

PORTFOLIO REPORT – STATE COUNCIL

Rural and Remote Report

Naomi Obst – Portfolio Holder, March 2020

There have been motions over the past years concerning the lack of training by the Education Department for new Principals into our small rural schools. 2019 has seen the beginnings of a program for new Principal's which will hopefully see better retention rates for Principals and teachers ensuring that they are "ready to go" on day one in their new school.

Small communities endeavour to support new Principals however ICPA members have increasingly expressed concern that many of these new Principals lacked the required training to confidently lead their school from the very first school day.

In 2019 the Esperance Branch submitted **Motion A8** "That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education to provide relevant Professional Development Training in areas such as online budgeting, Human Resource Management Information Systems (HRMIS), Policy requirements and School Council Training to all new Level Three School Principals that have not had previous Principal or Deputy Principal role/s prior to beginning their position."

Motion S3 also from the Esperance Branch "That ICPA (WA) lobbies the Minister for Education for the role of an Executive Principal being trialled with the Esperance Mallee Schools; to provide an overarching supporting role for new Principals."

In relation to Motion S3, Minister Ellery said that there had been a trial in 2016 in the Goldfields region. This trial was disbanded as it encountered major issues with the model of accountability and who was responsible for what.

In July 2019 State Council members met with Minister Ellery during our Face-to-Face meetings in Perth. Minister Ellery was receptive to Motion A8 and agreed that an educative program for beginning Principals would benefit all in these small school communities.

From 2019 the current programs as explained by the Minister are as follows:

- 1) *The Principal Eligibility Model*; This is an online professional learning module designed for aspirant Principals to develop the necessary knowledge and skills in managing a workforce, student services, financial resources and risk.
- 2) *Leading School Improvement in Small Schools*; is designed for Principals and their leadership teams to strengthen work relating to leading whole school improvement and building on current practice. The majority of attendees are Level three Principals.
- 3) *Launch*; A newly appointed Principal Program is for Principals in their first three years in the Principal role or with a fixed term contract of six months or longer. 49 beginning Principals completed the programme in 2019, of which 21 are Level 3 Principals.

In recognition that Principals need to be in their schools as much as possible Launch incorporates mixed modes of delivery.

- a) Four days of face-to-face workshops.
- b) 12 months of mentoring support and additional coaching support in school.

- c) Webinar modules (delivered in school/regional offices) presented by department staff across business units such as workplace policy, industrial relations, performance management and employee support, student centred funding, information and communication technology, legal services and infrastructure.

Since our July Face to Face meeting ICPA have continued to have discussions on this topic with Director General of Education Lisa Rogers and Melesha Sands Director of Leadership, Innovation & Strategy. Both Lisa and Melesha have been extremely receptive during our conversations and we thank them for this open dialogue.

Melesha has provided us with some statistics which we hope will be improved upon in 2020 and beyond.

- In 2019, 75 Principals completed the Launch program. 43 were from regional areas.
(Kimberley 3, Midwest 9, Pilbara 4, South west 7, Wheatbelt 19 and Esperance/Goldfields 1.)

The Department also trialled a WA Future Leaders Framework program in 2019. 138 teachers expressed an interest in participating in this program of which 29 were from the regions. (Kimberley 4, Pilbara 5, Midwest 3, Esperance/Goldfields 1, Southwest 11 and Wheatbelt 5)

All teachers who expressed an interest in the trial were provided with travel and accommodation funded by the DoE.

We look forward to 2020 and hope that many more of our rural school leaders take up this opportunity and that the program continues to be refined to ensure that it meets the needs of the very valuable role Principals play in our rural schools and communities.

In September 2019 State Council was requested by ICPA Australia to contribute to the issues paper requesting the establishment of the (RHEF) Rural Hardship Education Fund, which is designed to assist families in times of rural hardship (drought, flood, fire, cyclone, industry impact) when their income is severely impacted through no fault of their own. We were specifically asked to give examples of how our children are impacted during these times and how this might be addressed by government. Thank you to those members who contributed.