

From New Directions to Action:

World class teaching and
school leadership

October 2013



VICTORIA
AS A LEARNING
COMMUNITY

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Contents

Contents	3
Ministers' message	5
1. The key to improving Victorian education: world class teaching and school leadership	6
Victoria's outcomes must improve in a globally competitive environment	6
Teaching will have the greatest single impact on our education outcomes	6
Consultation has informed our next steps	7
Taking action to achieve world class teaching and leadership	7
Strategic Directions – Summary Overview	8
2. Attract great people into teaching: attract stronger candidates and improve their preparation	9
What we will do	9
Partnerships to improve teacher preparation	9
National reform effort to improve teacher preparation	10
High priority Victorian reforms	10
3. Create a high performance profession: stimulate a culture of excellence and effective professional development	13
What we will do	13
4. Provide strong direction and support: elevate the role of leadership at school and system levels	16
What we will do	16
5. Delivering and monitoring success	19

Ministers' message

The Victorian Government's goal is to achieve world leading education performance in the next 10 years.

We know this goal will improve opportunities for young Victorians in work and life, providing them with the tools and skills they need for further learning and a better future. It will also provide Victoria with the competitive advantage needed to prosper in tough economic times by driving growth and productivity.

In international assessments of literacy, numeracy and science, Victorian students perform well compared to other states and territories in Australia, but we want to be among the world leaders within a decade. In Victoria, we need to raise our standards – to reflect excellence and the competitive edge required for our economy and society to prosper.

In June 2012 we launched the *New Directions for School Leadership and the Teaching Profession* discussion paper, which outlined our vision for a teaching profession that will raise student performance to match the very best jurisdictions worldwide. The discussion paper launched a vigorous public debate on teaching quality and we are grateful for the many frank, passionate and inspiring submissions and responses we received as part of the consultation process.

This has confirmed our knowledge of the many great teachers and leaders working in our schools, and the importance of working with them to build on the strong foundations in our system. It has also affirmed our commitment to the bold actions to raise the quality and status of our teachers, school leaders and education professionals that you will find in this paper.

This paper complements the school-based reforms set out in *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community* released in November 2012. The reforms in these two statements are underpinned by professional trust and the conviction that the people working in our schools will be the drivers of real improvement in student performance.

The quality of teaching is the greatest force for realising our goal of a world class education system. We know that exemplary teaching requires a broad set of skills and attributes, such as communication

skills, literacy and numeracy skills, academic ability and a passion for learning and developing others. We will learn from best practice in Victoria and other jurisdictions and will continue to focus on the importance of effective curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting.

School leadership will be at the centre of our reform effort to improve teaching. Our principals, and the support we provide them, will be vital to our efforts. To support our principals, we need to attract and develop teachers of the highest quality. We must also challenge all teachers and principals to continually develop their skills and knowledge while nurturing leadership potential.

The positive impact of early childhood education in laying the foundations for future health, wellbeing and development is also widely recognised. The process of continuing to build early childhood workforce capacity is crucial to our goal of lifting Victoria's education performance over the next 10 years. That is why the Government is currently developing the *Victorian Early Childhood Strategic Plan*.

On 4 August 2013, Victoria reached a historic funding agreement with the former Commonwealth Government that will see an additional \$12.2 billion flow to our schools between 2014 and 2019.

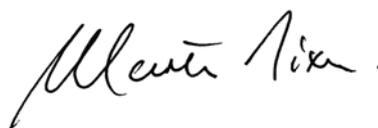
We know that schools are best placed to make the decisions about the high-effect strategies that best suit their context. As the new funding flows, principals and school leaders will be able to implement the actions outlined in this paper, so that we have highly effective leaders and teachers in our schools and that we make the most of this major funding boost. To provide schools funding certainty, we will work with the new Commonwealth Government to ensure this agreement and the promised additional funding is honoured beyond the current budget estimates period to 2019.

The Victorian Government commits to working on these bold reforms in close collaboration with teacher education providers, school leaders, teachers and the school community. It can only be through this combined effort, passion and commitment that we can succeed.



The Hon. Peter Hall, MLC

Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession



The Hon. Martin Dixon, MP

Minister for Education

1. The key to improving Victorian education: world class teaching and school leadership

Victoria's challenge

Our education performance is losing pace with leading jurisdictions.

There is too little improvement and too much variation in student outcomes within the state and particularly within individual schools.

Reform is needed to ensure our school system consistently provides all young Victorians with the tools they need for further learning and a better future, to build a strong and vibrant society, and foster improved economic growth and competitiveness.

Victoria has led the nation in educational performance. At the heart of these past successes are the school leaders and teachers who are dedicated to high standards of leadership, teaching and learning. However, the best in the world are significantly outperforming Victorian students in some international assessments, with Victorian students not faring any better than those 10 years before them.

Victoria's outcomes must improve in a globally competitive environment

Victoria's outcomes have not improved in the past decade, despite increased expenditure in the same period. International assessment programs consistently show that the gap between Victoria and the best performing jurisdictions internationally has grown, with implications for our global competitiveness and future economic growth.

International benchmarking from 2011 shows that Australian and Victorian performance has remained largely static and our overall ranking has dropped, while other nations have moved ahead.

In the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, 20 per cent of Victorian students (and 25 per cent of Australian students) did not meet the literacy proficiency standard, while

overall Australia ranked 22nd out of 45 countries.¹ In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study over a third of Victoria's Year 8 students did not meet the proficiency standard in maths. Overall Australia's Year 4 students were ranked equal 18th in maths and 19th in science out of over 40 countries.²

Australia's performance in these major international tests demonstrates that we are not building our students' skills well enough in areas such as reading and numeracy. The current national minimum standards on tests such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) are set too low for world leading performance. In a globalised economy our aspirations must be higher.

Teaching will have the greatest single impact on our education outcomes

Achieving world class education performance requires bold and comprehensive reform, building on Victoria's strong reform history and on the work of the many great teachers and school leaders in Victorian schools today. *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community*, released in November 2012, sets out key school-based reforms to improve performance across the education system, including through strengthening professional practice in schools.

1. The 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study tested the reading comprehension of students in the 4th year of school in 45 countries.

2. The 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study tested the maths and science skills of Years 4 and 8 students from more than 40 countries.

The evidence shows us that the quality of teaching has the largest impact on student learning outcomes, other than a student's socioeconomic background.³ We also know that a good teacher can take an average child from the middle of the class to the top of the class within three years.⁴

Improving the quality of teaching in our schools is critical to lift the performance of our students to world class levels. This must be central to our reform agenda and is the primary focus of this paper.

Consultation has informed our next steps

On 21 June 2012, the Government launched a discussion paper titled *New Directions for School Leadership and the Teaching Profession*. The discussion paper benchmarked current practice in Victoria against the practices of the highest performing jurisdictions worldwide, and sought feedback on a wide range of actions.

The discussion paper inspired a vigorous public debate on teaching and leadership quality. Over 130 written submissions were received on the proposed actions. These were supplemented with in-depth discussions with principals, teachers, and their representative bodies, as well as business and industry bodies, researchers and change management organisations.

Contributions were frank and passionate, confirming the importance of the focus on teaching and leadership.

There is strong support for action across the three areas outlined in the discussion paper, along with widespread acknowledgement of the challenges of implementation – getting the details right will require careful and concerted effort.

There is much work to do on all these fronts but we can be confident our focus is right and that Victoria's reform history puts us in a position to become world-leading.

Taking action to achieve world class teaching and leadership

This policy statement sets out the next steps that we will take and our commitment to build on best practice from our own education system and other jurisdictions nationally and internationally. Some of the actions will be challenging in principle and in practice. The Victorian Government remains committed to ensuring that the assessment of teachers' performance and development is more closely linked to student learning outcomes, and will seek diverse pathways to bring the best people into both teaching and leadership.

There are some steps we will take immediately, while other actions indicate the goals for future work with Victoria's teachers, principals and teacher education providers.

Like the complementary school-based reforms outlined in *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community*, workforce reform

will be driven locally. School leaders are of central importance in making this work, which is why we will continue our unwavering focus on investing in leadership in particular. Success also requires a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of school leaders, teacher education providers and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department) for improving teaching quality. It relies on strong collaboration among the key players and unequivocal, shared commitment to the challenge.

Within 10 years, the benefits of these directions will be evident in the world leading performance of our students.



3. Hattie, J. (2003) *Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence?*, Paper presented at ACER Research Conference, October 19–21, Melbourne.

