
Read as if your life depends upon it. — Globe and Mail, August 10, 2013

Australian School Study

A recent draft by the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) in Australia recommends more autonomy and accountability for school principals. “We know that quality school leadership and quality teaching are key drivers of improved student outcomes.” Dr. Matthew Butlin, the Chair of VCEC, said today. “

Even though schools in Victoria have more decision making authority than schools elsewhere in Australia, the draft report suggests further decentralization by allowing schools and principals more decision making room in school’s daily operation to better tailor services to meet the needs of students and school communities.

The report includes draft recommendations to expand the roles of principals in improving student performance, promoting collaboration and information sharing among schools in the system, improving performance appraisal for principals and teachers, making more information available on the performance of schools, governance in a more autonomous system and increased flexibility in recruiting and managing staff.

The Commission’s findings are consistent with an OECD survey of 11 countries in 2010 showing that schools with greater autonomy had better PISA results.

The study is part of a broader review of the efficiency of government of the State (Province) of Victoria, this one examining education.

Further information: www.vcec.vic.gov.au

Early Childhood Development

According to a recent survey, early childhood classrooms look more and more like those of early grades. (“The disturbing shift underway in early childhood classrooms”, Valerie Strauss, Washington Post, August 2, 2013) Many classrooms, especially those that depend on public funds, “look more and more like classrooms for older children where standards, testing, and accountability rule. Federal and state mandates are pushing academic skills and testing down to younger children, even preschoolers. These days, there is less and less emphasis on promoting child development, active, play-based learning, and hands-on exploration for our nation’s youngest learners.”

Canadian Vocational Association

The Canadian Vocational Association has shifted its focus from a print Journal to a web based newsletter. Each month CVA, the Canadian Vocational Association (info@cva-acfp.org) presents a survey of relevant links in both official languages. The survey is international in scope and covers a wide range of topics and specializations related to the field of vocational education.

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