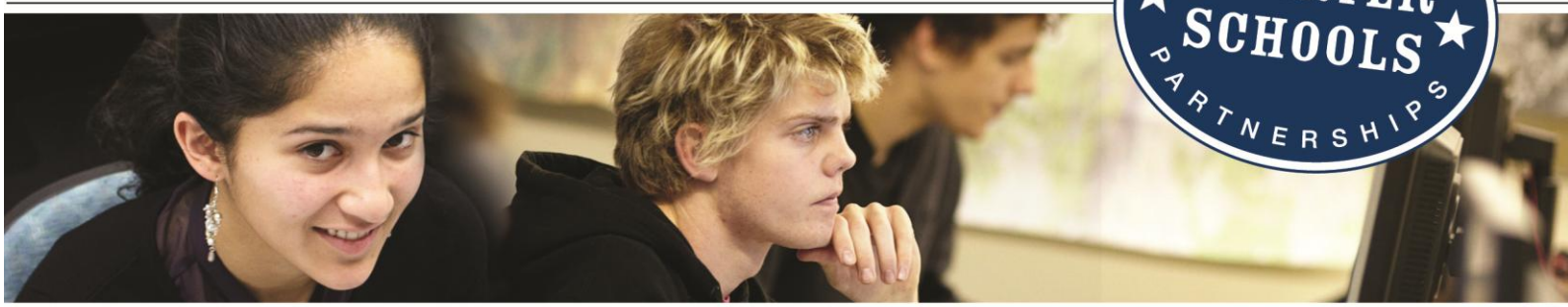




Australian Government



## **SMARTER SCHOOLS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

### **INTEGRATED REPORTING**

**COVERING**

**IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY**

**LOW SES SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

**LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

## **Victoria Annual Report for 2011 (due 30 April 2012)**

- Section 1**      ***Overview/Executive Summary of the Victorian Reform Agenda***
- Section 2**      ***Leadership and Teacher Capacity Reform Area***
- Section 3**      ***Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs Reform Area***
- Section 4**      ***School-Community Engagement and Extended Schools Reform Area***
- Section 5**      ***Research and Evaluation***
- Section 6**      ***Milestone Reporting***
- Section 7**      ***Performance Indicators for Identified Cohorts***
- Section 8**      ***State Performance Measures***

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Annual Report for 2011 covers Smarter Schools National Partnership (SSNP) funded activity for the 2011 calendar year – 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011.

The Annual Report also focuses on key highlights and achievements, case studies, and achievement against performance measures. The report also provides important information on SSNP funded activities to support the improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Annual Report provides an opportunity for states and territories to highlight reforms that are effective with supporting data and evidence, as well as to showcase successful strategies that are having an impact on improving educational outcomes for participating schools and students in a range of environments and contexts.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

The Annual Report has eight sections. Detailed instructions are provided in each section of the Annual Report.

- Section 1 - Overview/ Executive Summary
- Section 2 - Leadership and Teacher Capacity
- Section 3 - Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs
- Section 4 - School-Community Engagement and Extended Schools
- Section 5 - Research and Evaluation
- Section 6 - Milestone Reporting (not applicable to Annual Report)
- Section 7 - Performance Indicators for Identified Cohorts
- Section 8 - State Performance Measures

Sections 1 to 5 will provide a narrative description of the progress to date for each Reform Area. It is expected that input in these sections will include qualitative and quantitative information, as appropriate.

Section 6 includes tabulated responses to the relevant milestones indicated in state and territory Bilateral Agreements/Final Implementation Plans. 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 Reports, and not in the April Annual Reports. Accordingly, Victoria does not have any milestones to report on for the 2011 Annual Report.

Section 7 sets out performance indicators relating to Clause 20 of the Low SES NP Agreement which provides for reporting on outcomes for identified student cohorts.

Section 8 lists state/territory based performance measures for the reform areas identified in the state/territory Bilateral Agreement/Final Implementation Plan.

Note: Where quantitative information is included, the information should be clearly specified as:

- Accrued during the reporting period, e.g. 2011 calendar year
- A cumulative number accrued over more than one reporting period (please specify).

## Section 1 – Overview – Executive Summary (2-4 pages)

### 2011 National Partnership Overview – 1 January to 31 December 2011

This is Victoria's third 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 2011 and 31 December 2011. The Annual Report highlights Victoria's successes in 2011, 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, students with English as a Second Language (ESL) and students with a refugee background, 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.

Under this model, Victoria focuses on three key Reform Priorities which 11 initiatives 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.

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

### 2011 Significant Highlights/Achievements

## **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 (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.

Highlight activities for 2011 under this Reform Priority are:

- In the government sector, Victoria continues to demonstrate national leadership through Teach for Australia. The leadership capacity of a number of the Associates has been recognised in a number of the schools, as Associates have been successful in applying for leadership positions.
- In the Catholic Sector, the 360° Leadership Diagnostic Tools received overwhelmingly positive feedback from leaders in Catholic schools. The tools comprise of a number of elements, providing feedback on Leadership Style, Work Culture and Dialogue Effectiveness. In 2011, 220 leaders accessed the 360° leadership diagnostic data.
- In the independent sector, the ongoing coaching and professional mentoring of Principals by the Principal Advisors had a marked impact on the improvement of SSNP school leadership in 2011. The 4 Principal Advisors spent a total of 1680 coaching/mentoring hours with school leaders in 2011, including discussions on the development of school strategic plans, Teaching and Learning Plans and using data to determine future directions.

## **2. Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs**

The 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 2011 under this Reform Priority are:

- In the government sector, an updated literacy and numeracy 6-18 month strategy has been widely used by schools to review their assessment schedules, resulting in regions reporting a more consistent and systematic approach to assessment and to the collection and monitoring of performance data in schools.
- In the Catholic sector, all SSNP schools have addressed the need for intervention programs which are targeted and reflect a tailored response to the needs of all students, founded on a universal continuum of intervention.
- In the independent sector, there has been an increasing take up of platforms such as EBO, e5, PLCs and Cognitive Coaching, which teachers have been using in collaboration with colleagues to improve their classroom teaching, and identify and respond to student needs.

### **3. School-Community Engagement and Extended Schools**

While many 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 SSNPs have a particular focus on engaging parents, communities and businesses in schools and students' learning.

Highlight activities for 2011 under this Reform Priority are:

- In the government sector, a series of workshops for all Victorian low SES schools have been delivered to strengthen schools' capacity to identify, promote and implement good practice in family engagement. Schools have been supported to assess, plan and implement effective strategies to promote increased family engagement.
- In the Catholic sector, 25 Family School Partnership Convenors were engaged across the 46 participating schools and were involved in ongoing Professional Learning opportunities at local, regional and systemic levels during 2011.
- In the independent sector, a total of 2266 hours of coaching and mentoring has been provided by the Community Engagement Advisors, to improve school-community engagement in SSNP schools. They have assisted school leaders and teachers to acquire the knowledge and skills to build stronger community links and extend the school.

#### **Sustainability of Reforms**

- In the government sector, much of the 2011 activity has involved localised improvement strategies specifically designed to maximise the potential for sustainable improvement. For example, teacher coaching often involves the training of existing teachers to perform a coaching role within their school. At the system level, sustainable structures and strategies, such as communities, networks and partnerships, pathways and models of practice have been developed. These partnerships will help to ensure that reforms are sustained.
- In the Catholic sector emphasis has been placed on the development of assessment practice within schools. This, together with the development and implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework will further enhance the sector's capability to sustain effective practice.
- In the independent sector, advisors have been coaching leaders and teachers to take increasing responsibility for the implementation of the interventions in the most effective way for their particular school. By supporting schools to use collaborative platforms such as EBO, e5 and PLCs, there is an expectation that teachers will share knowledge and skills to improve student learning outcomes.

#### **Student Engagement and Attendance**

- In the government sector, professional learning through the Bastow coach training programs has supported in-school coaches during 2011. The coaches have had a significant impact on the

professional culture and pedagogical practice of teachers in their schools. Coaches reported an increased confidence in leading pedagogical and content focused discussions with colleagues. This has resulted in enhanced professional trust, and pedagogical content knowledge and skills. As a result, teachers have developed a deeper understanding of student needs, curriculum design, using student data to inform planning, target-setting and implementation. In many instances, coaching has resulted in a marked increase in student engagement and learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

- In the independent sector, 14 schools implemented the Evidence Based Observation program (in addition to the 14 schools from 2010). The initial data and evidence gathered of these classroom observations of teacher practice and student learning shows positive indicators, particularly in regard to de-privatising classrooms and creating an opportunity for collaborative professional conversations of discursive practice. In one particular school in Frankston North, a marked increase in the level of observed student engagement with classroom work was noted, with 45% of students engaged 100% of the time in Term II, up from just 16% of students in Term I.

#### **Support for Disadvantaged Student Cohorts (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with a disability, LBOTE/ESL students etc)**

- In the government sector, Reading Recovery professional learning and cultural awareness training has assisted teachers to better support indigenous students and LBOTE/ESL students.
- In the 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. In addition, Individual Learning Plans have been utilised to assist in the monitoring of students with additional learning needs.
- The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) strategy in 2011 involved the engagement of a new cohort of 9 Low SES school communities – 6 primary schools and 3 secondary schools (4480 students, 597 staff and 3648 families). Key school staff participated in intensive Professional Learning and received coaching support from a University Mentor throughout 2011. The formal evaluation of this cohort indicated these school communities demonstrated a broader understanding of SEL, and included the importance of developing the whole child and the essential link to student learning and achievement. Seven schools from the first cohort, in 2010, participated in a follow up Professional Learning day in 2011, reflecting on progress since their formal involvement in the initiative and furthering their development in leading SEL in school communities.
- The ‘Partnership Resources for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Catholic School Communities’ was produced and disseminated to the 46 Low SES schools engaged in both the SSNP SEL and Family School Partnership initiatives as part of the ongoing work in drawing links between building strong family school partnerships and providing specific support to parents in their engagement in their child’s learning.
- In the independent sector, advisors work with ESL specialists, support teachers, aides and classroom teachers to develop appropriate language programs for the significant number of students from recent arrival, refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds in SSNP schools.

#### **Cross Sector Collaboration**

At the commencement of the SSNPs, Victoria established excellent cross-sectoral relationships to provide effective governance over the three Reform Priority areas and the implementation of SSNP activities. The *Smarter Schools* National Partnerships Working Group (SSNPWG) continued to meet regularly during 2011. The SSNPWG considers matters of importance relating to SSNP implementation and assessment, such as the renegotiation of the 2012 Literacy and Numeracy NP rewards targets, and provides advice to Victoria's Cross-Sectoral Committee (CSC). The CSC is an executive-level forum, comprising the heads of the schooling sectors, which provides oversight and the authorising environment for all cross-sectoral activities and communications. The SSNPWG and CSC provide the overarching framework and leadership for cross-sectoral collaboration in Victoria.



## Section 2

### Reform Area 1: Leadership and Teacher Capacity

#### 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 (Bastow). Teachers and leaders in NP schools are given priority to participate in leadership coaching and professional learning programs offered by the Bastow to build their leadership capacity.

*Coaching for the Principal Class* was implemented in November 2011 to further develop the leadership skills of principals. A total of 199 assistant principals, acting principals and principals in their early years of the role are participating across all regions and school types. Induction sessions and one-to-one coaching sessions commenced in November. Participants have indicated through

evaluation that they have gained significant skills, strategies and insights regarding effective leadership in the initial phase of the coaching program.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/proflearning/principal/leadershipdev.htm>

The *Principal Preparation Program* is funding a total of 40 six-month internships for high potential principal aspirants over three years. Nineteen interns completed the 2011 program. Participants engaged in a professional learning program and a principal placement in their host school. Interns participated in the fourth and final workshop in December, and shared their leadership growth and achievements during the internship period. Host school principals attended a debrief session and provided feedback on the 2011 experience.

Internal and external evaluations of the *Principal Preparation Program* indicated substantial leadership development on behalf of both the interns and the host school principals. Interns built their knowledge and understanding of the role of the principalship, and brought a fresh point of view to the role which stimulated, challenged and reinvigorated the work of host principals. The rate of intern promotions during and at the conclusion of the program has also been high.

An updated Literacy and numeracy 6–18 month strategy: P–10 improvement schedule for school leaders was published in 2011 to support school principals and their leadership teams to work with teachers to ensure there is a shared focus on, and approach to, literacy and numeracy improvement across the school.

The second National Partnership schools' forum was held on 7 March 2011 and was fully subscribed, with over 500 attendees. Attendees included principals and literacy and numeracy leaders from National Partnerships schools, other nominated schools participating in targeted literacy and numeracy interventions and regional staff supporting the implementation of National Partnerships. The Forum aimed to raise awareness, stimulate discussion and generate action for literacy and numeracy improvement, and offered school leadership teams a differentiated program with a focus on moving from theory to practice. Forum resources, including presentations and digital stories, are available at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/litnum/secretariat/forummarch2011.htm>.

Across the regions, National Partnership schools are continuing to participate in targeted leadership programs, with a particular focus on building instructional leadership and the capacity to effectively use data to lead improvement. Support provided to principals and leadership teams is tailored to their local school needs, for example:

- the use of leadership coaches, executive principals, consultants and critical friends
- the completion of Instructional Rounds training and Learning Walks, focusing on classroom observation and feedback
- participation in professional learning programs, including at the network level and at the system level through Bastow programs such as Leaders in the Making, Coaching for Experienced Principals and Mentoring for First Time Principals
- the appointment of assistant principals and leading teachers.

Regions have reported an increased focus on effective instructional leadership and improving student learning outcomes, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. In many cases, leadership development has been integrated with existing accountability mechanisms and planning processes. Schools have put structures and processes in place to build the capacity of leaders, including the

establishment of school improvement and professional learning teams. Use of data, peer observation and learning has been embedded across schools and resulted in a professional learning community characterised by a culture of continuous reflection and improvement.

### *Catholic sector*

The Catholic sector continued the implementation of a number of reform initiatives during 2011 building teacher and leader capacity to initiate broad strategic school improvement, to drive student performance and to sustain improvement.

Progress and impact includes:

- The Catholic Leadership Centre progressed further in 2011, with a program of activities to be designed and promoted by October 2012. The centre will deliver accredited masters courses in Catholic leadership and professional development for teachers in the Catholic sector, including a Master of Leadership, delivered by Australian Catholic University (ACU) and non-credentialed leadership courses.
- The 360° Leadership Diagnostic Tools founded on the *Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice* (CECV) received overwhelmingly positive feedback from leaders in Catholic schools. The tools comprise a number of elements, providing feedback on Leadership Style, Work Culture and Dialogue Effectiveness. In 2011, 220 leaders accessed the 360° leadership diagnostic data.
- The Leadership Coaching Strategy continued to expand in 2011. After the promotion and training of coaches in 2010, there was a growing appreciation of the advantages of utilising a principal coach to support principals' reflection on their own leadership capability and the necessary actions for sustained school improvement. 527 hours of coaching was provided to principals across Victoria in 2011. In addition a further 9 experienced principals were trained as coaches.
- In 2011, there were 85 participants engaged in the Aspirant Principal Program across the Catholic sector in Victoria, 43 of these were newly enrolled in 2011 and 42 continued from 2010. The 360° Leadership Diagnostic data, integral to this program, supported the implementation of a personalised leadership development plan. A further analysis of shifts in cohort data will be retained in 2012.
- Sponsored study for 148 staff, including Principals, Deputy Principals, Student Wellbeing Leaders, Year Level Coordinators and teachers completed units towards a Masters in Educational Leadership at Australian Catholic University (ACU) or the Master of Education (Wellbeing in Inclusive Schooling) at Australian Catholic University (ACU). The cohort of 14 staff who commenced in 2010 completed their second year of the course, a further 6 staff commenced the course in 2011. Credentialed learning has contributed to building the capacity of key staff in Low SES school communities, enhancing their ability to develop a strategic approach to student wellbeing and family-school-community partnerships to enhance learning and achievement.

