



Australian Government



SMARTER SCHOOLS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

**IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY
LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS SCHOOL COMMUNITIES
LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

Victoria Annual Report for 2010 (April 2011)



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Section 1 – Overview of the Victoria Reform Agenda

Overview

This is Victoria's second Annual Report and reports on Victoria's challenging and ambitious reform agenda activity across all three schooling sectors under the Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNPs) between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2010. The Annual Report highlights Victoria's successes in 2010, and identifies areas of continued focus.

The Victorian education reform agenda

Victoria has adopted an integrated approach to the SSNPs which covers all three schooling sectors – government, Catholic and independent. Initiatives across the three SSNPs have been integrated as far as possible to ensure that school improvement is undertaken in a comprehensive and cohesive way across and within sectors.

Victoria's integrated approach:

- brings together multiple levels of activity, including at state, sector, region/diocesan, network and school levels;
- aims to maximise opportunities for the government, Catholic and independent sectors to work together and collaborate on reforms under the SSNPs, and particularly to share information, best practice and learning;
- provides flexibility for regions/dioceses, networks and schools to tailor their participation based on the local context and their needs;
- seeks to support specific cohorts of students who face additional challenges in improving educational outcomes, including indigenous students and students from English as a Second Language (ESL)/refugee backgrounds among others;
- seeks to draw on support and resources from outside the school gate including government agencies and non-government organisations, and partnerships with parents, communities and businesses; and
- draws on existing accountability arrangements for planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting as far as possible in order to minimise any additional burden on schools.

In line with this integrated approach, Victoria focuses on three key reform priorities which the 11 initiatives under the SSNPs contribute to. Not all sectors participate in all initiatives, but each sector contributes under each Reform Priority. The three Reform Priorities provide a clear conceptual framework for the aims of the SSNPs and target improved outcomes for teachers, students, and the broader community. They are:

1. Leadership and Teacher Capacity

The delivery of high leverage, high impact initiatives across the SSNPs requires specialist skills and knowledge, ranging from literacy and numeracy experts, and leadership, mentoring and coaching expertise, to assessment and data managers and community engagement experts. The Victorian Implementation Plan therefore includes a significant emphasis on workforce capability strategies at State and sector levels to ensure quality delivery at the network and school level.

Highlight activities for 2010 under this Reform Priority are:

- **In the government sector**, Victoria continues to demonstrate national leadership through Teach For Australia. Associates have completed their first year of teaching.
- **In the Catholic sector**, there has been strong participation in the Aspiring to Principalship Program and emerging evidence suggests that this has had a positive impact on applications for Principal positions; and
- **In the independent sector**, there is an unprecedented level of professional development for each of the National Partnership (NP) schools. Individual programs are being delivered to the schools in accordance with each school's needs.

2. Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs

The Victorian Implementation Plan (VIP) reflects the importance of all students being engaged in their learning. The delivery of programs that meet the needs and interests of students, enabling students to be active participants in their learning, and learning that is connected to the wider community outside the school, are critical in improving student outcomes across the NPs.

Highlight activities for 2010 under this Reform Priority are:

- **In the government sector**, in the Gippsland Region intensive coaching of teachers in a small number of schools has had significant impact at the school level. The coaching has focussed specifically on data analysis to identify individual student learning need and the use of specific content based learning tasks to support that need. Data collected for all schools involved has shown a shift in progress for all students involved, not only for the students at the lower end of progress but also at the higher end of ability levels;
- **In the Catholic school sector**, at the system level, work on development of a common Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework is underway with the aim of supporting and guiding schools to act in a timely manner in addressing student needs through improved monitoring of student performance information; and
- **In the independent sector**, the model implemented of providing regular visits to the NP schools has had a positive impact on schools and has encouraged teachers to recognise and respond to individual student learning needs. The strength of the professional relationships developed by the team of Advisors and the schools is a highlight of NP investment in the independent sector.

3. School-Community Engagement and Extended Schools

While many of the factors that impact on student improvement are outside the school gate, there is a growing body of evidence on the positive effects of collaborative approaches between schools and their communities. The NPs have a particular focus on engaging parents, communities and businesses in schools and students' learning.

Highlight activities for 2010 under this Reform Priority are:

- **In the government sector**, Extended School Hub activities at Sandhurst, Wyndham and Geelong North have commenced and planning for activity at the Frankston North Extended School Hub is underway. Local agencies are showing a strong interest in working with the Extended School Hubs;
- **In the Catholic sector**, the aim of the Family School Partnerships (FSP) initiative is for all 46

participating schools to implement a strategic approach to family school partnerships, whereby the role of families and community in enhancing student learning becomes core to school improvement. Family School Partnership Convenors (FSPCs) have been appointed across all the participating schools and are supported with strategic and structured professional learning opportunities at the local, regional and system level; and

- **In the independent sector**, employing Principal Advisors and Community Engagement Advisors to visit schools regularly has resulted in schools having unprecedented access to advice and support from Advisors experienced in developing greater school-community engagement.

The integrated approach taken by Victoria is reflected in the structure of this report, which reports on initiatives under the three Reform Priority areas.

Section 2 – Reform Priority 1: Leadership and Teacher Capacity

Overview – 1 January to 31 December 2010

Victorian overview

Victoria recognises that to achieve improved student outcomes, it is important to strengthen the capacity of the educators who deliver NP initiatives. A significant emphasis is placed on workforce capability strategies in the VIP in recognition of Victoria's challenging and ambitious reform agenda.

Victoria's emphasis on leadership and teacher capacity reform is evident across all three sectors. Activities to support and develop Principals and aspiring Principals have been well subscribed, and coaches have been deployed to assist teachers improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to ensure the sustainability of improvements. Victoria's leadership in the government sector's *Teach for Australia* program is complemented by other innovative pilots in the Catholic and independent sectors which promote career change and pathways, supporting new, high-achieving entrants to the workforce.

In Victoria Reform Priority 1 covers the following Initiatives:

- [Initiative 1: Building leadership capacity \(coaching, professional learning\)](#)
- [Initiative 2a: Building teacher capacity \(in-school support/coaches\)](#)
- [Initiative 2b: Building teacher capacity \(professional learning opportunities\)](#)
- [Initiative 3: Improve school access to high quality teachers](#)
- [Initiative 4: National Standards Subgroup](#)
- [Initiative 5: Rewarding excellence – Teacher Performance Pay](#)
- [Initiative 6: Pathways into Teaching](#)
- [Initiative 7: Wider Workforce Trials](#)

Overview of Progress

[Initiative 1: Building leadership capacity \(coaching, professional learning\)](#)

Government sector

In the government sector a range of professional learning programs are being delivered through the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership (BIEL). Teachers and leaders in NP schools are given priority to participate in leadership coaching and professional learning programs offered by the BIEL to build their leadership capacity.

An NP School Principals' Forum held in June 2010 built on Principals' understanding of literacy and numeracy improvement targets, shared best practice, and raised awareness of strategies to improve student literacy and numeracy outcomes. Forum resources, including presentations and digital stories, are available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/litnum/secretariat/forum.htm>.

The Forum also presented the *Literacy and Numeracy 6 – 18 Month Strategy*, which was developed to support regions, Principals and school leaders to achieve significant improvement in student literacy and numeracy outcomes. NP schools have been using the Strategy, which

provides a six term schedule focused on assessment for learning and whole school planning, throughout 2010.

The *Principal Preparation Program* was launched in May 2010. The program funds a total of 40 six-month internships for high potential Principal aspirants over three years. The 18 interns from the first cohort have now completed their placements and internal evaluation data indicates that the interns have rated the program 4.63 out of 5 in terms of overall effectiveness. Another 19 Principal aspirants will participate in this program in 2011 as part of the next cohort.

In addition, a range of targeted programs are being implemented which have been designed to build leadership capacity for NP schools, including:

- Appointment of Principal coaches;
- Use of critical friends and literacy and numeracy consultants;
- Provision of training for Literacy and Numeracy leaders;
- Completion of Instructional Rounds and Learning Walks, focusing on classroom observation and feedback;
- Professional learning programs focused on instructional leadership; and
- Additional leadership support through the network structure.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic school sector leadership and teacher capacity reform is being delivered through the extension and provision of a range of leadership initiatives, professional learning opportunities, sponsored study and collaborative partnerships with University partners. These are underpinned by tri-level partnerships between the education system, levels within the system and Catholic school communities.

The Catholic sector has implemented a number of reform initiatives to build the capacity of teachers and leaders to initiate broad strategic school improvement, to drive student performance and to sustain improvement.

Progress and impact includes:

- Further implementation of the Leadership Coaching Strategy: during early 2010 the focus of the Leadership Coaching Strategy was on promoting the benefits of leadership coaching and training coaches. Later in 2010 in-school coaching was provided to over 100 leaders. Through the targeted coaching sessions with accredited coaches leaders reflected on their own leadership capability, identified practical actions to be taken and contributed to important decisions about school improvement. Their skill and sophistication in harnessing the capacity of others to facilitate improvement in student outcomes was evident to system authorities and support personnel.
- 88 aspiring Principals have engaged in the Aspiring to Principalship Program, with evidence emerging of the program's positive impact on applications for Principal positions. Establishing a Victoria-wide initiative based on a shared leadership framework has provided increased opportunities for aspirants in each diocese and highlighted the important role of current Principals in succession planning and encouraging aspirants in their journey to Principalship.
 - 75 participants completed the first year of the program and received two rounds of 360 degree leadership capability data which supported the implementation of a personalised leadership development plan. There was a significant increase in the cohort capability

data over the 9 month period. By the end of 2010 participants had a strengthened capacity to articulate their leadership growth and challenges.

- 11 senior school leaders who had previously completed a two year initial program of the Aspiring to Principalship completed a newly developed Crucial Quarter program in 2010 which focuses on preparing for the first 90 days of Principalship. Participants were supported by 11 Partner Principals in the action learning phase of the program. Each senior leader has now developed a plan for transition into a Principalship role. Participant evaluations indicate an increased understanding of the importance of transition planning and a deeper understanding of the role of Principal. Partner Principals indicated that their participation had been a valuable opportunity to further reflect on their own Principal role.
- Provision of sponsored study opportunities for leaders, aspiring leaders and key staff to participate in postgraduate study: 14 staff from low SES school communities completed Units towards a Masters in Wellbeing for Inclusive Schooling at Australian Catholic University (ACU) and 89 completed Units towards a Masters in Educational Leadership at ACU or the University of Melbourne. The interest in Masters programs increased significantly with the numbers applying for sponsored study at the end of 2010 exceeding expectations and incorporating a broader range of staff (emerging leaders through to Principals).

Independent sector

The involvement of the four experienced Principal Advisors and four Ambassadors (former independent school Principals) has been a key reform activity bringing significant impact. NP leaders have valued Principal Advisors' and Ambassadors' personal assistance in helping to create a stronger learning culture among teaching staff, evident from the increased demand for their involvement during the year. The Principal Advisors will gradually withdraw direct leadership of initiatives at the school level, encouraging and supporting Principals to drive initiatives and support sustainable change.

The type of in-school coaching provided by the Principal Advisors depended on the needs of individual Principals and varied considerably from school to school. Coaching included strategic planning, managing change, developing a collaborative learning community, and strategies to improve student learning outcomes.

School leaders from the NP schools in the independent sector attended Professional Learning programs and briefings offered by the Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) Development Centre during 2010 and a Principals' Forum on Staff Appraisal. Four of the new Principals in NP schools attended a series of seminars to assist them in their first year of Principalship.

Principals of NP schools were offered funding to enable their schools' participation in LEAD, a school community opinion survey. Follow up support to analyse and use the data for school improvement was provided by ISV and Principal Advisors.

Evidence suggests that school leaders in NP schools are acquiring greater depth of understanding of the complexities of their role as drivers of educational improvement and are developing skills to address school improvement. Principals and leaders are driving new programs introduced by the Principal Advisors, including e5, Principals of Learning and Teaching (POLT), the Evidence Based Observation Tool and Coaching, and analysis of NAPLAN results and school assessment data to

inform improved teaching practice.

The results of the most effective strategies were seen in those schools that had the greatest need for change, regardless of their geographical location. Principal Advisors have ensured that they visited the rural schools as frequently as metropolitan schools. Consistent email and phone contact with regional schools has also been consistent with metropolitan schools. The range and consistency of contact has had a positive effect on the creation of strong learning cultures in NP schools.

[Initiative 2a: Building teacher capacity \(in-school support/coaches\)](#)

Government sector

In the government sector a range of programs are being delivered to ensure high quality in-school support for teachers in NP schools.

In 2010 Primary Mathematics Specialists were appointed, participated in professional learning programs in February and May 2010, and worked across 27 NP primary schools. The external evaluation has indicated that almost every aspect of the program has been successful in building teacher capacity and improving student learning outcomes in mathematics.

Language Support Coordinators were recruited across Victoria in 2010 to improve student speaking and listening skills in targeted schools. They have provided support and advice to schools and teachers to ensure that knowledge and understanding about oral language is embedded in schools' instructional practice and sustained beyond the timeframe of this activity. System-level representatives and coordinators met periodically to share approaches and possible issues associated with the implementation of the initiative. Schools are positive about the benefits of this initiative in building teacher capacity and improving student learning.

A range of targeted in-school support programs designed to build teacher capacity in NP schools are being implemented across Victoria. Literacy, numeracy, instructional, ICT and small school coaches have been appointed to work with individual teachers or teams. To ensure sustainability, these coaches were primarily identified from within the school or region, and professional learning was provided to the coaches to assist them in performing their role.

Many coaches accessed professional learning through the BIEL coach training programs. The Numeracy and Instructional Coach Training programs commenced in November 2009 and three Literacy Coach Training programs began in March, April and July 2010. There were 213 participants across the three coach training programs. The programs included a series of full day workshops, online learning communities and individual school visits by the providers. Participants have gained greater confidence in their roles as coaches as they support colleagues in their schools and build teacher capacity to improve student outcomes.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic school sector this initiative focuses on strengthening the capacity of teachers to engage with the particular learning and development needs of their school community. Progress and impact includes:

- School-based (internal) and external coaches are working alongside Principals, leadership teams, school Literacy and Numeracy Leaders and classroom teachers in the Literacy and Numeracy NP schools. 20 trained external Literacy and Numeracy coaches have been appointed and deployed to support in-school professional learning. Reports from Principals of participating schools suggest the greatest impacts have been on teacher practice, particularly in the use of evidence based approaches; focussed planning to meet students' needs; and increased teacher confidence.
- The expansion of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) strategy involving the engagement of 10 low SES school communities (2,485 students, 295 staff and 1,833 families). Key school staff participated in intensive professional learning and received coaching support from a university mentor. Early impact assessments demonstrate that these school communities have developed a greater understanding of the common language of SEL, enhancing their capacity to embed a whole school approach to social and emotional learning as reflected in their Annual Action Plans.

Independent sector

In July 2010 two additional Literacy/Numeracy Advisors and three additional Student Wellbeing/Community Engagement Advisors were employed, giving a total of seven Senior Advisors as well as four Principal Advisors for the NP schools. Teams of three, comprising a Principal Advisor, a Literacy/Numeracy Advisor and a Student Wellbeing/Community Engagement Advisor, visited schools in their Cluster on a regular basis to provide in-school support for teachers in creating positive learning environments in the classroom; developing collaborative practices; collecting and analysing assessment data to inform teaching practice; implementing strategies for improved student literacy and numeracy outcomes; and curriculum development.

The support provided by the Advisors varied according to the needs of the teachers in individual schools. The Advisors provided whole school staff presentations and topics included: Building Effective Learning Communities; Principles of Learning and Teaching (POLT); planning the school's strategic learning intent; monitoring the National Curriculum; training in the use of the Evidence Based Observation Tool; analysing NAPLAN and other assessment data; using Wikis; building successful teams; using Xpert (a computer program to track student performance); as well as groupwork in smaller teams of teachers in subject areas or year levels. Topics with these groups included planning Inquiry based learning units, ICT programs/software training and differentiating learning in the classroom.

Additional consultants were engaged for specialist in-school professional learning activities for teachers, including: *Accelerated Literacy*; African Languages; the *Jigsaw* student wellbeing program; *Teaching Handwriting and Spelling Skills* (THRASS) training; *Reading Comprehension Strategies*; numeracy workshops; supporting students with autism and Aspergers Syndrome; *ICT Innovations*; and interactive whiteboard training.

The regular presence of the Advisors in the schools has led to positive professional relationships and an observable commitment to improving teaching practice and student learning outcomes. The goal is to create a sustainable momentum for reform of teaching and learning practice, so that best practice will be led by the teachers in the schools themselves after the conclusion of the NP program.

Professional learning tailored to teachers' context and development was the most effective

strategy, regardless of geographical location. Providing regular coaching support was instrumental in developing motivation, confidence and effective teaching practice.

[Initiative 2b: Building teacher capacity \(professional learning opportunities\)](#)

Government sector

In the government sector professional learning opportunities are being provided to build the capacity of teachers to assess student learning and deliver quality classroom instruction in literacy and numeracy that supports the progress of all students.

The *Preliminary Training and Induction for New and Beginning Teachers* program supports the needs of first year teachers and facilitates the establishment of collaborative networks whereby beginning teachers engage in reflective practice and support each other through their first year of teaching and beyond. One hundred and twenty-two beginning teachers and mentors from NP and rural schools attended the first two-day workshop which was held in four locations across Victoria in August and early September 2010. Participants have also engaged in online discussions and workshops to share ideas, concerns and strategies.

A trial is being undertaken to expand literacy and numeracy professional learning programs by developing materials to be delivered through webcasting, online interactive learning and online learning modules. Coaches and consultants have nominated teachers and classes that demonstrate best practice to be filmed. Filmed scenes include student conferences, teacher interviews and interviews with coaches. The first online learning module, on independent reading and conferring, is currently in the final stages of production, and planning for the first webcasting session, on the topic of persuasive writing, has begun.

A range of targeted professional learning programs designed to build teacher capacity in NP schools have been provided at the regional level, including:

- regional literacy and numeracy sessions;
- professional learning teams;
- peer observation programs; and
- a range of other Department or externally designed professional learning programs, targeted to individual school and/or network need.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic sector extensive professional learning opportunities were designed to incorporate a mixture of differentiated workshops and consultancy support as well as intensive off-site, in-school and cluster based activities to build on leader and teacher professional skills. Progress and impact includes:

- There has been a high level of participation in multi-layered professional learning opportunities by school leaders and teachers. As a result leaders and teachers have gained strengthened understanding of evidence-based school improvement and the ability to monitor student achievement through the use of multiple data sets including school improvement survey data and NAPLAN. Leaders and teachers have also developed deeper disciplinary knowledge; pedagogical and content knowledge; and assessment expertise especially in formative assessment;

- Teachers participated in a range of off-site programs including: *Western Australian First Steps - Literacy and Numeracy*; *Extending Mathematical Understanding*; *Developing Oral Language Skills*; and *Using Assessment Data to Inform Teaching and Learning*;
- Significant emphasis has been placed on building each school's internal professional learning team structure to ensure sustainable improvement for leaders and teachers; and
- A coordinated approach to school improvement and professional learning within a whole-school context has been extended through the *Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture* initiative. This initiative has gathered momentum with a further nine schools receiving accreditation and 47 schools working towards accreditation. A group of eight accredited schools were also identified as 'Companion' schools to support each other in working beyond accreditation level and developing resources to assist other schools working towards accreditation.

Independent sector

More than 160 teachers from the NP schools attended professional learning programs outside their schools throughout the year. Demand from regional school teachers to attend professional learning programs in the metropolitan area has increased as a result of the Advisors' encouragement and financial support from the NPs Program.

There were some 14 programs offered at the ISV Development Centre in Literacy, Numeracy and ESL. Teachers from NP schools also participated in specific external training programs offered by the Principal and Senior Advisors, including *Cognitive Coaching*, e5 training, the *Evidence Based Observation Tool* and *Indigenous Cultural Awareness*.

Teachers were also supported to attend external programs such as: *Engaging Boys in Literacy*; *Extending Mathematical Understanding* training at the Australian Catholic University; *Identification of Students at Risk*; and the *National Accelerated Literacy Program*.

This initiative has been most effective when teams of teachers from a school attended together, and were able to share the experience and discuss how the concepts and strategies presented could be best implemented in their school. Additional benefit was observed when the Senior Advisors were present at the Professional Learning programs along with the teachers from their Cluster school based teams to provide further advice to teachers. The Advisors were then able to provide further insights and advice to teachers about how the newly acquired knowledge and strategies could be used to the greatest long term benefit of the students in their school. The Advisors were also able to coach the teachers in the implementation of the new strategies.

Initiative 3: Improve school access to high quality teachers

Government sector

Victoria continues to provide national leadership of the Teach for Australia program. The first cohort of Teach for Australia Associates completed intensive teacher training during 2010 and have completed the first year of their two-year contracts with the Department. Associates are working in educationally disadvantaged schools that are able to provide a supportive environment. Associates, host schools and in-school mentors have been selected for the second cohort of graduates, and new mentors have completed a mentor training program.