4. Whelan, F. (2009) *Lessons Learned: How good policies produce better schools*, MPG Books, London.

Strategic Directions – Summary Overview

Attract great people into teaching: attract stronger candidates and improve their preparation	Create a high performance profession: stimulate a culture of excellence and effective professional development	Provide strong direction and support: elevate the role of leadership at school and system levels
Immediate actions – commencing 2013/ 2014		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the quality of Victorian teacher education courses • Develop options for making the membership of the VIT Council expertise-based, as per the recommendations of the 2008 King Review • Pursue ways to attract high achievers into teaching • Increase the Victorian cohort of Teach for Australia • Make teacher education courses responsive to feedback from principals and teachers • Assess and publish information to make it easier to tell how well different universities prepare teachers • Establish 12 Teaching Academies of Professional Practice to improve pre-service preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide schools with a choice of quality teaching practice models • Equip principals for effective performance and development and require rigorous, evidence-based teacher assessment • Align principals’ powers with their responsibilities, including devolving the power to dismiss teachers for sustained unsatisfactory performance • Build teacher capacity in peer observation, evaluation and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a talent identification and management system and a new program to develop the capabilities of up to 400 emerging leaders • Support principals to lead by building the capacity of up to 200 middle leaders • Provide up to 100 high-potential leaders with the opportunity to complete a Principal Preparation Program • Provide sustained support for up to 260 new principals • Provide leadership coaching for up to 200 principals and 90 leadership teams, and coaching training for up to 120 retired and experienced principals • Provide support for up to 80 high-performing principals to become system leaders • Reform the principal selection process by moving to expertise-based selection panels • Introduce a new performance and development process
Medium to long-term priorities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Talent Strategy, including a graduate program for high achievers • Make entry to teaching easier for strong candidates from diverse backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine options to recognise excellence through reward for effort, including for teachers at the top of the scale • Share strategies for flexible uses of time in the school calendar for professional learning • Support professional learning that is focused on whole school and system improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance and resources for different leadership models, and create pathways for expert leaders from outside teaching

2. Attract great people into teaching: attract stronger candidates and improve their preparation

Victoria's vision

Teaching is a career of choice for talented people with the skills and attributes that make for great teachers. There are attractive pathways and incentives for top graduates and professionals from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

Teacher education responds to the demands and feedback of employing principals and graduate teachers and focuses on the impact on students. Course providers and regulators maintain high standards that all student teachers must reach for registration. Universities and schools work in partnership to prepare graduate teachers for professional practice.

Diverse induction, career and development opportunities are readily available to commencing teachers. High performers are recognised and rewarded for strong performance and collaboration, including with attractive career development options such as supported routes into leadership roles.

What we will do

Attracting quality candidates into teaching is a priority. It demands that we raise the status and perception of the teaching profession, develop stronger induction and career plans for new entrants and more diverse pathways for people with the skills and attributes of a successful teacher. These skills include academic ability, subject knowledge and broader skills in communication and teamwork. Attributes such as a passion for learning and working with young people are also vital ingredients in successful teaching. We must also raise the standards of pre-service teacher education to ensure that our new teachers are up to the challenge of world class teaching.

Partnerships to improve teacher preparation

The Department is the largest employer of teaching graduates in Victoria, and the second largest nationally – a role that we need to leverage in future reform efforts.

We must play a pivotal role in the reform of teacher preparation, including through partnerships with:

- **the universities that educate new teachers** – making them more responsive to the workforce needs of our system by driving better alignment between teacher preparation and the day-to-day demands of the classroom
- **schools in all sectors** – ensuring high quality in-school learning experiences for pre-service teachers, stronger induction, and better feedback mechanisms to the universities on teacher preparation
- **other states and territories and the Commonwealth Government** – supporting national effort where it is to our benefit and will produce the best outcomes.

In Victoria we will press ahead with high priority reforms to meet the immediate needs of our students, teachers and school leaders and to raise standards and outcomes in Victorian schools. These reforms are outlined later in this chapter.

National reform effort to improve teacher preparation

A more targeted admissions process for teaching courses

Victoria welcomes the Commonwealth Government's commitment for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to develop guidelines for a more rigorous and targeted admission process that recognises the broad range of attributes and competencies needed for teaching.

Victoria will continue to work with the Commonwealth and AITSL to ensure that any new approach to selection provides the opportunity for all potential candidates to demonstrate their aptitude for teaching, including those seeking to enter a course directly from Year 12, from tertiary study or from employment. Admission processes should also reflect the broad range of skills and attributes that make for good teachers.

Victoria will work with universities to introduce a new approach to admissions if it builds and improves on our current practice and is backed by robust evidence.

National review of teaching courses

The Commonwealth Government has proposed to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to review teaching courses and provide advice to government on changes required to improve teacher training. Victoria welcomes this review, which will focus on pedagogical approaches, subject content and improving teaching practicum experiences.

