



**Australian Government**

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**



## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Low Socio-Economic Status (SES)  
School Communities National Partnership



**Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn  
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE**



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# INTRODUCTION

The Low SES School Communities National Partnership (NP) supports a range of in and out of school reforms that are aimed at transforming the way schooling takes place in low socio-economic school communities. The NP aims to improve student engagement and educational attainment and to start to overcome some of the barriers to high educational achievement in these communities.

The ACT has particular issues around the participation of students from low-SES communities in schooling. The design of Canberra has spread low-SES families around the city, so that many low-SES families are hidden amongst the relatively affluent population in Canberra.

However, the challenge remains to find ways that educationally disadvantaged students might be encouraged to embrace classrooms and a school system that makes a direct improvement to their education outcomes, as well as improving their transition rates to further education, training or employment.

In collaboration with the Australian Government, this implementation plan will be reviewed and revised throughout the life of the National Partnership Agreement to ensure that it remains responsive to the changing context of the ACT environment.

This plan is a joint initiative of the Australian Government and the ACT Government.

This implementation plan should be read in conjunction with the *ACT Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Plan 2009 -2010*.

## KEY REFORMS – A FOCUS ON STRENGTHENING HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP AND ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

The four National Partnership schools (Charnwood Dunlop Primary, Florey Primary, Kingsford Smith School and Richardson Primary) will participate in a set of reforms which focuses on making a measurable difference to the educational outcomes of students in low socio-economic school communities. Under the key reforms identified in the NP, these National Partnership schools will focus on:

1. Incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers
2. Adoption of best-practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals
3. School operational arrangements which encourage innovation and flexibility
4. Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities
5. Strengthened school accountability

6. External partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and the provision of access to extended services.

## **Incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers**

The National Partnership schools will be priority schools for the introduction and ongoing placement of Accomplished and Leading Teacher positions based on the national professional standards being developed through the Improving Teacher Quality NP.

## **Adoption of best-practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals**

The principals of the three smaller National Partnership schools (Charnwood Dunlop, Florey, and Richardson) will be given increased flexibility to determine the most appropriate method of filling future teaching vacancies in the school's executive structure. The principal of the largest identified National Partnership school (Kingsford Smith) will be able to identify up to three teaching positions in the school's executive structure that can be filled using these different arrangements.

## **School operational arrangements which encourage innovation and flexibility**

By the end of 2009, each National Partnership school's plan will articulate the strategies and actions they intend to put in place for achieving sustained improvements in the educational outcomes of their students. The school strategic plan will be developed as required by all ACT public schools, and will also include the specific National Partnership initiatives.

Schools will have flexibility to use resources innovatively in line with their school plan. Consideration will be given to some of the following strategies, but each school's plan will be informed by the expertise and advice of the academic partner and their own school community needs.

Each National Partnership school plan may include strategies and actions evident in the areas of:

- specific school wide professional development
- student attendance
- raising expectations of Indigenous students
- teacher capacity building
- student engagement and significance of learning
- external partnerships
- parent learning and engagement
- innovative and flexible staffing arrangements.

Specific programs and initiatives will be identified through the development of the school plan. Communities, including Indigenous and multicultural groups, will be encouraged and supported to become involved in these programs.

Under this NP, funds will be used to provide each National Partnership school with an additional flexible staffing allocation, and schools will be encouraged to use this allocation for innovative arrangements. These arrangements could include allowing staff to vary their teaching day and schools to extend their hours in order to provide activities before and after school as required, such as homework support, ICT activities, arts workshops and sporting activities.

Opportunities for the National Partnership schools to develop shared activities will be explored, particularly using technology connections, and for sports days, multicultural and language programs, excursions and performing arts activities. Partnering with high performing schools will be encouraged.

## **Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities**

Each National Partnership school's plan will identify learning strategies with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy development, and will explore how technology can be better used to support tailored student learning opportunities.

