

Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Schools in Tasmania

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 at least 22 government schools in *Tasmania* 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. 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 Tasmania represented by the Minister for Education and Skills
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 TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

11. Tasmania is one of the smallest jurisdictions in Australia with an estimated population of half a million people. The midyear census of 2011 recorded 61089.7 61,090 students (K-12 FTE) attending Tasmanian government schools with 5,055.1 (8.3 per cent) of these students identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. There are approximately 5,800 FTE teachers in Tasmania, with on average, 71.5 per cent of these teaching in the government sector. Tasmania has one site identified for Place-Based Initiatives in the 2011 Federal Budget – Burnie in North West Tasmania.

12. 12.1 *Innovative reform*

From 2012, Tasmania has undertaken an innovative reform guided by the Department of Education's Strategic Plan 2012–2015— 'Learners first, connected and inspired'. Four Learning Services have been reduced to three, and eleven networks of schools have been established. The network structure will support school and system improvement, improved student learning outcomes and reform and will facilitate a model of principals working together. Each network will be supported by a Principal Network Leader who will work with principals within their networks with the express intention of building their individual and collective capacities. The Principal Network Leaders will be responsible for:

- leading the development of individual school improvement plans and professional learning strategies within and across networks.
- developing and strengthening the instructional and leadership capacity of Principals and maintaining a leading for high performance culture.
- working with other network leaders to ensure the development, implementation and maintenance of consistent educational policy and processes across the state.

This structure will support the implementation of the Empowering Local schools National Partnership.

12.2 *Funding and infrastructure*

Government schools in Tasmania currently enjoy a relatively high level of local decision-making in relation to funding. The School Resource Package (SRP), which has now existed for over 20 years, delivers a broad range of resources for local management.

Through the devolved-management model, schools use both their devolved resources and their own-sourced funds to address responsibility for a range of operational costs, including, but not limited to: teachers and other staff employed over and above staff allocated by 'quota' or formula; professional, curriculum and staff development; relief staff (subject to some centrally funded exceptions); maintenance and minor works (subject to some centrally funded exceptions); energy; computing and communication costs (subject to some centrally funded exceptions); operating supplies; classroom requirements and materials; teacher aides and other support costs; libraries; excursions and rubbish removal.

These responsibilities must, where requirements exist, be met in a manner that meets those particular requirements. In such cases, departmental policies, guidelines and procedures are in

place. For example, staffing must be met within a departmental industrial framework, procurement of goods and services must be undertaken in a manner that complies with Treasurer's Instructions and some services may need to be sourced according to departmental or government contracts.

The School Resource Package is also the means whereby the department can deliver supplementary, targeted resources which, despite being targeted, are still likely to be applied in a manner that has been developed by local school management.

12.3 Governance

All Tasmanian state schools are required to establish School Associations. These Associations work for the benefit of individual schools to support the goals, priorities and policies of the state education system. They are composed of elected members representing the parents, staff, students and the community. The principal is an unelected member of the association. Primary schools are not required to have elected student members but students' input into relevant association matters is encouraged in other ways. The chair is elected by the Association Management Committee and must be either a parent or community representative. The majority of School Associations are incorporated bodies. Many have School Parents and Friends organisations as a subcommittee. Each Association must have a formal constitution which is approved by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The functions, objectives and purposes of the Associations are to:

- participate in the formulation of school policies, values, beliefs, priorities and code of conduct within the current educational context;
- provide advice and recommendations to the principal in relation to the general operations and management of the school;
- participate on the selection panel in respect of any advertised permanent vacancy for the position of principal;
- foster cooperation among the school community members;
- approve the school budget; and
- provide policy advice to the Secretary if requested.

12.4 Workforce

Schools are supported through Department of Education human resources processes and policies in all matters relating to staffing. Processes agreed with the Australian Education Union are administered under the Teacher Transfer Industrial Agreement 2011 (draft). Permanent and Permanent Replacement Teachers (PRT) are placed in positions in schools through defined processes, and are given priority over teachers without permanent status. Participation in this National Partnership is not expected to alter current (2011) staffing procedures.

