Values-based Peer Mentoring
Students Taking Responsibility for the Next Leadership Generation

Student Councils 2011:

- Top Tips for Support Teachers
- SRC Needs Analysis
- Using Resource Kits
- Students on School Boards

Resources:
- Represent!
- Enviro Inspiro! 2011
- Schools First Student Awards
- Student Voice YouTube videos

- Students Publishing
- Connect on-line - for FREE
- Starting Student Action Teams
Welcome back to the 2011 school year (Connect's 32nd year). I trust that it will be a fruitful and busy and enjoyable year. Purposeful and purposeful learning relationships between students, teachers, administrators, parents and others will largely ensure that.

As 'normal', this first issue for the year focuses on Student Councils, SRCs and other forms of school governance, both in Australia and elsewhere (UK and USA). In particular, Connect features here the valuable leadership work of the VicSRC and the NSW State SRC. There are enormously valuable resources available from these organisations – but many schools still struggle with how to make best use of them. So in supporting that work, Connect here presents material about using resource kits – in particular, the copies of Represent! recently distributed to secondary schools in Victoria (but note that full PDFs of this Kit are also available on-line for free, and have relevance in other areas). The centre of this issue of Connect is what we've called an SRC Needs Analysis – a way to assess where to start and what sections of a Kit are of most urgent relevance to you. Use it! Tell us!

Old initiatives ... continuing excitement

In a return to ideas that were a focus in the very first issues of Connect, two students and their teacher write about processes in the production of a student-led school/community newspaper, and in another school, peer mentoring for student leadership is described. There may/must be other examples like these: but, you know, they don't really exist until you've told others about them! (as Art Pearl told us years ago!)

Connect on-line

You can read these early stories on-line now. As noted in the last issue, we're progressively putting all back issues of Connect on-line. I'm pretty sure that all issues from #1 (1979) to #180 (2009) are on the site: research.acer.edu.au/connect (that's 30 years of Connect archives!) – and #181 will be added as this issue gets to you. But remember that, for all the latest news and stories, you'll need to continue to subscribe to Connect: that way you'll get the current six issues – and encourage us to keep publishing Connect!

Our main site: asprinworld.com has also been revamped, to provide links to the Australian Student Participation Resource and Information Network (ASPRIN). Connect contents are indexed on the site and, where appropriate, these are linked to the full on-line PDFs. Have a look.

Student Voice Videos

As both the VicSRC and the NSW State SRC announce video-based competitions (see pages 10 and 19 in this issue), we came across some interesting short videos on YouTube under the heading of 'Student Voice'. Those from ESSA (the English Secondary Students Association) are particularly diverse and interesting. See all the details and links on page 26 of this issue.

Roger Holdsworth
In 2010, St Joseph’s Primary School (Northcote, in Melbourne’s northern suburbs) began a student newspaper called *The Students’ Voice*.

The idea for creating a student newspaper started with the senior SRC committee members. Discussions began at the SRC level and then, once it was officially decided to go ahead, it was announced to the whole school. The process we followed was to organise a competition for all students to create a name for the newspaper and a front cover design. We had quite a few entries for both. It was decided that the name that fit best was *The Students’ Voice* – suggested by Nicholas, a Year 6 student. The winning cover design was also by a Year 6 student, Eliza.

The senior SRC students, with the support of Signora Pina, the staff SRC leader, met to discuss what our newspaper would include. We were also very lucky to have Roger Holdsworth who came to our school to work with us and help us to get started.

We discussed the purpose of the newspaper and how it would be set up. We looked at examples of other student newspapers to give us ideas. We learnt that, with a newspaper, you should always work in sets of four pages. Our newspaper would consist of work from the students, articles about public current events, what the school and classes had been up to and a community section as well. We would also include a fun page in every issue for the students’ enjoyment.

Our newspaper was created using Microsoft Publisher. The first issue of *The Students’ Voice* was 8 pages long and was put together by the editorial team consisting of Luisa (SRC), Claudia (School Captain), Harrison (School Captain), Domenic (SRC) and Imanoula (SRC). With a lot of time and effort put in, we finally published our first ever issue at the end of Term 3. It was a great success and we had very positive feedback from students, staff and parents. We enjoyed working on it very much.

For our second issue, we created a 12 page edition. This time our editorial team consisted of us two with some help from four Year 5 students. They assisted us and we taught them what was involved in publishing the newspaper so that it will keep going in our school for many years to come. They were a great help and may be on the editorial team in 2011.

Here are some tips from what we learnt from our experience:

- **Be organised**: leave plenty of time to do everything. Set up and meet timelines and deadlines
- **Start small and then get bigger**: we began with 8 pages and then moved to 12 pages
- **Don’t have too many people on the newspaper crew**: we found four was enough for the big issue of 12 pages; depending on how big you want the newspaper to be, adjust the number of people working on it
- **Divide up the jobs**
- **Be patient** with each other and learn from mistakes
- **Be prepared to give up lunchtimes**: it takes a lot of commitment, organisation, time and effort
- **Really helps if articles submitted are online**
- **To make sure the newspaper continues**, include and teach Year 5 students at least for the last issue published

On behalf of the editorial team we would like to thank Roger for helping us to get started. He was a great help and we appreciated his time. Mostly we would like to thank Signora Pina for everything she has done to help us make our newspaper a success. Publishing a student newspaper is a great opportunity to learn, have fun and develop new skills.

Even though we are moving onto High School we will never forget this experience. We had an awesome time in beginning a student newspaper for our school and we are sure it will carry on for many years to come.

*Claudia and Luisa*

*Some teacher reflections ... page 4*
Establishing a student newspaper:
Responding to and supporting student self-initiated ideas

At St. Joseph’s, one of our aims for 2010 was to encourage and develop more student voice and action. When some senior students came up with the idea of beginning a student newspaper, we were delighted as a staff and encouraged this as a wonderful opportunity for students to take on a project that was initiated, developed and completed by them.

As the staff member on the Student Representative Council, part of my role was to work with the newspaper team, support them, encourage them and offer advice and direction when needed.

I felt it was important for the students to direct the whole project. They came up with running competitions for naming the paper and the front cover design. They created flyers, spoke often at whole school assemblies and visited classrooms to encourage contributions from the students. They used the student bulletin board to share progress of the paper and also set up a MyClasses intranet page where other students could follow the progress online. They also used email to communicate with students sending them material for the newspaper.

From our experience of establishing an inaugural student newspaper, we learnt that one of the most important things (and this should be done at the very beginning of the process) was to discuss and articulate the purpose of the newspaper. This then needs to be clearly communicated to the whole school. It was great to have Roger work with us and assist us during this process.

Students also need to work as a team, brainstorm ideas, agree on what is to be included and then divide up the tasks. From my observations, it is a good idea to have one or two people overseeing and being the editors but not necessarily having to take on all the work. Students who take on this project need to make a real commitment to it and should be prepared to give up some of their own free time.

Using students’ work that is currently being done in the classroom is a great way to showcase students’ everyday achievements and is also an incentive for students to produce their best effort. Original work, however, was also created just for the newspaper.

I would also suggest to students that they back up their work on the newspaper on the computer, or save it onto a USB stick, as our students lost some of their work because images used were too big.

Publishing a student newspaper is a very worthwhile project and our students were very proud of their achievements, of having the opportunity to share their ideas, celebrate their work and their school. It was a great learning experience for the students who worked with commitment and determination. The project was well supported by the staff and students and parent response was also positive.

As a staff member I am extremely proud of what our students have begun and I look forward to working with the new team for 2011.

Pina Iapozzuto
piapozzuto@sjnorthcote.catholic.edu.au

Opportunities for Setting Up Student Action Teams

How do you start to use Student Action Team approaches within a school? What can be the initiating impulse? Looking back on the experience of about 12 years, there seem to be three main opportunities or starting points for initiating a SAT; each has implications for the choice of topic:

1. Student initiation
The school can start with a commitment to the idea of a Student Action Team as a student-led, change-oriented way of learning. But about what? Students can then be invited (or asked) to brainstorm specific issues that could be the team’s focus. This could happen within a specific forum, within the SRC, or through informal channels. The school then works out ways to establish and maintain this within its practices.

