



NSWSPC Initial Submission to Local Schools, Local Decisions Consultation

Submitted: November 18 2011

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Introduction

The NSWSPC represents the principals in over 500 secondary schools, central schools and schools for special purposes.¹ The majority of secondary schools and all central schools are located in “communities” and the young people of that community attend the local school. Some secondary schools are specialist settings, enrolling students from a range of communities. These schools include selective schools, single sex high schools, sports high schools, performing arts high schools and schools for special purposes.

In response to this diversity the definition of the “local school” needs to be far better understood by parents, students and policy makers in defining what “local decisions” will be made. “Local” means a school or community of schools.²

It is essential that secondary schools and their communities (whether local or wider) are able to take ownership of the philosophy, purpose and practice of a more devolved model of authority, governance and decision making.

In its current form, the NSWSPC thinks the ideas presented in the *Local Schools, Local Decisions* discussion paper lack substance and the level of detail required for a serious professional response.³

¹ Referred to as ‘secondary schools’ in this submission.

² (SPC/PPA Community Of Schools Position Paper)

³ The NSWSPC has published its positions in a series of key papers over the last eight years that directly respond to issues raised in both the Local Schools, Local Decisions consultation and the Empowered Local Schools National Partnership. They are available at www.nswspc.org.au

There are three major issues that the NSWSPC has with the discussion paper and the consultation process:

- There is no funding model and no funding guarantee (such as in relation to additional federal recurrent funding) to enable an informed professional response to whether secondary students, schools and communities will actually benefit from the proposed changes.
- NSWSPC has had feedback that the purposes and processes of the consultation were unclear to many principals. There was a perception that implementation strategies and projects had already been designed. Critically, the consultation failed to establish a purpose for the policy itself and failed to explain how the proposed changes will improve student learning and school effectiveness. Failed to engage participants in a meaningful and deep manner.
- There is no indication about the commitment of government to the strengths of working within the NSW jurisdiction or to maintaining legislative frameworks in relation to hours of study, class sizes and working conditions.

The NSWSPC will expect the implementation of *Local Schools, Local Decisions* to be undertaken collaboratively and with the recognition that principals and their professional associations, through the Futures Alliance and the local consultations, have contributed much to the rebuilding of trust and the identification of priorities. They need to be directly involved in planning any redesign and implementation.

The NSWSPC expects governments and policy makers to determine policy that recognises that secondary schools in NSW have been asked to achieve significant “high stakes” improvements in student outcomes through the Melbourne Declaration on the National Goals for Young Australians, the National Education Agreement and the NSW State Plan. This includes lifting the Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment rate to 90% by 2015.

In this context, the NSWSPC expects the state government to ensure the investment in secondary education through the implementation of *Local Schools, Local Decisions*, particularly in recurrent state and federal funding, is sufficient to enable every secondary school to achieve the goals set for it.

Significantly NSWSPC considers that many of the largest barriers to effective change and overall reform to the educational provision in NSW (including reforms to teaching and learning as well as to school leadership and management) exist in the structures, organisation and inefficiencies of DEC portfolios and the layers of bureaucracy, not schools. There is a critical need for reform at the centre and in regions before genuine school reform is undertaken.

The NSWSPC will support those educational initiatives that recognise the role of the principal in leading the school to improve learning, teaching and student outcomes. It will also support those initiatives that:

- promote equity of opportunity for all students and match that with the funding to achieve greater equity of outcomes;

- focus the work of DEC on supporting schools to improve teaching, learning and student achievement.
- acknowledge that the challenge of achieving government targets varies between schools; and
- acknowledge that the task facing government schools is inherently more complex in secondary settings than it is in other sectors.

The NSWSPC looks forward to the opportunity for principals to lead schools and communities in creating genuine change and reform that will place school planning, decision making and authority closer to the school, secondary students and their communities.

The Federal Context for Local Schools, Local Decisions: Empowered Local Schools National Partnership

The NSWSPC recognises that both the federal and state governments are committed to increased local decision making in some areas, while maintaining highly centralised control over curriculum, assessment and professional standards.

The NSWSPC holds research and information from other OECD nations to show there is, at best, a variable relationship between school-based management (SBM) and the results achieved by students in PISA results. International school improvement and improved student outcomes cannot be attributed to school-based management. The most successful systems in the world have undertaken comprehensive educational reform and adopted educational approaches to improving student results.

The NSWSPC supports the use of the *Empowered Local Schools National Partnership* as a lever in NSW if it:

- affirms the public purposes of the government education system,
- values the strengths of jurisdictions as well as schools and
- recognises the importance of lifting the capacity of the whole system and every secondary school in any new model of operation.

It is widely recognised in schools that the need for management reform is greatest in the bureaucracy of DEC; schools are typically well managed and well run for their core purpose of teaching and learning. This is not articulated well in the consultation documents. They fail to recognise that much of what needs to change for schools to operate more effectively at a local level can be done within current regulations with a thoughtful review of policy settings and improving DEC internal infrastructure.

