



VPA Position Paper

Principal Wellbeing

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) is concerned about the impact of work on the mental and physical wellbeing of Victorian Government Principal Class Officers.

Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) recognises the excessive workload of Principal Class Officers (PCO) and advocates greater support for them. The VPA aims to ensure that principal workloads remain at a realistic level, that adequate and appropriate support is provided to principals in meeting these workloads, and that the department and the government publicly and periodically acknowledge the achievements of principals and schools, and promote the Principal Class profession.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- The workload of Victorian government PCOs is excessive and unsustainable – the DEECD publication *The Privilege and the Price* stated 59.6 hours per week – and cannot be achieved in the 38 hour week specified by the Award
- The number of days out of school required of PCOs by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) in various contexts is unrealistic
- PCOs face substantial and conflicting levels of accountability to various sectors
- There is a lack of coordination of DEECD departments in the implementation of programs and initiatives
- DEECD relentlessly pursues multiple layers of change, often simultaneously
- Community expectations are extremely high and often unrealistic
- PCOs perceive that the DEECD focus has changed from support to accountability, risk management and school improvement
- The coaching and mentoring provided to the increasing number of first time PCOs is not satisfactory
- There is a lack of inclusion and meaningful consultation of PCOs from DEECD

VPA Position

- DEECD consolidates and limits the implementation of changes and initiatives
- DEECD provides adequate and appropriate support and resourcing, additional to the SRP, for the implementation and ongoing management of changes and initiatives
- DEECD adequately consults with PCOs on all changes and initiatives at various stages
- DEECD internally monitors the conflicting requirements, commitments and accountabilities expected of PCOs from various sectors, and works to lessen them
- Principal remuneration needs to be proportional to the workload
- Coaching and mentoring need to be provided to PCOs, with focused programs for specific groups such as first time PCOs
- DEECD provides a framework that allows greater administrative and workload support to Principals, including Personal Assistants, Facilities/OHS managers, Attendance and Compliance Officers and more Leading Teacher Positions
- DEECD provides greater support and acknowledgement of principal class officers
- DEECD promotes the position of Principal Class Officers in the wider community