The National Partnership schools will have a full-time Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer whose primary role is to build teacher capacity at all levels across the school through on-site professional learning, coaching, mentoring and modelling. In these National Partnership schools, the Field Officers may also assist in:

- the development and implementation of parent literacy and numeracy programs, designed to provide parents with the skills to work with their children
- building, strengthening and coordinating school/community programs and links
- facilitating extra curricular student engagement programs.

Students from low socio-economic school communities have particular learning needs. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) will be developed for students who are not performing at their expected level, including ESL students, Indigenous students and those with a disability.

Under the ACT Department of Education and Training's new *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009 – 2013*, each National Partnership school will be provided with staffing capacity to appoint Literacy and Numeracy School Coordinators. A key role of the School Coordinators in these National Partnership schools will be to work with class teachers to support and track student progress.

An important aspect of this reform element is targeted early intervention. ACT schools use Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) data to identify kindergarten students at risk and classroom teachers use early intervention strategies to support these students.

## **Strengthened school accountability**

From 2009, three School Improvement Partners (SIPs) will work with schools to help them understand their School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) data and its use for planning at the classroom and whole school level. This will be done in collaboration with the academic partner and School Director, and will be reported to the school community through newsletters and as part of the Annual School Board Report.

School reporting procedures will be reviewed to ensure parents have a clear understanding of their child's progress. When necessary, translators will be employed, strategies to improve student learning will be explained and parents supported in understanding their roles in their child's learning outside the school.

## **External partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and the provision of access to extended services**

This is an area which will be further developed with each National Partnership school, with support from a working group comprising officers from the National Partnership schools, community representation, relevant government agencies and the academic partner.

The working group will identify how external engagement can be strengthened to promote activities between National Partnership schools, with business, the community and parents. Consideration will be given to some of the following strategies:

- developing a designated parent drop-in facility
- better connecting of health and community workers in an outreach program
- developing partnerships with other ACT government agencies
- developing and facilitating parent literacy programs
- offering parent information sessions and workshops across the National Partnership schools on educational topics of mutual interest
- developing joint project activities that give students, teachers, parents and community members an opportunity to work together.

Further detail about the performance indicators and measures designed to achieve these outcomes is provided below.

# ACT LOW SES GOVERNMENT SECTOR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2009-2012

## **Performance Indicators and Measures**

The ACT will implement the following initiatives in support of the reforms required under the National Partnership.

### **Reform 1 – Incentives to attract high-performing principals and teachers**

Networking opportunities will be established for the National Partnership School principals to work together and with other schools in their district. Support will also be provided through the leadership expertise of the academic partner at University of Canberra who will provide access to research and mentoring arrangements.

National Partnership schools will be priority schools for the introduction and ongoing placement of Accomplished and Leading Teacher positions based on the national professional standards being developed through the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership. The schools will be supported through a targeted implementation stage of the new positions to ACT public schools.

#### **Outcomes**

- Increased Number of Accomplished and Leading Teacher positions.

### **Reform 2 – Adoption of best practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals**

The principals of the three smaller schools will be given increased flexibility to determine the most appropriate method of filling future teaching vacancies in the school's executive structure. The principal of the largest school (Kingsford Smith) will be able to identify up to three teaching positions in the school's executive structure that can be filled using these flexible staffing arrangements. These arrangements reduce the selection process by eliminating the transfer round so that all teachers are eligible for selection for executive positions. This allows an increased pool of applicants to be considered on merit. This approach supports the reform relating to increased school-based decision making in the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership.

#### **Outcomes**

- Demonstrated School community satisfaction with leadership structures.

### **Reform 3 – School operational arrangements which encourage innovation and flexibility**

Schools will have flexibility to use resources innovatively in line with their school plan. Consideration will be given to some of the following strategies, but each school's plan will be informed by the expertise and advice of the academic partner and their own school community needs.

- Specific school wide professional development such as *Incorporating Strategies for an Inclusive Curriculum*, *ESL Students in the Mainstream Classroom*, and *ESL in the Mainstream for the Early Learner*.
- Schools will investigate participating in and learning from Australian Government funded pilot programs identified to address disadvantage, such as *Middle Years Mental Computation*, and *Positive and Proud – Together in Learning Program*.
- The use of technology to monitor student attendance and send SMS texts to parents, (used effectively in the secondary sector with reduced absences as a consequence), will be investigated.
- By sharing and learning from each other, these schools will work as a school cluster, and may also work with high performing schools in their geographical region, identified through NAPLAN results and school validation data. School directors will assist in the bringing together of these schools as required.
- Communities, including Indigenous and multicultural groups, will be encouraged and supported to become involved in school programs.
- Opportunities for the schools to develop shared activities will be explored, particularly through the use of technology connections, as well as for activities such as sports days, multicultural and language programs, excursions and performing arts activities.
- Innovative and flexible staffing arrangements could be implemented, such as variations to the teaching day and schools to extend their hours in order to provide activities before and after school as required, provision of an engaging after school program, and opportunities for flexible student grouping including individual student tuition.

### **Outcomes**

- Improved teacher satisfaction.
- All students are engaged in and benefiting from schooling.
- Improved student learning.
- Increased parental engagement and involvement in assisting children with learning.
- Increased student attendance and engagement in school activities.



#### **Reform 4 – Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities**

Schools will focus on literacy and numeracy development and explore how technology can be better used to support tailored student learning opportunities. The Department's new *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009 – 2013* gives priority to building the capacity of teachers to teach literacy and numeracy. Consideration will be given to some of the following strategies, but each school's plan will be informed by the expertise and advice of the academic partner and their own school community needs.

- The National Partnership schools will have a full-time Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer whose primary role is to build teacher capacity at all levels across the school through on-site professional learning, coaching, mentoring and modelling.
- Under the Department's new *Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2009 – 2013*, each school will be provided with staffing points to appoint Literacy and Numeracy School Coordinators. A key role of the School Coordinators in the schools will be to work with class teachers to support and track student progress.
- These officers will work with Indigenous kindergarten to year 4 students to devise individual programs in consultation with school coordinators and classroom teachers.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) will be developed for all educationally disadvantaged students, who are not performing at their expected level, including ESL students, and those with a disability. These students will be identified from evidence, including testing and teacher judgement. The ILPs will identify goals, focusing on student well-being and learning outcomes, and strategies to reach the set goals. They will be monitored, evaluated and adapted regularly in consultation with parents, relevant support staff and teachers.
- Personal Learning Plans for Indigenous students will build on student strengths and be based on learning outcomes, provision of student and school support strategies, student engagement and progress.
- An important aspect of this reform element is targeted at early intervention. ACT schools use Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) data to identify kindergarten students at risk and classroom teachers use early intervention strategies to support these students.

#### **Outcomes**

- All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling.
- Student improvement is evident in literacy and numeracy outcomes.
- Improved student attendance.

## **Reform 5 – Strengthened school accountability**

ACT public schools have been moving to a greater evidence-based approach to their practice. In 2008, the Department made the NSW developed School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) available to schools to assist with analysis and understanding of the NAPLAN results. From 2009, three School Improvement Partners will work with schools to help them understand their data and its use for planning at the classroom and whole school level. This will be done in collaboration with the academic partner and will be reported to the school community through newsletters and as part of the Annual School Board Report.

### **Outcomes**

- An improvement in outcomes for specified groups of students.
- Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the education disadvantage of children, especially for Indigenous children.

## **Reform 6 – External partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities, and the provision of access to extended services**

A working group comprising principals from the four schools, Department staff, relevant government agencies (Health Department, and Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services), academic partners, Schools Directors and the Canberra Institute of Technology has been established and will assist schools in the identification and coordination of relevant services. Each school's plan will be informed by the expertise and advice of the academic partner and their own school community needs.

Some strategies for building partnerships with parents and the school community that these schools will consider include:

- Development of a designated parent drop-in facility as a welcoming place for parents to gather and providing appropriate materials for parents to read, including magazines and parenting, health and community materials, and books suitable for reading to children.
- Delivery of parent information sessions and workshops across the schools on relevant educational topics.
- Development of joint project activities that give students, teachers, parents and community members an opportunity to work together on one or more topics of mutual interest.

Some strategies for building external partnerships that these schools will consider include:

- Investigation into the work being led by Western Australia in the reform area of full service schools
- Building better connections between schools, and health and community workers, in outreach programs.

- Development of relevant external partnerships drawing on case studies from the DEEWR Family – School Partnerships framework and building on the successful School Volunteers Program – ACT.
- Encouraging volunteers from the local community to share their skills and knowledge with the school and its students and families.

### Outcomes

- Increased parent involvement with the school.
- Parents use effective strategies to support their child's literacy and numeracy learning.
- Increased student engagement with learning
- Better nutrition, health and social skills of students.

## SCHOOL SELECTION

The National Partnership schools for Low SES School Communities have been identified using a nationally agreed methodology. In deciding the schools to participate in this National Partnership student profiles, which exhibit an elevated low socio-economic status (SES) population combined with Indigenous and non-English speaking background populations were taken into account.

The ACT has four National Partnership public primary schools participating in this NP. They are Charnwood Dunlop Primary, Florey Primary, Kingsford Smith School (Primary) and Richardson Primary.

No non-government schools in the ACT qualified for funding using the agreed methodology under this NP.

The life of this NP is seven years, until 2015. Participation in the NP will initially be for four years till the end of 2012, when school participation and implementation will be reviewed.

## SCHOOL LEVEL PLANS

All ACT public schools are required to develop four-year strategic school plans and annual operational plans in consultation with their school communities. These plans derive from system-based data, satisfaction surveys (students, parents and staff) and school-based analysis against the Department's *School Improvement Framework*.

Within their school plan, all National Partnership Schools will identify the specific reforms, and their strategies for addressing them, linked to the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. These school plans will clearly identify the level of National Partnership investment and the specific activities to address National Partnership reforms.

By the end of 2009, each school will have a plan which articulates the strategies and actions they intend to put in place for achieving sustained improvements in the educational outcomes of their students.

From 2009, the three School Improvement Partners are available to assist schools in understanding their data and its use for planning at the classroom and whole school level. The School Improvement Partners will give the National Partnership schools priority support, as required.

The Literacy and Numeracy Field Officers in the National Partnership schools will work in close association with their School Improvement Partner and Academic Partner to support the school executive in the development and implementation of their school plan.

School Plans for National Partnership schools are available from [www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au) and individual school websites. A list of National Partnership schools is available on the Smarter Schools site at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/state.aspx>

## EVALUATION

The National Partnership schools will finalise their school plans by the end of 2009 to show alignment of their priorities and strategies with the reform actions identified in the National Partnership.

These National Partnership schools will work with an academic partner from the University of Canberra, who will provide ongoing advice and support. The academic partner will also assist to develop an evaluation framework for the schools' activities, allowing for a review of this implementation plan in 2012.

The ACT will also participate in any national evaluations and will share findings of these evaluations as required.

## LINKS TO OTHER NATIONAL REFORMS

Implementation of this NP is closely linked to delivery of the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership, Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership and the Early Childhood Education National Partnership.

A quality teaching workforce is crucial to the successful implementation of any reform in schooling. Under this plan, schools will be supported through measures to attract, retain and support school teachers and leaders. The National Partnership schools will be given increased flexibility to fill key teaching and leadership positions within the school and will be priority schools for ongoing placement of accomplished and leading teacher positions.

Support for these National Partnership schools will be complemented and supplemented by support under the Literacy and Numeracy NP. Under the Literacy and Numeracy NP National Partnership schools will be supported through reforms to lift teacher quality, with specific measures to improve classroom practice, such as school based professional learning and leadership development.

As part of the Universal Access strategy under the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education, the four schools identified in this plan will be priority sites for 15 hours of preschool implementation in 2010.

The ACT views all three Smarter Schools NPs as a significant opportunity to contribute to the achievement of national policy and reform objectives as part of the National Education Agreement.