The NSWSPC supports *Local Schools Local Decisions (supported by the Empowered Local Schools National Partnership)* as an effective enabler of reform if there is:

Staffing and professional capacity

1. **Staffing:** Change to the staffing of secondary schools in line with the NSWSPC position paper to increase local decision making while maintaining a state wide system of recruitment, employment and accreditation.⁴
2. **Quality teaching:** Shared responsibility for ensuring that there are qualified and quality teachers to teach every subject in every secondary school and that overall teaching quality is a DEC priority enhanced through funding both the learning associated with national standards and school based professional development.
3. **Capacity building:** A commitment to building the capacity of all secondary school staff, students, communities and principals to lead the proposed government reforms. Critically this will include professional learning, professional networks and new models of principal “support” to be effective⁵. To build system wide capacity for reform, every principal and school must have the opportunity to be engaged in the reform process.

Financial and management reform

4. **School Funding:** Increased recurrent funding to all secondary schools⁶ to ensure the reforms are underpinned by equity principles and recognition of the complexity of secondary school settings in implementing major change and reform.
5. **Genuine global budgets:** Greater flexibility within genuine ‘global school budgets’ to target resources to the needs of students in the school and ensure students at each school have the best opportunity to achieve their potential.
6. **School resource package:** A collaboratively developed individual school resource package that ensures baseline funding (based on enrolment numbers, requirements for hours of teaching, the demands of the secondary curriculum and class sizes) is extended with additional funding for school and student complexity.⁷
7. **Management Expertise:** Recognition that the level of expertise in public sector (school) management in secondary schools is high and that new reforms need to recognise the local expertise and capacity that already exists in secondary schools.

⁴ NSWSPC Position paper – Staffing (2011)

⁵ These themes have been discussed in the draft NSWSPC ‘Consultant Principal’ paper.

⁶ NSWSPC Funding Submissions to the Federal Review of Funding – 1,2 and 3

⁷ Please see the NSWSPC third submission to the Federal Funding Review for more detail.

Aligned Local Governance

8. **Local decision making:** Greater authority for principals and local communities that is underpinned by increased local decision making and the locally agreed priorities of the School Plan.
9. **Effective delegation:** The delegation of decision making and management to schools must be in those areas where schools are best able to directly influence teaching & learning, school practices and student outcomes. The government and DEC must continue to accept responsibility for the overall funding of schools and the management of those functions and capital projects which are most efficient and cost-effective if managed centrally.
10. **Principal authority:** Agreement on new frameworks, standards and policies that define the role, authority, leadership and accountability of the principal⁸ in terms of leading for learning and reinstate professional accountability systems based on respect for the work of principals and schools.
11. **Professional accountability:** Professional accountability for principals that is derived from the role, authority and leadership of the principal...in the context of the national standard and the work of secondary and central school principals.⁹
12. **School accountability:** A system of school accountability and reporting that avoids duplication and builds on the comprehensive practices that have been in use in NSW Public Schools for almost 15 years, underpinned by school and external data.¹⁰
13. **Learning communities:** The opportunity and continuation of locally initiated and managed learning communities to provide collegial support to local schools and ensure opportunities for sharing resources and practices.
14. **Regional restructure:** There should be a reduction in regional bureaucracies with a review of which functions (including the placement of special needs students and the role of the region as the RTO) could be better organised and aligned locally. The functions of regions should be audited and re-aligned based on their value to secondary schools, secondary school students and secondary education outcomes. Longer term the regional level of operation should be replaced with local structures. These should vary in size and scope based on the needs of schools and groups of schools.
15. **Alignment:** A much better alignment of policy making and policy implementation within and between the DEC portfolios. Reform should start at the centre. Long standing confusion about the role of each portfolio in policy & program implementation for secondary schools has resulted in waste and inefficiency in DEC while, at the same time increasing the workload of schools.
16. **High quality systems support:** New practice to reduce administrative workload intensity, prevent duplication and eliminate unnecessarily complex reporting. The NSWSPC supports the provision of high quality software for

⁸ Role, Authority, Leadership and Accountability of the Principal; 2009

⁹ Position paper - Role, Authority, Leadership and Accountability of the Principal (2009)

¹⁰ Position paper - School Accountability, Development and Reporting (2009)

data management, learning management, systems management and resource management. There must be effective planning and a well structured implementation plan underpinned by an immediate improvement in DEC management systems.

Local Schools, Local Decisions – more detailed responses to the five sections of the discussion paper

In addition to the overall responses outlined above, the following specific positions, questions and recommendations are made about:

- making decisions
- managing resources
- staff in our schools
- working locally
- reducing red tape

It should be noted there is some repetition in the responses reflecting the overlap between the sections and the commitment of the NSWSPC membership to particular reform strategies and goals. . It should be noted that a commitment to state office reform and state office policy reform is critical to the support of the NSWSPC.

Making decisions

The NSWSPC recognises that decision making in government education in NSW has previously been characterised by:

- Policies that have supported differentiation in the focus and enrolment profile of secondary schools while maintaining rigid formulas in the allocation of staff and funding.
- Increasing regulation, fragmentation and inconsistency in administrative guidelines and reporting to multiple portfolios.
- Resource shifting by both federal and state governments away from secondary government schools.
- Lack of trust in principals, teachers and schools to make decisions for students.
- Poor systems, contradictory policies, confusion and inconsistent application in practice. Much of this is a direct result of the re-introduction of the regional layer of management as well as a growing overlap between DEC, the BOS, IOT and now ACARA and AITSL. All these layers and lines of policy create complexity and increase the workload of schools.