Informal feedback from participating Principals indicates that the current Associates are highly valued members of the teaching staff in schools and are working towards becoming highly effective teachers. Feedback from Principals has also indicated that discussion around effective pedagogy and the inclusion of current research around the teaching and learning process from Associates and educational advisers has been beneficial in further developing reflective practices in colleagues. The leadership capacity of a number of the Associates has been recognised in some of the schools as Associates have been successful in applying for leadership positions within schools.

Seven School Centres for Teaching Excellence have been established to reconceptualise the way in which pre-service teacher education is delivered and experienced through the development of strong school-university partnerships. The Centres comprise clusters of schools working with universities and Regional Offices in metropolitan, provincial city and rural locations. Partnership teams from each centre are participating in development sessions with special advisers to refine their Centre Implementation Plans. The Plans reflect the design principles of the project including school-university partnerships and an immersion approach to school-based teacher education. In an investigative approach to the project, each Centre is testing its own model of school-based teacher education within a statewide framework. A high-level forum in mid-May 2011 will enable teams from each Centre to share their plans and experiences and to contribute to the production of materials for dissemination across the state.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic sector two pilot projects with the Australian Catholic University are in progress. These provide opportunities for schools, the Catholic education system, and universities to explore innovative collaborative partnerships to improve both pre-service education and the quality of teaching within schools. Progress and impact includes:

- The *Partnerships in Learning: Enhancing Quality Teaching* project aims to enable pre-service teachers to have extended professional practice in low SES school communities over a period of two years, focusing on school community partnerships and enhanced student learning. The consultation and planning phase for this pilot was completed in 2010 involving preliminary data collection from 10 low SES school communities who have helped shape the evaluation tools to be used during the pilot in 2011 – 2012.
- The *Bachelor of Education Multi-Modal project* was established in collaboration with 7 partner schools. Sixteen pre-service teachers in the first year of their degree were placed with school teams of four experienced teachers at each school site. By the end of 2010 there had been a strong relationship established between the sector, ACU and the schools. Four professional learning seminars clarified the professional learning needs and roles of each key stakeholder. Pre-service teachers described a strong engagement with their school communities and demonstrated a high level of confidence in their potential as teachers. Established teachers working with them articulated the benefits that had been achieved through a renewed focus on their own pedagogy whilst working with the pre-service teachers. There was widespread interest from other schools seeking involvement for 2011.

Initiative 4: National Standards Subgroup

Government sector

At its 6 November 2009 meeting the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) agreed that the National Standards Subgroup (NSS) would progressively pass over its responsibilities as the relevant committees are established by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). All NSS responsibilities were transferred to AITSL by 30 June 2010 and reported on in the 2010 Progress Report, except for the National Professional Standards for Teachers (the Teacher Standards). The Teacher Standards were handed over to AITSL after 30 June 2010, and were endorsed by MCEECDYA in December 2010 and publicly released on 9 February 2011. AITSL's work plan for 2011 includes work to: elaborate and exemplify the Teacher Standards; support implementation by jurisdictions and sectors; and to collate and develop support resources. The work of the National Standards Subgroup is complete.

Initiative 5: Rewarding excellence – Teacher Performance Pay

Government sector

Victoria's trial of two models of school-based and teacher-based rewards in government schools through the Rewarding Teaching Excellence program began in 2010. School participation in trialling the models will allow the Department to test and refine the models and gather evidence of their impact on teaching practice, school culture and student learning outcomes. This initiative is on track, although on a smaller scale than originally planned because the magnitude of change required to current performance and development processes in schools presented a more significant challenge than anticipated. Progress includes:

- Participating schools in both reward models have received financial grants to cover costs associated with the trial. Trial schools also have access to professional learning, Regional Network Leader support and resources on the Sharing Centre site to support their involvement in the trial;
- Following stakeholder consultations, the Teacher Rewards and School Rewards guidelines have been finalised and submitted to all participating schools; and
- Guidelines have been finalised for the panels that will be judging and differentiating teacher quality to assist them in assessing performance and allocating teacher rewards.

Initiative 6: Pathways into Teaching

Government sector

The Career Change Program enables suitably qualified professionals with relevant experience to undertake teacher education while employed as supervised trainee teachers over a two-year traineeship period. Trainees in the 2010 and 2011 cohorts have been recruited to teach in hard-to-staff subject areas, predominantly technology studies, mathematics and science. The teacher education course associated with this program, provided by Victoria University, includes mentoring support at the school level with face-to-face and remote delivery and has been tailored to the needs of the target recruitment group. This program is a prototype in employment based training pathways into teaching in Australia and has been recognised nationally and internationally for its

innovation and effectiveness.

The Career Convert Program enables professionals with relevant experience in industries other than education to undertake an approved course of pre-service education in hard to staff subject areas. The program was developed in partnership with the University of Ballarat. The blended learning model comprises live-in intensive periods and web based delivery including instructional materials, interactive activities, Skype and discussion group activities.

Two programs targeting graduates have been developed to meet subject and geographical areas of need:

- The *Graduate Pathways* program provides outstanding eligible graduates with scholarships to complete a teaching qualification focussing on a subject area of need and additional benefits to attract recipients to accept employment in a government priority school. Fifty scholarships were awarded in the first round of the program in 2010. The second round in 2011 has seen 40 scholarship recipients confirmed and payments to these recipients completed.
- The *Incentives for Extended Service in Priority Schools for Graduates* provides financial rewards, conditional on performance, to graduate teachers appointed to designated positions in priority schools for each year of their continuous employment. This initiative aims to increase graduate teacher attraction and retention and add stability to priority school staffing. The first round of 40 participants has been identified and the first incentive payments are scheduled to be made in the first half of 2011.

Catholic sector

The Catholic sector has implemented two strategies to provide a tailored pathway for Indigenous workers to be supported whilst they are upgrading their qualifications and undertaking teacher education. These are *Career Enhancement Pathways for Indigenous Education Workers* and *Teaching Sponsorships for Indigenous Students*. Progress and impact includes:

- Successful completion by the seven sponsored students, of their first year of tertiary studies and confirmation of enrolment for 2011;
- The Life Academic Coach's role has provided valuable ongoing academic and personal support to ensure ongoing success for those involved in the teaching sponsorships; and
- There has been a deliberate focus on raising awareness of the study opportunities and support available for Koorie Education Workers and students.

Initiative 7: Wider Workforce Trials

Government sector

The Wider Workforce Field Trials were conducted in 34 primary, secondary and special schools during 2010 and investigated innovative and sustainable models of workforce organisation with the potential to increase workforce capacity and improve student outcomes. Field trial activity focussed on exploring ways to: expand the workforce through use of paraprofessionals; change the roles of Education Support staff to complement and/or supplement the work of teachers; and build workforce capacity of Education Support staff to support teachers and teaching outcomes. Although all of the field trials examined the same wider workforce research question, each school/cluster established a project to respond to the local needs of their students, school

community and school workforce.

Evaluation processes have already indicated successful deployment practices including:

- Identification of a wider range of non-teaching duties currently performed by teachers that can be more efficiently completed by education support personnel;
- Team-based teaching approaches in flexible learning environments supporting increased personalised teaching and learning; and
- Use of local community members (including parents) within the school's workforce to improve the community's capacity to support learning in the home and wider community contexts.

Next steps will include the development of a discussion paper about the role of teachers, education support staff and para-professionals in a wider workforce. There are no further wider workforce field trials planned at this stage.

2010 Key highlights

Government sector

- Twelve of the 18 interns in the Principal Preparation Program have been promoted during the program period. Five have been appointed to substantive Principal positions, two to Acting Principal positions, four to Assistant Principal positions, and one to a Leading Teacher position. All host Principals have indicated that they would perform the role again.
- Teach For Australia associates have completed their first year of teaching of a two year program. Five of the current 13 participating schools have requested additional Associates for the 2011 school year. This achievement is particularly significant because while most Associates were supernumerary, the five schools requesting additional Associates are sourcing their salaries internally.
- The first intake of 31 trainees in the Career Change Program have completed their first year of study and the second intake of 30 trainees were recruited in late 2010 and have completed their summer school training.
- 22 Career Convert scholarships were accepted. All scholarship holders have completed the first semester of the program and are currently in their final semester with all 22 due to complete in May 2011. This will add an additional 22 potential applicants to the pool of maths or science vacancies across the state.

Catholic sector

- An emphasis has been placed on multiple strategies around coaching, including a focus on both Leadership Coaching and Literacy/Numeracy/Learning coaches working with classroom teachers, leadership teams and Principals.
- There has been a focus on pre-service and postgraduate studies for teachers in the Catholic sector. Two pilot projects have been established around pre-service teacher education and its connection with quality teaching within schools. These pilots involve a partnership between the Catholic education system, the Australian Catholic University, and schools. There has also been increased interest in the sponsored postgraduate study opportunities by leaders, aspiring leaders and key staff; and
- There has been strong participation in the Aspiring to Principalship Program and emerging

evidence that this has had a positive impact on applications for Principal positions.

Independent sector

- In-school coaching/mentoring of leaders and teachers by Principal Advisors, Senior Advisors and Ambassadors: The model introduced in the independent sector of providing regular visits to NP schools has created a positive impact on school leaders and teachers. Principals and teachers in regional schools have had access to unprecedented levels of in-school professional learning opportunities and support to assist them plan and implement strategies to improve learning outcomes for students. There has been a strong demand from school leaders and teachers for continued, regular coaching/mentoring visits from NP Advisors. Principals and teachers in schools with significant non-English speaking family backgrounds have been supported to develop literacy focused programs and community engagement programs. Strong, on-going professional relationships between the school and the NP Cluster team resulted in a shared commitment to develop culturally appropriate programs in schools.
- External Professional Learning Opportunities: Providing support for Principals and teachers from NP schools has opened up professional learning opportunities that were previously inaccessible to many schools, particularly those in regional Victoria. Schools have been funded for their leaders and teachers to attend external programs and Advisors and external consultants have presented workshops in each of the NP schools during the year. This is an unprecedented level of professional development for each of the schools, with individual programs being delivered to the schools depending on the school's needs.
- Evidence Based Observation (EBO) Tool and Coaching: The EBO Tool was developed by researchers in New Zealand and used as part of the Te Kotahitanga project to enable teachers to access qualitative data to address any significant issues and improve their practice. Teachers and students are observed in a class setting by trained, volunteer peers against a well researched rubric and after the lesson there is structured feedback using the observer's documentation as the basis of discussion. Observers record the teacher's methodologies and modes of instruction, classroom organisation, resources, their relationships with students, and the students' level of engagement and depth of learning. Twenty-six Principals and teachers from eleven schools have undertaken training and are beginning to introduce the EBO Tool. Introduction of the EBO Tool in a school has the consequential benefit of de-privatising classrooms and opening them up for colleagues to observe and share good practice. Evidence suggests that teachers in participating schools are more prepared to collaborate and share classroom experiences, thereby learning from their colleagues.

