

School Leadership Strategy



This School Leadership Strategy is a long-term and ongoing strategic priority for public education in NSW. Its aim is to significantly enhance the department's support for school leaders so they can focus on leading teaching and learning in their schools.

The Strategy responds to well-established research that shows that school leaders who focus on instructional leadership have the biggest impact on student learning. It also responds to the findings of an independent study commissioned by the Department into principal workload and time use, and representations from the NSW Primary Principals' Association and the NSW Secondary Principals' Council.

The Strategy commits the department to three key actions:

1. provide quality leadership preparation and development
2. strengthen collegial support for school leaders
3. improve the quality of services and support to schools.

The Strategy builds on our previous school leadership strategy where we introduced elements such as the School Leadership and Management Credential.

Immediate actions under the Strategy will be implemented progressively across the next 18 months. Subsequent phases may include further initiatives and resources as a result of reviews into Educational Services, assets management and staffing entitlements. In its full implementation the Strategy will lead to significantly enhanced support for school leaders and leadership teams in their focus on instructional leadership to drive better educational outcomes for all students.

WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

Research shows that school leaders who focus on instructional leadership have the biggest impact on student learning. The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation **Learning Curve on Effective Leadership** found that:

- The most effective school leaders have a strong instructional focus - they are constantly seeking to improve teacher quality and student learning.
- The leadership practice with the greatest impact on student outcomes is promoting and participating in teacher learning and development. This can reduce variation in teacher effectiveness within a school, reduce staff turnover and support succession planning.

PRINCIPAL WORKLOAD AND TIME USE STUDY

In 2017 the Department commissioned Deloitte to undertake an independent study to investigate principal workload and time use. The study found that:

- Principals spend a significant amount of time on activities related to management and administration, which reduces the time they have to be an instructional leader.
- Greater authority for school decision-making to schools is supported by principals but that, coupled with higher community expectations, has led to an increase in workload.
- The main barriers to managing principal workload include limited training and preparation for leadership roles, insufficient administrative support and lack of access to quality support services, tools and systems.
- There is no one-size-fits-all model of great leadership. Leadership practices are contextualised to the school and system support should enhance flexibility and collaboration for school leadership teams.
- Principals could better manage their workloads if there was better coordinated, streamlined and aligned department support tools and communications.

The study can be found at education.nsw.gov.au/media/schools-operation/Principal-workload-and-time-use-report.pdf



1. Quality leadership development and preparation

Our own Leadership Institute

We will invest in our future school leaders at key points in their career cycle by establishing our own Leadership Institute.

The Leadership Institute will be a dedicated unit in the department to provide aspiring, new and experienced school leaders with access to quality, expert, affordable development programs relevant to their needs.

Programs will be standards-based and linked to the national teacher and principal standards and profiles. They will be co-designed with school leaders and developed in partnership with academics and other experts. Program delivery will be best practice and involve a mix of face-to-face workshops and courses, workplace learning, online learning, coaching and mentoring.

As a first step we will establish a Leadership Institute Advisory Group of experts, school leaders and key stakeholders to frame the Institute's charter and operating context – with the aim that the new Institute is functional in 2018.

The first flagship course will be a 12-month development program starting in 2018 for aspiring principals. This will ensure we have a pool of new principals better prepared to take on the principal role in our schools.

The Institute will eventually offer quality development programs for all school leaders at all stages in their career. The Institute will also enable us to streamline and better target the number of locally designed courses driving higher quality and more tailored development opportunities.

Systemic induction and onboarding of new school leaders

We will strengthen our current induction of new principals, with ongoing support for the first two years in the job, including coaching by Principals, School Leadership. We will also extend the coaching and mentoring for new principals to 20% of existing principals who may request this support. We will extend induction and tailor concentrated support for teaching principals.

Over time, strengthened induction and mentoring support will be extended to all other executive positions.

Scholarships for our best principals

We will invest in principals as system leaders.

We have great principals in our schools and their work needs to be better recognised and their expertise shared to improve performance and collaboration across schools. Each year up to 20 highly capable principals will be awarded a scholarship to participate in an internationally renowned leadership program as a cohort. They will then be better placed to work with and share lessons learnt with other school leaders and principal networks.

2. Stronger collegial support

A new principal role statement

We will replace the Leading and Managing the School document with a new contemporary principal role description, giving principals clarity about their core responsibilities and a better understanding of the key outcomes against which they can measure their effectiveness.

Directors, Educational Leadership

We will provide more support and guidance for principals with a refocusing of the Director, Public Schools NSW role to ensure that principals are in the best possible position to provide effective local leadership.

