



**New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council  
Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW**

**THE LEADERSHIP OF  
SECONDARY EDUCATION  
IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**August 2004**

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SECONDARY EDUCATION  
IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS***

*An interim position paper developed by the  
New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council  
on the role of the principal and other school leaders  
in NSW public secondary schools*

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# THE LEADERSHIP OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## **Preamble**

During the development of this paper principals from state secondary and central schools across NSW have engaged in a sustained professional conversation that has confirmed the need for principals to show leadership in defining the future role of principals and other school leaders in NSW public secondary education. It has also confirmed a commitment by principals to a more interdependent relationship between bureaucrats, unionists, school leaders, teachers, students and the community in the development of public policy for secondary schools in NSW.

Members of the Secondary Principals' Council affirm our collective belief in our role as *educational leaders* in NSW public schools.

- We value the paramount role that public education plays in building a cohesive democratic society.
- We value policy that ensures an educational provision for all NSW secondary students equivalent to the best offered in the OECD.
- We value belonging to a state-wide system of public education that provides frameworks and shared values for the operation of schools, curriculum and assessment.
- We recognise and value the diverse cultural and social contexts of public secondary school communities in NSW and are committed to providing high quality educational outcomes for all students.
- We acknowledge the increasing complexity and ambiguity of educational leadership and are committed to providing flexible, sustainable, equitable, local solutions for the provision of public secondary education.
- We value the effectiveness of school-based decision making.
- We value the meaningful use of information and communication technologies to inform and empower the lives and learning of principals, staff, students and their families.
- We value working collaboratively with deputy principals and all other members of the school community.
- We value the work of the NSWSPC in providing networks of support, opportunities to influence policy and leadership development.

## **Educational leadership: The preferred role of the secondary principal and other secondary school leaders**

Educating students is the core business of schools and educational leadership is at the heart of the role of school principals and other school leaders. The primary purpose of educational leadership is to improve the academic and social outcomes of students, enhance the professional learning of staff and develop quality relationships with parents and the community. This form of leadership demands clear vision, collaboration and shared responsibility. As a result, the NSWSPC conceptualises the preferred role of secondary principals, central school principals and other secondary school leaders as encompassing five dimensions of educational leadership.

Principals and other school leaders in NSW public secondary and central schools, with the support of DET and the school community, will:

- 1. Be responsible for maximising the educational outcomes of all students to create and sustain cultures of success, learning and achievement underpinned by a positive values framework.**
- 2. Lead and be responsible for the design and implementation of the school's curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning programs within agreed curriculum frameworks to address the needs of particular student, staff and community contexts.**
- 3. Sustain strong educational leadership and effective professional learning and development to strengthen and support the profession within and beyond the school.**
- 4. Lead and be responsible for recognising and building student and school capacity to develop strong community relationships and position public secondary and central schools as the preferred choice for the twenty-first century.**
- 5. Lead and be responsible for the planning, organisation, management, administration, evaluation and accountability of the school to accommodate diverse school-community contexts.**

To support the principal in this role, DET state and regional offices will:

- Recognise that the heart of effective educational leadership in the NSW public school system resides in schools.
- Empower, value, trust and support policy and decision-making at the school level.
- Ensure resources are directed to public secondary schools to effectively deliver the "National Goals of Schooling in the 21st Century.
- Align school accountability for student outcomes with the extent of the school's discretion and control over inputs and conditions.
- Model good practice in leadership and management, reflecting the values of public education and a culture of interdependence, open communication and transparent decision-making.

To support the principal in this role, the NSWSPC will:

- Assert the centrality of the educational leadership role in the work of school leaders.
- Provide learning and development opportunities for principals in relation to their role.
- Maintain strong reference groups to provide authoritative advice, consultation and feedback to principals, DET, the Institute of Teachers, Leadership Centre and the Board of Studies.
- Provide substantial input and expert advice on the development of public policies and procedures affecting schools.
- Build and maintain strong links with unions and other professional organisations and associations.

## **Dimensions of the role as they apply to the secondary principal**

This section of the paper specifically expands on the preferred role of the principal in NSW state secondary schools. It identifies the ways in which this role will be fulfilled by principals with the support of the principal's own school-community, the DET and the NSWSPC. Each item has been included after consultation, research, observation of the principalship in other jurisdictions and professional conversations within the NSWSPC. The items are designed to give direction to the role and indicate the kinds of support required if principals are to be effective educational leaders.