Cross sector collaboration

Government sector

Victoria is developing the English as a Second Language (ESL) Proficiency Assessment Tool to enable classroom teachers to better assess student language proficiency and provide feedback for teaching and learning. A reference group has been established for this cross-sectoral project, with representation from all Victorian education sectors. A contractor has been selected to develop the design framework for the assessment toolkit and to outline design options. The cross-sectoral reference group, together with representatives from the NSW Department of Education and

Training, have met with the contractor in 2010 to develop an Australian Research Council Linkages Proposal.

The ACT has placed five Victorian Teach For Australia associates and the Victorian Catholic sector has placed three associates.

Catholic sector

The Catholic sector is participating in the ESL Proficiency Assessment Tool cross-sectoral project, and is continuing to engage in informal cross-sectoral networking.

Independent sector

Principal Advisors and Senior Advisors have made use of proven programs developed in other sectors to assist schools in the ~~independent~~-independent sector to improve teaching practice. Examples of these programs include:

- e5; and
- Principles of Learning and Teaching (POLT).

Teachers from the independent sector were supported to attend external professional learning programs offered to all teachers in Victoria, including:

- *Visible Learning*;
- *Cognitive Coaching*; and
- The ISV Development Centre offers its extensive suite of professional development programs to teachers in all sectors.

The independent sector is participating in the ESL Proficiency Assessment Tool cross-sectoral project.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (if applicable)

Government sector

Support for indigenous students has included professional learning and the employment of indigenous coaches and Koorie Education Support Officers to support school staff to develop and implement robust Individual Education Plans and provide better teaching and learning outcomes for indigenous students. *Reading Recovery* professional learning and cultural awareness training has assisted teachers to better support indigenous students, and regional Wannik meetings have facilitated the sharing of best practice and the exploration of challenges in indigenous education.

Secondary schools within the Mildura and Robinvale areas with high numbers of indigenous students have been identified for Teach For Australia associates to be placed in them for the first time in 2011.

The Indigenous *Education Workers Career Enhancement* program and the Indigenous Scholarships program both aim to increase the supply of indigenous teachers. Priorities and selection criteria have been drafted and permission given by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for exemption from the Equal Opportunity Act for the advertisement of these scholarships for Indigenous applicants only. Selection has commenced and candidates are expected to be

selected by June 2011.

The *Indigenous Education Workers Career Enhancement* program is modelled on the *Career Change Program* and provides a career enhancement pathway for indigenous school leavers, education workers or career changers to upgrade and complete their academic qualifications, and enter and complete a teacher education course. Program planning has been carried out through 2010 to enable commencement in 2011. This program will enable 15 indigenous people to become fully qualified teachers at the completion of their courses.

Indigenous Scholarships are being provided to outstanding candidates who are enrolled in a pre-service education course. Ongoing consultation has been undertaken to help identify the target group within the workforce.

Catholic sector

Through the *Career Enhancement Pathways for Indigenous Education Workers* Koorie Education Workers have deepened their cultural awareness and have grown in confidence in their ability to guide teacher knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Empowering the Koorie Education Workers is providing early indications of improved student engagement (P-12) in learning.

Independent sector

Worawa Aboriginal College is a Low SES NP school that receives regular visits and support from NP Advisors. The Principal has been assisted by the Principal Advisor in planning school improvement and developing staff professional learning programs. The Principal attended the National Partnerships Principals' Forum on Staff Appraisal.

In-school support for all teachers has included training in using the Brigance assessment tools, presentation of the *Jigsaw* student wellbeing program as well as coaching of Learning Centre groups and individuals. External professional learning opportunities supported for Worawa teachers included Accelerated Literacy training and a visit to Woodville High School, South Australia, to observe the *Wiltja* program.

A Communities Forum, jointly sponsored by the SSNPs and the Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service, was held at Worawa for parents, staff and community members to discuss issues of joint concern, including educational vision, policies and practices, safety and pastoral care, and to provide mutual support.

In other schools an indigenous consultant was engaged to present an *Indigenous Cultural Awareness* program at the ISV Development Centre and he has also supported Advisors in their work with schools to address the specific needs of Indigenous students. Assistance was provided to develop individual learning plans for indigenous students in NP schools.

Support for Other Cohorts (if applicable)

Government sector

Support for other cohorts has included professional learning to assist leaders and teachers to develop inclusive approaches in their schools and encourage positive behaviours, particularly in schools with high numbers of at-risk students. Additionally, cultural awareness training, professional learning for ESL teachers, ESL training for teachers of ESL students in mainstream classes and the employment of ESL transition teachers are some of the ways regions are supporting refugees and other ESL students.

To address the shortage of qualified Special Education teachers, Special Education Scholarships will enable current and graduating teachers to complete an approved teaching qualification in special education. 79 current teachers have been awarded scholarships for study commencing in 2011. Recipients were drawn from a diverse applicant pool and will study in a range of specialities. A further 25 scholarships for teachers not currently in the profession will be allocated by June 2011.

Catholic sector

The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative supports school communities to implement a whole school approach to SEL, making explicit links between social and emotional learning and student engagement in learning. Through school improvement plans, schools are articulating a strong focus on creating welcoming communities for all students, including those from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Independent sector

There are some 14 NP schools in the independent sector that have significant numbers of parents with a non-English speaking background. This creates additional learning complexities for this cohort of students and Advisors are supporting schools to introduce literacy programs to address these challenges. Programs included training in literacy programs, ESL strategies, analysing PAT, TORCH and NAPLAN data and developing individual learning plans. These programs have increased teachers' capacity to engage students and cater for individual differences. Student Wellbeing & Community Engagement Advisors work with the schools to plan Homework Clubs and additional programs to support out of school hours engagement.

Advisors have supported leaders and teachers in schools with cohorts of students whose education has been disrupted and whose retention at school is problematic. Advisors have provided in-house coaching and funded teachers to take advantage of external professional learning opportunities at the ISV Development Centre.

Teachers in NP schools have accessed specialist programs at the ISV Development Centre for students with special needs, including *Reading Recovery* training, workshops for teachers of students with disabilities, a seminar for teachers of students with autism and Aspergers Syndrome, and training in using ICT to support curriculum outcomes for students with disabilities.

Case Study

Government sector

In one regional network in the Northern Metropolitan Region where student outcomes have been significantly below expected levels coaches were used as 'saturation' teams with four coaches working intensively in one school for up to six weeks with a focus on improving writing. Initially the team worked in primary schools with all teachers and every class to build teacher capacity in the area of writing. A key feature of the model was a highly structured, scaffolded teaching approach which emphasised high expectations of all students. In semester two the team worked with the secondary college using a similar approach. Anecdotal evidence from coaches, Principals and classroom teachers was that this was a highly effective approach to support change in teacher practice and improved student attitudes to learning and specifically writing. The standard of work achieved by some students was well beyond what they had previously achieved. NAPLAN data for the network indicates an improvement in writing -

	2009 %below	2010 %below
Y3	13	6
Y5	24	14
Y7	45	27
Y9	65	44

Coaches worked in close collaboration with leadership teams and learning leaders to support sustained practice in the school once the saturation team moved on.

Catholic sector

Bachelor of Education (Primary) Multi-Modal Pilot

The Bachelor of Education (Primary) Multi-Modal Pilot: Learning in the School Community has begun to explore the design and structure of a pre-service teacher program based on a tri-level partnership between school communities, an education system (Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM)) and a university (Australian Catholic University (ACU)). The approach is based on the development of a community of practice including all the stakeholders and utilising the power of authentic experiences and activities in learning.

The aim of the model is to interconnect areas of contribution to teacher education and improve the quality of the experience for the pre-service teachers (PSTs). This model has two components:

1. **On Campus:** PSTs participate in the units as stated in the BEd primary course program map; however the delivery of the units varies from the standard approach; and
2. **Learning in the School Community:** Teams of 2-4 PSTs engage in combined learning and teaching/work roles in real classroom/school contexts two days per week.

On Campus

In 2010 information about the pilot was provided at the First Round Offers Enrolment Information Session and at all subsequent gatherings of BEd Year 1 PSTs. An expression of interest was gained via an application and interview. The initial recruitment created many challenges, two significant ones being:

- The majority of PSTs in the BEd Primary Course were not accessible until 26 January 2010 at the Enrolment Information Session; and

- Encouraging PSTs to volunteer for a Pilot whilst undertaking the uncertain and challenging transition from secondary school to higher education.

In Semester 1, 2010, 19 PSTs participated with four having to withdraw at the end of the semester due to family, financial and health issues. An additional PST joined the Pilot in Semester 2.

All 16 PSTs have indicated their desire to continue in 2011 with five new PSTs going into second year having successfully applied to join the Pilot in 2011. At an enrolment information session in late 2010 for early offers into the BEd primary course, four PSTs indicated their eagerness to participate in the Pilot in 2011. PSTs have indicated their ability to connect theory and practice and draw upon their learning in the school community in providing authentic examples within their course units. Language that values the importance of establishing positive relationships, wellbeing and partnerships with families is commonplace within the discourse of all PSTs.

Learning in the School Community

Eight school communities agreed to participate in the first year of the Pilot; however seven received a team of PSTs as geographical location proved difficult in one instance for the PSTs. Participation of schools is determined by the CEOM and is primarily based upon the schools having gained accreditation in developing a Performance and Development Culture.

Four professional learning seminar days were held in 2010. Teams of three to four Established Teachers and School Team Leaders attended. These days were jointly facilitated by members of the ACU and CEOM teams and focused on:

- A shared language, understanding and responsibility for the implementation of the Pilot;
- Understanding of the learning outcomes, learning and teaching experiences and assessment tasks of the units undertaken by the PSTs; and
- Opportunities to identify and address challenges and achievements for PSTs, experienced teachers, CEOM, ACU and the teaching profession.

A pathway into the Masters of Education program has also been developed for Established Teachers and School Team Leaders participating within the Pilot. Three Established Teachers have enrolled into the Masters of Education program at ACU for 2011.

Tri-level Partnership

An ACU/CEOM Planning Team met monthly throughout 2010 to coordinate the implementation of the Pilot. Communication between members of this Team has been strong, open and positive in addressing issues as they have arisen. The tri-level partnership not only worked well from the ACU/CEOM perspective but has been recognised by school personnel.

Planning for 2011

Planning has commenced for the implementation of Stage Two of this Pilot which will involve:

- Moving into Year 2 of the BEd primary course and working in partnership with six new school communities; and
- The recruitment of a new cohort of PSTs in BEd Year 1 and continuing working in partnership with the 2010 eight school communities.

Independent sector

The Evidence Based Observation Tool – Pilot Program at Newhaven College

A volunteer teacher at Newhaven College had two classes video recorded to enable the training of teachers from Newhaven and other schools in the EBO Tool technique. This has provided a pilot study for the use of the EBO Tool in each of the 43 NP schools in the independent sector. Training in the EBO Tool will be extended in 2011.

Outcomes from the use of the EBO Tool include:

- A sound methodology based on proven research;
- Quantitative data from classroom observation to inform teaching practice;
- Development of collaborative practice;
- De-privatisation of classrooms; and
- High quality learning environments in classrooms.

Video recordings of the Pilot Program classes and testimonials from participating teachers are available.

Section 3 – Reform Priority 2: Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs

Overview – 1 January to 31 December 2010

Victorian overview

Victoria recognises that early intervention assists the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills, and contributes to student attainment and retention at school. To enhance the effectiveness of intervention activities, Victoria has a strong focus on recognising and responding to individual learning needs. This focus is designed not only to increase student achievement by connecting students and their learning within school, but also to facilitate and leverage connections with the wider community, contributing to better lifetime outcomes.

Utilising a strong evidence base to support initiatives, Victoria's school sectors share support for a number of areas:

- Improving and using information on students' literacy and numeracy performance to target areas for support;
- Effective individual student monitoring to identify key points and methods of intervention;
- Recognising the individual circumstances and needs of students and reflecting these in individual pathways and strategies for students; and
- Ensuring that schools have the resources to undertake intensive intervention programs for students whose performance is below the minimum level.

Victorian activity contributing to this Reform Priority has included a focus on using data to both develop longer term pathways for students as well as to identify immediate need for intervention. Educators are accessing professional development training to better understand and use data to support their practice, and are being further supported through the use of advisors and coaches to assist in literacy and numeracy interventions with students.

In Victoria Reform Priority 2 covers the following Initiatives:

- [Initiative 8: Improved monitoring of student performance information](#)
- [Initiative 9: Timely student intervention and support](#)

Overview of Progress

[Initiative 8: Improved monitoring of student performance information](#)

Government sector

In the government sector all NP schools are being supported to improve the monitoring of individual student performance using approved diagnostic tools. Data literacy support is being provided to system level leaders, school leaders and teachers to effectively monitor programs at individual and cohort levels. NP schools have used the *Literacy and Numeracy 6 – 18 Month Strategy*, which provides a six term schedule with a focus on assessment for learning and whole school planning to achieve significant improvement in student literacy and numeracy outcomes. All government sector NP schools were invited to attend a forum which included a focus on analysing and responding to

student performance information.

Coaches have had a key role in supporting teachers, leadership teams and Principals in the effective use of data collection and analysis. They have supported teachers to develop whole school assessment schedules and implement On Demand linear and adaptive testing.

Schools are being supported through a range of regional activities designed to improve the monitoring of student performance information in NP schools. These activities have focused on building teacher capacity in the area of data analysis, and include:

- Collegial data analysis sessions;
- Data analysis training and online professional learning;
- Coaching and expert advice, including a partnership with the Assessment and Research Centre at the University of Melbourne;
- Coaching in the use of data analysis software, such as the Student Performance Analyser tool; and
- Appointment of data coordinators or managers.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic school sector there is growing capacity to effectively utilise student performance data at the school level to inform planning and instruction. In addition there is a system focus on the instruments available to schools to support early literacy instruction. Progress and impact includes:

- The targeted NP schools have critically analysed their student learning data to ascertain strengths and weaknesses within the effectiveness of teaching literacy and numeracy. Importantly, schools' own Annual Action Plans outline targeted professional learning which matches teacher professional learning needs to student needs, as analysed through assessment data; and
- The Catholic Education Commission has engaged the Assessment Research Centre (ARC) at Melbourne University to conduct a review of the assessment instruments used in schools to support early Literacy instruction. ARC has conducted a survey of Principals, Literacy Leaders, teachers (P-2) and diocesan personnel and results of this survey are being finalised.

Independent sector - The independent sector has addressed Initiatives 8 and 9 together

[Initiative 8: Improved monitoring of student performance information](#)

[Initiative 9: Timely student intervention and support](#)

Progress accelerated during the year as regular visits to schools by Principal Advisors and Literacy/Numeracy and Student Wellbeing and Community Engagement Advisors fostered strong professional relationships with school leaders and teachers. In July 2010 two additional Literacy/Numeracy Advisors and three Student Wellbeing and Community Engagement Advisors were employed, bringing the total complement of the NP Advisory team to 11.

The Advisors worked in four Clusters of 10 -11 schools each, developing individual programs in each of the schools in response to their individual needs and priorities. The schools were found to be at different stages of readiness to implement programs to recognise and respond to students' individual learning needs. Advisors assisted teachers in schools to focus on collecting and analysing their assessment data (PAT, TORCH, Assessment on Demand, PM Benchmarks and

NAPLAN) and then develop strategies to recognise and respond to individual learning needs.

The regular visits from NP Advisors provided a significant impact on participating schools. Assisting school leaders and teachers to recognise the need to identify individual learning needs and develop programs to differentiate the curriculum and instructional practice has had a significant impact on student learning.

For example, Advisors trained teachers to track reading analysis data for individual students to provide a clear understanding of progress over time against a base line.

Other programs presented by Advisors included:

- Tracking running record data for Prep – Yr 4 students;
- Developing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs); and
- Creating positive classroom learning environments.

The analysis and use of assessment data to develop learning plans to assist individual students had a significant impact in schools. Using the data has had a positive impact on student engagement and learning (by December 2010, 15 schools were using ILPs following analysis of literacy and numeracy data).

[Initiative 9: Timely student intervention and support](#)

Government sector

A range of intervention programs support the local response to individual student learning needs, including the *Reading Recovery* Tutor Training program and the Yachad Accelerated Learning Project (YALP) literacy and numeracy intervention.

An additional eight Departmental *Reading Recovery* tutors (who have successfully completed a Masters of Education – *Reading Recovery* provided by The University of Melbourne) are contributing to literacy initiatives, involved in training *Reading Recovery* Teachers, and delivering professional learning for experienced *Reading Recovery* teachers. The program is being used extensively by schools identified to receive support through *Reading Recovery*, based on need. There are now 23 *Reading Recovery* tutors based across the state.

Trained YALP tutors are supporting students in six schools through the provision of individual literacy and numeracy intervention programs that aim to achieve improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Students have been selected to participate based on pre-intervention assessments. Qualitative feedback from participating schools has indicated a positive effect on student engagement in the classroom.

Schools are also providing timely student intervention and support through:

- *Reading Recovery* support;
- Language Support Program assistance;
- Use of the QuickSmart Numeracy Program;
- Literacy and numeracy intervention programs;
- Coaching and consultancy in data analysis and identifying and responding to need; and

- Engagement and Wellbeing Officers and other support staff.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic school sector there is growing capacity to deliver robust individual education and pathway strategies for students at risk. Progress and impact includes:

- Work on development of a common Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework is underway with the aim of supporting and guiding schools to act in a timely manner in addressing student needs through improved monitoring of student performance information. A Working Party has been formed and has set out a rigorous timeline for the completion of the framework, underpinned with intensive professional learning, to be achieved in 2011;
- Participating NP schools have received either funding or professional learning to implement or extend literacy and numeracy intervention programs such as *Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU)*, *Numeracy Intervention P-4* and *Reading Recovery*; and
- Six additional *Reading Recovery* teachers have been trained to increase coverage in NP schools. Two EMU Professional Learning Leaders have been appointed to two of the Catholic Education Offices in Victoria. They have consequently trained two cohorts of EMU Specialist Teachers to offer EMU.

2010 Key highlights

Government sector

In one region, coaching of teachers in five schools has focussed directly on data analysis to identify individual student learning needs and the use of specific content based learning tasks to support that need. Data collected for all five schools has shown a shift in progress for all students involved, not only for the students at the lower end of progress but also at the higher end of ability levels.

In the Grampians Region, over 200 students in 17 schools have taken part in the *QuickSmart Numeracy Program*, which aims to improve the academic performance of students who have been struggling with numeracy for several years. Qualitative evidence across participating schools suggests that there was student growth in mathematics and that improved student attitudes to learning were transferred to other subjects.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic school sector a significant emphasis on recognition and response to individual learning needs has been on the development of leaders' capacities to identify and utilise student performance data. This includes assisting schools to develop comprehensive and robust individual education and pathway strategies focussed on meeting the needs and circumstances of students at risk. Participating schools have received either funding or professional learning to implement or extend numeracy intervention programs and *Reading Recovery*.

At the system level, work on development of a common Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework is underway with the aim of supporting and guiding schools to act in a timely manner in addressing student needs through improved monitoring of student performance information.

Independent sector

The model implemented in the independent sector of providing regular visits to the 43 NP schools

created a positive impact on schools and has encouraged teachers to recognise and respond to individual student learning needs.

The strength of the professional relationships developed by the team of Advisors and the schools is a highlight of the NP investment in the independent sector. The Advisors have been able to visit the schools in their Cluster on a regular basis, making presentations to the teachers, coaching and supporting them as they implement programs to recognise and respond to individual learning needs.

Leaders and teachers have also been supported to attend external professional development activities that are relevant to their school's focus in developing programs to recognise and respond to individual learning needs, including:

- PAT Test marking (ACER);
- *Engaging the Disengaged – Boys and Literacy*;
- *Accelerated Literacy*; and
- *GradeXpert* student tracking system workshops.

Teachers in NP schools showed growing enthusiasm to implement the strategies that the Advisors shared with them in recognising and responding to individual learning needs, forming a sound foundation for sustainable, improved learning outcomes.

Cross sector collaboration

Independent sector

While there was no specific cross sectoral collaboration, several of the programs introduced to schools by the Advisors are in use in other sectors in recognition of their good practice.

Teachers from all sectors attended some of the externally provided professional learning programs including:

- *Extending Mathematical Understanding* (EMU) training – Australian Catholic University;
- *Understanding NAPLAN* – VCAA;
- *Making Learning Visible* – Professor John Hattie;
- The Innovation Showcase – DEECD; and
- *Assessment on Demand* – VCAA.

The professional learning programs at the ISV Development Centre are available to teachers from all sectors.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (if applicable)

Government sector

YALP and *Reading Recovery* activities are used to directly support indigenous students in regions. *Reading Recovery* has successfully supported indigenous students for more than 20 years, and the expansion of the workforce has assisted in strengthening this support. YALP aims to achieve

improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for indigenous students by providing focused educational approaches to students in need.