In particular, high quality in-school placements are a critical component of teacher preparation. In Victoria, we need up to 25,000 placements each year – each requiring local management and negotiation. Strong relationships between schools and universities are central to improving the quality of placements. They are also vital in achieving greater alignment between course content and delivery and the skills and experiences graduates need for an effective transition into teaching. These are a focus of Victoria's priority reforms.

High priority Victorian reforms

Victorian review of teaching courses

Victoria will work collaboratively with the Commonwealth and other states and territories on the national effort to improve teacher preparation and will seek to shape and influence this work.

However, there are other issues that need consideration. Building on the national work, we will review the quality of Victorian teacher education courses to examine the effectiveness of:

- feedback provided to pre-service teachers on their progress throughout their course and on their readiness to graduate
- in-school placement arrangements and the characteristics of partnerships developed between providers, schools and school systems
- the 'work-readiness' of graduates, including the existing minimum standards in literacy and numeracy needed to achieve registration in Victoria

- the mechanisms for graduates and employing principals to provide feedback on courses and the responsiveness of providers to this feedback.

Our review will also enable the provision of easily accessible public information on the quality of individual teaching courses and rates of graduate employment by course.

Immediate action: We will review the quality of Victorian teacher education courses to examine how well they prepare graduate teachers and respond to the demands and feedback of employing principals and graduate teachers.

Strengthening the Victorian Institute of Teaching

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) plays a vital role in ensuring high standards in Victorian teacher education and for teachers entering the profession in Victoria.

VIT accredits Victorian teacher education programs against the national initial teacher education program standards and the national graduate teacher standards. It is also responsible for the registration of teachers entering the profession and for the regulation of all teachers working in Victorian schools.

Achieving accreditation as a teacher education provider, and registration as a teacher, should be challenging and reflect the capabilities required of a world class profession.



The 2008 King Review of VIT recommended a move to an expertise-based council to ensure VIT has the specialist strategic skills and expertise required to deliver its responsibilities. Given our reform agenda, it is timely to reconsider this recommendation.

Immediate action: We will develop options for making the membership of the VIT council expertise-based, as per the recommendations of the 2008 King Review.

Understanding what drives high-quality candidates

To make teaching a more attractive career to high calibre candidates we need to understand what motivates high performers. We know that many are seeking diverse experiences, progressive development opportunities, meaningful feedback, and recognition for high performance. We need to know what will tip the balance for high achievers between choosing teaching and other careers.

Immediate action: High-performing students and university graduates, new teachers and career changers will be asked to help us better understand how to make teaching an attractive career to people at different stages of study and career progression and the features of an early career experience that might increase participation and retention.

In the medium term this will inform the development of a Talent Strategy, including a graduate program for high-achievers and a five-year career planning framework to support all new entrants. The graduate program will offer outstanding performers a range of experiences in different schools and accelerated pathways into leadership or specialist teaching roles. The framework will support new entrants to identify and plan for specific career options, development opportunities and pathways that reflect their aspirations and interests and enable achievement of career goals.

Making entry to teaching simpler for strong candidates from diverse backgrounds

There are many talented individuals who qualify in other disciplines or pursue different careers before developing an interest in teaching. To ensure we attract the best candidates to teaching, we need to reduce the red tape that prevents high achievers from other disciplines from making the switch.

The Victorian Government has already committed funding to attract quality individuals through programs such as *Teach for Australia*. Victoria welcomes the Commonwealth's commitment to work with the states and territories promoting alternative career pathways into teaching.

Immediate action: We will provide more opportunities for quality graduates to enter teaching through accelerated and employment-based pathways, such as increasing the Victorian cohort of Teach for Australia.

Over the medium to long term, the Department will work with VIT to maximise flexibility in teacher registration and permission to teach for strong candidates across broader pathways. This will include differentiating entrance requirements relating to qualifications and experience, while establishing high standards for accreditation via all routes.

The Department will also investigate other options to increase flexibility in entry to the profession from other industries, such as the UK's Schools Direct Training Program. The Schools Direct scheme enables accredited schools to select, recruit and train teacher candidates. The school employs the trainee teacher while they are training and for at least one year following graduation. Under the program, some funding is provided by government to subsidise training while the trainee teacher's salary is provided by the school.

Establishing strong relationships and partnerships between schools and universities

We need to ensure that graduate teachers demonstrate the quality and work-readiness that our students deserve. Governments, universities and schools must share the responsibility for preparing and delivering high-quality graduates. Ensuring that teaching courses adequately prepare world class graduates relies upon effective and ongoing feedback from employers about their requirements and current gaps in teacher preparation, and ongoing effort on the part of universities to build links with schools.