Areas of Support in NSWSPC position papers and policy:

Principal Authority and Accountability

***Role, Authority, Leadership and Accountability of the Principal (2009):** The NSW Secondary Principals' Council re-affirms the statement of beliefs and values set out in "The Leadership of Secondary Education in NSW Public Schools", and re-commits to the view of the principal's role expressed in that document; specifically that the principal as school leader will:*

- 1. Lead and be responsible for maximising the educational achievements of all students to create and sustain cultures of success, learning and achievement underpinned by consistent pedagogical platforms, the development of the whole child and 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 work with colleagues to 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.¹¹*

Authority of principal: *It is the position of the NSW Secondary Principals Council that in order to exercise their proper role, principals require a sufficient level of authority to lead the school, in the framework of a public education system and in the context of the school and its community. It is also the position of the NSWSPC that principals need to be authorised to delegate that authority within the school in ways that reflect the growing complexity of secondary and central schools.*

The authority which principals are able to exercise in leading and managing their schools is delegated to them by a complex set of legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks. These frameworks – and the accountability mechanisms which flow from them – have evolved over many years and are subject to continued incremental change.

One element of the preparation of this position paper¹² has been the enormous task of bringing together those frameworks and mechanisms into one place and the result is a formidable collection. Another element has been a deep and extensive consultation with principals around NSW in relation to their perceptions of the adequacy of their authority in various domains and their perceptions of the accountability mechanisms which they must address. It is the position of the NSWSPC that a risk management and compliance culture has resulted in detailed lists of accountabilities being developed at the expense of careful consideration of the authority that principals should hold in leading their schools. Further, principals have reported in surveys and consultation that they think their authority for key areas of school leadership and management has declined since 2004.

¹¹ Role, Authority, Leadership and Accountability of the Principal (2009) pages 15 and 16

¹² Ibid

It is the position of the NSWSPC that the authority of principals derives from three major areas. Like other professionals employed in public institutions, such as doctors, principals have a professional authority that derives from their expertise as a teacher and school leader. Principals have an in depth understanding of the processes of teaching and learning and a repertoire of experiences, professional learning and academic studies that underpin their ability to select (and reject) strategies for teacher and student learning in schools. As a result it is most likely that principals will have greater expertise and currency in this area than most bureaucrats. It is also the position of the NSWSPC that NSW DET will need to make a much greater commitment to linking research in effective professional leadership (in universities) and practice (in schools) than it has done in the past.

*The second source of authority for principals is the systemic authority which derives from the appointment and selection of the person who will lead the school. As each panel is led by a SED and each decision to appoint a principal is approved by the Regional Director, the authority of the principal to lead and manage the school as outlined in key policy documents, including *Leading & Managing the School* (2000) is established at appointment. It is the position of NSWSPC that the appointment and continued satisfactory performance of the principal through PARs gives the principal the authority to lead and manage the school flexibly within the constraints imposed by legislation and resource restrictions. It is further the position of NSWSPC that principals should have their delegation and authority more clearly defined, published in one location and recognised by the regional and state bureaucracy.*

The third source of authority for principals derives from their role in the school and wider community. While this authority is true of all principals, it is most often articulated for principals working in rural and regional communities. It recognises that the contexts in which principals work vary considerably and those contexts imply equity considerations that must inform both the authority and accountability of the principal. Principals need to exercise their authority to engage diverse communities and build the capacity of the community to support the school and its students. This is an authority given by the members of the community (including students, teachers and parents) to the school's principal and cannot be mandated by governments, employers.

The NSWSPC supports the position that principals must have the authority to act for their students and the community to create change and improvement. It also supports the position that SEDs and regional directors need to understand the contexts of different schools and support the authority of the principal in acting for students and the community in different schools.

Accountability: *It is the position of the NSW Secondary Principals Council that the principal should be accountable for the leadership & management of the school in all areas:*

- i. in which they have the authority to determine their school's practices and*
- ii. for which they have appropriate resources and expertise available and within their control.*

Three general directions of accountability are recognised:

- i. accountability to the school community;*
- ii. accountability to the government of NSW, through the DET; and*
- iii. accountability to the profession through the national standard.*

It is the position of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council that the forms of accountability used with principals should have carefully articulated protocols that ensure consistency and fairness in their application without the "one size fits all" problems of the current PARs implementation. Further, it is the position of the NSWSPC that principal accountability should not be solely linked to school accountability but should instead recognise the principal as an individual leading a complex organisation.¹³

The NSWSPC also holds positions on:

- School accountability, development and reporting that outline the principles for effective school accountability and the use of externally measured student performance data as only one measure of school effectiveness.
- School viability and social capital (developed with PPA) that will inform the decision making about school capacity, classification and funding.
- School funding (Submissions 1,2 and 3) which explain the funding principles and procedures recommended by NSWSPC and based on an equitable allocation directly to schools of additional federal recurrent funding.