### **1. Be responsible for maximising the educational outcomes of all students to create and sustain cultures of success, learning and achievement underpinned by a positive values framework.**

1.1. To be effective in this role the DET principal, with the support of DET and the school community, will:

- 1.1.1. Model educational leadership practices that place students and their learning at the centre of all planning, programs and practices.
- 1.1.2. Work with the school community to develop a set of value and belief statements that underpin the school's educational priorities and policies.
- 1.1.3. Build sustainable learning communities that promote quality teaching and learning with a focus on a culture of success and the achievement of personal best for every student.
- 1.1.4. Work strategically to lead the design and implementation of flexible programs to address the educational needs of students in their specific contexts.
- 1.1.5. Build flexible, inclusive and responsive student well being and learning support systems, practices and structures.
- 1.1.6. Use data from school, community and DET sources to evaluate and improve school effectiveness.
- 1.1.7. Develop mechanisms to celebrate achievements and report to the community on student and school performance.

1.2. To support the principal in this role DET state and regional offices will:

- 1.2.1. Recognise the critical importance of educational leadership as being at the heart of school and student achievement.
- 1.2.2. Build sustainable learning communities that focus on a culture of success, high achievement and recognition for all DET staff.
- 1.2.3. Implement a systematic, consultative policy framework that values and enables decision making at the school level.

- 1.2.4. Ensure effective, sustainable funding and resources to schools to support the full and effective implementation of quality educational programs for all students and school-community contexts.
- 1.2.5. Provide a range of meaningful, systematic, longitudinal, contextual data and information in a range of academic and social dimensions to underpin and inform flexible models of school planning, development and reporting.
- 1.2.6. Support principals and schools in developing effective public school communities and promoting and celebrating their achievements.

1.3. To support the principal in this role the NSWSPC will:

- 1.3.1. Maintain a strong focus on educational leadership as the core business of principals in public secondary schools.
- 1.3.2. Ensure the ethical use of valid school data and information as a tool for assisting in school planning and reporting.
- 1.3.3. Be actively involved in the development of flexible systems of accountability that will be used by schools in reporting to their communities and by principals in reporting to the system.
- 1.3.4. Encourage and advocate the use of research and the sharing of quality practice in improving outcomes for students.
- 1.3.5. Review the operation of DET state and regional offices with a view to ensuring the supply of adequate resources and services to support schools.

**2. Lead and be responsible for the design and implementation of the school's curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning programs within agreed curriculum frameworks to address the needs of particular student, staff and community contexts.**

2.1. To be effective in this role the DET principal, with the support of DET and the school community, will:

- 2.1.1. Lead and be accountable for the effective planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the school's curriculum, learning and assessment programs.
- 2.1.2. Build a strong culture of teacher leadership in curriculum, assessment and pedagogy focused on ensuring relevant, challenging and effective classroom practice.
- 2.1.3. Use school and community data to identify specific issues and create flexible learning programs and support to meet both individual student and equity needs.
- 2.1.4. Monitor, evaluate and report on the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of school programs.
- 2.1.5. Allocate funding and resources appropriately to the changing learning, welfare and curriculum needs of individual students and groups of students.

2.2. To support the principal in this role DET state and regional offices will:

- 2.2.1. Provide appropriate funds, resources and support so that schools can ensure the quality implementation of welfare programs, curriculum and pedagogy in the classroom.
- 2.2.2. Strongly represent the interests and views of public schools to the Board of Studies, state and federal government and other educational authorities.
- 2.2.3. Ensure policies, programs and resources support improved educational outcomes for all students in schools and encourage school-specific responses to the current and future needs of students.
- 2.2.4. Guarantee and implement an equitable, comprehensive, well-researched and well-resourced state-wide technology plan to support teaching and learning at the school level.
- 2.2.5. Provide appropriate alternative structures, programs and resources within and beyond schools to address the learning and welfare needs of students with disruptive behaviours.
- 2.2.6. Provide appropriate alternative structures, programs and resources within and beyond schools to address the learning and welfare needs of students with learning difficulties.
- 2.2.7. Ensure the Board of Studies (or other curriculum authority) establishes well-structured and inclusive exit standards against which student achievement can be measured and reported.



- 2.2.8. Initiate a process to review and guide the curriculum structure in NSW to ensure secondary schools are able to meet the diverse learning needs of the full range of students.
- 2.2.9. Ensure that there is an alignment between TAFE and schools that both supports secondary students in the transition to lifelong learning and enables schools to access and deliver quality vocational programs.
- 2.2.10. Ensure the curriculum is relevant, high quality and accessible to all students in NSW state secondary education.

2.3. To support the principal in this role the NSWSPC will:

- 2.3.1. Advocate for flexible curriculum frameworks to address individual school and student contexts.
- 2.3.2. Provide authoritative advice to principals, DET and the BOS in relation to curriculum, assessment & reporting, teaching, learning and equity programs.
- 2.3.3. Build partnerships with professional teacher associations and other organisations to support and enhance the delivery of curriculum in secondary schools.

### **3. Sustain strong educational leadership and effective professional learning and development to strengthen and support the profession within and beyond the school.**

3.1. To be effective in this role the DET principal, with the support of DET and the school community, will:

- 3.1.1. Participate in programs of personal professional learning on an ongoing basis throughout their career.
- 3.1.2. Participate in negotiated, meaningful processes of principal accountability and performance appraisal.
- 3.1.3. Provide supportive and developmental in-school structures and systems to implement annual workplace assessment and validation of staff proficiency.
- 3.1.4. Collaboratively design, implement and evaluate a range of professional learning opportunities for staff, focused on high quality teaching and learning and improved educational outcomes for students.
- 3.1.5. Encourage staff to participate in a range of internal and external professional learning opportunities, including work-based learning experiences.
- 3.1.6. Value and promote the pivotal role of the senior executive team in secondary schools and strengthen its individual and combined leadership and management capabilities.
- 3.1.7. Identify, encourage and develop aspiring school leaders within and beyond the school.
- 3.1.8. Lead and participate in local, regional and state networks and programs aimed at school leadership development, collegial networks and principal support.
- 3.1.9. Actively contribute to SPC policy development and participate in SPC initiatives.

3.2. To support the principal in this role DET state and regional offices will:

- 3.2.1. Provide access to and opportunities for principals to undertake sabbaticals, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, research fellowships and other leadership development opportunities.
- 3.2.2. Contribute to the resourcing of, and be an active partner in, the establishment and operation of an autonomous, cross-sectoral leadership centre.
- 3.2.3. Maintain appropriate funding of the School Leadership Development Unit to enable the implementation of a broad variety of leadership development programs and initiatives.
- 3.2.4. Ensure, in collaboration with SPC, that principal preparation, induction and development programs provide effective learning for school leaders.
- 3.2.5. Ensure adequate funding for schools to maintain effective programs of professional learning, and development.
- 3.2.6. Via the Institute of Teachers, establish in consultation with SPC and other partners, appropriate professional accreditation and registration processes for teachers.

- 3.3. To support the principal in this role the SPC will:
- 3.3.1. Support and accept the responsibilities negotiated under the Memorandum of Understanding and be publicly accountable for the use of any funding derived from government and corporate sources.
  - 3.3.2. Support and participate in the development of a strong, autonomous, best-practice cross-sectoral leadership centre for school leadership development and accreditation.
  - 3.3.3. Ensure ongoing commitment to and involvement in the preparation and delivery of quality principal preparation, induction, learning and development programs.
  - 3.3.4. Establish partnerships with professional associations and educational organisations to deliver ongoing professional learning to principals.
  - 3.3.5. Provide expert advice to and actively support and participate in leadership programs, the Leadership Centre, Institute of Teachers and other agencies that seek to improve the ability of schools, teachers and leaders to meet high professional standards.

**4. Lead and be responsible for the recognition and building of student and school capacity to develop strong community relationships and position public secondary and central schools as the preferred choice for the twenty-first century.**

4.1. To be effective in this role the DET principal, with the support of DET and the school community, will:

- 4.1.1. Develop and deliver a range of opportunities to build the leadership capacity and capability of all students and actively involve them in school decision making.
- 4.1.2. Build the capacity of parents and the community to have meaningful input into the school's values platform, policies, programs and practices.
- 4.1.3. Provide opportunities for consultation with parent and community organisations and representatives and provide avenues for parent and community participation in policy development and decision making.
- 4.1.4. Build strong, long term relationships between the school and local business community, local community organisations, government agencies, TAFE and universities.
- 4.1.5. Build strong, long term relationships between primary and secondary schools.
- 4.1.6. Advocate the essential place, value and importance of public secondary education and public schools in our community.