Immediate action: New processes will be developed so that the feedback of graduates, supervising teachers and principals, along with evidence of impact on student outcomes, drives continual improvement of teacher education course design and delivery.

Various national and state bodies collect data in relation to the quality of teaching courses. However, qualitative information on individual courses is limited in scope and availability. We will work at the national and state level to gather and publish information on the quality of individual teaching courses, drawing on principal and pre-service teacher surveys and data on the impact on pre-service learning. The Department will work with all bodies in the sector to improve the quality of information available. This will make the performance of pre-service providers more transparent and enable more effective planning and greater responsiveness to the workforce needs of schools.

Immediate action: We will assess and publish information to make it easier to tell how well different universities prepare teachers.

The Department will establish 12 Teaching Academies of Professional Practice, training and incentives for supervising teachers, better induction, and more support for in-school placements in regional locations.

Each Academy will act as a centre of activity within a school cluster. It will consist of a leading school, a network of other schools and at least one university. The Academies will:

- give schools greater influence over the design and implementation of pre-service teacher education
- adopt an onsite learning approach based on a clinical training model

- foster a community of practice on pre-service education and continuing professional learning within and between academies
- build on the lessons of the current Victorian School Centres of Teaching Excellence.

These Academies will be comparable to teaching hospitals. Schools interested in participating will need to demonstrate their suitability and a clear commitment to nurturing pre-service teachers for the benefit of the broader Victorian school system.

Immediate action: We will work with schools and universities on partnership arrangements that will strengthen the connection between practical experience and other course content, including establishing 12 Teaching Academies of Professional Practice to improve the preparation of pre-service teachers.



3. Create a high performance profession: stimulate a culture of excellence and effective professional development

Victoria's vision

Excellent teaching is 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.

Principals develop and are accountable for high standards of performance in their teachers. Evaluation and progression decisions are rigorous and fair, and based on evidence including feedback from peers and students.

Teachers learn from each other and share good teaching practices through a range of opportunities at school and system levels. Observing and giving feedback on each other's practice is the norm. Teachers also engage in and adapt new research, and use data that shows how their students are progressing to help them learn better.

Professional excellence and collaboration builds an education system that learns from itself and in which the Department supports schools to identify, share and promote best practice.



What we will do

Lifting the performance of our current workforce is fundamental to improving student outcomes. Principals need to develop our teachers and make sure they are well inducted and have opportunities to build new knowledge and improved skills throughout their careers. They must also be accountable for the performance of their staff and set high expectations.

We need to build robust performance and development processes, collaborative teaching and reflection in all our schools. This represents a cultural and behavioural change process that will need to be led and modelled by school leaders and respected peers. There are many talented teachers working in Victorian schools who can share and build good practice and help lead and drive culture change alongside their principals.

The actions that follow are intended to impact on and benefit the vast majority of the current teacher workforce, consistent with the aim of system-wide improvement.

Good teaching practice should be defined and well understood

Raising the standards of teaching in our schools must be underpinned by a clear understanding of quality learning and teaching practice.

Every teacher in a school should be able to consistently answer the question, 'What teaching model is used here?'

This model should include a shared understanding of a school's approach to curriculum, assessment and reporting.

Immediate action: As per the commitment in Towards Victoria as a Learning Community, the Department will work with teachers, school leaders and education experts to establish a selection of evidence-based teaching practice models. These can be selected and used by schools to embed good practice and to define and publish expectations of quality teaching in their school.

Principals need support to improve teacher performance management and development

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.

A self-improving system is the key to success – and requires a strong culture of self-improvement in the leaders and staff of our schools.

We need schools to set high expectations, recognise and reward high-quality teaching, motivate continuous improvement, and respond effectively to performance which does not meet their expectations.

Teachers require a deep understanding of their own practice through self-assessment – to identify their strengths and areas for development, and improve student outcomes.

A key role of principals and their leadership teams is to ensure these self-assessments are rigorous and consistent across the school workforce.

This requires them to give teachers differentiated and evidence-based feedback, which supports continuous improvement in their classroom practice.

Principals need effective tools and processes, and the skills and confidence to use them, to identify when expectations have been exceeded, when they have been met, and when they have not.

We are providing \$1.7 million for a set of evidence-based performance assessment and feedback tools.

We will assist principals and school leaders to use a range of evidence to understand the impact of teaching practices on student learning, wellbeing and engagement, and to inform the learning and development needs of teachers themselves. Leaders and teachers will also be supported to employ evidence-based approaches to teaching and to continuously evaluate these approaches.