Caution: this could become tokenistic, with the school only allowing limited issues, or students believing that only such trivial issues can be addressed.

2. Issue-focused commission
A specific issue has already identified within the school or community. A Student Action Team is formed (from volunteers, a class, within the SRC, by application etc) to specifically work on it. The students are commissioned to investigate and act because their expertise and interest is recognised. Again, the school works out how to support this within its structures.

Caution: the issue may not be one of concern to students; it definition can take control away from students. The SAT can be set up in ways that are marginal to the school’s central processes.

3. Curriculum-focused
A particular class or subject adopts Student Action Team approaches as a way of learning and teaching within that class/subject. The topic or issue is then set by the established curriculum; the Student Action Team becomes the way of transforming how learning and teaching of that topic happens to provide it with authenticity, meaning and purpose; the SAT is resourced as part of the curriculum.

Caution: the class may feel ‘drafted’ into such an approach around an externally-set topic to which they feel little commitment. The class’s work may have little impact on the rest of the school.
Emmanuel College, St Paul’s Campus, is a school with a rich tradition of taking the boys from around the Altona region and developing them into young men of good character. The foundation to our success includes a focus on and living of our Marianist, Catholic and Australian values. In recent years the College community has ambitiously strived to ‘raise the bar and narrow the gap’ in student learning and academic performance which complements and works in partnership with our core objective: to develop moral young men with strong Catholic values. These dual obligations empower the community to live out our philosophy of ‘Life to the Full’.

Five years ago, St Paul’s Campus evolved into a vertical House structure whereby students would move through each level in the same homeroom and House. Each homeroom has an even spread of students from Years 7 to 12 where students meet every morning to share in morning prayer and form positive relationships with each other and their homeroom teacher. This structure has allowed for an abundance of opportunities for older students to act as good role models and mentors to the younger students they have daily contact with.

Four years down the road, we recognised a need to further empower senior students to develop their skills as models and mentors for younger students. The Peer Mentoring Program has allowed this to occur.

Aims and objectives of the Peer Mentoring Program
The Program aims to:
1. develop a core body of Year 10 students with an awareness of their values and the capacity to confidently live them
2. support one Peer Mentor from each homeroom to build a trusting relationship with each Year 7 student in their homeroom, to welcome them, help them set learning goals, resolve challenges as they arise, and discuss and model good values
3. support Peer Mentors to mentor Year 7 leaders
4. develop a community of young men who don’t simply do the right thing out of obedience or reward but rather embody good values and live them out.

Peer Mentoring Development Days
With 40 homerooms, 40 Peer Mentors were required. We deemed it necessary to split them into two groups and run two identical Peer Mentoring training days. Each day was attended by 20 Year 10 students. The days had core objectives of:
1. developing a strong peer mentoring team
2. identifying personal strengths which make them great mentors and areas of challenge which need to be further developed
3. recognising what our core values are as individuals, as a team and as a College
4. confronting situational responses scenarios and developing specific mentoring skill to impart our core values.

A range of activities was utilised to create the appropriate culture for the day, develop trust and best achieve our objectives. Students left the day feeling confident, energised and determined to be the change they wanted to see in their College community. Their action plan...
was to model good values by developing welcoming, trusting and positive relationships with the Year 7s in their homeroom. They would help them review their academic progress, set termly goals and monitor their success at achieving these goals. They would discuss and problem-solve challenges confronted by Years 7 as they arose. Finally, they aimed to develop the elected Year 7 leaders into genuine leaders.

**Mid Year Evaluation**

The work of the Peer Mentors was reviewed mid-year with the vast majority of Year 7s aware of who their mentor was by name and hugely appreciative of the support and mentoring given in a number of areas.

**Year 7 Mid-Year Evaluation of Peer Mentors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7s who correctly named their Peer Mentor</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Peer Mentor made the Year 7 feel welcome into their homeroom and school</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Peer Mentor was friendly to the Year 7 and establish a positive friendship</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7s received good advice from Peer Mentor</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning goal setting and regular monitoring of these occurred with the assistance of their Peer Mentor</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We were incredibly pleased with these positive results. We had far more modest expectations given this was the first year of the Peer Mentoring program. Within the survey we were also able to identify key areas for improvement for the remainder of the year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas requiring extra support</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra assistance required in the use of our diaries</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help me with school and homework I find difficult</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have more fun with us</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help me set and achieve my learning goals</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It became clear that the students were very happy at school and most hadn’t confronted significant relationship issues that required extra assistance. Rather, their focus was predominately on gaining more assistance with their learning. Our response to this was to provide further training to our Peer Mentors in how to work individually with Year 7s in reviewing their progress, analysing their habit formation and setting achievable goals during our Learning Advisor sessions. Several Peer Mentors volunteered to extend the program by running a Student Tutoring Service that ran during lunch time once a week. Year 7s could bring their class or homework to the sessions and get assistance from Peer Mentors and other senior students.

**Wellbeing Feedback survey drives a new focus**

As the year progressed, it became apparent that a small number of relational issues began within the Year 7 cohort as indicated by our Wellbeing Survey. The Peer Mentors decided to tackle this challenge by having individual conversations with the Year 7s in their homeroom where they could openly discuss conflict situations they had experienced and help guide them to solutions.

Secondly a small group of them ran a Year 7 assembly where they discussed and promoted the good values that
make us a great community. They openly discussed that when we stray from these values the impact on individuals can be hurtful and damaging.

**Senior Leaders Mentoring Junior Leaders**

This was an opportunity for a selection of exceptional Peer Mentors to run a leadership development session with Year 7 leaders. From this they were then able to develop personal ongoing mentoring relationships with a Year 7 leader. The core objectives were:

1. **Peer Mentors to mentor junior leaders** to develop:
   - unity, awareness of personal strengths and areas of challenge as a leader,
   - identify core values as individuals and as a College,
   - identify how I can make a difference as a leader, imparting values.

2. **Ongoing mentoring:** Junior leader and senior mentor to meet weekly during homeroom to discuss progress and development as a leader.

**Key lessons**

As a College community we are growing in our belief that the more we empower our students, the greater cultural development will occur. The embodiment of our core values will be more successfully achieved when modelled by other senior students, rather than solely promoted by teachers.

Although the program has key objectives and structures, flexibility is required to respond to the needs of the junior students as they arise. The solutions to these challenges need to be determined by the Peer Mentors, giving them as much control over the program as possible.

**Mark Sciberras**

Head of House, Emmanuel College, Altona North

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Top tips for teachers taking on Student Councils

By now, teachers and students will have returned for the 2011 school year. What thought have you put into how your Student Representative Council (SRC) will operate? Maybe you have been allocated the role of support teacher for the SRC, but have no idea what to do. Hopefully the information below will assist you in getting up and running for 2011.

1. Be ready for business on Day 1
   Have you already elected your student representatives for this year?
   If not, get on top of it quickly. How many students do you require for your Council?
   Will students nominate for positions? Will you conduct interviews? Whatever process you choose, make sure it is clear and transparent to the student body. You can't go changing things and attempt to rig the system once things get underway.

   The Australian Electoral Commission (www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/index.htm) has a great online kit for running elections. Your local returning officer may also be able to assist you in holding your elections by helping create your ballot papers, speaking to your students about voting, bringing out all of the official polling materials such as ballot booths and boxes that are used at state and federal elections and assist you with counting the votes. This is currently a free service. While you're in the process of organising this year's elections, make a note in your diary towards the end of Term 3 to start organising your school elections so you will be ready for business on day 1 next year.

   Celebrate and promote your student representatives
   Once you have obtained your student representatives, be sure to celebrate and promote them within the school. Some ideas for this might be a special badge presentation at a whole school assembly, an afternoon tea with school administration staff – perhaps invite parents/guardians to come along or have a local excursion or outing.

2. Training & Support
   Organise a PD session with your student representatives.
   Think about the roles that exist for teachers within your school. Think about the professional development you or others required to undertake to enable you to undertake those roles. For many of your students, taking on the role of SRC member will be something new and one that they will require training in. For most, a one off training day will be sufficient to get you started, however I do know of schools that extend their training over a few days, through to those that go away and run an SRC Training Camp.

