



Establishing a Performance and Development Culture in schools in Victoria, Australia

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This paper explores the notion of a Performance and Development Culture and its success in bringing about school improvement in two exemplar schools in Victoria, Australia. Performance Development Culture Accreditation was a mandated program established in Victorian government schools and later adopted by the Catholic Education System, Melbourne, but on a voluntary basis. The paper shows how the adoption of a system wide initiative can be successful in bringing about positive change and support school improvement directions.

The Performance and Development Culture Accreditation was aimed at improving school leadership, professional practice, and professional learning in schools in Victoria. For a school to be accredited teachers were required to complete a questionnaire and submit a formal application to a team of independent verifiers. The program identified five key elements that were the core to a Performance and Development Culture: an effective induction program for new teachers to the schools and for teacher in new leadership positions; the use of multiple sources of feedback for teachers on their performance; that teacher had developed and implemented customised individual teacher development plans that meet the needs of teachers and school priorities; the school had a comprehensive quality professional learning program; and, the belief by teachers that the school had established a performance and development culture. The intended outcomes of the program were to improve selection, retention, development and sustainability of quality teachers and teaching which would lead to improved student outcomes. It was also seen as a foundation for effective performance management.

The paper examines how two schools in the Catholic Education System in Victoria were able to develop and sustain a Performance and Development Culture that led to school improvement. Through in-depth case study analysis, the paper outlines the journey, strategies, processes and outcomes of two schools over time (between 2007 and 2012). The schools were identified as exemplars by the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne.

