



Coaching for Inclusion: Strengthening Victorian Government Schools through Specialist Expertise

Australian Association of Special Education

National Conference - *Beyond Boundaries*

3 September 2026



‘Connection 2022’ by Kayla Clinch, a Badimaya Yamatji woman from Melbourne.

Source: [Dhelk Wukang Aboriginal Inclusion Plan 2022-2026](#)

Welcome and Session Goals



- **Illustrate** How the Victorian Inclusion Outreach Coaching (IOC) initiative is about a partnership between specialist and mainstream schools, building capability and embedding inclusive practices.
- **Hear** Principal, teacher and IOC voices how the coaching support schools to become more inclusive.
- **Reflect** on potential opportunities in your own school setting.

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Pre-Presentation Survey: Coaching
for Inclusion



Disability Inclusion system capability-building initiatives

Inclusion Outreach Coaching initiative



Inclusion Outreach Coaches (IOCs) are based in specialist schools and **provide capability-building opportunities to partner schools**. Coaches assist schools to set up systems and processes to sustain inclusive practices over time.

Diverse Learners Hub



The Diverse Learners Hub (DLH) **improves the capabilities, practice and confidence of the education workforce** to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of students with diverse learning needs. The DLH works directly with schools and produces state-wide resources.

Inclusive Education Professional Learning



Inclusive Classrooms **are blended learning courses**. The catalogue offers practical teaching strategies, adjustments and supports at the school, classroom and individual level, focusing on the Victorian education context.

Inclusive Education Scholarships Initiative

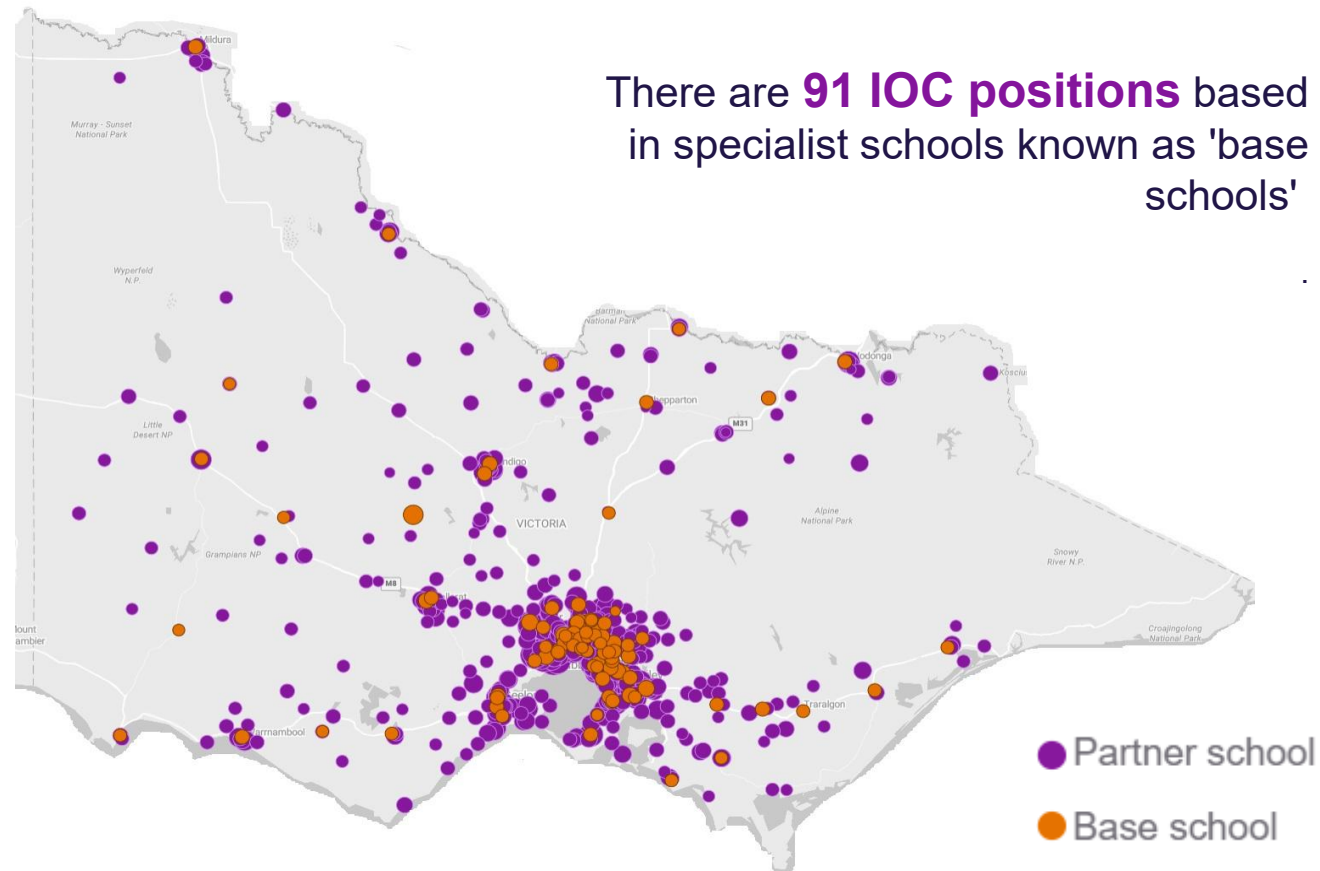


Provides **access to 125 funded postgraduate courses** in inclusive and specialist education or learning difficulties to teachers and regional workforces. Application rounds take place annually.

Inclusion Outreach Coaching – a unique opportunity

What is the purpose of the IOC initiative?

To deliver best practice guidance to the education workforce to improve the capabilities, practice and confidence in supporting students with disabilities and diverse learning needs at a multi-tiered level, and to ensure **all** students are fully supported to participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive school culture.



How do IOCs work?

- Coaches (IOCs) are based in specialist schools and spend most of their time supporting mainstream 'partner' schools.
- Schools are supported for a defined period, typically two terms, focusing on a specific goal tailored to the school's needs.
- Together the school and IOC develop a Partnership Agreement with a SMART goal and an action plan.
- IOCs guide the development of systems and processes that can be sustained by the school after the IOC support period.

IOC support to schools

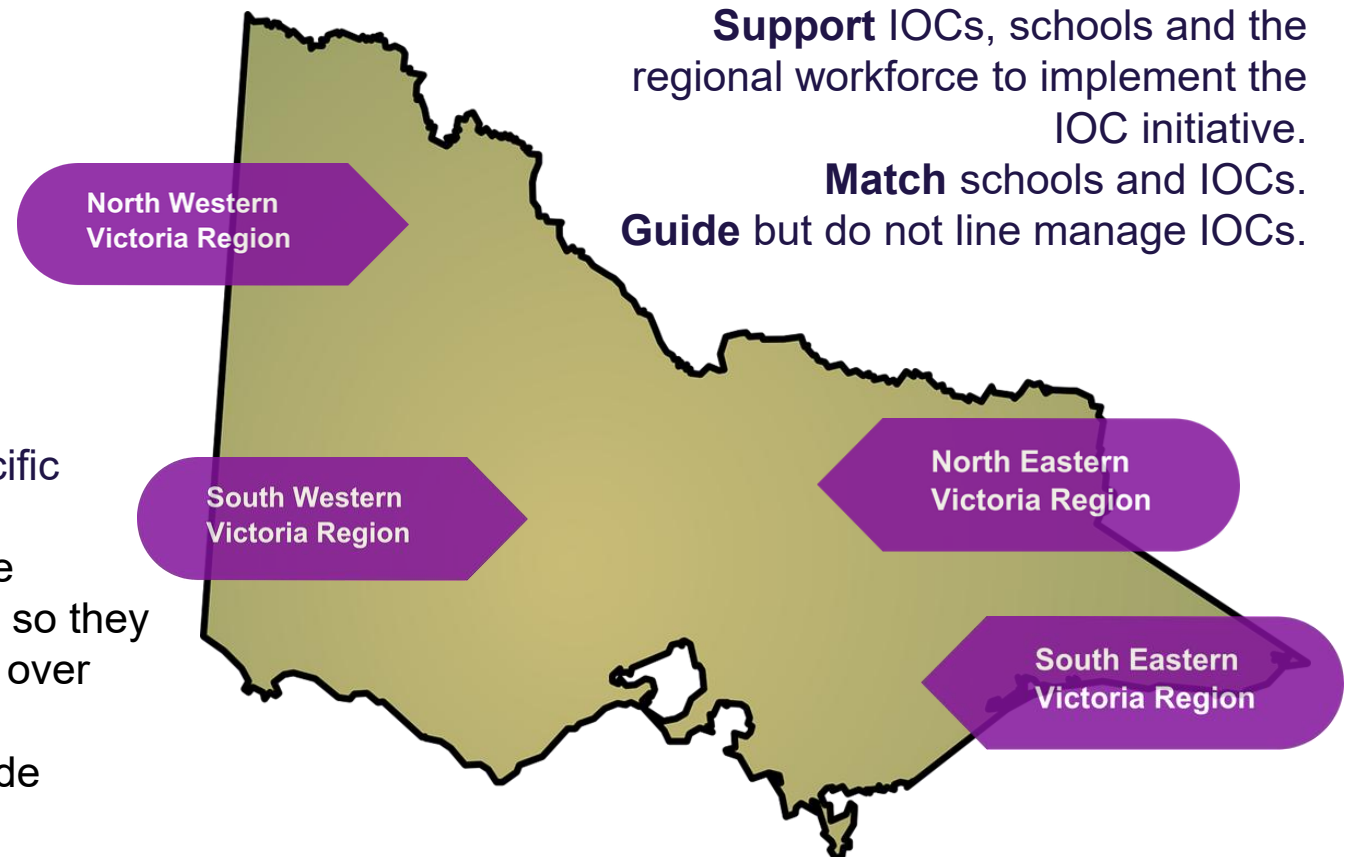
What knowledge and skills do IOCs have?

- A deep knowledge of teaching and learning
- Inclusive practices
- Problem-solving
- Multi-tiered System of Supports
- Coaching
- Implementation science

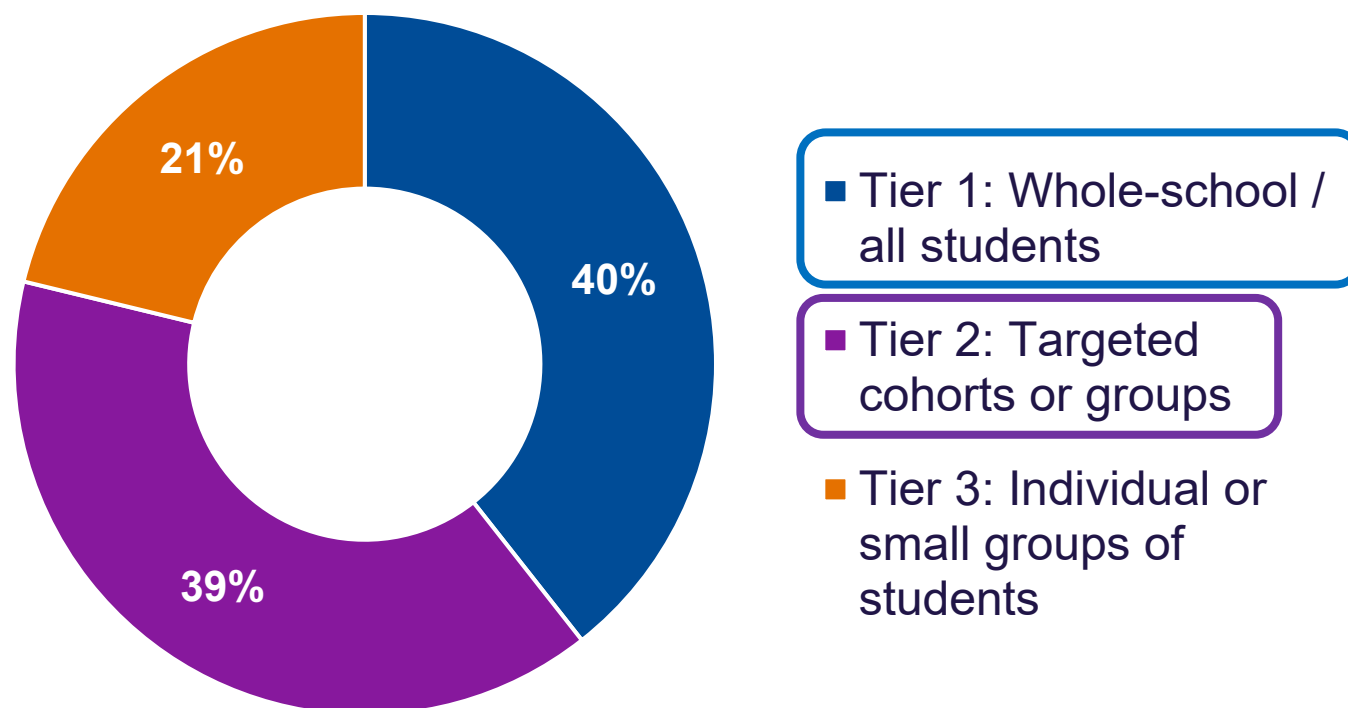
How do the IOCs support schools?

- Coaches apply a problem-solving process to a specific school-identified issue, based on school data.
- Coaches assist schools to set up Tier 1 preventative schoolwide systems, processes, practices and data so they can sustain and strengthen their inclusive practices over time.
- Coaches do not work directly with students or provide individual student support.

Four Regional IOC Coordinators



Greatest impact at closure of a partnership



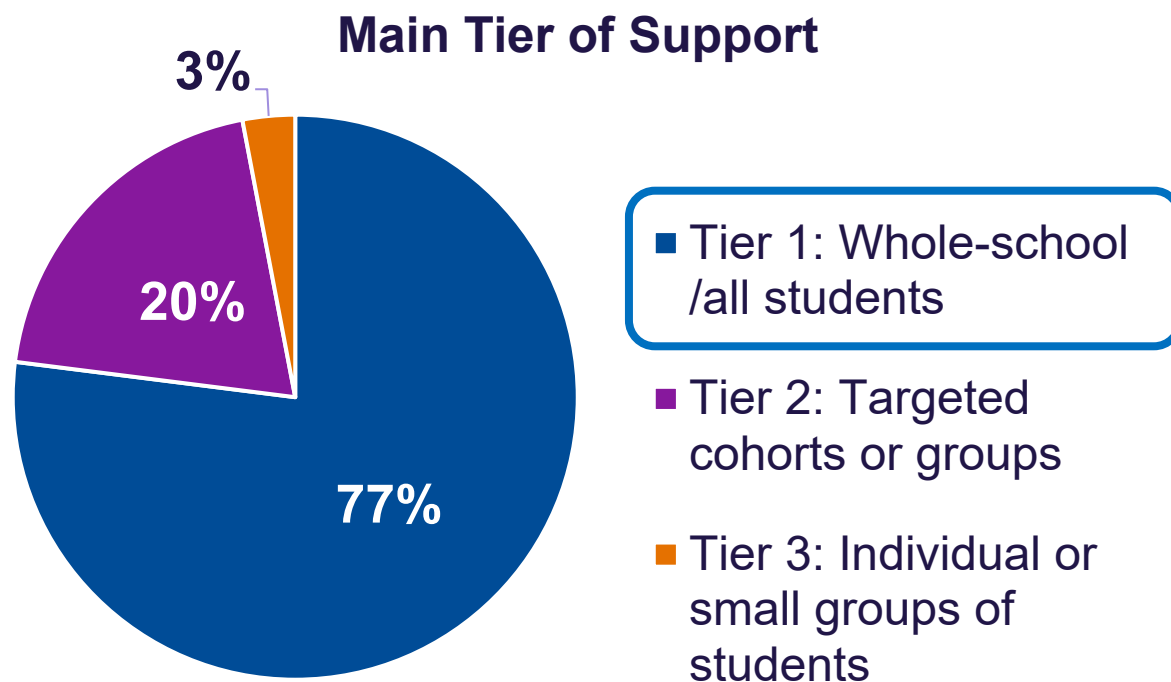
"We've already seen improvements in student data."

- School Leader

"... transformational for individual and collective practice."

- Leading Teacher

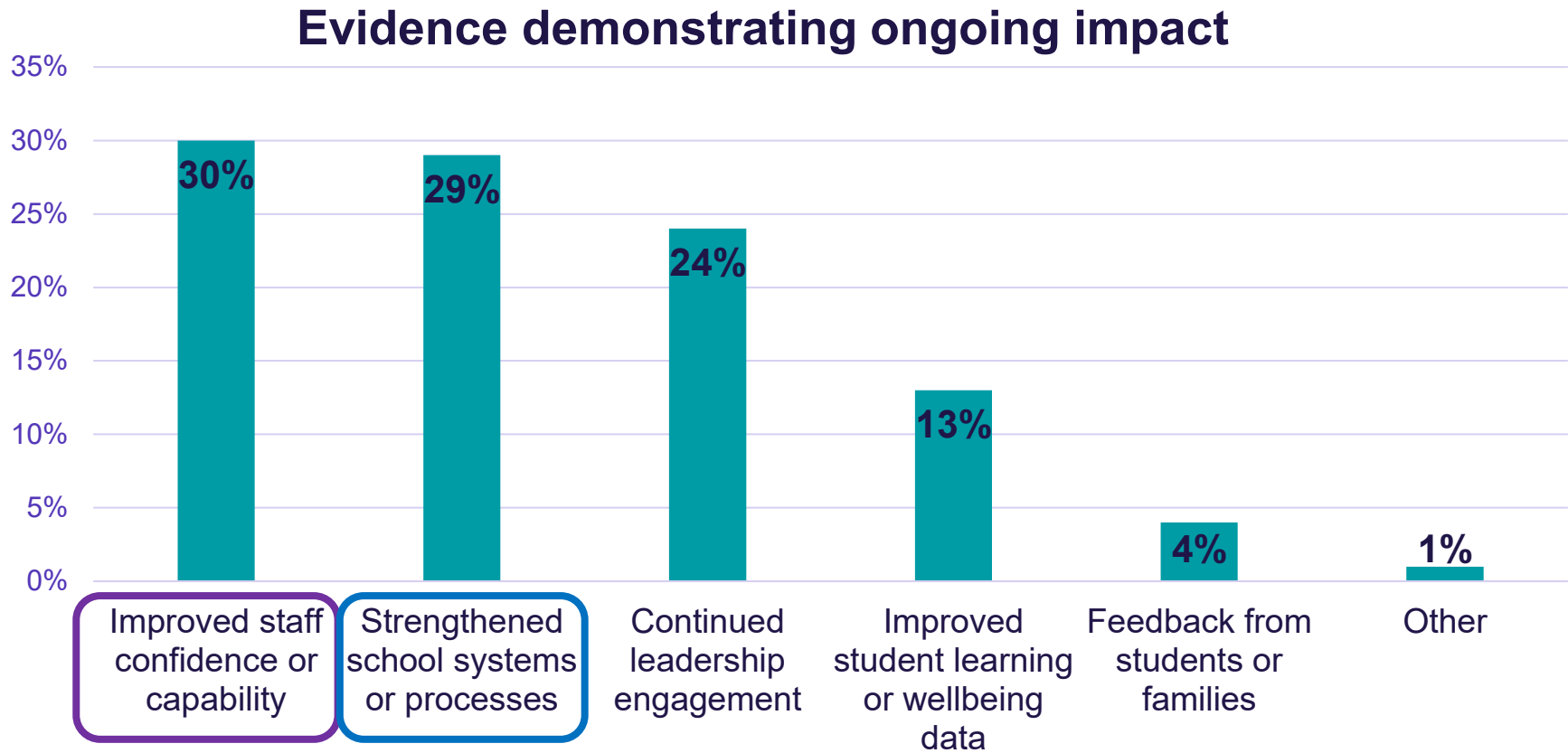
Impact data as of August 2026



IOCs have commenced **803** partnerships with schools across Victoria

94.29% of partner schools would recommend the IOC Service to other schools

As at 18/08/26



“... a really positive impact on our practice and the way we support students.”

- Disability Inclusion Leader

“...building staff knowledge and understanding of Tier 1 strategies”

- School Leader

Impact data as of August 2026

IOC School introductions

Ascot Vale Heights School Video (2 min)



Lilydale Heights Secondary College video (2 min)



Marong Primary School Video (2 min)



Trafalgar Primary School Video (2 min)



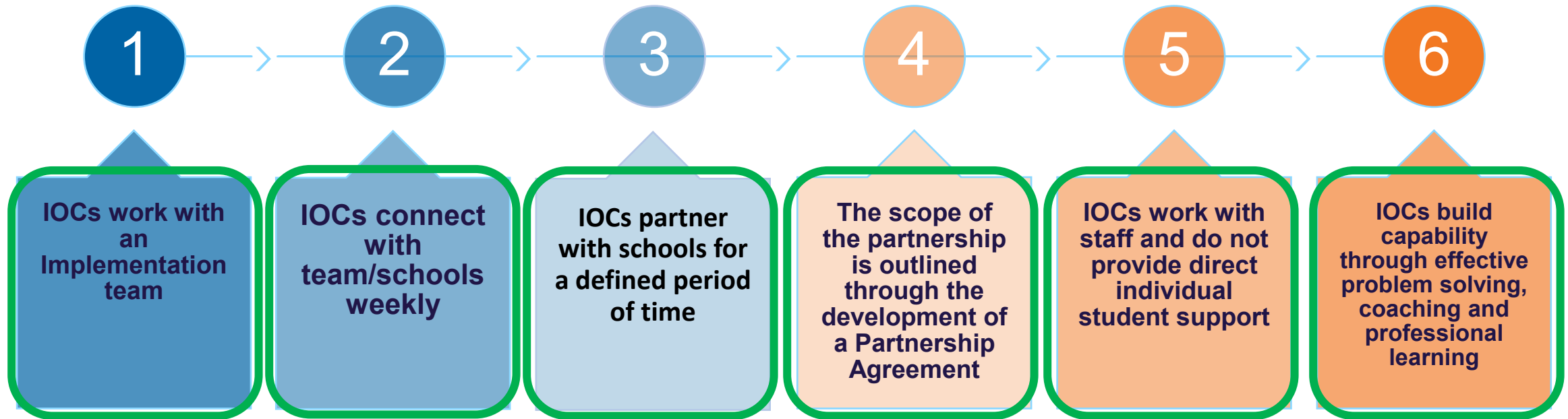
IOC Case Study Video (11 min)



IOC Website



How Inclusion Outreach Coaches (IOCs) work with schools

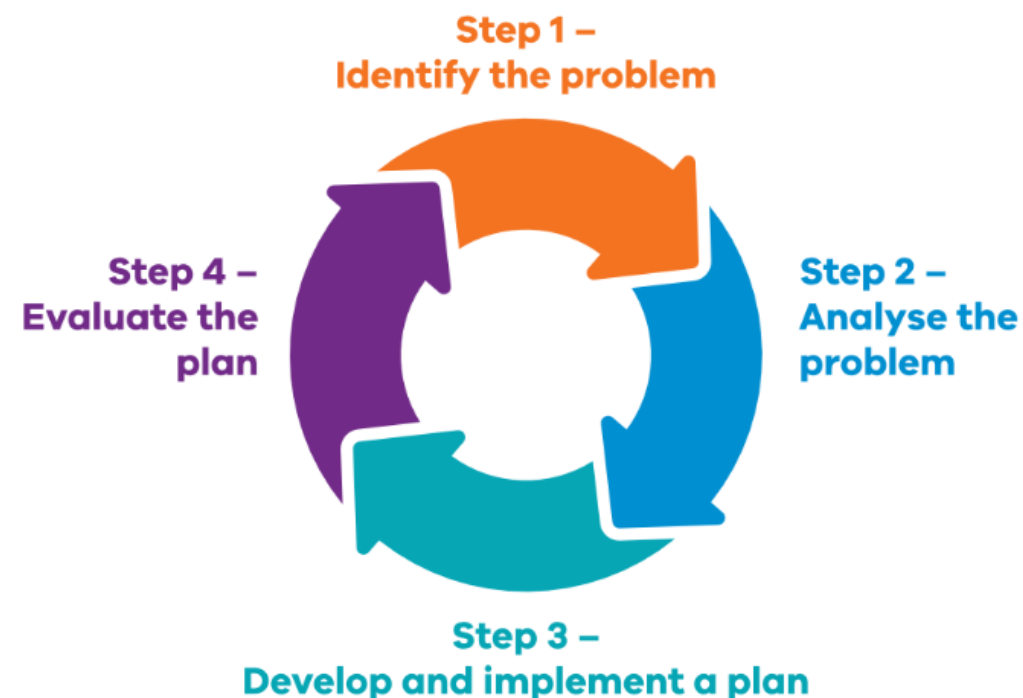


IOCs build capability, practice and confidence of the education workforce to better meet the learning and wellbeing needs of **all** students.

Building capability to meet the needs of ALL students



Figure 15. Adapted from Florida MTSS (2022). Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fact Sheet.



Who uses evidence-based problem-solving and is it data informed?

Abbotsford Primary School



Turn and Talk: one goal, many voices

“The work that I am doing with the Inclusion Outreach Coach is actually making my job more manageable”
Keith McNeil - Principal



Thinking about the data that you explore to inform decisions

How do you understand the story behind the data?

Which voices do you include when discussing data?



Sandringham Secondary College



At your table, discuss – what did you hear, what did you see?



One problem identified



One **GOAL**



Many voices to fully understand the problem



Strategies to address the problem

1) What is the goal?

2) Whose voices helped shape the work?

3) What data sets were used and what other data sets could be used?



And then we also surveyed the teachers



We did surveys with the students

Deer Park West Primary School



Turn & Talk – Implement



Looking at the Action Plan (Page 4) of the Partnership Agreement and list some actions/ tasks that could be implemented in a classroom or across a school to remove barriers and benefit all students.



Inclusion Outreach Coaching Partnership Agreement

Introduction

Inclusion Outreach Coaches (IOCs) build the capability of school leaders, teachers, and staff to implement, monitor and embed high quality inclusive practices.

The Partnership Agreement (PA) is developed in collaboration between the IOC and the school-based Implementation / Problem-solving Team &/or Leadership Team. It is an agreement that is signed between the Principal and the IOC, which outlines the nature of the IOC's engagement in the school, the goal/s for the partnership, and the responsibilities of all parties.

School: _____

Implementation / Problem-solving Team Members: _____

Inclusion Outreach Coach: _____

Our Implementation / Problem-solving Team will co-construct this Partnership Agreement in collaboration with Leadership, guided and supported by the IOC. This team will be responsible for problem-solving, planning, implementation of agreed actions, monitoring progress towards the goal and evaluation of outcomes. We understand that the Action Plan is a working document and may be adjusted in response to monitoring progress towards the goal and fidelity of implementation.

Section A

Strengths of the school: which strengths can be highlighted and leveraged as enablers to support implementation, monitoring and embedding of high-quality inclusive practices?

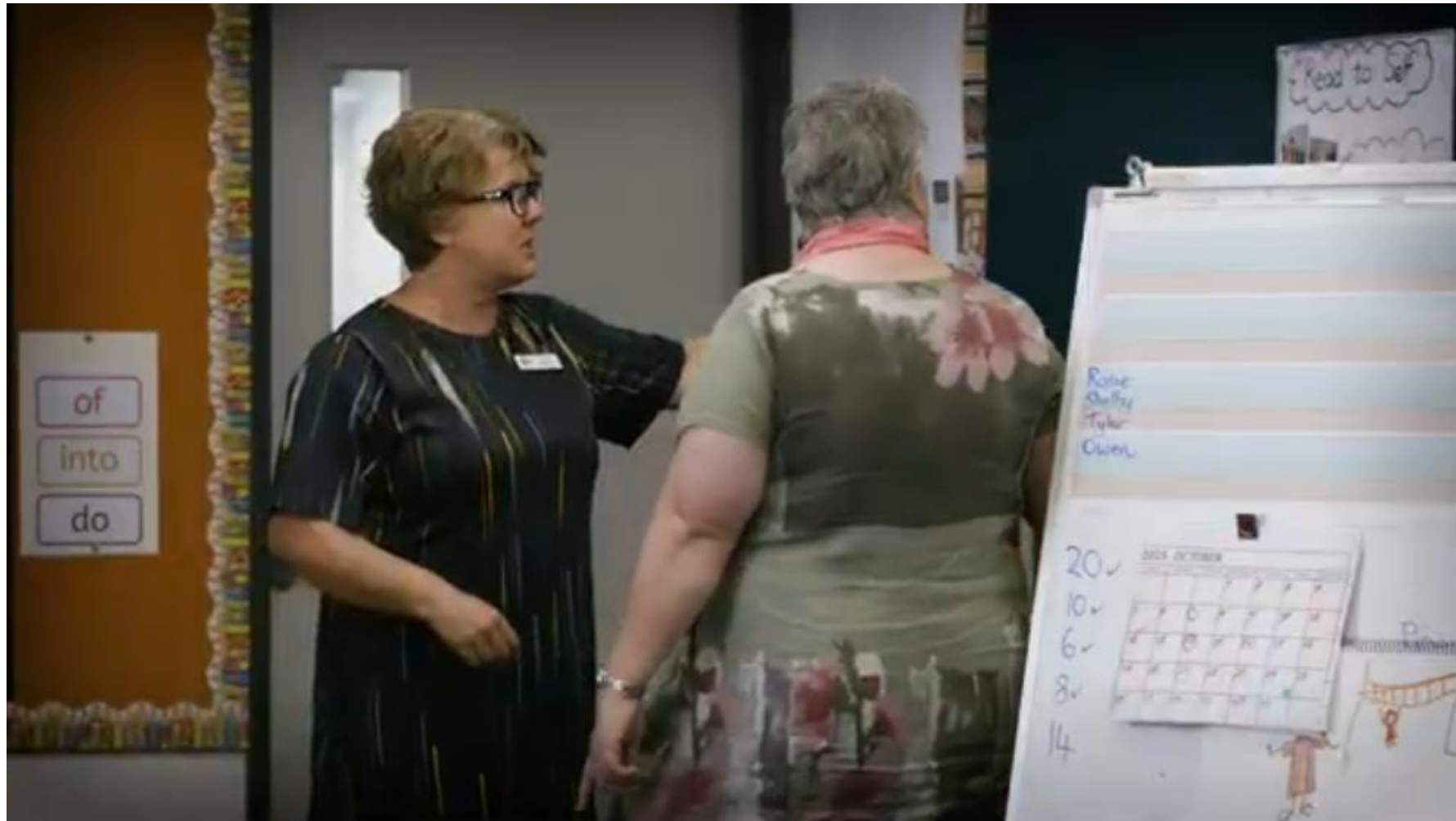
Original reason for request: (what did the school originally seek support for?)

The area of focus for this partnership agreement: (what is this partnership going to focus on?)

Tip: refer to alignment with BIPT and/or FISO 2.0 core elements and/or dimensions.

Phase 4 – Sustainability

Appin Park Primary School





As part of the sustainability stage of the problem-solving process, what small but achievable changes could you implement to ensure successful practices become part of everyday school routines?

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Section A

Strengths of the school: which strengths can be highlighted and leveraged as enablers to support implementation, monitoring and embedding of high-quality inclusive practices?

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The area of focus for this partnership agreement: (what is this partnership going to focus on?)

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Sample Version developed: 30/04/2026

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Handouts

Inclusion Outreach Coaching

Overview

Inclusion Outreach Coaching (IOC) is a Department of Education initiative being delivered as part of the Victorian Government's Disability Inclusion Reform agenda.

What is the purpose of the IOC initiative?

IOC aims to improve the capabilities, practice and confidence of the education workforce to better meet the learning and wellbeing needs and aspirations of all students, with particular attention to students with disability and diverse learner needs.

Inclusion Outreach Coaches support schools to improve inclusive practice capability and, in doing so, improve student outcomes.

How does IOC work?

Inclusion Outreach Coaches are based in specialist schools but spend most of their time supporting mainstream 'partner' schools that want to develop their capability around inclusion.

The coaches work with each partner school for a defined period, focusing on a specific goal tailored to the school's needs. They help the school develop a Partnership Agreement and support them to plan and implement actions to achieve their goal. Coaches assist schools to set up Tier 1 preventative schoolwide systems, practices and data so they can sustain and strengthen their inclusive practices over time. Coaches do not work directly with students or provide individual student support.

How can IOC benefit your school?

Inclusion Outreach Coaches have expertise in inclusive practices and problem-solving, Multi-tiered System of Supports, a deep knowledge of teaching and learning, and the skills to coach and support others.

Coaches can work with your school on problem-solving around a specific school-identified issue. They are trained to provide best practice evidence-based coaching guidance, information, resources and professional learning to support teams of school leaders, middle leaders, professional learning communities, teachers and other staff.

Find out more

Scan the QR code to visit our website



Scan the QR code to watch a short animation on our initiative



Scan the QR code to visit our case study video



General Enquiries – Central Office
inclusion.outreach.coaching@education.vic.gov.au



Questions

Post-Presentation Survey: Coaching for Inclusion



*"The IOC initiative is **one of the best things** the Department of Education has ever done **to support school staff.**"*

- *School Leader*



Thank you!

For further information please reach out to
inclusion.outreach.coaching@education.vic.gov.au





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Click [here](#) to view our new video which features four schools with different focus areas:

Abbotsford Primary School setting the scene around behaviour support needs and building staff capability to strengthen student voice and agency

Sandringham Secondary College demonstrating the importance of clear, measurable goals to develop consistent entrance routines

Deer Park West Primary School showcases how structured action planning and capability building can supporting students with complex needs

Appin Park Primary School shares their success in transforming classroom environments and improving inclusive practices to sustaining continuous improvement

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