

# Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Schools in Queensland

## NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON EMPOWERING LOCAL SCHOOLS

### PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is created subject to the provisions of the **National Partnership Agreement on Empowering Local Schools** (the Agreement) and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement.
2. The objective of the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative is to empower participating schools to make decisions at a local level, supporting them to better respond to the needs of students and the local school community and provide services designed to assist their students to achieve their best educational outcomes. The *Empowering Local Schools* initiative complements reforms being delivered through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships and aligns with and builds on the broader schools reform agenda.
3. The Agreement will contribute to delivering greater local decision-making in approximately 131 government schools in *Queensland* participating in Phase One of the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative.
4. An independent evaluation of Phase One will collect evidence regarding the achievement of greater local decision-making in participating schools across the country. The Evaluation will consider the unique circumstances in each state and territory and provide an opportunity to learn and share what works effectively in different settings.

### TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5. This Implementation Plan supports and complements the Agreement and information provided within this plan will be critical to supporting the evaluation of activity under Phase One of the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative.
6. This Implementation Plan will commence as soon as it is signed by the Commonwealth of Australia (the Commonwealth), represented by the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, and the State of *Queensland*, represented by the Minister for Education, Training and Employment.
7. This Implementation Plan will cease on 30 June 2014 or on completion of the project, including the processing of final payments against the performance milestones, the acceptance of final performance reporting and completion of the project evaluation, unless terminated earlier or extended as agreed in writing by the Parties.
8. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between relevant Ministers.
9. Either Party may terminate this Agreement by providing 30 days notice in writing. Where this Implementation Plan is terminated, the Commonwealth's liability to make payments to the State

is limited to payments associated with Implementation Milestones achieved by the State by the date of effect of termination of this Implementation Plan.

10. The Parties to this Implementation Plan do not intend any of the provisions to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to this Implementation Plan.

## CURRENT LEVELS OF LOCAL DECISION-MAKING IN QUEENSLAND STATE SCHOOLS

11. Queensland has long recognised the important role of the principal as instructional leaders in their schools. In addition, Queensland has devolved workforce, funding and infrastructure management and governance functions to state school communities since the late 1990s through its on-going commitment to school based management.

12. Examples of the decisions already undertaken by Queensland state schools include:

### *Instructional Leadership*

- a) Principals have legislated authority to plan the learning experiences offered to students at a school within a curriculum framework approved by the Minister such as the Australian Curriculum including Queensland Curriculum requirements.
- b) Schools have flexibility to adapt and adopt support materials such as the Curriculum to the Classroom (C2C) materials and eLearning resources.

### *Managing People*

- c) Principals and relevant qualified staff members select classified teachers and temporary and casual teachers for their school.
- d) Schools currently have the authority to participate in teaching staff management processes including decisions about probation, approval of leave and management of under performance of school staff.
- e) Schools have limited flexibility to convert positions from one employee type to another depending on school needs and priorities through the existing workplace reform process.
- f) Principals are consulted throughout the teacher transfer process; particularly in relation to ensuring teachers to be transferred to a school have the teaching capabilities the school requires. However final decisions rest with regional HR staff.
- g) Staffing arrangements and conditions for teachers employed in "University Training Schools", including consideration of additional coordination and non-contact time on a school-by-school basis, under the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership Agreement.

### *Managing Resources*

- h) Schools develop their own operational budgets within system-wide planning and reporting guidelines. Schools use a school based financial system with control over the school's own bank account.
- i) Principals, with their school community also formulate and manage the school's annual asset maintenance program for planned maintenance projects. Maintenance work in state schools is undertaken by QBuild.
- j) Principals manage minor capital works within existing procurement and contract management guidelines and have to use QBuild.

*Working with Communities*

- k) Queensland state school communities have responsibility for strategic planning and reporting for their school. School improvement planning and accountability in Queensland state schools is guided through the School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework (SPRRF).
- l) Queensland state schools are empowered to determine the governance structure that best meets their needs rather than complying with a prescriptive single model of governance for all state schools. There are approximately 220 State school councils in Queensland.