### *Independent sector*

The focus in achieving this Initiative has been on building the knowledge, skills and understandings of the Principals and leaders in each school as lead learners. This has been achieved by systematic coaching from the Principal Advisors, to develop their skill sets in using data to set strategic directions and to set the educational agenda of their school. Principals have been coached to develop strategic

plans, and teaching and learning plans. These activities have been successful in assisting school leaders to build sustainable capacity, regardless of the context and the location, although the schools that are isolated tend to need the most support. As a consequence, Advisors visit these schools more regularly.

There was an increase in schools' capacities to take on board programs to improve their effectiveness, and there is clear evidence of the growing confidence and ability of school leaders to implement change themselves, with decreased levels of Advisors' support. The evidence to support this progress comes from two surveys that were undertaken in February, 2012, one for Principals and one for Teachers.

Examples of reform activities which have made a significant impact on student achievement and the teacher workforce in 2011 include:

- Advisors have analysed the school's LEAD Reports with Principals to determine issues relating to governance, setting future directions for teaching and learning, curriculum innovations, student wellbeing programs and relationships with parents and the wider community. The sections in the LEAD Report include Governance, Parents, Staff, Students, and Year 12 Exit Surveys. The Report comprises 4 parts, Overall School Performance, Domains of School Effectiveness, Stakeholder Perspectives and Demographics. Individual school results are then benchmarked against data obtained from schools which participated in LEAD in 2010. 14 SSNP schools undertook the surveys in 2011. The evidence from the Reports was used by Principals, supported by Principal Advisors, to set targets for school improvement, which can be measured against data gained from future LEAD surveys that they undertake.
- Support was provided for all Principals to develop strategic plans for their schools in 2011. One Principal Advisor coached 3 Principals to achieve future measurable strategic plans using the *Strategic Navigation Process*. In 4 other schools, the leadership and executive teams were coached through the Agile Project Management Process, providing a template and action plan to deliver large scale projects in their schools. Examples of projects undertaken include the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, a whole school Review and the development and implementation of teacher chronicles and weekly/monthly Planners. Cognitive Coaching techniques have also been used to develop aspiring school leaders in schools, using the AITSL Principal Standard as a benchmark.
- School leaders have been assisted by Advisors to set the educational agenda in their individual schools using tools such as Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams, e5, Cognitive Coaching and the Evidence Based Observation Tool (EBO) – a classroom observation and coaching technique. Analysis of the data has been of great use to Principals in identifying issues, and then planning strategies to address them.
- In September, 8 SSNP schools participated in a pilot program of the American Productivity and Quality Center's (APQC) Process and Performance Management approach (PPM) to school improvement. Training of the leadership teams from the 8 schools in the Pilot program, *Southern Cross*, took place at The Development Centre at ISV for a week in September 2011. Schools were assisted with funding for their involvement in the *Southern Cross* Pilot.

The PPM approach to school improvement has been used successfully in the USA for the past 10 years with measurable results. Each school identified a Project they wished to pursue using the PPM approach. Examples included:

- Improving the Professional Learning process (Christ the King Anglican College, Cobram)

- Improving retention rates (Albury Wodonga Community College)
- Strategically expanding the use of ICT (Lighthouse Christian College, Keysborough)
- Tracking student attendance (St Anthony's Coptic Orthodox College, Frankston)

Small teams of 3- 5 staff from each school were trained by APQC staff from the USA in the steps of the PPM framework. Webinars and follow-up skype phone calls from the APQC leaders have supported the schools as they work through the process back in their schools. The projects should be completed by the end of Term I 2012.

- 19 new Principals in the sector participated in the residential *Exploring Leadership for New Principals* Seminars held over 8 days from February to October. There were 3 new SSNP Principals participating in the program. Opportunities for “new” Principals in 2011 are extended to the 2012 Leadership program.

#### 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 2011, 81 specialists participated in the *Primary Mathematics Specialists* program (three specialists per school in three schools from one network in each region). Twenty seven schools participated, and specialists from the original cohort were employed where possible. 19 new specialists from across the 27 schools undertook a five day professional learning program in March 2011 to build their disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge in mathematics, leading professional learning and using data to inform planning.

The external evaluators of the initiative, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, are currently collecting perception data through evaluation surveys and interviews with Regional Network Leaders, principals, specialists and teachers being supported by specialists. RMIT will also provide an analysis of student data from 2010 and will continue to collect data during 2011 and 2012 to evaluate the impact of the initiative on student learning outcomes.

The Primary Mathematics Specialists initiative is being continued in 2012 to build teachers' capacity to improve mathematics learning outcomes for primary students.

Professional learning through the Bastow coach training programs has supported in-school coaches during 2011. The Literacy Coach Training Program had 31 participants from National Partnership schools and the Numeracy Coach Training Program had 23. The Coach Training Programs consisted of a series of eight full day workshops, an Ultranet design space with online learning communities, pre-reading and in-between session tasks, needs analysis survey, data collection, network group meetings and individual school visits by the providers.

The coaches have had a significant impact on the professional culture and pedagogical practice of teachers in their schools. Coaches reported an increased confidence in leading pedagogical and content focused discussions with colleagues. This has resulted in enhanced professional trust, and pedagogical content knowledge and skills. As a result, teachers have developed a deeper understanding of student needs, curriculum design, using student data to inform planning,

target-setting and implementation. In many instances, coaching has resulted in a marked increase in student engagement and learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

Regions are implementing a range of targeted in-school support programs designed to build teacher capacity in National Partnership schools, particularly around literacy and numeracy instruction. Across regions, a consistent focus on improving teachers' pedagogical knowledge and ability to differentiate instruction effectively has been established. During 2011, coaches worked in classrooms with individual teachers to guide, instruct and support improved teaching practices. Coaches worked with teams of teachers, building their collective capacity, and establishing professional learning teams.

### *Catholic Sector*

In the Catholic school sector the focus of this initiative has been on strengthening the capacity of teachers to engage with the particular learning and development needs of their school community.

- School-based (internal) and external coaches continued to support Principals, leadership teams, school Literacy and Numeracy Leaders, and classroom teachers in the 75 LNNP schools.
- During 2011, schools were challenged to build on improvements gained through their continued involvement in the SSNPs. Sustaining the reform momentum has been critical to ongoing improvement. The appointment of expert working coaches has been retained and has continued as a primary source of support to schools, working alongside the learning leaders. Principals reported that participation in the SSNPs has facilitated a change of culture in schools, disseminating key findings beyond literacy, into other school domains, including supporting teacher pedagogy, collegial discussions, identification of school priorities and analysing the effectiveness of intervention strategies deployed by schools.

### *Independent Sector*

The independent sector's model of coaching and mentoring in schools has been valued by participating teachers, as can be seen in the surveys. The regular visits have built knowledge of previously unknown strategies (such as PLC, EBO, e5, Cognitive Coaching, using formative assessment data to analyse student performance), developed skills to enable teachers to share Professional Learning acquired with colleagues, and given them confidence to undertake objective, professional conversations with colleagues. Schools have become more focussed on ways to achieve more effective student learning outcomes as the teachers' capacities have been built. Again, the aim is to build sustainable change in school improvement.

There have been 3 significant platforms to effect change in schools and evidence of the progress that the platforms have achieved in building teacher capacity in SSNP schools can be seen in the surveys.

- *EBO classroom observation and coaching tool.* In 2011, there were 28 schools using this technique to improve classroom practice, with some 70 teachers having been trained at The Development Centre. The training is for 4 days and involves small volunteer teams of 2-4 teachers from a school learning the technique of observing colleagues as they teach, recording data relating to teacher practice (style of pedagogy – discursive/traditional) and level of student cognitive engagement. An objective, reflective coaching discussion takes place after the lesson and the observed teacher sets goals for future improved practice. The colleagues then swap roles and the other teacher's classroom practice is observed. Training in the tool helps teachers to reflect on best practice and plan for sustainable change and it opens up

classrooms and empowers teachers to share ideas on student learning outcomes. Costs of training, replacement CRT costs and on-going (0.2FTE) CRT costs to support the observation and professional conversation program in schools for the year have been funded.

- *The e5 Train the Trainer program* is a series of workshops designed to equip teachers with skills to deliver school-based professional learning sessions in their own schools. These sessions include practical and engaging activities that demonstrate what constitutes high quality teaching instruction and what effective teachers do. It is a program that empowers teachers in schools to develop skills that can be used after the funding life of the SSNP program. In 2011, 17 schools were using the e5 program, with a mix of small/large, metro/regional schools. Several of the schools have a significant number of LBOTE students enrolled.

#### 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.

DEECD's Digital Content Strategy is engaging 43 schools to develop a *Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) level 4, 5 or 6 Mathematics eBookbox* (an online collection of relevant research and quality resources organised around learning goals & focus questions). The evidence-based and quality endorsed resources will be available to all schools via the Ultranet, and regular Elluminate online conferencing sessions focusing on using the Ultranet to support enhanced learning outcomes will be provided in each region.

Feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive in terms of the usefulness of the eBookboxes as a starting point for planning, and the resource development process itself as a professional learning and sharing exercise. eBookboxes for English Level 4 VELS were developed in 2011 for publication in 2012. The first endorsed eBookboxes will be available to all schools through the Ultranet early in 2012.

A trial is being undertaken to expand literacy and numeracy professional learning programs by developing materials to be delivered through online learning modules. The first release of the project, *Improving Student Reading: A Professional Learning Course*, was opened to all registered Ultranet users in November 2011. Currently the site has 474 members. Additional footage and support materials will be added to the site with a secondary and special education focus in early 2012.

*The Supporting New Teachers' Practice Program* (formerly the *Preliminary Training and Induction for New and Beginning Teachers program*) supports the needs of first year teachers. In 2011, 277 beginning teachers participated in the program. Participants completed an orientation process in April and commenced the program in May, with a two day workshop held in six locations across the state. Mentors attended the first day of the program and worked with their beginning teachers to critically reflect upon their practice. The second workshop was conducted online in June and focused on assessment and reporting; a focus topic identified as a result of Workshop 1. The final workshop was

conducted online in October. Australian Teacher of the Year, Lyn Nelson, shared her knowledge, experience and passion for teaching with participants. The final optional online session was offered to participants also in October. This session focused on Student Wellbeing. Participants had an opportunity to discuss and unpack some of the wellbeing issues that they faced in their first year of teaching, and examined ways of setting up their learning spaces in 2012 that will promote a stronger focus on student wellbeing.

Participants highly valued the opportunity to network with others as part of the program. Beginning teachers consistently comment on the usefulness of the two day face-to-face workshop, which mentors also attended. They found the opportunity to talk about their teaching challenges with other new and experienced teachers most valuable with many participants communicating that it was a relief to realise that their challenges of practice were challenges that were faced by many teachers.

Across the regions, teachers in National Partnership schools have been supported to participate in a range of targeted professional learning programs designed to build their teaching capacity, including:

- Bastow and other DEECD or external professional learning programs targeted to individual school and/or network need
- school based, network and regional professional learning sessions focusing on areas such as planning, literacy and numeracy, pedagogy, and using data to inform differentiated teaching and develop individual learning plans
- action research projects
- professional learning teams
- peer observation programs.

### *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 in-house, external and cluster based activities. Significant emphasis was placed on building each school's internal professional leadership and learning team structures ensuring sustainable improvement. The access to in-house consultancy allowed schools to ensure Professional Learning programs were targeted to the specific school context.

In 2011, provision of sponsored study opportunities for teachers to participate in postgraduate study increased. A number of teachers enrolled in a Post Graduate Certificate in Mathematics Leadership at Monash University and 117 teachers participated in the Post Graduate Certificate in Literacy Leadership at the University of Melbourne.

This was coupled with a deeper disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical and content knowledge and assessment expertise especially around formative assessment. Leaders and teachers identified establishing a common language around learning as a key priority, which was informed by evidence and research of best practice.

During 2011, Catholic schools continued to take advantage of the differentiated and multi-layered Professional Learning opportunities facilitated through the sector, including both in-house and external Professional Learning forums. As a result, schools reported that they have strengthened their understanding of evidence-based school improvement and developed their ability to monitor student



achievement through the use of multiple data sets including school improvement survey data and NAPLAN.

A coordinated approach to school improvement and Professional Learning within a whole school context was extended through participation in the *Creating and Supporting a Performance and Development Culture* initiative. This initiative continued to gain momentum in 2011 with a further 9 schools achieving accreditation, increasing the sector total to 57. The initiative clearly identifies the importance of organisational culture in meeting the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes by:

- emphasising evidence-based performance improvement through multiple forms of feedback
- explicit connection of development plans to performance needs
- shifting the focus of Professional Learning from one-off external activities to on-going classroom /context specific Professional Learning
- being inclusive; recognising each person's role informing the culture of the school, including parent and community partners.

Case study research into PDC schools post-accreditation, undertaken by the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, also commenced in 2011 with the products expected to be launched early in 2012.

### *Independent Sector*

In the independent sector, advisors continued to encourage school leaders and teachers to attend relevant external professional learning activities throughout 2011.

Advisors discuss specific professional learning needs with Principals, leaders and teachers and recommend appropriate external PL programs that will best suit the needs of the school. Funding is then provided for replacement CRT coverage and additional costs may be met for regional schools.

- Participating schools were encouraged and funded to attend programs at the Independent Schools Victoria's *The Development Centre* in West Melbourne. The programs offered in 2011 included several topics in Literacy and Numeracy, ESL, Early Years, Curriculum Planning, ICT, Student Wellbeing, Students with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties.
- In addition, SSNP schools were funded to attend other external professional learning programs, including Professional Learning Communities (Hawker Brownlow) and How to establish Assessment on Demand.
- Another effective form of professional learning used in 2011 was the organised visits for teachers and leaders in SSNP schools to other high-performing schools in the sector. Advisors arranged for teachers from SSNP schools to visit Carey Baptist Grammar School and Acacia College to learn about integrating ICT, including iPads, into the curriculum.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams in schools. In 2011, 33 teachers were funded to attend the 3 day Hawker Brownlow training led by Richard Du Four in Melbourne in May. Other schools had undertaken the training in 2010, and Advisors supported each of them throughout 2011 to implement their PLCs. This model has attracted schools from a range of contexts and locations.

### Initiative 3: Improve school access to high quality teachers

## *Government Sector*

School Centres for Teaching Excellence (SCTE) consists of seven centres across metropolitan and rural Victoria with each centre consisting of a cluster of schools and one or more universities. Across the centres, there are 50 schools, six universities and approximately 300 pre-service teachers involved bringing together unique perspectives and knowledge of pre-service teacher education.

The centres have been allocated funding over two years for their establishment and operation. Each centre has established governance through a Centre Co-ordination Committee and the funds are applied within the project framework according to the priorities of the centres.

In 2011, the first state-wide forum was held, bringing together representatives of all centres, industry bodies and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) staff. The forum focused on the key issues and objectives of the SCTEs and was officially opened by the Hon. Peter Hall, MLC, Victorian Minister Responsible for the Teaching Profession. Also in 2011, a state-wide reference group was formed, consisting of two representatives from each centre and DEECD staff. Special Advisors were also engaged to oversee and assist in the development of individual centre implementation plans and governance arrangements

Teach For Australia cohort one Associates have completed their two year involvement in the program. Eligible Associates have been supported by their schools and the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education (MGSE) to apply for full registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Of the cohort one Associates, 58% have gained employment as teachers for 2012, with an additional 12% undertaking further education related study.

