

Strategic Planning and the Student Mapping Tool

The Student Mapping Tool is a pre-programmed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which presents an easy-to-read selection of school data.

The Tool highlights factors which have been shown to increase the risk of student disengagement and early leaving, and maps the programs and initiatives being used within the school.

System Improvement is one of the three core strategies in the Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development. This will be achieved through improved integration and transitions, by creating a more integrated system that will smooth the major transition points in the system, and more specifically, by improving the transition from school by strengthening school responsibility for monitoring young people's pathways until they complete year 12 or equivalent, with greater expectations for accountability placed on schools to support their students to meaningful post-school pathways.

To assist schools to achieve this outcome, the Student Mapping Tool sits within a suite of complementary programs and initiatives to support student engagement and improve student retention.

For **Principals**, the Tool provides a snapshot of key data, which can be easily interrogated to start conversations about student outcomes within the school.

This document shows you the sorts of questions schools using the Student Mapping Tool will easily be able to answer.

The Student Mapping Tool and the Ultranet

During 2010, all Victorian Government schools will begin to use the Ultranet. One of the aims of the Ultranet is to improve the efficiency of the learning environment and school administration.

Although the Ultranet will greatly improve the information teachers are able to access on students' learning and their performance, it will **not** immediately replace all of the functionality of the Student Mapping Tool, and all schools currently using the Tool are advised to continue to do so.

The Student Mapping Tool is a rich source of data and targeted information on students, much of which is **not yet available on the Ultranet**.

In 2011, professional development activities on using the Student Mapping Tool together with the Ultranet will be provided across Victoria.

The Student Mapping Tool and Wannik

Under the Wannik initiative, the Student Mapping Tool **must** be used by all Government schools (both primary and secondary) with **one or more** Koorie student enrolments, to "**enhance school understanding and use of learning and engagement data**".

More information and assistance

For more information on and assistance with using the Student Mapping Tool, please see the comprehensive website at:

www.education.vic.gov.au/studentmappingtool

1. Examine the school destination data as the starting point for evaluating its effectiveness.

The Victorian Government has set a target that 90% of all young people will complete Year 12 or its equivalent (Certificate II) by 2010, and that the best place for them to do this in through school.

School completion is becoming increasingly important. The percentage of jobs available for those without a school completion certificate is getting smaller with every year, and research shows that having post-school VET qualifications reduces a person's likelihood of being unemployed by 40 percent, and having a university degree reduces it by 60 percent¹.

Therefore schools must be asked not only about their retention rates, but also whether the students have moved on to further education, training or full-time employment.

It is reasonable to ask at any stage of the year: "How many students have left so far this year? Where did they go?" and even "How many have gone to other local schools?"

Student Pathways / Destinations

Retention Rates: Target 90% or better

Destinations: Target 100% to successful pathways

Note: 'Successful' pathways could include exiting to another school due to parents moving out of the area; TAFE; Apprenticeship/Traineeship; full-time employment.

Take special note of other exits, especially 'Not interested' and 'Not followed up'. These students should have been referred to a local agency/support service.

NB 'UNKNOWN' entries are not acceptable. All exits must be accounted for. 'Unknown' entries can make the rest of the data almost meaningless.

Progress statistics:

	Date:				
No. students exited to date					
% of cohort exited to date					
% of students to 'successful' destinations					
No. students needing a follow up					

Key questions should always be asked of the data.

Key questions could include:

- Are we 'happy' with the numbers who have left during the year?
- Are we 'happy' with their destinations? Or are there concerns?
- Who are the students who left?
- Is there a pattern to the year level; the time of year?
- Which risk factors were present for most of our early leavers? For example, what percentage

¹ DEEWR, 2008.

- Had a record of high absenteeism?
- Were under-achieving, or were high achievers, in Literacy and Numeracy?
- Were from low income families or whose living arrangements were difficult?
- Were Koorie or refugees?
- Were suspended from classes?
- Were part of the integration program, had a disability and/or medical issues)?
- Did the students' backgrounds vary according to their destination?
- Did students show similar backgrounds when moving to another local school?
- Did students show similar backgrounds when leaving 'looking for work' etc.?
- Having identified the individuals, and their exposure to 'risk factors' what steps did we take to assist the student to remain at school and/or to better prepare the student to move on to further training or employment?
- Which of our intervention/support programs were effective? Which were not so effective?

Schools using the Student Mapping Tool effectively should be able to answer all these questions by examining data within the tool.

2. The single most important factor that the school can influence in helping a student to a worthwhile destination is through the student experiencing effective learning and achieving academic success.

Learning outcomes, and effective teaching, are the core business of each school.

In years P-10 academic progress is recorded by VELs and NAPLAN. In the senior section of schooling the results can be seen in VCE, VET and VCAL. The offering of VET and VCAL is vital, but ensuring a successful completion is even better. Schools need to monitor the effectiveness of each of the different learning programs they offer.

