



New South Wales Smarter Schools National Partnerships Summary Implementation Plan

Improving Teacher Quality

Literacy and Numeracy

Low Socio-economic Status School
Communities

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are a joint initiative of the Australian and New South Wales Governments, the Association of Independent Schools NSW and the NSW Catholic Education Commission.

The New South Wales Smarter Schools National Partnerships Implementation Plan was produced in October 2010. All figures are correct at this time.



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Introduction

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are enabling New South Wales to achieve extensive education reform that will benefit current and future students, schools and their communities.

The three Partnerships in Improving Teacher Quality, Literacy and Numeracy, and Low Socio-economic Status (SES) School Communities integrate to form a cohesive platform for system-wide innovation, focused on improving the education experiences and outcomes of the State's students, particularly those most in need of additional support.

The Partnerships encompass nationally agreed education objectives developed through the Council of Australian Governments.

Significant in scope and ambition

Together, the Partnerships involve over 850 schools across the government, Catholic and independent sectors in New South Wales. They will directly incorporate:

- 27 per cent of schools in New South Wales
- 24 per cent of students in New South Wales
- 54 per cent of Aboriginal students in New South Wales
- 50 per cent of ESL students in New South Wales
- 65 per cent of remote schools in New South Wales
- 78 per cent of students in remote schools in New South Wales
- 29 per cent of small schools in New South Wales
- 30 per cent of students in small schools in New South Wales.

Through networks established within the Partnerships, including 'hub' schools designed to engage neighbouring schools, the influence of the Partnerships extends wider than the listed schools. This scope, together with the significant funding provided, offers unprecedented opportunities for far-reaching systemic change.

Implementation Timeframe

The three Partnerships commenced with an intensive planning phase late 2009, and are now in the implementation stage, with evaluation processes underway.

Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership is a five year program, the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership is a two year program, and schools participate in the Low SES School Communities National Partnership for four years, with four separate cohorts commencing in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively, with the last cohort completing the Partnership in 2015.

The additional government schools undertaking the two-year Low SES School Communities Reform Extension Initiative will be phased onto the program in two cohorts, in July 2010 and July 2011. The 22 schools participating in the one-year Literacy and Numeracy Addendum Program commenced in Semester 2, 2010.

Priorities for the Smarter Schools National Partnerships in 2011

In 2011 New South Wales will focus on:

- Embedding teacher quality initiatives (such as the employment of Highly Accomplished Teachers in the government sector) as part of the Low SES School Communities National Partnership
- Building capacity through continued engagement in whole-school teacher professional development
- Using data collected through the rigorous situational analysis/ environmental scan to identify the outcomes that need to be achieved in each school
- Putting in place new strategies that can effect measurable change, with teacher quality as a key element
- Identifying and addressing individual needs of students
- Accountability for achieving outcomes with transparent planning and reporting
- Ongoing evidenced-based evaluation of reform to refine implementation and identify future priorities



Supporting our Aboriginal Students

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships affirm our commitment in New South Wales to support, strengthen and lift educational achievement for all of our Aboriginal students. The State's most significant Partnership reforms have a strategic Aboriginal education focus so that the most effective and sustainable impact is made where it is most needed, in classrooms and in school communities.

The three Partnerships offer the New South Wales education systems and Government the opportunity to assess existing infrastructure and policies that support Aboriginal students and to strengthen successful practices already in place so that they are relevant and meaningful. The State is using the Partnerships to work collaboratively with peak Aboriginal groups to develop innovative responses to Aboriginal education needs.

2.1 How we fit into the national context

Since COAG's commitment to *Closing the Gap*¹ targets in October 2008, the national policy landscape has accelerated the need to strengthen collaborative support for Aboriginal educational outcomes.

The New South Wales whole-of-government approach to Aboriginal education closely aligns with the national interests in that we aim for equality of achievement for all of our students. For the State, the goal is to deliver the same opportunities and standards to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. The State target is to halve the 2008 achievement gap in reading, writing and numeracy between NSW Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by 2012 and to eliminate the gap by 2016.²

2.2 Strengthening support for Aboriginal students

The interactive nature of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships supports common elements in the approach New South Wales takes towards supporting Aboriginal students, teachers, school leaders and their local communities. The three Partnerships build on our efforts to:

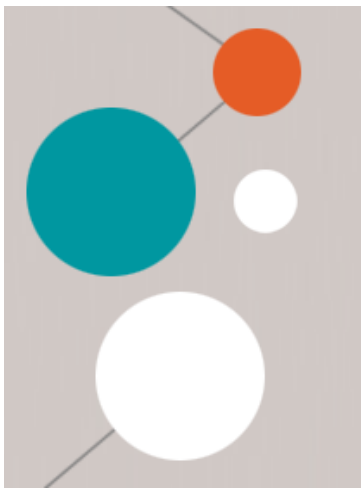
- Understand the learning needs of our Aboriginal students through Personalised Learning Plans and data assessment tools

¹ Closing the Gap targets: www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/.../communique20081002.rtf

² NSW Department of Education and Training Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy 2009-2012, p2

- Have high expectations for all Aboriginal students in every school measured against the same benchmark as non-Aboriginal students
- Improve outcomes through targeted support for Aboriginal students not meeting national standards and early intervention for students falling behind in literacy and numeracy
- Provide quality teachers teaching culturally appropriate curriculum
- Provide pathways into teaching for Aboriginal people
- Provide professional development for principals and teachers that is meaningful and culturally appropriate for innovative teaching and increasing accountability in schools
- Build community relationships to engage parents, Aboriginal Elders, local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and Aboriginal community organisations in school planning and decision making processes
- Support Aboriginal parents and carers engage in their children's education.

New South Wales is concentrating State efforts where they can have the greatest impact, with a clearer focus on what and how action will occur, given differences in local contexts. The largest partnership, the Low SES School Communities National Partnership, covers 46 per cent of Aboriginal students in New South Wales and includes all schools with greater than 25 per cent Aboriginal student enrolments.



Improving Teacher Quality

National Partnership

3.1.0 Operation of the Program

3.1.1 Importance of teacher quality

New South Wales' Implementation Plan focuses on reform activity that will significantly impact across all schools and where possible, will be sustainable after the life of the National Partnership. As a result, implementation in New South Wales focuses on changing culture and practice and developing systems to ensure continual improvement and support for teachers and school leaders.

The Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership provides an opportunity for significant national reform to build teacher and school leadership capacity. Through this National Partnership, New South Wales is both actively participating in the national reform agenda and implementing state level initiatives to effect school improvement.

3.1.2 Priorities for 2011

In 2011, New South Wales will continue to implement the reforms, programs and initiatives detailed in the 2009 Final Implementation Plan. However, in response to changing local and national contexts, the State will also focus on some newly targeted reform activity and the collection of progress data, to support accountability.

New reform activity

New reform activity to be implemented in 2011 includes:

- Development of strategies to break the cycle that leads to inadequate supply of quality teachers of maths and science, through joint engagement with schools and higher education providers. This will include a revised approach to managing professional experience placements in schools

- Planning of strategies to address the Bradley and State higher education participation targets (particularly for students from low SES backgrounds), including examining the role of quality teaching in improving attainment rates
- Integration of the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan into National Partnership reforms
- Joint projects with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. to further engage Aboriginal parents and Aboriginal community members in school planning and decision making
- Further development and implementation of strategies to attract Aboriginal people to the teaching profession and to paraprofessional positions
- Provision of more opportunities for students to undertake internships and extended practicum placements in schools located in remote and rural locations, and in schools with high Aboriginal student enrolment.

3.2.0 Reform Priorities

Reform directions

The Improving Teaching Quality National Partnership consists of a total of 18 reforms. These include 12 mandatory ('facilitation') reforms and six reward reforms.

In support of the State's intention to effect ambitious and extensive reform, New South Wales is participating in all facilitation and reward reforms. The reform activity section of this implementation plan details significant activity against each of the reforms. However, sectors will each participate in reforms according to their particular needs and capacities.

Facilitation reforms

Although each school sector will implement the range of reforms appropriate to its particular context, New South Wales will collectively participate in the implementation of the following facilitation reforms:

1. World-leading professional development and support which will empower principals to better manage their schools to achieve improved student results and higher quality to lead performance improvement at the local level
2. New Pathways into teaching
3. Better Pathways into teaching
4. Indigenous education pathways
5. New professional standards to underpin national reforms
6. Nationally-agreed process for accrediting/certifying Accomplished and Leading Teachers
7. Joint engagement with higher education providers to improve teacher quality
8. Establishing quality placements for teacher education courses
9. Establishing School Centres for Excellence
10. Improved mobility of the Australian teaching workforce
11. Improved quality and availability of teacher workforce data

12. Improved performance management and continuous improvement in schools (linked to professional learning and national standards).

These facilitation reforms rely heavily on collaborative activity at the national level to create national structures and bodies, the development of which are being progressed through Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

Key NSW initiatives include Centres for Excellence and Highly Accomplished Teachers.

Centres for Excellence

New South Wales will continue to create Schools as Centres for Excellence (C4Es) in partnership with universities. By July 2011, 35 C4Es will have been established across all sectors and will generally operate in a hub and spoke model which will extend the benefits to all schools in their clusters (spoke).

- C4Es will support pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education within and across hub and spoke schools by by:
 - Providing professional development planning and resourcing aligned to standards to build capacity and quality assure outcomes
 - Providing professional development and networking support to experienced teachers undertaking voluntary accreditation at the higher levels
 - Aligning mentoring programs to promote professional learning for early career teachers
 - Developing school-university partnerships to strengthen the links between theory and practice
 - Developing active partnerships between schools to enable teachers to share knowledge of best practice approaches, with a particular focus on in-classroom practices.
- The Catholic sector will continue to establish at least 10 C4Es to focus on specific areas of curriculum provision, pedagogy and parental engagement.
- The Independent Schools Centre for Excellence (ISCE) will continue to support schools within the sector to demonstrate, develop and share high quality teaching and learning. Activities will include:
 - Working with Aboriginal Elders and communities to build capacity
 - Acknowledging and rewarding up to 10 teachers accredited at Professional Accomplishment who will work with colleagues participating in the Smarter Schools National partnership
 - Increasing the number of accredited teachers by supporting the initial application and accreditation process for up to 80 teachers

applying for Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership.

Highly Accomplished Teachers

- Establishment of 35 new quality teacher positions across all sectors by July 2011 (increasing to 100 positions by July 2012).

In government schools the positions will be identified as 'Highly Accomplished Teachers'. These teachers will:

- Be classroom-based (above staffing allocation) but on a reduced teaching load to enable them to support colleagues and demonstrate quality teaching practice supported by data analysis
- Complete a submission for accreditation at Professional Accomplishment or Leadership play a lead role in school-based professional learning programs and support other experienced teachers to do the same
- Mentor, coordinate and manage professional experience placements and interns, demonstrating high quality teaching
- Form part of the school executive team
- Work with cluster schools for professional learning and accreditation support
- Liaise with partner universities.

In independent schools that have adopted a standards based teacher agreement, teachers who have completed their accreditation at Professional Accomplishment are required to continue to meet and demonstrate standards at this level. These teachers play a significant role in mentoring colleagues such as new scheme teachers applying for accreditation at Professional Competence, teachers applying through the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority for Experienced Teacher as well as those who have commenced accreditation at the higher levels of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership with NSWIT. They will actively support colleagues to participate in professional associations, conferences and courses.

The Catholic sector will establish up to 40 new positions (with up to 4 year appointments) in conjunction with the establishment of Centres for Excellence. These positions will have titles and remuneration commensurate with their function within the structure of the Centres for Excellence. These positions will vary according to the needs of individual dioceses. All will work in schools with teachers to develop and enhance teaching capacity. Titles for these positions also vary but will include: 'Teacher Leader', 'Teacher Educator', 'Leading Educator'.

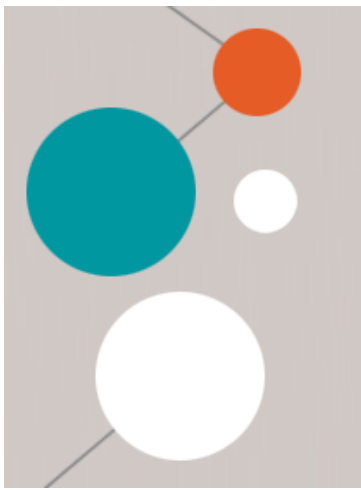
Reward reforms

The Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership's reward reforms are intended to significantly enhance teacher quality, by engaging jurisdictions in the delivery of stretch targets that reflect the state context.

New South Wales is participating in each of the following reward reforms:

1. Improved pay dispersion to reward quality teaching
2. Improved reward structures for teachers and leaders who work in disadvantaged rural/remote and hard-to-staff schools
3. Improved in-school support for teachers and leaders, particularly in disadvantaged Indigenous, rural/remote and hard-to-staff schools
4. Increased school-based decision-making about recruitment, staffing mix and budget
5. Continual improvement program for all teachers
6. Indigenous teachers' and school leaders' engagement with community members.

Successful performance against these reforms will be recognised by reward funding from the Commonwealth. The COAG Reform Council will periodically assess progress against each reward target. Funding will then be allocated by the Commonwealth relative to performance.



Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership

4.1.0 Operation of the Program

4.1.1 Scope of the Partnership

In New South Wales, 147 primary schools from the government, Catholic and independent sectors are participating in the two-year Literacy and Numeracy Partnership from July 2009 to June 2011, with a further two schools joining the program for the final year.

In February 2010, the Commonwealth Government announced additional funding to support a further 22 schools, including 18 primary and 4 secondary schools to participate in a one-year version of the Partnership, commencing in July 2010.

4.1.2 School and student profile

The students participating in the Partnership represent:

- 16 per cent of Aboriginal primary students in New South Wales
- 7 per cent of first phase ESL primary students in New South Wales government schools
- 12 per cent of refugee primary students in New South Wales government schools
- 11 per cent of students in remote New South Wales schools.

4.1.3 Priorities for 2011

Participation in the Partnership has given teachers and school executive staff opportunities to embed practices that will deliver sustained improvement in literacy or numeracy outcomes for all students, especially those who are falling behind.

Effective practice, as identified by the participating schools in the evaluation process, has been disseminated to support system wide improvements in attainment.

The priority for New South Wales for 2011 is the sustained implementation of literacy and numeracy programs identified by schools participating in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. To ensure the sustainability of improvement initiatives, capacity building of schools through continued engagement in whole-school teacher professional development and executive engagement in leadership programs, will be used by Partnership schools.

A key focus for 2011 is the growth in teacher capacity to assess student performance through the use of the School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART 2). Ongoing access to e-learning modules in SMART Data Analysis will be provided to teachers and school leadership teams to enhance teacher capacity to analyse data for effective intervention in literacy and numeracy programs for the whole class, including target student groups.

In the preliminary New South Wales *Evaluation of the First Implementation of the National Partnership for Schools*, principals have identified strategies to support schools with high staff mobility as an issue and this will continue to be a priority for 2011.

Teachers' capacity building to mentor others through whole-school professional development, increased educational leadership as well as parent and community engagement, will continue to provide direction for 2011.

4.2.0 Reform Priorities

4.2.1 Reform directions

The New South Wales response to the National Partnership Agreement Literacy and Numeracy addresses the three priority areas, focusing particularly, but not only on, our need to build on student achievement in reading and numeracy in the middle and upper primary years.

The development of programs in the Implementation Plan has, where appropriate, been undertaken as a cross-sectoral activity.

Through this Partnership New South Wales has undertaken a focused set of reforms with the clear aim of making a measurable difference to the educational outcomes in our participating schools.

