Dear colleagues

It has been a busy fortnight with the first three 'Education State' briefings being held in Bairnsdale, Berwick and Traralgon. Thank you for attending, there was great attendance at all sessions and feedback so far through on line surveys and in person suggests the majority of attendees have found the sessions useful and the directions for education in Victoria positive with good alignment connected strongly to work already underway in our schools.

In particular the positive feedback on the focus on the development of the whole child has been confirming as has the positive response to the new state targets including 'happy, healthy and resilient kids' and the curriculum capabilities of ‘creative and critical thinking, intercultural understanding, personal and social capacity and ethical understanding’. There were many good questions asked and comments made that have assisted with greater understanding of the opportunities ahead and the shared understanding of the elements of 'The Education State'.

It is great that we have had members of the Department’s executive state board attending to provide knowledge about the way in which the education state elements have been developed.

This is the beginning of our work into 2016 and further discussion, sharing and learning will help us all identify ways of using these opportunities to meet the needs of our children and communities over the next twelve months and beyond.

Cardinia Early Years Educators Forum

On Thursday it was my pleasure to open the Cardinia Early Years Educators Forum which was held at the new Pakenham Race Course. Sponsored by a range of community agencies and in partnership with Cardinia Shire this event epitomises the strong partnership between members of the ‘The Cardinia 0-12 Years Better Connections Collective Group’.

Preschools, Maternal Child Health and schools are trialling new ways of working with a focus on school readiness and smooth transition practices and parent engagement in learning and development.

The forum attracted close to two hundred participants wanting to learn more and engage with each other which demonstrates the commitment to this important work.

I congratulate all of the Cardinia schools who have engaged in this critical partnership and wish to acknowledge the important work that Alex Greenwell and Carol Hankinson from our Region have undertaken to create the conditions for this to occur.
Regional Director’s (con’t)

School visits

During the last fortnight the Minister has visited a number of schools in SEVR including Kooweerup SC, Korumburra SC, Wonthaggi SC and the Minister met with the South Gippsland Principal Network last Wednesday at Mirboo North SC.

Once again it was an opportunity for principals, school council members and staff and students to host the Minister and for the Minister to learn about the work of each school and its community. Further visits are being planned and underway.

REMINDER:

Education State Principal Forum:
29 October 1.00-5.00pm at Dingley International. Please note this is now at capacity.

Merit Protection Boards training:
10 November—Bairnsdale RSL
Registration is through PD Online

In addition to the Minister’s visits, Bruce Armstrong, Deputy Secretary also visited both Bairnsdale Secondary College and Bairnsdale West Primary School at the conclusion of the Principal Forum.

Andrew Nipe, Executive Director, School Reform Funding, Peter Fella, Bruce Armstrong, Deputy Secretary, RSG, Paul Martin, and Ian Hall, Principal, Bairnsdale SC

Bruce Armstrong, Deputy Secretary, RSG at Bairnsdale West with Doug Vickers Principal
Upcoming Events and Programs:

Australian Paper are inviting Career Teachers to an Industry Information Session on 17 November from 2.30-4.00pm at the Australian Paper—Maryvale Mill, Morwell. Please see attached flyer for further information.

Attention Principals:
Expressions of Interest are invited from members of the Principal class for an Acting Principal position at Cheltenham Secondary College. The position is from 27 January to 10 April 2016. Applications close on 6 November. Please see attached Memo 2015-065 for further details.

Item of Interest:

The Eight Principles for Health and Wellbeing

Principle 5 – Person-centred and family sensitive practice
People are seen in the context of their families and environment and are supported and empowered to lead and sustain healthy lives.

SEVR Administration team highlight:
The SEVR Administration team are part of the Services Planning Branch. They are a dispersed team based in the Sale, Moe and Dandenong offices. Their roles include general administration to all staff in SEVR as well personal assistants to senior management (executive and senior advisors).

The SEVR Administration team, like other units, have committed to discuss, reflect and connect with all The Eight Principles for Health and Wellbeing.

This is being done through:

- contact with the Management Project team to work towards maintaining a common client centred focus
- looking at a shared understanding on how to support families
- ensuring positive experiences and expectations for families or young people when contacting DET.
- using a structured approach to record and track all contact made by families using the STAR system (Service Tracking and Recording)
- Reflective Practice – administration staff have the opportunity to discuss the more complex calls from families in staff meetings giving everyone the opportunity for a shared learning experience
- weekly discussion in their team meetings about the Principles and inclusion in the team’s Performance and Development Plans

Reflective Questions for your team to consider?

