

Helping SRCs Help Parents/Guardians to Better Understand the Victorian Schooling System

BACKGROUND

Parents and guardians of secondary school students often lead busy lives. Combined with a changeable and often confusing education system, it can be difficult for parents/guardians to find the time to understand the terminology and educational pathways available for students.

If parents/guardians are confused or lack information, they cannot provide accurate support and advice to students. This has a direct impact on our education.

The education system can be complex for parents. Parents/guardians need to process a lot of information to best know how to support their children. It can be difficult finding time to look at all the information available from schools. The VicSRC believes that there are still aspects of the Victorian education system that remain relatively unclear to some parents/guardians.

While it may appear that some parents/guardians don't take much interest or participate in their children's learning, this isn't always the case; they might not participate simply because they don't have a solid understanding of the issues their children face at school.

For example, do your parents know how to best support you when deciding what learning pathway you might take at school? Do they understand what learning pathways are available for students?

Do your parents/guardians know that children between the ages of 6 and 17 years of age legally have to go to school?



THE 2011 RESOLUTION

In 2011, the VicSRC Congress passed a resolution stating: *'that the Government should provide some sort of resource for schools to help better educate parents about the Victorian Schooling System; this resource could include funding, professional facilitators and/or kits'*. This was voted to be a major focus of the VicSRC Executive for the following year.

As the VicSRC Executive investigated this issue further, we discovered the existence of a range of resources that can be used by SRCs to provide information about schools to parents/guardians.

WHY SHOULD SRCs TAKE ACTION?

The student delegates at Congress saw that the lack of knowledge of parents/guardians about the Victorian Schooling System is a big issue, and one that affected the education of many students. As SRC members, representing the interests of all students, we therefore have a responsibility to do something about this.

We're standing up and speaking up; it is the job of SRCs to take action on this.

SOME ACTIONS THAT YOUR SRC CAN TAKE IN YOUR SCHOOL

- **Research:** Information and resources are available for parents/guardians in your school community. Search out this information about the services your school provides: VCE, VCAL, Peer Support Program etc. From your findings, you could publicise a list of all related information so that students are aware that such resources exist and so that they can pass on this information to their parents/guardians.
- **Publicise:** the *VicSRC Parents' Education Resource List* (attached) in your school. The publications and websites listed in the resource list can assist parents/guardians to better understand their children's schooling system.
- **Contact:** parent groups in your local area to help you and your SRC facilitate a forum within your school where parents/guardians can openly ask questions about school or issues within the school community. Students and teachers can also be involved in this forum so that the parents/guardians can have their questions answered by people who have first-hand experience in school. First ask your School Council (or equivalent body in your school) for permission to run an event like this.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The VicSRC has created a resource list of websites, videos and publications that students and parents/guardians can use to expand their knowledge and understanding of the Victorian schooling system. It is available online at the VicSRC's website: www.vicsrc.org.au

GROUPS THAT CAN HELP

There are groups that can help you to help parents/guardians better understand the schooling system.

Parents Victoria is a statewide organisation representing parents of students in Victorian government schools. It provides parents with a voice and has information for parents about schools:

www.parentsvictoria.asn.au

The **Victorian Parents Council** provides similar resources within non-government schools:

www.vicparentscouncil.vic.edu.au

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) have materials and videos to help **both** parents/guardians and students understand the schooling system better. There is one in your area.



Your **School Council** and your **Local Government (Council)** can also help you with your actions. They have current and local information available and also have connections with other organisations that focus on this issue.

LET US KNOW!

The VicSRC is keen to know if your SRC has taken any action on this issue in your school. We will support schools that have taken action to publicise the action that they have taken, in order to encourage other SRCs to also act within their own school community.

We would also like to know if you have found any other useful information to enrich the resource list that we currently have.

Let's close the knowledge gap and help parents and guardians to further support their children.

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