We want our directors to be an ally and a partner for principals, a problem-solver and a sounding board – and to support the principal on continuous school improvement. We will redefine the role of directors and their title will change to Director, Educational Leadership.

We will give principals greater access to their director and directors the time and capabilities to better support principals. We recognised that the span of responsibility for our directors was too large and out of step with leadership models in other professions, business and industry. Directors currently support an average of 34 principals and schools. We will reduce this ratio to one director for an average of 20 principals and schools. It will ensure that principals and directors are able to develop professional relationships that are collegial, constructive, informed and insightful.

Outstanding principals across NSW will be encouraged to apply for 45 additional director positions, joining 65 existing directors to lead 110 new principal networks. The Directors, Educational Leadership, will start in term 1, 2018.

Principals, School Leadership

We will maintain 50 FTE Principal School Leadership (PSL) positions to provide coaching and mentoring support for new principals and expand that support to current principals. These roles will also continue to lead external validation and provide collegial and system support to principals. From 2018 we will restructure the positions and recruit PSLs on a 1.0 FTE or 0.2 FTE basis, and open up recruitment to current principals and recently retired principals and directors.

3. Better services and support for school leaders

\$50 million in flexible funding and interim staffing entitlement adjustments

We will allocate an additional \$50 million in flexible funding as a school support allocation in school budgets from 2018 to free up principals from work that takes them away from instructional leadership. The extra funds may assist principals to employ business managers or additional administrative support, or principals may use them in some other way to increase their capacity to focus on instructional leadership.

This is an interim measure as we embark on a longer term staffing entitlement review.

We will also put in place other interim measures to staffing entitlements to account for larger school sizes and to more equitably distribute staffing resources to Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs). These measures include:

- increasing the upper limit on executive FTE entitlements and support staff FTE entitlements to reflect larger school sizes
- providing additional FTE-based release for primary school executives to reflect larger primary school enrolments
- amending the distribution equity of resources for SSPs by consistently allocating staffing on the basis of the primary school formula and notional enrolments for the entire SSP.

Teacher performance improvement support

We will better support principals to manage teacher performance by establishing new teams of experienced leaders to provide hands-on support, guidance and advice to principals in managing teacher underperformance and improvement.

Eight field officers – at assistant principal, deputy or principal level – will be appointed to trial this process in a metropolitan and regional area in 2018 with the potential to roll the program out across the state should it prove effective.

Compliance inspection support

There are a number of compliance inspection activities that currently fall to the school principal as the site manager under work, health and safety legislation. This includes tree audits, emergency management equipment and bushfire management.

We will put in place centrally engaged and trained department officers to undertake these inspection activities, removing the need for these tasks to be undertaken by principals. The new officers would complete an annual visit to every school and provide advice to principals on action needed to rectify any identified issues. The school would retain responsibility for any rectification works.

Better coordinated, streamlined and aligned support

We have commenced a review of Educational Services so we can understand how to better provide the support schools require to improve teaching and learning.

We have commenced a Staffing Entitlement Review to identify what changes can be made to the staffing methodology to better reflect the current and future operating environment of schools.

We will work with principals to improve the timing, coordination and presentation of communications to schools.

We will adopt a user-centred approach to initiative design, implementation and change management that considers the ability of principals to absorb the change.

We will continue to identify further opportunities for reducing the workload burden on principals and addressing pain points in areas such as procurement, assets management and technology support.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The School Leadership Strategy web pages www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/leadership-strategy

Leadership Pathways <https://education.nsw.gov.au/leadership-pathways> on the Department of Education intranet

The implementation timeline



2017

- Leadership Institute Advisory Group established.
- Schools receive their funding allocation for 2018, including flexible funding to free principals to focus on instructional leadership.
- Recruitment and induction for new Directors, Educational Leadership
- Educational Services review completed.

2018

- Leadership Institute operational.
- Directors, Educational Leadership in place.
- Strengthened induction for new principals.
- Extend coaching and mentoring for new principals to 20% of existing principals.
- New preparation program for aspiring principals.
- First cohort of international scholarships for principals.
- Two teacher performance and improvement teams in place.
- Tree audits, emergency equipment management and bushfire management inspections centralised.
- Actions arising from Educational Services review.

FROM 2019

- Leadership Institute offering development courses for principals, deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers.
- Evaluation of the teacher performance and improvement team pilot completed and decision made about program expansion.
- Long-term actions arising from the Staffing Entitlement Review.