

Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Schools in South Australian Government Schools

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 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 *[insert indicative number of schools in relevant state or territory]* government schools in *[insert state or territory]* 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 South Australia, represented by the Minister for Education and Child Development.
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 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

11. The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) South Australia has been devolving decision-making authority to schools and preschools, since the release of the landmark *Freedom and Authority Memorandum* in 1970. The Memorandum signalled the future delegation of power to manage schools to their Principals, while urging them in turn to devolve authority to teachers and students.

In 1999 following the release of a commissioned report into local management in SA public education, schools and preschools were invited to participate in *Partnerships 21* which provided greater autonomy in the areas of governance, resourcing flexibility and quality improvement. Since that time DECD has taken a series of steps towards increasing the autonomy of all government schools and principals:

11.1.1 Finance and budget

SA public schools have had increased control of their budget - including staffing, grants and utilities - since local management was introduced in 1999 -2000. The *South Australian Education Staff (Government Preschools and Schools) Arbitrated Enterprise Bargaining Award 2010* which included individual workload protection for teachers, paved the way for schools to be funded via a Student Centred Funding Model which provides student per capita funding to schools in place of the previous enrolment step formula for teachers, ancillary staff and leadership. While the new Student Centred Funding Model implemented in 2011 has increased autonomy further, this funding model still has a number of elements that identify additional funding for special needs, grants and utilities.

The student centred funding model only became operational in September 2011; therefore it was too late to influence the mix and deployment of staff for the 2012 school year. The model has the potential to offer greater flexibility in the mix and deployment of staff than has been possible up until now. The Department for Education and Child Development expects that the National Partnership on Empowering Local Schools will provide the opportunity for schools to explore the possibilities within this model ready for the 2013 and 2104 school years.

11.1.2 Human resources management

In 2011 DECD implemented a new recruitment and selection policy that provides principals with increased autonomy in vacancy management and staff appointment processes. Reforms that were ushered in as part of this policy included:

- Removal of the "10-year rule" where teachers were required to transfer after a 10 year appointment at a given school;
- Schools are able to advertise vacancies throughout the year as they occur;

- All schools are able to select all teachers through an 'open selection' process based on merit;
- Schools are able to offer a conversion to permanency to individual temporary teachers at the school level; and
- Schools are able to offer temporary contracts for up to three years in circumstances such as replacement of staff on maternity leave or secondment.

Some very limited central management occurs for unplaced teachers and teachers returning to the metropolitan area from regional South Australia.

All South Australian Government schools are required to have a Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) comprising the Principal, an Australian Education Union representative and two staff representatives. The PAC's role is to advise the principal regarding human resources matters at the school.

11.1.3 Governance and engagement

South Australian Government schools have operated under local management arrangements since 2000 when school Governing Councils were established through legislation. Prior to this time School Councils operated as advisory bodies. Governing Councils have joint responsibility with the school leadership team to:

- Set broad direction and vision through strategic planning;
- Monitor and review the school's learning plan;
- Determine the application of the total financial resources available to the school and regularly review the budget; and
- Participate in the selection of a principal should a vacancy arise.

Governing Councils manage and employ non teaching staff such as canteen managers and Out of School Hours care staff.

12. South Australia is undertaking 5 of the 6 reward reform areas in the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ NP). However, 'Reward Reform 4: Increased school-based Decision Making about Recruitment, Staffing Mix and Budget' is not included.

The Department for Education and Child Development plans to use ITQ NP reward funding for capacity building of School Services Officers, ongoing work with leadership particularly in relation to online delivery programs and ongoing work with pre service and teacher leaders connecting with early career teachers through centres for excellence.

13. All major reform activity being undertaken at jurisdictional level to support increased local decision making by schools is outlined above.

FOCUS OF ACTIONS TO INCREASE LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

14. The DECD proposal has two policy objectives:

- *Moving towards Greater Empowerment*; and
- *Changes to Systems Arrangements to Support Empowered Local Schools*

- 14.1 There will be two strands within the *Moving towards Greater Empowerment* objective:

- *Excellence and Diversity in Public Education through Transforming School Strand*
- *Excellent Provision of Public Education by Confederations of Schools Strand*

These strands reflect South Australian Government policy reform priorities for schooling and will enable schools to implement the initiative in the way which will provide them with the best outcomes. They will be the means by which schools trial their greater empowerment.

14.2 Key features of the proposal are:

- It builds on the policy intent of a forthcoming educational leadership paper by empowering schools and principals to tailor education provision to best meet the needs of students and the local community.
- It seeks to build co-operation and professional learning across schools.
- It creates the opportunity for principals to access greater expertise which in turn assists them to make decisions about their school
- It enables principals and school communities to think and act beyond their own school community and consider how their school contributes to the public education system.
- It gives permission for schools to be innovative and share their innovation with the system.
- It encourages systemic thinking about how best to support schools
- It will chart the way forward for local management in the South Australian public education system by providing important information about new effective and efficient practices at local and systems level.