13. Supported by the Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) National Partnership, the Department of Education provides a suite of leadership programs for aspirant and existing school leaders across all schooling sectors in Tasmania.
14. The Emergent Leadership Program (2006-2009) and the Aspiring Leaders Program (2010-2011) have evolved to provide increasingly diverse leadership programs state wide. The specific intentions of these programs are to:

- raise awareness of the nature of leadership;
- cultivate a personal sense of being a leader;
- grow leadership across the school system;
- build capacity in leadership in the local context;
- raise awareness of the responsibilities of school management; and
- support responsibility for personal learning in leadership.

15. A new Professional Learning Institute will build on reform underway through activity Tasmania's implementation of the ITQ National Partnership

Principal professional development is to be provided through the variation to the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership Implementation Plan will also complement this work.

16. In addition, a School Resourcing Review is being undertaken as part of the ITQ National Partnership. Phase 1 was completed at the end of 2010. It looked at both how the Department might change the manner in which school resource allocations are determined; and the resource management models that might apply in schools.

By end of 2010 Phase 1 of the Review had agreed on:

- a new measure for socio-economic disadvantage for schools;
- an agreed approach to the resourcing of schools that included:
- the adoption of a generic 'base' funding package that should provide all schools with the fundamental resourcing that is necessary to operate a school;
- the implementation of a very limited number of supplementary resource allocations to address specific equity issues including: students with disabilities, socio-economic disadvantage and location;
- the potential for individual targeted strategies to be implemented on a stand-alone basis with their own allocative principles and with their own accountability.
- greater emphasis on accountability for educational outcomes based on clear strategic direction.

The findings of the School Resourcing Review are likely to lead to increased school-based decision-making in 2012 with the intention of delivering more significant reforms in the 2013 school year (subject to the outcomes of the Australian Government's Review of Funding for Schooling). One aspect of the reform is the consideration of the level of school autonomy that may suit the Tasmanian context. This work will inform the roll-out of increased local decision-making in our schools.

17. Further work on school autonomy and school management models, particularly to increase the flexibility that schools have in relation to the use of staffing resources, and timelines for implementation are underway and have informed the DoE new Strategic Plan, the new DoE structure from 2012 and the DoE response to this National Partnership

High-order work in this area is being demonstrated by consultative policy development with the AEU, University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Principal's Association in relation to a Teacher Workforce Study that will guide and support the supply of a skilled and qualified workforce.

18. Initial discussions with principals in relation to this NP have revealed ambition about resources being delivered to schools with a higher level of flexibility in how they can be used within the school. This ambition is already starting to be implemented, with more resources being delivered directly to schools in 2012 and has been positively received by schools.

FOCUS OF ACTIONS TO INCREASE LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

19. Schools participating in the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative will be known as Plus Schools.
20. The approach to this National Partnership will be guided by the Department's Strategic Plan mantra – 'Learners first- connected and inspired.' The objective to improve student outcomes underpins all activity. Principals, as themselves learners, will therefore be supported in this situation of increasing responsibility and autonomy.
21. Plus Schools will undertake activity in the three key areas of governance, innovation and leadership:
 - a) Governance – schools will consider Advisory Board arrangements, community advisory structures etc. Strong local community, local industry and Aboriginal community representation will be encouraged. In these schools new governance structures may replace/redefine School Associations – this will be a local decision. Increased parental participation in decision-making will be an outcome. Schools and principals will be better equipped to engage with communities. Opportunities to grow the capacity of the local community to participate in school governance may be provided.
 - b) Innovation - a one-line financial budget will afford schools greater flexibility to better direct resources to areas of need and educational value. Resources will be used with increasing flexibility. Principals will have clarity regarding performance expectations and accountability processes, while at the same time receive constructive feedback, opportunities for self-assessment, learning and growth. Schools may explore possibilities including, but not limited to: school amalgamations, partnerships with neighbouring schools, flexible learning opportunities, increased use of eLearning opportunities, altered school operational structures, increased flexibility to apportion staff to work across school settings.
 - c) Leadership – professional learning and leadership opportunities will equip school leaders to manage and encourage innovation and continuous improvement. Professional learning through Family Partnerships Training will increase leadership capacity to genuinely engage with and involve parents, carers and students, as well as the local community, in school decision making (Family Partnership Training Program aims to assist non-mental health workers to deal effectively with the psychological and social problems that arise commonly in the life of all families; the aim is to help participants to determine and develop the core skills of helping needed to establish a facilitative relationship with parents; and thus help parents to deal with the problems facing them and identify their strengths). Leadership density will be enhanced by the network structure. Sustainability of design and implementation will be a requirement of the signed Improvement Plus Agreement.
22. Plus Schools, in aligning with the Department's expected school improvement planning process, will be required to set out the specific activities they plan to undertake in each of the three areas above within their School Improvement Plan (SIP); these identify goals and targets which are established in consultation with school communities. Schools will also be required to outline their training and professional learning needs as part of their SIP.

