LITERACY AND NUMERACY STRATEGY PHASE 2

Achieving Excellence and Equity in Literacy and Numeracy

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government

Education and Training

Contents

Secretary's Foreword

I am very pleased to provide you with the *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Phase 2: Achieving Excellence and Equity in Literacy and Numeracy*.

Throughout the past 12 months, I've had the opportunity to visit many primary and secondary schools and see the evidence-based work underway to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for your students.

This is such critical work.

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy is intended to support the work already underway in your schools. It is a framework to bring together existing and new resources to support your work in achieving excellence and equity in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all our students. I have been greatly heartened by the enthusiasm and good feedback on these resources.

When I introduced *Version 1* of the Strategy in June last year, I committed to maintain a sense of urgency in supporting this important work, and that the Strategy would be developed and implemented with you—our school leaders. Through this process, you've provided feedback about the resources and professional learning released to date, and on those that you still need. In response, *Phase 2* provides information about what is under development to help you improve literacy and numeracy in both primary and secondary schools, and to engage parents and carers as partners in learning. Thanks to significant investment in literacy and numeracy in the 2018–19 Budget, there are new resources and professional learning that will be available from June 2018.

The Strategy initially focused on improving primary literacy. Primary schools have incorporated literacy improvement goals in school planning and all government primary schools have established Literacy Leaders, who have received professional learning and development to support their leadership role in lifting whole-school teaching and learning outcomes. This includes the popular Literacy Leader workshops, which brought together Literacy Leaders in each area to collaborate on identifying and resolving problems of practice in their own school, and the Literacy Data, Assessment and Practice online course delivered by the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership.

Teachers of all children and young people, from birth through to secondary school, now have access to new, detailed, evidence-based teaching tools and resources, including the online *Literacy Teaching Toolkit for Birth–Level 6*, the *High Impact Teaching Strategies* and the *Practice Principles for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*.

More targeted support is being provided to leaders and teachers in selected schools based on the new Differentiated School Performance Method, so that all students are supported to achieve their potential.

While the initial focus of the Strategy has been on primary schools, every teacher and leader in secondary schools and specialist schools plays a critical role in ensuring that every student finishes school with the literacy and numeracy outcomes they need to thrive in the world of their future. Recognising this, over time the Strategy will provide literacy and numeracy teaching resources from birth through to secondary school, and professional learning for teachers from all schools. You will also have access to case studies of best practice in using whole-school approaches to lifting literacy and numeracy for secondary students whose literacy and numeracy are well above or below the expected level.

In this way, the Strategy complements other significant education reforms, including those in the early years. *The Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan: Ready for Kinder, Ready for School, Ready for Life* was released in 2017 to ensure that every Victorian child receives a high quality early childhood education experience that will set the course for successful lifelong learning. Included in this is Australian first 'school readiness funding' which will direct more resources to all services with a funded kindergarten program on the basis of need. This will drive the outcomes we are seeking in the Strategy by enabling kindergartens to invest in evidence-informed supports such as early literacy programs, speech therapists or language experts to work directly with children and build the skills of teachers and educators.

Thank you again for your leadership and enthusiasm in helping to implement the Strategy so far. Throughout this document, you'll find examples of the incredible work that schools are doing to support their students' learning across our system. These are only a small selection and there are many more examples we could share. I invite you to participate in the ongoing development and implementation of this Strategy: share this document with your leadership and teaching teams, share your stories of great practice within and across schools, and reflect on which of the new resources you could use in your improvement journey.

Gill Callister

Secretary

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Introduction

Literacy and numeracy are foundational skills for lifelong learning. They underpin the acquisition of more complex skills, particularly critical and creative thinking. The skills that our children and young people will require to be flourishing lifelong participants in education, employment and the community are changing. Today's students need a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy to be innovative, adaptable and responsive, and to develop the knowledge and skills the future will require of them.

There is robust evidence that the benefits of literacy and numeracy stretch well beyond schooling. Literacy and numeracy proficiency supports student engagement and achievement, completion of Year 12 and tertiary and further education, and employment and higher income—all of which are associated with better health and less involvement with the justice system. Students who have developed strong literacy, numeracy and critical and creative thinking skills are well-placed to succeed in all areas of the curriculum, and will have the capabilities to flourish in the careers of the future.

The Strategy is Victoria's plan to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, by prioritising literacy and numeracy across all schools and throughout the Department, and by providing the resources and support that will help teachers to make a difference at the student's desk.

The Strategy has been designed based on the local and international evidence of what works to lift educational outcomes, adapted with the guidance of the people who best understand the Victorian school context.

Literacy is students' ability to interpret and create texts with appropriateness, accuracy, confidence, fluency and efficacy for learning in and out of school, and for participating in the workplace and community. Texts include media texts, everyday texts and workplace texts from increasingly complex and unfamiliar settings, ranging from the everyday language of personal experience to more abstract, specialised and technical language, including the language of schooling and academic study. Students learn to adapt language to meet the demands of more general or more specialised purposes, audiences and contexts. They learn about the different ways in which knowledge and opinion are represented and developed in texts, and about how more or less abstraction and complexity can be shown through language and through multimodal representations. This means that print and digital contexts are included, and that listening, viewing, reading, speaking, writing and creating are all developed systematically and concurrently (VCAA, 2017).

Numeracy is the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need in order to use mathematics in a wide range of situations. It involves recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully. Number, measurement and geometry, statistics and probability are common aspects of most people's mathematical experience in everyday personal, study and work situations. Equally important are the essential roles that algebra, functions and relations, logic, mathematical structure and working mathematically play in people's understanding of the natural and human worlds, and the interaction between them. Students are exposed to increasingly sophisticated and refined mathematical understanding, fluency, reasoning, modelling and problem solving. These capabilities enable students to respond to familiar and unfamiliar situations by employing mathematics to make informed decisions and solve problems efficiently. There is now also good evidence that other areas of development—such as resilience and perseverance—support achievement in numeracy as well (VCAA, 2017).

In this way, the Strategy builds on the work we're all doing to embed the Education State reforms. The Strategy sits within the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO), Victoria's model for school improvement. The FISO Improvement Model, Improvement Cycle and Improvement Measures were introduced to provide a common language across our system to facilitate collaboration and the adoption of evidence-based strategies to lift student achievement across the State.

Version 1 of the Strategy was released in June 2017. Based on your feedback, *Phase 2* of the Strategy is deepening the supports for teachers and school leaders, and extending the benefits of the Strategy to include families.

