NSWPPA POSITION | Technology in Schools

Background

The NSWPPA is committed to ensuring that all students in NSW public schools receive the highest quality teaching and learning experiences, delivered by highly trained teachers in well-resourced learning environments.

As technology use increases both within schools and as part of our everyday lives more broadly, it is essential that schools have access to appropriate kinds and ratios of devices, high levels of connectivity and sufficient staffing support to ensure that schools continually develop and improve their digital maturity.

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that not only are students engaged in technology rich learning environments that allow them to develop their digital capabilities, but to ensure that staff are well supported and equipped to teach students to access online environments responsibly. In order to do this, staff must be supported to develop their own capabilities.

Rationale

- It is not possible to perform the any role in a school without access to a suitable device at a ratio of 1:1. *Staff in schools are not currently entitled to be provided with a device for their work.*
- It is essential that all schools have high levels of connectivity to ensure reliable and consistent connection to the internet and intranet within the school. *There is significant inequity in connectivity and technology infrastructure between schools, and when upgrades are required, this must be funded from the school's budget at the expense of other initiatives for students.*
- Schools are required to maintain a fleet of devices for use by students and staff. Schools are reliant upon a staff member having technological expertise or paying a third party to provide technical support within the school. *Despite there being a significant increase in the number of devices to manage in schools, schools are not provided with a technical officer to support the administration and upkeep of these devices. Schools must rely upon regional field services teams, who are not always available to visit schools for day to day technical tasks.*
- The Rural Access Gap program has provided a strong example of how enhanced support for the use of technology in schools makes a difference to all students and staff. *Successful elements of this initiative should be continued & expanded to include all schools.*
- Teaching and administrative staff are required to use technology in every aspect of their work and technology is developing at a faster pace than traditional models of professional learning can be offered for school staff. There is minimal training or professional learning available to support staff to improve their skills and maintain currency in their digital capabilities that is personalised or contextualised. *The Digital Classroom Officer model of support is limited to Rural Access Gap schools and is currently only in place for a 12 month period.*

Position

The NSWPPA believes that:

- All temporary and permanent teaching and support staff in schools should be provided with a suitable portable device for their work that is allocated to the school at a ratio of 1 device per person, regardless of FTE.

- All schools should be provided with access to suitable devices for students to use at a ratio of at least 1:2.

- These devices should be maintained and periodically upgraded.

- All schools should be provided with a Digital Classroom Officer (DCO) at a minimum allocation of 0.2FTE (and increased pro rata according to number of students) as part of their permanent staffing entitlement to ensure support is ongoing and that technology and digital skills are deeply and authentically embedded within teaching and learning programs in all classrooms.

- The statewide Digital Support Team (DST) should be continued and expanded to support all schools. This ensures the building of capacity and collaborative networks for DCOs, to support best practice technology integration within teaching & learning, school systems and the wider community.

- Schools should receive a Technology Officer allocation, paid at a rate that is competitive with industry, and works school hours.

- Schools should be provided with appropriate technology infrastructure and connectivity that is funded centrally to ensure equity of access.

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