



Australian Government

## NEW SOUTH WALES



### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality

National Partnership for Literacy And Numeracy

National Partnership for Low Socio-Economic Status  
School Communities



New South Wales Government

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The National Partnership Agreements on Literacy and Numeracy, Low SES School Communities and Improving Teacher Quality are collaborative initiatives supported by funding from the Australian Government, the New South Wales Government and the Catholic and Independent school sectors.

# SMARTER SCHOOLS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

## Introduction

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are a new approach to reforming education through innovative, practical and measurable initiatives. The Partnerships demonstrate the State's determination to achieve improvements to education in New South Wales, and in particular to lift the educational outcomes of those students most in need of additional support.

The Partnerships for Teacher Quality, Literacy and Numeracy, and Low Socio-economic Status School Communities are based firmly in Australian and international research into what actually works in classrooms and school communities to improve the educational experiences and achievements of students. The Implementation Plans are built on the consistent evidence that:

- Teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student engagement and outcomes
- Literacy and numeracy attainment is a cornerstone of schooling
- Socio-economic status remains a significant determinant of educational outcomes

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships, together with State, Commonwealth and private investments in schooling, will contribute to achieving our overall strategic aims that were agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in November 2008.

Participation of Government and Catholic schools in the Partnerships will be managed by each school sector and the participation of Independent schools will be coordinated by the Association of Independent Schools.

## Timeframes

The Teacher Quality National Partnership is a five year program.

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership is a two year program.

The Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership is a four year program with four separate cohorts commencing in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively.

## The New South Wales context

New South Wales has engaged continuously in considered reform in its system of schooling. Indicators of the success of our reforms have been our internationally competitive test scores and the extent to which practices developed in New South Wales are now national standards.

Rigorous teaching standards and teacher accreditation mechanisms have been introduced, with the NSW Institute of Teachers the first to have standards for all four levels of accomplishment (from 'Graduate Teacher' level to 'Professional Leadership').

High quality professional learning and leadership development programs have been established, new evidence-based literacy and numeracy interventions have been implemented and specific initiatives to address socio-economic disadvantage have been refined and enhanced.

The State has made significant investments to reduce class sizes in Years K-2, driven a focus on literacy and numeracy in all schools, introduced the 'Best Start' initiative to ensure student needs are identified from the beginning of their education and introduced school leaving age reforms to lift the proportion of students successfully completing their education.

### **The initiatives**

While the outcomes of New South Wales schools are high by international standards, it is recognised that:

- There is more work to do to lift the literacy and numeracy achievement levels of students, particularly in Stages 2 and 3 of the primary years.
- There remains a strong association between socio-economic disadvantage and schooling outcomes – and that early educational disadvantage has long term implications for individuals and the State.
- Increasing the Year 12 completion rates must remain a priority.
- Greater effort needs to be directed toward building capacity within schools to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students.
- Current efforts to address issues affecting teacher quality can be fragmented across levels of government and between jurisdictions and systems.
- More focussed, evidence-based reforms are required to take the State's schools to the next level of performance.
- School leadership, flexibility and community engagement (including with business) will be critical factors in making real, sustained improvements.

The Smarter Schools National Partnerships are delivering state wide and targeted reforms that will further develop quality education in New South Wales. Collectively, the three National Partnerships provide a significant opportunity to deliver an ambitious program of system-wide, cross-sectoral and school-based reforms.

# ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

## **The current context**

New South Wales is committed to lifting educational achievement for Aboriginal students, and achieving the Council of Australian Government's target of halving the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade. The State also has pre-existing targets that aim for equality of achievement for all students.

## **How the partnerships will work in practice for Aboriginal students**

The Implementation Plans for each of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships include strategies to support Aboriginal students, teachers, school leaders and school communities.

Across the three partnerships parents and communities will be involved in the refinement of school plans. In particular, for schools with Aboriginal students, this will include engaging with the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and members of the local Aboriginal community.

## ***Teacher Quality***

- Professional learning programs for Aboriginal staff will be developed including mentoring and resource packages. Regional networking will be provided during initial teacher training and in the first year of appointment
- Paraprofessional support positions have been created for short-term appointments in schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal students, including remote schools. These will assist teachers by providing specific literacy and numeracy support and facilitating small group and one-to-one interventions

## ***Literacy and Numeracy***

- The program *Focus on Reading 3-6* explicitly incorporates research-based support for teachers to improve reading outcomes for Aboriginal students in the primary years
- The *Accelerated Literacy* program is designed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students through an intensive exploration of complex grammar
- The *Taking off with Numeracy* program is being improved by using the experienced gained in the numeracy trials in Western NSW government schools

## ***Low Socio-economic Status School Communities***

- Engaging and building the capacity of elders and other Aboriginal community members will provide in-classroom support in relation to core areas such as attendance, reading and numeracy

- The 'Schools as Community Centres' model will link Aboriginal parents and students to services provided by other government agencies, non-government and Aboriginal organisations by bringing these services into the school environment

### **Related opportunities to support the Aboriginal workforce**

The Teacher Quality National Partnership includes strategies designed to both attract and retain Aboriginal teachers. Examples include:

- Up to 80 new scholarships for Aboriginal students to study education
- Professional learning programs to develop the leadership capacity of current Aboriginal principals and teachers who are in, and are aspiring to, school leadership positions

### **Indigenous Education Action Plan (IEAP) Focus Schools**

At its September 2009 meeting, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs decided to target additional assistance to schools where significant numbers of Aboriginal students (more than 25 per cent) are not meeting the minimum national benchmarks. Some of this funding will come from the Smarter Schools National Partnerships initiative. Within New South Wales, many such schools targeted in the Action Plan are currently accommodated within the Smarter Schools National Partnerships.

The New South Wales Smarter Schools National Partnerships Implementation Plans already includes the critical features of the IEAP such as:

- Identification of need using national performance data
- Development of strong school plans based on performance data
- Real engagement with Aboriginal communities in refining and developing school plans
- Development of Personalised Learning Plans in consultation with Aboriginal parents and caregivers

# **TEACHER QUALITY NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP**

## **Introduction**

A national quality teaching workforce is critical to the successful implementation of any reform in schooling. For New South Wales, the overarching objective in participating in this National Partnership is to improve the quality of teachers in order to improve student achievement outcomes.

Much of the reform agenda is applicable to the whole of the teaching profession. Where actions apply to some but not all schools, the basis for choosing the schools will be indicated.



## **Mandatory facilitation reforms**

While school sectors will implement a range of reforms that will be most effective in their contexts, between them they will be required to participate in 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, developed to encourage individuals to enter the teaching profession
3. Better Pathways into teaching, which is designed to enhance the training of graduates by implementing an internship program for up to 100 fourth year education students in their final semester
4. Indigenous education pathways to encourage teaching as a profession through providing teacher education scholarships and support
5. New professional standards to underpin national reforms
6. A 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 which are school sites for demonstrating, developing and sharing high quality teaching leading to improved student outcomes
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)

## **Reward reforms**

The Teacher Quality National Partnership also includes six reward reforms which will generate additional funding if achieved:

1. Improved pay dispersion to reward quality teaching (for example higher salary classifications for Highly Accomplished Teachers)
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. Continuous improvement program for all teachers by establishing school-based learning registers for teachers
6. Indigenous teachers' and school leaders' engagement with community members

## Performance measures

Performance measures will include:

- Teacher professional learning: professional development activity to support delivery of Teacher Quality initiatives
- Scholarships: number of scholarships delivered
- Internships: number of internships conducted
- Teacher mentors: number of teacher mentors appointed
- Centres for Excellence: number of Centres for Excellence established and number of schools participating in the initiative
- Quality placements:
  - number of students placed under the 'Beyond the Line' and 'Beyond the Bridge' professional experience programs
  - number of fourth year teaching students appointed to schools with high Aboriginal enrolments participating in an 'in country' professional experience placement
- Performance management and development systems: schemes in place for teachers, executive and principals
- Quality teacher positions: number of quality teacher positions created
- Payment to principals: number of payments provided to principals of School Centres for Excellence
- Paraprofessionals: number of paraprofessionals appointed
- Enhanced Decision-Making: number of schools participating in the enhanced decision-making trial
- Professional Learning: data management system in place to manage and track completion of teacher professional learning, aligned to the Professional Teaching Standards for accredited NSW teachers
- Accreditation: number of teachers applying for and gaining accreditation at higher levels
- Indigenous Engagement:
  - number of schools participating in Indigenous community engagement programs
  - number of teachers and school leaders participating in Aboriginal education and cultural immersion programs



# LITERACY AND NUMERACY NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

## Introduction

Literacy and Numeracy have always been priorities in NSW schools. Schools' implementation of literacy and numeracy programs is guided by policy and supported by well researched and evaluated professional learning.

The comparative performance of NSW students in the 2008 and 2009 National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) confirmed the strength of teaching in NSW schools and the support given to it.

The NAPLAN results also confirmed that there is a need for further development in Stages 2 and 3 in NSW schools to build on the achievements of students, particularly Aboriginal students and other disadvantaged students. While the focus generally needs to be on Stages 2 and 3, deeper professional learning is highly desirable for teachers of the early years working in many disadvantaged communities.

NSW Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools are building on previous successful cooperation and collaboration. Representatives from each sector have been involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of all priority areas in the implementation plan.

## Schools selection

Eligible primary schools from each sector were offered the opportunity to participate in the two year National Partnership Program in Literacy and/or Numeracy from 2009/10 – 2010/11.

Schools in the three sectors were identified as eligible using a range of criteria including:

- The 2008 NAPLAN data – Year 3 and Year 5 at or below national minimum standard in reading and/or numeracy. The list identified schools where the percentage of all students at or below minimum standard is above the state percentage (using reading and numeracy at Years 3 and 5)
- Assessment of schools' suitability and readiness to be offered an opportunity to participate in the National Partnership. This was determined by Government regional and Catholic Education Commission diocesan offices
- The regional/diocesan capacity to support school leaders and teachers as they participate in bold and innovative lasting school change
- The schools' characteristics including:
  - Enrolment size
  - Student language background

- Student demographic data - for example schools with a large proportion of refugee students and/or Aboriginal students
- The degree of disadvantage of the schools or group of schools

The Association of Independent Schools identified participating schools using only the 2008 NAPLAN data.

## **The profile of schools and students covered by this program**

There are 147 primary schools participating in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

The students participating in the partnership represent:

- 15 per cent of Aboriginal primary students in New South Wales
- 8 per cent of first phase English as a Second Language primary school students in New South Wales government schools
- 12 per cent of refugee primary students in New South Wales government schools

## **Development of school plans**

All schools participating in the Smarter Schools National Partnerships are required to outline their participation in a School Level Plan. School plans will include an outline of the planned National Partnership activities for the school, the resources the school is using in participating in the National Partnership and the amount of Australian Government funding allocated to the school. These school level plans will be produced during each school's normal planning cycle.

Lists of participating schools are available on the Smarter Schools National Partnership website:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/default.aspx>

School plans for participating schools will be available on school websites.

### **Support Provided to Schools**

Schools will be supported in their planning by their sector School Education or Diocesan Director. Independent schools will be supported by officers from the NSW Association of Independent Schools.

## **Literacy and Numeracy programs**

### **Reading programs – individual student intervention**

- Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (MULTILIT)
- Mindful Learning: Mindful teaching (Intervention)
- Supporting Individual Readers
- Successful Language Learners

- Targeted Reading Intervention
- Working Out What Works

### **Reading programs- whole class**

- Accelerated Literacy
- Focus on Reading 3-6
- First Steps Literacy 2nd Edition – Reading
- Mindful Learning: Mindful teaching
- Reading to Learn

### **Numeracy programs**

- Taking Off With Numeracy
- QuickSmart Numeracy
- Learning in Numeracy (K-8)
- Numeracy Matters

## **Mandatory reforms**

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

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

## **Performance targets - facilitation phase**

The Literacy and Numeracy performance targets include four mandated NAPLAN measures and three local measures specific to New South Wales.