   Whilst it is possible to run your own training day yourself, I have found that these days work best when you have an external facilitator come in and run the day for you. This prevents you from having to wear multiple hats and allows you to ‘float’ more as the teacher advisor and provide advice about school operations whilst the facilitator can extend and challenge the students’ thinking.

   Second Strike is an organisation that specifically provides training for Student Councils (www.second-strike.com). All of their crew have had experience being on a Student Council to some degree. Each training day is tailor-made to suit the needs and requirements of your school. Some sessions you might like to consider for your training day may explore the purpose of a Student Council, what it means to be an SRC representative, meeting procedure, action planning, promoting your student council or public speaking.

   (Disclaimer: As the President of VISTA, Second Strike does provide extensive support and resources to our organisation.)

3. Have a plan
   What is your Student Council about and how does it work?
   How often does your Student Council meet? How will you deal with SRC members who don’t attend meetings? What process will the SRC use to make decisions? These are just some of the questions or issues you will need to address as the SRC Teacher Advisor with your SRC throughout the year.

   Developing a constitution or policy for the Student Council is a worthwhile exercise. It can clearly outlines what the SRC is responsible for doing. More importantly, it can assist in making clear to others what the SRC is not responsible for doing. It also makes clear to others how your Student Council operates.

   Some items to include:
   Name of the organisation
   (Student Representative Council, Student Leadership Council, Student Parliament, Student Voice, Student Union etc.)

   Mission Statement, Aims & Objectives
   What is your Student Council about? What do they do?

   Nominations, Elections and Selecting SRC Members
   How will you elect/select your SRC members? How long can they be a member for? What is the process for nominating? How will you run elections? What will you do if there is a vacancy during the year? Can the SRC co-opt members to join the SRC?

   Membership & Positions
   Who can be a member of the SRC? What different positions will exist within your SRC?
   Will you have officer bearers (eg: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer)? How will they be selected? What is their role?

   Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Action
   What do you expect from your SRC members? What action will be taken if the code of conduct is breached?

   Meeting Procedures
   How often will you meet? Where and when will you meet? What format will your meetings take? How will you make decisions?

vista@srcteachers.org.au
http://srcteachers.ning.com
What process will you have if you need to hold an emergency meeting? What is your quorum (number of people required present) to make a decision?

Operations
How will your funds be managed? Can work for the SRC be used as credit for school based subjects? What awards will your SRC offer students or SRC members? What are the criteria?

Changes or modifications to the policy/constitution
What is the process for changing your policy or constitution?

What are you going to do for the year?
The size and skill set of your Student Council will determine what projects you can take on for the year. Having worked with senior primary students on an SRC of about 10 members, I have found that we can manage one major project and up to two minor projects a term.

A useful task at the beginning of the year (perhaps at your training day) is to develop a plan of action for the year. Get feedback from the student body about what events or projects they would like to see the Student Council undertake. Determine what projects and tasks you are going to undertake for the year. Look at what other major events are happening in the school and schedule your events around them.

Work with your Student Council to develop a template or proforma for action planning. This can be a useful tool for students to map out their ideas and make sure that all possibilities have been considered and all requirements have been completed.

4. Resourcing
Resourcing your SRC well will help to determine its success throughout the year. A well resourced SRC indicates to the student representatives and the wider student body that the SRC is seen as a valid and worthwhile organisation within the school.

Where does your SRC get its funding from? Hopefully your school provides the Student Council with some core funding from its own global budget at the beginning of the school year. If not, then you will need to consider fundraising or grant applications to fund the resourcing and operations of the Student Council.

In addition to funding, consider the physical resources your Student Council will require to operate. Do you have a room to meet? Do you have an office or location you can work from? Do you have access to a telephone, fax and a computer e-mail facilities? Do your SRC members have folders to store minutes, agendas and other important documents?

Consider how information is delivered to the SRC and how information from the SRC is distributed to others. Access to a pigeon hole (and a person who checks it regularly!) will allow for others to pass on information. Access to a photocopier will assist in distributing agenda, minutes and other documentation from meetings as well as posters promoting upcoming events. You could also create and publish your own SRC newsletter or contribute a column to your current school newsletter. Some Student Councils use e-mail, develop webpages and run ‘radio stations’ over the school’s internal PA system to communicate and promote their work to others.

5. Sharing and networking and with others

Developing local clusters
Some schools have gone about forming working relationships with Student Councils from other neighbouring schools. These cluster groups meet regularly to share the workings of the Student Councils at their respective schools, discuss common issues and concerns, seek out new ideas and ways of operating and undertake projects that extend beyond the school gate.

At a state level, the Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) (www.vicsrc.org.au) is the state’s peak body for secondary SRCs and school students in Victoria. The organisation is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and auspiced by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YAcVIC) (www.yacvic.org.au). They have produced a range of kits, from developing SRC networks and clusters through to how principals and school leaders can support student councils.

Are you the teacher responsible for the student council at your school?
What issues and challenges are you experiencing?
What would you like to know more about or get some help with?
What successes have you had in the past?

The most recent kit, Represent! is a comprehensive manual that will assist any SRC and support teacher in taking their SRC to the next level (www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent). Whilst the kit is pitched towards secondary schools, primary SRCs will find many of the tools and articles of value. Copies of this kit are being distributed to secondary schools early in 2011. Others interested in obtaining a copy can do so via the DEECD Fuse Website (fuse.education.vic.gov.au/secondary/pages/Results.aspx?s=represent)

Read all about it!
Connect magazine is a bi-monthly Australian journal about student participation (www.aspinworld.com/Connect). This publication regularly features the work of Student Councils and other student organisations from around Australia and overseas. Recently, all past editions of Connect have been digitally scanned, archived and made available for free online thanks to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (research.acer.edu.au/connect). Access to the most recent editions are available through subscription.

What about the SRC Teacher?
VISTA is the Victorian Institute of SRC Teacher Advisors (srcteachers.ning.com). It is the state’s peak organisation for teachers who work with Student Councils across government, catholic and private sectors from both primary and secondary schools. It provides access to resources, professional development and the opportunity for SRC teachers to network in their own region and across the state. As a member of VISTA, you also receive a free subscription to Connect and discounts to training days provided by Second Strike.

Our first PD session for the year is on Thursday 3rd March, where we will be exploring in more detail tips to support SRC Teacher Advisors. This event will be hosted in Kew and streamed live over the Internet for those in regional, interstate and overseas locations. For links to resources and details of all upcoming PD sessions, visit us at srcteachers.ning.com.

Hopefully the above information will spark your enthusiasm for your Student Council and assist you to make 2011 your SRC’s greatest year yet!

Scott Duncan, VISTA President Cranbourne East Primary School duncan.scott.s@edumail.vic.gov.au
Represent! in schools

SRC Resource Kit

In the coming months SRCs around Victoria will be receiving their very own, brand spanking new copies of Represent!, a Resource Kit for SRCs, students and teachers. The kit was put together by some of the most experienced SRC students and teachers from across the state.

The kit itself is split into six sections and contains information – from setting up an SRC at your school, right to great templates to enhance your SRC meetings, to make even the most advanced SRC more effective in representing their students’ needs and interests.

Part 1 introduces the concept of SRCs and the need for them in schools, and outlines the qualitative characteristics of an effective SRC. Part 2 expands on this idea and goes into the nitty gritty of how to establish an SRC at your school – which is also useful for established SRCs to review their own processes of brainstorming, decision-making and taking action. Part 3 is a must read for everybody on the SRC as it discusses the day-to-day doings of an SRC, and most importantly the role of the representative within the school and the SRC itself, reminding students it’s not all pretty horses and rainbows on SRC. Part 4 talks about the needs of the SRC not only in financial terms, but also in human resources and investing in training to create more effective representatives. Parts 5 and 6 are used as endnotes containing all the templates that an SRC can use in meetings.

Whilst this is just a brief summary of the Resource Kit, it is by no means complete. For even the most experienced SRCs or for the student wanting to start an SRC, the Resource Kit is great for handy hints, tips, tricks, hoodwinks and bamboozles. At the VicSRC we use the Kit as a benchmark to ensure that we, as an organisation, are running as effectively as we can in representing the interests of over 50,000 students in Victoria.

