



Australian Government



VICTORIAN

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Smarter Schools National Partnership Agreements

on

- Literacy and Numeracy
- Improving Teacher Quality
- Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities

January 2010

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1. Introduction



The Victorian Implementation Plan (VIP) is part of a broad strategy designed to implement significant reforms across a range of Victorian schools requiring improvement. This whole-of-system strategy integrates Commonwealth and State government funding to construct a Statewide Improvement Strategy.

Victoria's approach to the *Smarter Schools* National Partnerships (NPs):

- 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 NPs, 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 Koorie 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.

2. Engagement and Implementation

Victoria's approach to the *Smarter Schools* NPs is one of collaboration and integration across the three schooling sectors and the three NPs. All three sectors have been active participants in the development of the VIP and the governance arrangements supporting this work, and have committed to continuing to work collaboratively on agreed projects throughout the life of the NPs.

Cross-sectoral collaboration will be further developed and strengthened through the life of the NPs. As the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities NP has a seven year lifespan, there are many opportunities for the sectors to learn from one another and to use this opportunity to develop ongoing collaborative practices.

Government school sector

Government schools participating in the NPs will be supported through a coordinated system, regional and network response targeting the individual needs of each school or group of schools. The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has established 70 regional school networks with about 22 schools (including primary, primary/secondary, secondary, and special schools) in each regional network led by a Regional Network Leader.

System-wide approach

The resources of the *Smarter Schools* NPs and Victoria's System Improvement funding will be combined. From this pool, a small proportion of funds from the government sector share of each NP will be allocated to systemic and network-level initiatives supporting the aims of the NPs.

Strategic planning and reporting

The School Accountability and Improvement Framework provides the structure for schools to reflect on their performance through self-evaluation, and review and plan for further school improvement through their four-year school strategic plan and annual implementation plans. Based on this structure, network self-evaluation and strategic planning provide the key processes for identifying improvement strategies for schools in each network. Initiatives developed under the VIP will be reflected in network plans and will be either network-wide or targeted towards groups of schools or specific student cohorts.

Government schools will include VIP initiatives as part of the school strategic plan and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). Schools will ensure that their AIP clearly outlines how strategies developed in response to the VIP will be implemented and monitored. This will include the identification of how the resources provided through the NPs will be combined with school resources in support of the strategies. Schools will be required to have an appendix to their AIP for each year that the school is being supported through the NPs.

Early childhood development

The formation of DEECD in 2007 established a framework for seamless service provision for Victorian children and youth from birth to adulthood. This provides a sound foundation for further strengthening the links and partnerships between schooling and early childhood services and programs through the *Smarter Schools* NPs.



Catholic school sector

The diocesan structure of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Limited (CECV) enables collaborative relationships with, and the provision of, direct support to schools. Catholic schools identified for targeted support through the NPs will be engaged through consultation with their local diocesan/regional office.

Each diocese requires their schools to engage in a School Improvement Framework over a four or five year cycle. This framework provides the structure for schools to reflect on their achievements through internal self-evaluation followed by an external school review, culminating in a broad four-year school improvement plan supported by more specific annual action plans.

Targeted strategic support to schools will be provided in response to school goals detailed in the improvement plans and annual action plans. As the broad School Improvement Plan does not specify particular strategies, schools can include the VIP initiatives within their annual action plans, reflecting alignment with the school's broader goals.

Decisions concerning the engagement of schools in NP initiatives will also consider a school's capacity to initiate and manage change processes. Each diocesan office will directly support the monitoring and reporting process both at the school and diocesan level.

Independent school sector

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) member schools cater for a wide range of educational, philosophical, religious, moral, social and family values reflecting the diversity of the Victorian community. Independent schools determine their own policies on enrolment, staffing, curriculum, co-curricular activities and student welfare in the context of the legislative requirements to meet or exceed minimum standards. The diversity and independence of ISV member schools necessitates a localised, school-based approach to the NPs.



School Improvement Approach

The ISV will adopt a whole school improvement approach to the Smarter Schools NPs with resources being devoted to deliver outputs targeted to specific NPs, and to building whole school capacity across both targeted NP schools and the sector more broadly.

ISV member schools involved in the NPs will be supported through a cluster based support structure. A NP school improvement structure has been specifically designed and consists of four Literacy and Numeracy and Low SES clusters, with each cluster consisting of approximately ten schools and led by a Cluster Leader. ISV has developed strong links across clustered schools and will build on these relationships to maximise the opportunities for improved student outcomes. An additional four clusters will be created to specifically address pre-service placement outcomes through a clinical specialist model.