Figure 1: FISO Improvement Model and Improvement Cycle

How the Strategy will lift student literacy and numeracy

The Strategy works through existing improvement structures in the school and system. It is based on the idea that while it is the **work that teachers do with their students** that is so important for improving every student's literacy and numeracy, we all have different roles and responsibilities at each level of the education system. We all **share responsibility** for making this aspiration a reality: students, parents and carers, teachers, school leaders, regional and central office leaders. It requires a shared focus that aligns each layer of the system—central office leaders working with regional staff, who are working with school leaders, who are supporting teachers in their daily practice and engaging parents and carers as partners in their child's learning.

For this reason, the Strategy is based on the following principles:

- teachers, middle leaders (including Literacy and Numeracy Leaders and Learning Specialists) and school leaders, and regional staff have access to practical, evidence-based tools and resources to support them in their work. These resources, such as the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit,* the *Mathematics Teaching Toolkit* and the *High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS)*, are detailed but not prescriptive

- teachers, middle leaders (including Literacy and Numeracy Leaders and Learning Specialists) and school leaders, and regional staff have access to professional learning in literacy and numeracy teaching, such as Literacy and Numeracy Leader workshops and other Bastow professional learning

- collaboration within and across schools, areas and regions supports excellence in teaching and learning. This includes collaboration across school Professional Learning Communities, Communities of Practice, and through Literacy and Numeracy Leader workshops, and principal forums

- use of a range of data and evidence, such as the Panorama reports, to provide insights into what is working, and matching additional regional support to where it is needed.
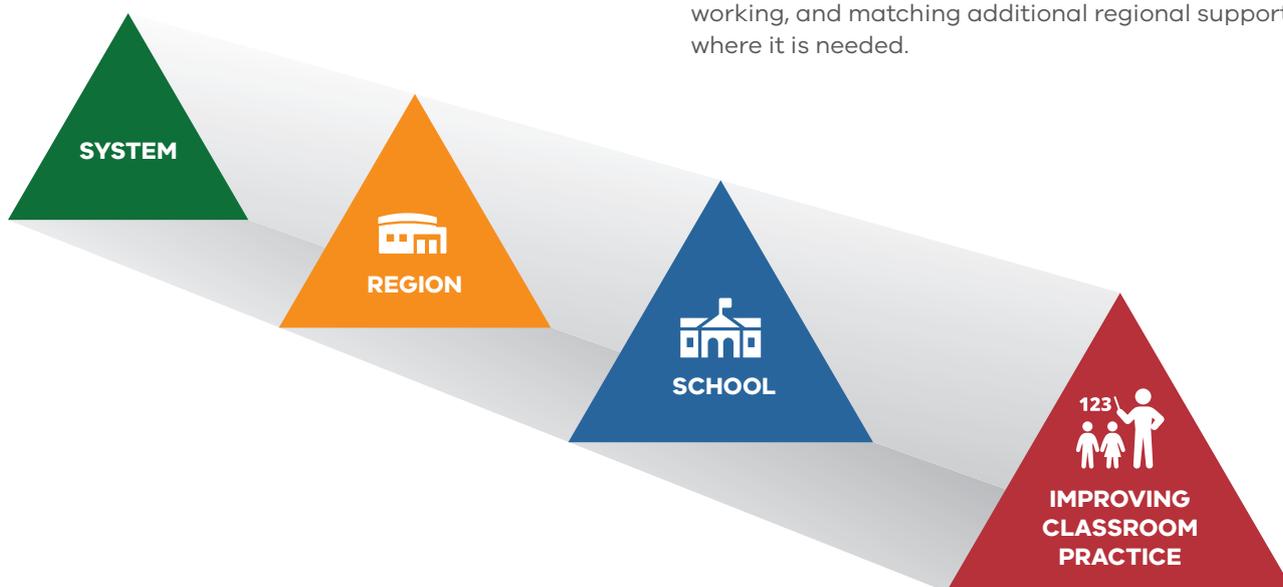
Figure 2: Shared responsibility for improving student outcomes

The Strategy ensures that teachers have access to support that will help them meet the learning needs of their students and to continuously improve their professional practice in the classroom. It is making available new, detailed, evidence-based teaching tools and resources for teachers of all children and young people from birth through secondary school. Building on this strong universal base, more intensive support is being provided to teachers in selected schools based on circumstances and needs.

Our shared focus is on supporting teachers in their daily practice to lift literacy and numeracy achievement for all children and young people in Victoria so that every student can expect:

- that they will receive the teaching they need to achieve success in literacy and numeracy—regardless of their background or prior achievement

- to be engaged in their learning, including working with their teachers to set their own immediate and longer term literacy and numeracy goals, and have their voice heard in designing their own learning.

Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Implementation Highlights

During 2018, teachers have been increasingly engaging with our literacy and numeracy resources, including accessing the **Literacy and Numeracy Portals**, *Literacy Teaching Toolkit*, and articles in *School Update* and *In Our Classrooms*

13430
Literacy Portal visits in January, February and March

6991
Numeracy Portal visits in January, February and March

10020
Literacy Teaching Toolkit homepage visits in March

4152
views of Teacher Tip articles on *In Our Classrooms* in March and April

2925
views of Professional Practice Notes 5, 6 and 7 on *School Update* in March and April

A sample of **160** schools were surveyed and

77% reported using the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit* in Term 1 2018

92% reported using *HITS* in Term 1 2018

93% of Literacy Leaders said that the resources being provided through the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy were of high quality

All primary schools and specialist schools adopted a literacy Key Improvement Strategy as part of their 2018 Annual Implementation Plan

1175 OUT OF **1178** primary schools participated in a Literacy Leader Induction workshop or equivalent in 2017 and 2018, with a total of **2203 participants**. **93%** of participants agreed the workshops were relevant to their work

Literacy Leaders are working in **every** primary school and specialist school to drive the improvement of instructional practice

Two Bastow Literacy Masterclasses were delivered via webinar in March and April 2018

638 live concurrent links from unique sites

1720 recorded module views in March and April

Bastow Literacy Data, Assessment and Practice Program is fully subscribed for 2018 with **420 registrations** and a growing waiting list

25 Teaching Partners are working across **50 schools** each year for **four years**. Partnerships build teacher capacity to improve student literacy through the implementation of best practice

Key Actions

Leading the implementation of these actions in your school will enable you to make best use of the current and forthcoming tools and professional learning, and result in improved student literacy and numeracy outcomes. These actions have been designed to:

- build excellence in classroom practice in literacy and numeracy

- differentiate teaching to meet students' different learning needs

- build instructional leadership in literacy and numeracy

- empower students in their learning

- embed a whole-school focus on literacy and numeracy

- engage parents and carers as partners in literacy and numeracy learning.