15. *Policy Objective 1: Moving towards Greater School Empowerment*

15.1 *Excellence and Diversity in Public Education through Transforming School Strand*

- 15.1.1 Selected DECD schools will volunteer to embark on or progress further in transforming an aspect of their operation or service delivery. They may elect to transform a particular characteristic, program or educational approach that is at the core of the school's operation and ethos, that has been developed in response to their local context and which makes this school distinct from other schools.
- 15.1.2 Schools will make decisions about the aspect they wish to transform in close consultation with their local community, consisting of parents, local government, any local higher education providers, DECD regional office and business and industry.
- 15.1.3 In transforming their operation or service delivery area, selected schools will be able to articulate the expected progress and report on local decision making in one or more of the following areas:
- Governance arrangements, including strategic planning and school operations decision making.

- Funding and infrastructure that may include allocation of resources, infrastructure management, planning and maintenance.
- Workforce matters such as staffing profiles, recruitment and performance management.

15.1.4 To avoid any concerns about schools in the Transforming School Strand setting themselves up to compete with other public schools, the Expression of Interest process will include a requirement that consultation occurs at regional level, and that the applicant school has a commitment to share expertise with other schools in the region and across regions including providing reports to regional leadership and annual National Partnership forums.

15.1.5 Schools might elect to engage in a combination of the Transforming School and Confederation of Schools strands.

15.1.6 Participating schools will receive a start up grant of at least \$40,000 and a grant of \$3,500 per school for professional development.

15.2 *Excellent Provision of Public Education by Confederations of Schools Strand*

15.2.1 DECD schools selected through an Expression of Interest process will volunteer as established or new confederations. These groups of schools will work collaboratively with their broader communities to achieve greater flexibility and improve and extend the educational services they provide to their students.

15.2.2 Schools will be encouraged to join with other schools to establish a confederation that covers birth to year 12. Confederations will be established by the schools themselves although some groupings may be encouraged by regional directors.

15.2.3 Each school in a confederation will receive a grant of at least \$40,000.

15.2.4 Confederations of schools will work together to make collective decisions that may include shared staffing models.

15.2.5 Each school in a confederation will receive start up funding. However, while schools may elect to include local preschools in a confederation, due to limited funding and the policy intent of increasing 'schools' empowerment, preschools will not receive start up funding.

15.2.6 Regional and rural schools might combine with metropolitan schools to increase curriculum options and thereby enhance equity in terms of access to educational opportunity. Small regional schools might elect to combine with other small schools or larger schools to establish centres of excellence in an area such as joint financial management.

15.2.7 In developing or expanding their confederation selected groups of schools will undertake activity and report on progress they have made in increasing local decision making in one or more of the following areas:

15.2.7.1 Governance arrangements.

15.2.7.2 Funding and infrastructure.

15.2.7.3 Workforce matters.

15.2.8 Participating schools will receive a start up grant of at least \$40,000 and a grant of \$3,500 per school for professional development.

CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

16. *Policy Objective 2: Changes to System Arrangements to support Empowered Local Schools*

- 16.1 DECD central office will work with Empowered Local Schools in both the Transforming School and Confederation of Schools strands to address and eliminate (where possible) any systemic arrangements that present obstacles to progress towards greater empowerment. This work will include scrutiny of 'tied' and 'untied' resources.
- 16.2 Once schools are selected and analysis completed of obstacles to empowerment, a schedule of reforms will be prepared and listed in the Progress Report. The system transition support funding will be used to address the obstacles.
- 16.3 Two people with experience in school leadership will be appointed as liaison officers for the start up phase of this national partnership.
- 16.4 A Stakeholder Steering Committee consisting of a governing council chairperson and principal from a participating school and representatives of principal associations, Australian Education Union, and regional and central offices will be formed to oversee this National Partnership and manage the \$909,000 budget for Changes to System Arrangements to ensure astute investment is made in effective and sustainable change initiatives.

PARTICIPATION OF SCHOOLS

17. Once the National Partnership has been signed by the Premier of South Australia, schools will receive advice about how to participate in the DECD program as follows:
 - 17.1 In late January 2012 all schools will be sent a package of information that invites them to provide a brief Expression of Interest. This package will include:
 - 17.1.1 Information about the Empowering Local Schools initiative that sets out the following criteria under Clause 22(e) i. of the National Partnership Agreement, to be used by a selection committee. This will ensure that schools selected to participate:
 - have the capacity to take on greater responsibility for managing their own affairs
 - are supported by their local community, including staff and parents and carers
 - have the capacity to use their participation for the benefit of students, parents and carers and the broader community over time; and
 - agree to participate in the independent evaluation of the initiative.
 - 17.1.2 Applicant schools must address how they plan to develop the following attributes in their Expression of Interest as appropriate to each of the two strands:

- Greater empowerment
- Networking with other schools
- Developing a specialist skill set in their school
- Sharing expertise with other schools in their region and across the state
- Developing greater engagement with their community
- Innovation and ambition and
- Willingness to work with DECD central office on overcoming obstacles to empowerment.

17.1.3 Information about the training and professional development grant;

17.1.4 An Innovation checklist;

17.1.5 Suggestions about possibilities for the two strands;

17.1.6 Information about the allocative mechanism for start up funding;

17.1.7 Guidelines for the use of the start up funds and school accountability;

17.1.8 Information about communications and support; and

17.1.9 A template for an Expression of Interest.

17.2 The Expression of Interest also will include:

17.2.1 An overview of the school's proposal to participate in one of the two *Moving towards Greater Empowerment* strands that addresses the criteria for selection;

17.2.2 Their preference for participating in either round 1 (2012) or in round 2 (2013);

17.2.3 A brief statement on how the start up grant might be used via a check box to comply with Australian Government requirements;

17.2.4 A statement that acknowledges that no additional or recurrent funding can be provided centrally or regionally for the school for this initiative;

17.2.5 A statement that the regional director has been advised of the application; and

17.2.6 Signature blocks for the principal and school governing council chairperson.

18. A stakeholder selection committee that includes representatives of principals associations and the Australian Education Union will consider submissions in consultation with DECD regional directors. The committee will use the selection criteria outlined in 17.1.1. above and may contact regional directors and applicant schools to seek further information.

18.1 Selection will also include consideration of (as appropriate to each strand) the applicant school's plans for:

- Greater empowerment.
- Networking with other schools.
- Developing a specialist skill set in their school.
- Sharing expertise with other schools.

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- Developing greater engagement with their community.
 - Innovation and ambition
 - Willingness to work with DECD central office on overcoming obstacles to empowerment.
- 18.2 Due to the requirement for a proportion of rural and regional schools to join the initiative, DECD regional directors will be asked to identify schools in regional South Australia who will be encouraged to join the program.
- 18.3 The National Partnership specifies that schools in areas, including Playford in South Australia, that have been identified for Place Based initiatives by the Australian Government, should be encouraged to join. To lessen the burden on schools in this area that already receive significant numbers of programs through National Partnerships and state reform activity, the Adelaide North Regional Director will play an important role in identifying schools that will have the capacity to join this initiative.
- 18.4 Schools that have been identified as Focus Schools within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan will be invited to participate in this initiative with the assistance of senior leaders in DECD Aboriginal, Student and Family Services.
- 18.5 Schools in both *Moving towards Greater Empowerment* strands will identify and work with central and regional office staff to address systemic barriers to local empowerment.
- 18.6 Start up funding will be allocated using a formula that will be agreed by the Stakeholder Steering Committee for this National Partnership. This formula will be advised to schools via the Expression of Interest package. It will consist of a core amount of at least \$40,000 and additional weighting based on complexity factors including remoteness from Adelaide, student characteristics and size. Each school in a nominated confederation will receive funding. While primary schools may elect to include preschools in a confederation, preschools will not receive start up funding. The formula and school allocations will be published in progress reports.
- 18.7 Schools selected for Round 2 (2013) will be contacted during September 2012 to confirm their interest. If any schools withdraw a further selection round will be held during term 4 2012.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

- 19.1 The approach to professional development used for South Australian Government schools for the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership will be to provide the \$3,500 training and development funds as a direct grant to each NP school to be used to purchase leadership training and to pay expenses for attendance at a National Partnership focus day to be held in September/October each year.
- 19.2 National Partnership schools will be able to use their funds to purchase training from providers other than the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD).
- 19.3 DECD has instigated a review of professional development needs which along with the results of the expression of interest approach will determine centrally offered options for professional development for this National Partnership.

- 19.4 The Steering Committee for the National Partnership will have an important role in determining appropriate professional development.
- 19.5 Details of the professional development to be offered centrally and through individual transforming schools and confederations will be provided in progress reports.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

20. Performance indicators from the Agreement which are applicable to the activities the South Australian Government will be undertaking through this initiative are:
- a) The number and schools participating in this initiative;
 - b) The degree to which centralised administrative arrangements support schools to manage increased local decision-making responsibilities;
 - c) The degree to which schools are responsible for their finances and school budgets;
 - d) The extent and effectiveness of school-based decision-making, particularly in relation to governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce, including staffing profiles;
 - e) The availability and appropriateness of training and professional development provided to principals and school communities;
 - f) The number and range of opportunities for engagement of parents and carers and the school community;
 - g) 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

21. Due to the open ended approach used by the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) for the Empowering Local Schools initiative generic performance milestones have been developed that will accommodate this approach.