Each independent school's approach to the NP will be reflected in school strategic plans, developed in partnership with the ISV cluster leaders, specialist mentors and underpinned by expertise from other ISV education personnel.

Supporting specific cohorts of students

The VIP will seek to support specific cohorts of students who face additional challenges in improving educational outcomes, including Koorie students, students from ESL/refugee backgrounds, and students with disabilities.

Indigenous students

While approximately 40 per cent of Victorian Koorie students will be participating in the NPs across the three sectors, the concentration of students in each participating school is very low, consistent with the low concentrations of the Indigenous population in Victoria more generally. Victoria will utilise both existing sectoral strategies such as *Wannik – Education Strategy for Koorie Students* as well as additional NP resources to support improved Koorie outcomes.

Within the *Smarter Schools* NPs, there will be specific strategies to support Koorie students, teachers and their communities including:

- an increase in the number of Koorie engagement support officers across the system by 30%; and
- additional cultural training for literacy and numeracy coaches working with Koorie students.

Place-based initiatives

The *Smarter Schools* NPs will have a particular focus on place due to the strong relationship between socioeconomic status, educational disadvantage and geographic location. Place-based approaches will be implemented across the NPs through:

- dedicated school-community partnerships; and
- the partnering of local schools to provide a response on issues such as literacy and numeracy or homework assistance.

School-community partnerships

Victoria will establish a number of dedicated school-community partnerships by directing resources to groups or clusters of schools in geographic locations that have high levels of disadvantage. In these partnerships, the sectors will work with other government departments, local governments and the not-for-profit sector where possible to link into and leverage existing programs.

Participating Schools

In Victoria approximately 181,800 students are participating in the NPs across approximately 500 schools.

For a list of participating NP schools for the government, Catholic and independent sectors, see the *Smarter Schools* website at www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools.

School Plans

All participating Victorian schools will include NP information in their school plans. This will include information on:

- initiatives and activities schools are implementing;
- Commonwealth funding; and
- school resources applied to the NPs.

School plans will be made publicly available on school websites by March in each school year.

3. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation



Victoria has developed a Performance Measures Matrix to monitor the success of the NP initiatives in achieving long-term, sustainable improvement in student outcomes. Its key elements are:

Outputs

The most appropriate measures of reform in the early stages of implementation are outputs. These are specific to each initiative and include measures such as the number of new teaching positions and number of students with individual learning plans. These measures monitor the progress of implementation against agreed milestones.

Leading measures

Some factors from the staff, parent and student surveys undertaken in both government and Catholic schools provide appropriate leading measures of change. The independent school sector collects similar information via the ISV Parent, Staff and Student Satisfaction Surveys and its Governance Survey.

Victoria will monitor progress against the following leading measures:

- staff perception (survey) – factors include school morale, goal congruence, student motivation and student misbehaviour;
- student perceptions (survey) – factors include student morale and student distress; and
- student absence.

Achievement measures

Victoria will use the proposed Year 12 or equivalent completion measure and NAPLAN data to measure student improvement. Analysis of the NAPLAN data will include:

- data from the interventions over time;
- comparative data between participating schools with the rest of the state; and
- data on participating Literacy and Numeracy and Low SES schools, both separately and combined.

In addition, Victoria will also assess data on the following achievement measures for government schools: Teacher judgments, and the English Online Interview (P-2).

Rewards Framework – literacy and numeracy

The Victorian Rewards Framework has a set of targets for participating schools, including:

1. 32 NAPLAN targets consisting of measurement of years 3, 5, 7, and 9 against:
 - all students above the national minimum standard;
 - all students at or above the national minimum standard;
 - the mean scale score; and
 - Indigenous students at or above national minimum standards.
2. Two local measures:
 - Learning Environment Factor (measure drawn from Staff Opinion Survey); and
 - Teaching and Learning Index (composite measure from Attitudes to School Survey).

This is consistent with Victoria's whole-of-system approach to school improvement through the NPs.



