

Non-Government Reform Support Strategic Plan

2019-2022

Independent Schools Victoria

Non – Government Reform Support Fund

Independent Schools Victoria – Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) will use funding provided through the Reform Support Fund to assist Victorian independent schools to implement agreed national and state-based reform initiatives.

In particular, ISV's approach will focus on the following:

1. Providing direct support to schools via ISV's School Improvement Team
2. Collecting and analysing school performance data via ISV's LEAD surveys, and using this analysis to inform further activities
3. Implementing a research program aimed at validating schools' practices and informing future initiatives
4. Ongoing development of isConnect, an online resource for schools that focuses on process management and improvement
5. Continued growth and improvement of our professional learning program, especially in the areas of leadership development, governance training and online learning
6. Ongoing participation in cross-sectoral working groups, at both a state and national level.

Current context

There are currently 220 independent schools in Victoria. They educate more than 142,000 school-aged students on more than 350 campuses across metropolitan Melbourne and in regional and rural Victoria. They also employ more than 18,000 teachers and other staff to support these students. Many schools provide vocational education and training, as well as substantial services beyond school education, including long day care, out of school hours care, kindergarten programs and pre-Prep programs.

There is broad educational, social and philosophical diversity within the Victorian independent sector. The sector reflects a variety of religious faiths and ethos with schools affiliated to Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Catholic, Christian, Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Lutheran, Islamic, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Seventh-day Adventist and Uniting churches. There are inter, multi and non-denominational schools, as well as schools for students with learning difficulties and individual needs and schools adhering to the Montessori and Steiner education philosophies.

Through the Reform Support Fund, ISV focuses on individual school improvement initiatives as well as broad activities across the entire sector. Each school will be at its own point on its improvement journey and ISV supports each school based on their particular needs. ISV also identifies specific schools that might need additional support (e.g. small enrolments; isolated locations; low SES; significant numbers of refugee, non-English speaking backgrounds and indigenous students). ISV does this by reviewing performance data of schools via our LEAD surveys and NAPLAN results.

ISV also provides a significant program of professional learning through The Development Centre. We have a particular focus on building leadership capacity whilst also supporting teachers who are in the early stages of their career. ISV delivers its programs face to face in our dedicated training facilities as well as directly in schools. We also continue to develop our online learning programs.

ISV will also continue to use the Fund to support improvement in governance practices. School governing bodies are able to attend a variety of training programs, including two day residential retreats. We will also build on the range of online support materials made available for governing body members.

National Policy Initiatives

As previously mentioned, ISV's approach will focus on the following:

1. Providing direct support to schools via ISV's School Improvement Team
 - a. ISV has a team of School Improvement Advisors. This team consists of former Principals, Deputy Principals and School Leaders. Each Victorian Independent school has been allocated one of these Advisors and the Advisors will work with schools on a variety of improvement initiatives.
 - b. The team of Advisors will visit schools and support them with their individual school improvement initiatives. Schools may request support based on their particular needs, and ISV staff may identify specific schools that might need additional support (e.g. small enrolments; isolated locations; low SES; significant numbers of refugee, non-English speaking backgrounds and indigenous students). Many of these areas of support provided by ISV align with the National School Reform Agreement.
2. Collecting and analysing school performance data via ISV's LEAD surveys, and using this analysis to inform further activities
 - a. ISV's LEAD School Effectiveness Surveys are for school leaders who want to make informed decisions on planning and resource allocation and gain a deeper understanding of their school. The LEAD surveys are seven psychometrically-tested stakeholder surveys that are statistically proven by the University of Cambridge to measure school effectiveness.
 - b. ISV will use Reform Support funds to support schools' participation in LEAD so that ISV can further analyse school performance data and provide future activities and initiatives to support school improvement
 - c. Implementing a research program aimed at validating schools' practices and informing future initiatives. ISV will continue to work with a variety of research partners such as Harvard University, the Feuerstein Institute, the University of Melbourne and other partners in the delivery and evaluation of a number of research projects
3. Ongoing development of isConnect, an online resource for schools that focuses on process management and improvement
 - a. isConnect is a dynamic and interactive platform which contains extensive information, materials and tools needed to effectively manage a school. The material is directly linked to critical school processes.
 - b. isConnect is structured around the six key process areas of the School Process Architecture:
 - i. Vision and Strategy
 - ii. Governance, Compliance and Risk
 - iii. Learning and Wellbeing
 - iv. Facilities, Operations and Finance
 - v. People and Culture
 - vi. Communications and Relationships
 - c. By identifying and deeply understanding process management systems within these process areas, schools can align their operations with their strategic goals – leading to continuous school improvement.

4. Continued growth and improvement of our professional learning program, especially in the areas of leadership development, governance training and online learning
5. Ongoing participation in cross-sectoral working groups, at both a state and national level.

State-based Reforms

ISV will work with the Victorian government in the implementation of the reforms outlined in the bilateral agreement. This work will involve:

- Participation in the School Policy and Funding Advisory Council (SPFAC) and its working groups
- Sharing of data and information to assist with monitoring Victoria's state-wide performance
- Possible cross-sectoral school engagement on occasions

In relation to some of the specific actions listed in the bilateral (i.e. actions 1, 5 and 11), ISV will participate in cross-sectoral working groups so that the various initiatives can be achieved.

Objectives

As outlined in the previous section, ISV's long-term objectives are focused on improving student outcomes, increasing leadership capacity and enhancing the quality of school governance.

The activities we expect to undertake to achieve these objectives have been previously outlined:

1. Direct support for schools
2. Collecting, analysing and using performance data
3. Research initiatives
4. Process management and improvement
5. Professional learning

Measurement and Evaluation

ISV will use a variety of measurement and evaluation tools and methodologies. These include:

1. Qualitative and quantitative surveys of participants in our professional learning program
2. LEAD surveys
3. Analysis of the use of isConnect and our other online resources
4. Targeted research programs as required.
5. Participation rates in our professional learning program