4.2.2 Cross-sectoral approach

The three sectors in New South Wales share the objective of raising overall attainment so that New South Wales students acquire the literacy and numeracy skills to participate effectively in school and in society. NSW Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools are building on successful previous cooperation and collaboration.

Representatives from each sector have been involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of all priority areas in the Implementation Plan, specifically:

- Developing the literacy program *Focus on Reading 3-6*
- Developing the numeracy program *Taking Off with Numeracy*
- Planning the implementation processes for the literacy and numeracy programs
- Developing the evaluation schedule for literacy and numeracy programs
- Working collaboratively on the objectives for whole-school programs to build leadership capacity in participating schools
- Collaborating on the guidelines for participating schools' self evaluation, with a special focus on enhancing executive and teacher capacity in data analysis through the School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART). SMART, developed by

the NSW Department of Education and Training is used extensively in NSW schools, including non-government schools, in the analysis of (NAPLAN) student performance

- Contributing to the regular reports provided to the Commonwealth on progress in implementing the agreed reform agenda.

4.2.3 Mandatory reform elements

Schools are required to demonstrate the following elements:

1. Effective and evidence-based teaching of literacy and numeracy
2. Strong school leadership and whole-school engagement with literacy and numeracy
3. Monitoring student and school literacy and numeracy performance to identify where support is needed.

Details of initiatives selected by schools are outlined in the 2009 Annual Report.

4.3.0 Program Evaluation

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships will be evaluated through a co-ordinated framework that covers all three Partnerships.

New South Wales is an active participant in Commonwealth commissioned evaluation. New South Wales is also ensuring that any State level evaluation is within a consistent national framework, possibly including joint evaluation across jurisdictions.

Reading and Numeracy Programs developed by NSW Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools will be evaluated externally and independently. *Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (MULTILIT)* will also be evaluated externally.

The following programs will be evaluated:

Reading programs – individual student intervention

- *Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (MULTILIT)*
- *Mindful Learning: Mindful teaching (Intervention)*

Reading programs – whole-class

- *Accelerated Literacy*
- *Focus on Reading 3-6*
- *Mindful Learning: Mindful Teaching*
- *Reading to Learn*

Numeracy programs

- *Taking Off With Numeracy*
- *QuickSmart Numeracy*

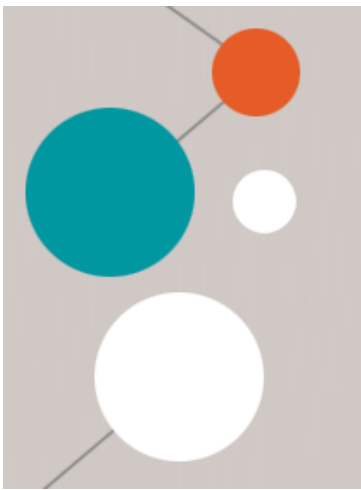
The outcomes of the evaluation of the Literacy and Numeracy Pilots in low SES communities across NSW government schools, Catholic Education Commission schools and the Association of Independent Schools as they become available, will be used to refine strategies implemented in schools.

4.4.0 Literacy and Numeracy Addendum Program

The three education sectors, the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools NSW, have collaborated to design an implementation strategy for the 22 additional schools identified for funding support in New South Wales by the Commonwealth Government.

Regions/dioceses and sectors have engaged in high level consultations to inform the design of processes that will meet the specific and contextual needs of each of the 22 schools.

For all schools there will be focused intervention for students most in need of support, enhanced capacity to use NAPLAN student and school performance data, enhanced teacher capacity to use other locally developed diagnostic tools and assessments to inform teaching and learning programs, and increased capacity to deliver consistent, high quality literacy and/or numeracy teaching.



Low Socio-Economic School Communities National Partnership

5.1.0 Operation of the Program

5.1.1 Scope of the Partnership

In New South Wales, 637 schools from the government, Catholic and independent school sectors are participating in a four year program under the Low SES School Communities National Partnership.

