



Victorian Principals Association

Unit 2, 13-21 Vale Street, North Melbourne Victoria 3051, Australia

t: (03) 8379 4000 f: (03) 9326 9950 e: info@vpa.org.au w: www.vpa.org.au

VPA Position Paper

Regional Office Support

Purpose

The VPA is concerned that there needs to be clearer protocols and definition of the role of regions in supporting the work of principals, schools and networks. There is a decrease in resources and ongoing, timely and knowledgeable support from regional offices. The VPA calls on the State government to provide regional support to principals in a differentiated, timely and contextual manner.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- The dismantling of regional structures and fragmentation of support has left schools in regional and metropolitan areas without sufficient backing.
- Without such supports in place, principals frequently have to take on the role of regional personnel, straining their already demanding schedules. This has been labelled autonomy.
- There is no direction or support being provided for new principals.
- The large and time-consuming SSS role is untenable for principals and networks, who have other core roles.
- There is a lack of knowledge amongst current regional personnel, compounded by a high staff turnover, resulting in inconsistency, confusion and inefficiency.
- Emergency management is inconsistent in response and lacking in resources.
- There is a lack of clarity about the changing role of the SARPP and all regional staff, and how they can assist and support schools.
- Information briefings have no collegiate work or professional development.
- The role of regions in relation to networks/ clusters is not clearly defined.
- Schools are unsure of who their contact in the region is for pertinent issues.
- KESO's are not allocated or not available.

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- Consistent regional responses across Victoria.
- The development and communication of clearer protocols that clarify the role and responsibilities of the region, the SARPP and other regional staff and how they may help and support the operation of schools.
- One support person, a senior officer who understands schools well, in a ratio of 1:20 principals.
- Regional Leaders to know about each school in their region and visit regularly.
- A Directory to be provided indicating who school leaders contact to obtain information and address issues. This should be regularly updated.
- Delivery of regional meetings that are of higher quality, enabling professional learning.
- Guidance and facilitation of networks in regard to innovations in education.
- Coaching and mentoring of regional staff to orientate them towards supporting schools

- Stronger communication lines between the regions, DET and schools to ensure a consistent approach to regional issues.
- More financial and personnel support for principals, including an increase in personal development offered by each region.
- Greater support for new principals including coaching and mentoring.
- Regional support to optimise the KESO program.
- Stronger emergency management support from regional staff, including onsite support, for a wider range of situations, in particular for aggressive parents and violent students.