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Position Paper Strong Leaders

Building leader wellbeing and capability through collaborative networks

Program Proposal

Introduction

The Queensland Secondary Principals' Association (QSPA) and the Department of Education, Training and Employment acknowledges that effective school leadership is fundamental to strong education outcomes for Queensland students.

The Department is committed to working with QSPA to deliver the Strong Leaders Initiative. It is proposed that the Strong Leaders Initiative be implemented to build on the previous work of the Principal Connect Program.

While the initiative embraces the full range of secondary school leaders it has particular focus on the needs of rural, remote and small school principals.

Background

Principal Connect recognises the complex role undertaken by schools leaders and seeks to:

- Provide a principal to principal statewide support service.
- Provide practical assistance in a confidential environment.
- Complement existing support systems for principals.

Principal Connect was established by principals as a partnership between the Principals Associations (QSPA, QASSP, QSP-10/12SAA and ASEAQ), the Queensland Teachers' Union and the Department of Education, Training and Employment. The principals providing support through the Principal Connect initiative are a diverse network of state school principals from across the state who are committed to supporting their colleagues.

The Principal Connect initiative does not provide professional counselling, mediation or legal assistance nor is Principal Connect related to the recruitment and selection or the performance and review processes.

The 2012 review of the educational needs of geographically-isolated families and the services available to them identified that the positive wellbeing of teachers and school leaders is critical in delivering world class education and to maximise potential learning outcomes for their students.

In this regard the review recommended that the Department partner with Principals Associations to reinvigorate the Principal Connect initiative through the provision of appropriate training and effective marketing and promotion.

The Strong Leaders Initiative seeks to respond to this recommendation.

Objectives

The central objective of the Strong Leaders Initiative is to build on and improve the quality of support for all secondary school leaders including all classified officers and aspiring leaders with a particular focus on the needs of rural, remote and small school principals.

The program will enable the QSPA and the Department to build on their existing relationship to support a broader range of school leaders by providing principals with access to relevant professional development and a proactive and established network.

Context

QSPA has identified a significant demand for the Strong Leaders Initiative, particularly with a focus on the needs of rural, remote and small school principals and believes that an investment in leader wellbeing and capability is an investment in effective school leadership.

Professors Fullan and Levin note in the 2012 Education Queensland System Review (p.10):

“Education Queensland recognises the importance of leadership in driving outcomes in schools. In work that was conducted with Professor Geoff Masters, ACER, it was recognised that effective leaders are an essential component of the school reform agenda; they create high expectations, they provide clarity of vision, and can establish effective professional learning communities. Effective, distributed leadership across the system is the key to leading ongoing efforts to improve instructional practice.”

QSPA as the peak association for Principals and Deputy Principals in secondary state schools has long been concerned for the welfare and wellbeing of school leaders.

Education Queensland established 'Principal Connect', a network of Principals across the state, however this initiative has not been promoted as strongly as in previous years, with service underutilised by primary and secondary school Principals and Deputy Principals.

It is within this context, that the QSPA seek to establish a new network of experienced, skilled and trained colleagues across the state to support Principals and Deputy Principals and provide appropriate advice in fulfilling this vital role in school.

A similar program has been established by the Queensland Association of state school Principals (QASSP) to support Primary Principals.

Approach to the program

QSPA is seeking financial assistance to the value of \$60,000 from the Department to support the implementation of the Strong Leaders Initiative.

The initiative will assist in:

- Expanding the level of direct support and training for secondary school leaders, and establishment of Welfare and Wellbeing Officers.
- Providing training for Welfare and Wellbeing Officers to increase their confidence and competence to provide support to individual school leaders at a local level.
- Inviting all classified officers and aspiring leaders to form a mutually supportive network for their personal wellbeing and professional growth.
- Assisting individuals, particularly those in rural, remote, small schools, in forming or joining a network. Individual school leaders who do not wish to form a network may access support directly with a QSPA Welfare and Wellbeing Officer or delegate.
- Providing professional development for wellbeing and personal and professional growth through literature, web conferences and other means.
- Providing "face to face" workshops at the local level based on periodic needs analysis. Face to face workshops are to be provided in rural, remote areas at close to or at metropolitan prices.

Benefits

The Strong Leaders Initiative will benefit the Department and its workforce in the following ways:

Benefit	Benefit measure
Thirty Principals and Deputy Principals across the state trained in coaching and networking skills.	The number of school leaders trained.
School leaders have access to individual support from the QSPA Service Officer or delegate.	The number of school leaders who access support.
School leaders have access to face to face or remote training on personal leadership skills.	The number of school leaders who access training opportunities.

Milestones and timeline

Key tasks/milestone	Timeline/anticipated completion date
QSPA branches nominate Principals and Deputy Principals to undertake Welfare and Wellbeing Officer role	28 February 2014
Training for Welfare and Wellbeing Officers.	24 March 2014
All school leaders and aspiring leaders informed of proposal and invited to participate.	24 March 2014
Networks established.	30 May 2014
Training opportunities for personal leadership provided face to face and /or remotely.	23 June 2014
Review to determine future directions	15 September 2014

Budget

The Strong Leaders Initiative requires a contribution of \$60,000 from the Department to ensure successful phase one implementation. The following table outlines the total expenditure anticipated with the development and delivery of the Initiative. The difference will be funded by QSPA.

Strong Leaders Initiative

Details	Funding
Development and implementation of training program (Up 30 Principals and Deputy Principals)	\$38,000
Extension of Welfare and Wellbeing Officers roles and support for Welfare and Wellbeing Officers	\$17,000
Ongoing mentoring and coaching for Welfare and Wellbeing Officers	\$15,000
Administration	\$ 5,000
Total	\$75,000

Marketing and communication

QSPA will have responsibility for marketing and promoting the Strong Leaders Initiative to relevant stakeholders and secondary school principals and deputy principals. This will include:

- Using existing QSPA databases supplemented by EQ databases. QSPA will provide direct information to all leaders and aspiring leaders and issue individual invitations to participate.
- Databases are to be updated and fresh communication issued a minimum of once per school term.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment will also utilise both internal and external communication tools, including:

- Departmental websites (i.e. One Portal).
- Schools Update.
- Education Views.

Recommendation

The Department provide funding and support for phase one implementation of the QSPA Strong Leaders Initiative, with a review by the end of Term 3 2104 to determine future directions.