



Victorian Principals Association

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VPA Position Paper

School Reviews

Purpose

The VPA wants a credible, consistent and properly resourced School Review process with clarity over requirements, timelines and roles.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- The school review process has been confusing and unclear; there has been a lack of information and principals feel unsupported.
- Schools have received different responses from the DEECD regarding the process.
- Review categories are not defined and have not been consulted upon. Confusion exists around numerous details such as what the quota is, and whether it is floating or fixed.
- Thresholds have not been provided in a timely way.
- A role statement for reviewers and training has not been released.
- There is concern over how well-prepared upon entering the process peer reviewers will be.
- Similarly, there is concern about how well prepared those accepting reviewers will be.
- There needs to be guidelines delineating how long the process should take and what resources will be necessary to ensure an effective and credible process.
- The scope to negotiate acceptance to become a peer reviewer is unclear. Schools that are in a review year and also have peer reviewers are placed under an inordinate amount of pressure due to unreasonable additional workload.
- The peer review process potentially increases principals' workloads, many of whom are already occupied with numerous responsibilities in their roles as school leaders both within and beyond school settings.
- Both schools and peer reviewers are inadequately compensated for time and money taken to partake in the school review process. The current remuneration amount of \$500 to peer reviewers is frequently less than the costs associated with assuming the position. Additionally, schools with nominated peer reviewers are stretched by their absence and should receive compensation to backfill some aspects of the absentee principal role. This is increasingly relevant when a rural school is involved.
- The price of external reviewers is unclear.

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- Clear, consistent and thorough communication of the new school accountability framework with clarity provided on the timeline, process and practices for school reviews.
- DEECD support for the school review process, including the production and sharing of standard policies and templates and information on the DEECD website.

- DEECD to ensure the framework is consistent in practice and format across Victoria, so allowing for fair, equitable and credible school reviews
- The establishment of a realistic and reasonable timeline for the conduct and implementation of future reviews.
- Schools to be given clear indication as to the type and extent of the review.
- Processes for VRQA to be separate from school reviews.
- Clarification on how information is shared between the DEECD and the VRQA.
- Adequate resourcing for all schools to have a comprehensive review.
- A review of the peer review process with the view to:
 - Ensuring adequate resourcing to all schools and peer reviewers that is fair and reflects associated costs. In particular, accounting for issues affecting schools in rural areas.
 - Offering alternative implementation strategies that take into account excessive principal workload.
 - Clarification of the process for accepting a role, and preparing to become a peer reviewer. In a review year, affected school principals to be exempt from being expected to participate as a peer reviewer.
- A large number of external registered reviewers to be available and costs shown on the website.
- Training programs for schools to be flexible and readily available.
- Thresholds to be provided in a timely way.
- Reviews to be a positive and supportive process.