This year we encourage all students to take the time to read through Represent! in the knowledge that it’ll reignite your SRC fire.

Megan Shellie
VicSRC Executive Member 2010/11

VicSRC Competition!

A first ever for the VicSRC – we’re holding a competition for all SRCs across the state to enter! Great prizes are up for grabs – including a Flip HD video camera and a Lenovo netbook computer generously donated by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Here’s what your SRC needs to do: create a digital video promoting your SRC and the benefit of having a strong and involved SRC at your school.

We want to hear about what you think makes a great SRC and why your school SRC fits this description. Give us your tips for creating strong student representation and participation at your school.

Be creative! Your video could be in the format of an advertisement, a news presentation, a documentary or whatever you feel is the best way to communicate your ideas! Have fun and involve as many students as possible.

The video must be 3 minutes in length and in digital format to be eligible to win.

What better way to get your SRC motivated for the year ahead than to take part in our competition?!

The competition opens on February 8th and entries are due on Friday 20th of May. Winners announced in early June.

Further details about the competition will be available on the VicSRC website from the 8th of February: www.vicsrc.org.au

www.vicsrc.org.au

The VicSRC receives funding support from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and is auspiced by and based at the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACvic). It can be reached there on 03 9267 3744 or, for the cost of a local call from outside Melbourne on 1300 727 176; or by email: vicsrc@yacvic.org.au
SRC Leadership Camps

Ever thought of having an SRC Leadership Camp to kick off a great year? This could be held at the start of the year or at the end of the previous year. We had one last October at our school and it provided lots of ideas and plans for this year. Here are some details:

Twenty determined students from Narre Warren South P-12 College attended their first Leadership Camp in 2010. Students ranging from Years 9 to 11 attended a week-long camp at Nayook Outdoor Education Centre and returned with an experience which really tested their limits and strengthened their bonds.

Some activities included orienteering, rock climbing, underground caving, backpack hiking, overnight camping, and low and high ropes courses. Amidst these activities, everyone was assigned roles such as navigators or someone in charge of environmental awareness for example, which meant full involvement and a chance to take charge. Aside from physically leading, it was learnt that leadership could be portrayed through bravery, smart thinking, positive motivation and much more. Many challenges that were faced were overcome through strong teamwork, an important aspect of the camp. ‘Thinking outside the box’ was also something that students learnt to do.

Overall, it was a valuable and enjoyable time. It is recommended for SRCs who seek a challenge that they should start leadership camps at their own schools. If you wish to know more about setting up a leadership camp, feel free to contact me at shafshariff@hotmail.com

Happy camping!

Shaf Shariff
VicSRC Exec 2010/11

VicSRC Poster for your SRC noticeboard

The VicSRC is pleased to unveil our first poster – that recognises the importance of student voice within schools. Every secondary school within Victoria will be receiving a copy of the poster, along with our latest publication Represent!

The poster was designed by Executive members Elizabeth Kalas and Samantha Mountford, working with Joe Collier, Communications Officer from the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria to create the final product.

Please put the poster up in a prominent location within your school to draw attention to your SRC and the fantastic job you do as the voice of students, and to the importance of the SRC role within your school.

Thanks to Princes Hill Secondary College for allowing us to carry out a photo shoot at their school and also to Rosa Coyle-Hayward and David Mould for the photography.

Additional copies of the poster are available for A3 and A4 PDF download from: www.vicsrc.org.au
VicSRC Recognition Awards 2011

Think your SRC does an awesome job at representing students?

Has your SRC completed a successful special project in your community?

Do you think your SRC deserves RECOGNITION?

After the success of 2010’s Awards, the VicSRC is once again offering our SRC Recognition Awards to acknowledge SRCs across Victoria that are making valuable contributions to their schools and communities through student representation.

Awards will be given in four categories in 2011:

- The **Connect** Award for Integration, recognising SRCs that are strongly connected to the school’s decision-making processes, that are strongly responsive to student needs and voices, and that is linked strongly with the School Council/Board and its committees.
- The **Second Strike** Award for Enterprise, recognising SRCs that, through use of strategic planning and strong leadership structures, have completed a highly successful school or community project.
- The **VASSP** Award for Informed Representation, recognising SRCs that are truly democratic and fully representative of students.
- We are pleased to announce a new category for our recognition awards – the **VISTA** Award for Outstanding Teacher Adviser, sponsored by the Victorian Institute of SRC Teacher Advisors (VISTA).
  - The **VISTA** Award seeks to recognise and highlight the support that teachers provide to Student Councils.
  - Schools may apply for more than one award.
  - We highly recommend that students are involved in writing your awards application. Extra credit will be given to applications written by students.

So what happens if we win?

Your SRC will be presented with a plaque and will receive a one-year free membership to the VicSRC, normally valued at $70. Benefits of membership include discounts at VicSRC events, $75 off Second Strike SRC Training Days, free subscription to Connect Magazine and membership to a heap of other youth organisations. We may even use an interview with your SRC to create a case study outlining SRC best practice!

Applications will open from **15th March** and are due on the **10th of June**. Finalists will be contacted in mid June and winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2011 VicSRC Congress (**August 5-7**).

Application forms will be available from the VicSRC website and on request from the VicSRC coordinator: coordinator@vicsrc.org.au

Come On, Click On!

**VicSRC Website**

The VicSRC has relaunched its new improved website.

We have refreshed its look to give it a fresher vibe and to make it easier to navigate through our pages.

The website upgrade coincides with a new VicSRC Executive, new resolutions, new resources and new achievements.

The relaunch significantly enhances our communication with all schools and provides a greater variety of tools and resources for both students and teachers. Furthermore, it allows the VicSRC a greater presence on the world wide web and creates a more effective space for our voices to be heard.

The quality, presentation and useability of this site has dramatically increased. It contains information on who we are, Student Executive members and their portfolios, how far we have come, upcoming events and conferences, issues affecting schools, resources established by the VicSRC (such as **Represent!**, the VicSRC Environmental Resource Kit and **Principal Resource Kit**) and a variety of other resources.

Our new website also offers the opportunity for you and your school to participate in monthly polls and became a member of our Facebook and Twitter pages. Check it out:

[www.vicsrc.org.au](http://www.vicsrc.org.au)

Elizabeth Kalas
VicSRC Executive Website Portfolio

Regional SRC Conferences: Term 2

The VicSRC will again be organising Regional SRC Conferences across Victoria in Term 2. A full list will be in the next newsletter and on the website.

To host a Conference at your school or in your area, please contact Kate Walsh, VicSRC Coordinator, as soon as possible: coordinator@vicsrc.org.au
Using SRC Resource Kits

How do you decide what your SRC needs to include in its training and discussions in order to operate better? There are so many possible areas for action. Even when there are kits of materials and resources, (like the recently distributed Victorian SRC Resource Kit, Represent!, or the NSW State SRC’s A practical guide for student leaders and teachers), there are often many pages of ideas and materials - over 160 pages in Represent!. How will you use such Kits effectively to meet your needs?

Here are some general ideas about ways to use these Kits - please adapt and use them in your own circumstances:

Copy and Read
This material contains lots of great ideas. Those new to SRCs - and even those who have been involved for a long time - will find new and challenging ideas here. So there is a role for simply making whole sections of the Kit available for SRC members and support teachers to read.

All of Represent! is available online (www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent) and individual pages or sections can be easily printed off - or you can photocopy from the printed Kit. But don’t copy too much at a time: it is better to have a short section of the Kit copied, and ask all members to read that. Or put the Kit on your intranet, or e-mail sections or pages to SRC members and/or to staff members and ask them to read it on-line.

And then the discussion that you will have on the topic will be better informed by the ideas – which are, in turn, based on the experiences of students and teachers at other schools.

Training Day Debate
The Kits stress the value of having specific time put aside for planning and discussion. Whether you have a training day, or go away on an SRC camp, you can plan to use specific sections of the Kit as a discussion starter.

Break into groups; each group takes a specific section of the Kit (something you have decided you need - see below) reads it and leads a discussion by the SRC about the ideas and what you will do. This could be a debate about the ideas and about how your SRC should respond.

Audit
There are specific sections within Represent! (and in many other Kits) that ask you questions such as ‘how effective is your SRC?’ There is a quiz or ‘audit’ for you to complete. For example, in Represent!, such a quiz starts on page 45; it can be a useful starting point for sharing perceptions.

Make sure you collect lots of different views on these questions: there’s no one correct answer. When you have different people’s opinions, compare them and see where you agree and disagree. Then use this to start a discussion about how to improve your effectiveness.

Other Surveys
There are other surveys throughout Represent! The one on page 69 looks at who leads the various decisions and actions of the SRC (teachers or students). Again, get various viewpoints on this, and use these to decide on what changes (if any) are needed.

Templates
The Kits often contain templates (increasingly electronic or on-line) that can be downloaded and used by the SRC as planners or tools or document starters (minutes, agendas, year-planners etc). Copy these onto your SRC laptop or computer, adapt them for your school, and use them to assist your work.

Needs Analysis
But this still leaves you thinking about how you make a decision about your priorities. The Contents pages (in Represent!, pages 4-5) show what’s in a Kit. You could use this as a guide to say: ‘we do this well’ but ‘we need to develop this area’.

To help with this, we’ve adapted typical contents into a needs analysis of your SRC (see next pages). SRC members and support teachers could complete this; perhaps include some more experienced SRC members who know what has happened in the past, but also include some new and enthusiastic members who are less restricted by what has always happened.

Even this document looks long, so you could decide to concentrate on one area of most concern (A to Q) and work first on the details of what’s needed in this area.

Use the Needs Analysis form to see what agreement there is on your current status on each item: are you just beginning to work on this and still a long way from the outcome? Are you ‘consolidating’, doing well, but needing further work? Are you ‘established’, agreeing that you’re going well and that other areas are more important for action? (But you might like to come back to these areas and challenge yourself at some stage)

Then decide on a priority list for action that will develop your SRC. You might still have a lot of areas where you are beginning or consolidating – more than you can deal with for now. So you’ll need to come to an agreement on what your priority is for each item: ‘low’, ‘medium’ or ‘high’.

Write in your own action steps, but the ideas here are linked to the structure and sections of Represent! (They could also be adapted for use with any other SRC or similar Kit.) Schedule some time to work through these high priority sections. And finally, note who will be involved (who might lead the discussion?) and with what timeline.

Let us know how you use these Kits. We will all benefit from your experience.

See:

www.vicsrc.org.au/resources/represent

# SRC Needs Analysis

## A: Understanding the basic concepts of an SRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action: (links to Represent pages)</th>
<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students and teachers understand what an SRC is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 13-15 at staff and student meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teachers understand the variety of things that an SRC can do</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 18-19; copy and use pp 21-22 in a training day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and teachers understand the different ways in which SRCs can work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss p 20 at an early meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and teachers know what makes an SRC effective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 15-17 and 23-24; complete the audit tool on pp 45-49 and discuss the results</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school recognises the stages of development of its SRC and can identify where it is at</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read pp 62-63 and match it against your experience of your SRC</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## B: The SRC is set up and operational

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SRC has a structure that is appropriate to the school and that is relevant to students' needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss the models on pp 25-31; use the questions on p 26 to review your current structure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The SRC has a constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 32; use Template T1 to set up a constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teachers have identified qualities of SRC representatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss the ideas on pp 33-34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an appropriate process for selecting SRC representatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss the models on pp 35-38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC representatives represent the diversity of the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 39-40 and use the checklist on p 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### C: The SRC works as an effective team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SRC representatives have developed and work effectively as a team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 51-54; build in some team activities (pp 53-54)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an SRC team agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 55-57; use Template T2 to write down your agreements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC has worked out its common purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 58-61; use Template T3 to map possible activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are clear statements of the way that leadership roles are formed in the SRC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss the two models on pp 64-67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC Support Teacher has a clear role statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss p 68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is clear understanding of shared responsibilities between students and teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 68-69; complete the quiz on page 69 and discuss the results</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### D: SRC representatives are effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRC representatives know and understand the responsibilities of being a representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 77-80</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives know what to bring to meetings in order to be effective contributors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Give all representatives a copy of the checklist on p 80</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Representatives know how to research issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 81-82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives know how to get ideas from other students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 83-86; use Template T5 to keep track of ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives know how to report to other students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 83-86; use Template T5 to keep track of reports to make</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC is able to organise consultative forums</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 87-93; use this as a guide to practice running a forum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### E: The SRC is effective in its operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status (1: beginning, 2: consolidating, 3: established)</th>
<th>Priority (L: low, M: medium, H: high)</th>
<th>Action: (links to Represent pages)</th>
<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SRC has a <strong>plan</strong> for its year’s work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 70-75; use Template T4 to draw up a year planner</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The SRC has effective <strong>meetings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 94-103; use Templates T6 and T7 to record agendas and minutes of meetings</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC has a clear and effective <strong>decision-making process</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 98-99; decide on a process for making decisions</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student <strong>roles</strong> within SRC meetings are clear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 102-103; define your own SRC roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC knows how to <strong>respond to issues</strong> that are raised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 104-105; use Template T8 to plan steps in responding to an issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC is effective in <strong>organising events</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 106-108; use Template T9 to plan your action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC <strong>promotes</strong> itself effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 109-110; brainstorm ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC <strong>solves problems</strong> effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 133-136; use Template T12 to help you solve problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC deals effectively with <strong>conflict</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 136-138</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC knows and uses several <strong>tools</strong> for helping it to make decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 139-141; add your own tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The SRC reflects on and <strong>evaluates</strong> its work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 72-73; build in time to evaluate</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### F: The SRC is linked to the overall school and community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status</th>
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<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SRC understands the school's decision-making processes</td>
<td>1: beginning 2: consolidating 3: established</td>
<td>L: low M: medium H: high</td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 111-114; do the 'mapping' exercise on pp 113-114</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC is an effective part of the school's decision-making processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 111-114; draw the SRC into the school's map</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC is linked to the wider school community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 115-117</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC knows about the VicSRC and how it can take part in it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 142-143; check the VicSRC website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRC members receive recognition and credit for their work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 129-132; use the checklist on p 132</td>
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</table>

### G: The SRC has and uses resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Current status</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Action:</th>
<th>Who will be involved</th>
<th>Timeline for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SRC has the resources it needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 119-122; use Template T10 to map your resource needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC manages its finances effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 123-124; use Template T11 to keep track of finances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SRC uses technology effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read and discuss pp 125-128</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The NSW SRC invites student teams in NSW public schools to create a 5 minute media presentation and a two page report to showcase their successful student-led environmental projects. Schools and student teams can win one of three major ‘prizes’ valued up to $3,000.

Enviro Inspiro! is a great way for students to connect with their local community, have fun while learning and help improve the environment.

While aimed at secondary school students, joint entries from clusters of schools and/or school communities are welcome. Primary students may wish to team up with students from a nearby secondary school and students are encouraged to seek help from community organisations to showcase local environmental projects in which students have taken a significant role.

Enviro Inspiro! 2011 web pages are now live. The main page is at:
and there are links at

Enviro Inspiro! 2011 will be promoted in NSW public schools during Terms 1 and 2. A direct mail out of posters and a letter of support from Greg Prior, newly appointed Deputy Director-General, Schools will arrive at all NSW public secondary schools, central schools, special schools, environmental education centres and Intensive English Centres in the first week of term 1, 2011. The 2011 NSW SRC is hopeful of more school entries than ever before!

2010 Winners

Congratulations to the winners of Enviro Inspiro! 2010:

- 1st prize ($3,000): Mudgee High School, Hakea Hedge
- 2nd prize ($2,000): North Sydney Girls High School, A Biodegradable Truth
- 3rd prize ($1,000): Warrawong Intensive English Centre, New Beginnings

View the Enviro Inspiro! 2010 winning entries on the above web page.

2010 High commendations:

- Lambton High School, Spreading the Environmental Message
- North Sydney Boys High School, North Sydney Boys and Lane Cove West Liaison
- Riverside Girls High School, Back to Your Roots
- Mosman High School, Recyclone!
- Ku-ring-gai High School, Vegie Garden
- Homebush Boys High School, Enviro Mafia!
- St George Girls High School, Plant a seed, Grow a Tree
- Seven Hills High School, Project Paper
ENVIRO INSPIRO! 2011
THE STUDENT-LED ENVIRONMENTAL COMPETITION

Students in primary schools can enter by teaming up with students from a secondary school.

TERMS 1&2, 2011
THE NSW SRC INVITES SCHOOLS TO SHOWCASE THEIR SUCCESSFUL STUDENT-LED ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
Create a 5 minute DVD showcasing your environmental project and explain how you've improved the environment in 750 words or less.

COMPETITION CLOSES FRIDAY 24 JUNE 2011
Entries should be sent to:
Enviro Inspiro Student Welfare Directorate
NSW Department of Education & Training
Locked Bag 53 Darlinghurst NSW 2010

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?
For enquiries, e-mail:
student.leadership@det.nsw.edu.au
For full details about the competition see:

Enviro Inspiro is supported by the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW. The competition is an initiative of the NSW Student Representative Council.
Student leaders from across New South Wales have added their ideas to the NSW State SRC website to answer these questions.

**What does SRC stand for?**

A Student Representative Council (SRC) is an elected group of students. The role of SRC members is to represent all students in the activities in which the SRC becomes involved.

“SRCs promote the views of students, encouraging them to become more active in the decisions that affect them.” Jeremy

**How do SRCs provide opportunities for students?**

The role of SRC members is to promote the views of students and to encourage students to become actively involved in their school. Students can have their say on a wide variety of issues from school uniform and appearance to anti-discrimination policies in schools.

School SRCs provide participation and leadership opportunities by asking for input from peers, holding open meetings where all students can personally voice their opinions and by holding special activities/events in which students can participate.

“School SRCs provide students with the opportunity to interact with teachers, parents and volunteers to provide the student body with a voice on the issues that ultimately affect them. This opportunity gives students a crucial leadership role within their school environment.” Lauren

“By being on a school SRC, students can actively participate in the decisions that ultimately affect them. By becoming more involved in the running of their school they will gain respect from their peers while at the same time creating a more harmonious environment in which students and teachers can interact.” Kaila

**What is the difference between an SRC and a School Parliament?**

School parliaments operate in some primary schools as an alternative to an SRC. Both include students democratically elected by their fellow students to represent them. They both facilitate leadership and decision-making by all students in a school.

School Parliaments are based on the Australian system of government and include students elected to positions such as Prime Minister, portfolio ministers, Whip and Speaker. They operate by following parliamentary procedures, such as moving and debating motions, voting and parliamentary sittings.

Student Representative Councils are based on a committee structure with some students elected to positions such as chairperson, secretary, treasurer and class/year representatives. For secondary schools there are school, inter-school and state level SRC groups.

“The most significant aspect of both a School Parliament and an SRC is that they function as a representative organisation for the students.” Jeremy

**How do schools elect their SRC members?**

The most successful SRC will have members who really want to represent student ideas and opinions and who are prepared to work to improve student participation in all areas of the school.

Members of the SRC can come from all years and they are democratically elected by their peers. The SRC election process will vary from school to school. It could involve:

- An awareness campaign, using items such as posters, pamphlets and speeches to stress the aims and achievement of the SRC and the need for responsible voting.
- Compiling information sheets on candidates, including photos and lists of their school based interests, which can be displayed and distributed.
- Students who would make good leaders being lobbied to stand for election.
- People such as local Members of Parliament acting as election observers and drawing comparisons with Australian and state government election processes.
- Former SRC students talking to students.
Student Leadership and SRCs

- Speaking at school assemblies and highlighting the SRC as an active body that is valued and respected by the whole school community.
- At my school, an election process is held. People are nominated or nominate themselves, and each person is formally notified by means of a letter from the SRC Coordinator. They are then asked to present a 1-2 minute speech in front of their year on why they want to be a student representative, what they can bring to the Council and ideas that they would like to implement. A secret ballot takes place and the votes are counted by a student on the Council and the SRC Coordinator. Four or five positions are usually offered but it can vary depending on the amount of people running," Lauren

What can a student do if they don’t think their SRC is relevant to them?

Students can talk to an SRC member or their SRC teacher adviser to voice any concerns they may have about their SRCs relevance to them. A principal, year adviser/Coordinator or other trusted teacher might also be approached.

“If this happens speak up because if a SRC isn’t relevant to a student then there is something wrong.” David

What is the difference between school, inter-school and state SRC forums?

School SRCs operate in ways that are appropriate to school needs.

- School SRCs liaise and communicate with a number of groups within their school community, including:
  - students
  - local community
  - School Council
  - School Principal, executive, staff, committees
  - Inter-school SRC.

- Inter-school SRCs discuss recommendations from school SRCs, they:
  - help to improve communication between school SRCs
  - deal with issues that affect the local community
  - provide leadership training.

- Inter-school SRC forums focus on local community issues and issues arising from school forums.
  - At State Level the SRC is made up of two groups, the NSW SRC (the Department’s peak student leadership forum) and the State Conference Working Party (the group responsible for organising and running the annual state conference);” Kaila

The State SRC Conference forum debates and votes on recommendations passed on from inter-school SRCs. Approved recommendations are called resolutions. The NSW SRC works to accomplish the resolutions that were passed at the State Conference.

How much work and time is involved in being a SRC member at school, inter-school and state level?

“The more work a student puts into their SRC the more they are going to benefit from the opportunities the SRC can provide.” Kaila

At all levels, being an active SRC member involves commitment. Most school SRCs meet on a weekly basis. Inter-school and state SRCs usually meet once each term. Members are expected to perform as a team and effectively contribute to discussions, decisions and action planning.

All SRC members need to take time to communicate with their fellow students and represent the interests of all students from their school/local community.

SRC members may also be an ambassador for their school or local community at activities and/or forums. State SRC representatives also take on a liaison role on a committee with an associated organisation that relates to the NSW SRC. Involvement and time commitment for these roles will vary.

“You have to put in a fair bit of time to achieve the goal you are after.” Paige

How are school SRC students elected to the inter-school and state SRC groups?

Secondary school SRCs elect students to their inter-school SRC.

Inter-school SRCs elect students to participate at state level in the NSW SRC and the State SRC Conference Working Party.

Does the NSW SRC represent all government school students in NSW?

“Yes, the NSW SRC represents all government secondary school students in NSW.” Ruth

The NSW SRC is the Department’s peak student leadership consultative and decision-making forum. It meets regularly to discuss student issues with Senior Officers in the Department of Education and Training, other government departments, business and community groups.

“SRC is there to voice all students’ opinions.” Michael

How does the State SRC Conference operate?

“The State SRC Conference is run by the students themselves.” Daniel

The State Student Conference Working Party organises and runs this annual conference. The Working Party chooses a conference theme. Key note speakers, workshops (‘flexi-shops’), discussion groups and a Student Forum provide opportunities for examining the theme. Social activities, such as a dance party, are also an important aspect of the conference.

At the Student Forum recommendations from inter-school SRCs are put forward, debated and voted on and the resolutions are forwarded on to the next years NSW SRC to work on.

How is the State SRC Conference theme selected?

“The theme of the conference is selected by the State SRC Conference Working Party.” David
Who attends the annual State SRC Conference?

In total 130 conference participants attend from Years 9, 10 and 11.

“Students are supported by a team of adults comprising SRC teacher advisers, Aboriginal Education Consultant and the Senior Education Officer Student Leadership and Participation.” Jeremy

“Special guests are invited to attend and present at the conference concerning issues relevant to the conference theme.” Ruth

How do school SRCs have a voice at the State SRC Conference?

A school SRC can take issues to their inter-school SRC. The inter-school SRC debate the issue and can resolve to take a recommendation to the State SRC Conference.

At state level what other leadership opportunities are there for students apart from the SRC?

There are many other leadership opportunities that exist for students.

“There are leadership opportunities in sporting fields, drama orchestra, vocal, debating etc.” Kimberley

Many of these opportunities arise through activities students may be involved in out of school hours.

“Students can take on liaison roles with different government and non-government organisations.” Scott

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People and the NSW Youth Advisory Council of the Premier’s Department are examples of organisations that invite young people to apply for positions on advisory boards and committees. From: www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studleadsrSrc/studentvoice/slrsrcfaqs.php

Felix Finkbeiner’s Address to the United Nations at the Opening of the International Year of Forests 2011

On 2nd February 2011, Felix Finkbeiner, a 13-year-old from Germany, spoke at the United Nations at the opening of the International Year of Forests.

Felix is the founder of Plant for the Planet who in 2007, at the age of nine, announced that he wanted to plant a million trees in his native Germany. It took him just three years to do that, and now his organisation, Plant for the Planet, is international and more than 100 thousand children from 91 countries have planted millions of trees as part of his initiative.

Felix was invited to speak at the Cancun climate conference in December 2010, and on February 2, 2011, he addressed the United Nations in New York.

In a ten-minute speech, which Felix delivered in perfect English and apparently without needing any prompts, he presented the motives and goals of children from several different countries, and asked them to join forces worldwide in the fight for their future.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sur8coFE0tU
Introducing NAB Schools First Student Awards

Have your voice heard & make a difference

NAB Schools First is a national awards program that recognises and rewards outstanding school-community partnerships that improve the educational outcomes of young people beyond the classroom. In its first two years, the program has awarded over $10 million in funding to 195 school-community partnerships across Australia with a further $5 million available in 2011.

NAB Schools First is brought to life by NAB in partnership with The Foundation for Young Australians and Australian Council for Educational Research.

Following two successful years of awarding school-community partnerships across Australia, NAB Schools First is thrilled to announce the launch of a Student Awards category in 2011.

Student Awards

The NAB Schools First Students Award is designed to provide young people with the chance to have their voices heard about how they think their school could benefit from partnering with the community. For students who want to make a real difference in their school community, this is their chance to have their vision realised.

Award winning students will receive $2,000 for their school to help implement their community partnership ideas, plus national recognition and support from NAB Schools First. Five awards are available in 2011, with applications opening at 9.00 am on Monday, 9 May 2011 and closing at 5.00 pm on Friday, 27 May 2011.

In addition to the Student Awards, NAB Schools First is awarding $5 million in funding across 110 awards, including 60 Impact Awards (for established partnerships) and 50 Seed Funding Awards (for new or developing partnerships).

Applications for these two categories open at 9.00 am on Monday, 20 June 2011 and close at 5.00 pm on Friday, 29 July 2011.

For more information on the NAB Schools First Student, Impact and Seed Funding Awards and to apply, visit: www.schoolsfirst.edu.au

Support Resources

The NAB Schools First website hosts a number of additional resources and tools which will be of benefit and interest to students and teachers wanting to learn more about NAB Schools First and the 2011 awards funding.

Resources and tools include a revamped Partnership Matching Service designed to assist schools and community groups in finding a partner. There are also over 200 case studies on past winners, insights from NAB Schools First team members, application tips, guidelines and terms and conditions, interactive discussions and details on our series of 40 NAB Schools First Partnership Forums which are taking place around Australia between March and May 2011. The Forums will provide attendees the chance to learn more about NAB Schools First, the application process, collation of evidence and the awards criteria for 2011.
Typical Engagement?

A recent study reported that as much as 92% of any individual school building population in the USA is comprised of students, with adults accounting for only 8% of the total humans in any given school. Much the same as in Australia, there is a growing concern for the vastly underutilised majority here as we struggle with how to make schools more effective for all students.

As part of my work through SoundOut (soundout.org), I provide technical assistance and training to districts that are interested in systematically engaging students in education policy-making. I have researched more than 40 years of involving students as School Board members, and follow national trends carefully. This article is a report and analysis focused on the growing interest in the practice of engaging students through Boards of Education, both at the state and local levels, across the USA.

Consultation

There are several types of practices that involve students with School Boards. The lowest bar is simply and routinely asking students what they think about School Board policy-making issues. This can be a formal process mandated through policy, conducted through online surveys or in-person student forums. Another practice is to require regular student attendance at School Board meetings. Both of these are generally seen as non-meaningful forms of involvement, as they do not require students have an active role in the process of decision-making beyond that of ‘informant’.

Student Advisory Boards

Higher up the ladder is the practice of having Student Advisory Boards that inform regular School Board decision-making. This is the case in Boston, Massachusetts, where the Boston Student Advisory Council (bostonteachnet.org/bsac/) is a city-wide body of student leaders representing their respective high schools. BSAC, which is coordinated and administered by the District Office in partnership with a nonprofit called Youth on Board (www.youthonboard.org), offers student perspectives on high school renewal efforts and inform their respective schools about relevant city-wide school issues. In addition to personal skill development and knowledge building activities for their 20-plus members, BSAC students have strongly influenced district policy-making about cell phone usage, truancy, and reducing the drop out rate. They also have regular dialogues with the District Superintendent and School Board members.

The Denver, Colorado, Student Board of Education (studentboard, dpsk12.org/) is a group of 30 students who represent the 15 high schools in the city. They are charged to serve as leaders in their schools and represent all students at the district level. Students create projects that affect their local schools and report back on them to the district. They have also created a curriculum that is used in several high school leadership classes. However, these students have to ask permission to speak at their regular board, and that does not happen frequently. According to a recent local newspaper article, the district has trepidations about giving students a regular voice in school policy-making. A school district attorney was quoted saying: “The law does not provide for a means by which to create a student position on the board, whether it’s a voting position or not.”

Positions on Boards

One of the main issues in student involvement in Boards of Education is whether students are legally allowed to sit on Boards and, if they are allowed, whether they have a full vote akin to their adult peers. A 2002 study posted on the SoundOut website (soundout.org/schoolboardlaw.html) identifies laws regarding student involvement on state and local School Boards in 39 states out of 50 states across the USA. The results vary: as many as 16 states have laws allowing students to sit on School Boards at the state level, with no vote; 20 states allow the same at the district level; six states disallow either entirely; while seven allow full student voting on the state and district levels.

Despite being allowed otherwise in those seven states, only California and Maryland actually have full-voting student members on their State Boards of Education. Both of those states have highly influential student organisations that openly lobby for student voice. The California Association of Student Councils (casc.net), founded in 1947, proudly proclaims that all their programs are student-led. One of their most powerful activities is the Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, or SABLE. Each February, SABLE convenes in the state capital to set education priorities and share them with key decision-makers. They have a direct audience with the Senate Education Committee, and their influence helped form a position for a full-voting student member of the California State Board of Education, whose position was created in 1969. They gained full voting rights in 1983, including closed sessions. The Maryland Association of Student Councils has similar impact in their state, with a student member serving in a regularly elected position annually.

Dilemmas and Developments

As I have written about in Connect before, I have more than a decade working with hundreds of schools across the USA and Canada to promote meaningful student involvement. Among the things I have found is an inherent dilemma in the type of special positioning students on School Boards receive. The dilemma is that while an extremely limited number of students gets an opportunity to share their voices with adult decision-makers in the system, this type of ‘convenient student voice’ is generally conducted at the adults’ convenience and with their approval.

In a growing number of states, the status quo of being excluded does not suit students themselves anymore. Currently, a disjointed but growing movement...
is seeking to increase the authority of students in school policy-making and decisions. In Hawaii, there has been a non-voting student representative on the State Board of Education for more than 20 years. However, a recent proposal would eliminate the position. A new Facebook page (on.fb.me/gtnZqk) seeks to maintain that role.

In my home state of Washington, a group of independent students (on.fb.me/heGvN) is working with the state’s Legislative Youth Advisory Council (lyac.leg.wa.gov) to lower the voting age for School Board elections to 14 which, while not necessarily installing students on School Boards, would give them a concrete say in education policy-making. In Maryland, where students already have a role on the State Board of Education and in many District Boards, there are active campaigns to increase the effect of student voice, with students calling for a full and regular vote in education policy-making (bit.ly/eBt0BH). There is even an instance in Maryland where an 18-year-old named Edward Burroughs (edwardburroughs.com) was elected to his local School Board through regular office after running an effective campaign.