**FOCUS OF ACTIONS TO INCREASE LOCAL DECISION-MAKING**

- 13. In November 2011, the former Queensland Government released a public consultation paper on *Local Decisions: Stronger School Communities* canvassing further empowerment of school communities.
- 14. This implementation plan for the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative in Queensland state schools has been developed after public consultation with school communities and key stakeholders on the focus actions through the *Local Decisions: Stronger School Communities* public consultation process. The approach focuses on capacity building to fully utilise existing local decision making flexibilities and provides options for schools to take on new areas of decision making responsibilities.
- 15. The Queensland Government's election commitment, Independent Public Schools, is a complementary initiative which will operate separately to the Empowering Local Schools initiative.
- 16. The new areas of local decision making and capacity building include managing people, managing resources and working with communities as follows: Schools will implement actions across each of these three areas of local decision making.

Managing People – increasing school based decision making in Human Resource management through:

- a) empowering school communities to undertake workforce planning to make decisions regarding staffing mix (teacher staffing profiles, administration and school support staff) with the local consultative committees (LCCs) giving schools the capacity to shape the staffing profile to meet local needs. LCCs plan and oversee the local workplace reform issues, and include school leaders and union representation.
- b) enhancing the capacity and capability of principals and their leadership teams to flexibly manage both their human resources and non-labour funds to provide differentiated learning to their students based on need.

Managing Resources – More flexibility to determine and direct resources to improve student outcomes through:

- c) enabling schools to make decisions on how to spend their grant funds based on local priorities with increased flexibility regarding the use of school grant funding through the removal of tied grants.
- d) enabling schools to make decisions on how to raise more funding from the hire of school buildings to the local community and businesses<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Note, a school funded under the Building the Education Revolution is not obliged to incur the cost of community usage of their BER libraries or multipurpose halls, however schools should not be seeking to make a profit from community use of these facilities either. <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Documents/BERCommunityUseFactSheet.pdf> for further information.

Working with Communities – enhancement of community engagement in school based decision making through:

- e) a new procedure to support schools in the establishment of school councils.
- f) a new resource to better support school communities to decide their school governance arrangements within current legislation.
- g) the collaborative development of a new School and Community Partnerships Framework to guide schools to develop more effective relationships with parents, the school and community. This framework will include: ways to improve communications, connecting learning between home and school, building a school-community identity and recognising the role of the family.
- h) enabling Principals to approve a waiver of restrictions on who may be a member of the P&C executive committee.
- i) harnessing philanthropic and community investment for the purpose of local learning.

## CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

- 17. Subject to agreement with stakeholders, some changes to administrative arrangements will commence by Term 4, 2012 for enactment by participating schools during the 2012 school year and in planning for the 2013 school year.
- 17. A number of administrative arrangements will need to be developed or modified to support these new local decision making flexibilities. These include:
  - a) administrative enhancement to the grant schedule and the removal of tied grants to provide flexibility in the allocation of school funds at a school level
  - b) development of advice and support package to ensure principals have the skills and knowledge to take up the available flexibility in managing the school budget
  - c) development of a School and Community Partnership Framework, to ensure family and community engagement is a key component of whole school planning and reform
  - d) redevelopment of relevant departmental procedures to support schools in the establishment of school councils by providing the key steps and processes
  - e) updating of Departmental delegations to align with new delegated responsibilities
  - f) professional development opportunities for school leaders and leadership teams including school council and P&C members to ensure school communities have the skills and knowledge to support local decision making flexibilities
  - g) the development of guidelines and resources to support philanthropic giving to and community investment in Queensland state schools, to strengthening the capacity of schools to leverage partnerships within and beyond their school community.

