocks |
| March 2018 | Student data to be collected by schools (e.g Mathematics Online Interview, VCAA On Demand: Number, PAT Science, NAPLAN) |
| August 2018 | Five days professional learning for specialists, in 3 and 2 day blocks |
| September 2018 | Student data to be collected by schools |
| February 2019 | Communique regarding interim evaluation outcomes distributed to schools |
| March/May 2019 | Five days professional learning for specialists, in 3 and 2 day blocks |
| March 2019 | Student data to be collected by schools |
| September 2019 | Student data to be collected by schools |
| October 2019 | Online session for principals and specialists |
| February 2020 | Communique regarding final evaluation outcomes distributed to schools |

# EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

## Section 1: School Details

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| Principal Name |  | | |
| School Name |  | | |
| School Number |  | | |
| School Address |  | | |
|  | Postcode |  |
| Telephone number |  | | |

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| --- | --- |
| Please identify your school’s focus – Either mathematics OR science | |
| Mathematics | Science |

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| --- | --- |
| Other participating school/s (NB: nomination should be reciprocal) | |
| Name of School 1 |  |
| Name of School 2 |  |
| Name of School 3 |  |
| Name of School 4 |  |

## SECTION 2: Selection Criteria

Please respond to each of the following:

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| 1. **Demonstrated whole school commitment to building teacher capacity and improving student learning outcomes in mathematics or science.**   You may wish to discuss any of the following when writing your response:   * School’s shared vision and strategy * Professional learning teams; professional learning * Leadership’s support and advocacy of the specialists to the school and broader school community. |
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| 1. **Demonstrated commitment to using student data to inform planning and teaching.**   You may wish to discuss any of the following when writing your response:   * Assessment for learning * Identified need. |
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| 1. **Demonstrated capacity to provide structures to enable change and support a culture of success.**   You may wish to discuss any of the following when writing your response:   * School structures such as staffing, facilities and resources * Selection process of specialists * How the specialists will work with school leadership, with other specialists, with other teachers in your school and in partner schools Current and/or past initiatives in either mathematics or science * Partnerships with other schools. |
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| 1. **Demonstrated commitment to sustaining the positive impact of the initiative beyond the life of funding.**   You may wish to discuss any of the following when writing your response:   * Planning for success * School structure and staffing beyond funding. |
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| 1. **Demonstrated commitment to active and full participation in the PMSS evaluation.**   You may wish to discuss any of the following when writing your response:   * School commitment to contributing to knowledge base * How evaluation student data schedule will be managed across the school. |
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## Section 3: Principal Declaration

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ declare that:

* the information contained in this Expression of Interest is true and accurate,
* I have read and understood the eligibility criteria, and
* I commit to the funding being used as intended.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Principal Name | Principal’s signature | Date |
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