Teachers' performance must be assessed against the achievement of agreed outcomes. The performance framework will incorporate a balanced scorecard approach that will culminate in a yearly performance assessment, with ongoing feedback throughout the cycle. An example of a possible balanced scorecard approach is at Figure 1 on p.15.

A crucial input to these assessments will be principal, peer and student feedback. The value of feedback is already well understood by the profession as a means to improve practice and student outcomes.

Based on their balanced scorecard, every teacher will receive a differentiated performance rating.

The primary purpose of this assessment system is to drive evidence-based improvement. As a secondary purpose, performance ratings will be linked to principals' decisions on promotion, salary progression, and accelerated progression.

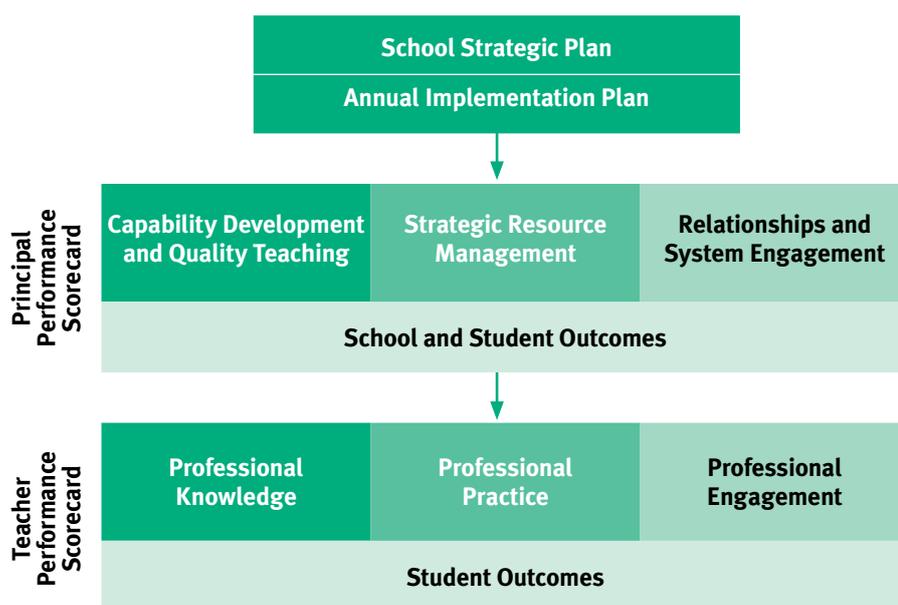
Following the practice commenced in 2013, annual guidance will be provided on the expected profile of performance in schools. If a school's assessment profile departs significantly from the guidance, the principal will be asked to demonstrate how this outcome is consistent with the school's level of student learning growth. Importantly, each school's profile will remain the principal's decision.

This moderation will support fair and consistent assessments across schools. It will help the Department to target appropriate support to schools on effective performance management, and to identify and share best practice. The final details of this moderation system will be determined following further consultation.

In the medium to long term, the Victorian Government has committed to examine further options to recognise excellence in teaching through reward for effort – in addition to current options such as accelerated progression. These future options will encompass teachers at the top of the salary scale.

Principals' success in establishing a culture of self-improvement will be one focus of a new performance system for principals that will take a broad view of school performance, in particular the student outcomes being achieved. This will be aligned with school reviews and is described further on p.18.

Figure 1 – example of a balanced scorecard approach



Immediate action: Principals will be trained and equipped to undertake effective performance and development with teachers, based on robust evidence of achievement against agreed goals and quality standards.

Immediate action: The Department will provide principals with the tools and powers that align their responsibility for performance and development with the capacity to manage the consequences, including devolving the power to dismiss teachers for sustained unsatisfactory performance.

Strengthening peer observation and feedback will drive professional improvement

Teachers’ observation of one another’s teaching and the provision of feedback must become routine practice in every school and every classroom.

Immediate action: Teachers will be trained in classroom observation, evaluation and feedback, supported by a peer observation framework and opportunities for inter-school observation.

Principals need support to create time for effective feedback and observation to occur as a core activity.

Over the medium to long term, the Department will support schools to do this by documenting and sharing strategies for more flexible use of time in the school calendar for professional learning and collaboration. For example, successful strategies might include rationalising meeting schedules to focus on professional learning rather than administration, altering the grouping of secondary students for learning to free up teacher time, and team teaching to support observation of practice and feedback.

All schools will be encouraged to make achieving world class performance a shared priority by running professional learning that focuses on whole school and system improvement, including a continued focus on the importance of effective curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting.

