



Australian Government

QUEENSLAND



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

National Partnership for Literacy And Numeracy



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The Smarter Schools National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy is a joint initiative of the Australian Government and Education Queensland, Independent Schools Queensland and Queensland Catholic Education Commission.

INTRODUCTION

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership is a joint initiative between the Australian Government, Education Queensland, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, and Independent Schools Queensland.

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership includes a long-term commitment to improving student literacy and numeracy achievements and supporting teachers to develop enhanced skills. Reforms will include a focus on curriculum leadership and engaging school communities in literacy and numeracy education, professional development for teachers and setting targets to monitor student progress.

Each schooling sector, in consultation with local communities, will determine which strategies best respond to local needs.

Purpose

Improving the literacy and numeracy achievements of all school students requires a considered and strategic approach. Queensland's Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Plan has been developed to support schools to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students.

It includes a range of strategies tailored to suit the diversity of schools in Queensland – from small rural and remote to large complex urban schools. Integral to the focus of the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership is a state-wide commitment to strengthening accountability, curriculum leadership and quality teaching in every school, every classroom, every school day.

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership reforms focus on:

- Building strong leadership and effective teams to renew and refocus on curriculum, through principal forums and literacy leadership programs and training
- Engaging school communities in the literacy and numeracy education of their children by providing literacy and numeracy information to families and e-learning resources for schools
- Delivering professional development for teachers in the areas of literacy and numeracy by engaging literacy and numeracy coaches, providing all state school teachers in Years 4 to 7 with five days' literacy training and offering vacation-based professional development for teachers; and
- Achieving improved learning through assessment and monitoring of student progress in literacy and numeracy and intervention by providing increased resources to regions for local initiatives.

Implementation process

A total of 175 state schools, 36 Catholic schools and 28 Independent schools across Queensland have been selected to participate in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. Summer school programs will be provided during the September and Christmas vacation periods from 2009 for students in state schools in Years 5, 6 and 7 that require additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy achievement. Other schools will benefit from state-wide strategies under the partnership.

CROSS-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

The non-government sector in Queensland includes Catholic and Independent schools, represented by Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ).

QCEC and ISQ have been engaged as partners in the development of this Implementation Plan. Representatives from the sector have been integral to the development of the reform areas and specific actions contained in the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan has been endorsed by both QCEC and ISQ.

Governance during this development period has occurred through the Queensland Schooling Sector CEOs Committee, which is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Education and Training and has as members the respective heads of the government, Catholic, and Independent schooling sectors. The Queensland Schooling Sector CEOs Committee will continue as the overarching governance forum between the schooling sectors for the life of this agreement. Queensland will continue to work collaboratively with the non-government sector, both systemically and with individual schools as required, in implementing reforms under this agreement.

The non-state sectors will report six-monthly to the Department of Education and Training (DET) on the progress of implementation, and provide data to inform full annual reporting to ensure payments from the Commonwealth are triggered in a timely manner.

REFORM INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Partnership Agreement provides an opportunity to build on existing strategies that are reflected in good practice, while also allowing for the introduction of new reforms. These reforms have been selected based on research reporting high quality results in developing strong school leadership, building teacher quality and maximising student achievement.

The Partnership Agreement will be linking to and strengthening literacy and numeracy professional development currently being delivered to teachers through the Literacy – the Key to Learning: Framework for Action and the First Steps in Mathematics programs.

Strong leadership – effective teams

Existing strategies:

- Refocus and renewal of curriculum leadership for senior leaders to strengthen capacity to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes. (State, Catholic)

New strategies:

- Develop and implement an accountability and school improvement framework and auditing tool to focus on quality curriculum, teaching and improved outcomes. (State)
- Build IT processes for collecting, using and monitoring data including NAPLAN, P – 9 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators, ESL Band scales. (State)
- Support partnership schools to use student achievement data to inform teaching and track student progress. (State, Catholic, Independent); and

- Develop materials and advice for schools to use to engage families and communities in literacy and numeracy education of their children (State, Catholic, Independent).

High expectations – focused teaching

Existing strategies:

- Conduct literacy and numeracy training for teachers Prep to Year 7 and early childhood teacher aides (State).

New strategies:

- Develop P – 9 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators, and monitoring tools to raise the bar and provide clarity to teachers about standards and expectations and measure the ‘distance travelled’ by students. (State, Independent)
- Engage and train coaches/mentors of literacy and numeracy to provide support to teachers in partnership schools. (State, Catholic, