

# **THE ROLE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL IN THE LEADERSHIP OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NSW PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Draft position paper developed by the  
New South Wales Deputy Principal Association*

## **Executive Summary**

### **Preamble**

While this paper was being developed state secondary deputy principals have been involved in a number of professional learning conversations which have led to a closer understanding of the shift in the traditional role of the secondary deputy principal as a manager and administrator to a broader and deeper role as a key leader in the delivery of quality teaching in schools. As the leadership structures in secondary schools move from an hierarchical, cascading model to one of distributed, inclusive leadership, the role of the secondary deputy principal will inevitably move to one of shared responsibility for the unique educational needs of students.

Members of the Deputy Principal Association affirm our collective belief in our role as educational leaders in NSW public schools.

- We value the paramount role that public education plays in constructing a cohesive democratic society based on principles of fairness and equity.
- We value policy and practices that ensures an educational provision for all NSW secondary students equivalent to the best offered in the OECD.
- We value belonging to a state-wide system of public education that provides frameworks and shared values for the operation of schools, curriculum and assessment.
- We acknowledge that the role of the deputy principal as an educational leader has become more varied, complex and ambiguous.
- We value the effectiveness of collegial, school-based decision making in consultation with key stakeholders of the school community.
- We value the meaningful use of information and communication technologies to inform and empower the lives and professional learning of staff, students and their families.
- We value working closely and collaboratively with principals and all other members of the school community.
- We value the work of the NSW DPA in providing networks of support, opportunities to influence DET policy and leadership development.

## **Educational Leadership:**

### **The preferred role of the secondary deputy principal and other school leaders**

Educating students and delivering quality teaching is the core business of schools and shared educational leadership is at the heart of the role of the deputy principal and other school leaders. The primary purpose of educational leadership is to improve the academic and social outcomes for students, to enhance the professional learning of staff and develop quality relationships with parents and the community. This style of leadership requires clear vision, collaboration and shared responsibility. Traditionally, secondary deputy principals have been “forgotten leaders” and a wasted educational resource in the education system, with a role defined in management terms. In line with the new directions and culture of school leadership contained in the NSW leadership strategy, secondary deputy principals see their role as broad and complex, embracing all aspects of school management and leadership, ranging from financial accounting, day to day school operations, school law to curriculum design and implementation.

Deputy principals and other school leaders in NSW secondary schools affirm that they will:

- **display a high level of understanding about quality teaching and learning, curriculum, assessment and reporting**
- **apply this understanding to inform, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate teaching, learning, assessment and reporting practices across the school**
- **apply this understanding to assist with the development of systems to support learners and their learning and**
- **develop and sustain a professional learning community.**

To support the deputy principal in this role, DET, state and regional offices will:

- acknowledge that effective educational leadership in NSW resides in schools
- empower, value, trust and support policy and decision-making at the school level
- ensure appropriate resources are directed to public secondary schools after taking into account the socio-economic context of the school community
- provide opportunities for the professional learning of deputy principals and other school leaders
- provide a supportive learning culture that responds to the needs of the community
- acknowledge that the role of the secondary deputy principal has shifted to encompass both educational leadership and management responsibilities
- clearly articulate the shift of the role of the secondary deputy principal as an educational leader in all relevant publications and public forums
- support the secondary principal in the articulation of a vision for learning.