These examples allude to the process of what I refer to as engagement typification, where the roles of students are repositioned throughout the education system to allow Meaningful Student Involvement to become the standard treatment for all students, rather than something that is exceptional. Consistently positioning students as in special positions doesn’t allow adults, including educators, administrators, or parents, to integrate students throughout the regular operations of the educational system. While seeing their peers as School Board members is enticing to a number of students, most are disallowed from seeing themselves as regular and full members of the leadership and ownership of education, or as trustees for their own well-being. That is what differentiates Meaningful Student Involvement (soundout.org/frameworks.html) from other attempts at student engagement and student voice: positioning students as full owners of what they learn. Involving students on School Boards is a step in the right direction; the next question is whether anywhere in Australia or the USA is ready to go the full distance.

Adam Fletcher, SoundOut: adam@commonaction.org

Connect Archived!

Most back issues of Connect are now on-line for free! Thanks to a great partnership with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER - to whom continued thanks), back issues of Connect have been up-loaded or scanned and are now loaded on a newly developed site within ACER’s Research Repository: ACEReSearch.

You can find issues of Connect at:

research.acer.edu.au/connect

Look at the left-hand menu; there you’ll find a pull-down menu with which to select the issue number – browse; then when the front cover of that issue is displayed, simply click on the link in the main body of the page to download a PDF of that issue. Recent issues are searchable by key words.

Availability

The last 12 months of Connect (ie the last 6 issues) will continue to be available ONLY by subscription. But issues will be progressively added to this site and made freely available after that 12 months.

Connect has always been committed to the sharing of ideas, stories, approaches and resources about active student participation.

Let us know

There may be some gaps or improvements necessary. As you use this resource, let us know what you find. (But note that, if an issue of Connect seems to be missing, check the issues either side, as double issues show up only as one issue number.) If you have any ideas for improving this resource, please let us know.

Most importantly, please USE it.

All back copies of Connect to be available on-line for free!

research.acer.edu.au/connect/
Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together, USA

Hazeno Union High School in Hardwick, VT, USA is a member of the Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together initiative. YATST administers a survey to teachers and students to assess perceptions about the level and quality of the relevance, rigour, student-teacher relationships and shared responsibility in the school.

This is shown on a video at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwGtlyZ6pRc that focuses on the immediate reactions of students to taking the survey. Of particular note was their sense of potential limited impact on either classroom instruction or curriculum. This triggers fundamental questions about how to best foster needed shifts in both student and teacher beliefs and practices.

Student Voice on youtube: UK

A quick youtube search comes up with a pile of examples of short clips made by primary and secondary school students to support and publicise ‘student voice’.

The English Secondary Students Association (ESSA) has been promoting a competition to develop a series of these videos. Some are at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yjsd4h0-l4
www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Wpcn3xoybw
www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4-T-uCtYqU
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxf2f8MF5lo
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGYdVzJdwz8

And Channel 4 is promoting a campaign for students “to go and make your own film about how you think education in the UK can be made better. All you have to do is join the campaign, tell us what you think, get creative, make a 3 minute video and the best films will be shown on Channel 4!”. www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbhfDyVRUJQ

For more details about what ESSA is doing: www.studentvoice.co.uk

VISTA Wine and Cheese Nights

The Victorian Institute of SRC Teacher Advisors is continuing its series of Wine and Cheese Nights for SRC Support Teachers in 2011. They will be held on Thursday nights in Kew in Melbourne:

• 3rd March • 31st March
• 5th May • 9th June
• 28th July • 1st September
• 20th October • 24th November

Contact: vista@srcteachers.org.au or check srcteachers.ning.com for all the details.

Second Strike Training Days

Second Strike, the Victorian-based student and teacher training organisation, is presenting a range of training days in 2011.

For Victorian schools:

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<tr>
<td>Friday 4 March</td>
<td>Jump Start - Primary school SRCs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 16 March</td>
<td>Form One Lane: Professional Development Seminar for Secondary SRC teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 18 March</td>
<td>Form One Lane: Professional Development Seminar for Primary SRC teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday-Friday 5-6 May</td>
<td>Class Captains Forums - Secondary</td>
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<td>Monday-Tuesday 9-10 May</td>
<td>School Captains Forums - Secondary</td>
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<td>Wednesday-Thursday 11-12 May</td>
<td>House Captains Forums - Secondary</td>
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<td>Tuesday-Wednesday 17-18 May</td>
<td>School Captains Forums - Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday-Friday 19-20 May</td>
<td>House Captains Forums - Primary</td>
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<td>Thursday 2 June</td>
<td>JSC Congress - Primary: Box Hill Town Hall</td>
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For New South Wales schools:

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<td>Form One Lane: Professional Development Seminar for Secondary SRC teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 31 March</td>
<td>Form One Lane: Professional Development Seminar for Primary SRC teachers</td>
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For more information and venues: info@second-strike.com or check www.second-strike.com for details.
ASPRINworld: the Connect website!
www.asprinworld.com/Connect

Connect has a website at ASPRINworld; ASPRIN is the Australian Student Participation Resource and Information Network (“a cure for your student participation headaches”) – a still-emerging concept. The Connect section of the website is slowly growing, with information about subscribing, recent back issue contents and summaries of and order information for Student Councils and Beyond, Student Action Teams, Reaching High and Switched On to Learning. There are also links from the indexes of recent issues to their archived PDFs (see below).

Connect is now also archived and available electronically: research.acer.edu.au/connect

All issues of Connect are being archived through the ACER Research Repository: ACEReSearch. Connect issues from #1 to #180 are available for free download, and recent issues can be searched by key terms. See the ASPRINworld site for index details of recent issues, then link to and download the whole issue you are interested in.

www.informit.com.au

In addition, current and recent issues of Connect are now available on-line to libraries and others who subscribe to RMIT’s Informit site – a site that contains databases of many Australian publications. You can access whole issues of Connect as well as individual articles. Costs apply, either by a library subscription to Informit’s databases, or through individual payments per view for articles.

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Local and Overseas Publications Received

Connect receives many publications directly or indirectly relevant to youth and student participation. We can't lend or sell these, but if you want to look at or use them, contact us on: (03) 9489 9052 or (03) 8344 9637

Australian:
Congress 5 (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) Report, 2010
Crossing the Bridge: Overcoming entrenched disadvantage through student-centred learning (Rosalyln Black, Education Foundation, Melbourne, Vic)
FYA Newsletter (Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne, Vic) Issue 4; December 2010
Parents Voice (Parents Victoria Inc., Brunswick, Vic) Vol 37 Issue 5; October 2010
Research Developments (ACER, Camberwell, Vic) No 24; Summer 2010-2011
Shine (DEECD, Melbourne, Vic) Issue 10; November 2010
Student Advocate (VicSRC, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 5 No 1; February 2011
The Students’ Voice (St Joseph’s PS, Northcote, Vic) Vol 1 Issues 1, 2; September, November 2010
WYPIN Newz (WYPIN, Footscray, Vic) Vol 1 Issue 4; January 2011
YAPRap (YAPA, Surry Hills, NSW) February-March 2011
Yikes! (YACvic, Melbourne, Vic) Vol 8 Edition 5; September 2010
Youth Studies Australia (ACYS, Hobart, Tas) Vol 29 No 4; December 2010

International:

Education Revolution (Alternative Education Resource Organization, New York, USA) Volume 22 No 4 (Issue 63); Winter 2010-11

Contribute to Connect

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(See Connect website for contents of recent issues)

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Connect Publications:

- Switched On to Learning ($5; limit of 10 copies per order) 2009 $ ...........
- Reaching High ($33; $27.50 for Connect subscribers) 2006-7 $ ...........
- Student Action Teams ($33; $27.50 for Connect subscribers) 2006 $ ...........
- Student Councils & Beyond ($33; $27.50 for Connect subscribers) 2005 $ ...........
- Democracy Starts Here! Junior School Councils at Work 1996 $ ...........
  Case studies of Primary School SRCs ($6.60 or $11 for two copies)

Foxfire Publications (stories of a US-based student-run oral history publication project):

- Sometimes a Shining Moment and Foxfire: 25 Years ($22 each) (limited copies) $ ...........

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