



Succession Planning and Aspirant Development

Purpose

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) wants to support the development of the next generation of quality principals by encouraging succession-planning and increasing support for new principals.

Background to the VPA Position

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- There is a room for improvement in the number and quality of applicants for principal positions. New principals require optimum levels of support in the critical initial stages of their role as school leaders.
- The availability of credible principal applicants is stymied by an absence of clear, systemic processes identifying and developing high quality aspirants. There is an insufficiently defined career path into the principal role.
- High quality aspirants do not have access to a sufficient breadth of programs to assist their development into leaders. Career structure changes and SRP ramifications affecting school leadership profiles have contributed to this deficiency.
- Confusion exists over who is responsible for drafting aspirant development processes and how these programs are to be resourced.
- A widening gap has emerged between those still developing as teachers, and those who are at the top of the expert range; there are insufficient middle level leadership opportunities.
- The principal role is complex and multi-faceted, and new principals would benefit from experienced mentoring and/or shadowing to aid their transition into the role. Sufficient training and support is essential for producing and retaining qualified, competent and confident principals.
- Many training and support programs once available to new principals now no longer exist. For instance, shadow coaching programs, Principal and School development programs - as well as a number of regional coordination and funding support systems. This dearth of professional development opportunity is compounded by the unfolding devolution of school autonomy.
- Acting principal job openings are only advertised through edumail, potentially excluding their distribution to the widest possible range of applicants.

VPA Position

The VPA advocates for:

- The drafting and implementation of *processes* to assist the early identification and targeted professional development of potential principal candidates. The processes should incorporate an outline of a clear career path, the provision of previous teaching experience as a pre-requisite to candidacy, and appropriate “apprenticeships” for aspiring candidates.
- The development of formalised aspirant principal programs that provide learning in multi-dimensional aspects of leadership.
- Additional resourcing from the DEECD to nurture leadership skills and fund targeted principal-training.
- Resourcing to be allocated through existing networks, or Professional Associations, who would help identify and co-opt aspirant principal class members.
- Support for new principals including the vital components of shadowing and mentoring; systemic coaching from an experienced principal or sharing of the principal role with another to ease them into the position for two years.
- Job openings for acting principal roles to be advertised broadly to the widest possible audience.