Areas where NSWSPC requests more information

NSWSPC members will need the following information to be provided before the next phase of consultation:

- Every school needs access to detailed funding, staffing and outcomes data about the school. At present no school or school principal is told the cost of running the school except in the limited information presented on the *MySchool* website.
- Will Juvenile Justice Schools and SSPs with secondary enrolments be re-classified as secondary schools? Their principals work with secondary students and curricula – will their authority be recognised in re-classification?
- Current and future demographic information held by DEC about the enrolment patterns of each school, including individual student information to inform decisions on the needs of the school and the school planning process.
- Detailed funding proposals for the funding of individual schools, types of schools and local groups of schools.

¹³ Ibid page 18

- Benchmarks and/or business rules to be used to determine what decisions are best made at the school level and which are best made outside the school.
- An outline of the proposed “accountability framework” and the proposed mechanisms designed to “recognise high performance” and “improve performance where necessary”. (Discussion paper page 5)
- An explanation of the following sentence: *The accountability framework defines not only who should have authority and therefore be accountable for the outcomes, but also how we should ensure that accountability.* (Discussion paper page 5)
- How the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy will reduce the “bureaucracy” of current decision making and reduce the workload of the principal in day to day administrative management, allowing a greater focus on key leadership and professional roles.
- Governance rules, audit and policy settings for local schools making decisions to improve teaching and learning as outlined in the discussion paper (Page 4).

NSWSPC Recommendations

- DEC should retain and fund the 3 year school planning and resourcing cycle, with plans developed at the school in consultation with the school community. Planning should be done from the student focus with school plans driving system support. In the context of national and state plans, schools should identify local priorities, then negotiate the appropriate support. This means schools must have funding and more flexible decision making within the school to address the priorities.
- The *Local Schools, Local Decisions* policy must affirm that principals are accountable to their local community, the profession and the Director General. The NSWSPC recommends a thoughtfully crafted Statement of the Role, Authority and Accountability of principals and school leaders is developed in collaboration with the profession.
- The role of the principal must be much more than managerial. For the demanding managerial functions secondary schools need functional roles such as business managers and technology support to support the principal and deputy principals in their day to day management roles.
- The *Local Schools, Local Decisions* policy needs to articulate a position where “local” means “local” not “regional”. The NSWSPC questions the value of some regions in supporting local decision making. Some regions are so large that they have significant diseconomies of scale and, in the majority of regions there is little evidence of value adding by the region to the achievements of secondary schools and their students.
- Acknowledgement needs to be made that for schools to change their management practices there will be an increased workload that will need increased funding and staffing capacity to offset. The NSWSPC would like to discuss the uses to which any increase in federal recurrent funding for secondary education could be used to meet the additional demands. It is

NSWSPC policy that business managers should be appointed to secondary schools.

- The NSWSPC would like to see an outline of the expectations of the local community in governance and information on the range of options being considered for local decision making and accountability. In particular, the NSWSPC would like clearly articulated protocols and procedures for dispute resolution developed before any change is made to the supervision, accountability and roles of principals and deputy principals.
- The NSWSPC expects that the jurisdiction will maintain and extend its commitment to evidence based decision making, diagnostic testing and data driven planning.

Managing Resources

The NSWSPC recognises that resource management in government education in NSW has previously been characterised by:

- Rigid, centralised funding, asset, procurement and infrastructure allocations accompanied by complex and confusing administrative systems and software.
- The inflexibility of whole of government contracts negotiated outside DEC. Many of these contracts traded conditions from schools (such as the cleaning contracts) and prevented schools from having a commercial advantage (such as the banking contract, the electricity contract and the solar panel rebate for schools).
- The domination of preferred contractors and high project management fees.
- Rigid rules and formulas applied to assets and maintenance applied by Asset Management Unit.
- Some outstanding exceptions such as the DER where centralised contract negotiations by DEC itself created an advantage for students, schools and the system of secondary schools.
- Resource shifting by both federal and state governments away from secondary government schools.
- Lack of trust in principals, teachers and schools to make decisions in project management, investing school funds and managing the total school budget.
- Lack of trust in principal associations with repeated requests for information and transparency in disclosing the costs of resource allocations denied.

Areas of Support in NSWSPC position papers and policies:

School funding

- The majority of school funding for government schools in NSW should be held in schools as actual funds not notional budgets held centrally or regionally.
- All schools should have their own bank accounts and ability to manage their funds within those accounts.
- Principals and school communities should have greater authority to manage school resources if they receive additional recurrent funding to do so.
- School funding should be “graduated” for each individual school, rather than allocated on “one size fits all” or “categories” models of funding.
- School funding should be based on state funding that ensures all fixed running costs (the costs of opening and operating the school each day for teaching & learning) are funded. There should be no supplementation for fixed costs because funding as budgets should cover fixed costs. For secondary schools running costs will include a base funding figure and a complexity figure based on the costs of delivering the full secondary

provision in curriculum, the provision of specialist facilities and the delivery of technological infrastructure. It would also include increased costs for casual relief and school maintenance to redress inequities.

- Capital works, including refurbishment should be separately funded by the jurisdiction. The jurisdiction should be required to achieve asset & infrastructure benchmarks and facility standards that enable the delivery of the full academic, scientific and vocational curriculum to all secondary and central schools.
- Governments should fund on equity and inputs (based on socio educational advantage) for individual students, concentrations of disadvantage and targeted programs. Secondary school funding in government schools should include state and federal recurrent funding that is equitably allocated based on student input data using ICSEA and the quadrant data.¹⁴ This is the flexible component of funding that could vary every three years in response to changing demographics and the student factors identified in the school plan.

School Budgets

- The experience of the 17 secondary and central school principals who participated in the 47 schools trial demonstrated that, when there is sufficient funding and sufficient support, schools can already operationalise a greater proportion of the education budget. Principals involved were in strong support of the trial and many valued being able to appoint business managers to support the funding and administrative functions of the school. It is essential the fortnightly monitoring reports and access to high level support continues in any new model.
- NSWSPC will support greater school based management of resources only if schools receive a commensurate financial benefit and administrative support.
- NSWSPC supports a greater proportion of untied funds being allocated to schools.
- School budgets should contain a minimum number of lines. These might include base funding, school complexity funding, student complexity funding and targeted program funding. Within each budget line there should be the option for flexible allocation within required guidelines.
- NSWSPC members do not wish to manage the long term costs of recruitment, retirement, leave, injury, salaries payments, long term on-costs or costs that are associated with individual staff as they move through their careers such as superannuation and long service leave. The NSWSPC does not think schools should fund above establishment teachers – they should remain a

¹⁴ Details are outlined in the NSWSPC third submission to the school funding review – page 5

systems responsibility as the central management creates efficiencies that cannot be delivered by individual schools.

- NSWSPC supports increased local authority for the use of school funds. This includes school bank accounts, schools retaining interest raised and schools having access to term deposits, tax benefits from GST refunds and local purchasing up to \$10000.

Areas where NSWSPC requests more information

- It will not be possible to provide a substantial professional response until schools and school principals know what is in the current school budget, how it was calculated, the parameters of the new funding and school budget model and how much money they will have in their budgets.
- It will not be possible to provide a full response until the costs associated with state and regional operations, consultancy costs, the costs of the current SED model, project costs and program costs are available for consideration and planning through the Futures Alliance.
- The NSWSPC would like to see any plans that have been put in place to cut program costs to directorates and regions in order to increase school funding. Principals would like to know if directorate support services for secondary schools are to be maintained, including retraining programs, professional learning programs, leadership development programs.

NSWSPC Recommendations

The NSWSPC requests:

- The appointment of a business manager to each secondary school and to central schools and SSPs on a sliding scale based on complexity.
- Publication of funding and budget proposals for schools in time for consultation and collaborative planning for 2012 – 13.
- That all project and program funding transferred to schools under *Local Schools, Local Decisions* include the full budget. If needed local communities of schools can negotiate to share resources and salary costs.
- That state office and regions be required to report on the source of funds and disclose the full costs of each directorate, region, program and regional project managed outside the school.
- That the redesign of funding models takes into account the previous issues with cost shifting away from secondary schools. The NSWSPC is happy to discuss specific concerns.
- Clarification about the legislation, regulation and policy that will be used to establish funding and salary formulas.
- Mandatory compliance training should remain the responsibility of DEC, the employer. Current in-school WHS responsibilities should be maintained but not increased. There remains a need to maintain State office responsibility for overall OHS/WHS.
- Clarification of any proposed changes to formulas derived from legislation and regulation that will impact on secondary school funding.

Staff in our schools

The New South Wales Secondary Principals Council (SPC) advocates that Principals and schools be given greater flexibility and authority in selecting staffing to meet the school priorities as determined by student needs. Professional learning resources are important to ensure the development of staff capability locally and enhance effective performance management processes. The NSWSPC Staffing Paper (2011) and other position papers provide more detail and will be used as references for further consultation. The needs of schools and the students must drive the composition of staff and should be a priority for educational investment not cost-cutting.

Areas of Support in NSWSPC position papers and policies

The following statements are supported by NSWSPC positions and position papers:

- Provision of greater flexibility of staff appointment within a state-wide staffing framework ensuring all young people in schools have quality secondary teachers.
- Increased authority of the Principal to determine the right mix of staff skills and abilities to meet the school's priorities, generally on a three-year cycle. The three-year cycle should be applied flexibly, with no expectation that staff would be restricted to a maximum three-year appointment or 'contract'.
- Support a state wide staffing system as per the SPC Position Paper, with expanded suite of options including direct selection of temporary staff; every second position in a school being determined by the school and removing resumption of duty as a priority transfer.
- The NSWSPC strongly supports the initiative and incentives for "hard to staff" and remote schools. The initiative should not only continue to be a priority but be strengthened and guaranteed. Continuing consideration needs to be given to strategies not only to attract, but retain quality staff as per the recommendation of 2008 Incentives Working Party and of research into effective incentives for executives in rural and remote schools (Halsey, 2010).
- Principals and schools being able to access local appointment procedures, if they choose, for the filling of a vacancy, where the school did not have the opportunity to select a staff member for the preceding vacancy.

- A streamlining of the current process that supports teachers experiencing difficulty with their performance, that allows a maximum of 5 weeks for the implementation of a support plan and, if this has not been successful, a maximum of 10 weeks for a formal improvement program to address identified matters of concern. The current application of this process must be reviewed to ensure the most appropriate and expeditious outcome for student learning.
- Improved system-based support being provided to Principals, including the use of DEC personnel not employed at the school, to ensure that student learning and school programs are not adversely affected by the implementation of improvement programs.
- Professional Learning (TPL) funds being allocated and administered at the school level and increased to include SAS Staff, with a balance of access to PL to meet the school's priorities and the broader professional development of the teaching and administrative staff. The continuation and refinement of the current PARS, EARS and TARS processes and the addition of a similar process for SAS Staff, with an increased emphasis on collegial support and an alignment for teaching staff with the National Standards for teaching and school leadership.
- Teaching scholarships to the best public school graduates with a bond to public education.
- Primary and secondary schools to maintain separate classifications for schools and Principals - SPC supports the continuance of 2 classifications for high schools.

Areas where NSWSPC requests more information

- What is the rationale for changing secondary and central school principal classification?
- Will principals of SSPs with secondary enrolments be allowed to operate under secondary classifications?
- How will changing classifications improve student outcomes and guarantee the stability of leadership in secondary settings?
- Different schools have different complexities. If principal classification is to be undertaken what factors/components/criteria will be taken into account when classifying principal positions?
- How will the components/criteria of complexity be ranked?
- There is limited support for the regional structure in most regions. The NSWSPC would like to ask if the region and/or regional director will influence the allocation of global funds to schools in a future model. Who will determine the complexity of schools and their funding? Will this function remain a centralised one? Is there a model proposed where secondary schools work locally and centrally without reference to regions?
- Is there any proposal for performance pay for teachers in NSW to be based on external student learning outcomes? Is there any move in NSW towards one-off 'performance' pay for teachers (SPC performance pay position paper)? Will NSW use a standards based approach to teacher recognition and remuneration? The narrow reward payment concept, while not a direct part

of LSLD, is a looming threat from the Commonwealth that will have an adverse effect on professionalism, collegial work in schools and has the potential to undermine worthwhile reforms at state level.

- Is there any plan for regions to play a managerial role in staffing allocations. A school's need for specialist staff such as STLA, ESL, Reading Recovery and Numeracy should be centrally registered, based on data provided annually by the school. This data should generate appropriate state wide staffing funds that will then be applied locally (at school level) under the authority and accountability of the Principal.
- Is there to be a devolution of decision making to the Regional level? In the majority of instances decision-making should be at a school level.

NSWSPC Recommendations

Staffing of schools

- Increased authority of the Principal to determine the right mix of staff skills and abilities to meet the school's priorities.
- Measures to create greater authority for principals and schools in the allocation of the executive mix of secondary campuses than is allowed under the current staffing agreement.
- Appointment by school based (local) selection of a Business Manager to all secondary schools and/or (in the case of small schools) a community of schools.

Staffing operation

- Continuation of the state wide staffing operation
- As staff are entitled to transfer principals should NOT be required to CONSULT WITH SEDs OVER service or nominated transfers
- Increasing the current suite of 5 options with the addition of an option which allows the school principal to seek permanency for long term temporary staff when this meets the school's needs
- For a transition period priority transfers will be matched to vacancies on no more than three (3) subject codes including extension courses such as mathematics and English.
- Continuation of incentive transfers.
- Resumption from leave should not be considered a priority transfer. That teachers resuming duty after extended leave be processed using the service transfer procedures or encouraged to apply for advertised positions. In the current agreement applicants for service transfer can be invited to interview for positions; the same procedures should be applied to resumption from leave,
- In cases where nominated transfers are necessary, transfers be appointed to the nearest suitable vacancy
- Every second teacher vacancy in each school will be filled by local selection procedures to ensure fairness and equity for all schools. (NSW SPC Staffing Position Paper).

- Introduction of 0.4 concessional allowances for Head Teachers in acknowledgement of the increasing complexities of Head Teacher roles.
- All secondary Deputy Principals be non-teaching positions OR that the school's concessional allowances be increased for each DP to 1.0
- The following formula for allocation of DPs in secondary schools be applied so:
 - Schools with 600 students are allocated 2 DPs;
 - Schools with 1000 students are allocated 3 DPs;
 - Schools with 1500 students are allocated 4 DPs; and
 - Central Schools, with an enrolment of 150 or more secondary students or equivalent (the conversion factor is one primary student is equivalent to 0.583 secondary student)
- Review of staffing codes to better meet the needs of schools in specialized settings.
- Continued use and development of staffing codes to meet emerging needs, including special interests and skills, for recruitment and for defining specific qualifications for vacant teacher and executive positions.
- The following formula should be extended to all high schools
 - classes from Years 7-10 are generally based on the need not to exceed 30
 - The General Scale entitlement for Years 11 and 12 should be extended to Years 10-12 to enable high schools to better meet the needs of students in the now compulsory senior years. However, the NSWSPC is not seeking a reduction in class size in Year 10 but seeking the option for schools to use the resource to reduce class sizes, create transition programs, offer additional electives and create pathways solutions for students.
- Data is published and an extensive analysis is conducted, on an annual basis, of the number of applicants for all secondary executive positions in rural/remote areas.