Victoria has agreed to the following rewards targets for literacy and numeracy:

Mandated NAPLAN Measures	Area	Target Group	Target 2010	Target 2011
All Students Above Minimum Standard - Reading and Numeracy	Reading	Year 3	83.05%	84.70%
		Year 5	76.08%	78.35%
		Year 7	75.93%	78.35%
		Year 9	70.68%	73.95%
	Numeracy	Year 3	78.63%	80.55%
		Year 5	76.10%	78.30%
		Year 7	77.13%	79.35%
		Year 9	77.55%	80.00%
All Students At or Above National Minimum Standard - Reading and Numeracy	Reading	Year 3	92.90%	93.60%
		Year 5	90.23%	91.25%
		Year 7	92.30%	93.10%
		Year 9	88.95%	90.30%
	Numeracy	Year 3	91.10%	92.00%
		Year 5	93.50%	94.20%
		Year 7	92.25%	94.80%
		Year 9	94.55%	95.10%
Mean Scale Score (All students) - Reading and Numeracy	Reading	Year 3	412.45	418.9
		Year 5	489.180	494.95
		Year 7	529.448	535.65
		Year 9	568.50	575.30
	Numeracy	Year 3	395.63	400.95
		Year 5	482.63	487.55
		Year 7	533.20	539.10
		Year 9	579.15	585.60
Indigenous Students At or Above Minimum Standard - Reading and Numeracy	Reading	Year 3	86.05%	88.10%
		Year 5	81.78%	84.25%
		Year 7	82.95%	85.80%
		Year 9	80.03%	82.55%
	Numeracy	Year 3	84.13%	86.15%
		Year 5	87.55%	89.30%
		Year 7	85.30%	88.10%
		Year 9	88.38%	90.25%
Weighting			40%	70%
Local Measures	Target Group	Target 2010	Target 2011	
Learning Environment Factor	Staff from participating Literacy and Numeracy and Low SES NP schools	1.4% improvement on 2009 base	1.5% improvement on 2010 actual	
Teacher and Learning Index	Students from participating Literacy and Numeracy and Low SES NP schools	1.2% improvement on 2009 base	1.3% improvement on 2010 base	
Weighting			60%	30%

Rewards Framework - teacher quality

All sectors will address at least four reforms including Reward Reform Area 6 - Indigenous teachers' and school leaders' engagement with community members.

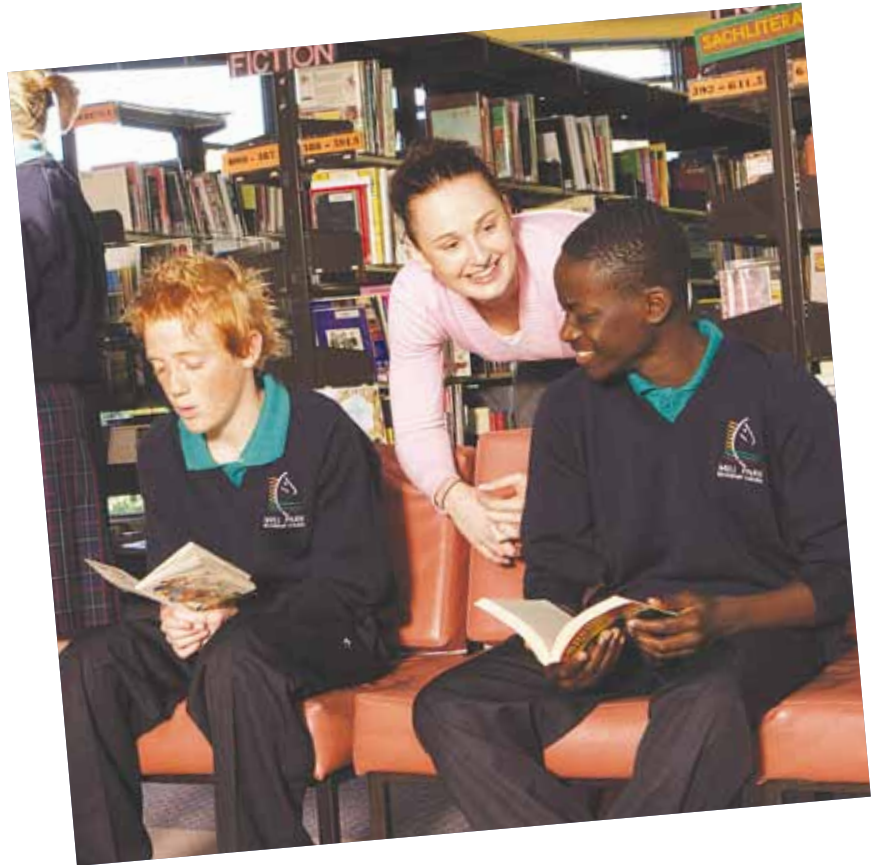
Examples of possible achievements attracting reward payments in Victoria include:

- *Improved pay dispersion to reward quality teaching* – conducting Rewarding Teacher Excellence model trials in 2010-2012;
- *Improved reward structures for teachers and school leaders who work in disadvantaged, Indigenous, rural/remote and hard-to-staff schools* – attracting and appointing high-performing principals to use their leadership skills and experience to lift performance in disadvantaged schools, and providing graduate teachers in priority schools and hard-to-staff areas/subjects with payments for each continuous year of employment in a rural/remote government school;
- *Improved in-school support for teachers and leaders, particularly in disadvantaged, Indigenous, remote and hard-to-staff schools* – conducting field trials in schools that will explore models for teachers to work with other professionals and paraprofessionals to deliver a wider range of learning experiences and to allow teachers to focus on areas where they have unique skills;
- *Increased school-based decision-making about recruitment, staffing, budget* – implementing an enhanced approach to school improvement and a performance culture, including: clear standards, strong accountabilities, and urgent assistance for schools where students are not meeting expected standards;
- *Continual improvement program for all teachers* - broaden and deepen existing performance and development culture initiatives and deployment of ICT tools;
- *Indigenous teachers' and school leaders' engagement with community members* – redesigning the roles and responsibilities of the Koorie workforce to ensure high-level support for individual Koorie students and families, with a particular focus on school-family engagement.

Evaluation

Victoria will undertake specific evaluations of initiatives relating to the key reform areas under the Bilateral Agreement. The results will contribute to continued evidence-based reform in Victoria, and the dissemination of best-practice to the Australian Government and other states and territories. Victoria will also support and contribute to the national evaluation of the *Smarter Schools* NPs.

4. Reform Priorities



As far as possible, Victoria has sought to integrate the partnership initiatives across the *Smarter Schools* NPs to create a cohesive and comprehensive approach to school improvement. To achieve this, Victoria has focused on three key reform priorities:

Leadership and teacher capacity

Ensuring success in delivering improved outcomes across the VIP is reliant on the involvement of people with expertise. The delivery of high-leverage, high impact initiatives across the NPs requires specialist skills and knowledge, ranging from literacy and numeracy experts, to leadership, mentoring and coaching expertise, assessment and data managers, community engagement experts and others. The VIP therefore includes a significant emphasis on workforce capability strategies at state and sector levels to ensure quality delivery at the network and school level.

Recognition and response to individual learning needs

The VIP reflects the importance of all students being engaged in their learning. By recognising and responding to individual learning needs, student outcomes can be improved across the participating NP schools. The delivery of initiatives such as offering programs which 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.

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 will have a particular focus on engaging parents, community and business in schools and students' learning.

National reform initiatives

Victoria is well advanced in a number of reform areas within each of the NPs, and expects to continuously improve rather than introduce major initiatives. However, in other reform areas Victoria will benefit from a more intensive reform focus.

In the Teacher Quality NP in particular, there are a number of initiatives identified for national reform effort, including:

- nationally agreed process for accrediting/certifying Accomplished and Leading Teachers;
- national Teacher Professional Standards Framework for teachers and school leader standards;
- national consistency in pre-service teacher education course accreditation; and
- national consistency in the initial registration of graduate teachers.

Victoria is leading the National Standards Sub-group which is providing advice to Ministers and the new Board of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership on these priority areas. Victoria is also providing advice on strategies to facilitate quality professional experience (practicum) placement systems and the establishment of school centres for teacher excellence.

Victoria and Queensland are co-hosting the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. The Institute will have strong links with the leadership institutes of all other jurisdictions and sectors including the Victorian Bastow Institute for Educational Leadership.

In addition, Victoria will also be involved in the national reform work on:

- school performance improvement;
- strategies to engage parents in schooling in low SES schools;
- the extended school service model;
- diagnostic assessment of literacy/numeracy; and
- leadership development strategies.

5. Smarter Schools Initiatives



Leadership and teacher capacity

Building leadership capacity (coaching, professional learning)

The three school sectors agree that school improvement needs school leaders with strong knowledge of effective teaching methods.

Current and aspiring school leaders will participate in professional learning leadership programs on literacy and numeracy leadership, effective use of data, school partnerships, different approaches for targeted school groups, and cross-cultural communication and understanding. They will also participate in post-graduate leadership study and work with principal leadership coaches.

