



## VPA Position Paper

### Rewarding Teacher Excellence

#### Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) supports research into the concept of rewarding teacher excellence with performance based pay. This paper provides the conditions that should be applied to the development of the concept.

#### Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- DEECD are trialling two performance pay models during 2010-2011.
- Knowledge and skill based approaches to merit pay may provide incentives and recognition to teachers to move to high standards of professional performance and are therefore worth considering.
- Concerns arising from previous attempts to identify and reward exemplary teachers:
  - None appear to have been successful
  - Many principal class officers (PCOs) were placed in difficult situations during previous teacher recognition roll-outs due to systemic incapacity to standardise the assessment of teachers' ability.
  - Competition, rather than co-operation, among teachers has been evident in previous 'reward for performance' pay systems e.g. leading teacher performance pay in the 1990s.

#### VPA Position

- Performance based pay should only be introduced if the process is transparent, evidence based and capable of being *systemically rigorous*, including:
  - Unambiguous description of how a teachers' or teams' performance is measured. Multiple sources of evidence are considered essential.
  - Sensitivity to the social and environmental context of the school where teacher performance is measured in terms of improved student learning outcomes.
- DEECD should extract from the trial detailed descriptions of the teacher practices and school cultures, linked to current initiatives, which resulted in successful performance. This will inform professional capacity building across the system.
- The VPA has reservations about the overall impact on a school if only some staff are awarded performance pay.

The VPA *Rewarding Teacher Excellence* position paper was initiated by VPA Board and Council Members in August 2009. Further work on this document was undertaken by VPA President and Executive Officer in consultation with Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP) and Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA).