



The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for Mental Health

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A BETTER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

The Andrews Labor Government will overhaul Victoria's school-based vocational education with a new integrated end-of-school certificate – ensuring wherever they go to school, every student will be able to do both academic and vocational subjects.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* invests \$38 million to develop a new single VCE integrated senior secondary certificate – meaning students no longer have to choose between doing VCE or VCAL – and fund new Jobs, Skills and Pathways Coordinators in government secondary schools.

The move to an integrated certificate follows a review by former Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority CEO John Firth that found the change would provide all Victorian students with the best opportunity to develop both academic and practical vocational skills.

The investment will also create a new Foundation Pathways Certificate to support students in all settings to successfully transition after finishing school, particularly students with a disability and additional needs.

The integrated certificate will be implemented progressively from 2023 and will be fully implemented by 2025.

The Firth review, released today, also found more needed to be done to ensure young people had access to training that engages young people, delivers in-demand skills and leads to quality jobs. The Labor Government has accepted all recommendations of the review in-principle.

The Coordinators will provide advice and support for students choosing vocational and applied learning programs, in addition to working with training providers and employers to ensure that students get the most out of their learning and training.

This initiative will also reduce the administration burden on schools, so they can get on with the job of delivering high-quality teaching and supporting students in their vocational learning.

To continue to support families in need and bridge the digital divide, the Budget also invests more than \$24.5 million so students can keep the more than 71,000 mobile devices loaned to them during the coronavirus pandemic.

An additional \$31.6 million will support more families through the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund and State Schools Relief's Affordable School Uniforms program.

The Budget provides more than \$37.5 million to continue to help schools adopt a whole-school-approach to Respectful Relationships and embed a sustained, universal approach to the prevention of family violence.

Another \$7.4 million will continue the Marrung strategy, including expanding the successful Koorie Literacy and Numeracy and Koorie Engagement Support Officer programs to help Aboriginal students stay engaged in their education.

These initiatives build on \$250 million announced recently for more than 4,100 tutors at schools across Victoria, to ensure students who have fallen behind or become disengaged in the wake of the pandemic get the support they need in 2021.

We also know the difference a great teacher makes to the lives of their students. That's why a further \$32.8 million will extend the Primary Maths and Science Specialists initiative, to train 200 more primary school teachers as mathematics and science specialists and help more students achieve their potential in STEM.

More than \$20.5 million will continue to help build teacher capability and data literacy in schools through specialist teachers and data and evidence coaches.

The Labor Government has already announced \$10.8 million to give aspiring teachers the opportunity to build their experience in secondary and specialist schools, as part of a \$15.4 million investment towards fast-tracking teacher training programs.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"We want our kids to be all they can. With a single VCE certificate, we'll make it easier for kids to get a range of skills – both academic and vocational."

"Not only will this change give students greater flexibility in the subjects they choose – it will also give young Victorians more flexibility once they leave school, whether that's work or study."

"While learning from home, thousands of students benefitted from borrowed laptops, iPads and dongles. We want to make those loans permanent for kids who need them."