The Victorian Government has committed \$2.5 million to support teacher-led research, encouraging teachers to reflect upon and try out new ideas in collaboration with others to support student learning, and foster a culture of excellence to build the quality of the teaching profession.

Over the medium to long term, the Department will provide advice on how schools can undertake purposeful activities that drive improvements in practice and performance, either separately or in collaboration.

4. Provide strong direction and support: elevate the role of leadership at school and system levels

Victoria's vision

All principals effectively manage and develop the resources available to them, supported by a capable leadership team. Their leadership role and their team are highly valued.

Teachers with leadership potential are identified early and well prepared. New principals are mentored by experienced peers, and all principals are linked into supportive peer networks.

School leadership teams make active contributions to the school community and across the broader education system through peer review, the development of networks, and sharing practices that can benefit others.

Principal performance evaluation is aligned with school improvement goals, and is based on feedback from a variety of sources including peers.

Schools benefit from mixed leadership models that are appropriate to their context and from leadership expertise drawn from other sectors and industries.

What we will do

In Victoria's highly devolved system, principals must be the driving force behind improvements in teaching quality and performance. Greater effort will be devoted to preparing and supporting teachers with leadership potential and empowering principals by building their capacity through coaching, other professional development and sharing good practice from Victoria, Australia and internationally.

Victoria welcomes the Commonwealth's proposal to develop a new school leadership program. In addition, Victoria needs to continue building capacity, commitment to lead, high expectations for the workforce as well as applying the performance management and development system consistently and effectively.

Many of the actions that follow are deliberately specific and targeted, given the leadership cohort is limited in number and its needs vary depending on both school context and the individual leader's background.

Identifying and nurturing new school leaders is a priority

We know that leadership in the diverse and complex modern school environment can be challenging and that some principals feel unprepared for the demands of the position, particularly in their first principal appointment.

We cannot expect to develop the next generation of highly competent school leaders without establishing firm foundations.

High-potential teachers need to be identified early, and provided with leadership pathways that include targeted and personalised development and support. This should include opportunities to transition through roles that develop their leadership skills.

Immediate action: The Department will identify, track and support aspiring leaders to move into senior leadership positions. This includes a new program to develop the leadership capabilities of up to 400 emerging leaders over two years from 2014, and clear pathways for high-potential leaders to move into senior positions.

This initiative is intended to provide a steady supply of high-quality leaders for Victorian schools. It will provide a systematic approach to recruitment, development and support of high-potential leaders, starting with their identification and continuing throughout their careers.

The new *Impact Program* for emerging leaders, launched in May 2013, provides a comprehensive introduction to school leadership, building leadership skills and an understanding of the drivers of improved performance.



Year-level and curriculum area leaders, as well as professional learning and student wellbeing coordinators, lead aspects of teaching and learning across the school. These middle leaders set direction and lead and build teams in pursuit of improved student achievement and wellbeing. Their close proximity to the classroom makes them important agents of change. Like all school leaders, middle leaders require support to perform their role effectively. This initiative will provide a highly personalised learning experience and significant capacity-building opportunities to this important leadership group. It will include knowledge of how to sustain high quality teaching within a team, how to use data, appropriate management structures, systems and processes, and developing effective teams.

Immediate action: Over two years from 2014, provide a program to develop the capacity of up to 200 middle leaders in schools.

Developed in partnership with one or more universities, the *Principal Preparation Program* will become a

non-mandatory principal qualification and provide credit towards a postgraduate degree. The program will be tailored to the needs of individual participants and a rigorous selection process will ensure only the best candidates are selected to take part.

Immediate action: Provide up to 100 high-potential leaders, who are interested in becoming principals, with the opportunity to complete a comprehensive and personalised Principal Preparation Program over two years from 2014.

Existing school leaders need ongoing development and support

Current principals need targeted support that improves their capacity to meet school and system challenges and expectations. This support must respond to each principal's individual needs and be sensitive to the unique contexts in which they work. Support is best provided by peers and experienced principals who can build local capacity and reinvest their expertise to lift performance across the system.

Immediate actions over two years from 2014:

- *Provide sustained support for up to 260 new principals to meet the challenges and demands of the principalship*
- *Provide specialised coaching to improve the performance of up to 200 principals and 90 school leadership teams*
- *Provide training for up to 120 serving and retired principals to become coaches, so that they can work with and support current principals and*

help create a system that learns from itself

- *Provide support for up to 80 high-performing principals to develop the knowledge and skills to become system leaders, and prepare them to take on leadership roles in school networks and to provide assistance to other schools.*

Diversifying school leadership will strengthen the skills and management capability of leadership teams

As well as their primary accountability for student outcomes, principals must take overall responsibility for the efficient use of all the resources at their disposal. This requires capability not only in educational leadership but also in human resources, asset, financial and stakeholder management and other areas. As with any leadership role, principals can learn from leaders in other fields and benefit from the unique skills they offer in managing their multiple responsibilities.