## **Mandated NAPLAN Measures**

The four mandated NAPLAN measures are:

1. The percentage of students above the minimum standard in the 'focus domain' of either literacy or numeracy will increase from 68.9% to 70.5% in 2010
2. The average of the mean scores in the focus domain will increase from 414.8 in 2008 to 424.8 in 2010
3. The percentage of Indigenous students at or above minimum standard in the focus domain will increase from 74.9% in 2008 to 76.2% in 2010
4. The percentage of students at or above the minimum standard in the focus domain will increase from 88.5% in 2008 to 89.1% in 2010

## **Local Measure 1: National Partnership Literacy Numeracy assessment**

All identified schools from the Association of Independent Schools, the NSW Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Commission will implement a series of four assessments in reading and numeracy. All schools have completed a pre-assessment in April 2009. Successive assessments will be implemented in March 2010, August 2010 and August 2011.

The tests, developed by the Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) in the NSW Department of Education and Training are based on the NSW Basic Skills Test (BST). They are shorter version of the BST (approximately 20 minutes rather than 40 minutes in duration) covering reading and numeracy.

## **Local Measure 2: Data Analysis Skills Assessment**

The Data Analysis Skills Assessment (DASA) is a self-assessment designed to assess how teachers use student data. It is completed online and provides immediate feedback to the user. DASA measures teacher and school executive use of data in each of the following eight domains:

- Navigating School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) data
- Analysing SMART data for the classroom
- Analysing SMART data for the school
- Using the target setting tool and school performance graphs
- Integrating school and external assessment
- Using data to drive pedagogy
- Ethical practice
- Professional contribution.

### **Local Measure 3: Analytical framework to support school improvement in literacy and numeracy**

This involves assessment of school practice in literacy and numeracy using the NSW Department of Education and Training's *Analytical framework for effective leadership and school improvement in literacy and numeracy™*.

This framework articulates 25 statements of best practice at levels (bands) in literacy and numeracy drawing from research findings which identified the following five leadership dimensions that have a powerful impact on students:

- Establishing goals and expectations
- Strategic resourcing
- Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum
- Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development
- Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment

# **LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCHOOL COMMUNITIES NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP**

## **Introduction**

Over 630 New South Wales Government, Catholic and independent schools have been invited to participate in the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Each school will participate in the program for four years with schools commencing in four separate cohorts from 2009 to 2012 respectively.

## **Schools selection**

Schools invited to join the partnership in New South Wales were identified in two ways:

### **The National Methodology**

The Australian Government used the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD), constructed from the 2006 Census, to identify schools serving low socio-economic status communities.

IRSD summarises 17 different variables that all relate to disadvantage and can be summarised into the following broad categories:

- Housing variables
- Income variables
- Employment and occupation variables
- Education variables
- Various other indicators of relative disadvantage including skills, language backgrounds other than English, single parent families, access to a car and the Internet.

### **Additional Criteria – Government Schools**

The Department of Education and Training in New South Wales manages State based programs for government schools serving low socio-economic status communities. The most disadvantaged schools are those on the Priority Action Schools program. Eligibility for this program is based on the Priority Schools Programs - a survey of parents at each school completed every 4 years.

