



Victorian Principals Association

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VPA Position Paper

Revised Complexity of PSD Application

Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) is concerned that due to the current complexity of PSD (Program for Students with Disability) applications, schools are being unreasonably and artificially thwarted in accessing adequate resources to support students who genuinely deserve to benefit from additional resource availability.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

PSD applications require so much detail and supporting evidence and documentation that the process of completing applications becomes so onerous and time-consuming that schools cannot facilitate adequate completion of applications. Children who are already disadvantaged suffer further disadvantage. Issues arising from the red-tape involved in application processes include:

- Difficulties experienced in pursuing student history data in cases where students have no prior pre-school experience or have been transient in locational patterns. This issue is exacerbated when parents are refugees, foster, or suffer from psychological disturbances or are impaired by substance abuse.
- The extreme amount of time/history/evidence that is required for severe behavioural disorders
- A lack of regional, or other, discretionary funds available for emergency support.
- The wording in application specification requirements is much too pedantic i.e. “may” needs to be re-written as ‘will’, requiring an application to be re-written and re-submitted.
- Dysfunctional transfer between systems. Applications have to be completely re-written for an already identified and funded disability simply because of a system transfer.
- A mental health disability category does not exist yet very young children experience highly debilitating impediments to learning due to mental health anomalies.
- Autism funding fails to maintain pace with documented increases in prevalence and severity.
- A February application cut-off is inadequate as new Prep students to a school cannot be properly assessed and applied for within such a tight time-frame.
- The increasing residualisation of government schools due to the “drift” of children that require funding from independent to governments schools.
- Confusion over Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) contact details as only an email contact is provided on the DEECD website.
- Workload is an issue when year six/seven reviews take place in primary school prior to vulnerable students transferring to secondary school.
- Interstate students who have attended specialist schools are unable to transfer directly into a Victorian specialist setting.
- Staff are being placed in physical, emotional and mental danger

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- Professional trust to apply to investigations related to student history – it cannot remain as a requirement where it is unreasonable to expect the determination of a complete and accurate history. Weightings need to be established to be applied to the assessment factors associated with disability so that one category missing, or incomplete, does not automatically disqualify an otherwise eligible student.
- The mental health category to have regular reviews to assess the child's condition.
- The application window to be open throughout the entire year for students who transfer within Victorian Government Schools.
- Increased funding for emergency cases and Autism should be transparently available for periods of up to six months while regular applications are considered.
- Application completion requirements to reflect ordinary language and interpretations.
- Short-term funding to be abolished in favour of students being supported throughout their primary years.
- Funding transferring students should automatically be available to recipient schools through CASES.
- Further DEECD contact details to be made available on the DEECD website.
- Year six/seven reviews to take place at the end of Year 7.
- A review of the entire funding process.