Regions are also using a range of other strategies to identify and respond to specific indigenous learning needs, such as:

- The use of Individual Education Plans and Managed Individual Pathways Plans;
- The use of tools to track the learning progress and attendance of indigenous students;
- *Wannik* Tutorial participation, which provides schools with funding to contract tutorial support for eligible indigenous students;
- Development of local indigenous Literacy Programs and Homework/tutoring programs for indigenous students; and
- Intervention by indigenous Engagement Support Officers and Language Support Program intervention.

Catholic sector

The 60 NP schools with indigenous students are participating in initiatives including the *Number Intervention P-4*, *Extending Mathematical Understandings* (EMU) and *Reading Recovery*.

St Peter's Primary School, North Bendigo has particularly addressed the needs of indigenous students in numeracy through personalisation of EMU intervention. This initiative has enabled parental and community involvement which enriched the program.

Independent sector

The Advisors supporting Worawa Aboriginal College maintained a close link with the Principal and teachers, visiting on a regular basis to assist them to develop diagnostic assessments, Individual Learning Plans, and Digital Portfolios to document each student's academic and social progress.

Advisors have workshopped teachers in the use of the Brigance assessment tools to provide a base line from which to establish Individual Learning Plans. They have also supported teachers and students in the Worawa Learning Centres (Literacy, Numeracy, Science, Wellbeing, Creative Arts and Aboriginal Culture). An indigenous consultant has been employed to present the *Jigsaw* student wellbeing program and staff from the school were supported to visit Woodville High School to observe their *Wiltja* program.

Leaders and teachers have been supported to attend external professional development programs provided specifically for NP schools such as *Accelerated Literacy*. The *Communities Forum* provided an opportunity for the school to explain the Worawa model to parents and to gain their support by way of a Memorandum of Understanding.

In other schools an indigenous consultant was engaged to present an Indigenous Cultural Awareness workshop for teachers in other NP schools and Advisors have followed up with schools to support the development of Individual Learning Plans for indigenous students in need.

The consultant provided software for teachers to create Individual Learning Plans for indigenous students.

Support for Other Cohorts (if applicable)

Government sector

Students with additional learning needs have been supported in NP schools through strategies including:

- Strategic use of outside agencies to support at risk refugee students, such as the Local Learning and Employment Networks and Foundation House;
- Use of literacy and numeracy intervention programs, such as the *QuickSmart Numeracy* program and the *Fast ForWord* literacy program;
- Tracking of progress through tools such as the Student Performance Analyser (SPA); and
- Establishment of after school homework/tutoring programs.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic sector Individual Learning Plans are being utilised to assist in the monitoring of students with additional learning needs.

Independent sector

Advisors have worked closely with schools with significant numbers of students whose parents have a non-English speaking background to develop literacy programs as part of in-school curriculum and after-hours programs. Support for literacy programs, ESL strategies, and using assessment data to develop learning plans were effective with schools with significant numbers of parents with non-English speaking backgrounds.

Advisors also visited and supported schools with cohorts of students whose education has been disrupted and whose retention at school is problematic.

Schools have been supported to attend ISV Development Centre professional learning seminars and workshops including *Writing for ESL Learners*, *Linking Oral Language to Written Language* and an African Languages workshop.

Two 2-day Autism and Aspergers spectrum workshops were presented at the ISV Development Centre to assist teachers who cater for children with these conditions.

Case Study

Government sector

In the Western Metropolitan Region a literacy intervention program based on the 'gradual release of responsibility model' was introduced for Year 7 students by a secondary college. The program aims to shift the responsibility for task completion from the teacher to the student gradually over time. Using the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) progression points scale, students were selected who fell below the required level for Year 7 students. These students had a similar reading and comprehension level making it easier to pitch the lesson and select the appropriate text. Post testing indicated that the program has been successful in that most students made some or significant improvement throughout 2010. Selected students had a VELS progression level that ranged from 2.70 to 3.70 (mid-year 4 – mid-year 6). At the end of the program it was noted that the VELS range improved to as high as 5.40 with a significant number of the cohort working at or

around the VELS level. The literacy program's strategic focus and student selection around a similar reading ability across the cohort made for a successful program.

In Hume Region intensive work by schools through literacy intervention programs for indigenous students saw Year 3 Reading NAPLAN indigenous participation move to over 90% with the percentage of these students above the national minimum standard exceeding that of non-indigenous students. This intensive literacy work was supported by a focus on attendance, data analysis and the development of Individual Education Plans for all indigenous students. At the senior end this same region recorded 100% retention for indigenous students moving from Year 11 to Year 12.

Catholic sector

Coaching has been adopted across the Catholic Education Sector in Victoria. Each diocese has embraced coaching as a means of personalising the professional learning experience of teachers to recognise and respond to individual literacy or numeracy learning needs of students. The impact of coaching is the disruptive nature of the experience which challenges teachers to consider the impact of their instruction. Although coaching is directly linked to building leader and teacher capacity, the effect is directly reflected through learning in classrooms across Victoria.

The development of the coaching initiative in Victoria has been enriched through the collaboration of the four dioceses. A central set of principles has underpinned the rollout of coaching across the Catholic sector. Collaborative dialogue has focussed on how the implementation of coaching will enhance learning through focus on curriculum analysis, data analysis, instructional changes, and strategic conversations about beliefs and how coaches influence practice. The initiative is focused on building capacity with a focus on improvement. Leaders and teachers are coached to plan powerful instruction; implement and analyse frequent formative assessments; hold high expectations for teacher performance; and deliver a rigorous curriculum. Each diocese requires coaches to turn their attention to high-leverage services with the greatest potential for improving teaching and learning.

The focus on recognition and response to individual learning needs has enabled each diocese to re-orientate and re-construe the traditional Catholic education service-based relationship with schools. The common purpose presented through the SSNPs reform agenda of accelerating improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes has intensified and aligned the lines of accountability and responsibility operating between system and school. The reform initiatives have consequently enabled strong alignment of policy and practice. School-diocese relationships, and the reforms' effectiveness, highlight clarity of purpose, collaborative decision-making and joint problem-solving.

The coaching initiative has been rolled out across the Catholic Sector of Victoria and focussed on the tri-level impact (that of state – through the CECV; diocesan – through each office; and then ultimately the school) to significantly impact on students' literacy and numeracy achievement. Teachers and school leaders need effective support from the system if they are to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes. Through both external and internal coaches, the capacity of teachers to build effective and productive literacy and numeracy learning spaces has been enhanced. The next challenge is to sustain and further enhance these spaces.

Independent sector

Principal Advisors and Literacy/Numeracy Advisors supported schools to develop programs targeting students at risk of significantly falling behind national literacy and numeracy standards. Schools developed Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for students who were 12 months or more below expected levels of literacy or numeracy as measured by NAPLAN results. This included indigenous students, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and students from both Low SES schools and Literacy/Numeracy schools, in metropolitan and regional areas.

Advisors assisted teachers to develop a Learning Profile for each student, based on VELS Progression Points and achievement data to monitor and guide progress. Information was shared with teachers in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs) to ensure that they were cognisant of students' literacy and numeracy standards. This enabled teachers to differentiate the curriculum in their KLA to meet students' individual needs. Parents were kept informed of the process and the progress of their children.

Five schools introduced ILPs in 2010 and the ILPs will be further rolled out in 2011.

Section 4 – Reform Priority 3: School-Community Engagement & Extended Schools

Overview – 1 January to 31 December 2010

Victorian overview

Victoria recognises that collegiate approaches to education between schools, parents and communities are demonstrated to improve attitudes to schooling, reduce absenteeism, increase retention, and enhance academic achievement. This Reform Priority recognises that students learn in more than just the school environment. In the VIP there is a focus on improving educational outcomes through the engagement of parents, communities and businesses in schools.

In Victoria there is a shared emphasis across the three school sectors on:

- Getting the best out of families' involvement in their children's learning;
- Helping parents support their children's literacy and numeracy skills through the development of advice to parents;
- Forming partnerships between schools, the community and businesses to address students' barriers to achievement; and
- Addressing disadvantage through community-business partnerships that provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to school and community disadvantage.

In Victoria Reform Priority 3 covers the following Initiatives, which are integrated:

- [Initiative 10: Enable and enhance the capacity of families to be engaged in learning](#)
- [Initiative 11: Enable and strengthen school-community/business partnerships to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes and to extend schools](#)

Overview of Progress

[Initiative 10: Enable and enhance the capacity of families to be engaged in learning](#)

[Initiative 11: Enable and strengthen school-community/business partnerships to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes and to extend schools](#)

Government sector

Extended School Hubs are being piloted in the government sector to reduce barriers to educational achievement through school partnerships with business, local government and community based agencies. Hubs at Sandhurst, Wyndham and Geelong North have developed comprehensive plans of action, established local governance structures, and begun to implement activities and programs relating to specific, local priority areas. The Frankston North Hub has established an interim governance structure and initial community consultation and data analysis has been undertaken to inform governance and next steps.

Participating schools in each of the Hubs are from the same network and have played a key leadership role at a system level in the roll-out of Hub activity including the appointment and coordination of Hub Partnership Coordinators. Each of the action plans and focus areas strategically align with the School and Network Improvement Plans. Hub projects are also coordinated and connected with existing projects initiated through other government initiatives including Neighbourhood Renewal.

The Geelong North Hub is focusing on activities that respond to needs identified by the schools, including:

- providing tutoring for students through Deakin University;
- supporting student transition to further education through a 'writing with academic rigor' program; and
- improving NAPLAN results through a 'read, write and answer' trial program that will increase student competencies in multiple choice tests.

The Sandhurst Hub is working with a consultant to improve family engagement and achieve higher learning outcomes. An initial workshop brought together teams of administration staff, teachers and parents to design and implement a plan based on results from parent surveys.

The Wyndham Hub, which is using the Smith Family as its lead coordinating agency, is aligning with existing community initiatives to provide some early activities through the Extended School Hub. This includes building on some of the projects from the Neighbourhood Renewal initiative, Deakin University workshops with VCE students, and trialling services as part of the Western Region Children and Youth Mental Health Service Redevelopment. Wyndham City Council Youth Services provided Year 7 support programs in Term 4 2010, including a 'working together' day program for 60 students plus a young women's personal development group and an assertiveness and self-esteem program. Memoranda of understanding with participating agencies will be used to clarify expectations and set service standards.

A trial Municipal Literacy Partnership Project involving Southern Metropolitan Region and the Local Government Areas of Frankston and Mornington Peninsula aims to improve the way in which schools, early childhood providers and wider community groups approach and aid literacy development. Two Literacy Villages have been established, with a further ten to be rolled out in 2011. Project officers have been recruited and have commenced in their roles, and an outcomes framework, a communication strategy, an early childhood professional development strategy and a project website have all been finalised.

