

Executive Memorandum distributed to Victorian Government Schools on Tuesday 26 September 2006

Department of Education and Training Victoria

For all principals, regional directors, school council presidents, parent
association/club presidents

E004-2006 Provision of specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 in Victorian government schools

***This memorandum replaces 2000/002 (17 February 2001) concerning
specialised pedagogical and methodological approaches to education.***

This memorandum provides updated advice regarding the provision of specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 in Victorian government schools.

Specialised curriculum approaches relevant to this policy include, but are not limited to, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary and Middle Years Programs, Montessori, Reggio Emilia and Steiner.

Schools are responsible for the development and implementation of curriculum approaches and programs. However, while issues of curriculum planning and organisation and teaching and learning practice are clearly the responsibility of schools, they must be undertaken within the parameters of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and other Departmental curriculum policy requirements, including those outlined in the *DE&T Requirements and Key Curriculum Considerations Checklist*:

<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/phase1/WS/detreqs.asp>

The *Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide* identifies the Victorian Essential Learning Standards as the policy framework that Victorian government schools are to use for the development of curriculum and courses of study for years Prep–10 (Item 3.3.1).

The Standards identify what is important for students to achieve at different stages of their schooling and provide a clear basis for reporting to parents. The Standards are based on best practice in Victorian schools, national and international research, and widespread consultation with school communities, educators, professional associations and community groups.

Schools are required to develop curriculum approaches and programs that enable assessment and reporting of individual student progress against the domains of the Standards. For example, schools with primary enrolments are required to provide programs and report progressively, by 2008, on student achievement against standards at Level 1 in English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, Interpersonal Development and the Arts.

While it is appropriate for schools to implement new and revised approaches to curriculum, the school council is responsible for decision making regarding school policy, and should do so in the context of the Department's policy frameworks.

Approval to introduce a specialised curriculum approach in years P–10 in Victorian government schools.

School councils need to be aware of existing Departmental curriculum and policy requirements when making decisions about the introduction of a specialised curriculum approach in years P–10.

School councils that decide to plan for the introduction of a specialised curriculum approach will need to undertake an extensive consultation process with their school community and seek approval from the Department prior to the introduction of the approach.

The Department has developed guidelines and an approval process for the introduction of specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 in government schools. The *Guidelines for the provision of specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 in Victorian government schools* include key principles, details of the approval process and criteria for Departmental approval. The Guidelines are available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/curriculum/specialcurriculum.htm>

Schools developing specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 in Victorian government schools

Schools in the process of developing specialised curriculum approaches are expected to meet Victorian Government legislative and Departmental policy requirements and the key principles outlined in the Guidelines referred to above. They are also expected to have endorsement from the regional director through the regional recommendation process.

Schools with existing specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 in Victorian government schools

Schools with existing specialised curriculum approaches in years P–10 can continue to offer these approaches. These schools are expected to meet Victorian Government legislative and Departmental policy requirements, and the key principles outlined in the Guidelines referred to above, through existing accountability and improvement processes.

Principals requiring clarification of these requirements should seek the advice of their regional director.

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