Cohort two Associates began their two-year placements in February 2011. They were placed in 34 vacancies in 17 schools. At the end of 2011, all of the cohort two Associates remain within their schools.

The Department has agreed to participate in a third cohort commencing in 2012. Twenty four cohort three Associates were recruited and placed in 16 schools, with a number of the Associates going to schools that have employed previous Associates.

The support structure for the Associates was redesigned in 2011 to include six Training and Leadership Advisers managed by Teach For Australia with a focus on developing the Associates' leadership skills. MGSE provided 12 Clinical Specialists to support the pedagogical development of the Associates along with the in-school mentors. Cohort one and two in-school mentors have completed five days of mentor training program, with cohort three mentors completing the first three days of the five day training.

The Associate selection processes utilised by the Teach For Australia organisation continues to provide high quality Associates. The participation of DEECD principals in the selection process has provided a significant level of expertise and allowed principals to become familiar with the program. The provision of the MGSE Clinical Specialist and the in-school mentor has supported the development of the Associates as effective teachers. The mentor training has also provided them with the requisite knowledge and skills to be able to become effective mentors. The clinical practice model, where Associates are able to link their teaching practice with the theory covered at MGSE, has allowed the investigation of alternative teacher education methodologies.

### *Catholic Sector*

In the Catholic sector the two pre-service pilot projects with ACU were further developed during 2011. These projects enable 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. The *Bachelor of Education Multi-Modal* project moved into its second year, 15 pre-service teachers (PSTs) continued to participate and another 25 PSTs commenced the first year of the program. An additional twelve schools became involved in this partnership, increasing involvement to 14 schools in 2011.

Research commenced to examine the impact of this pilot on all key stakeholders and preliminary reports indicate the high value of the project, identifying areas for refinement; including feedback from PST's who endorsed the key features of the multi-modal pilot as contributing to building their teacher capacity. Overall, the pilot has helped PSTs to grow as a member of the Professional Learning community, connect theory to practice and cater for diversity in the classroom.

The pilot project '*Partnerships in Learning: Enhancing Quality Teaching*' developed in partnership with Australian Catholic University, aims to enhance pre-service teacher (PST) education by providing a deeper understanding of rich and diverse school communities and the importance of family-school-community partnerships in driving achievement. 13 pre-service teachers have extended professional practice in one of seven Low SES school communities over a period of two years

It is intended that the findings from this pilot project will enhance the ongoing delivery of pre-service teacher education, by including greater emphasis on family-school-community partnerships as an essential reform element for driving achievement and equity and attracting high quality teachers to Low SES school communities.

### *Independent Sector*

ISV commenced discussions with *Teach For Australia* regarding the possibility of promoting this source of high performing graduates to begin their teaching in schools in the independent sector.

### Initiative 4: National Standards Subgroup

#### Government Sector

As outlined in early reports, in November 2009 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 to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

All NSS responsibilities have now been transferred to AITSL. 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.

Victoria is actively engaged in AITSL's work through representation on several AITSL working groups

and through chairing MCEECDYA and AEEYSOC in 2011.

#### 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 continued throughout 2011. The number of schools participating in the School Rewards trial remains at 34 (19 primary, 13 secondary, 2 P-12), with the group split into 2 cohorts, one beginning in 2010 and the other in 2011 with each cohort participating for 2 years. A second cohort of Teacher Rewards schools were recruited at the beginning of 2011, with the total number of schools participating in the Teacher Rewards trial being 11 (6 primary, 3 specialist, 2 primary/secondary schools), with each school also participating over a 2-year period.

Teacher Rewards schools from both the 2010 and 2011 cohorts established or reviewed their balanced scorecards and completed their mid-cycle reviews, with some schools electing to hold meetings for teachers by classification in order to share evidence and learning. The 2010 cohort schools completed the assessment panel process and reported the outcomes to the teachers involved, with the top 30% of participating teachers receiving their rewards in June. A total of 21 teachers received reward payments. The 2011 cohort schools completed their balanced scorecards. This allows the commencement of the assessment process and informs teachers of the criteria and evidence that the panels will be examining when determining which individuals will receive rewards. The 2010 cohort completed follow-up training for members of assessment panels and the 2011 cohort participated in a number of workshops, including panel training, which took place in both Melbourne and Wodonga, and an e5 Instructional Model workshop in Melbourne.

For the School Rewards trial, four schools from the 2010 cohort were eligible for a reward following Year 1, receiving their rewards in June. The use of the reward payments is determined by the school, with a direct line of sight to teaching staff required.

Schools in the Teacher Rewards trials have highlighted that the Rewarding Teaching Excellence initiative is extending the performance and development processes already in place within schools. Defining teaching excellence and the nature of the dimensions of the balanced scorecard has supported the development of common understandings and increased the depth of professional conversation.

##### *Independent Sector*

In the independent sector, the previous Rewarding High Quality Teachers Pilot (RHQT) was revised and renamed the Rewarding High Performing Teachers Pilot (RHPT) in January, 2011. The process has been changed by adding classroom observations and evidence from students and peers. Reporting is more structured to lessen the burden on candidates.

20 schools across the sector attended the Briefing in March. Two schools with one volunteer candidate each expressed interest in participation. One candidate withdrew following a further meeting that

provided further details of the evidence gathering process.

One candidate has begun the Pilot, working with a coach who has supported him in the process of reflective writing. There have been two additional meetings with ISV staff, the candidate and the coach. The candidate submitted his written evidence in September 2011 and was assessed in December and deemed a High Performing Teacher.

#### Initiative 6: Pathways into Teaching

##### *Government Sector*

The Career Change Program is a prototype in employment based training pathways into teaching. The teacher education course, including mentoring support at the school level and face to face and remote delivery, has been tailored to the needs of the target recruitment group. Twenty trainees in the Career Change Program completed their summer schooling in November 2011 and are working in schools in 2012 in hard to staff subject areas, predominantly technology studies, mathematics and science. Trainees in the 2010 intake are also continuing to teach in these areas. Twenty-seven trainees of the 2010 intake have successfully completed their studies and a further four will complete pending submission of outstanding work.

There is evidence that the recruitment of career changers has led to local transformations in curriculum delivery and staff culture. The program has also been particularly successful in providing recruitment alternatives for hard to staff (mainly rural) schools and for facilitating the recruitment of high quality, mature-age professionals and tradespeople into the classroom. Since 2005 there has been a reduction in the number of hard to fill vacancies.

The Graduate Pathways program provides outstanding eligible graduates with scholarships to complete a teaching qualification focusing on a subject area of need and additional benefits to attract recipients to accept employment in a government priority school. The 2010-11 target of 40 scholarships was achieved with all recipients commencing study in the 2011 academic year. The 2011-12 target of 40 scholarships was achieved with 43 scholarships confirmed with recipients commencing study in 2012. Scholarships were provided to a broad range of teaching speciality areas including maths, science, information technology and Languages Other Than English (LOTE).

There is significant interest from schools in the current Graduate Pathways program, particularly as it provides an effective strategy to recruit in geographic and curriculum areas where it has been difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers.

The focus of the Incentives for Extended Service in Priority Schools program is the retention of high quality teacher graduates in priority rural schools which traditionally experience significant difficulties in attracting and retaining quality teachers. The program provides financial rewards, conditional on performance, to graduate teachers appointed to designated positions in priority schools for each year of continuous employment. The program commenced in 2011, with incentive payments made to the 40 participants identified for the first round. Planning for a second round of nominations has now commenced with a view to participating graduate teachers receiving their first retention payment in 2012.

All graduate teachers receiving retention payments in round 1 are in rural schools with the majority

(95%) in rural hard to staff locations and the remainder (5%) teaching in hard to staff subject areas. Some schools in rural areas had multiple graduate teachers who were able to be retained due to the retention payment.

At a system level, this incentive payment has reduced the rate at which graduate teachers move on to other schools for employment and has provided increased support and stability. Rural and regional schools reported that the retention payment has helped them to retain their graduate teachers who may have otherwise sought employment in other schools.

#### Indigenous Education Workers Career Enhancement Program and Indigenous Scholarships

The Indigenous Education Workers Career Enhancement program (IEWCEP) and the Indigenous Scholarships program both aim to increase the supply of indigenous teachers, and will enable Indigenous people to become fully qualified teachers at the completion of their courses. Both programs were advertised in March 2011. The IEWCEP targets year 12 graduates and current workers wishing to become teachers. The target group for the Indigenous Scholarships program is currently enrolled students who are in their final year of a teacher training course. The programs have identified 28 scholarship holders and DEECD is currently working with universities to identify the final two scholarship recipients.

Successful strategies used to identify the target groups and increase the applicant pool included:

- enhanced and targeted communication within local communities that commenced in September 2011
- Indigenous centres in all universities with teaching departments were visited and various posters and fliers provided
- individual follow up of interested candidates occurred and contact was made with Koorie Education Workforce members currently completing teaching studies
- schools with Year 11 and 12 students were also targeted and provided with information on the program.

The scholarships have provided valuable assistance for pre-service teachers to participate in pre-service teacher education programs. They have provided much needed funds to enable pre-service teachers to purchase computers and other learning resources while also assisting them during their practicum placements. The program has had early success with 3 scholarship holders completing their studies in 2011.

To address the shortage of qualified Special Education teachers, Special Education Scholarships have been offered to enable current and graduating teachers to complete an approved teaching qualification in special education. To date, a total of 144 scholarships have been awarded of the target 150 scholarships. Selection for the award of a further 12 scholarships will be completed in early 2012.

#### *Catholic Sector*

During 2011 the Catholic sector continued to implement two strategies to provide a tailored pathway for Indigenous workers to be supported whilst upgrading their qualifications and undertaking teacher education. These are *Career Enhancement Pathways* for Koorie Education Workers (KEW) and *Teaching Sponsorships* for Indigenous Students.

Sponsored Study has been provided to four Koorie Education Workers (KEWs) representing 25% of

KEWs employed in Catholic schools and to four Year 12 Indigenous students entering tertiary education. Three of the four KEWs work in National Partnerships Low Socio Economic Schools (Low SES). The intent of this strategy is to increase Indigenous teacher presence within Indigenous communities.

The CECV has also implemented the Life /Academic Coach strategy by allocating staff members to coaching roles that integrate personal and academic support to ensure the participants' successful completion of their chosen tertiary studies.

There is emerging evidence that as the participating KEWs working in the 5 schools engaged in their own pathway journey, their confidence increased and they have been involved in arranging activities, which have fostered increased participation of members of the local Indigenous community in teaching and learning forums.

#### Initiative 7: Wider Workforce Trials

##### *Government Sector*

Resources resulting from the Wider Workforce trials, including a series of case studies, have now been placed on the DEECD public website and are available to all schools (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/widerworkforce/default.htm>).

The Wider Workforce Field Trials were conducted in 34 government primary, secondary and special schools during 2010 and explored ways of expanding the workforce through the use of paraprofessionals, changing roles of Education Support staff to complement and/or supplement the work of teachers, and building workforce capacity of Education Support staff to support teachers and teaching outcomes.

#### **2011 Significant Achievements/Activities/Highlights – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

##### *Government Sector*

- In the Northern Metropolitan Region, Regional Network Leaders report that the quality of applicants for principal class positions has improved significantly. Significant numbers of NMR coaches have returned to schools to take up principal class positions. Many report that their work as coaches enabled them to develop a deeper understanding of leadership, school improvement and change management which they would not have acquired as classroom teachers.
- Victoria continues to demonstrate national leadership through *Teach For Australia*. Feedback from principals has 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.

- Specialists and DEECD presented the Primary Mathematics Specialists model and implementation at the National Literacy and Numeracy Partnerships Forum in Brisbane (10-11 November). Specialists shared their experiences, roles and responsibilities at the Primary Mathematics and Science Specialists Initiative professional learning conference in November. Specialists from three networks presented at the Mathematical Association of Victoria State conference in December.
- There have been a total of 28 successful applicants through the Indigenous Scholarships and Indigenous Career Enhancement Programs, enabling them to become fully qualified teachers on completion of their courses.

#### *Catholic Sector*

- In the Catholic sector, extensive Professional Learning opportunities have been designed to incorporate a mixture of differentiated workshops and consultancy support as well as intensive off-site, in-school and cluster based activities. Significant emphasis has been placed on building each school's internal professional leadership and learning team structures to ensure sustainable improvement. The development and implementation of the *CECV Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework* progressed significantly in 2011. The framework aims to increase the capacity of teachers and school leaders to more readily identify and respond to individual learning needs.
- Eighteen schools (involving 6965 students, 892 staff and 5481 families) were engaged in the National Partnerships Social and Emotional Learning Strategy (SEL) between 2010 and 2011. Aimed at the development of leadership and teacher capacity, a comprehensive program of activities continued throughout 2011, for promotion and delivery at the Leadership Centre by October 2012.
- School-based (internal) and external coaches continued to work alongside principals, leadership teams, school Literacy and Numeracy Leaders and classroom teachers in the 75 Victorian Literacy and Numeracy Catholic National Partnerships schools.
- Catholic schools continued to strengthen understanding of evidence-based school improvement data and the ability to monitor student achievement through the use of multiple data sets including school improvement survey data and NAPLAN.

#### The Catholic sector's significant achievements include:

- all 121 SSNP schools (46 Low SES National Partnership and 75 Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership) engaged in deliberate Professional Learning activities both formal and informal, at local, regional and systemic levels in 2011;
- Interest in postgraduate study increased significantly with the numbers applying for sponsored study at the end of 2010 for 2011, exceeding expectations and incorporating a broader range of staff (emerging leaders through to Principals). In 2011, 148 staff enrolled in a Masters in Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) or the University of Melbourne and a further 20 staff from Low SES school communities were enrolled in a Masters in Wellbeing for Inclusive Schooling at ACU;
- 527 hours of coaching via the Principal Coaching Bank was provided to 97 Principals in the Catholic sector during the course of 2011.
- 21 Catholic schools participated in school-university pre-service partnerships with the Australian Catholic University (ACU) in 2011. Of these, 14 schools participated in the *Bachelor of Education Primary Multi-Modal Pilot* and seven low SES schools participated in the



## Partnerships in Learning: Enhancing Quality Teaching Pilot.

### *Independent Sector*

The ongoing coaching and professional mentoring of Principals by the Principal Advisors had a marked impact on the improvement of SSNP school leadership in 2011. The 4 Principal Advisors spent a total of 1680 coaching/mentoring hours with school leaders in 2011, an average of 39 hours per school (although there were variations in time spent in different schools because of different needs). Discussions with the leaders included the development of school strategic plans, Teaching and Learning Plans, using data to determine future directions and establishing the Principal as lead learner who then sets the educational agenda for the school.

All SSNP schools developed strategic plans in 2011, providing targets for continued improvement in teaching and learning, literacy and numeracy and student wellbeing/community engagement. Principal Advisors worked alongside school leaders to establish procedures to monitor progress and make adjustments to strategies using data.

**The Principals' Survey** (completed by 40 Principals and 7 Deputy Principals/Campus Heads) provides evidence of the effectiveness of the sector's interventions in this Initiative:

- *The SSNP team's interventions have helped build leadership capacity in your school*

Strongly Agree: 40%

Agree: 55%

Coaching and mentoring of teachers in schools continued in 2011. The 8 Advisors spent a total of 3,233.5 hours in-school coaching visits in 2011, an average of 75.2 hours per school. These hours are a combination of Literacy/Numeracy Advisors and Student Wellbeing/Community Engagement Advisors visits. All schools were offered support, regardless of location. Travel time is not included in these hours.

In addition, Advisors spent 1524.5 hours providing in-school support, modelling best practice in the classroom, presenting professional learning sessions and workshops.

**The Development Centre** at Independent Schools Victoria offered an increased number and range of professional learning programs to all teachers and leaders in the sector in 2011.

289 Seminars were offered in total, with a total number of 3802 attendees.

15 Seminars were offered to Principals in the sector, and there were regular governance Briefings conducted throughout the year for senior members of staff and governors.

The breakdown of Seminar categories:

- Curriculum-Pedagogy – 74 Seminars; 832 attendees
- Literacy (and ESL) – 34 Seminars; 325 attendees
- Numeracy – 27 Seminars; 262 attendees
- Languages – 13 Seminars; 125 attendees
- Student Services (students with individual needs, student wellbeing) – 43 Seminars; 774 attendees
- Careers – 2 Seminars; 27 attendees

- Vocational Services – 10 Seminars; 69 attendees

Teachers from SSNP schools were supported to attend The Development Centre Seminars and 870 replacement CRT days were funded in 2011.

There were other external Professional Learning opportunities, mostly held at The Development Centre, specifically for SSNP schools:

- 14 teachers from 20 SSNP schools were funded to attend the 4 day EBO training workshops conducted at The Development Centre by SSNP Principal Advisors.
- 25 teachers were funded to attend the e5 Instructional Model Framework: Train the Trainer Workshops in 2011 (March/June and June/Aug.)
- 36 teachers were funded to attend the 2 day workshop, *Pause, Prompt, Praise and Running Record Analysis* in August.
- 19 teachers were funded to attend the *West Australian First Steps in Mathematics* 2 day workshop in March at the Australian International Academy (a SSNP school).

Other external Professional Learning opportunities:

33 teachers were funded to attend the Hawker Brownlow PLC two day Workshop in May, 2011.

## **Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

In regions, support for indigenous students has included professional learning and the employment of Koorie coaches and Koorie Engagement Support Officers to support school staff to develop individual learning plans for Koorie students and to meet the learning needs and improve the learning outcomes of these students. Reading Recovery professional learning and cultural awareness training has also assisted teachers to better support indigenous students. For example:

- In the Grampians Region, professional learning opportunities have been offered through the Grampians Teacher Education Network in the areas of Writing Individual Education Plans for Koorie Students, Exploring Koorie English and Developing Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competence. Sessions are facilitated by Network Improvement Officers, coaches and Koorie Education Support Officers and the participation of leaders and teachers in National Partnerships schools is encouraged.
- At one school in the Loddon Mallee Region, one of the assistant principals has received individual leadership coaching and mentoring in regard to leading Koorie education, particularly around analysing reading and attendance data on Koorie students, the establishment of a Koorie literacy educator, and the provision of ongoing professional development for two Koorie tutors
- In Western Metropolitan Region, a Koorie literacy coach works across three schools with 20 or more Koorie students to build the capacity of teachers to develop and implement robust individual education plans for these students. The coach also ensures that eligible students receive assistance under the Wannik Tutorial Assistance Scheme and that there is consistency

in approaches between classroom teachers and tutors.

Secondary schools with high numbers of indigenous students in the Mildura and Robinvale areas of the Loddon Mallee Region have had Teach For Australia Associates placed in them for the first time in 2011.

### *Catholic Sector*

The sponsored study support provided to Koorie Education Workers in 2011 strengthened the support provided to Indigenous students within schools. Emerging evidence suggests that their continued success in their studies has increased their efficacy and confidence within the schools.

During 2011 the Catholic sector continued to implement two strategies to provide a tailored pathway for Indigenous workers to be supported whilst upgrading their qualifications and undertaking teacher education. These are Career Enhancement Pathways for Koorie Education Workers (KEW) and Teaching Sponsorships for Indigenous Students.

- Sponsored Study has been provided to four Koorie Education Workers (KEWs) representing 25% of KEWs employed in Catholic schools and to four Year 12 Indigenous students entering tertiary education. Three of the four KEWs work in National Partnerships Low Socio Economic Schools (Low SES). The intent of this strategy is to increase Indigenous teacher presence within Indigenous communities.
- The CECV has also implemented the Life /Academic Coach strategy by allocating staff members to coaching roles that integrate personal and academic support to ensure the participants' successful completion of their chosen tertiary studies.
- There is emerging evidence that as the participating KEWs working in the 5 schools engaged in their own pathway journey, their confidence increased and they have been involved in arranging activities, which have fostered increased participation of members of the local Indigenous community in teaching and learning forums.

### *Independent Sector*

Numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander students in SSNP schools in the independent sector are very small, with the exception of Worawa Aboriginal College (62 girls from Years 7- 10).

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander students at Worawa in 2011 includes:

- The Principal Advisor spent 64 hours coaching, mentoring and supporting the Principal.
- SSNP Advisors spent 120 hours in-school coaching teachers to build capacity.
- SSNP Advisors spent 35 hours presenting in-school workshops and seminars to build teacher capacity.
- Indigenous specialist consultants spent 87 hours supporting the teachers with in-school workshops and professional learning opportunities.
- The Principal participated in the *Exploring Leadership for New Principals Seminars* offered in 4

residential sessions during the year.

- A Monash University Pre-Service Teacher was funded for a 5 week placement at Worawa in August, with a brief to undertake a Literacy Action research project.
- In other SSNP schools where the need arises, Advisors support teachers to develop Individual Learning Plans for indigenous students.

At a state level, one of the Principal Advisors is a member of the following cross sectoral support groups that help build leadership and teacher capacity in support of indigenous students:

- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI) education reference group, includes representatives from DEECD, CEO, ISV, TAFE and Universities, meeting 3 times a year.
- Victorian Indigenous Education Network (VIEN), includes independent school and Catholic school teachers, meets to share experiences of support for indigenous students in schools. Developing a wiki for on-going contact in between meetings.
- English as an Additional Language-Teacher Education Forum (EAL-TEF), hosted by DEECD, meets quarterly, with representatives from DEECD, CEO, ISV and Universities that teach EAL students and cross-cultural contexts.
- Technology Enhanced Curriculum Project (TECP), a “Closing the Gap” initiative of the Australian Government, involving 15 schools across the sectors (including Worawa Aboriginal College), meets monthly, representative on the steering committee.
- Indigenous Education Focus Group (IEFG), hosted by the Centre for Strategic Education, includes representatives from each sector and Universities, meets quarterly to share effective programs and activities.

The ISV team of Advisors receives feedback from this involvement, in support of indigenous students.

## **Support for Other Disadvantaged Student Cohorts (if applicable) – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

Regions have continued to support educationally disadvantaged cohorts by providing access to professional learning and coaching to assist leaders to develop inclusive approaches in their schools and assist teachers to support the learning needs of students with additional needs.

### *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*

In 2011, there were 505 students in SSNP schools in receipt of Australian Government funding for students with disabilities and 456 students in receipt of State Support Services funding for students with demonstrated needs. Principal Advisors and Literacy/Numeracy Advisors work with specialists and classroom teachers to develop individual learning plans to support these students.

There were 8 Seminars presented at The Development Centre on the topic of Students with Individual Needs. Registration costs and replacement CRT costs were paid for 42 teachers from SSNP schools to attend these Seminars.

There is a significant number of students from recent arrival, refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds in SSNP schools, particularly in Islamic, Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Turkish schools. Advisors work with ESL specialists, support teachers, aides and classroom teachers to develop appropriate language programs for these students.

The Development Centre offered 4 ESL Seminars, and 3 Seminars for teachers of students with language difficulties in 2011. Registration costs and replacement CRT costs were provided for 48 teachers from SSNP schools to attend these Seminars.

## **Challenges to Implementation/Progress – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

In the Supporting New Teachers' Practice initiative, using the Ultranet as the primary platform for program delivery has been a vast improvement on the technology used in the 2010 pilot. However, it has been recognised that there is a need to provide multiple opportunities, using multiple platforms, for online interaction between participants and the online coaches to ensure adequate participation. Identified barriers to participation in online sessions included the ability to prioritise school commitments, meetings and relationships, and technical difficulties.

In the Special Education Scholarships initiative, a multi-faceted communication strategy was required to generate interest and ensure a high quality applicant pool was available from which to select the 20 scholarships for hearing impairment study targeted at teachers outside the profession. Direct and targeted communication and liaison within the deaf community, education networks, and universities, as well as traditional press advertising, was undertaken from August to December 2011. This activity resulted in an increased applicant pool from which scholarship recipients could be selected.

Implementation of the Indigenous Education Workers Career Enhancement and Indigenous Scholarships programs was impacted by advertising restrictions. The target groups were contacted directly and where possible were provided with information on this initiative. An administration officer was appointed to liaise between the DEECD and universities, year 12 level co-ordinators and KESO staff to promote the programs and increase the applicant pool. This resulted in a significantly improved uptake of the program.

### *Catholic Sector*

Awareness of the overall National Partnerships reform agenda continued to evolve across the sector. Schools identified the most appropriate Professional Learning to support planning for ongoing improvement in schools, evident in the Professional Learning choices in 2011. Competing priorities and demands on school leadership impacts the ability for schools and staff to participate in Professional Learning opportunities, including sponsored study.

Participation in both credentialed study and external professional learning programs can be impeded by both location and distance for schools in regional settings. The cost implication in resourcing and supporting participation in professional learning programs remains challenging to schools in remote locations.

### *Independent Sector*

The single most significant challenge to implementing reform in the Leadership and Teacher building capacity Initiatives is the turnover of Principals, senior leaders and teachers in SSNP schools. In 2011 there were 8 new Principals appointed to SSNP schools. Although in most cases, senior managers and teachers in the school are well versed in the aims and level of support offered by SSNP Advisors, there is still the issue of “getting a new Principal up to speed” with the interventions already in train. For Principals who are new to the role, additional coaching support is vital, and this can be time consuming for the Principal Advisor.

This involves the Principal Advisor spending significant blocks of time to support and brief the new Principal and ensure that he/she is in tune with the interventions, and is ready to drive the reforms. This was done readily with each of the new Principals in 2011, regardless of their school’s geographic location.

## **Showcase – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

A large National Partnership secondary college in Northern Metropolitan Region has focused on

building the capacity of the school's leaders and staff. The school has implemented a coaching model where school leaders work as coaches alongside teachers in class. All members of the leadership team have been trained in coaching techniques, and work with their teams on instituting the behaviours that have been identified as leading to better teaching and learning for students. Leadership team meetings are structured around the core objectives and priorities of the school and always include a professional learning component to build the capacity of leaders to work with other staff. The meetings are also supported by a critical friend who provides feedback to the team and to the principal class group. Leaders other than the principal lead sessions in these meetings and thereby exercise leadership and responsibility for whole-school issues and not just the work of their teams. There is an expectation that members of the leadership team understand the whole school not just their own area of responsibility. Staff culture at the school is improving, with the 2011 Staff Opinion survey showing the school's means for Empathy, Clarity, Engagement, School Climate and Learning have all increased. Furthermore, anecdotal feedback from members of the principal class and leadership team include:

- A belief that they have grown enormously as leaders
- A greater appreciation of whole school priorities and the links between them
- Greater reflection and questioning about improvement strategies and their impact
- Greater clarity around the role of leading whole school priorities
- Expectation that members of leadership team talk with each other and share what they are doing and have learned.

The Country School Centre for Teaching Excellence (one of seven established under the NP) has brought together three Victorian universities, two country Regions and four clusters of schools in a unique collaboration. Universities are sharing practices and delivering courses with common elements in teacher education curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and technology use which are centred on the needs of rural schools. Student teachers are benefiting by being able to interact and reflect on practice with groups of peers and mentors either in the same school or elsewhere in the cluster, as well as university staff. While formal evaluation findings are not yet available, schools are reporting gains in professional learning about contemporary practice as teachers interact more frequently and in a more concentrated way with colleagues, teams of student teachers and university staff.

The Incentives for Extended Service in Priority Schools program has been particularly successful. Principals reported that because of the retention program graduates were encouraged to plan for a medium to long term presence in rural and remote communities. Some graduates in the communities are considering buying homes, and are active members of community groups and sporting clubs. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that graduates have brought additional knowledge, skills, and energy into schools which have reinvigorated the existing school workforce. One example is Wedderburn College, a rural school which in the past has attracted graduate teachers for usually short periods. The Incentives for Extended Service in Priority Schools program has helped the school to retain three graduate teachers, significantly reducing turnover. Graduates have established meaningful relationships with children's families, other teachers and the community and this has provided more stability for the school. Wedderburn has been able to significantly enhance their art program because of the retention of their graduate art teacher.

#### *Catholic Sector*

St. Leo the Great Primary School, Altona North has demonstrated significant improvement in

Numeracy outcomes. St. Leo the Great is situated in a residential and industrial suburb in Melbourne's Western region. The parish/school demographic comprising many ethnic backgrounds including Italian, Maltese (first and second generation), Asian (predominantly Vietnamese) and other European cultures. The school mission is committed to providing a quality Catholic education for the children of Altona North and surrounding parishes. Teaching and learning programs cater for individual needs and promote opportunities for student engagement and learning. The 2011 school enrolment was 165, with 25.7 % of the student population supported by the Educational Maintenance Allowance; with classroom organisation based on a multi-age philosophy.

Since the introduction of the SSNP initiative, the school has focused extensively on improvement in Mathematics, by adopting a whole school approach to improving student learning outcomes in Mathematics. The major area that the school has developed is on providing each teacher with extensive Professional Learning. Each teacher has attended twelve days of evidenced based Professional Learning focussed on best practice approaches. Numeracy Coaches have also provided school support and have assisted teachers with their planning of Mathematics curriculum units and provided in class support to the teachers. This 'shoulder to shoulder' support has enabled staff to gain confidence with their teaching of Mathematics. The focus for on-site Professional Learning evolves from the National Partnerships Plan, the Annual Action Plans and NAPLAN data. The Schools Mathematics Leader was allocated 0.2FTE time release to work with all teachers on planning initiatives. The School Mathematics Leader has been mentored by the Numeracy Coaches with success. At planning sessions (which is an important area of focus), the School Mathematics Leader is continually asking the teachers to reflect on effective teaching of contemporary Mathematics. They are planning using key ideas from research, child friendly understandings, and pre-assessment data. An important focus for planning in 2011 was differentiating the curriculum to accommodate the wide variety of student knowledge in Mathematics.

The school has also implemented a Number Intervention Program over the last two years. This program has enabled the school to develop a comprehensive ten to fifteen week teaching cycle for low attaining students in Years 1 – 4. The students are taught individually, in pairs or trios. This program combined with the extensive improvement in the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge provided from the Professional Learning for classroom teachers has enabled the school to improve their student learning outcomes in Mathematics.

### *Independent Sector*

#### **1. The Travelling Teddy Project**

The Travelling Teddy Project was designed by SSNP Literacy/Numeracy Advisors to support student literacy development by enhancing teacher practice. The specific goals were:

- To model for teachers the practice of providing authentic purposes for reading and writing give young children an authentic purpose for reading and writing and thereby increase engagement.
- To facilitate teacher collaboration between schools.



- To model the benefits of on-line learning to teachers and to encourage the use of ICT in reading and writing.

Twelve teachers (Prep – Year 2) from 6 SSNP co-educational schools participated across the state.

*The Project:* The Advisor matched the Teachers by year level, and city – rural schools, to broaden the children’s understanding of other children’s lives. Teddy bears were exchanged between classes of children who then took turns to take them home over night and on weekends/holidays, writing stories of their adventures with bears, taking photos to add to the class diary/scrapbook. At the end of the agreed time the Teddies and the diaries were returned to the paired school so that the children could read about the bear’s experiences in another school setting.

A blog was established during the project to encourage teachers to use on-line resources with the students. For many teachers this was the first time that they had accessed a blog and it was the first time they had enabled students to post comments. The blog was accessed 391 times and can be found at the following link <http://www.patches.wordpress.com/>

The evaluation of the Project was most positive. All participating teachers believed that the project provided authentic purposes for reading and writing.

The diaries created and the emails sent to their buddies provided rich and authentic reading and writing tasks that engaged students and modelled this practice to teachers. Most teachers involved admitted to being “reluctant” users of technology at the start of the project, but saw the benefits for the children at the end of the project.

*Teachers comments about the effectiveness of the Project included:*

“Seeing the children enjoy having the teddy bear as part of our class and being engaged in writing about our experiences with the bear.”

“It was a novel way to encourage children to write.”

“The children were all engaged and excited with the bear. The emails between the schools provided the children with a richer experience of electronic communication.”

A digital summary of the project can be found at this link  
<http://www.vuvox.com/collage/edit/045825df0f>

## **2. The Evidence Based Observation Tool (EBO) and Coaching in 2011**

During 2011, 14 schools implemented the EBO program (in addition to the 14 schools from 2010). The initial data and evidence gathered of these classroom observations of teacher practice and student learning shows positive indicators, particularly in regard to de-privatising classrooms and creating an opportunity for collaborative professional conversations of discursive practice.

In one Cluster of 13 schools, 109 teachers engaged in EBO and Coaching have been observed at least twice as they taught. They were observed using a time sample reporting method. This observation was followed up immediately by a feedback session to allow the teacher to reflect on the data collected by the observer. 539 target students were also observed during these classroom sessions. The teachers are able to engage in reflective conversations with a coach. They are encouraged to examine kinds of interactions they have with the students, where they spend the majority of the time located in the classroom and the perceived cognitive level as gauged by the students. They also reflect on the quality of the relationships they have with their students based on the indicators of quality teaching.

After two terms of Observations and Coaching in three of the schools, the following trends occurred:

**Newhaven College**, a regional school, (Low SES), founded in 1980, interdenominational, co-educational, P – 12, 676 students, 3% LBOTE, 1 % indigenous, 59 teachers, SES score of 93.

*Increase in the perceived cognitive level as rated by target students, sample size of 15 teachers and 75 students:*

2011	Low cognitive challenge	Medium cognitive challenge	High cognitive challenge
Term I	42% students	52% students	6% students
Term III	6% students	63% students	31% students

**St Anthony's Coptic Orthodox College**, Frankston North, an outer Melbourne suburb (L/N), founded in 1995, co-educational, P – 12, 254 students, 97% LBOTE, 28 teachers, SES score of 98.

*An increase in the level of observed student engagement with classroom work of the target students:*

Term I – 16% of target students engaged 100% of the time, 47% engaged more than 70% of the time

Term II – 45% of target students engaged 100% of the time, 87% engaged more than 70% of the time.

**3**

## **Sustainability**

### *Government Sector*

Much of the 2011 activity in this reform area (particularly activity under the building leadership and teacher capacity initiatives) involves localised improvement strategies specifically designed to maximise the potential for sustainable improvement. For example, teacher coaching often involves the training of existing teachers to perform a coaching role within their school. Similarly, structures such as professional learning teams and collaborative networks of teachers and leaders have been established within and across schools and are designed to be sustained beyond the life of the SSNPs. These strategies have contributed to a culture of shared responsibility for continuous improvement, which is helping to embed the improvements. Improvement strategies are also being formally embedded through structural changes, such as altered school timetables and updated accountability measures in performance plans.

At the system level and more broadly, and particularly in relation to the establishment of pathways into teaching, many of the activities in this reform area have involved the development of sustainable structures and strategies, including communities, networks and partnerships, pathways and models of practice.

In the Supporting New Teachers' Practice program, providing beginning teachers with an online space enabled them to work collaboratively to explore, and find solutions for, the problems that they face in their classroom. Some learning communities established at the two day face-to-face workshop held in May continue to use their community spaces to discuss their teaching practice with each other, even though the program finished in October. The space will be left open to enable further collaboration between those that feel that it is a valuable networking tool.

The focus of the Incentives for Extended Service in Priority Schools for Graduates is the retention of high quality graduate teachers in rural and regional locations for the first four to five years of their careers. It is anticipated that the incentive payments will enable these graduate teachers to consider staying in their rural and regional locations rather than being attracted to work in metropolitan schools and that, once established in the community, these teachers may favour living in rural and regional locations. In these years both their professional practice and connection with the local community will be established and enhanced, leading to improved teaching and learning outcomes for students. This will be explored through the Program's evaluation.

As a result of the Schools Centres for Teaching Excellence (SCTE), new models for school placement of pre-service teachers are being developed. Schools are trialling different arrangements with SCTE pilots structured so that the practical component provides a more 'immersive' experience with guidance from an experienced supervisor or mentor. There is also evidence that university courses are being adjusted to take account of the more intense 'residency' model of teacher preparation.

The Career Change program has been successful in delivering an alternative pathway into teaching

while providing schools with a recruitment strategy to fill vacancies that have not previously attracted qualified teachers. The program has also been used as a template for the development and delivery of other programs such as Teach for Australia and the Teach Next programs.

### *Catholic Sector*

Building sustainability across the system is both a challenge and an opportunity. Embedded in this is the need to sustain ongoing workforce development to ensure both equity and achievement for students.

The depth of capacity of staff in Catholic schools continues to be enhanced by participation in credentialed courses of study, encompassing leadership, wellbeing for inclusive schooling, and literacy and numeracy leadership. There is emerging evidence that post graduate study has enhanced the ability of staff to develop a whole-school strategic approach to learning and teaching, premised on reforms which are context specific and embedded in sustained professional practice.

Global budgeting affords autonomy at the local level, with schools exercising discretionary choices over program participation; however, the Catholic sector remains mindful that school capacity must be managed with existing resource allocations and ensure program initiatives remain viable beyond the current SSNP funding quadrennium.

Emphasis has been placed on the development of assessment practice within schools. This continues to enhance teacher capacity to align assessment practice, with teaching programs, recognising the function of formative, summative and diagnostic assessment, thus enabling teachers and school leaders to more readily identify and respond to individual learning needs. The development and implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework will further enhance the sector's capability to sustain effective practice.

### *Independent Sector*

Deciding how an intervention will be sustainable is a key element in the planning process. Advisors coached leaders and teachers to take increasing responsibility for the implementation of the interventions in the most effective way for their particular school.

**The Teachers' Survey** endeavoured to determine the success of encouraging teachers in schools to play an increasing role in their own school's in-school professional learning.

*Has there been an increase in the number of in-school workshops/PD offered by you or your colleagues?*

Yes: 74%

No: 12%

Don't Know: 14%

Given that the encouragement for teachers in SSNP schools to share knowledge gained from Professional learning opportunities and present to their colleagues only began in 2010, it is a measure of a strong beginning in making sustainable change to have more than half of the respondents affirming that their colleagues' sessions influenced their teaching practice.

## Section 3

### Reform Area 2: Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs

#### Overview

#### 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 Regional Network Leaders, school leaders and teachers to effectively monitor programs at individual and cohort levels. An updated Literacy and numeracy 6–18 month strategy: P–10 improvement schedule for school leaders was published in 2011, which outlines a literacy and numeracy assessment schedule for all students from Prep to Year 10 and provides advice on data analysis at a school, year, cohort and individual level. Catholic schools can access the online strategy and the accompanying suite of professional support resources.

National Partnership funding has enabled the provision of school subsidies for participation in Mathletics. Mathletics aims to improve student results around the Mathematics curriculum. It engages students in a fun and safe learning environment and provides immediate feedback to students, teachers and parents. In particular, it provides continual formative assessment, which teachers can use diagnostically to guide instruction.

The total number of Victorian government schools accessing the subsidy in 2011 was 781. The number of Victorian Government students in Years P–8 that have enrolled in Mathletics using the subsidy is 139,491. The percentage of Victorian government students enrolled in Mathletics in 2011 is 70%, an increase of 31% from 2010.

Approximately 500 principals and literacy and numeracy leaders attended a National Partnership schools' forum on 7 March 2011, which included a focus on building teachers' and leaders' data literacy and using data to inform teaching.

A range of resources continue to be offered to schools to help triangulate student achievement data and improve the monitoring of student performance information in National Partnership schools. Resources include:

- Professional learning sessions for teachers and team leaders centred around the collection of data and the use of results to inform appropriate strategies to improve student outcomes, often provided by coaches, school leaders or regional staff.
- Data analysis and tracking tools, such as the Student Performance Analyser or Student Mapping Tool, to support the monitoring of growth in student achievement and the use of collected data to inform school planning
- Individual Learning Plans for all students

- Assessment schedules for schools outlining specific requirements around literacy/numeracy, based around the Literacy and Numeracy 6-18 Month Strategy.

The resources available, and associated activity, have facilitated an improved use of data in schools, with regions reporting that schools are developing a more sophisticated understanding of data management and analysis and demonstrating a more consistent approach to the assessment and monitoring of student performance.

### *Catholic Sector*

Catholic schools have a strengthened understanding of evidence-based school improvement and an enhanced ability to monitor student achievement through the use of multiple data sets including school improvement survey data and NAPLAN. During 2011, all the targeted SSNP schools critically analysed their student learning data to ascertain strengths and weaknesses within the effectiveness of teaching literacy and numeracy. Item analysis of NAPLAN data has been used to build teachers' understanding of how to use these data formatively.

In the Catholic Sector there is a system-level focus on the instruments available to schools to support early literacy instruction and an increasing confidence in the effective use of student performance data to inform program planning and instruction across the schools.

In early 2011, the CECV engaged the Assessment Research Centre (ARC) at the University of Melbourne to conduct a review of the assessment instruments used in schools to support early literacy instruction. Five recommendations for further development of assessment practice have resulted, including revising the P-2 Assessment Schedule. As a result further investigation and piloting of assessment instruments commenced in the second half of 2011.

### *Independent Sector*

The 12 Advisors have worked closely with leaders and teachers in schools to assist them to develop the understanding and skills necessary to recognise and respond to individual learning needs. In 2011, Advisors regularly visited schools and coached curriculum leaders and groups of teachers (subject departments, year level teachers) and individual teachers to embed appropriate methodologies that will be sustainable after the life of the funding period. Leadership teams now recognise that it is their responsibility to drive the use of data as the vehicle for sustained improvement in teacher quality and student performance.

Analysing an increased battery of formative assessment data has had a significant impact on teacher quality and student achievement. Teachers have been using NAPLAN results and additional formative assessments to monitor student progress, including PAT R, PAT M, PROBE, TORCH, PM Benchmarking, running records and On Demand Assessment. Having additional testing data provides teachers with a greater understanding of student progress and highlights individual needs. In addition to using NAPLAN, different schools use a variety of different assessment data to monitor student progress, depending on their needs.

Using specific platforms for improved classroom practice (such as PLCs, EBO, e5 and Cognitive

Coaching) enables teachers in schools to establish professional practices that will enhance the recognition and response to student learning needs. Teachers have a clear and consistent framework in which to conduct collaborative and professional conversations about best classroom practice and student learning. They share responsibility for all students' progress, across the year levels and disciplines.

Providing specialist consultants to present in-school workshops and funding teachers to attend external professional learning opportunities has also had an impact on teacher quality and student achievement. Workshop topics have included, analysing NAPLAN data, PLCs, EBO training, Cognitive Coaching, and e5 training.

### Initiative 9: Timely student intervention and support

#### *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. Phase two of this cross-sectoral project is now complete. It involved a small-scale qualitative study which aims to evaluate how well a range of English language assessment models available nationally and internationally can be used to improve the assessment of ESL learners in an Australian context. The University of NSW was granted approval in November 2011 to undertake phases 3 and 4 of the project.

National Partnership funding is being used to support local responses to individual student learning needs through a range of intervention programs and support. Regions have reported that schools are now actively using data to identify students in need of intervention and support, and determine the most appropriate intervention strategies. Coaching and consultancy in data analysis and management are being provided to teachers in regions and schools are developing individual learning plans for students identified as 'at risk' to support and monitor their progress. Regional support staff are being engaged to provide timely student intervention and support, including:

- Education and ESL support staff
- Engagement and Wellbeing officers
- Literacy and numeracy aide support
- Language Support Coordinators
- Wannik tutors
- Specialists, such as speech pathologists, psychologists and social workers.

Training is also being provided to teachers and principals in regions to support them to implement and utilise particular literacy and numeracy intervention programs, such as the Getting Ready in Numeracy (GRIN), Reading Recovery, Language Support, Speaking and Listening Supporting Early Literacy and Quicksmart Numeracy programs.

Regions have reported that these intervention programs have been highly successful in some instances. For example, in Western Metropolitan Region, Year 3 students in eight schools participating



in the GRIN program showed significant improvement in numeracy outcomes compared to non GRIN students. The Quicksmart Numeracy program has also facilitated improvements in student learning. For instance, over 400 students in the Grampians Region participated in this program, with the region reporting anecdotal evidence that across the 30 schools involved, there was significant student growth in mathematics and a noticeable shift in students' attitudes to learning, which was transferred to other subjects. In the Eastern Metropolitan Region, Quicksmart students reported new confidence about their learning based on feedback and acknowledgement of observable improvements. Interviews and surveys also yielded consistently positive qualitative data in relation to student performance and attitudes to school, attendance rates and levels of academic confidence. Further, a pilot of the Speaking and Listening Supporting Early Literacy (SALSEL) oral language program has been completed with Prep to Year 2 students in two schools in the Deer Park/Sunshine network in the Western Metropolitan Region. The SALSEL pilot program schools experienced significant improvement in their Prep to Year 2 students' literacy outcomes and will expand the program to Years 3 to 6 in 2012. The program will also expand into a further eight network schools in 2012.

#### *Catholic Sector*

A growing capacity to deliver robust individual education and pathway strategies for students at risk was reported in 2011. Progress and impact in this period includes:

- continued work on development of a common Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework leading to the development of Professional Learning modules and resources to be published in the second half of 2011. It is expected that these resources will be made available to schools via a web-based portal in late 2011 or early 2012; and
- participating SSNPs schools 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.

#### **2011 Significant Achievements/Activities/Highlights – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

##### *Government Sector*

An updated Literacy and numeracy 6-18 month strategy: P-10 improvement schedule for school leaders (Term 3, 2011 – Term 4, 2012) has been made available to all schools and is supporting National Partnership schools to plan for literacy and numeracy improvement. The Strategy has been widely used by schools to review their assessment schedules, resulting in regions reporting a more consistent and systematic approach to assessment and to the collection and monitoring of student performance data in schools. Hume Region's Assessment Schedule is now embedded in schools, providing a consistent approach to assessment in literacy and numeracy across the region. This enables teachers within and across schools to discuss and share data to inform teaching and evaluate progress. Anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers' proficiency in determining readiness for learning, creating class profiles and differentiating learning has improved significantly.

70% of Victorian government schools students enrolled in Mathematics in 2011, an increase of 31% from 2010.

### *Catholic Sector*

The Catholic sector's significant achievements include:

- All SSNP schools have addressed the need for intervention programs which are targeted and reflect a tailored response to the needs of all students, founded on a universal continuum of intervention.
- All SSNP schools received support from a trained external coach for either literacy or numeracy during 2011, with all schools appointing a school based literacy and numeracy specialist.
- All targeted SSNP schools critically analysed their student learning data to ascertain strengths and weaknesses within the effectiveness of teaching Literacy and Numeracy within existing programs.