Regions are using support staff such as Family Liaison Officers and Family Therapists to connect with families, engage them in learning and assist them in supporting their children at home. Schools are also encouraging greater parent participation in school activities by, for example, running family education programs and training parents to work as tutors or parent assistants in the school.

In regions a range of strategies have been deployed to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes through partnerships. Examples include:

- Community Engagement Officers or Engagement and Wellbeing Officers establishing

opportunities for students to take part in meaningful community projects that result in them re-engaging with school; and

- Careers education programs and exhibitions to allow secondary students to engage with people from tertiary institutions, business and industry.

Catholic sector

In the Catholic school sector initiatives 10 and 11 are targeted at low SES school communities with the aim of supporting schools to implement a strategic approach to family school partnerships, addressing identified issues that impact on family and community involvement in learning. Progress and impacts include:

- Family School Partnership Convenors (FSPCs) have been appointed across participating schools. FSPCs come with a wealth of experience from a range of settings including education, health and community development, and are further supported with strategic and structured professional learning opportunities at the local, regional and system level. During 2010 FSPCs have worked with school leadership teams to plan and implement initiatives that support family and community engagement in learning.
- A number of professional learning opportunities were conducted during 2010, including a state-wide Family-School-Community Partnerships forum with school leaders, FSPCs, Catholic Education Commission Victoria (CECV) leaders and system personnel, international delegates and personnel from the government sector. Individual school communities and clusters of schools have also had the opportunity to work with highly regarded consultants Dr George Otero from the Centre for Relational Learning and Sharon Butler from Silent Partners. These consultants have used current and emerging evidence to strengthen understandings and practice among school staff in relation to the role of families and community in enhancing wellbeing and learning.
- Links between the Family School Partnerships initiative and the literacy and numeracy component of the SSNPs continue to be strengthened. Consultation meetings have occurred with all schools, involving key system personnel and school leaders working collaboratively to explore the interrelationship between literacy and numeracy and Family School Partnerships.
- CECV continues to explore ways to communicate and share good practice among participating schools and across the system. During 2010 an electronic newsletter was developed and distributed each term, showcasing school case studies, websites, resources and research articles.
- Emerging evidence indicates there is an enhanced understanding of the role of family-school-community partnerships in learning, and the number of school community strategies and initiatives with this focus has increased. This is reflected in schools' Annual Action Plans through the school improvement process.
- The Australian Catholic University was commissioned to conduct a three-year research and evaluation of the Family School Partnerships initiative. During 2010 the researchers conducted interviews with system personnel, including the FSPCs; as well as school community stakeholders from across the Low SES NP schools, including school leaders, staff, parents and community representatives. Surveys were also used to gather a small amount of quantitative data.

Independent sector

During the 2010 year the Principal Advisors and Senior Advisors increased their contact hours

within schools, developing effective professional relationships with leaders and teachers.

Student Wellbeing/Community Engagement Advisors played a significant role in supporting this initiative, particularly after July with the employment of the three additional Advisors. The four Student Wellbeing/Community Engagement Advisors visited schools regularly and assisted Principals and teachers to develop programs to foster community engagement, and extend their schools' influence beyond the classroom.

Advisors assisted schools to engage parents more fully in their children's school life by conducting Information Forums on curriculum and programs, student welfare, school organisation and administration.

2010 Key highlights

Government sector

- Extended School Hub activities at Sandhurst, Wyndham and Geelong North are underway and planning for activity at the Frankston North Extended School Hub is underway. Local agencies are showing a strong interest in working with the Extended School Hubs.
- Two Literacy Villages have been established as part of the Municipal Literacy Partnership Project.
- Eastern Metropolitan Region reports that by inviting parents to engage in school activities, parents are becoming increasingly confident, resulting in greater valuing of education and increased school attendance. By enabling students to participate in local community activities, student self-esteem and community engagement are increasing in low socio-economic settings.

Catholic sector

The CECV Family School Partnerships (FSP) initiative is a key reform strategy under the Low SES School Communities NP. The aim of the FSP initiative (2010 – 2012) is for all 46 participating schools to implement a strategic approach to family school partnerships, whereby the role of families and community in enhancing student learning becomes core to school improvement. Family School Partnership Convenors (FSPCs) are integral to the initiative, working across clusters of schools, building the capacity of school communities to establish effective partnerships for learning. Emerging evidence indicates there is an enhanced understanding of the role of family-school-community partnerships in learning, and the number of school community strategies and initiatives with this focus has increased. This is reflected in schools' Annual Action Plans through the school improvement process. The FSP initiative is expanded further in the case study at page 42.

Independent sector

The model introduced in the independent sector of providing regular visits to NP schools has created a positive impact in improving school-community engagement and extending schools. Employing Principal Advisors and Community Engagement Advisors to visit schools regularly has resulted in schools having unprecedented access to advice and support from Advisors experienced in developing greater school-community engagement. This is of significance, as historically in some schools there has been little engagement with parents and the wider community for cultural

reasons, such as language barriers, cultural shyness, perceptions of schooling being inaccessible, distance between home and school, lack of transport and family support available to enable parents to attend meetings. Advisors and schools are responding creatively to the challenges presented.

Advisors have assisted in programs including:

- Conducting Parent Forums;
- Establishing Parent Associations in schools;
- Presenting a VCE Information Night for parents;
- Planning the establishment of after school *Homework Clubs*;
- Consultations with local government and Service Clubs;
- Student Wellbeing programs such as *You Can Do It*, and
- Planning inaugural school camps.

Senior Advisors assisted teachers from a regional school to conduct a cross-sectoral Indigenous Cultural Day for students, teachers and community leaders. The day was facilitated by two indigenous consultants and enabled indigenous and non-indigenous participants to gain a greater awareness of current issues that affect indigenous students' educational outcomes and wellbeing.

Cross sector collaboration

Independent sector

- NPs Advisors coordinated the inaugural meeting of schools, local government officials and welfare agencies in Albury/Wodonga in November to build partnerships and coordinate service delivery in the region (across state borders). This was the first time representatives from both sides of the border had met to discuss initiatives to provide support programs for students at risk and establish accessible post-secondary vocational pathways. The Albury-Wodonga Community School and other local schools will benefit from the partnerships with the agencies represented at the meeting.
- Planning meetings began in 2010 to conduct an interschool/community forum in consultation with the City of Dandenong and a Rotary service club. The intention is to establish future cross-sectoral inter-school activities and programs using community/business mentors, careers advice, and programs for schools in debating, performing arts and sport.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (if applicable)

Government sector

Community consultation with key stakeholders has influenced the development of action plans and the identification of areas of focus for Extended School Hub services and activities. Where appropriate, representatives from indigenous communities were consulted with as key stakeholders. Each of the activities and services will target and support identified cohorts of teachers and students, including those from an indigenous background.

Regions have used Koorie Engagement Support Officers to support indigenous family and student engagement in education and culturally inclusive practices in schools. Gippsland Region reports that as a result of the work of indigenous support staff, over 90% of indigenous families have

increased their engagement with schools and in some cases have met with teachers at the school for the first time since their children have attended school.

Catholic sector

To strengthen the understanding of mathematics for Indigenous students, parents and family members, a *Deadly and Solid Maths Night* was hosted by a Low SES NP school community. Among the participants were school staff, Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) representatives, and staff from both the Australian Catholic University and the Ballarat Catholic Education Office. Students engaged in playing maths games with each other and their parents, and a dinner offered opportunities for interaction between community members. Requests have been made to conduct similar activity nights across several communities and schools in 2011, including events potentially run in conjunction with indigenous families from the independent and government sectors.

Independent sector

A *Communities Forum* was held at Worawa Aboriginal College in December 2010 in partnership with the Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service. Worawa Aboriginal College is a Yr 7 – Yr 10 boarding school for girls, many of whom come from communities interstate. The Forum was held on the first day of a three day visit to the College by parents and community leaders. Parents shared experiences from the children's home communities and aspirations for their futures, and were involved in planning and shaping the learning journey for Worawa students. They also engaged in discussion about student wellbeing issues.

Teachers explained the Worawa teaching and learning structure which involves diagnostic testing, and a variety of Individual Learning Plans in which the students are assisted to set their own goals and are supported in their academic, social, emotional and cultural progress. The curriculum model is a four year program based around literacy and numeracy learning centres, with the primary focus of *Caring for Country*. Worawa Learning Centres incorporate all three domains of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). The NP Advisors assisted teachers to develop student literacy and numeracy skills and to introduce individual digital portfolios to record their learning outcomes.

In other schools, one Principal Advisor attends regular cross-sectoral meetings at VAELI (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated) and the Victorian Indigenous Education Network (VIEN). NP funding was used to co-sponsor (with VIEN) the 2010 *Jindi Worabak Day* where 230 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from 18 Independent schools (including Worawa College) came together for a day of sharing and activities run by local ~~indigneous~~indigenous elders.

Support for Other Cohorts (if applicable)

Government sector

Regions are supporting families of students from refugee and ESL backgrounds through transition and Family Engagement Officer support, the strategic use of outside agencies such as the Local Learning and Employment Networks and Foundation House, and after school homework clubs.

Catholic sector

In order to strengthen learning outcomes, school communities are forming partnerships with a number of community organisations to better support students and their families from non-English speaking and refugee backgrounds. Emerging partner organisations include Foundation House, Ardoch, CentaCare and Victoria University.

Independent sector

Developing Community Engagement programs in schools with significant numbers of students from non-English speaking families is a priority. Advisors play a key role in assisting schools with strategies to encourage parents to attend school functions such as Parent-Teacher Interviews and Curriculum Information Sessions. In some cases, school leaders and Advisors have travelled to religious/cultural centres to meet with parents. The emphasis in this activity was to overcome difficulties related to parent cultural reluctance and language differences.

Case Study

Government sector

In the Western Metropolitan Region two primary schools and one secondary college located in Wyndham are involved in the Extended School Hubs project. The collaborative work of the hub has included pro bono support from consultants McKinsey and Co. that resulted in a detailed analysis of literature and data to inform a governance structure and areas of local priority to ensure that the hub activities reflect local school and community needs. The Smith Family has been engaged as a lead agency, delivering partnership coordination in the Hub. Two staff members are located in the secondary college and since the Hub's inception in 2010 have achieved some important shifts for families, including:

- A significant increase in the engagement of families with the secondary college. Over 250 families attended a parent information session at the school, where in the past as few as 50 have attended; and
- Support for families who, due to financial circumstances, have not been able to access electronic information about their children or provide their children with access to the internet. These families will receive a Tech-pack that includes a computer, free Broadband access and four sessions of computer training free of charge.

