

Participant Information Form – SEIL and Area ED Focus Group

Background

This document provides you with information about the purpose and scope of the evaluation of the Intensive School Support (ISS) Evaluation – 2024 – 2027

Please read this information carefully as it describes the purpose of the evaluation, how the information collected will be used and your rights. If you have any questions regarding this evaluation, contact details are included below.

This evaluation has been approved by the Department of Education Research in Schools and Early Childhood Settings (RISEC) 25-12-798.

Who are we and who is this research for?

Synergistiq, an independent research consultancy, has been appointed by the Department of Education (the department) to undertake an evaluation of ISS. Through this evaluation, we are seeking to understand the effectiveness of ISS, how the initiative contributes to the department's education policy, and what may be able to be improved. The findings of this evaluation will inform the department's future decision-making and help the department understand more about improving the quality and consistency of leadership and teaching in schools.

What will I be asked to do?

You are being invited to take part in a 1-hour Focus Group. The Focus Group will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. We will be asking questions about the ISS initiative's design and implementation, and its impact on schools as a change intervention.

Up to 7 other representatives from DE regional teams will also be in the focus group with you. It is expected that all participants act respectfully to each other during the focus group, acknowledging that there may be different experiences and viewpoints and that what is discussed in the focus group is not to be shared externally.

You can choose to skip over any question or stop participating at any point.

What would my participation mean?

Your contribution will enable us to develop an understanding of the effectiveness and impact of ISS, and identify any areas for improvement.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to participate, you don't have to. You can end your participation in the focus group at any time by discontinuing your responses. Should you wish to clarify or redact anything following your focus group, please let us know.

How will the information be used?

Information that you provide will be combined with and analysed along with data gathered from other stakeholders and a range of initiative data.

Our findings, as generated from the data gathered, will be presented in a report to the department. You will not be named or identifiable in the report. Should a quote you provide be used in a report, you will not be named and any identifiable information will be redacted or removed from your quote.

The department may choose to use this report or sections from it in future documentation about ISS, including, but not limited to, budgetary bids or internal reports.

What will happen to information about me?

All information collected will be handled in accordance with Synergistiq's [privacy policy](#), DE's [privacy policy](#), the *Privacy Data and Protection Act 2014* (Vic), the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic) and the *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic). All project data will be destroyed after 7 years.

Notes/recordings of the interview will be kept on our secure server or in a locked office. Only the Synergistiq project team will have access to those files. If you agree to record the focus group, recording is done by Microsoft Teams which is also used to produce a transcript, which is reviewed in detail by the researcher. All data stored by Microsoft is stored on our own secure server in Australia.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

The department may provide the report, or relevant sections of the report, to evaluation participants like yourself at their discretion.

Contact information

If you have any questions about the research, or any concerns or complaints, please contact either:

- Belinda Wong (Senior Program Advisor, Department of Education) at belinda.wong@education.vic.gov.au
- Nicole Donaldson (Executive Director, Synergistiq) on 9946 6800 or Nicole.donaldson@synergistiq.com

If you would like to access or correct your personal information you can contact:

- Nicole Donaldson (Executive Director, Synergistiq) on 9946 6800 or Nicole.donaldson@synergistiq.com
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If you experience any distress or discomfort because of your involvement in this research, and would like to speak to somebody about how you are feeling, please contact: Lifeline Support Services on 13 11 14. You can also access the Employee Wellbeing Support Services which provide free and confidential advice to proactively support Victorian government school staff wellbeing through the external provider, Converge. Call 1300 291 071 or book online via <https://portal.converge-online.com/>.

Consent Form – SEIL and Area ED Focus Group

Project: Evaluation of ISS

To consent to your participation please read the information provided in the Participant Information Sheet and indicate your understanding and agreement to take part below.

Please tick in the boxes below if you have read and understood each point:

- ☐ I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet about the ISS evaluation.
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the focus group, and that I can withdraw at any stage without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that any information I provide and that is used in any reports will be stored securely and de-identified (not attached to my name or specific role title)
- ☐ I consent to my interview being recorded for note taking purposes. This recording and a transcription will be done by Microsoft Teams. The transcript will be reviewed in detail by the researcher before analysis.
- ☐ I understand that the information that I provide in this consent form will be kept confidential and will only be used for communicating with me about my participation in the study.

By writing my name below I agree to participate in a focus group as part of the ISS Evaluation.

Name:

Signature:

Date: