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VPA Position Paper

Managing Performance and Development Process

Purpose

The VPA advocates for the creation of a consistent, well-planned and effective Performance and Development framework.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- The framework for managing the performance and development of school staff leaves a lot to be desired; and state-wide processes vary considerably. There are also a number of mixed messages around the process which prevent it from running smoothly. For example, common understandings around which staff are eligible for incremental progression and when process elements need to be implemented.
- The culture surrounding performance and development is deeply embedded and not universally appreciated, and will take considerable time to overhaul.
- PISA research shows there is little correlation between performance pay and outcomes.
- There is insufficient ongoing support for principals in managing this process.
- The need for expert teachers to be more meaningfully included within the framework.
- The process envisages a fail-rate expectation around 20 - 40 per cent. This seems unfair and contradictory as, if the development process in itself is strong, then no staff should be deemed as underperforming.
- The responsibility for communicating a pre-determined, fail-rate set by DEECD will detract from the capacity of school leaders to engender team trust within schools.
- Management of the process is potentially divisive and is discouraging potential applicants for principal positions.
- The performance management processes and planned, pre-determined, failure-rates mitigate against the filling of specialist teacher positions in schools as the “standards” are less readily addressed.
- Small schools face multiple challenges – if there are only three teachers, for example, the one failing is less likely to embrace initiatives of the two that pass. The process becomes much more personal in a small community and has the potential to damage relationships at the expense of improved performance.
- The current non-availability of the School Level Report adds another layer of workload to the gathering of data related to performance. Increased data-gathering workload detracts from the core business of teaching and learning
- There is confusion about which performance standards are to be employed.

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- Suspension of the implementation of any new process within the 2013/14 cycle as we need adequate time to properly develop a consistent, state-wide performance review framework that incorporates easy-to-use templates and is perceived as fair and reasonable.

- AITSL national professional standards to be adopted.
- Training for all parties involved in the process must precede any new cycle implementation.
- Data referring to relative growth needs to be available through the data portal.
- Teachers who meet development process standards to automatically be entitled to a pay increment.
- Concentrating on the development side of the process as this will drive performance and improve the quality of the workforce.
- A culture of achievement, success and competence among our DEECD workforce – not one of built-in failure. The VPA advocates for an enhanced public perception of Government Education for all, not just for two- thirds of the workforce.
- A review of the whole process annually.
- Induction and training be provided by personnel with an educational background.