The Strategy builds on the work we're all doing to embed the Education State reforms, including: the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) Improvement Model, Improvement Cycle and Improvement Measures; the Learning Places regional model; Professional Learning Communities; principal forums, networks and Communities of Practice; better data for schools; the Victorian Curriculum; equity funding; and the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017.

Phase 2 of the Strategy strengthens, deepens and makes more use of the improvements in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment already occurring in classrooms, schools and across networks.

Embed the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes Essential Elements

Principals and the School Improvement Team should embed the FISO Essential Elements for School Improvement.

The Essential Elements form the foundation upon which improvement in literacy and numeracy is built.

The School Improvement Team:

- evaluates their school's performance, including in literacy and numeracy, through assessment and evidence of students' learning

- identifies where their school sits on the FISO Continua of Practice by using available evidence and data

- identifies the next steps their school needs to take on its literacy and numeracy improvement journey using the FISO Improvement Cycle. For example:

  » focusing on instructional leadership

  » building the capacity of the school and its community to collectively achieve teaching and learning excellence

- engages intensively with the Continua relevant to the school's particular area of focus for each year, to track status and progress and avoid a decline in performance.

FISO Essential Elements for School Improvement
1   Documented curriculum plan, assessment and shared pedagogical approaches.
2   School-based professional learning program developed and implemented that supports the school's identified improvement strategies.
3   School Improvement Team formed to develop, oversee and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Annual Implementation Plan.
4   Student voice, leadership and agency in own learning activated so that students have positive school experiences and act as partners in school improvement.
5   Whole-school approach to health, wellbeing, inclusion and engagement.
6   Moderation of common student assessment tasks.
7   Data collection, analysis and evaluation of student learning growth over time.
8   Explicit use of evidence-based school improvement strategies and teacher professional practice activities.

Identify Literacy and Numeracy Leaders

School leaders should assign one or more staff with specific responsibility for the leadership of literacy and/or numeracy whole-school approaches. Literacy and Numeracy Leaders will form part of the School Improvement Team.

As part of the school's middle leadership, Literacy and Numeracy Leaders form an important part of the state-wide effort to lift literacy and numeracy outcomes. Literacy and Numeracy Leaders will be key members of the School Improvement Team with responsibility for:

- leading whole-school approaches to the use of cycles of inquiry to reflect upon and understand effective pedagogical practices that lead to improved student outcomes

- taking an instructional leadership role based on deep content knowledge about the curriculum, formative, summative and diagnostic assessment, assessment moderation, and pedagogy of literacy and numeracy

- acting as a conduit between central office and schools on available literacy and numeracy programs, resources and tools such as the Professional Practice Notes and the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit*, and professional learning

- actively enhancing their knowledge and expertise through attendance of targeted literacy and numeracy professional learning opportunities when available.

Primary schools	Secondary schools	Specialist schools
- **In 2017**, primary school principals assigned one or more staff with specific responsibility for leadership of literacy whole-school approaches. Literacy Leaders participated in the Bastow Literacy Leader Induction workshops and continue to build their literacy leadership capability through participation in the Leading Literacy for Networks program. - **By the end of 2018**, all primary school principals should identify one or more staff with specific responsibility for leadership of numeracy whole-school approaches for the 2019 school year.	- **By the end of 2018**, all secondary school principals should assign one or more staff with specific responsibility for leadership of literacy whole-school approaches, and one or more staff with specific responsibility for leadership of numeracy whole-school approaches for the 2019 school year.	- **In 2017**, specialist school principals assigned one or more staff with specific responsibility for leadership of literacy whole-school approaches. Literacy Leaders participated in the Bastow Literacy Leader Induction workshops and continue to build their literacy leadership capability through participation in the Leading Literacy for Networks program. - **By the end of 2018**, all specialist school principals should identify one or more staff with specific responsibility for leadership of numeracy whole-school approaches for the 2019 school year.

Annual planning

As part of the annual planning cycle, all school leaders and School Improvement Teams (including Literacy and Numeracy Leaders and Learning Specialists) should:

Primary schools	Secondary schools	Specialist schools
analyse data and draw on evidence of best practice to identify literacy and numeracy priorities	analyse data and draw on evidence of best practice to identify literacy and numeracy priorities	analyse data and draw on evidence of best practice to identify literacy and numeracy priorities
make a considered judgement on whether to refine their literacy Key Improvement Strategy or move to a numeracy Key Improvement Strategy, taking into consideration whether student outcome data demonstrates sustained growth and embedded improvements	are encouraged to select a literacy and/or numeracy Key Improvement Strategy if appropriate	make a considered judgement on whether to refine their literacy Key Improvement Strategy or move to a numeracy Key Improvement Strategy, taking into consideration whether student outcome data demonstrates sustained growth and embedded improvements
establish a targeted and explicit improvement agenda aligned with the use of Department professional learning, guides and advice to deliver high quality teaching and learning—taking into consideration the Bastow Professional Learning Program.	establish a targeted and explicit improvement agenda aligned with the use of Department professional learning, guides and advice to deliver high quality teaching and learning—taking into consideration the Bastow Professional Learning Program.	establish a targeted and explicit improvement agenda aligned with the use of Department professional learning, guides and advice to deliver high quality teaching and learning—taking into consideration the Bastow Professional Learning Program.

Communities of Practice

School leaders drive system improvement through their collaborative work in Communities of Practice, including having a focus on literacy and numeracy achievement. The Communities of Practice approach means that principals work together to:

- engage in joint activities and share best practice approaches to improving student learning outcomes

- deepen their collective understanding of how to achieve school-wide improvement, and the supporting evidence base for improvement strategies

- analyse and trial the adoption of different FISO initiatives and monitor their impact on lifting student learning outcomes

- collectively improve data literacy and analytical skills

- focus on improving student outcomes through mutual discussion and accountability

- build capability through professional evidence-based conversation: share, adapt, apply and monitor professional practice and analyse school performance data

- seek evidence, analyse data and measure impact of strategies in the pursuit of shared goals and improved performance.

Professional Learning Communities

Teachers work in professional learning teams to:

- reflect on and evaluate their current practice to identify both strengths and areas for improvement, share their strengths with their teams, and collaboratively design opportunities for improvement

- jointly create a unit of work to develop deep learning experiences, common assessment tasks, and a consistent approach to moderating student work

- establish peer observation and feedback arrangements

- gather evidence from several classrooms, including through moderated assessment, peer observation and feedback, about how a particular literacy or numeracy skill is currently taught

- design a common teaching approach comprising both current strategies that are working and new strategies drawn from best practice research

- monitor student progress

- understand, adopt and trial new strategies and resources, including literacy and numeracy resources, *HITS*, the *Pedagogical Model,* the *Practice Principles for Excellence in Teaching and Learning*, and *Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership (draft for consultation)*

- collectively improve data literacy and assessment skills.

The rate of student learning increases when teachers in collaborative teams support one another to develop their skills in specific teaching strategies. Students learn even faster when highly skilled teachers—such as the Literacy Leader, Numeracy Leader or Learning Specialist—lead collaborative teams focused on understanding what is working and why.

The four professional practice days may create opportunities for individual teachers to focus, reflect on and improve their individual practice and have the opportunity to engage in purposeful collaboration, including peer observation and feedback, so as to impact student learning.

Engage parents and carers

School leaders and teachers should:

- encourage and support parents and carers to engage with their children's literacy and numeracy—including reading and counting at home in the early years, and sending the message that, with persistence, their child can achieve in literacy and numeracy

- build relationships with families that encourage positive dialogue and establish a sense of partnership around the learner

- build partnerships with Koorie and culturally and linguistically diverse families, and explore opportunities for formalised school/community partnerships.

Support from regional teams

Schools will continue to be supported by regional teams, depending on their needs. Selected primary schools will continue to have access to a range of more intensive support and engagement from Senior Education Improvement Leaders (SEILs), and in some cases, Education Improvement Leaders (EILs), Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Regional Managers, Leadership Partners, Teaching Partners and Executive Principals.

SEILs and EILs continuously build on their knowledge of what it takes to lift performance, and work with all schools under their remit to:

- understand their literacy and numeracy performance

- consistently embed literacy and numeracy goal-setting and improvement into discussions with school leadership

- reflect on, monitor and evaluate their improvement

- provide opportunities for schools to share and learn from each other within and beyond networks

- develop local approaches to support Koorie learners. They will do this by working in partnership with Koorie communities through Regional Partnership Forums, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc., Koorie Education Roundtables, and with support from Koorie Education Coordinators and Koorie Engagement Support Officers.

SEILs and EILs differentiate engagement with schools in a tailored way to support a trajectory of improvement, including connecting schools with different modes of support to capitalise on strengths and achieve higher levels of literacy and numeracy for all students.

Leadership Partners and Teaching Partners will work with leadership teams and classroom teachers from schools in the Transform Differentiated School Performance group to build capability to achieve the goals identified in the school Annual Improvement Plan (AIP). They will help to improve teaching practice by identifying professional need and building capability through modelling, sharing resources and learning.

Support from central office leaders

Schools will be supported by central office leaders through the development and provision of evidence-based, clearly-articulated and precise guidance for teachers. This guidance will include high impact teaching strategies, pedagogy, professional practice, how language and numbers work, how to identify what children and young people know and can do in literacy and numeracy, how to teach literacy and numeracy effectively and how to evaluate what is working.

Literacy and Numeracy Resources

Excellence in teaching and learning	
Excellence in classroom practice in literacy and numeracy	
Available now:	
Pedagogical Model	
Practice Principles for Excellence in Teaching and Learning	
High Impact Teaching Strategies	
Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Birth–Level 6	
At a Glance: Literacy and Numeracy Teaching Resources	
To be released:	
Academic vocabulary resource for secondary school teachers	Term 3, 2018
Mathematics Teaching Toolkit: Birth–Level 10	From Term 3, 2018
Koorie English online teaching resources	Term 1, 2019
Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Levels 7–10	From Term 1, 2019
Differentiating student learning needs	
Available now:	
Insight Assessment Platform	
Formative Assessment Guide	
Annotated student work samples in reading and viewing	
Literacy Data, Assessment and Practice online course	
To be released:	
Enhanced English Online Interview process and supporting resources for teachers	Term 2, 2018
Annotated student work samples in writing, speaking, listening and numeracy	From Term 2, 2018
Literacy teaching resources and guidance for teaching students with learning difficulties (including dyslexia)	From Term 3, 2018
Koorie English professional learning	Term 1, 2019
Digital Assessment Library	From Term 3, 2019
Numeracy teaching resources and guidance for teaching students with learning difficulties (including dyscalculia)	From Term 3, 2019
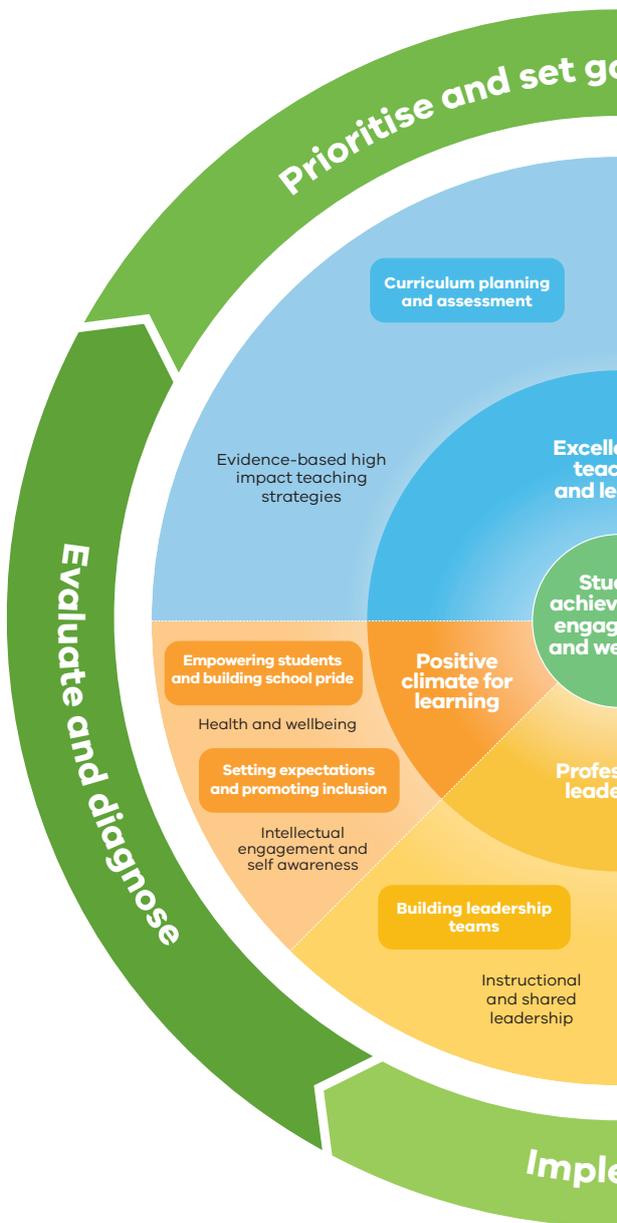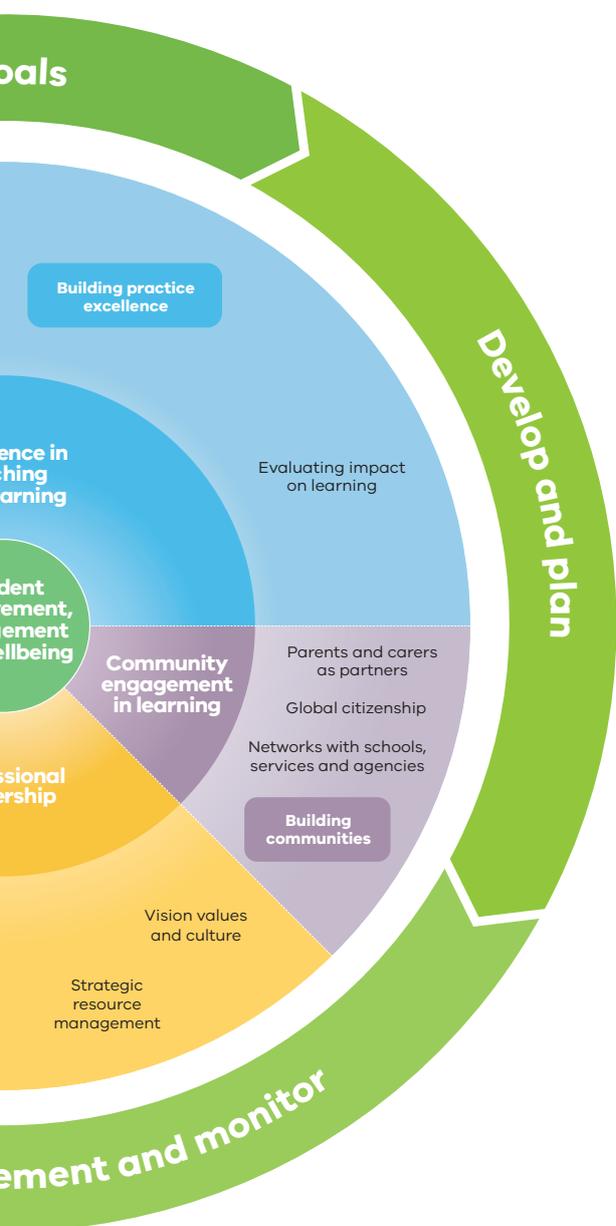
Professional leadership

Building instructional leadership in literacy and numeracy

Available now:

Workshops for primary school Literacy Leaders

To be released:

Leading Effective Professional Learning Communities: Guidance	Term 3, 2018
Bastow Leading Literacy for Networks program	From Term 3, 2018
Workshops for primary and secondary Numeracy Leaders	From Term 3, 2019
Workshops for secondary school Literacy Leaders	From Term 3, 2019

Embedding a whole-school focus on literacy and numeracy

To be released:

Catalogue of Programmatic Supports	Term 4, 2018
Guidance for secondary schools to lift literacy and numeracy outcomes	Term 3, 2019

Positive climate for learning

Empowering students in their learning

Available now:

Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership (draft for consultation)

Community engagement in learning

Engaging families as partners in literacy and numeracy

Available now:

Literacy and Numeracy Tips to Help Your Child Every Day: A guide for parents of children aged 0–12

To be released:

'Prep Bag' books and family literacy and numeracy guidance	From Term 1, 2019

Excellence in Classroom Practice in Literacy and Numeracy

Supporting excellent teacher practice is the most effective way to lift learning outcomes in school. In order to diagnose students' learning needs and improve practice, teachers need deep knowledge about the content their students are trying to learn, and about best practices. Teachers need high-quality pedagogical resources, but it can sometimes be hard for teachers to quickly and reliably find these resources. Providing practical evidence-based teaching and learning resources, developed by experts, will make it easier for both new and experienced teachers to understand how language and numbers work, to teach literacy and numeracy effectively, to stay current with best practice, and to focus on the learning needs of their students.

Resources developed for teachers to support their professional practice in literacy and numeracy during the first year of the Strategy have been well received. Ninety-three per cent of Literacy Leaders reported that the resources being provided by the Department to support schools in literacy and numeracy have been high-quality.

The *HITS,* a package of 10 universal strategies consistently found to have the greatest impact on student learning, have been popular because they are practical, effective and easy to apply immediately in the classroom.

The online *Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Birth–Level 6* provides detailed expert guidance to teachers in literacy instruction, across reading, writing, speaking and listening, with guidance to support planning and targeted teaching and learning to meet students' diverse literacy needs. Mapped to the Victorian Curriculum, the Toolkit includes a comprehensive package of videos of experts and of teachers demonstrating the techniques in practice.

> *Effective teachers… are knowledgeable about curriculum content and the strategies for teaching it… and make expert use of existing instructional materials in order to devote more time to practices that enrich and clarify the content.*
>
> James Ko, Pamela Sammons and Linda Bakkum, *Effective Teaching: A Review of Research and Evidence*, 2013

Guiding improvement in literacy instruction—the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit*:
Coolaroo South Primary School

Coolaroo South Primary School set a goal for improving growth in student reading outcomes in their School Strategic Plan. To achieve this goal, the school adopted a deliberate process to improve the teaching of reading across all classrooms. Staff collected data and observed reading instruction and discovered that guided reading looked very different in every classroom. Based on their investigation, the school decided to implement a whole-school, evidence-based reading model, with a focus on guided reading.

Coolaroo South adopted a deliberate approach to building teachers' capacity in guided reading instruction. Teachers used peer observation and worked in their professional learning teams to unpack best-practice guided reading instruction and to develop teaching and learning activities. The work at Coolaroo South has helped to inform the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit* content on guided reading. The Toolkit provides a strong rationale and theory for the use of guided reading, including its key elements, purpose, explicit teaching methods, and the role of the teacher in the process. Teachers from Coolaroo South have contributed to the templates, learning examples and videos that feature in the Toolkit.

In just two years, Coolaroo South has achieved substantial improvements in student learning growth in reading. There has also been improved growth in students' learning outcomes in both grammar and punctuation. Staff have recognised the ways in which guided reading instruction can positively impact other areas in student learning and have valued the opportunity to learn together and progress towards a common goal.

While the initial Strategy resources and support were mainly targeted at primary schools to lift their literacy performance, you have asked for resources and support for literacy at the secondary level and all levels of numeracy. You have also said that it can be difficult to find and navigate some of the online resources. In addition, you have asked for more explicit coherence between different resources being provided by central office.

For this reason, the Strategy includes new resources that are being developed to respond to this feedback.

Additionally, the newly established Teacher Reference Group is helping central office to improve the way it supports teacher professional practice, including how it provides online resources, and identifying new resources that would be helpful for teachers to improve literacy and numeracy for their students. This will help to ensure teachers have the resources they need, that can be easily accessed at any time—resulting in more time to concentrate on the critical task of teaching.

New and forthcoming resources	
Mathematics Teaching Toolkit: Birth–Level 10	The *Mathematics Teaching Toolkit: Birth–Level 10* will support excellence in the teaching and learning of mathematics by equipping teachers with high-quality and evidence-based teaching, learning and assessment tools. The Toolkit will provide practical advice and high impact teaching practices that support teachers to improve student outcomes for mathematics in varied learning environments, as well as resources for families to encourage numeracy development in the home.
Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Levels 7–10	The *Literacy Teaching Toolkit: Levels 7–10* will expand on the existing Toolkit content (Birth–Level 6), as a comprehensive online source of multimodal information with practical and evidence-based information on all aspects of literacy. The Toolkit will provide teachers with the latest research on pedagogy and literacy learning, easily-accessible and practical resources and strategies that can be translated into positive outcomes for students in reading, writing, listening and speaking.
Academic vocabulary resource for secondary school teachers	This resource will help teachers to build the academic literacy skills of secondary school students, including key vocabulary from all learning areas and capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum Levels 7–10.
Koorie English online teaching resources	Online teaching resources will be developed to improve teachers' ability to understand Koorie English and effectively facilitate Koorie learners' acquisition of literacy in Standard Australian English (SAE). This will support teachers to not only understand the spoken and written language of Koorie students, but to understand that students are likely to comprehend school literacy materials in terms of meanings in Koorie English. A greater knowledge about and respect for Koorie English will enable teachers to develop a better understanding and appreciation of their students' strengths. This in turn leads to a more accurate identification of where students need assistance and how this help can best be delivered. This will also assist teachers in building positive relationships with students learning SAE.
At a Glance: Literacy and Numeracy Teaching Resources	*At a Glance: Literacy and Numeracy Teaching Resources* provides teachers with an overview of key Department and VCAA literacy and numeracy resources currently available. This document aligns these resources to the FISO model and the teaching and learning cycle, providing an integrated approach to support teachers in using student data, identifying learning goals, planning, teaching and assessment. The document has been hyperlinked to support access to a wide range of resources for classroom teachers.

Differentiating Student Learning Needs

Every child, no matter their starting point, can and should complete school with the literacy and numeracy skills they need to thrive in the world of their future. This relies on teachers being resourced to differentiate their teaching practice, to effectively support specific groups of students to reach their potential in literacy and numeracy.

You have said that for the Strategy to be effective, there should be greater emphasis on assessment, and that teachers need more guidance on when, why and how to effectively use assessment. Whole-school formative assessment has been effectively used in schools to help teachers to understand individual students' capabilities and progress, and to plan appropriate strategies tailored to their needs.

You have also asked for more resources to help support students from certain cohorts—particularly Koorie students, students with English as an additional language and students with learning difficulties—guidance on how to empower these students to achieve success in literacy and numeracy.

New resources are being developed that will assist teachers to differentiate their teaching practice, including new guidance on the use of formative assessment to identify the needs and goals of each child. Support for differentiated teaching and learning will be further strengthened by the release of new tools and advice on working with Koorie students, students with English as an additional language, and students with learning difficulties.

Teachers and schools can lift all students' performance if they are equipped to collect and use evidence of individual student achievement and progress. Working together, teachers should assess what each student knows now, target their teaching to what they are ready to learn next, and track each student's progress over time. Teachers should then analyse their own impact, keep what works and change what does not.

Grattan Institute, *Targeted Teaching*, 2015

New and forthcoming resources	
Formative Assessment Guide	The *Formative Assessment Guide* will outline the process for determining learning intentions based on the progressions in the Victorian Curriculum, and developing and using associated assessment rubrics. The guide will include: illustrated examples that demonstrate learning goals derived from the curriculum continuum expressed in the content descriptions and achievement standards; and an assessment task and a model assessment rubric for teachers to use in assessing the work produced by their students from this task. Teachers can use this as a model to develop their own tasks and assessment rubrics.
Annotated student work samples in reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy	Annotated samples of student work, including videos and teaching and learning sample plans of students' reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy, are being provided to increase teachers' capabilities to moderate marking of work and assess students' progress against standards. This will enable teachers to plan effective lessons to achieve optimal learning outcomes.
Digital Assessment Library	New accurate and objective assessment tools, housed in a digital assessment library, will support teachers to undertake frequent and formative assessment. These will provide feedback that identifies areas of student learning need and immediately informs strategies that teachers can use to improve learning outcomes.
Enhanced English Online Interview process and supporting resources for teachers	Additional resources for teachers to support their use of the English Online Interview, Diagnostic Assessment Tools in English (DATE) and other Department resources to assist in identifying students who may be experiencing literacy learning difficulties. This will support teachers to use differentiated teaching and learning strategies for all students.
Koorie English professional learning	Professional learning will be delivered to support teachers to identify and meet the needs of students who are speakers of Koorie English.
Literacy teaching resources and guidance for teaching students with learning difficulties (including dyslexia)	High-quality, evidence-based teaching resources and professional guidance will be developed for teachers to support them to identify, understand and meet the literacy learning needs of students with learning difficulties (including students with dyslexia). The resources will supplement the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit* and *HITS* and support effective classroom planning, interventions and tailored pedagogy. The resources will include information on the range of learning difficulties.
Numeracy teaching resources and guidance for teaching students with learning difficulties (including dyscalculia)	High-quality, evidence-based teaching resources and professional guidance will be developed for teachers to support them to identify, understand and meet the numeracy learning needs of students with learning difficulties (including students with dyscalculia). The resources will form an analogue to resources developed for literacy. With a strong emphasis on mathematics, the resources will supplement the *Mathematics Teaching Toolkit* and *HITS* and support effective classroom planning, interventions and tailored pedagogy.

Building Instructional Leadership in Literacy and Numeracy

Research shows that improving teacher effectiveness outweighs the impact of any other school education program or policy on improving student performance. Improving the consistency and quality of professional practice by all teachers, across pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and reporting, is central to improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for our students.

During 2017, all primary schools identified a Literacy Leader who would join the School Improvement Team, with responsibility for literacy instructional leadership across the school. A new program of professional learning, led by the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, has been developed to support these Literacy Leaders. This began with the popular Literacy Leader workshops, in late 2017 and early 2018, which provided an induction into the new role. The workshops have been delivered in each area around Victoria, making it easy for rural and regional schools to access. Ninety-three per cent of participants reported that the workshops were relevant to their work.

Many of these Literacy Leaders have also enrolled in the new Literacy Data, Assessment and Practice online course, which develops an understanding of the importance of ongoing formative assessment at the classroom level for improving student outcomes, and how to use data to inform planning and delivery of effective teaching and learning. The Literacy Masterclass Series, initiated in Term 1 2018, are quarterly webinars designed to build understanding and capability in different aspects of pedagogy and professional practice.

The greatest influence on student progression in learning is having highly expert, inspired and passionate teachers and school leaders working together to maximise the effect of their teaching on all students in their care. There is a major role for school leaders to harness the expertise in their schools and to lead successful transformations. There is also a role for the system: to provide the support, time and resources for this to happen. Putting all three of these (teachers, leaders, system) together gets at the heart of collaborative expertise.

John Hattie, *What Works Best in Education: The Politics of Collaborative Expertise*, 2015

Instructional leadership in literacy and numeracy:
Southmoor Primary School

The Literacy and Numeracy Leaders at Southmoor Primary School have led the development of a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning across the curriculum to ensure that all students are developing the key skills required for lifelong learning.

The Leaders prioritised work on explicit curriculum documentation and worked with teachers to develop processes and protocols to better support targeted teaching. The Leaders then worked with classroom teachers, providing hands-on instructional guidance to support all teachers in the use of focused and precise teaching strategies to lift student learning outcomes. Teachers and Leaders worked collaboratively to ensure that individual lesson structures and unit planning support the development of essential literacy and numeracy skills. Peer observation has been an important priority in the professional learning and collaboration between teachers. Leaders have supported the development of greater consistency in the ways in which feedback and formative assessment is undertaken across the school. This work is building confidence in moderation processes and the understanding of student learning progressions.

As a result, teachers are now ensuring that learning intentions and success criteria are made transparent for students in each lesson. Teachers are providing greater opportunities for students to work collaboratively on rich learning tasks that foster negotiation and consolidation of new knowledge through peer learning. The skills of each and every student have been extended through this targeted approach to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning.

Based on your feedback, these initiatives will be continued and modified versions will be provided for numeracy and for secondary schools, starting from Term 3, 2019.

Supporting students to achieve excellence in literacy and numeracy is already core business for schools and teachers. Part of the Strategy is to encourage schools to share what is working for their school, so that others can learn from their success. Conversely, school leaders and teachers can work through solutions to problems of practice with colleagues and peers across professional learning teams, networks and areas.

The success of the Professional Learning Communities initiative, as well as the peer learning offered through the Literacy Leader Induction workshops, has demonstrated that teachers and school leaders value opportunities to use collaborative expertise to help make practice improvements throughout their school. You have asked for these initiatives to continue.

Forthcoming resources	
Bastow Leading Literacy for Networks program	Delivered by network-nominated Master Trainers, the program enables the development of literacy leaders within their network and supports them to lead the development of a shared understanding of quality literacy instruction, whole-school approaches and models of effective literacy practice, to improve student literacy outcomes.
Workshops for secondary school Literacy Leaders	Expert-led area-based workshops will provide an opportunity for secondary literacy leaders and principals to keep abreast of best practices to build literacy capability and learn how to implement the *Literacy Teaching Toolkit* across secondary classrooms.
Workshops for primary and secondary school Numeracy Leaders	Expert-led area-based workshops will provide an opportunity for primary and secondary Numeracy Leaders and principals to keep abreast of best practices to improve whole-school numeracy outcomes and learn how to implement the *Mathematics Teaching Toolkit* in their classrooms. Schools will also develop an understanding of strategies and pedagogical approaches that increase student motivation and engagement to maximise learning outcomes.
Leading Effective Professional Learning Communities: Guidance	This is a compendium of resources that will provide practical support for teachers to work together on lifting student attainment, including advice on peer observation, student perception data and teacher assessments of student learning.

Embedding a Whole-School Focus on Literacy and Numeracy

Ensuring that every student achieves their potential is a shared responsibility and this can be supported through a whole-school focus on literacy and numeracy, particularly when student literacy and numeracy is below or above its expected level. During the first year of the Strategy, all primary schools identified at least one literacy-related Key Improvement Strategy for their 2018 Annual Implementation Plan, using the new Strategic Planning Online Tool (SPOT). You have advised that this has helped to prioritise improvements in literacy instructional practice with your teachers. The Department made literacy a dedicated focus for Regional Performance Reviews, regional and area principal forums, and Network Chair forums in the second half of 2017.

The *School Leaders' Guide to Improving Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes* was released in June 2017, which uses the FISO Improvement Cycle to provide practical guidance to planning, monitoring, and evaluating literacy and numeracy instruction.

Your feedback has generally been to maintain the focus on primary school literacy until progress is consolidated. However, you've said you also need resources for numeracy and secondary literacy and numeracy. New resources will include guidance and case studies on best practice approaches to using a whole-school approach to lifting literacy and numeracy for secondary students who are below expected level.

> **What matters most in accomplishing school success is focus.**
> Michael Fullan and Lyn Sharratt, *Putting Faces on the Data*, 2012

Lifting student growth in early secondary numeracy through targeted intervention:
St Albans Secondary College

The School Improvement Team at St Albans Secondary College led a whole-school review of numeracy student learning data, and identified the junior secondary years as the critical period for targeted intervention.

After research, including peer observation at other schools, St Albans decided to implement the 'Getting Ready in Numeracy' (GRIN) intervention for a select group of students demonstrating low learning growth in numeracy in years 7 and 8. The GRIN strategy involves maths teachers working as tutors to provide additional discrete teaching sessions of 15–20 minutes, three times per week, with small groups of 2–3 selected students from the years 7 and 8 cohorts. The sessions build students' foundational skills and knowledge through introducing them to key mathematical terms, concepts and vocabulary prior to the regular maths class, so that students are prepared and can participate fully in the upcoming classes. School leaders provide the teachers working as GRIN tutors with a time allowance to collaborate with the students' regular maths teachers to ensure that the intervention is provided with fidelity.

St Albans is seeing fantastic results in learning gain and growth in those students who have participated in the GRIN intervention. Students have greater confidence in their regular maths classes, and their beliefs about their capacity as students has shifted since they have started to enjoy greater success in their learning.

Forthcoming resources

Guidance for secondary schools to lift literacy and numeracy outcomes	This resource will provide guidance to secondary schools on effective whole-school approaches to lift educational outcomes for students experiencing difficulty in literacy or numeracy, including those who are below National Minimum Standards or not achieving their potential, primarily as a result of disengagement. The guidance will be supported by case studies of successful strategies and models developed and implemented in schools in Victoria and other Australian jurisdictions.
Catalogue of Programmatic Supports	The Catalogue of Programmatic Supports will provide schools with easy access to information about the literacy and numeracy support programs available through the Department.

Empowering Students in their Learning

When students have high expectations for their own learning, and take responsibility for their progress, this has a powerful effect on their learning outcomes. When teachers instil a growth mindset in their students, students understand the value of effort, persistence and adaptability and apply them to their learning. Fostering this attitude towards literacy and numeracy also helps students to develop their critical and creative thinking skills.

You asked for more resources to help schools develop student voice and agency, and to engage students to take responsibility in all aspects of their learning. Work will continue with students and teachers to identify and deliver further resources that help schools with this important issue.

New resource

Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership (draft for consultation)

Amplify will support young people to be active partners in decision-making about their own learning, and provide tools and resources that support the development of student agency in the classroom, at the whole-of-school level, and at a system level.

[School reform is effective when] students reach the state where they become their own teachers, they can seek out optimal ways to learn new material and ideas, they can seek resources to help them in this learning, and when they can set appropriate and more challenging goals. Students need to be involved in determining success criteria, setting higher expectations, and being open to experiences relating to differing ways of knowing and problem solving.

John Hattie, *Visible Learning*, 2009

Building student agency to support learning outcomes:
Keilor Views Primary School

Our Communities of Practice are focused on three areas: Assessment and Reporting, Curriculum and Engagement. Through this work we are building student agency by incorporating regular feedback from students to inform what we do. We began by asking students what they understood about their learning, assessments and their reports, and what we could do to make these more accessible to them. What we learned was that they didn't clearly understand what the 'dot' in their report actually meant, and how it reflected their learning and skills. We worked with our Student Leaders to develop a 'Look up Matrix', which would allow students to engage with the curriculum, pinpoint where they are in their learning and set appropriate learning goals. Students worked with leadership and teachers to identify the key curriculum progressions in writing and mathematics; and worked to develop 'I can' statements to make these more student-friendly.

The impact of our Communities of Practice has been powerful across multiple levels of the school. In junior years, students are beginning to use the 'I can' statements to shape and focus their learning progress, and to set mid- and long-term goals. In the senior primary years, the Look up Matrix will become a digital tool that students can access to help them track their progression and to identify what the key skills ahead look like and mean. The process has empowered students to better understand their learning progressions. Students are starting to discuss their work with greater confidence and focus, because they are familiar with the curriculum and there is greater transparency between students and teachers.

An exciting next step in this work is our developing partnership with a local secondary school. By sharing our Look up Matrix, we will collaboratively extend the 'I can' statement descriptors of the curriculum progressions to Year 8. We hope that this will assist our students' transition to secondary school and support continuity in their learning.

—Principal Helen Butler, Keilor Views Primary School

Engaging Families as Partners in Literacy and Numeracy

Parents and carers are crucial partners in learning for Victorian students. Literacy and numeracy acquisition starts from early childhood and the more that parents read to their child, the higher their NAPLAN scores for both reading and numeracy. Learning in the home environment gives children the confidence and skills they need to engage with school. Additionally, children have better literacy and numeracy outcomes when their parents have high aspirations for their child's education. While some families are actively engaged in seeking to support their child's learning and development, for a variety of reasons some families are not as engaged. When families are involved with the school, their child's learning outcomes improve.

You have said that the Strategy should be extended to include parents and carers. In response to this, a range of resources are being developed to help schools to engage parents and carers, including a suite of resources that families can use at home.

> *[Student learning outcomes] can be influenced by focused and intentional interventions by the school itself, through the relationships, expectations and opportunities for association it creates within the community of those intimately attached to it.*

Harvard Family Research Project/Academic Development Institute, *The Effects of Comprehensive Parent Engagement on Student Learning Outcomes*, 2004

Partnering with parents and carers to build early literacy:
Bass Valley Primary School

Teachers at Bass Valley Primary School identified specific developmental needs in the children entering Foundation. Recognising that parents and carers are crucial partners in language acquisition and early literacy development, the school sought to build parent engagement and skills to support early literacy, particularly through the transition to school.

The school worked closely with local kindergartens to develop a six-month 'Ready, Set, Go!' pre-Prep program that ran two days per week. School staff also met parents and carers at kindergartens to explain the program and build strong relationships with them prior to their child's transition into primary school. As part of this program, the school developed 'Talk and Play' bags containing three or four books of different genres and related activities (such as puzzles, bead threading and classification) to encourage families to be involved in their child's learning. Each bag also included a sheet with suggested activities and language building questions for parents to ask their children. A key to the success of this initiative was to show parents and carers how to use the Talk and Play bags, demonstrate how to develop vocabulary, extend their language, and present parents and carers with the data on the value of doing this. In addition, the school made it a priority to meet with the parents and carers in the early weeks of a child's transition.

The impact of this initiative has been significant, with children now transitioning well into Foundation. Parents and carers are also reassured that their children are socially and emotionally adjusted to the new setting, and that the school will make appropriate early interventions to develop early literacy skills based on the information collected about their child.

New and forthcoming resources

Literacy and Numeracy Tips to Help Your Child Every Day: A guide for parents of children aged 0–12	This booklet provides parents and carers with easy tips to encourage home learning from the early years through primary school.
'Prep Bag' books and family literacy and numeracy guidance	A selection of expert-selected books and the *Literacy and Numeracy Tips to Help Your Child Every Day* will be provided to families in the 'Prep Bag' given to every child starting in a government school. This will encourage parents and carers to support their child's learning beyond the classroom.

Communication and Feedback

Thank you to the students, parents, teachers, principals, regional staff, experts and stakeholders who have helped to design and implement the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. In particular, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Project Reference Group has provided invaluable guidance, feedback and advice to ensure the Strategy is useful and relevant for our schools. The supports delivered through the Strategy will continue to be tested and refined with you.

Lifting literacy and numeracy outcomes in every school, in every classroom, for every student, is a responsibility we all share. Please share your views and experiences by email to literacy.and.numeracy@edumail.vic.gov.au.

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