Building teacher capacity (in-school support/coaches)

All three school sectors have a common commitment to developing pedagogical knowledge and the skills of teachers and curriculum leaders. Opportunities for coaching and support will be provided in all sectors to strengthen the capacity of teachers to engage with the particular learning and development needs of their school community.

The government school sector will focus on the training and deployment of school-based literacy and numeracy coaches. Coaches will work with classroom teachers and literacy and numeracy leaders in schools. The focus of the initiative will be on building the capacity of classroom teachers to effectively assess and monitor student progress and to deliver programs that are differentiated according to student need.

In the Catholic school sector, coaches will work with principals, leadership teams, school literacy/numeracy leaders, and classroom teachers to support and facilitate improvements in teaching and learning of literacy/numeracy. Their work will include supporting school leadership teams in school improvement planning and implementation processes for literacy/numeracy with a focus on parental engagement, supporting literacy/numeracy leaders and teachers in tracking and monitoring students' progress and planning for student needs.

The independent school sector will provide in-school coaching/mentoring support and professional learning opportunities for school-based curriculum leaders and teachers. Literacy/numeracy and student wellbeing/community engagement mentors will coordinate classroom support and action research projects.



Building teacher capacity (professional learning opportunities)

Effective and well-trained teachers can support all students to make progress in literacy and numeracy. Each school sector will provide professional learning opportunities to develop teacher capacity.

In the government sector, school activity will be coordinated at regional network level with identified schools targeted for support. Funds for teacher release will support teachers' participation in school or network-based professional learning and planning. This will include working in professional teams to plan for future teaching, attending local, on-going professional development, and working with literacy and/or numeracy experts at the school to build discipline and pedagogical content knowledge.

In the Catholic sector, professional learning opportunities include in-school, out-of-school and cluster-based activities. These programs will focus on the specific needs of students at different stages of schooling. Teachers will develop and refine their knowledge of teaching methods to improve learning outcomes in their classrooms.

The independent sector will provide targeted professional learning to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the needs of all students, particularly Indigenous and ESL students and students with disabilities.

Improve school access to high quality teachers

Schools, particularly those from low SES communities, will be provided with improved access to quality teachers. This initiative will provide increased opportunities to employ, reward and retain high quality teachers, and school-university partnerships to access high performing low SES schools for mentoring and professional learning activities.

All sectors will participate in school-university partnerships to improve pre-service teacher education. These partnerships will provide a strong foundation for all sectors to develop and support selected schools as School Centres for Excellence to produce a new generation of interventionist teachers, capable of using data to address the needs of individual learners.

The Catholic sector will work to develop a partnership with the Australian Catholic University, and the independent sector will access high quality teachers through partnerships with Victorian universities, and ISV's Teacher Performance-based pay project.

In the government sector, the Teach for Australia program will recruit high-calibre graduates who would not otherwise have considered teaching to make a two-year commitment to teaching in areas of disadvantage.

National standards and accreditation

Victoria is leading national work on the development of national standards for teachers and school leaders, a nationally agreed assessment process for accrediting high quality teachers, and options for a national accreditation system for pre-service teacher education. This national work will also develop strategies for quality professional experience (practicum) placement systems, the establishment of school centres for teacher excellence to support pre-service and entry-level teachers and the development of nationally consistent registration across all levels of teaching.

Rewarding excellence – teacher performance pay

Victoria plans to trial three models of school-based and teacher-based rewards over the 2010-2013 school years in government and independent schools:

- a Teacher Rewards model where an annual bonus would be paid to top performing teachers (government sector);
- a Teacher Rewards model which builds on a 2009 pilot, where candidates from participating schools would be assessed against criteria by an external panel (independent sector); and
- a School Rewards model where payments would be made to the top 20 per cent of Victorian government schools that demonstrate the greatest improvement on a broad-based measure of performance over the assessment period (government sector).

Pathways into teaching

Building on existing Victorian programs and previous experience, a series of programs will create new pathways into teaching and address teacher shortages in particular subjects and locations.

The Career Change initiative enables 90 professionals and tradespeople with relevant experience to enter teaching in Victorian Government schools over the next three years.

Special Education scholarships will address the shortage of qualified special education teachers, enabling current and graduating teachers to complete an approved teaching qualification in Special Education.

Graduate Pathways will provide outstanding eligible graduates with appropriate study in a subject area of need with scholarship support and employment opportunities.