Incentives

- Proactive support for hard to staff schools e.g. free child care, incentives to stay, 4 to 5 years in the one school to earn 6 months sabbatical
- Where appropriate the DEC implement procedures and incentives that ensure all schools in rural areas have high quality staff in executive positions.

Recruitment

- Recognition of the need to address the employment of graduate teachers as a special category of teachers who may not have all the codes required
- Continuation and expansion of the Teacher Training Scholarship Program
- DEC implements procedures, and provide resources, that ensure we attract, and retain, the highest quality teachers and educational leaders in all schools and in particular rural/remote schools
- DEC develops, in partnership with rural universities, a model to effectively prepare teachers and leaders for placement in rural schools, and conducts an advertising campaign to advocate the professional and personal advantages of a teaching career in rural schools.

- Final year teaching students must undertake at least one school practicum in a public school

Three year staffing operation

- A three year staffing cycle for secondary settings
- Increase temporary employment in schools with capacity to allocate up to 10% of staff in city schools and 15% of staff in rural schools and school with rapidly declining enrolments (to cope with rural fluctuations). This would result in the elimination or significant reduction in priority (nominated) transfers
- That any school whose enrolment has declined by 15 students or more for three consecutive years be given the option to appoint temporary teachers to any vacancy until there has been two years of growth in total enrolment

Merit Selection

- Local school-based selection of executive staff should be maintained.
- There should be no SED representative on each executive panel with the exception of Principal panels. (SPC staffing position paper).

Performance

- PARS, EARS and TARS are part of the PROFESSIONAL Learning program and should be extended to include SASS. The professional assessment of teachers, executive staff and principals should be aligned with the national standards for teaching and school leadership.

Standards

- Standards based pay will be directly related to teacher accreditation at each of the levels under the National Teaching Standards and will be supported by a rigorous and consistent quality assessment process.
- Introduction of a promotional career path as a classroom teacher based on the career stages outlined in the National Teaching Standards – Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Leadership

Working Locally

The NSW SPC recognises the value and imperative of greater and authentic Principal authority at the local level, including local decisions about school resourcing, school(s) and community partnership(s), appointment of a business manager, increased local responsibilities and accountabilities and facilitation of local solutions to enhance teaching and learning. “Local” means a school or community of schools as referenced in the SPC/PPA Position Paper on Community of Schools.

Areas of Support in NSWSPC Position papers and policy

- Schools should have greater authority and flexibility to access local trades, products, services, maintenance and purchasing to ensure that choice, diversity and flexibility are available for timely solutions. Principals should be given greater authority to employ local tradespersons, with support provided by State Office in a number of areas (e.g. pro-formas for risk assessment, trade qualifications, working with children checks, business bona-fides; Workplace Health & Safety requirements.)
- Access to central procurement (e.g. T4L, DER etc.) and central contract negotiation needs to be available. Principals need to be given the choice of local management with appropriate support, or management by Regional/Local/Central Asset Management Units.
- Local communities of schools should be organised locally to meet their needs by working together including building social cohesion through a focus on agreed sets of shared social values (Preferred Future 3.7, 2005).
- Local Public Schools should be working together and the concept of “community of schools” should be continued when they are locally managed, not imposed, and maximise the effectiveness of each school and the NSW Public Education system.
- A school-community advisory “role”: The school community should act in an advisory role, not a decision making role.
- A balanced approach to purchasing resources, maintenance and cleaning of school sites should take into account both centralised procurement savings and appropriate use of local suppliers.

Areas where NSWSPC requests more information

- Will there be greater transparency on procurement negotiations?
- What will happen where there is conflict between Principal and local community?
- Will there be transparent consultation processes for changes in those areas that remain a state responsibility (e.g. cleaning.) with clear communication channels,

transparency of issues and explanation during the consultation phase of the fiscal imperatives?

- Will there be ongoing review and monitoring of the effectiveness of state-wide whole-of-government contracts for School Maintenance, Utilities and School Cleaning that were previously negotiated without input from schools and Principals? (During the recent re-negotiation of these contracts, Principals were assured the new contracts would lead to improved maintenance and cleaning, but this has not been the case in many instances.)
- Will there be a budgetary commitment to meet required facilities standards for secondary education by the State Government to continue to fund ongoing maintenance and capital works programs, particularly with the increased 'asset-footprint' created by the Commonwealth BER works in Primary Schools.