These schools have been arranged into four cohorts commencing in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively.

Additional government schools are being invited to participate in a Reform Extension Initiative. This program will run over three years from July 2010 to June 2013. Schools will participate for two years and will be phased onto the program in two cohorts.

5.1.2 School and student profile

Of these schools:

- 68 per cent are primary, 18 per cent are secondary, 9 per cent are combined primary and secondary schools and 5 per cent are Schools for Specific Purposes
- 21 per cent are “small” schools with an enrolment of less than 52 students (and typically three staff or less).

The students participating in the Partnership represent:

- 78 per cent of students in remote New South Wales schools
- 46 per cent of Aboriginal students in New South Wales
- 37 per cent of first phase ESL students in New South Wales government schools

- 56 per cent of refugee students in New South Wales government schools.

Reform options have been incorporated into this partnership to cater for potentially disadvantaged students such as Aboriginal students, students with English as a second language (ESL), refugees and students living in remote and rural areas.

5.1.3 Priorities for 2011

In 2011, schools will continue to focus on developing:

- Increased engagement with data as a basis for educational planning
- Deeper understanding of students' strengths and potential for improvement
- Increased leadership skills development for change management
- Increased capacity in whole-school evaluation and monitoring processes
- Increased emphasis on parental engagement and opportunities to link more effectively with local communities, including Aboriginal communities
- Strategies for supporting students' transition from school to further education and employment, including raising aspirations and transitions to higher education.

5.2.0 Reform Priorities

5.2.1 Reform directions

Through the Low SES School Communities National Partnership, New South Wales is undertaking a focused set of reforms with the clear aim of making a measurable difference to the educational outcomes in our most disadvantaged schools.

In implementing the reforms, schools are focusing on:

- Using data collected through the rigorous situational analysis/ environmental scan to identify the outcomes that need to be achieved in each school
- Putting in place new strategies that can effect measurable change, with teacher quality as a key element
- Identifying and addressing individual needs of students
- Accountability for achieving outcomes with transparent planning and reporting
- Ongoing evidenced-based evaluation of reform to refine implementation and identify future priorities.

Mandatory reform elements

The absolute priority in this National Partnership is on lifting the availability of high quality teaching in the State's most disadvantaged schools. While schools have the flexibility to try new and innovative approaches, and to engage closely with their community, this is to be done within a framework where teacher quality interventions are the building-blocks for reform in each school.

To ensure that resources are directed to the highest priority teacher quality reforms, there is a requirement that schools develop and implement strategies to address mandatory reform areas.

Schools are therefore required to include in their plan:

- Strategies to improve the availability of high quality teaching (such as professional learning for executive staff, attracting Highly Accomplished Teachers and employing targeted graduates or interns)
Located under **Reform 1: Incentives to attract high-performing teachers and principals**

- Professional development for school executives and teachers to help them use and analyse student data (e.g. NAPLAN) to cater to student needs. Located under **Reform 4: Providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities**

5.2.2 Rationale

Reforms have been weighted to those that are 'close to the classroom' and that have a direct impact on student learning outcomes. Many of the reforms listed are modelled on programs and initiatives that have been effective in both government and non-government schools in New South Wales. They draw on the evidence base developed within Australia, internationally and from evaluations of programs that have already been trialled within the State.

Many of the approaches extend from the principal programs for Government schools serving low SES school communities: the Priority Schools Funding Program, the Priority Action Schools Program and the Schools in Partnership program for schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal students.

The reforms also recognise the importance of school leaders and leadership, particularly the leadership required to make a significant difference in the schools and their communities represented in the Partnership.

5.2.3 Reforms

In addition to the mandatory reforms, schools are able to include elements from each of the six reform areas outlined below. Importantly, the strategies include reforms from the Improving Teacher Quality and Literacy and Numeracy National Partnerships. In this way, schools included in the Low SES School Communities National Partnership are able to strengthen the combined impact of the reforms in the other Partnerships.

Taking account of the different contexts of the schools on the program (location, size, primary or secondary, student characteristics), schools develop and implement the most appropriate strategies to address the reforms through the school plan.

It is recognised that the nature of independent schools means that some of the reform options present challenges for implementation within the independent sector. This is especially the case where reform options rely on the use of school clusters to share teaching resources. The challenge for schools in the independent sector is to select reform options which are both suited to the nature of independent schools and achieve the aims of the Partnership initiative. The development of a sector-wide virtual Centre for Excellence is a good example of this as a supporting mechanism for all independent Partnership schools, particularly those on the low SES Partnership, to facilitate the sharing of high quality teaching practice and enhance student performance.

5.3.0 Performance Measures

Individually, schools are required to report to their communities publicly on the outcomes of their participation in the Low SES School Communities National Partnership through their school's Annual School Report.

The measures to be reported at the school and State level are consistent with those that schools will be reporting publicly in their Annual School Reports and that all jurisdictions will be reporting through COAG processes.

The performance measures selected for this Partnership are those most relevant to the aims of the reforms:

- Student attendance
- Literacy and numeracy performance in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 (NAPLAN)
- School-based assessment and reporting mechanisms
- Year 12 or equivalent attainment (for appropriate schools)
- School retention data
- Student destinations
- School satisfaction (parents, students)
- Student and school community engagement (through surveys of parents and students).

For targeted student groups, additional measures such as ESL scales for newly arrived migrants are being used to track improvements.

Measures of value added will be included once these have been developed through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. Indicators which currently do not have a consistent measure – student well being, student destinations, school satisfaction and student and school community engagement – will be developed by the Schools Reporting Working Group. In the meantime, jurisdictions are reporting on these using existing measures.

5.4.0 Reform Extension Initiative

The Low SES School Communities Reform Extension Initiative is an extension of the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. It funds 63 additional NSW government schools, not already in one of the National Partnerships, to participate in a two year modified program to assist them to boost their literacy and numeracy results.

As in the case of the four year program, schools undertake a rigorous situational analysis to ensure that the revised school plan includes strategies that will best support the learning of all students in the local context.

The priority in the Low SES School Communities National Partnership Reform Extension Initiative is on actions that directly lift the availability of high quality teaching. While schools have the flexibility to try new and innovative approaches, and to engage closely with their community, this should be done within a framework where teacher quality interventions are the building-blocks for school improvement.

The Reform Extension Initiative schools address reform areas 1 and 4 of the Partnership, which recognise the importance of school leaders and leadership, particularly the leadership required to make a significant difference in the schools and communities participating in this Initiative over two years.

Each school will employ a Highly Accomplished Teacher and one or more educational paraprofessionals, placing strong emphasis on innovative and tailored programs to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students.



Evaluation

As part of its commitment to evidence-based decision making, systems improvement and accountability, New South Wales has implemented a coordinated approach to the evaluation and reporting of reform activities across the Smarter Schools National Partnerships.

New South Wales's evaluation strategy has two components:

1. Major strategic evaluation
2. Specific program evaluation.

In addition to undertaking evaluation of reforms specific to the State, New South Wales is an active participant in national evaluation activity.

Evaluation of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships is overseen by a NSW National Partnerships Evaluation Committee.

Major Strategic Evaluations

The main purpose of major strategic evaluation is to assess the impact of National Partnership activity on student learning outcomes. This requires an evaluation framework that will accommodate investigation of the total activity/impact as well as the impact of component parts.

The New South Wales National Partnerships Evaluation Committee's advice will be sought on the scope of strategic evaluations. The purpose of the strategic evaluations is to assess the impact of National Partnership activity on learning outcomes by targeting state-wide reforms that have potential for expansion. It is not intended to encompass all evaluation activity (for example sectors may undertake their own specific program evaluations). Major strategic evaluations may encompass existing programs as points of comparison with National Partnership activities.

Program Evaluations

NSW will evaluate reading and numeracy programs implemented for the Literacy and Numeracy Smarter Schools National Partnership in NSW Department of Education and Training, Catholic and independent schools.