

NSW Secondary Principals' Council



School Planning and Evaluation Position Paper Ratified: 2024

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Rationale

The purpose of this Position Paper is to present an agreed NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC) statement of position, principles and recommendations about school planning and evaluation.

The Position Paper has also been written to support principals in their leadership of school planning and evaluation by identifying areas requiring action by the NSW Department of Education (The Department).

Definition:

School planning and evaluation is essential to identify the needs of the school community to progress contemporary education. This includes evidence-informed evaluative practices leading to self-assessment to identify school planning needs.

In the NSW Department of Education, school planning and evaluation encompasses the following areas.

- School Excellence Procedures
- External Validation
- School Excellence in Action
- Strategic Improvement Plan
- Annual School Report
- Principal, School Leadership
- School Excellence Framework

Principles

The NSWSPC recommends:

School Excellence Procedures- Support for principals

- There is an ongoing commitment to a strong Principal, School Leadership (PSL) team that services a reasonable number of schools (2023 levels - 44) and commensurate with needs of school leader capacity and experience.
- This role continues to include support for Annual Report, Strategic Improvement Plan development, External Validation and principal coach mentoring and provides the maximum amount of shoulder-to-shoulder support possible.



- NSWSPC recognises the high value of the PSL role and the expertise and leadership capacity of the PSL in their role in supporting school leaders.
- NSWSPC recognises the importance of the PSL role as developing leadership in individual PSLs (Principal School Leadership).

The School Excellence Framework

- NSWSPC strongly supports this framework as a clear statement of the domains, elements, and themes of school excellence. We recognise it as a holistic document that allows accurate but contextual assessment of school practice, providing authentic pathways to improvement.

School planning platforms

- Processes for self-assessment must be intuitive and interactive to enable collaboration across the school. The Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) should be a one-page per Strategic Direction document. Any SPaRO (School Planning and Reporting Online) enhancements should be focussed on making the platform user friendly and driven by the needs of the user.
- NSWSPC as the experts in school leadership, need representation on all planning committees.
- The design of the new School Dashboard considers possible psycho-social impacts on principals and is transparent in its content across both corporate and school roles.

External Validation (EV)

- The external validation (EV) panel continues to comprise of a peer principal and lead panellist of a PSL, and all PSLs participate in the panel processes every year. Under no circumstances that EV be used as a ranking or that SEF (School Excellence Framework) validations should be published.
- NSWSPC supports the current simple EV panel report with next steps and future directions.
- EV is a validation of a self-assessment and should never be used to judge schools and result in support.

Self-Assessment & Annual Report

- NSWSPC supports DoE (Department of Education) policy that the Annual Report retains optional elements at the discretion of the principal.
- Self-assessment should include workforce considerations and identify improvement needs.

Professional Learning

- That the NSWSPC supports professional learning to support principals in the areas of school planning and evaluation.



Recommendations

The NSWSPC recommends that the Department:

- Recommends that the Department of Education forms a School Excellence in Action stakeholders committee that includes representatives from SPC, PPA (Primary Principals Association), SEPLA and Teachers Federation that forecasts future work and authentically consults in all areas of school planning and evaluation, to support schools to deliver school excellence through continuous improvement. NSWSPC must have representation on all committees/ teams that are considering changes in this space
- The PSL numbers be reinstated at 2023 level of 44
- No-one on an EV panel is above the level of principal, to ensure that the panel can validate the schools on balance judgement.
- Systems for reporting are automated/ pre-populated where possible to reduce administrative burden on school leaders.
- The Department offers high quality professional learning around school planning and evaluation at point of need and in a cyclical nature, delivered through a variety of accessible formats.
- Additional Strategic School Support (SSS) is negotiated with the principal, never imposed, and the EV and SEF-SASS cycle are never used to trigger support.

NSWSPC Position:

- The NSWSPC is committed to participating in meaningful consultation with the Department and other organisations to achieve these recommendations and thereby build school planning and evaluation capacity in NSW secondary schools.





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