

## NSWSPC

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

#### Rationale

The NSWSPC Futures document identifies the following core principles about school-based professional learning and development:

1. Effective student learning depends on quality teaching, which in turn depends on the quality of teachers' professional learning.
2. School based professional learning and development teams, which focus on the real work of teachers, achieve better outcomes for students.
3. It is the responsibility of every teacher to commit to continuing professional learning, and the responsibility of DET to support this by appropriate school-based funding.
4. School based professional learning and development needs to be focused on the needs of the learning community, and targeted to achieve improvement in the quality of student learning outcomes.

#### Definition of a Professional Learning and Development Activity

An approved professional learning and development activity should meet all the following criteria:

1. Support the implementation of priorities in the school management plan;
2. Lead to improved student learning outcomes; and
3. Assist teachers and other school staff to meet agreed negotiated goals.

#### Principles of Professional Learning and Development

Effective professional learning and development activities reflect current knowledge of best practice in respect of learning principles, access and modes of delivery.

1. Professional learning and development for teaching staff should include a negotiated individual program of learning and development conducted within the context of the TARS process.
2. A range of professional learning strategies and modes of delivery should be valued and utilized, including mentoring, coaching, school-based action research, personal reflection, teacher exchanges, discussion with and observation of colleagues and participation in formal conferences, programs and courses.
3. Workplace learning should be valued, utilized, supported and encouraged.
4. Recognition of prior learning should be reflected in the design and delivery of professional learning activities.
5. Professional learning and development activities should be planned, evaluated and linked to school and Department priorities, and the learning needs of individuals as identified within their negotiated individual learning plans.

6. The statement *Quality teaching in NSW public schools* should be used to inform professional learning and development activities in the area of learning and teaching.
7. The principal is accountable for ensuring the planning and implementation of the school's professional learning and development program.
8. The whole school community should have opportunity to participate in relevant and appropriate professional learning and development activities.
9. Professional learning and development could include activities held during the normal school day, on special school days designated for the purpose of learning and development, after school hours and during weekends and holidays.
10. Where approved professional learning and development activities are held outside normal school hours in special/agreed circumstances, there should be the ability to pay teachers to participate. "Approved professional learning and development activities" do not include activities such as staff meetings, parent-teacher evenings, excursions, presentation nights, etc, which are considered to be a normal part of a teacher's duties.
11. The Department of Education and Training should develop a list of externally accredited consultants who are available for use in schools.
12. Principals have the right to determine their school's level of participation in non-mandatory professional learning and development activities.
13. All teachers should participate in at least a minimum number of professional learning and development hours.
14. Teaching loads should be reduced by the Department of Education and Training, to facilitate increased professional learning time.

### **Compliance Training and other Mandatory Training**

1. Compliance training should remain centrally organized and funded
2. Compliance training should be conducted through mixed mode delivery, such as seminars, online, CD ROM, video conference. Opportunities for recognition of prior learning should be provided.
3. Programs which support the implementation of new curriculum and policies must be available to all staff through a variety of delivery modes.

### **Funding Recommendations**

1. Where efficiencies of organisation and savings exist, centrally developed, delivered and funded professional learning and development programs and resources should be retained.
2. The major factor causing inequity of access to professional learning and development opportunities in schools is distance. This creates a range of additional costs that would otherwise not be incurred. A monetary allowance for distance should be incorporated into the funding formula.
3. Temporary and permanent probationary teachers, and newly appointed executive other than principals in their first year of appointment should participate in a program of induction that is funded from a pool of funds held

centrally and distributed to individual schools on the basis on these appointments.

4. The induction of principals should continue to be designed delivered and funded centrally.
5. Additional funds should be in the funding formula for SAS staff

**This policy was approved by the State Assembly of the NSW Secondary Principal's Council on 29 August 2003.**