



**In response to the discussion paper 'Working Together To Shape Teacher Education in Victoria, August 2016'** members of the VCSPB have reflected on and expressed the experiences of parents with regards to teachers and teaching standards in Victorian Catholic schools and has summarised responses to each of the four focus area questions:

#### AREA OF FOCUS 1

#### RAISING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND THE STATUS OF THE PROFESSION THROUGH A ROBUST APPROACH TO SELECTION INTO INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

##### **What academic capability threshold should be set for entry into ITE?**

- High standard of literacy and numeracy skills
- High standard of humanities skills, problem solving and analytical skills, adaptability and versatility to be able to teach various subjects (broad skillset/multi-skilled)
- Ability to verbally communicate with both children and adults
- Cognitive and non-cognitive skills
- Time management and organisational skills

##### **What personal attributes are important for teachers?**

- Social and emotional skills
- Ability to demonstrate versatility in adapting to various situations
- Resilience
- Perseverance
- Accepting of diversity in students (abilities and cultural/personal backgrounds) and their families
- Growth mindset
- Positive attitude towards children and families
- Willingness to develop relationships to work in partnership with leadership, teachers and parents
- Versatility and adaptability to challenging situations
- Empathy and ability to assess and respond to situations from various perspectives
- Maturity
- Seeing a need and doing something about it – conscientiousness, awareness and taking purposeful action
- Awareness of what teaching involves before entering the profession (no longer just about teaching academic – social and emotional, behavioural and special needs children, working in partnership with parents needs to be seriously considered prior to application – communication of this information to careers teachers and advisors).
- Awareness of future global opportunities – what future they are preparing learners for.

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### **How might these be measured in the Victorian context?**

- Interview process to determine articulatory skills, knowledge of self and awareness of strengths - confidence
- Demonstration of experiences where the candidate has had to draw on these skills (either through personal experiences, previous professional experiences or voluntary activities)
- Interview process for candidates – eg. MFB stringent process to be able to enter the profession – working with the public – working with children should be seen as just as important – it is a privileged professional position.
- Psyche test – as required by MFB and Police Force
- Measuring impact of reforms on teacher quality, number of graduates who pursue a teaching career following their training and measuring teacher performance and student learning outcomes over a time period of 3-5 years once reforms have been implemented.
- Measurable targets attached to key areas to measure effectiveness of reforms.
- Ongoing consultation with teachers and leaders in the profession of what is required for quality teaching and learning.

### **AREA OF FOCUS 2**

#### **ENSURING HIGH QUALITY PATHWAYS INTO THE TEACHING PROFESSION FOR CAPABLE AND COMMITTED CANDIDATES FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS**

##### **Is there a case for greater quality assurance of bridging courses and pathways into ITE in Victoria?**

- Yes – including online teaching courses
- If the bridging courses are not linked with the ITEs then they are a waste of time and resources – they must collaborate and consult to inform what is required to enter an ITE so students can be adequately prepared for entering ITE.
- If the skillset and abilities of students in bridging courses is not up to standards, they may be ineligible to enter a bridging course.

##### **Is there a case for more pathways into ITEs in Victoria? What should the key features be?**

- There may be several courses that could lead to entry into ITE. The extra year would actually assist with VCE students and other later entry students to understand what the teaching profession involves prior to applying for an ITE- much like previous TOP (Tertiary Orientation Program) system.

##### **How can flexible pathways attract career changers and address key areas of need such as disadvantaged or rural settings**

- Those who are entering the profession from other careers/professions would have various non-academic skillsets and strengths they can bring to the classroom – there may need to be a specific bridging course developed for career changers where they are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skillsets and further their understanding of the teaching profession prior to entering an ITE.

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- An example of this may be short courses for IT Professionals with coding experience or science/maths/technology/design professional background to enter the teaching profession bringing with them a specific and specialised skillset that other teachers are not qualified to teach – or have experience to teach.
- Placement of student teachers in low SES schools and remote areas can ease the gap for the disadvantaged – students who wouldn't otherwise choose to apply for graduate jobs in these schools come to understand the communities without bias and their need for quality teachers in these areas – examples St. Joseph's Primary (Collingwood), St. Mark's (Fawkner) and Holy Child Primary (Dallas) partnership with ACU – placing pre-service teachers on-site to immerse them in the school experience of low SES school communities.
- Course: ACU EDAC 408 Bachelor of Education – School and Community Unit 2014.
- Appropriate timing of placement of teachers needs to be a consideration – timing of placements (not at end of term) and process for placements in certain areas – according to postcode? According to background/cultural background and briefing prior to placement.

### AREA OF FOCUS 3

#### IMPROVING COURSE QUALITY, INCLUDING THROUGH FEEDBACK LOOPS BETWEEN GRADUATE, SCHOOLS AND ITE PROVIDERS

#### **How can teacher education courses respond to future demands in classrooms and society – building expertise in digital technology, entrepreneurial skills, collaboration?**

- Introduce ITE students to project based learning, critical and creative thinking techniques and development of entrepreneurial mindset and business skills for students in a global market – encourage those in the profession (entrepreneurs, creatives/designers/advertising execs, digital technology specialists, business managers as well as current school leaders and teachers) as well paid sessional teachers or guest lecturers for pre-service teachers.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration with schools whilst studying – to have access to teacher mentors currently in the profession.
- Include Parent Engagement and School Communities as a core subject with the understanding that parent engagement and working with parents as partners is essential in contributing to academic and social and emotional learning outcomes.
- Include psychology and human behaviour as well as relationship building skills – with students, peers and parents.
- Include SEL (social and emotional learning) as a core subject as well as restorative practice techniques (behaviour management in the classroom and playground and having restorative practice conversations with peers and parents).

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### **What should be common elements in a graduate's final 'capstone' teacher performance assessment?**

- Understanding and awareness of expectations in teaching
- Ability to engage with students at all different levels – understanding of learning abilities, behaviours, identifying strengths and focusing on improvement
- Understanding of planning and teaching for assessment and working as part of a planning team
- Understanding of report writing and communicating learning and expectations verbally and in written form with parents
- Understanding how to provide appropriate feedback to improve student understanding and learning outcomes (Hattie, John, and Helen Temperly, "The Power of Feedback", *Review of Educational Research* 77/1 (March 2007) 81–112, <<http://rer.sagepub.com/content/77/1/81>>)
- Understanding of AITSL Standards - <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/standards/list>
- Ability to self assess, accept feedback and improvement - Encourage mastery/self improvement not performance
- Time management and organisational skills
- Relational skills – ability to build positive relationships and classroom culture – a safe and co-operative learning environment for children
- Ability to develop positive relationships with other teachers and parents.

#### AREA OF FOCUS 4

#### DEVELOPING EARLY CAREER TEACHERS TO BECOME EXCELLENT TEACHERS AND LEADERS

#### **What can we learn from what is currently working well in induction and mentoring, and what is not?**

- Support for new teaching staff – adequate mentoring and wellbeing support
- Induction in understanding school community vision and culture as well as processes, policies and procedures
- Induction should include meeting with parents at the beginning of the year to get to know families and the students to understand student interests and provide opportunity for a personalised and relational approach to teaching and learning.

#### **How can we ensure that a teacher's early work experience sets up a positive and future-focused career outlook?**

- Timing of placement of student teachers in schools – often placed at end of term when teachers are busy with report writing and teachers/students are tired at end of term.
- Provide a process and criteria for schools when selecting appropriately skilled and experienced teachers to work with student teachers – particularly as they are paid an additional salary whilst mentoring students.

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- Quality leaders/mentors in schools who are positive and optimistic about the teaching profession and who are willing to meet with the student teacher each day for a briefing and to provide feedback, answer questions.
- Visit from lecturers to schools during placements to supervise teaching and provide constructive feedback
- Adequate feedback and discussions with lecturer/class following teacher placements – sharing of ‘what did they learn’, ‘what more do they want to know’, ‘where can they improve?’
- Funding for mentoring of early graduate teachers within schools

Ends