NSWSPC Recommendations

- The central procurement process will be reviewed to ensure a better balance between savings achieved for large high-cost items through State contracts and the ability of local Principals to ensure the greatest efficiency and build goodwill by using local suppliers.
- Schools and Principals, working with the DEC and the NSWSPC, will have a major input into any future negotiations for state-wide school maintenance, cleaning and other contracts.
- The State Government and DEC State Office provide increased funds to meet the maintenance and capital works needs of their Secondary Public Schools. There is a need to "remove the middle man" – who is often seen as receiving up to 20% in contract fees for no gain to the school.
- NSWSPC wants Principals to have the option of selecting local contractors for local maintenance repairs and the option to manage local projects. The school should choose whether to use the "central price" or the local contractor.
- Savings from central contracts and procurement should come back to schools.
- There should be direct and authentic SPC consultation with regard to the consultant/project management fees and rates for mandatory purchases/contracts to be 'paid' for procurement, EUR and minor capital projects.
- Flexibility to allow locally organised communities of schools to share resources as determined locally. Capacity for communities of schools to employ local contractors (who are approved by State to work in the individual schools).
- State determined facility guidelines and state checks of qualifications should be maintained. The State should maintain a register of approved contractors similar to the registers of approval for teaching staff.
- Principal seen as, and supported by DEC as, community leader locally (Role of Principal Authority etc. pp9-10).

- Regional and SEG structures should be replaced with district groups of schools with up to 30 schools.
- Appropriate levels of administrative staff in schools (Additional Business Manager and non-teaching Deputy Principal) without other loss of executive or SASS staffing.
- Appointment of a Business Manager to all large secondary schools and smaller communities of schools without loss of SASS staffing.
- Remove/diminish regions to fund central/local management.
- All planning should be based on a three year cycle with State/regional plans being released by the start of Term 3.

Reducing Red Tape

The NSW SPC advocates for a sustained focus on teaching and learning by the Principals as an educational leader. This requires the streamlining of current processes, co-ordination and refinement of reporting requirements, improved state to school communication and improved procedures to harvest data.

LMBR

The failure of DEC to deliver data, support and high quality technology and management systems to secondary schools must be a priority for structural and systems reform immediately.

Areas of Support in NSWSPC Position Papers and policy

- The NSWSPC supports a three year planning cycle – school plans, staffing, budgeting. Greater flexibility in the application of school funding.
- Greater flexibility in school funding allocations consistent with a centralised audit and funding formula based on enrolments and equity principles.
- Schools setting their priority areas, generally on a three-year School Planning cycle, with the Principal having the authority to direct funds to these priorities.
- The streamlining and simplification of school funding allocations and accountability requirements through a centrally managed audit process.
- There should be a single detailed school audit in preference to multiple individual audits.
- The increased capture and application of accessible information by State Office, utilising technology, reducing the need for schools to duplicate data collection.
- A review of the Annual School Report (ASR) and its relevance, given the advent of the burgeoning 'My School' website. Schools still see relevance in reporting achievements and successes to their local community, but much of the information in the current ASR is a repetition of the data on 'My School'.
- NSWSPC supports the rationalisation of tied funds and reporting to avoid separate reports often on small amounts of money.
- NSWSPC recommends a simple budget with a minimum of one line and maximum of 5 lines, including federal recurrent funding.
- Devolution of decision making to secondary schools not region.
- Harvesting of data electronically to avoid duplication of work for schools so principals are not required to enter the same information in multiple systems.
- NSWSPC recommends a direct line management relationship between consultants in the field and their related state office directorate. Regions currently create an unnecessary additional level of bureaucracy.

Areas where NSWSPC requests more information

- Is the Annual School Report redundant where there is the 'My School' website, school newsletters and website.
- Will the State and Commonwealth Governments to agree on a unified funding and accountability model. Such a model would reduce the current cumbersome and in many cases, overlapping and duplicated accountability paperwork.
- Will the DG disclose details about the current structure at state office to enable the public education community to understand possible areas for further reduction of red tape to financial savings?
- Will there be ongoing interrogation of the impact of any devolved decision making on Principal workload matched with identifying and providing the level of resourcing required to support that level of decision making?
- Will there be a systematic review of the current processes that operate in all programs, ICE, Elaps, Access Requests...in order to make Dec systems and procedures more user friendly rather than policy/directorate friendly?
- Will the Minister reject the need to channel capital works through public works and minimise the use of inefficient and inequitable state contracts?
- Will the DG prevent the ongoing "trivialising of local management" and the devolution of local management decisions over which principals have little control (eg management of cleaners without decision or capacity around cleaning, the contract and expectations)?
- Can NSWSPC members and their schools expect an ongoing commitment to technology infrastructure for all secondary schools and students?

SPC Recommendations

- Local means schools – remove/diminish regions. "Local" means a school or community of schools as defined in the SPC/PPA Position Paper on Community of Schools.
- All planning should based on a three year cycle and should be simple, aligned and effective in improving teaching & learning.
- Appointment of a Business Manger to all schools and/or community of schools.
- We recommend the abandonment of the ASR given that the information is redundant and already captured in a variety of forms – My School Website and school websites.
- There should be a reduction in reporting requirements to reduce administrative tasks and red tape by reporting against school plans instead of pre-determined and expansive range of separate requirements.
- A significant diminishment in the role of regions and the abandonment of regional bureaucratic structures.
- A direct relationship between the State Plan and the school plan.
- Investigation of the impact of any devolved decision making on Principals and research into the impact of SBM on student learning, achievement and broader school outcomes over the next 5 – 8 years.

- Review all the current processes that operate in all programs, ICE, ELAPs, Access Requests, in order to make them more user friendly, efficient and effective.