The Plus School Improvement Plan will also outline student achievement improvement targets and specify:

- what is to be improved – which outcomes and which students;
- the amount of improvement;
- how this will be achieved;
- how this will be measured; and
- by when.

23. Plus Schools will also be required to negotiate an Improvement Plus Agreement (IPA) which will be ratified by the School Association and then signed by the Principal, Chair of the School Association/board and the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The IPA will reflect sustainability of design and implementation and identify compliance and legislative requirements, the resources the school will receive, support that will be provided, the programs it will be contracted to deliver, student achievement and how it will be monitored, sustainability strategies that schools will put in place and the performance and accountability of the school over the life of the agreement which expires on 30 June 2014.

24. Plus school principals will be supported through the Principal Network Leader structure to share their experiences and knowledge with other schools. The network structure will support school and system improvement, improved student learning outcomes and reform and will facilitate a model of principals collaborating and working together.
25. By December 2013, each Plus School principal will have identified an area of specialisation for which she/he will assume a leadership role across the eleven networks. Each principal will lead innovation, in their identified area of specialisation, and will support other principals and network schools.

Plus School principals' specialisation may be in a curriculum area or any area of identified network priority such as attendance, retention, transition, cultural awareness, supportive school environment etc. This action will contribute to sustainability of innovation and reform focus as well as capacity building across networks and the system.

26. Each Plus School Principal will, with support from Principal Network Leaders, undertake a self-assessment process to monitor school and student achievement of targets and milestones as outlined in the Plus School Improvement Plan. The IPA and the Plus School Improvement Plan will be examined as part of each Principal's Professional Review. A Teaching and Learning School Improvement Framework will be used for this purpose.
27. Under the leadership of the ELS Project Manager, an ELS Advisory Group will ensure consultations are conducted with key stakeholders as appropriate throughout the program.
- Membership of the ELS Advisory Group will include senior officers of the department, principals and School Executive officers.
 - The Advisory Group will develop approaches that respond to identified local needs which will support appropriate determinations of allocative mechanism for start-up grants.
 - Stakeholder consultations will occur with representatives of the Tasmanian Principals Association, the Tasmanian Parents and Friends Association and the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Education Union.
29. The Department of Education will implement the Empowering Local Schools NP in two stages with Plus Schools selected through the process defined below.

In 2012, all participating Plus Schools will be selected, professional learning needs identified and undertaken and Plus School Improvement planning commence. Much of the professional Learning will crucially precursor the finalisation of Improvement Plus Agreements and Plus School Improvement Plans.

a) Stage 1 – 2012 (All 22 Government Schools)

- Central and Administrative structures and arrangements implemented to support the NP
 - Induction package for Plus Schools developed and delivered – includes all required information including an overview of the Plus School concept, accountability information, finance and procurement implications, reporting and planning obligations, frequently asked questions.
 - Information sessions offered in each of the Learning Services.
 - Plus School SharePoint and Department of Education web presence developed.
 - Calls for Expressions of Interest to be a Plus School.
 - School selection process.
 - 22 schools selected – by beginning May 2012.
 - Professional Learning (for Principals, governing bodies, School Executive Officers, Business Managers) – workshops and forums designed, resourced and implemented (Term s 2 and 3 2012 and during 2013).
 - Family Partnership Training provided to the principal and one parent representative from each participating Plus School during 2012.
 - Governance structures determined in each Plus School.
 - Improvement Plus Agreement (IPA) developed in each participating school.
 - Plus School Improvement Plan developed in each participating school for implementation from 2013.
 - 2012 School Resource Packages and staffing confirmed for each participating school.
- b) Stage 2 – 2013 (All 22 Government Schools)
- 22 schools commence the new school year as active Plus Schools with Improvement Plus Agreement agreed and signed.
 - 22 schools implement a teaching and learning program and approaches guided by their Plus School Improvement Plan.
 - Professional Learning will continue to target identified Plus School need.