- How can your team become familiar with and understand what is involved in being ‘person-centred’ and having a ‘family sensitive practice’.
- What opportunities does your team have to ‘reflect regularly with others’ to embed this approach in every day practice?
Starting from Scratch Prep – 2 Indonesian PD

Teachers from across the region who are planning to teach P-2 Indonesian in 2016 gathered at Timbarra P-9 College in Berwick on Saturday 17th October to learn from teachers who have undertaken this journey. Jessica Mills (Primary Language Coordinator, Timbarra P-9) and Michelle Lewis (Berwick SC) hosted the event - providing beginning lessons, resources and pathways to assist in developing a language program that suits a range of classroom contexts and structures. Emma Gubbles (Yarragon PS) shared her experience and approach to incorporate songs and stories into the teaching of Indonesian. Using ebooks and ipads the group explored a variety of texts and techniques to maximise opportunities to strengthen vocabulary and oral rehearsal.

This program was fully sponsored by SEVR with the kind assistance from Timbarra P-9 College

Berwick Mandarin Language Network

Teachers from schools in the Berwick area who teach Mandarin meet once a term. This term’s meeting was hosted by Amy Ma at River Gums PS. The focus of the micro PDs lead by William Duncan & Yu Liang (Kambrya SC) was assessment and reporting. A range of samples, examples, readings and methods to collect and record student progress were considered. Videos of students using rap / beat box to demonstrate different tones clearly demonstrated a high degree of engagement and enthusiasm towards learning goals and vocabulary development (thankyou for sharing Chunyan). Various digital sites were listed as helpful for student rehearsal and revision. The importance of nurturing a multicultural perspective throughout lessons and learning opportunities was highlighted.

The next meeting will be hosted at Gleneagles SC, Term One 2016, for further details please contact Chrissie Chen chen.ching-rui.c@edumail.vic.gov.au
Cardinia Early Years Forum - Iram Siraj

Supported by "Better Connections - Better Outcomes", "Linking Learning" and "Best Start", the Cardinia Early Years Educators Forum held on the 22nd of October, brought together over 160 educators and specialised service providers who serve the children of the Cardinia Shire every day. What brings and binds this large group together? - An overwhelming desire to build better outcomes for the children of Cardinia. Acting Regional Director Karen Cain and General Manager for Community Wellbeing in the Cardinia Shire Jenny Scicluna set the broad canvas for the day and introduced Professor Iram Siraj.

Iram Siraj worked as an Early Years teacher for most of the 1980s and has been an academic and researcher for over 25 years, holding positions at the universities of Warwick and London. In her seminal work – The Effective Provision of Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE 3-16) Iram followed the progress of over 3,000 children since 1997 from the ages of 3-16. She researched the impact of home learning, staff training, pedagogy, curriculum and assessment on young children's learning and development, particularly those children and families from vulnerable backgrounds. Her groundbreaking research has given preschools and Primary Schools a blueprint for reducing inequity.

In her presentation, “Performing against the odds” Iram provided educators with an insight into what shapes learners’ life-course trajectories over time, stressing the importance of Early intervention, strong Oral Language and Vocabulary development. Iram Siraj outlined the various protective factors that make a real difference to a child's development and participants of all sectors had a clear picture of the work we share together to underwrite a future for our most vulnerable children.

Karen Weston from DET Central Office gave an impressive outline of the current government initiatives in the Early Years, that will have to be followed up by our Better Connections - Better Outcomes team: the Department has its fingers in many research pies with the idea of rolling out successful initiatives such as: "Earlier engagement in learning", "Every Toddler Talking", "Supported Playgroup" reforms and the "Smalltalk Parenting" program. Megan Gill from the Cardinia Shire Council completed the picture for the Forum presenting a fine-grained analysis of the issues, threats and opportunities open to us.

Our local Linking Learning teams then gave an excellent overview of their individual pilot projects.

On behalf of the participants on the day, we applaud the work of the Education Department Linking Learning Team for organising some time for us with Iram Siraj, to Project Officer Carol Hankinson for her incredible energy and organisation, Better Connections - Better Outcomes and the Cardinia Shire who together with the local Linking Learning Team brought so many participants together, sharing a vision and work ahead of us for the benefit of every child in Cardinia.