In order to ensure that the most disadvantaged government schools are included in the partnership, the list of Government schools includes:

- Those identified through the **national methodology** (IRSD)
- Any new or continuing school supported by the Priority Action Schools Program not already included in the Commonwealth list
- The 30 next most disadvantaged schools identified by the Priority Schools Program survey as meeting the criteria for the Priority Action Schools Program
- Any school not covered by the above criteria that had a greater than 25 per cent enrolment of Aboriginal students (averaged over a three year period)

### **Additional Criteria – Catholic Schools**

The list of participating Catholic schools includes:

- Those identified through the national methodology
- Schools below the median socio-economic status score as assessed locally. Catholic schools are each allocated a socio-economic status score by the Commonwealth for the payment of general recurrent grants. From those schools below the median socio-economic status score of all NSW Catholic schools, a local assessment will be made about which additional schools will be included in the partnership. The inclusion of additional schools will be based on factors such as:
  - the potential to benefit most from participation in the partnership
  - which other programs may be in operation

- the potential for clustering

## The profile of schools and students covered by the program

There are 638 schools participating in the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Of these:

- 69 per cent are primary schools, 17 per cent are secondary, 9 per cent are combined primary and secondary schools and 5 per cent are Schools for Specific Purposes
- 23 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:

- 67 per cent of students in remote New South Wales schools
- 43 per cent of Aboriginal students in New South Wales
- 40 per cent of first phase English as a Second Language students in New South Wales government schools
- 60 per cent of refugee students in New South Wales government schools

## School plans

All schools participating in the Smarter Schools National Partnerships are required to outline their participation in a School Level Plan. School plans will include an outline of the planned National Partnership activities for the school, the resources the school is using in participating in the National Partnership and the amount of Australian Government funding allocated to the school. These school level plans will be produced during each school’s normal planning cycle.

Lists of participating schools are available on the Smarter Schools National Partnership website: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/default.aspx>

School plans for participating schools will be available on school websites.

## Facilitation reforms

### Mandatory Facilitation Reforms

To ensure that resources are directed to the highest priority teacher quality reforms, there is a requirement that schools receiving funding will, as a first priority, undertake specified actions drawn from the Teacher Quality National Partnership.

Schools will be required to include as mandatory elements of their plan:

- Incentives to attract high-performing teachers and principals, such as actions to attract Highly Accomplished Teachers and employing targeted graduates or interns



- Professional development for school executives and teachers to help them use and analyse student data (e.g. NAPLAN) to cater to student needs

Once the mandatory reforms are undertaken, schools will still have a significant sum of additional funding with which to select other reform options. Existing and redirected resources will also be available.

### **Other Facilitation Reforms**

- Adopting best practice performance management and staffing arrangements that articulate a clear role for principals in leading the development and delivery of the school plan
- Implementing school operational arrangements that encourage innovation and flexibility in putting in place clear strategies that will have a direct impact on student outcomes
- Strengthening school accountability using transparent planning and reporting mechanisms
- Developing external partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities and providing access to extended services (including through brokering arrangements)

## **Performance measures**

Schools will be required to report to their communities publicly on the outcomes of their plans.

The measures to be reported at the school and State level will be consistent with those that schools will be reporting publicly in their annual school reports and that States 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 English as a Second Language scales for newly arrived migrants will be used to track improvements.

# EVALUATION

New South Wales will implement a common evaluation framework across the three Smarter Schools National Partnerships to support a coordinated and consistent approach to the evaluation and reporting of reform activities.

School self-evaluation will be conducted as part of continuous improvement, program evaluations will guide implementation of specific strategies and a longer-term evaluation process will measure the effectiveness of the approaches taken across the Smarter Schools National Partnerships.

In addition New South Wales will also participate in the national evaluation to be commissioned by the Commonwealth Government.

The principles underlying the common evaluation framework for Smarter Schools National Partnership activity in New South Wales include:

- Objectivity
- Use of recognised expertise
- Use of valid and reliable data
- Cross-sectoral involvement where possible
- A focus on outcomes

New South Wales's evaluation strategy has two components:

1. major strategic evaluation
2. specific program evaluation

Evaluation of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships will be overseen by a NSW Minister's National Partnerships Evaluation Committee. This Committee will be chaired by a highly respected external expert qualified in research and evaluation principles. The Evaluation Committee will:

- oversee the design and implementation of major strategic evaluations of National Partnership reforms
- provide advice on national evaluation arrangements as they develop and ensure the New South Wales evaluation framework is consistent with the agreed national approach
- provide advice on the methodologies to be employed as part of the New South Wales common evaluation framework

