

Place-Based Education Plans

OVERVIEW

The Education State reforms are driving improvements at all levels of the system to help education providers of early childhood services through to post-secondary services achieve equity and excellence for our children and young people. However, for some education providers, in communities where achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people are well below expected levels, the challenges to achieving equity and excellence are particularly complex and multi-faceted. Often these challenges are beyond the reach of a single school or service, as they stem from geographic, social or demographic factors including entrenched disadvantage.

A Place-Based Education Plan is a tool to harness collective responsibility for transforming education in a community, with a focus on improving learner achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes. The key characteristic of a Place-Based Education Plan is that the needs and aspirations of the community guide its development. Local stakeholders collaborate to identify the challenges to improving these outcomes, and to find holistic, comprehensive solutions tailored to their local context.

Depending on the specific challenges for a given community, potential solutions can include changes to the curriculum and developing alternative learning pathways, co-location of services, increasing access to local support services for families, capacity and capability building opportunities for staff, communications campaigns to engage the community, industry engagement and investment in infrastructure.

Theory of Change – Place-Based Education Plans

If we support Victorian communities to identify tailored, locally driven solutions to improving learner achievement, engagement and wellbeing

then we will harness collective effort and responsibility to inspire confidence and engagement with local education

so that we improve learners' outcomes, foster innovation and narrow gaps in achievement in communities with complex challenges or unrealised opportunities for excellence.

The process of developing a Place-Based Education Plan forges strong, ongoing connections between these local stakeholders – including education providers (early years, primary and secondary, post-secondary), families, community, industry, government and support services. It inspires engagement and commitment to the success of government education by repositioning learning and development at the heart of the community.

Place-Based Education Plans are currently at varying stages of development and implementation in Footscray, Shepparton, Lilydale/Upper Yarra, Frankston North, Bendigo, Flemington and Oakleigh. For more information visit: [Place-Based Education Plans](#).

EVIDENCE BASE

Under the right conditions, place-based approaches are an effective way to tackle complex community issues and to act upon opportunities for innovation.

Taking a 'people and place' approach to education, Place-Based Education Plans enable decisions about learners and local circumstances to be assessed and made in an integrated, holistic, collaborative way.

In March 2016, the Department introduced Learning Places, a place-based service delivery model that puts partnerships and community engagement at the heart of education system improvement. This included the establishment of 17 new areas within the Department's four regions, which align to Local Government Areas and provide a strong basis to build meaningful partnerships.

Place-Based Education Plans consolidate and extend this approach by focusing more intensively on natural groupings of education providers within an area that has significant challenges to improvement, allowing a deeper exploration and response to community-specific needs.

A place-based approach is particularly important in communities where there is a need to build on and leverage prior and planned investment – such as where there are new or regenerated schools, early childhood services, TAFEs or Tech Schools, or where there is a need to coordinate school improvement initiatives across the local system.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are communities targeted for a Place-Based Education Plan?

Communities are prioritised based on a range of evidence-informed criteria, relating to:

- achievement, engagement and wellbeing outcomes
- pathways and opportunities for lifelong learning
- demographic change or demand pressures
- opportunities for innovation and establishing hubs of excellence
- other complex community circumstances.

Another important factor is the community's readiness for change, including the willingness of education providers like schools, early childhood services and training providers to work together to develop local, tailored solutions.

What are some pre-conditions for a successful Place-Based Education Plan?

Some critical success factors for Place-Based Education Plans to make an impact in a community include:

- Community acceptance of challenges or barriers and readiness for change
- Willingness and readiness of local education partners to establish a strong culture of collaboration
- Quality of governance structures in operation to support local decision-making and information-sharing
- Alignment with other community priorities, investments and initiatives.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Shepparton, Lilydale/Upper Yarra and Frankston North Education Plans released	May 2018
New Bendigo Education Plan released	Jul 2018
Implementation of actions and strategies identified in the Education Plans commenced	Jul 2018
Consultation and scoping of new education plans for Flemington and Oakleigh commenced	Jul 2018
Construction for the Footscray Learning Precinct commenced	Late 2018
Oakleigh Education Plan community engagement completed	Apr 2019
Flemington Education Plan community engagement completed	Jun 2019

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES

Oakleigh Education Plan will be completed	Late 2019
Flemington Education Plan will be completed	Late 2019
Infrastructure development in Shepparton, Lilydale/Upper Yarra and Frankston North will commence	2019
Implementation of actions and strategies identified in the Flemington and Oakleigh Education Plans will commence	2020