Principal Health and Wellbeing
Strategy 2020–2022
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Message from the Minister for Education

I am very proud to release the Principal health and wellbeing strategy, a suite of initiatives designed to support our principals to flourish and lead Queensland state schools.

Our state school principals play a vital role in creating safe and engaging learning communities. They are passionate, they are talented and their leadership has a resounding impact on the outcomes of students, teachers and the community.

School leadership is a changing and challenging role, and principals tell us that, with the right supports, it is also a uniquely rewarding one. The Principal health and wellbeing strategy aims to provide that support, in tangible and meaningful ways, so that the health and wellbeing of our school leaders is improved.

By safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our school leaders we are investing in the futures of our students and our state education system as a whole. At an individual level, positive wellbeing contributes to increased job satisfaction, enhanced self-autonomy, and improved delivery of quality teaching and learning for our students so they reach their potential.

I would like to thank each of the many school leaders who contributed their time, energy and feedback throughout the development of the blueprint and this strategy and to Professor Phillip Riley, whose involvement helped to ensure that stakeholders’ voices were heard and reflected in the suite of services and strategies that have emerged through this process.

We know how demanding and complex the daily workload of principals can be. With this in mind, the Queensland Government is committed to improving the wellbeing of our school leaders, and ensuring it remains a priority.

I would like to acknowledge school leaders for their incredibly valuable role contributing to Queensland’s success in providing a world-class education for all students and look forward to seeing the initiatives in this important work improve their wellbeing.

The Honourable Grace Grace MP
Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations

Wellbeing vision

Safe, fair and healthy workplaces and communities.

We will create workplaces that are positive and constructive, where school leaders feel valued and connected to the community, enabling them to create a positive learning environment.

Who is this strategy for?
The Principal health and wellbeing strategy is for principals and deputy principals. Where school leaders are referred to throughout this document, it is intended to include principals and deputy principals.

How did we get here?
In February 2019, the department committed to the development of a strategy for improving mental and physical health and wellbeing outcomes for all Queensland state school principals and leaders.

The listening tour and feedback received from consultation on the Blueprint in 2019 elevated a number of areas that the department is now addressing.

Related strategies

The Staff Wellbeing Framework on page 5 captures the holistic nature of wellbeing that contribute to an individual’s wellbeing.

Leadership strategy

A comprehensive Leadership strategy has been drafted and is currently in consultation. It is intended to strengthen leadership capability across the department and increase the quality, quantity and diversity of leaders across all levels and contexts.

The department believes there is an element of leadership in all roles, and is committed to strengthening the leadership capability of the workforce.

Occupational Violence Strategy

The rising prevalence of aggressive behaviour in our communities, by students, parents and community members is impacting the role and health and wellbeing of school staff.

In response, the department is developing a strategy to ensure safe and supportive school communities. This is underway with the launch of the Occupational Violence roundtable in November 2019 and will include a coordinated suite of initiatives from across the department.
Wellbeing approach and scope

Wellbeing is important to everybody and includes many positive aspects including being healthy, feeling valued and socially connected, having purpose and feeling fulfilled.

The concept and scope of workplace health has broadened over the years from being solely focused on the individual to considering the workplace as a whole setting.

In the work context, a positive state of wellbeing enables the individual to achieve their full potential, resulting in improved performance and engagement.

The Staff Wellbeing Framework recognises that many factors, both inside and outside the workplace, contribute to an individual’s wellbeing. The framework has five interdependent dimensions including:

- Physical
- Financial
- Occupational
- Psychological
- Social and Community Engagement

There is also a range of different approaches to supporting wellbeing, from reactive approaches to managing injury, stress and consequences, to others that take a more proactive approach through a focus on prevention and positive factors. Consistent with leading wellbeing approaches, this strategy adopts a balanced model (THCU)\(^1\) that incorporates responses to individual factors, organisational factors and environmental factors. The three areas of the model are addressed in the strategy as follows:

1. Individual factors
   Improving wellbeing by supporting individual lifestyle behaviours, including the provision of practical advice, coaching, and professional support to improve physical health & fitness and reduce negative stress.

2. Organisational factors
   Improving job satisfaction and performance by increasing efficiency of work processes so as to reduce stress and optimise time to lead.

3. Environmental factors
   Reducing negative impacts on wellbeing by addressing environmental issues such as workplace violence and aggressive behaviour.

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The strategy

The Principal health and wellbeing strategy is nested within the broader Staff Wellbeing Framework and supports the strategic priority in the Department of Education Strategic Plan 2019–2023, to ‘support the health, safety and wellbeing of our people in every workplace’.

This strategy aims to support improved principal health and wellbeing through a range of initiatives that focus on leading and managing a school. It is an incremental strategy over a number of years reflecting the evolving focus on individual wellbeing in our workplaces.

The wheel depicts department systems and supports continuously improving in response to changing needs.

The Principal health and wellbeing action plan 2020/21 identifies an eight point plan to deliver a balanced wellbeing model under the key pillars:

1. Optimise time to lead
2. Support services
3. Safe and respectful workplace

Diagram 1 shows the Principal health and wellbeing strategy nested in a continuum, which represents the continually improved and built upon systems and processes that we operate in, and responds to the changing dynamics and nature of the school environment.

Principals receive and access information about their role and requirements in a range of ways during their employment including induction, internal and external training, mandatory training, online/OnePortal, newsletters, networks, conferences and professional associations. It is important that principals are up-to-date with current industry and role requirements, changing legislation and expectations for corporate service delivery alongside their teaching and learning remit.

The department has existing wellbeing supports and programs in place that this strategy is designed to complement and promote rather than replicate or overlap.

Examples include the Employee Assistance Program, the principal coaching and support services and newer initiatives such as the School-based staff wellbeing program and the appointment of wellbeing coordinators.

The Principal health and wellbeing action plan 2020/21 is also underpinned by ‘business as usual’ services and systems that exist within the department to support principals and school leaders. These include:

- Expert resources: access to supports such as disability and inclusion, legal, human resources, finance and procurement to assist in problem solving and decision making
- Access to quality information: supported by systems, policies, and templates
- Learning and growth: opportunities for growth, including induction, leadership development and ongoing professional development.

As in any organisation these existing supports, systems and services are continuously improving to respond to changing environments and expectations. Improvements are informed by a range of factors including staff feedback, complaints and changing roles and requirements.

Further information is available on the intranet site detailing the journey to develop this strategy and the initiatives in the action plan designed to contribute to principal wellbeing.
The Principal health and wellbeing strategy delivers targeted initiatives that focus on assisting principals with the practicalities and complexities associated with leading and managing a school. This is an incremental strategy over a number of years that reflects the evolving focus on individual wellbeing in our workplaces.

The 2020/21 action plan identifies an eight point plan aligned to each of the four pillars to deliver a balanced wellbeing model.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blueprint initiatives</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Blueprint commitment</th>
<th>Business improvement activity underway</th>
<th>Existing DoE strategy underway</th>
<th>Strategy action plan 2020/21</th>
<th>Strategy action plan 2021/22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support responses in complex school communities and situations</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Pilot the establishment of dedicated support to provide hands-on intervention and case management of complex matters</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide additional support to principals in the management of complex matters</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Provide clear advice on the management of unreasonable conduct and provide mechanisms to terminate contact where wellbeing and safety are at risk</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop core leadership capabilities for principals in the leadership strategy, including leading in a complex environment</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a contemporary leadership strategy</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Incorporate role-specific management and leadership development into the strategy</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build leadership capability and confidence across the system</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Establish pathways for all school leaders to build leadership insight and capacity, and develop broad and transferable leadership expertise</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Align the leadership strategy with best practice leadership capability frameworks</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide differentiated learning methods including coaching, mentoring, on-the-job and formal learning, and 360-degree feedback tools</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate and deliver place-based coaching to rural and remote leaders through the Centres for Learning and Wellbeing</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance induction processes for principals and deputy principals.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Create a suite of induction resources that are fit-for-purpose and can be accessed based on individual needs</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a more effective, tailored and timely induction for school leaders</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Develop toolkits, masterclasses and ‘how to’ guides to help principals and deputy principals navigate new role responsibilities</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refine essential training for school leaders</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Establish a principal induction portal</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a communication strategy and resources to set clear expectations for respectful communication and behaviour in school communities</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote strong and respectful relationships and partnerships between school leaders, parents, students and the wider community</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build resilience and create a culture of self-care</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Offer a proactive wellbeing coaching program for principals with independent experts</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthen proactive self-care and resilience among school leaders</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Offer a range of programs to develop individual capacity to manage stress and build resilience</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Raise awareness of the existing health and wellbeing support offered within the department for school leaders, staff and students</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a proactive check-in system for principals (eg new, moving bands, rural and remote and otherwise nominated)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and strengthen a school-based wellbeing program for principals and staff</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>✓</td>
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Leadership Strategy; Occupational Violence Strategy
A strategic initiative of

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