Student Learning								
VELS targets: the mid year results provide a guide, and an opportunity for interventions								
Year Level	Target		Actual		Target		Actual	
	READING		July	Dec.	MATHS		July	Dec.
2	90% at/above 2				90% at/above 2			
	15% at/above 2.5				5% at/above 2.5			
4	85% at/above 3				85% at/above 3			
	7% at/above 3.5				5% at/above 3.5			
6	82% at/above 4				82% at/above 4			
	12% at/above 4.5				12% at/above 4.5			
8	74% at/above 5				74% at/above 5			
	7% at/above 5.5				5% at/above 5.5			
10	64% at/above 6				45% at/above 6			
	7% at/above 6.5				5% at/above 6.5			
* You may need to change the specific target for your school/network								
NAPLAN targets are a one-off situation and not subject to a progress check								
Year Level	Target		Actual		Target		Actual	
	READING				MATHS			
3	100% above band 3				100% above band 3			
	20%+ above band 4				20%+ above band 4			
5	100% above band 4				100% above band 4			
	20%+ above band 6				20%+ above band 6			
7	100% above band 5				100% above band 5			
	20% above band 7				20% above band 7			
9	100% above band 6				100% above band 6			
	20%+ above band 8				20%+ above band 8			

Key questions:

- Does the proportion of students below, or well above, the expected standard change across the year levels at our school?
- Is there a significant discrepancy between teachers in their (VELS) assessment?

- Of the under-achieving students which also have a low attendance; a record of suspensions; come from low income families; difficult living arrangements; are Koorie students or refugees; are listed as integration students, having a disability or medical issues.
- Having identified each student needing assistance (as recommended by the Auditor General's Report on improving literacy and numeracy) what factors need to be taken into account, how many of these are receiving extra support, and of what nature is that support?
- Does the size of the school's response match the numbers needing support?
- How effective has each of the school's support programs been in improving the outcomes for those in the program?
- How is the effectiveness being monitored?
- Are the school's resources, both human and financial, being wisely spent?
- Which students have been identified as high achievers?
- What assistance have they been given?
- Has the assistance been effective?
- Years 11-12: Which students are at risk of leaving school before the end of year 12 due to academic difficulties?

Schools using the Student Mapping Tool to record their interventions as well as the ability to use the NAPLAN data within the tool should be able to answer all these questions – just from data within the tool.

A more detailed analysis of NAPLAN and VCE results are obtainable for teaching purposes (as distinct from school planning purposes) from NAPLAN and VASS websites.

3. The other key area in a school's strategic plan relates to student wellbeing.

Even schools that experience difficulties with the other key areas usually pride themselves on the way they support student welfare.

A key indicator is the attendance of a student at school. A common network target is shown below.

Student Engagement Absence Rates

Year Level	Attendance Target	Actual	
		July	Sep
Prep	14 days = 93%		
Pre-6	13.5 days = 93.2%		
7-10	17.5 days = 91.2%		
10-12	17.5 days = 91.2%		

No. students with a Student Absence Learning or Attendance Improvement Plan

A school may wish to examine each year level individually.

Key questions:

- Does the percentage attendance change by year group?...by form group within the year level?...over the year?
- How many students missing one day a week or more (i.e. 80% attendance or less) have many unexplained absences and are also exposed to other risk factors? These could include:
 - Were under-achieving in literacy /numeracy;
 - Had a record of suspensions;
 - Come from low income families;
 - Have difficult living arrangements;
 - Are Koorie students or refugees; and
 - Are listed as integration students, or as having a disability or medical issues.
- Having thus identified the students at risk of not completing year 12 and the factors impacting on their schooling, what interventions have been used for each of these students to assist them stay at school and succeed?
- How effective has each intervention been with these students?
- Who is in each program?
- Who really needs to be in which program?

The range of interventions schools use to assist students at risk is usually considerable, but following examination of the Student Mapping Tool, you may see that in terms of meeting needs it may be too small or too large. It is only after mapping student support programs, the students in them and examining the outcomes that we can see if we are missing out in meeting a need or if there is over-provision.

The effectiveness of the wellbeing programs need to relate back to improving key school data e.g. has attendance of those participating in a program improved? Or, has the literacy performance of those involved improved?

A related matter in student wellbeing is the internal monitoring of the school's processes in dealing with suspensions and expulsions.

Suspensions/Expulsions

(2009 new DEECD Guidelines)

While the aim may be to reduce suspensions, the target is to check the appropriate implementation of the 2009 DEECD Student Engagement Guidelines.

No. students suspended to date	<input type="text"/>	No. expulsions	<input type="text"/>
No. suspended for 8 days, or more and/or 4 individual suspensions			<input type="text"/>
No. referred to DEECD regional office: Suspensions	<input type="text"/>	Expulsions	<input type="text"/>
No. with a formal Support Group	<input type="text"/>		
No. with a 'Return to School Plan'	<input type="text"/>		

Difficulties may arise if a Principal cannot view this information at any time.

Key questions:

- What are the risk factors (as above) to be found in any of the students suspended? Taking these factors into account what intervention/support has been offered to assist the student stay at school and/or make a successful transition into further training or full-time employment?
- How effective is each of the interventions / supports – including the effectiveness of outside agencies?

Schools using the Student Mapping Tool effectively should be able to answer all these questions – just from data within the tool.

4. Each school needs to identify specific groups and monitor their progress.

The Department has identified that certain groups of students, because of some personal characteristic, are more at risk of school disengagement and / or early leaving. Some of these groups are linked to **extra funding** for schools, or for **specific DEECD policies**.

For example: Koorie students (Wannik policy); integration students; students with a disability (PSD); students in out of home care (DHS agreement with DEECD); monitoring students at risk of suspension or expulsion (under the Student Engagement Guidelines).

MIPs funding is provided to schools to support existing career programs, which, like Maths, English and Science, should be funded from a school's core SRP. MIPs funding supports the creation of Career Action Plans for all students in Years 10-12, but also provides funding to schools to provide additional assistance to students at risk. As a condition of MIPs funding, schools are required to use the Student Mapping Tool or an equivalent resource to determine which students should be receiving the additional supports available through MIPs funding, and under Wannik, those schools with one or more Koorie students **must** use the Tool.

Schools should be asked to demonstrate exactly how they are meeting these requirements. The Student Mapping Tool, properly used, meets these requirements in the one spreadsheet.

Most schools realise that there are a range of **external agencies and external programs** that can be used to assist schools to improve outcomes for their students and families.

Schools may engage with these programs as part of their student wellbeing work and the IEP process, through activity through MIPs or other reasons.

The Tool has been designed to map the support provided by these agencies and programs. Whether the school is paying for the support or not, it is essential that the effectiveness of their assistance be monitored. Are they doing what they claim to do? Are they really assisting improve specific out comes for the students they are working with? *The Tool can give an overview of the effectiveness of the support.*

The key to improving outcomes is a process that involves:

- Identifying the issues
- Establishing goals/targets
- Identifying the students to be involved, and the factors impacting on them
- Determining the most appropriate interventions at the earliest possible time
- Implementing the strategies
- Monitoring progress
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies over time, and
- Providing feedback, and adjusting targets accordingly...and continuing the cycle.

The Tool can greatly assist and simplify the planning and monitoring of this process.

5. Monitoring school processes and data management.

The Ultranet and the Student Mapping Tool are both critically important tools which use data as an end product which requires both efficient organisation and school processes.

Both require schools to have processes that ensure the data is recorded accurately and on time in CASES21. Without successful management within the school, the end data product cannot be meaningfully interpreted, e.g. office staff may use the wrong code and school beginners who are officially only expected to attend 4 days a week may show up as having an 80% attendance.

Poor processes could see senior students on work experience, at school sport, etc. being recorded as absent or a student exited without a person being designated to follow up and record their destination.

Who needs an overview of each of these areas... and therefore access to the Student Mapping Tool data?

At the school:

- Individual teachers will have day-to-day responsibility for working with individual students and with groups in the implementation of their specific programs, but do NOT need access to the Tool. The Ultranet should meet the needs of teachers much more effectively than the Tool.
- Leaders or Coordinators (e.g. MIPs, Welfare) may need access to develop plans.
- Student managers (e.g. year level coordinators) need the overview of the breadth of data on each student in planning the most effective strategies in assisting their students.
- The person who has the overview of the school's strategic planning process.
- If not already included above, the person with ultimate responsibility for the outcomes of every individual in the school; the person who has the responsibility to make things happen...the Principal. The Tool should be on the desk of every Principal.

At the regional level:

- The Regional Network Leaders should understand the Tool and how it can be used to promote discussion about a school's progress in relation to its strategic plan.
- The officer with responsibility for the development of school strategic plans, and officers who provide support for improving student outcomes under those plans.
- Officers with responsibility to provide assistance to schools in specially funded programs e.g. MIPs, Koorie education.
- CASES 21 training centre staff – to provide training for school staff in the use of Excel techniques that assist the analysis of data.

School Reviewers and new, incoming Principals

Access to the information within the Student Mapping Tool provides an insight into the school and enables a series of detailed questions about the prepared about the organisation and operation of the school as well as its approach to assisting students and achieving their goals.

ACCOUNTABILITY and 'compliance tasks' cannot be seen as simply as a 'tick the box' exercise that no-one else asks about! The Student Mapping Tool is no more than a tool to start conversations about student outcomes.

Prepared by Doug Smith