Response to Intervention (RTI) has been introduced at Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School, Wendouree (1 year) and St Augustine's Primary School, Maryborough (6 months). Its purpose is to offer educators a framework in which to structure Early Intervening Services.

The RTI process involves gathering and examining assessment data. Educators use the results to judge the effectiveness of the interventions used with students and to determine appropriate new instructional plans. Schools must have systems in place to ensure that:

- a comprehensive, universal screening process is administered to all students to identify those at risk and guide instructional decisions
- responsive, expert-driven instruction in the regular classroom is available to support struggling learners
- prescriptive research-based interventions are provided to at-risk students
- each student's response is carefully monitored so instruction can be adjusted accordingly
- students consistently failing to respond to interventions of increasing intensity can be referred for a comprehensive special education evaluation—a proactive alternative to the IQ-achievement discrepancy model used in the past.

### *Independent Sector*

The increasing use of collaborative frameworks in schools to enable classroom teachers to use evidence to inform their practice and share ideas about recognising and responding to individual learning needs was a highlight of 2011 in many SSNP schools. There has been an increasing take up of platforms such as EBO, e5, PLCs and Cognitive Coaching. Teachers in schools have been using these methodologies in collaboration with their colleagues, improving their classroom teaching, and identifying student needs and responding to them.

**The Principals' Survey** provides evidence of the success of each of these interventions:

- *The SSNP interventions have helped build teacher capacity in your school*

Strongly Agree: 48%

Agree: 43%

Routine, regular analysis of NAPLAN data is bringing an increased focus on the need to use data and evidence to inform school improvement in teacher quality and student achievement. All SSNP school leaders in the sector analyse their NAPLAN results with the Principal Advisor to review trends and issues.

An example of such an analysis is St John's Greek Orthodox College. The Principal Advisor and the leaders reviewed NAPLAN data from 2008 – 2011 in October 2011, focusing on % students At & Below expected national levels. They identified the positive areas: Cohort improvement from Years 3 - 5 Numeracy; Years 5 – 7 Writing; Years 7 – 9 Numeracy; and areas requiring attention: Cohort decline from Years 7 -9 Grammar/Punctuation; Years 7 – 9 Reading.

Trends discussed included: across 2008 - 2011 there is improvement in outcomes across all areas and all Year levels; Between 2010 and 2011 there is significant improvement across the majority of areas; The data provided a rich source of discussion between the school leaders and the Principal Advisor regarding appropriate future interventions for 2012.

### **Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

#### *Government Sector*

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

- Tools to track the attendance and learning progress of Koorie students
- Managed Individual Pathways Plans, Individual Learning Plans and Koorie Education Learning Plans
- Koorie Engagement Support Officers and Koorie Transition Officers
- Wannik Tutorial participation, which provides schools with funding to contract in-class and out-of-class tutorial support for eligible Koorie students
- Development of local Koorie Literacy Programs and homework/tutoring programs for Koorie students
- Provision of oral language support in the early years through the Language Support Program
- Literacy and numeracy intervention programs, such as the Reading Recovery and Quicksmart Numeracy Programs
- Professional learning opportunities centred around Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competence
- Promotion of a heightened awareness of Koorie culture and identity in schools through involvement with the Koorie community and organisations, such as the Victoria University Moondani Balluk Aboriginal Programs Unit.

87% of Koorie students in Victorian government schools have Individual Education Plans and the

apparent retention rate of Koorie students from Year 7 to year 10 improved by 10% in 2010 and 2011. 85 principals and schools undertook a 'snapshot' of their approach to the education of Koorie students in conjunction with the Dare to lead program and 25 school leaders participated in a the Bastow Stronger Smarter leadership program.

### *Catholic Sector*

During 2011, the 60 NP schools initially identified with Indigenous students continued to participate in initiatives including the Number Intervention P-4, Extending Mathematical Understandings (EMU), and Reading Recovery.

### *Independent Sector*

Advisors continued to support teachers and students at Worawa Aboriginal College to develop rigorous and culturally appropriate interventions to improve learning outcome throughout 2011. Students come from at least 10 different communities, speaking the equivalent number of different first languages. At the beginning of the year, the Principal Advisor facilitated an in-school workshop for teachers, "Purposeful Learning", focusing on the importance of ensuring classroom learning is purposeful, explicit and scaffolded. Advisors then presented PL sessions on classroom Reading Comprehension strategies and followed up with in-class support.

Advisors have assisted teachers to implement Individual Learning Plans for students. SSNP Advisors visited the school regularly during 2011. Indeed, visit hours to Worawa Aboriginal College were significantly higher than for other schools, as were specialist consultants' PD hours, most of whom were Indigenous consultants.

Worawa Aboriginal College has used the Brigance "Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skill" diagnostic tool to ascertain students' literacy and numeracy competencies on entry to the school. However, because of frequent staff changes, it was discovered in 2011 that the tests were being administered irregularly and inconsistently. SSNP Advisors and a consultant undertook to review the school's processes and practices in the use of the tests and secured permission from Hawker Brownlow (publishers and distributors) to review the test items and re-write those needing to be more accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal students. The revised material was introduced to staff at the beginning of this year for the 2012 intake.

## **Support for Other Disadvantaged Student Cohorts – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

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

- programs specifically aimed at ESL and refugee students
- enhanced transition programs for new arrivals to support the transition from language schools and centres to mainstream schools
- strategic use of outside agencies to support at risk refugee students, such as the Local Learning and Employment Networks and Foundation House
- provision of ESL teachers
- professional learning opportunities centred around Individual Learning Plans and the use of the ESL continuum
- use of literacy and numeracy intervention programs, such as the 'QuickSmart Numeracy' program
- tracking of progress through tools such as the Student Performance Analyser (SPA)
- establishment of after school homework/tutoring programs
- ongoing training for all education support officers to provide appropriate support for students with disabilities.

### *Catholic Sector*

In the Catholic sector, Individual Learning Plans were utilised to assist in the monitoring of students with additional learning needs. Each school considered and documented an intervention framework which clarified effective school practices in the identification of students with additional learning needs, the targeted assessment of needs, a careful analysis and interpretation of data to inform the development of learning and teaching pathways and an evaluation process across each stage and level.

This approach supports the educative process for all students, including:

- a smaller, specifically identified group requiring targeted instruction; and/or
- the broader range of students in the class or cohort; and
- individual, specific support to individual students with a particular aspect/s related to their Individual Learning Plans.

### *Independent Sector*

In 2011, there were 505 students in SSNP schools in receipt of Australian Government funding for students with disabilities and 456 students in receipt of State Support Services funding for students with demonstrated needs.

Principal Advisors and Literacy/Numeracy Advisors work with specialists and classroom teachers to develop individual learning plans to support these students.

There were 8 Seminars presented at The Development Centre on the topic of Students with Individual Needs. Registration costs and replacement CRT costs were paid for 42 teachers from SSNP schools to attend these Seminars.

There is a significant number of students from recent arrival, refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds in SSNP schools, particularly in Islamic, Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Turkish schools.

Advisors work with ESL specialists, support teachers, aides and classroom teachers to develop appropriate language programs for these students.

The Development Centre offered 4 ESL Seminars, and 3 Seminars for teachers of students with language difficulties in 2011. Registration costs and replacement CRT costs were provided for 48 teachers from SSNP schools to attend these Seminars.

### **Challenges to Implementation/Progress – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

#### *Catholic Sector*

While all schools involved in the SSNPs demonstrated improved outcomes, this occurred to a varying extent within individual schools. The challenge at system level is to ensure continuation of a differentiated support and service model that is responsive to the individual contexts of schools, whilst maintaining the reform momentum so that teachers and leaders maintain their improvement trajectory.

#### *Independent Sector*

There was significant teacher turn-over in SSNP schools again in 2011, and this presented a challenge to leaders as they inducted new teachers into the ethos and expectations of the school, and also to Advisors who endeavoured to apprise them of the processes and practices of the SSNP programs. Most teachers become aware of the SSNP program once they are fully involved in the life of the school, but some take more time to make full use of the interventions.

Individual coaching sessions from Advisors are provided to assist teachers who require assistance to understand platforms such as EBO, e5 and PLCs if school leaders think it is helpful.

### **Showcase – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

#### *Government Sector*

In 2011, the Western Metropolitan Region Numeracy Improvement Strategy was introduced in 18 secondary schools. The schools participating in the program won the DEECD Victorian Team Excellence Award in 2011. The strategy involves consultants, coaches and the Regional Network Leader working with school teams of which the principal is a key participant. Each school is required to establish a strategic plan and program, which are outcome based and have a clear focus, such as differentiation. The plan and programs begin with an analysis of data, with students at the centre and have clear indicators and benchmarks to monitor growth and progress. Each school nominates a year level, or levels, as the focus for the program and each class is required to have clear learning goals, with classroom activities focused on differentiation. Formative assessment is used to track student progress. Teachers in the program are released on a regular basis to plan, monitor growth and progress, and moderate student work. The strategy has made a significant impact on student numeracy outcomes in Years 7-9.

In Northern Metropolitan Region, a Low SES primary school has implemented an approach to improve literacy outcomes. With the support of the Literacy Coach, the Years 1 and 2 Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) developed an action plan to address student reading levels. The Literacy Coach led the implementation of a range of strategies, including the Literacy Café program to support improved reading levels at Years 1 and 2. Explicit teaching strategies were brainstormed, shared, documented and assigned to differentiated groups of students. With the support of the coach, texts were carefully matched to students through a more thorough analysis of running records and the setting up of individual student 'packs'. Mini lessons (guided reading) were introduced in Semester 2 after the foundational reading practices in the Literacy Café were embedded. Students in years 1 and 2 have been monitored carefully via a whole cohort student log. Expected reading levels were established based on benchmarking data: End of Year 1 – Level 15 and end of Year 2 – Level 20. A 'shifting the tail' program was a focus for Semester 2. This involved all classroom teachers released for two hours a week to work with their lowest performing students. The following data sets out the percentage of students reading at or above level as determined by teacher administered running records:

	Year 1	Year 2
February	23%	28%
November	58%	54%

A primary school in the Northern Metropolitan region has introduced a 'Student Case Management Program' with the purpose of:

- improving student outcomes;
- providing an opportunity for teachers to directly focus on student data to develop learning plans; and
- facilitating the sharing of ideas, skills and knowledge.

The program runs on an eight week cycle and involves Professional Learning Teams meeting each fortnight during this period. At the initial team meeting, each teacher focuses on one of their students, discussing their data with the group and recommending a focus for improvement that aligns with the schools' priority for each semester, for example, a focus on writing. Follow-up in other PLT meetings includes research into effective strategies to support the case study students, team members

suggesting other strategies, the sharing of each team members' experiences of implementing the strategies and an evaluation of the students' progress. NAPLAN results for matched cohort 2009 – 2011 Years 3 -5 indicate significant improvement, with the following NAPLAN growth based on raw scores:

- Reading: 101 (State 73)
- Writing: 100 (State 65)
- Spelling: 100 (State 72)
- Grammar & Punctuation: 85 (State 76)
- Numeracy: 122 (State 89).

Sixteen digital stories were presented at the National Partnership schools forum in March 2011 and are available at the following web address

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/litnum/secretariat/forumdigistories.htm>. These case studies were used to illustrate good practice, showcasing practical approaches to improvement, with some specifically focusing on student learning interventions and the use of data to drive improvement.

#### *Catholic Sector*

St. Leo the Great Primary School, Altona North has demonstrated significant improvement in Numeracy outcomes. St. Leo the Great is situated in a residential and industrial suburb in Melbourne's Western region. The parish/school demographic comprising many ethnic backgrounds including Italian, Maltese (first and second generation), Asian (predominantly Vietnamese) and other European cultures. The school mission is committed to providing a quality Catholic education for the children of Altona North and surrounding parishes. Teaching and learning programs cater for individual needs and promote opportunities for student engagement and learning. The 2011 school enrolment was 165, with 25.7 % of the student population supported by the Educational Maintenance Allowance; with classroom organisation based on a multi-age philosophy.

Since the introduction of the SSNP initiative, the school has focused extensively on improvement in Mathematics, by adopting a whole school approach to improving student learning outcomes in Mathematics. The major area that the school has developed is on providing each teacher with extensive Professional Learning. Each teacher has attended twelve days of evidenced based Professional Learning focussed on best practice approaches. Numeracy Coaches have also provided school support and have assisted teachers with their planning of Mathematics curriculum units and provided in class support to the teachers. This 'shoulder to shoulder' support has enabled staff to gain confidence with their teaching of Mathematics. The focus for on-site Professional Learning evolves from the National Partnerships Plan, the Annual Action Plans and NAPLAN data. The Schools Mathematics Leader was allocated 0.2FTE time release to work with all teachers on planning initiatives. The School Mathematics Leader has been mentored by the Numeracy Coaches with success. At planning sessions (which is an important area of focus), the School Mathematics Leader is continually asking the teachers to reflect on effective teaching of contemporary Mathematics. They



are planning using key ideas from research, child friendly understandings, and pre- assessment data. An important focus for planning in 2011 was differentiating the curriculum to accommodate the wide variety of student knowledge in Mathematics.

The school has also implemented a Number Intervention Program over the last two years. This program has enabled the school to develop a comprehensive ten to fifteen week teaching cycle for low attaining students in Years 1 – 4 in Number. The students are taught individually, in pairs or trios. This program combined with the extensive improvement in the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge provided from the Professional Learning for classroom teachers has enabled the school to improve their student learning outcomes in Mathematics.

### *Independent Sector*

The Literacy Advisor at ISIK College wanted to impress upon the teachers the benefits of regular and sustained implementation of explicit literacy strategies. The students in the Year 8 class were assessed using TORCH at the start of term IV 2011. The findings were shared with the teachers at that point. The Advisor then coached the teachers in the literacy strategies and visited them each fortnight for the next 8 weeks. The strategies used in supporting teachers to deliver teaching comprehension skills were created by John Munro (University of Melbourne). The procedures used included, Getting Knowledge Ready, Building Vocabulary, Paraphrasing Written Text, and Summarising Written Texts. These teaching procedures guide and support students to learn comprehending reading actions and strategies. The students learn to use these tools to understand and learn from the text and create what is called switching on their "meaning motors".

At the end of the 8 weeks explicit teaching, the students were assessed again using TORCH.

- 62% of the students tested improved their reading ability, with one student making significant improvement.
- 30% of the students remained at the same reading level.
- 7% of students regressed slightly

The teachers were able to see that their direct teaching of literacy strategies had an impact on student achievement in a relatively short period of time. The teachers themselves acquired the skills to affect student literacy outcomes as a result of the coaching of the Literacy Advisor. An expanded intervention program is continuing this year, led by the teachers and supported by Advisors.

In Term I, Primary teachers and leaders at Trinity Lutheran College were supported by Advisors to use their 2010 NAPLAN data to analyse student achievement. They found that students were underperforming in Spelling. At Year 3 level, 24% of students were At or Below national benchmarks, and at Year 5 level, 25% were At or Below benchmarks. These results were confirmed by the administration of the South Australian Spelling Test in February 2011, with an average of 41% of Year 3 and 35% of Year 5 students below expected levels.

The school investigated a number of different Spelling approaches and settled on the First Steps framework for Years 1 and 2. Teachers worked collaboratively to support a focus on spelling in the early years. Years 3 and 4 Teachers used the explicit Spelling Mastery Program, which was expanded to Years 5 and 6 later in the year because the teachers could see the improvement in student spelling. The school developed a commitment from all teachers, a transparent shared process, and a clear vision to improve spelling achievement in the next three years across Prep to Year 6.