In the medium to long-term, schools will be supported to diversify their leadership under the executive management of the principal, and to bring in effective leadership practices and experience from other settings.

Principals can be assisted in the tasks for which they are responsible by assembling a leadership team that has expertise in both educational and other relevant skills. Such skills could include finance, personnel, facilities and OH&S.

We will work with schools to enable the recruitment of persons with skills that enhance management capabilities at the school level.

Over the medium to long term, the Department will also investigate pathways and qualifications for entrants from different backgrounds to prepare for principalship. These changes will broaden the pool of talent available for senior leadership roles and enable non-teachers to enter the formal leadership structure within the school, with pay commensurate with current assistant principals where the work value is equal.

Principal recruitment and performance and development should be consistent with standard industry practice at the executive level. Key decisions regarding principal appointments and performance assessment should be expertise-based, with significant peer input, consistent with best practice in other industries.

We understand that there are certain professional capabilities that are required of all school principals but that some schools may require specific emphasis on particular skills over others.

Yet, there remains a conflict of interest in school staff participating in the selection panel for their future employer, the principal of their school.

We will establish a two-part principal selection process:

- Candidates will be assessed for suitability by a regionally-based panel of educators and leaders in other fields. This will ensure that candidates meet the quality criteria

expected by our system, including technical management skills. This approach also aligns with our focus on professional trust and the importance of peer to peer accountability.

- Short-listed candidates will then be provided to the school council, to determine the candidate with the best fit for that school community.

Immediate action: Principal selection will be transitioned to an expertise-based two-part process.

A new principal performance and development process

To support these priority actions we will implement a new performance and development system to drive improved performance by principals using a balanced scorecard approach.

Like the teacher performance and development framework, the balanced scorecard will be the focus of principals' self-assessment, stakeholder and peer feedback, and external assessments with which regions will ensure rigour and consistency in self-assessment across schools. Each principal will receive a differentiated performance rating.

The primary purpose of this system will be to clearly identify the level of performance and drive improvement. As a secondary purpose, the performance rating will be linked to departmental decisions on principals' promotion, salary progression and accelerated progression.

As with teacher assessments, annual guidance will be provided on the expected profile of performance among

schools in a region. If the assessments vary significantly from those expected, regions will be asked to demonstrate how this outcome is consistent with the level of student learning growth.

Victoria's level of in-school variation is high against comparable jurisdictions. We need to draw on the best available professional feedback and development practices to improve quality in classrooms and schools across the state.

One key role of principals will be to strengthen their active leadership of the professional learning culture in their schools, by ensuring meaningful feedback, appraisal and development for every staff member. These processes will be regular, precise and based on shared expectations of quality professional practice – such as reducing teacher isolation and building staff teams to progress all students without exception.

Immediate action: A new principal performance and development process will be introduced, including a 'balanced scorecard' approach to evaluation that will be linked to student outcomes and include peer appraisal and feedback from students and teachers.



5. Delivering and monitoring success

This statement sets out a challenging agenda for change. Successful implementation of this agenda will rely on collaboration between universities, principals, teachers, professional bodies and the Department. All those involved will need a strong understanding of their respective roles and the commitment to take collective responsibility for improvement. The range of actions and the complexity of effective delivery will require a robust framework for monitoring, implementation and evaluation. That framework must also make all partners accountable.

Immediate action: The Department will establish an annual summit with the Minister for Education and the Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession, Deans of Education and principal and teacher peak bodies as part of the review and accountability cycle.

This summit will initially focus on plans to improve teacher education programs, including steps taken to collect and respond to stakeholder feedback. It will provide an opportunity to discuss how this information is being used to enhance course offerings and outcomes, and the role of the Department in supporting these processes. In future its scope will expand to consider progress on other key elements of the agenda for change.

The Department will also work with key stakeholders to establish a set of ambitious but achievable indicators of success for key actions. This will require better and more specific collection of data across the board. We need to track the career paths, retention and success of pre-service teachers, to better profile the qualifications and skills of the current workforce and to quantify teachers' impact on student outcomes.

Ultimately, the key determinant of success will be achievement of our vision of world class outcomes for all Victorian students.