21.1 DECD Performance monitoring and reporting

	Performance Indicator	Performance Milestone	Anticipated level of Achievement	Data collection date	Reporting
a)	The number and schools participating in this initiative	All schools selected for Round 1 (2012) and Round 2 (2013)	Round 1 – 43 schools Round 2 – 18 schools	March 9 2012 March 9 2012 November 16 2012 (Confirmation of Round 2 schools)	Progress report (May 2012)

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b)	The degree to which centralised administrative arrangements support schools to manage increased local decision-making responsibilities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison officers/ program manager have collected information from all National Partnerships schools about anticipated obstacles to local empowerment Program Manager has prepared a summary of progress in addressing obstacles to local empowerment using information collected at National Partnership Focus Day 	<p>All Round 1 schools</p> <p>All Round 2 schools</p> <p>All Round 1 schools</p> <p>All Round 2 schools</p>	<p>April 5 2012</p> <p>April 4 2013</p> <p>October 26 2012</p> <p>October 25 2013</p>	<p>Progress report (May 2012)</p> <p>Final report (December 2013)</p> <p>Final report (December 2013) and available for NP Evaluation</p>
c)	The degree to which schools are responsible for their finances and school budgets	Schools selected to trial greater empowerment in an aspect of Finances and Budget have assessed their own progress using data and questions developed by the national evaluator for this NP.	All schools working towards greater empowerment in an aspect of Finances and Budget have made progress by comparing their responses to data and questions developed by the national evaluator.	<p>May 4 2012</p> <p>October 26 2012</p> <p>May 3 2013</p> <p>October 25 2013</p>	Summary available for NP evaluation
d)	The extent and effectiveness of school-based decision-making, particularly in relation to governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce, including staffing profiles	Schools selected to trial greater empowerment in an aspect of governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce, including staffing profiles have assessed their own progress using data and questions developed by the national evaluator for this NP. They have reported on their progress to other schools at a National Partnership Focus Day.	All schools working towards greater empowerment in an aspect of governance, funding and infrastructure, and workforce, including staffing profiles have made progress by comparing their responses to data and questions developed by the national evaluator.	<p>October 26 2012</p> <p>October 25 2013</p>	Summary available for NP evaluation

e)	The availability and appropriateness of training and professional development provided to principals and school communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison officers/ Program Manager have collected information from National Partnerships schools about requirements for training and professional development to support increased local empowerment. DECD has used the results of a review of professional development and information collected from National Partnership schools to develop a menu of options for centrally delivered training and professional development Program Manager has prepared a summary of training undertaken using information collected at National Partnership Focus Day 	Needs based training and professional development program developed, publicised and carried out	<p>April 5 2012</p> <p>April 4 2013</p> <p>April 5 2012</p> <p>April 4 2013</p> <p>October 26 2012</p> <p>October 25 2013</p>	<p>Progress report (May 2012)</p> <p>Final report (December 2013)</p> <p>Progress report (May 2012)</p> <p>Final report (December 2013)</p> <p>Final report (December 2013) and available for NP Evaluation</p>
f)	The number and range of opportunities for engagement of parents and carers and the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools have described how they will engage parents, carers and the school community in their expressions of interest Program Manager has prepared a summary of progress in better engagement of parents, carers and the school community using information collected at National Partnership Focus Day 	National Partnership schools report improved engagement with parents, carers and the school community	<p>October 26 2012</p> <p>October 25 2013</p>	Summary available for NP evaluation

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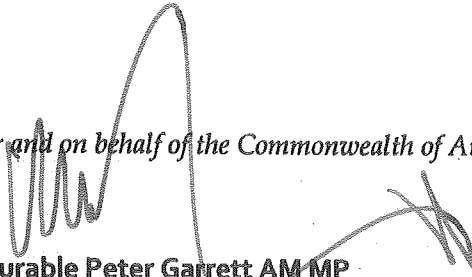
g)	The extent to which schools are better able to respond to the needs of students and school communities, including the needs of students experiencing disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools have assessed their responsiveness to the needs of students and their community on two occasions. 	National Partnership schools report increased responsiveness to the needs of students and their community.	<p>April 2012 and October 2012</p> <p>April 2013 and October 2013</p>	Summary available for NP evaluation
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22. The Department for Education and Child Development stakeholder steering committee for the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership will set out activity milestones for schools that may include:

- Establishment of governance arrangements;
- Preparation of relevant plans including resourcing and staffing;
- Attendance at National Partnership focus day;
- Development of case study;
- Reporting on progress; and
- Plotting a baseline and progress by comparing their responses collected at different times to data and questions developed by the national evaluator.

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

Date:

*Signed for and on behalf of
the State of South Australia by*



The Honourable Grace Portolesi MP
Minister for Education and Child Development

Date: