

Public education
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LEADING THE WAY IN INNOVATION AND REFORM

OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL IN 2017



Department of
Education



INTRODUCTION



FROM THE MINISTER



Independent Public Schools are leading the way in the reform of public education in Western Australia to give students an even better education.

In 2008, we committed to a policy of empowering school communities by giving them greater capacity to shape the ethos, priorities and directions of their schools to reflect the aspirations of their students.

We announced the Independent Public Schools initiative in 2009 and the first intake of 34 schools started in 2010.

Since then we have extended and developed the initiative with further intakes of schools that meet the stringent selection criteria. Today, we have 70 per cent of public school students and teachers in 445 Independent Public Schools across the State.

While all schools can create cultures of high performance, Independent Public Schools approach the challenge with a particular desire to test the status quo, a commitment to forge new education pathways and a willingness to hold themselves more accountable for the decisions they make.

We are now building on this successful initiative with a new intake of Independent Public Schools for 2017. Our aim is for an even stronger public education system with greater opportunities for student success.

I am delighted to invite school communities to be part of the continuing transformation of public education in Western Australia.

Hon Peter Collier MLC
Minister for Education

FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL



There is an opportunity for up to 50 schools to gain Independent Public School status for 2017.

Over the last six years, Independent Public School staff and community members have chosen to bring a spirit of empowerment to shape their schools to better meet the distinctive needs of their students.

They are creating innovative solutions, testing new concepts and generating practical ideas – not just for the benefit of students in their schools but for students in all our schools.

These school communities understand that attaining greater autonomy does not in itself make a difference to the learning of students in classrooms; that always depends on how each school puts that autonomy to use.

It comes down to the decisions they make, the ways they use their resources, the programs they introduce and, most of all, the extent to which they value, resource and support high quality teaching.

This new opportunity for schools to become Independent Public Schools draws on these dimensions and, as in previous years, the same rigour will be applied to the selection process.

This prospectus details the specially designed program to assist principals, their staff and their school communities through the stages to become an Independent Public School for 2017.

Sharyn O'Neill
Director General

February 2016

BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL



PATHWAY OF FOUR KEY STAGES

A comprehensive program supports school communities wishing to become Independent Public Schools for 2017.

The commitment of the whole school community is essential for success. Becoming an Independent Public School is a consultative process with the principal, school staff, school council, parents and local stakeholders all having a part to play.

For school communities wishing to be considered for Independent Public School status, the pathway consists of four mandatory key stages.

Schools that completed the 2014 program but did not become Independent Public Schools take part in an alternative development stage (stage 2). Details are provided at the briefing day.

Throughout these stages, the principal can seek feedback about their school's readiness to be an Independent Public School. At any point the principal, in consultation with their school community, can also decide to withdraw from the program.

For queries or clarifications:
School Improvement and Support Unit
T: 9264 4124
W: education.wa.edu.au

STAGE 1: BRIEFING

A one day briefing that captures the philosophy, nature and requirements of autonomy in Independent Public Schools.

Registration: Email ipseoi@education.wa.edu.au by 4.00pm on 18 February 2016

Briefing days: 29 February to 11 March 2016

STAGE 2: DEVELOPMENT

Workshops complemented by contextualised on the job learning activities to provide structured professional support.

Expression of interest: Email form to ipseoi@education.wa.edu.au by 4.00pm on 8 April 2016

Workshops: 27 April to 30 June 2016

STAGE 3: SELECTION

A 30 minute presentation to a panel of specially chosen and trained Independent Public School principals.

Presentations: 1 to 16 August 2016

Notification of selection outcomes: 9 September 2016

STAGE 4: TRANSITION

Comprehensive transition training to prepare the school community to function effectively as an Independent Public School.

Training: 11 October to 9 December 2016

STAGE 1: BRIEFING

The principal, chair of the school council and one other staff member of the school attend a one day briefing that captures the philosophy, nature and requirements of autonomy in Independent Public Schools in Western Australia.

The briefing includes a detailed overview of the development stage. Information from the briefing day enables the principal and school community to determine whether to progress with seeking to become an Independent Public School.

Briefing days are held in metropolitan and regional locations.

KEY DATES

18 February 2016:

Expressions of interest close for briefing day

29 February to 11 March 2016:

Briefing days held in various locations and on various dates

The principal should register their school's interest to attend the briefing day by emailing ipseoi@education.wa.edu.au by 4.00pm on 18 February 2016.

STAGE 2: DEVELOPMENT

Readiness development activities prepare the principal and school community to approach the selection stage with confidence.

Workshops are complemented by contextualised on the job learning activities to provide structured professional support which takes into account the individual circumstances and context of the school. The principal and one staff member attend each workshop, with the school council chair involved in some aspects.

Activities assist in meeting the rigorous Independent Public School selection criteria:

- Capacity of the school to assume greater responsibility for its own affairs.
- Level of local support, including staff support.
- Potential benefits to students and the broader school community.

Experienced Independent Public School principals play an important role in providing participants with personal ongoing guidance, support and feedback tailored specifically to each school. Workshops are held across two days over a four month period and are delivered in metropolitan and regional locations.

KEY DATES

8 April 2016:

Expressions of interest close for development program

27 April to 30 June 2016:

Workshops held in various locations and on various dates

The principal should email a completed expression of interest form to ipseoi@education.wa.edu.au by 4.00pm on 8 April 2016.

STAGE 3: SELECTION

On completion of the development stage, and in consultation with their school community, the principal may choose to progress to the selection stage.

This stage involves a 30 minute presentation to a panel of specially chosen and trained Independent Public School principals.

The selection process is independently moderated by respected educators.

KEY DATES

1 to 16 August 2016:

Selection panel presentations in various locations and on various dates

9 September 2016:

Principals notified of selection outcomes

STAGE 4: TRANSITION

For a selected school, the final stage is comprehensive transition training to prepare the school community to function effectively as an Independent Public School.

Key school staff and community members participate in this training. Training is specifically designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills to enact expanded decision making powers and meet new responsibilities that come with the heightened level of accountability in Independent Public Schools.

KEY DATES

11 October to 9 December 2016:

Transition training for successful schools

A DISTINCTIVE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE



EACH COMMUNITY IS UNIQUE...SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT EACH SCHOOL IS TOO.

Independent Public Schools combine a powerful combination of local autonomy and central support to deliver high quality, tailored and distinctive education experiences for staff, students and parents.

It takes committed and proactive school communities to become Independent Public Schools.

Independent Public School communities take a greater leadership role in all aspects of education, with the ultimate goal of delivering high quality education to students.

Independent Public School principals have a direct line relationship with, and are accountable to, the Director General of the Department of Education.

Independent Public Schools:

- have greater independence for local decision making which directly reflects the needs of their students and communities
- establish more dynamic and open governance relationships with the people in their communities
- employ greater flexibility in areas such as staff recruitment, budgeting, procurement, school development days, travel approvals and student support
- take part in regular external performance reviews to provide their school communities with independent assessment of the differences they are making over time
- have access to targeted leadership development programs to build principal capacity in getting the most impact in classrooms from autonomy
- participate in highly specialised board training covering all aspects of effective governance.

Central support for Independent Public Schools

Independent Public Schools are supported by the full range of resources and infrastructure that comes with being part of the Western Australian public school system.

Resources and support include:

- regional services and school networks
- graduate teacher support and induction
- all professional learning offered by the system
- engagement centres
- management of critical incidents
- attendance officers and participation coordinators
- attendance panels
- student exclusions
- corporate business services
- employee support services
- ICT helpdesk
- computer software licences (eg Microsoft products)
- central services including Schools Resourcing and Support, Staff Recruitment and Employment Services, Standards and Integrity, and Corporate Communications and Marketing.

SUPPORTING TRANSITION



INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE ACCESS TO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TAILORED SPECIFICALLY TO THEIR LEVEL OF AUTONOMY.

Transition support

- Each school receives additional one-off funding of between \$20 000 and \$40 000 to help transition to an Independent Public School.
- Principals, staff, managers of corporate services and representatives of school councils have access to an operational training program to support their transition to a more autonomous environment.
- Principals of new Independent Public Schools have a unique window of opportunity to revisit and reconfigure their staffing profiles.

Leadership support

- The School Improvement and Support Unit provides ongoing specialised support during the transition period and beyond.
- Strong and well established collegiate relationships among principals of Independent Public Schools provide mutual support and guidance in the area of leadership.
- The Independent Public Schools Principals' Group provides support and advocacy for the initiative and has a proactive role in its continuous improvement.
- Central office business units actively support and assist Independent Public School principals and staff to deal with specific matters attached to their new level of autonomy.
- School leaders may choose to access specifically designed Independent Public School leadership programs offered through the Institute for Professional Learning and other providers.

In 2016–17 Independent Public School principals also have access to an Advanced Leadership Program which focuses on how to use autonomy to ensure maximum impact in classrooms.

A new and specialised development program for Independent Public School board members is available for school communities that want to maximise the impact of their governance arrangements.

Administration support

Each school receives additional administrative funding of between \$25 000 and \$50 000 a year to support the introduction of innovative and creative approaches to establish conditions for student success.

Legal and industrial support

Independent Public School principals and staff are supported centrally in industrial negotiations and provided with support for all legal and industrial matters.

OBLIGATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY



INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY.

Compliance requirements

As part of the public education system, Independent Public School principals must meet legislative and policy obligations, particularly in terms of:

- all legislation including, but not limited to, the *School Education Act 1999*, *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, *Financial Management Act 2006* and *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 2012*
- all industrial instruments
- whole of government policies and initiatives that apply to all Western Australian public schools
- all agreements between the Australian Government and Western Australian Government as outlined in the National Education Agreement
- providing relevant data to enable the Department to meet Statewide reporting obligations (eg suspensions, exclusions, attendance, on-entry assessments, finance)
- the school audit program
- teacher registration, staff screening and Working with Children Check requirements
- participation in the Department of Education Services' independent review process in the final year of the Delivery and Performance Agreement
- application of the strategic plan and directions for public schools in Western Australia.

Delivery and Performance Agreement

Each Independent Public School has a Delivery and Performance Agreement signed by the principal, Director General and chair of the school board.

The agreement sets out the performance and accountability expectations of the school, as well as the resources and support provided centrally to the school. This agreement also forms the principal's performance agreement with the Director General.

Public accountability

Each Independent Public School:

- has an independent review in the final year of its Delivery and Performance Agreement, with the report made available to the Minister for Education, Director General and the public
- produces an annual school report endorsed by the school board
- undertakes ongoing self-assessment of performance which is reported to the school board.

Governance

Governance of an Independent Public School requires:

- the principal to ensure the school has an effective school board that is representative of the school community and complies with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000*
- endorsement of the Delivery and Performance Agreement by the chair of the school board, principal and Director General
- endorsement by the school board of the school business plan and associated budget
- the principal to provide relevant monthly financial reports, results of any school audits and reviews, and advice on school performance and student improvement targets as detailed in the school business plan
- participation by the school board chair or board representative in the selection of the principal when a vacancy arises.