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26 June 2015

Industrial Bulletin to SAS Staff Update re meetings held on 15 June 2015

PSA Industrial staff and officials attended three meetings with the Department Monday 15 June 2015. This communication advises SAS staff members of the main issues discussed at the meetings.

Learning, High Performance and Accountability (LHPA) Meeting

The PSA was advised the Department has allocated an additional \$1 million towards professional development and training for SAS staff. This recurrent funding is in addition to the \$1 million for the SRGs.

Additional funds for SAS staff during the Baird Government's era of slashing public sector budget are welcome. The PSA constantly raises with the Department the need for additional funding for SAS staff training and is pleased the funding has been restored to the 2009 level. Clearly, the Department will need to do a lot more to guarantee schools funding to provide professional development and training to SAS staff. It is vital schools continue to have skilled, competent and confident employees equipped to deal with the challenges of the constantly changing workplace environment.

The Department also provided an update on Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSLD) Resource Allocation Model (RAM). Training has been ongoing and a large proportion of SAS staff have attended the training. LHPA has delivered training on: Core Financial Literacy, Strategic Financial Management, Equity Funding and School Planning. PSA SAS staff members are encouraged to take part in this training if they believe it will assist them in their duties.

SAS staff Reference Groups (SRG) – Central Reference Group (CRG) Meeting

SAS staff will be aware that the SRGs are a training and professional development source for members in schools. The CRG comprises of executive members of the PSA Schools Departmental Committee and DEC High Performance and Teacher Quality and provides a forum for state-wide discussions in relation

to SRGs, particularly on the provision of funding, access and equity in support of professional learning for all SAS staff. SRG structure and associated documentation is regularly revised as the functions of the SRGs change constantly.

- 1. PSA Representative on SRG:** The Department reaffirmed its aim of continuing to work closely on SRGs and that PSA representation was vital to help ensure the training and professional development needs of SAS staff are met.
- 2. Update on Leadership modules:** The Department advised leadership modules tailored for School Administrative Managers are being developed through a Rural and Remote program.
- 3. Change management training:** LMBR rollout beyond the Focus Schools is still on hold. The Department is considering the development of material to assist school administrative and support staff in managing the transition to LMBR
- 4. Performance Development:** The PSA reported discussions were occurring with the Department and also, sector-wide. SAS staff in Schools are not participating pending the finalisation of these discussions.
- 5. LMBR training:** The SRGs will be instrumental in co-ordinating training for LMBR when deployment is extended. Refresher courses targeted for new employees will also continue to be available.
- 6. Year 6 / Year 7 transition and Chainsaw training:** The PSA again raised that training was being offered by SRGs that did not reflect the Statements of Duties for SAS staff and General Assistants.

The Department has proposed a review of the SRG structure and guidelines, also considering options for the sharing of professional learning resources on a state-wide basis. This will decrease administrative burdens on the SRGs. In principle, the PSA agrees

with the proposal and will continue to work with the Department to ensure limited training funds for SAS staff are utilised efficiently and effectively.

Regular meetings of the CRG will be held in the future and the PSA will update SAS staff members of discussions.

LMBR Taskforce meeting

An LMBR Taskforce meeting was held between the Department and the PSA. There has been a significant decrease in issues reported from members in the Focus Schools. This may indicate either an improvement in LMBR processes or that SAS staff are too busy finalising their work prior to the school holidays to report any issues.

The PSA requested information on trends associated with issues raised about LMBR. This information will provide a better idea of how LMBR is travelling and whether the volume of issues is reducing, remaining constant or increasing over time. The Department has agreed to provide this information at a future LMBR Taskforce meeting.

KPMG survey

The PSA is aware that KPMG undertook a survey during this term. The PSA asked the Department to provide information on the survey's findings. The Department agreed to share information. Once that is received, the PSA will advise SAS staff members.

Oliver Library System

SAS staff members were advised consultation around deployment of the Oliver Library System was sought with the Department some time ago, prior to trial deployment.

Oliver has now been deployed in some schools. The use of Oliver to record equipment and stocktake in schools as an alternative to SAP (and OASIS) is currently being considered.

The Oliver Library package offers a viable option for lending, stocktakes, bar coding and all the tracking functions required for smaller equipment administered by SAS staff. Positive feedback has been received from SAS staff in relation to this option.

Invoice automation

LMBR Focus schools are taking advantage of the recently introduced invoice automation process (involving vendors submitting invoices direct to Shared Services for processing). This process is reducing workload associated with vendor payments in schools.

Vendors are being reminded by the Department to send all invoices directly to Shared Services. Discussion with larger organisations on contract such as Telstra is occurring.

The Department advises that Invoice Automation successfully matches 95 percent of invoices received and should prove to be a boon to SAS staff in LMBR Focus Schools already facing heavy workloads. The PSA encourages SAS staff to follow the Department's procedures and request vendors send invoices direct to Shared Services for processing.

Budget Planning and Consolidation (BPC) tool demonstration

The Department has offered to run a BPC demonstration at a future LMBR Taskforce meeting. The PSA will report back to members after the demonstration. The date of the BPC demonstration is yet to be finalised.

PSA Members workload issues – still not addressed

Whilst the PSA has been successful getting the Department to fix a number of process and mechanical issues, it has still not adequately addressed concerns raised about excessive workloads.

A survey of the 229 schools (with over a 74 percent response rate) revealed that more than 80 percent of staff perform more than three hours of unpaid work per week.

We have written to the Department to demand an urgent meeting.

The PSA continues to work hard to improve the working conditions for its members in Schools. Your Union will continue to provide updates on these meetings as they occur in the future.

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