2011 South Australian Spelling Test Analysis: Years 1 and 2

February 2011			June 2011			November 2011		
Low	Av.	High	Low	Av.	High	Low	Av.	High
48.3%	39.3%	12.4%	38%	51%	11%	33%	45%	22%

## **Sustainability**

### *Government Sector*

The data literacy that is being developed within the *Smarter Schools* National Partnerships schools has largely occurred through in-school professional learning, which is increasing schools' internal capacity to identify students' learning needs and monitor and provide appropriate teaching and support in a sustainable manner. Further, regions have reported that practices related to the collection, monitoring and use of student performance data are becoming embedded in schools' processes, ensuring their long term sustainability.

### *Catholic Sector*

The learnings from the SSNP Projects are significant, schools continued to identify evidenced based interventions that facilitate student achievement. There is scope for further measurement of school based interventions to evaluate measurable outcomes, at both the system and local level.

The depth of capacity of staff in Catholic schools continues to be enhanced by participation in credentialed courses of study, encompassing leadership, wellbeing for inclusive schooling, and literacy and numeracy leadership. There is emerging evidence that post graduate study has enhanced the ability of staff to develop a whole-school strategic approach to learning and teaching, premised on reforms which are context specific and embedded in sustained professional practice.

Global budgeting affords autonomy at the local level, with schools exercising discretionary choices over program participation; however, the Catholic sector remains mindful that school capacity must be managed with existing resource allocations and ensure program initiatives remain viable beyond the current SSNP funding quadrennium.

Emphasis has been placed on the development of assessment practice within schools. This continues to enhance teacher capacity to align assessment practice, with teaching programs, recognising the function of formative, summative and diagnostic assessment, thus enabling teachers and school leaders to more readily identify and respond to individual learning needs. The development and implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Framework will further enhance the sector's capability to sustain effective practice.

### *Independent Sector*

All interventions by SSNP Advisors are based on achieving sustainable practices beyond the funding life of SSNP.

By supporting schools to use collaborative platforms such as EBO, e5, and PLCs, there is an expectation that teachers will share knowledge and skills to improve student learning outcomes. By analysing data

to provide evidence on which to make decisions, by observing colleagues in the classroom and having objective, professional conversations about best practice, and by taking shared responsibility to identify and respond to individual learning needs, sustainability is a predictable outcome.

## Section 4

### Reform Area 3: School-Community Engagement and Extended Schools

#### Overview

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 Schools Hub Trial

Extended School Hubs are being piloted in the government sector to reduce barriers to learning and provide complimentary learning programs and services through school partnerships with business, local government and community based agencies. Hubs at Sandhurst, Wyndham, Geelong North and Frankston North have comprehensive action plans in place, established local governance structures and are implementing activities and programs relating to specific, local priority areas. Planning for a fifth hub site at Berendale Specialist School started in March 2011 and the Hub is now operational. A launch of the Hub project Beyond the School Gate was held on 15 June 2011.

Each of the Hubs has formed committed teams that provide a complementary mix of capabilities and skills with strengths in both community engagement and education. The Hubs have been successful in strengthening partnerships and governance arrangements and enhancing principal engagement, with all Hubs having formed a range of partnerships between schools, non-government organisations, local government, business and the broader local community.

#### Municipal Literacy Partnership Project -SMR

A trial Municipal Literacy Partnership Project involving Southern Metropolitan Region and the Local Government Areas of Frankston and Mornington Peninsula aims to maximise the unique opportunity to improve the way in which schools, early childhood providers and wider community groups approach and aid literacy development. The Minister for Education, Martin Dixon officially launched the project in June 2011. Literacy villages are now established and have begun implementing a range of initiatives including; book swaps, local literacy promotion utilising existing community events, engagement/support from service groups/local businesses and primary/secondary students reading to children at early childhood services. Early Childhood professional development and coaching/mentoring will continue throughout 2012, providing support and strengthening capacity.

A meeting was held in November 2011 of literacy village mayors and leaders. This meeting provided an opportunity for each village to share their progress and identify any issues/concerns. The Villages have

participants from a wide range of backgrounds including schools, early childhood services, post compulsory education services, non-government organisations, residents, community health services, business, youth and family services, Neighbourhood Renewal and councillors.

### **Regional Activity**

Regions used support staff such as Engagement and Wellbeing Officers, Family and Community Engagement and Liaison Officers and Family Therapists to connect with families, engage them in learning, and assist them in supporting their children at home. Recognising the importance of engaging families to bring about improved student outcomes, schools encouraged greater parent participation in school activities by running family education programs, particularly around literacy and numeracy, training parents as school volunteers, and communicating with families through newsletters and the Ultranet. Regions reported that these activities have resulted in schools having a greater understanding of how to engage parents, improved access to and involvement of families, improved relationships amongst parents and between parents and the school and a greater parent understanding of how they can assist their child.

Schools had various levels of involvement with business and community groups on joint provision of services and training and shared use of facilities. During 2011 many schools used their Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes through local partnerships between business, community groups, schools and training providers.

### *Catholic Sector*

Family School Partnership Convenors (FSPCs) continued to work in small clusters across the 46 participating schools throughout 2011, supporting leadership teams and school communities to broaden their understandings of the 'learning environment' to include formal and informal learning environments (school and home/community) and to plan and implement initiatives that promote family and community engagement in learning.

In 2011, the Australian Catholic University (ACU) commenced the second of their three year research and evaluation of the FSP initiative. The CECV and ACU Research and Evaluation Committee (CAREC) chose nine schools as case studies for deeper exploration and analysis of the FSP initiative. Researchers continued to gather qualitative and quantitative data from system personnel, including the FSPCs, as well as from school community stakeholders from across the 46 schools, including school leaders, staff, parents and community representatives.

There has been ongoing commitment and dedication to Professional Learning opportunities at the system, region and local levels during 2011. Activities to be highlighted include:

- A state-wide Family-School-Community Partnerships forum with school leaders, FSPCs, CECV leaders and system personnel was held in Semester 1, 2011. Two main themes were explored: school community partnerships for learning, and family engagement in learning, with

participants reporting an obvious shift in understanding from 'parent involvement in schooling' to 'family engagement in learning'.

- Individual school communities and clusters of schools had the opportunity to work with highly regarded consultants Dr George Otero from the Centre for Relational Learning and Sharon Butler from Silent Partners, as well as with system personnel. Facilitators have used the current and emerging evidence promoting school community partnerships for learning. Ms Butler used the evidence to strengthen understandings and practice among school staff in relation to 'learning at home' and 'the language of schooling', through the development and delivery of Professional Learning.

Links between the Family School Partnerships initiative and the Literacy and Numeracy component of the SSNPs continue to be made in order to strengthen and broaden understandings of the 'learning environment'. Key system personnel across these two areas have worked collaboratively to provide greater strategic and intensive support to a small number of schools within the Low SES cohort.

School communities demonstrated new and changed practices and initiatives that engage families in learning in 2011. For example, 'community classrooms' where teachers from a range of schools meet regularly together to discuss classroom and partnership strategies that engage families in learning; re-thinking traditional homework practices to have a greater focus on families learning together at home; and the parent-teacher interview process being re-shaped into a two-way partnership approach. Demonstrated commitment and changed practice in many schools is reflected in Annual Action Plans through the school improvement process.

### *Independent Sector*

The work of the 4 Student Wellbeing/Community Engagement (SWCE) Advisors continued throughout 2011 as they visited their Cluster schools regularly, building relationships with those staff in schools who had responsibility for these 2 Initiatives. The Advisors brought knowledge and ideas to assist school staff to develop closer engagement with families and form partnerships with the wider community.

The SWCE Advisors have supported schools to build strong relationships with parents in order to maximise student learning. In many cases, the families are from recent arrival, refugee, and non-English speaking backgrounds. Schools have been supported by Advisors to establish culturally appropriate programs to reach out to families who may not be confident, or previously experienced in having close links with their children's school. One school arranged meetings with parents at their local church, rather than expecting the parents to travel to the school. Parent information sessions have been facilitated in some schools and assistance was given to re-establish a Parents & Friends group in one school. Homework Clubs have been established, embracing parental and volunteer involvement. Student Wellbeing programs were introduced to those schools that did not already have a strategic program in place.

## **2011 Significant Achievements/Activities/Highlights – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

- Minister for Education, Martin Dixon launched the Municipal Literacy Partnership Project in June 2011 and 10 villages have now commenced.
- On 25 February 2011 the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard visited the Wyndham Extended School Hub, at Galvin Park Secondary College, to celebrate the introduction of Netbooks for all year 9-12 students through the gconnect 1:1 and the positive impact of the hub program on students and community of Wyndham. The Prime Minister was informed of the extensive range of programs and support that have been established within the hub and concluded her visit with a presentation to the senior students of Galvin Park Secondary College.
- To strengthen schools' capacity to identify, promote and implement good practice in family engagement, the DEECD's Education Partnerships Division is sponsoring a series of workshops for all Victorian low SES schools to assist schools to assess, plan and implement effective strategies to promote increased family engagement. Participants are also introduced to resources developed through the National Partnerships Parental Engagement in Schooling in Low Socio-economic Communities Project and DEECD's Families as Partners in Learning Resource. The first two of these workshops were held in November 2010 in Western and Southern Region. Five additional workshops will be held in regional areas early in 2012.

### *Catholic Sector*

The Catholic sector's significant achievements included:

- In 2011, all schools worked towards a strategic approach to Family School Partnerships, as reflected in their Annual Action Plans, with goals and activities focused on family engagement in learning and school community partnerships for learning.
- 25 Family School Partnership Convenors (FSPCs) were engaged across the 46 participating schools. All FSPCs were involved in ongoing Professional Learning opportunities at local, regional and systemic levels during January-December 2011.

### *Independent Sector*

In 2011 the 4 SWCE Advisors spent a total of 2266 hours visiting schools and attending meetings to discuss initiatives to achieve greater engagement of parents and the wider community. This is an average of some 52 hours' service per school. This does not include travel time, planning, preparation and administrative follow-up.

Al-Taqwa College representatives were supported by the SWCE Advisor to attend the Engagement in Schooling in Low SES Communities Project Workshop where they made connections with a number of schools regarding the establishment of a Parents & Friends group. They shared resources and have now begun the process of establishing a P & F.



Several schools were successful in receiving grants from the corporate sector as a result of support from the SWCE advisors including:

- Belgrave Heights Christian College - \$1.2m Trade Training Centre grant
- Albury Wodonga Community College - \$25,000 Seed Funding Award from the National Australia Bank for the schools partnership with YES, to continue providing alternatives to mainstream schooling with better equipment, facilities, resources and programs for disengaged youth.
- Al Siraat College - \$2,000 NAB Student Awards for their partnership with Bicycle Victoria to establish a “bike bus” for students to get to school safely and fight obesity. The 2 students involved in the application received iPads. The school received \$9,000 from SFYS for the same project.
- Henderson College - \$60,000 Stephanie Alexander Garden Award to establish a specialist garden.
- Good Shepherd College, Henderson College, – 2 grants of \$1000 each from Landcare.
- Mt Hira College - \$5,000 from SFYS for a wellbeing program for Years 9 – 10 students, SAYG (Respect)
- SFYS – grant of \$6,500 to Henderson College
- Newhaven College - \$1400 from the LLEN
- ISIK (Keysborough) - \$3,000 from SFYS for their REACH wellbeing program.
- Bunnings donated a DIY workshop at Sunshine Christian College

### **Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

#### *Government Sector*

The SSNPs support family and community engagement initiatives in schools with large numbers of Indigenous students. Koorie community engagement is a central focus of many family engagement strategies across regions. Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) and Koorie Transitions Officers are used widely across regions to support schools and families to increase engagement of Indigenous students in education. For example, in Northern Metropolitan Region, KESOs are working with families and ensuring parents are involved in the development of individual education plans for their children. In Hume Region, the KESO workforce is providing service to a number of schools, focussing on supporting Koorie family and student engagement and developing culturally inclusive practices in schools.

#### *Independent Sector*

The SWCE Advisor spent 80 hours visiting Worawa staff in 2011, discussing wellbeing and parent/community engagement issues. Indigenous consultants were engaged for an additional 87 hours to support teachers and students.

In December, Advisors facilitated the second Parent and Community workshop to provide community members with an opportunity for input into the strategic direction of the school. During the full day program, parents from indigenous communities discussed the teaching and learning program at Worawa and future (post-secondary) pathways for their children. The participation of the parent and community members was funded by DEEWR and the workshops included key partners Eastern Health, Healesville Sanctuary, and the VCA Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts.

In August, a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Workshop was facilitated by Educational Psychologist, Maria Ruberto, supported by SSNP funding. The staff, representatives from Eastern Health and SSNP Advisors, investigated ways to improve wellbeing support for students at the school.

## **Support for Other Disadvantaged Student Cohorts (if applicable) – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

### *Government Sector*

Schools support educationally disadvantaged students with customised, local responses, including the utilisation of in-school support staff and the strategic use of outside agencies.

For example, in 2011 schools in Western Metropolitan Region utilised external agencies such as LLENs and Foundation House to support at-risk refugee students, established a homework club with the support of ESL transition officers and developed bilingual kindergarten and prep programs. One network in the Western Metropolitan Region included autism support as part of its SSNPs program. It employed a Leading Teacher - Autism, who works across 20 school sites with Principals, teachers in the classroom and parents. The Leading Teacher also set up an Autism Network of parents and meets with them after school once per term, and developed a network autism support plan which is achieving its goals to:

- overcome isolation for families who have students with autism;
- share strategies and approaches in dealing with Autism Spectrum Disorder and associated behaviours; and
- link families more closely to the school.

The Wyndham Extended School Hub has been working with Victoria University pre-service teachers to provide out of hours learning support. Additionally, the hub has developed a partnership with Orygen Youth Mental Health and has successfully implemented formal secondary consultation to the student welfare team and convened a panel of Orygen staff that meet weekly to provide support to relevant students and families.

The DEECD student mapping tool is being used by the Sandhurst Extended School Hub to track attendance and achievement. These measures will support the identification of those who may experience difficulties in transition, especially with respect to years 6 and 7. To assist in addressing these needs the Sandhurst Hub has engaged the Reach Foundation to deliver programs in years 5 and 6 to address transition to secondary school.

### *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. Through the SSNP Low SES initiative, schools have reported the challenges associated with their changing school communities, particularly in terms of new and diverse cultural groups.

In 2011, the CEOM instigated a new project that will target a small number of SSNP Low SES school communities to explore policies, procedures, structures and approaches to create learning

environments that embrace diversity and maximise outcomes for all. CEOM will work in partnership with community organisations, Foundation House, who are experienced and committed to working with diverse cultural groups, particularly refugees and newly arrived migrant families.

2011 involved planning the new project *Cultural Development Project: Good Practice into Common Practice* and strengthening the partnership with Foundation House. Implementation of the project will occur more formally throughout 2012.

A strategy being used by a number of schools to support culturally and linguistically diverse students and families is referred to as 'Community Conversations'. Inspired by the work of Dr George Otero from the Centre for Relational Learning, 'Community Conversations' aim to establish relationships and ongoing learning partnerships between schools and families. Members of the school community, including families, meet together to engage in open conversation about any issues that are important to them.

In 2011, Killester College in Springvale conducted a series of 'Community Conversations' with each of the two key cultural groups in their community – Vietnamese and African. The first session focused on encouraging people to talk and identify things they 'would like to know more about at Killester College'. The second session was focused on discussing these issues in more detail and ways to work through the issues in partnership. As a result of this initiative, the school community has made a commitment to regular 'Community Conversations' with each of these cultural groups throughout 2012.

#### *Independent Sector*

Students with disabilities and those with learning difficulties were always included in programs to engage parents more fully, and to develop community/business partnerships.

### **Challenges to Implementation/Progress – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

#### *Government Sector*

Support from school principals and staff is crucial for making the Extended School Hub Pilot Projects a success and insufficient support is a potential barrier to progress. Consequently, clear and effective relationships are being developed between each Hub and participating schools to ensure that Hub activities align with schools' strategic plans.

#### *Catholic Sector*

The ongoing challenge for CECV is to disseminate key findings and practice from the Low SES SSNPs across the system, within the current parameters, using SSNPs funding for nominated schools only. An improvement in understanding the essential role of family-school-community partnerships was observed across the majority of Low SES schools, however changing policy and practice across all

schools takes time. It is anticipated that as schools become directly engaged in the Low SES initiative and continue to make progress, their findings will be shared across the system; encouraging additional schools across Victoria to become involved.

#### *Independent Sector*

Maintaining momentum with community/business networks can be difficult when staff responsible for partnerships leave the school. In most cases, a reasonable hand-over phase can be implemented, but in other cases, the initial connection has been made through personal contacts and relationships.

SWCE Advisors put in place transition arrangements during their school visits. In several schools, Volunteer programs have been introduced. One Volunteer is usually funded to be the coordinator, and it then becomes the coordinator's role to maintain contacts and communication with other Volunteers, parents and the wider community. This helps to maintain continuity in school support.

#### **Showcase – 1 January to 31 December 2011**

##### *Government Sector*

As part of the Central Gippsland Koorie Literacy project, which focuses on direct literacy intervention for Koorie students, the intervention teacher and Koorie support officer directly work with each family to build an agreement about the literacy learning plan for their child and how they can be involved in support at home. The project also includes working with the wider school community to engage families to participate in school events and the use of regular reports home to parents and families on student progress. Since the introduction of this project, over 90% of 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 attended.

In response to identified issues around student wellbeing and engagement, one primary school in Northern Metropolitan Region has been implementing a comprehensive family engagement strategy. The strategy includes 'Family Time', a weekly program whereby parents and their children participate in after school social and learning activities, as well as a range of other programs to support parent engagement with the school and to assist parents to better support the learning and health and wellbeing of their children. The school believes the key to the program's success is having a coordinator responsible for running the program and indicates that the program has resulted in strengthened relationships with families that previously haven't demonstrated an interest in school based programs and activities. This has encouraged a positive and confident attitude towards home-based learning and the links to school. The family engagement program has been a catalyst to open the school to families and for parents to gain a greater understanding of what occurs in the school. Parent opinion surveys have shown a significant growth in the area of School Culture and Student Engagement. In particular, parent perceptions of Approachability, Parent Input and Behaviour Management are now above the 75th percentile.

A partnership between the Geelong North Extended School Hub, Deakin University and Northern Bay College has established SPIRE (Strategic Partnerships for improved Research in Education). This program involves students selected for their high proficiency in numeracy and literacy to work closely with Deakin University pre-service teachers and teaching and learning coaches. The project aims to enhance students' aspiration, opportunities and readiness to gain university entry.

In response to AEDI data that shows that children in the Geelong North Hub area are developmentally more vulnerable and at risk than the Victorian average, the Geelong North Hub has established a number of social and emotional learning programs and activities. These include REDI for the Early Years, Bear Necessities Program, Teddies on Tour, Sensory Snack Packs and Kimochi. Case study information for this project, including video footage, is available at <http://www.schoolsforum2010.edu.au/pages/videos/ExtendedSchoolHubs.html>

### *Catholic Sector*

At St Kieran's Primary School, Moe, a strong focus has been on the transformation of random acts of family involvement, to deliberate and effective family engagement strategies that promote student success. In 2011, key to this approach was the establishment of a school community Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) made up of school staff, parents and the wider community. Facilitated by the Family School Partnership Convenor, the ATP plans, organises, implements and evaluates partnerships.

Through the ATP, exemplary practices and activities have been created where school community members, families, the wider parish community and Latrobe City have spent time, energy, and resources working together to develop a number of strategies that promote partnerships for learning. Some initiatives include, Learning Beyond the Bell, playgroup, Baby Bounce, a refugee parent group, breakfast club, community garden, literacy groups, professional learning and parenting seminars.

Feedback so far has provided clear evidence of improvements in school programs, family engagement in learning and stronger connections between the school and community.

### *Independent Sector*

Henderson College is using data to inform practice as part of its involvement in the SSNP program. To improve student reading levels, parent involvement was sought. Two parent information evenings were held outlining the *Pause, Prompt and Praise* reading program to the 9 parents who attended. The first evening was conducted by the SSNP Advisor, with the Principal and a teacher observing. In the second session, the teacher was involved in facilitating the discussion and the question time. A coaching meeting was held with the teachers to review this session, giving the teacher the confidence and resources to present future parent sessions. *Pause, Prompt and Praise* is now embedded in the school and will be used at the start of each school year for all year levels for parents of children who require extra assistance with their reading to achieve benchmark levels. The program has the twin benefit of improving student reading levels, and engaging parents in their children's learning. Progress

will be monitored over time.

East Preston Islamic College has been supported to build a strong partnership with Victoria University's (VU) School of Education through the placement of Pre Service Teachers (PST) in the school's Out of School Hours Learning Support program (OSHLS). The PSTs benefit from working with experienced mentor teachers while developing their teaching skills with students from a range of Year levels and different cultural backgrounds (44% Somali, 33% Arabic, 1.5% Indonesian and 1.5% Pashto). The PSTs are participating in a VU Applied Curriculum Project, involving curriculum development and one-one assistance for EPIC students.

Students benefit from the coaching they receive from PST tutors, building trusting relationships and literacy skills, receiving assistance with understanding and completing homework, and gaining confidence to participate more actively in the classroom setting. Teachers indicate that students' engagement and motivation is improving as a result of the confidence they gain from the program.

Albury Wodonga Community College is a (Low SES) small alternative school established in 2006 to cater for post-compulsory students 15 – 19 years of age who have been disengaged in mainstream schools and have not been able to complete their secondary studies. The College aims to give young people, through VCAL and the individualised adult-style learning environment, the opportunity to choose their own educational program and complete it to the best of their ability. The Victorian campus, which caters for some 53 students, is located in the regional centre of Wodonga.

Advisors have supported the College to develop partnerships with local agencies and community groups to provide a Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA) to students with minimal secondary education success. CGEA is a qualification recognised in Victoria as an equivalent to Year 10, the minimum requirement for entry into TAFE. Support is provided to students undertaking the course from case workers from Youth and Family Services (YES) and other youth agencies, in addition to teachers from the school. There is a low ratio of students to adults in the class of 12 – one teacher and the case manager from YES. Individual Learning and Assessment Plans have been introduced and the Principles of Adult Learning apply. Adult Mentors assist the students. The course is taught at the Aged Concern premises, a non-school environment.

The project is being evaluated to determine the numbers who complete the full course successfully, (and understand the reasons for non-completion) and the numbers who go on to TAFE courses or employment.

## **Sustainability**

### *Government Sector*

These initiatives encourage localised approaches to building family engagement with education and are specifically designed to bring about a sustainable cultural shift. In particular, it encourages families that may have previously felt disengaged to increasingly value education and to develop higher expectations of their children's performance at school. Furthermore, the work around developing partnerships with business and community is intended to result in long-lasting relationships that can facilitate partnerships well beyond the life of the SSNPs.

Sustainability plans are being developed by the Extended Schools Hubs to ensure that partnerships established are able to continue beyond the three year funding period. The establishment of strategic partnerships is crucial to the sustainability of the extended school approach beyond the National Partnerships funding. Over the last twelve months the Extended School Hubs have all formed a range of partnerships between schools, non-government organisations, local government, business and the broader local community. The strength of these partnerships provides a strong basis for ensuring that the aims of the Hubs can continue to be achieved. The Hubs are now examining how community engagement can be further encouraged. The Hubs are involving community stakeholders in the planning and development process, harnessing community resources and skills through volunteer opportunities and delivering programs that build the capacity of community members and their appreciation of the importance of education. These strategies are designed to ensure whole of community commitment to the Hub initiative, which will lead to sustainability beyond the National Partnership funding.

### *Catholic Sector*

During 2011, a number of strategies and approaches have been used at school community, region and system levels to encourage sustainability of family-school-community-partnerships, including:

- Some schools have employed more capacity at the local level to strengthen their approach to family school partnerships. In some cases, schools have created Positions of Leadership (POL) whereby existing staff are given more formal responsibility to lead Family School Partnerships in their individual school community. This supplements the FSPC leadership role that is spread across a cluster of schools. In other cases, schools and community organisations have partnered together and are co-funding a family-community liaison role to do more direct program delivery with families and the community. These roles are used to complement the FSPC leadership role.
- School communities securing specific funding for initiatives that strengthen family-school-community partnerships. For example, two schools in the northern suburbs of Melbourne secured three years of funding through the 'Supporting-Parents-Developing-Children' project,



initiated by the Scanlon Foundation and Hume City Council, to develop an Early Years Community Hub. The hub promotes the participation and engagement of families within the local community, to build their capacity as key partners in their children's learning and enhance school readiness in the early years.

- Schools that went through the school improvement review process during 2011 have demonstrated long term commitment by articulating relevant family-school-community partnership goals and objectives in their 4-year school improvement plans. In many cases, these goals are not just reflected in the school community sphere of the school improvement framework, but are also represented in learning and teaching, leadership and management, and student wellbeing spheres.
- Diocesan strategic plans name family-school-community partnerships as a key focus area for the next 4 years, challenging education systems and school communities to strategically work with families and the community as key partners in young peoples' learning.
- The Catholic sector has demonstrated ongoing commitment to the essential role of family-school-community partnerships in maximising wellbeing and learning outcomes for all, by developing the *Charter for Promoting Outward Facing School Communities*. This key document is designed to be a platform for further discussion and planning with a view to changing practice in school communities (within and beyond SSNP), education systems and other sectors.

#### *Independent Sector*

SWCE Advisors emphasise that each intervention to increase parent involvement and build school community/business partnerships should be long-term. Sustainability is a key part of the initial planning process for each intervention. Advisors support school staff to develop the knowledge and skills to build sustainable projects.

## Section 5

### Research and Evaluation

#### Research

Two on-line surveys were commissioned by the SSNP program through the Research and Analysis Department of Independent Schools Victoria.

The on-line surveys were distributed in February, 2012 seeking responses about the SSNP program in the 2011 school year.

One survey was for Principals, and the other for Teachers involved in the SSNP interventions in each of the 43 SSNP schools.

40 Principals and 7 Deputies/Campus Heads responded, and 222 Teachers from 27 schools responded.

The aim of the surveys was to encourage principals and teachers to give feedback regarding last year's SSNP interventions and therefore give the Team a guide to future directions for the program in 2012 and beyond. An Intensive review of the Report will be undertaken by the SSNP Team in March, 2012, with a view to making whatever changes may be necessary to ensure the interventions are as effective and sustainable as possible.

Excerpts from the survey responses have been included in this Report.

#### Evaluation

All major NP programs and initiatives are being evaluated. Evaluated progress in 2011 includes:

- Participants in the Coaching for the Principal Class initiative were encouraged to undertake a self-assessment and/or 360o iLead survey to support their coaching direction and reflect on their leadership practice against the five domains described in the Developmental Learning Framework for School Leaders. Mid progress reports will be provided in March 2012 and final evaluation reports are due at end of the initiative from each of the three coaching providers.
- For the Extended School Hub Trial project, a comprehensive four phase evaluation of all field trial sites is being undertaken by the Extended School Hub Advisory group, I & J Management. The evaluation comprises a process evaluation, network analysis, analysis of comparison schools, and impact evaluation. The first Social Network Analysis for Wyndham, Frankston

North, Sandhurst and Geelong North Hubs was undertaken and a draft ESH Model Discussion Paper was presented at the November 2011 meeting of the ESH Advisory Group. The ESH model discussion paper presents the key components and critical success factors in establishing, implementing, supporting and managing an Extended School Hub and the policy framework in which it sits. The aim of the paper is to stimulate discussion about the application of the extended school model, as well as acting as an assessment checklist for each of the Hubs. All Hubs are continuing with data monitoring of activities and programs. Performance measurement is part of the ongoing monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments and progress towards goals. Performance measures address the type or level of program activities conducted (process), the direct products and services delivered by a program (outputs), and/or the results of those products and services on the targeted audience and other stakeholders (impacts and outcomes).

- In October 2011, Deakin University commenced a detailed longitudinal evaluation of a range of national partnerships initiatives related to improving pathways into teaching, including the Indigenous Scholarships and Indigenous Education Workers Career Enhancement programs, and the Special Education Scholarships.
- Graduate Pathways intake processes are reviewed annually. The 2011 intake evaluation resulted in process efficiencies including the development of an online application tool for the 2012 intake. The use of the online tool for the 2012 intake and the expansion of communication channels, including the use social media, have contributed to a 98% increase in applicant numbers from the previous intake and a 91% increase in the number of eligible applicants.
- An internal evaluation of the Incentives for Extended Service in Priority Schools program was conducted after the completion of the recruitment of Round 1 participants, resulting in a number of adjustments made to the processes. A comprehensive external evaluation of the project being conducted by Deakin University commenced in September 2011. In addition to providing a longitudinal evaluation of the program it will also include an investigation of non-cash incentive payment options which may increase graduate teacher retention in rural areas of Victoria.
- For the Municipal Literacy Partnership Project, Datasets have been drawn together for each Literacy Village to inform and monitor activities, and will be updated in September each year. These include the Australian Early Development Index, English Online, NAPLAN, Maternal and Child Health Service, Kindergarten and Library Resources.
- The 'Evaluating the 5 day Primary Mathematics Specialists Professional Learning' report (September 2011) has been received from RMIT University. Ongoing and regular professional learning is viewed as extremely important by the specialists and the report suggests the importance of taking into account the differences in experiences of the specialists when considering further professional learning. Findings from this evaluation report will feed into the final evaluation report due May 2013.
- Internal and external evaluations of the Principal Preparation Program have indicated substantial leadership development on behalf of both the interns and the host school

principals.

- The Western Metropolitan Region Professional Learning Program project team is organising an evaluation on usability and effectiveness which will bring together the thoughts and experiences of teachers and consultants who have accessed and used the Ultranet resource, Improving Student Reading: A Professional Learning Course. This will inform any changes that are needed, as well as improving the quality of future releases.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers has submitted the first interim report for the Rewarding Teaching Excellence trials. The evaluation will continue throughout 2012 and 2013, with further data analysis as the trials progress providing greater insight into the effects of performance based incentives on teaching performance and student outcomes.
- The Australian Council for Educational Research was commissioned in October 2011 to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the School Centres for Teaching Excellence over the course of two years (October 2011 to September 2013). The evaluation will explore options for achieving the SCTE design principles and project objectives. It is expected to make recommendations on how the initiative can be sustained in schools and universities after the completion of the project, and explore different approaches to improving pre-service teacher education and building stronger links between schools and universities.
- The 2011 process evaluation of the Special Education Scholarships resulted in improvements in process efficiencies including the development of an online application tool for the 2012 intake. The online tool assisted in the identification of quality applicants.
- ACER is continuing to survey stakeholders and visit schools as part of their ongoing evaluation of Teach For Australia. The evaluation will comprise three phases, with 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.

## **Section 6 – Milestone Reporting**

**Reform Area 1: Leadership and Teacher Capacity**

**Reform Area 2: Recognition and Response to Individual Learning Needs**

**Reform Area 3: School-Community Engagement and Extended Schools**

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 2011 Annual Report.

## Section 7 – Performance Indicators for Identified Cohorts

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.

## Section 8 – State Performance Measures

### 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.