The Extended School Hubs project was highlighted at the Australian Education Ministers' 2010 Biennial Forum held in October 2010. Case study information for this project, including video footage, is available at

<http://www.schoolsforum2010.edu.au/pages/videos/ExtendedSchoolHubs.html>

Catholic sector

The CECV Family School Partnerships (FSP) initiative is a key reform strategy under the Low SES School Communities NP. The FSP initiative demonstrates the interplay between system level initiatives and emerging impacts on the 46 targeted school communities. The aim of the FSP initiative (2010 – 2012) is for all 46 participating schools to implement a strategic approach to family school partnerships whereby the role of families and community in enhancing student learning becomes core to school improvement. Family School Partnership Convenors (FSPCs) are integral to the FSP Initiative, working across clusters of schools, building the capacity of school communities to establish effective partnerships for learning.

Michael Fullan (2010) supports the metaphor 'ready-fire-aim' (Peters and Waterman, 1982), which captures the staged change process underpinning the FSP initiative. 'Ready-fire', representing the initial stages of implementation, was the focus of 2010 whereby relationships were established and strengthened between: FSPCs and schools; schools within a cluster; schools and their communities; and schools and the system. During the course of 2010, relationships and understandings deepened, schools developed and engaged in a number of activities, and links were made across the reform agenda initiatives.

Some key themes emerged in the FSP initiative as a result of activities in 2010. These are outlined below.

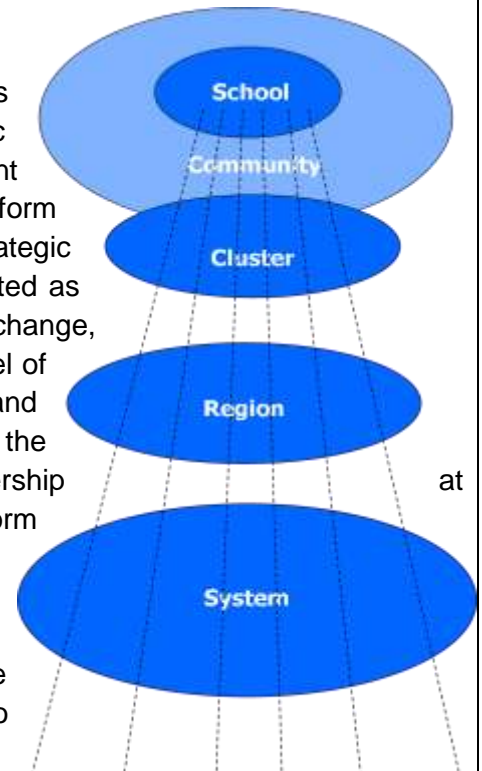
- *The shift from family involvement in schooling (eg parents helping at school events), to family engagement in learning.* This strategic theme has been strongly influenced by the work of Alma Harris (2009). During 2010, many schools started to explore how the parent-teacher interview process can be more inclusive of the parents' role in their child's learning. Barriers were broken down by making the school environment more welcoming and communication enhanced by providing translated materials and interpreters.
- *Early learning and issues related to school readiness, including pre-school and play group activities that engage families in learning, both at school and home.* In some schools this led to partnerships being developed with Local Government Authorities (LGAs), universities and community agencies. For example during 2010 the Brimbank Sunshine Cluster developed a partnership with Victoria University to establish Kinda Kinder programs in the three schools.
- *Broadening understandings of learning beyond the school, to include 'learning at home'.* Towards the end of 2010 this theme extended to include 'the language of schooling/learning' as this has been identified as a possible barrier for families to engage in learning both at school and at home. An external consultant, Sharon Butler from Silent Partners, was contracted in 2010 to develop and conduct professional learning activities for school staff and parents focusing on 'learning at home'. Ms Butler will continue to work with school communities in 2011 to deepen understandings of the 'language of schooling/learning'.
- *Cultural considerations associated with many of the participating school communities having a large number of refugee families, including a significant number of new arrivals.* During 2010 these school communities focused on improving communication strategies, creating opportunities to strengthen connectedness and engaging families in schooling and their child's learning. Much of this work was undertaken in partnership with community organisations such as the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) and Foundation House. For example, Sacred Heart School in Fitzroy worked with Foundation House in 2010 to conduct the 'Talks in' program, designed to support Sudanese families (often new arrivals) with

schooling in Australia.

- The first year of the FSP initiative involved schools exploring their wider communities and creating opportunities to either develop new, or strengthen existing school community partnerships. During 2010, the Epping Cluster developed partnerships with Olympic Adult Education (OAE) and Preston Reservoir Adult and Community Education (PRACE) to provide English language classes for parents, and supported learning activities for parents and children to link home and school learning.

Using the emerging themes in 2010, CECV is in a stronger position to sharpen the focus and take 'aim' in 2011.

As the FSP initiative is part of a system reform agenda, it is essential that each level of the system is engaged in a strategic and purposeful way. The diagram demonstrates the different levels where change is required in order to achieve system reform (ie. school, community, cluster, region and system). The strategic themes that emerged in 2010 (described above) are represented as the dotted lines. In order to achieve long term sustainable change, activity under each strategic theme needs to occur at each level of the system. Key understandings, learnings, data, resources and practices must flow between the system and schools to build the capacity of leaders at each level. Distributed coordinated leadership at all levels of the system is fundamental for whole-system reform (Fullan and Levin, 2009), whereby family-school-community partnerships for learning are no longer peripheral, but core to school improvement. During 2011 and 2012, the FSP initiative will continue to use the emerging evidence from the research base and from the 46 targeted school communities, to inform strategies and priorities at each level of the system.



Independent sector

The Worawa Aboriginal College *Communities Forum* brought together 13 parents and community members from six isolated indigenous communities across Australia whose daughters attend the school. The discussions, facilitated by an indigenous consultant, focussed on establishing an understanding of the experiences and backgrounds of the school families, strengthening partnerships and sharing aspirations for the education of their daughters. The Worawa curriculum model was outlined to parents and community members, and discussions during the day enabled the parents to fully understand the school's vision and to strengthen the link between their cultural backgrounds and the educational vision of the school.

This was the first time that parents and leaders from the students' communities across Australia had visited Worawa for a Forum, and it was an opportunity for them to tell the school's story to others when they returned to their communities. The Forum was an effective way to share the school's recognition of the needs of Aboriginal adolescents and the difficulties they face in mainstream schooling. The Forum provided an opportunity to inform parents and community leaders of the ways that the school strives for mainstream academic success along with reinforcement of Aboriginal culture.

Section 5 – Research and Evaluation

Government sector

All major NP programs and initiatives are being evaluated. Within the Department, reports on the evaluation of programs linked to the National Partnerships are provided to the National Partnerships Implementation Strategy Panel. Key findings will be reported to DEEWR through the evaluation section of the Progress and Annual Reports. Evaluated progress in 2010 includes:

- An external provider has been contracted to conduct a formal evaluation of all BIEL programs against the intended objectives.
- A comprehensive external evaluation of the *Principal Preparation Program* has commenced. Evaluation will include face-to-face interviews with interns, Host School Principals, Base (Home) School Principals, and Assistant Regional Directors (School Improvement).
- The Teach For Australia evaluation has commenced. The evaluator has visited or conducted online or phone interviews with school Principals, Associates and major stakeholder groups, and has provided an initial evaluation report. The evaluation will comprise three phases, with projected reporting in September 2011, March, September and December 2012, with the final report due in March 2013. The evaluation will assess whether the delivery of the Teach For Australia initiative is achieving the expected outcomes and identify modifications to better achieve intended outputs and outcomes.
- Following the evaluation of baseline data and a teacher survey, an initial Rewarding Teaching Excellence evaluation report was compiled and produced in November. Evaluation of the trials will occur from 2010 to 2013.
- For the Extended School Hub Trial project, a comprehensive two year, four phase evaluation of all four field trial sites has commenced. The evaluation comprises a process evaluation, network analysis, cost-benefit analysis and impact evaluation. The first evaluation progress report (covering the Sandhurst, Wyndham and Geelong North sites) was discussed and accepted by the Extended School Hub Field Trial Advisory Group on 11 November 2010. The report analyses and documents the establishment phase of the hubs, within the context of models and lessons from school hubs adopted overseas and interstate.
- A preliminary report of the key evaluation findings has been provided for the Wider Workforce Field Trials.
- An evaluation report for the Primary Maths Specialists program was provided in November 2010.

Catholic sector

- The Australian Catholic University was commissioned to conduct a three-year research and evaluation of the Family School Partnerships (FSP) initiative. During 2010, the Researchers conducted interviews with system personnel, including the FSPCs, as well as school community stakeholders from across the Low SES NP schools, including school leaders, staff, parents and community representatives. Surveys were also used to gather a small amount of quantitative data.
- In late 2010 the University of Melbourne was commissioned to conduct research and evaluation of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) strategy. The research will commence in 2011.

- A preliminary evaluation of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Multi-Modal Pilot has been completed by an external independent consultant. The evaluation focused on the connections between CEOM, ACU and schools in the first 12 months of implementation and has provided recommendations for going forward in 2011. The Australian Catholic University is currently preparing a research project which will incorporate data on the impact of the project.
- Atkinson Consulting analysed feedback from the 2009 and 2010 participants in the *Aspiring to Principalship* program. The report provided insight into the early impact of the strategy and made recommendations for improvements to the 360 degree capability instrument.
- Preliminary evaluations of the *Leadership Coach* strategy and the *Aspiring to Principalship* program were completed by an external independent consultant. The reports provided early impact data and made clear recommendations for strengthening these strategies.

Section 6 – Milestone Reporting

When the Bilateral Agreement and Victorian Implementation Plan (VIP) were negotiated between Victoria and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, agreement was reached that throughout the life of the VIP, Victoria would be required to report on facilitation and reward milestones only in the October Progress Report, and not in the April Annual Report.

Accordingly, Victoria does not have any milestones to report on for the 2010 Annual Report.

Victoria has agreed with DEEWR that it will provide a single Annual Report on its Smarter School National Partnerships, reflecting the integrated approach of three SSNPs under the Victorian Implementation Plan. In line with that agreement and consistent with existing reporting arrangements against rewards targets under the SSNP Literacy and Numeracy NP for 2011, NAPLAN performance information is provided on both Low SES and Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership Schools.

Victoria's response to Section 7 is at **Attachment 1** to this Report.

Performance Measures for Long Term Reform Outcomes for all Low SES and Literacy & Numeracy NP schools: (Victorian Performance Measures Matrix)

As outlined at Section 7, Victoria's performance information is provided on both Low SES and Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership Schools at **Attachment 1** to this Annual Report.