The Indigenous Education Workers Enhancement Program responds to an ongoing shortage in the supply of Indigenous teachers. It will provide a career enhancement pathway for education workers, including recognition of qualifications, work experience, and appropriate support to complete a teaching qualification.

Indigenous Scholarships will also provide supported pathways for outstanding candidates enrolled in a pre-service education course.

Wider workforce trials

This initiative will examine different approaches to workforce reform through the use of a wider, more efficient and more skilled workforce. It will investigate innovative and sustainable models of workforce organisation and improved teaching effectiveness.

Field trials will be conducted in 35 government primary, secondary and special schools. These will explore models for teachers to work with other professionals and paraprofessionals to deliver a wider range of learning experiences and allow teachers to focus on areas where they have unique skills.



Recognition and response to individual learning needs

Improved monitoring of student performance information

Schools will be assisted to more effectively monitor individual student performance and to decide when and how best to intervene before a student falls behind expected outcomes or becomes at risk of early school leaving. This initiative will improve the use of literacy and numeracy performance information to identify where support is needed at all levels.

Across all three school sectors, this initiative will equip leaders, principals, and teachers with strategies to monitor student progress and identify and assess students at risk of academic and school disengagement. In the government sector, this will support more accurate targeting of resources to schools and students with the highest need, while in the Catholic and independent sectors, particular attention will be given to implementing evidence-based assessment and intervention strategies.

Timely student intervention and support

Schools will be assisted to develop individual education and pathway strategies focussed on the needs and circumstances of students at educational risk, at risk of homelessness or homeless, refugee students, Indigenous students, and students with complex needs.

In the government sector, a variety of school-based interventions will be trialled.

In the Catholic school sector, a numeracy intervention strategy will provide advice and professional learning opportunities for teachers in year P-4, and the implementation of evidence-based early intervention literacy strategies, such as Reading Recovery, will accelerate students' literacy learning and support students identified to be at greatest risk.

The independent school sector will consider a range of best-practice, evidence-based literacy and numeracy interventions, according to their appropriateness for particular school and student groups. Possible intervention programs will have been trialled in pilot programs implemented across independent schools prior to 2010-2011.

School-community engagement and extended schools

Enable and enhance the capacity of families to be engaged in learning

Research shows that greater parental involvement in education encourages more positive attitudes towards school, improves homework habits, reduces absenteeism and dropout, and enhances academic achievement. Accordingly, advice will be developed on how parents can support the literacy and numeracy development of their children, maximising the involvement of families in their child's learning and enhancing both the school and home as learning environments. All sectors will collaborate to share knowledge and experiences in this area, and work on common projects across clusters, areas, and regions.

In the government sector, this initiative will concurrently build the capacity of schools to develop strategies that will better engage families to be more involved in learning, including using the Extended School Hub model to pilot a focused effort in at least one site.



The Catholic sector will appoint Family School Partnership Convenors to work across schools to promote enhanced school/parent relationships. Convenors will seek partnerships with community-based agencies, businesses, and the tertiary sector to create opportunities to foster school/family connections, and facilitate school/family partnership activities.

The independent sector will employ student well-being and community engagement mentors to enhance and extend opportunities to engage families in the learning experiences of their children and provide opportunities for all family members to access and engage with learning experiences.

Enable and strengthen school-community/business partnerships to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes to extend schools

Community/business partnerships can provide co-ordinated and comprehensive approaches to redressing disadvantage experienced by students both within schools and the broader community.

Working in partnership, schools will be connected with businesses and the community to address barriers to students achieving their educational potential. Collaboration across school sectors will enable sharing of successful partnership strategies, and the identification of opportunities to work together with agencies, organisations and businesses in various clusters, areas and regions on cross-sector projects.

The government sector will develop strategic partnerships with business and non-government organisations, employ a Network Partnership Coordinator and Network Outreach Worker, and pilot a model of extended school hubs that will coordinate partnerships with business, local government and community agencies.

In the Catholic sector, this initiative will enhance the capacity of families to be engaged in learning. It provides further opportunities to develop models, including the School as Core Social Centre model, and direct the approach to targeted schools and clusters. Family School Partnership Convenors will be appointed, to be centrally coordinated by School Community Partnerships Coordinators.

In the independent sector, schools will strengthen and extend relationships with community organisations, businesses, and tertiary institutions, supported by student well-being and community engagement mentors working in each school cluster.

For sector specific information on the Victorian approach to the *Smarter Schools* National Partnerships, go to:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/nationalpartnerships/default.htm>