4.2. To support the principal in this role DET state and regional offices will:

- 4.2.1. Recognise and actively support the role of the school in developing social capital and student and community capacity.
- 4.2.2. Provide formal structures and opportunities to engage all students in leadership roles within and beyond the school.
- 4.2.3. Provide the funding, structures and personnel to sustain meaningful parent and community links at school, area and regional level.
- 4.2.4. Provide mechanisms for outside agencies (including health, welfare, social services and the police) to work collaboratively with schools.
- 4.2.5. Provide clear guidelines to schools and school communities in relation to the purpose, structure and role of parent and community organisations.
- 4.2.6. Support all public secondary and central schools to promote and market to prospective students and their families.

4.3. To support the principal in this role the SPC will:

- 4.3.1. Maintain strong reference groups to provide authoritative advice to principals, DET and government in relation to effective models of student leadership and capacity building.
- 4.3.2. Establish direct links with state, regional and area SRCs and provide access for students to SPC support.

- 4.3.3. Work in partnership with peak parent and community organisations including P&C Federation, AECG, Ethnic Communities Council to build social capital and community capacity.
- 4.3.4. Advocate for public policy in the funding and operation of all schools to ensure appropriate resourcing of public secondary and central schools.
- 4.3.5. Lobby for equity in the ways in which public and publicly funded private schools are permitted to operate and account for the use of public funds.

**5. Lead and be responsible for the planning, organisation, management, administration, evaluation and accountability of the school to accommodate diverse school-community contexts.**

5.1. To be effective in this role the DET principal, with the support of DET and the school community, will:

- 5.1.1. Consult with the school community to determine the school's long term goals, annual priorities, policies and procedures.
- 5.1.2. Develop contextually appropriate teaching, leadership, management, administration and specialist support roles and teams.
- 5.1.3. Strategically allocate the school's financial and physical resources to best meet the needs and priorities of the school.
- 5.1.4. Implement systems of annual school self evaluation, strategic planning and school-based decision making.
- 5.1.5. Use data and information from school, community and DET sources to inform school planning, policies, practices and evaluation.
- 5.1.6. Develop quality local solutions to ensure and enhance staff performance and manage staff welfare and workplace safety.
- 5.1.7. Develop effective systems to manage educational, legislative, regulatory and industrial requirements within the secondary and central school context.

5.2. To support the principal in this role DET state and regional offices will:

- 5.2.1. Ensure principals and schools have sufficient flexibility and adequate resources to implement DET policies and requirements in a way that recognises and values the local context of the school and its school community.
- 5.2.2. Review the operation of all formula-based resource allocations, with a view to moderating or eliminating the "one size fits all" approach.
- 5.2.3. Ensure all public school students have access to appropriate quality learning spaces, technologies and learning resources.
- 5.2.4. Maintain a centralised staffing operation for schools that provides quality staff and sufficient flexibility for individual schools to determine a proportion of their overall staffing in response to recognised local needs.
- 5.2.5. Provide support personnel within and beyond the school to assist principals to enhance staff performance, ensure staff welfare, address staff efficiency and manage workplace assessment.
- 5.2.6. Ensure schools have the right to determine the allocation of government-sourced funds to meet school and government priorities.
- 5.2.7. Provide "state of the art" learning and administration technology to schools supported by quality technical assistance and training.
- 5.2.8. Allocate cleaning, maintenance and capital works funding according to school needs and priorities.

- 5.2.9. Provide expert technical advice and support to schools and ensure that ongoing compliance training is readily available and accessible to principals and school leaders as required.
  - 5.2.10. Review the effectiveness of all DET directorates and policies to ensure there is an ongoing and identifiable priority focus on the support of schools.
- 5.3. To support the principal in this role the NSWSPC will:
- 5.3.1. Advocate and lobby for improved and devolved DET management structures to support school management and ensure the workload of principals and executive staff can be focused on educational responsibilities.
  - 5.3.2. Provide authoritative advice to DET and the BOS in relation to the school management of personnel policies and programs, properties, maintenance, cleaning, finance and OH&S.