

Action manual for school reviews

December 01, 2017

Federation is pursuing member concerns regarding School Development Reviews and External Validation. Both of these procedures arise from the School Excellence Policy.

The union has not endorsed the School Excellence Policy or the procedures associated with School Development Reviews and External Validation. Federation organised a series of meetings with the Department commencing in October. School Development Reviews were discussed first and now the focus is External Validation.



Review Procedures

The *School Development Review Procedures* were issued in August. Federation is concerned this document does not provide specific details on a number of issues. In particular, there is insufficient information on the consultation that should occur with school staff about the purpose and methodology of any School Development Review and the proposed recommendations and strategies arising out of a review. A draft *Manual for School Development Reviews* has been developed to clarify these issues. School development reviews have occurred over many years and the previous procedures were aimed at providing support for schools. Based on what has been learned in the earlier processes, Federation Executive identified the following principles as essential for any school development review either internal or external:

1. There will be genuine consultation with teachers, executive and principals concerning the need for a review, the terms of reference and the recommendations and actions arising.
2. A review must not be an investigation or inspection. Matters related to performance management and/or discipline must be dealt with under the relevant policy and procedure.
3. There must be an opportunity for staff to raise any concerns regarding any potential conflict of interest or bias by review team members prior to the commencement of the review.
4. Federation members must be able to collectively raise concerns about the review before it commences, during the process and in relation to any recommendations.
5. The processes to collect information at the school level must be negotiated with school staff.
6. Any observation of teaching, school activities and individual teacher's work must be negotiated with, and agreed by, the individual teachers affected.
7. The cost of the review including any release for teachers to participate in interviews will not be met by the

school.

The *Manual for School Development Reviews* has not been finalised but the draft provided to Executive on 4 November 2017 incorporated each of these principles. When the manual is finalised, Federation will provide advice for its members. Any reviews which are inconsistent with the seven principles will be opposed.

External Validation

Members have consistently raised issues associated with the extensive workload demands associated with External Validation. Executive has determined the focus of discussions on External Validation should result in changes that will:

- simplify the process and make it fairer, less resource intensive and more equitable
- recognise the context of a range of schools, especially small schools
- reduce the cost associated with staff time and resources spent on assembling and collecting evidence as well as preparing submissions
- require the Department to provide additional support and guidance to schools so that the focus remains on supporting teaching, learning and school development rather than compliance
- provide a mechanism to challenge an External Validation decision.

The discussions will continue and a report on these matters will be provided to February Council. Advice to members will follow this report.