CHANGES TO ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

28. The development of a centralised student administration data-collection system will support Plus Schools to better address and measure improvements through this National Partnership.

Effective data management is central to improving educational performance which requires explicit data and evidence. A data warehouse will provide this explicit link. The warehouse and related tools will be developed with capacity for measuring assessment, school readiness and attendance as well as developing reports to meet individual school reporting needs as required by their Plus School Improvement Plans. This will include performance measures that the Department is currently unable to accurately measure.

29. The ELS Project Manager from the Department of Education will lead implementation of this National Partnership. The ELS Project Manager will be responsible for coordinating the school selection process, leading the ELS Advisory Group, and supporting the initiative.
30. Other changes to centralised administrative arrangements to support Plus Schools may also be required. While the exact changes will be dependent on local decision making and priorities, it is expected that specific supports will be provided in the areas of:

- Financial structures, reporting and supports to schools
 - HR
 - Policy development
 - Accountability and reporting
 - IT systems and support
 - Development of training modules
 - Revision of Principal Statement of Duties for Plus Schools
31. Further changes to centralised administrative arrangements may also be undertaken as a result of recommendations arising from the School Resourcing Review.

PARTICIPATION OF SCHOOLS

30. The Department of Education will implement a process by which eligible school principals and school communities will have the opportunity to apply for selection as Plus Schools. Transparent criteria will ensure that only those schools of sufficient size, staffed with experienced senior staff and School Executive Officer are eligible to submit an expression of interest. Smaller schools with principals on significant teaching loads, with part-time School Executive Officers, no senior staff and a small school community population are not considered best placed to fulfil the expectations and desired outcomes of this National Partnership.
31. Expressions of Interest (EoI) will be invited from eligible principals, endorsed by their current School Associations. The EoIs, in addressing the following selection criteria, will need to clearly articulate the schools proposed activity and demonstrate the school has:
- sufficient human resources and the capacity to take on greater responsibility for managing their own affairs to a greater extent than pre-participation;
 - the support of their local community, including staff, School Association, parents and carers;
 - a principal with proven experience and capacity to use Plus School participation for the benefit of school improvement and improved outcomes for students and the broader school community; and
 - the capacity to meet reporting and planning requirements and participate in the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership evaluation.
32. In addition, the EoI will also require schools to commit to:
- participating in professional learning essential to the Plus School Improvement Plan;
 - demonstrating the potential benefits for the school community;
 - principal and parent participation in Family Partnership Training; and
 - if an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan Focus School, commitment to develop a school-community partnership agreement with the local Aboriginal community.
33. The minimum requirements for participation are:
- School/college with a Band 3 Level 4 Principal classification Level 4 or larger (see point 36 below);
 - Minimum overall Principal experience of four years;
 - Minimum Principalship of the potential Plus School of two years;
 - School Executive Officer/ Business Manager with a minimum experience of four years;
 - School Executive Officer placement in potential Plus School of at least two years;
 - Favourable Financial Audit Report –in previous two years; and
 - Established and effective community consultation through School Association.

34. Both the written application and an interview will determine selection. Interviews will be held with shortlisted school leadership teams, which will be required to include a community representative. An independent selection panel will comprise the Deputy Secretary Early Years and Schools, the ELS Project Manager, a representative of the Tasmanian Parents and Friends Association and a representative from the Department's Finance and Facilities Leadership team. It will recommend participating schools to the Secretary.
35. The selection panel will ensure that a range of schools are selected to participate - including primary schools, high schools, combined schools and colleges, and schools from a range of areas and with students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Schools in Burnie, an identified site for Place-Based Initiatives, will be encouraged to apply.
36. Each Plus School will receive a start-up grant of between \$40,000-\$50,000. The exact funds to be allocated will be determined by the classification of each participating school:
 - Principal classification Band 3 Level 4 -5 schools (i.e. minimum of 201 students) - \$44,000
 - Principal classification Band 3 Level 6 - 8 schools/colleges (i.e. minimum of XX students) - \$48,000
37. The exact allocations will depend on the number and type of schools selected in each range. The ELS Advisory Group, after being advised by the selection committee of the number of schools, may apply a weighting system to schools according to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population and SES status. This would be the case if the ELS Advisory Group, through their work, believed that some schools faced particular challenges due to their unique circumstances.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

38. Professional learning will be provided through the Department's Professional Learning Institute which will (PLI). The PLI will broker presenters as needed. International and national presenters will be sourced if local expertise is unavailable or limited.
39. Professional learning requirements will be identified by Plus Schools in their Plus School Improvement Plans. Principal Network Leaders will assist schools to recognise their individual and collective professional development needs and will work with the Professional Learning Institute to ensure appropriate and timely opportunities.
40. In some instances, identified professional learning requirements will be met through professional learning activity provided under the implementation of other state and Commonwealth agreements and reforms. This complementary activity is a positive and will enable funds provided for professional learning under this agreement to hone in on the specific professional learning required from being a Plus School and operating with increased autonomy. Planning for the delivery of high quality professional development will be deliberate and strategic; informed by participant feedback and advice.
41. Plus School requirements, and the demands of the nature of the increased decision making in schools, will inform the suite of professional learning opportunities, and delivery options, provided. Schools will outline their requirements in their School Improvement Plan. Professional Learning in Family Partnership Training will be mandated for all Plus School Leaders and a parent representative.
42. It is however expected that additional topics to support local decision-making may include : global budgeting – one-line budgets, From data to interpretation – using data to inform sound decision making, board/governance training, coaching and mentoring, Integrated practice – cross- agency collaboration, grievance processes, industrial affairs awareness, managing under-performing teachers, and understanding and working with legislation.

43. Training packages will be developed as governance, leadership and innovation modules. Principals will participate in the design of these modules to ensure that need is met. The determination of exact professional development requirements will result from involved discussions between Principal Network Leaders and school leadership teams. Data, goals and targets within Plus School Improvement Plans will inform these discussions.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

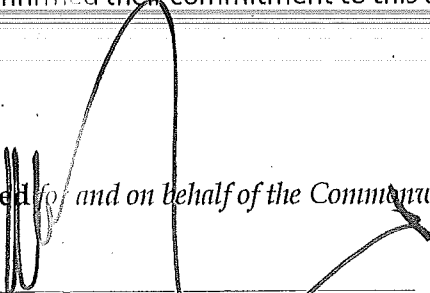
44. The following performance indicators apply:
- (a) the number of schools participating in this initiative;
 - (b) the degree to which centralised administrative arrangements support schools to manage increased local decision-making responsibilities;
 - (c) the degree to which schools are responsible for their finances and school budgets;
 - (d) the extent and effectiveness of school-based decision-making, particularly in relation to governance;
 - (e) the availability and appropriateness of training and professional development provided to principals and school communities; and
 - (f) the number and range of opportunities for engagement of parents and carers and the school community.

PERFORMANCE MILESTONES

45. The following performance milestones will apply to the implementation of the *Empowering Local Schools* initiative in participating government schools in Tasmania:

<i>Performance indicator</i>	<i>Performance Milestone</i>	<i>Date</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of schools participating in this initiative 	22 schools selected to participate in the initiative (through EOI and selection process)	May 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the degree to which centralised administrative arrangements support schools to manage increased local decision-making responsibilities 	ELS Project Manager appointed Student Data Management Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation Plan completed Proof of Concept completed Stage One completed and implemented in Plus Schools 	February 2012 April 2012 June 2012 Dec 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the degree to which schools are responsible for their finances and school budgets 	Governance Bodies that will oversee school finances and budgets.	Feb 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent and effectiveness of school-based decision-making, particularly in relation to governance 	Plus School Improvement Plus Agreements (IPAs) developed in all participating schools. Plus School Improvement Plans developed in all participating schools. Governance bodies endorse IPAs.	Dec 2012 Feb 2013 March 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the availability and appropriateness of training and professional development provided to principals and school communities 	Annual Plus School Principals Professional Reviews completed Plus School Network leadership role identified Plus School principal professional learning workshops over 2012 and 2013	Dec 2013 Dec 2013 By Dec 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number and range of opportunities for engagement of parents and carers and the school community 	Parent engagement and participation in Governance structures. Parent / carer participation in professional learning opportunities.	By March 2014

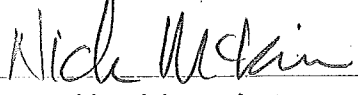
Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signed  for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by

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

Date 23-6-12

Signed for and on behalf of Tasmania by


The Honourable Nick McKim MP
Minister for Education and Skills

Date 13/4/12