## PARTICIPATION OF SCHOOLS

- 18. Phase 1 schools are to be selected through a centralised process and confirmed by Regional Directors and the nominated schools. The criteria for selection will be based on the school's readiness to implement greater school based decision-making as evidenced by support from the school's community and the other criteria for school selection outlined in clause 22(e) of the Agreement. The selection process will ensure the appropriate proportions of schools in regional locations are selected.
- 19. Consideration will be given to schools with high proportions of Indigenous students and in sites identified in clause 23(b) of the Agreement. All selected schools will receive a start-up grant of

between \$40,000 and \$50,000 according to school size. The funding allocated to each school will be determined once the total proportion of small, medium and large schools is known. The full amount of start-up funding will be distributed to participating schools. Schools will be empowered to determine how their funding allocation is expended to support the focus actions and in response to local needs.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

20. A number of professional development offerings for principals and school communities will support new local decision making flexibilities. This may include provision of professional development from approved providers including universities, the Queensland Education Leadership Institute or private providers, coaching and mentoring.
21. The allocated funding for professional development and training for Phase One schools under the Agreement will be distributed to regions to meet the professional development needs of participating schools in each region.
22. Professional development opportunities will include:
  - § Getting the right staffing mix for your school
  - § Managing your school budget
  - § Inclusive school based decision making
  - § Harnessing Philanthropy.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

23. Activities undertaken as part of this Agreement will be informed with reference to the following performance indicators:
  - a) the number of schools participating in this initiative
  - b) the degree to which centralised administrative arrangements support schools to manage increased local decision-making responsibilities
  - c) the extent and effectiveness of school-based decision-making, particularly in relation to governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce, including staffing profiles.
  - d) the availability and appropriateness of training and professional development provided to principals and school communities
  - e) the extent to which schools are better able to respond to the needs of students and school communities, including the needs of students experiencing disadvantage.

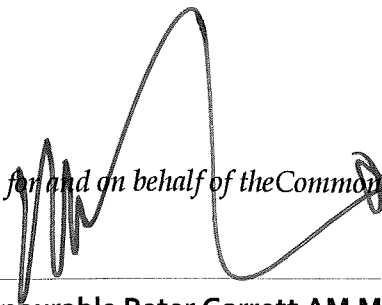
## PERFORMANCE MILESTONES

24. The performance milestones that will be used to measure progress toward increased school decision-making under this initiative are set out at Table One below.

*Table 1: Performance Milestones*

Indicator	Milestone	Date
<i>The number of schools participating in this initiative</i>	<i>131 schools selected to participate</i>	<i>June 2012</i>
<i>The degree to which centralised administrative arrangements support schools to manage increased local decision-making responsibilities</i>	<i>Scoping of changes to centralised administrative arrangements are initiated</i>	<i>May 2012</i>
	<i>Central administrative arrangements completed including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• administrative enhancement to the grant schedule and removal of tied grants</i></li> <li><i>• redevelopment of relevant departmental procedures to support schools in the establishment of school councils</i></li> <li><i>• updating of Departmental delegations</i></li> </ul>	<i>Before November 2012</i>
<i>The extent and effectiveness of school-based decision-making, particularly in relation to governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce, including staffing profiles</i>	<i>School self-evaluation of effectiveness undertaken in 131 schools</i>	<i>First week of December 2013</i>
<i>The availability and appropriateness of training and professional development provided to principals and school communities</i>	<i>Professional development opportunities identified to be made available to principals and school communities</i>	<i>October 2102</i>
	<i>131 schools engaged in professional development programs for principals and school community members on focus areas</i>	<i>First week of December 2013</i>
<i>The extent to which schools are better able to respond to the needs of students and school communities, including the needs of students experiencing disadvantage.</i>	<i>School self evaluation of effectiveness undertaken in 131 schools.</i>	<i>First week of December 2013</i>

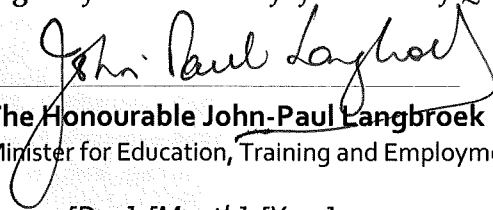
Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

  
Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by

**The Honourable Peter Garrett AM MP**  
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

[Day] [Month] [Year]  
10 8 2012

Signed for and on behalf of the State of Queensland by

  
**The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP**  
Minister for Education, Training and Employment.

[Day] [Month] [Year]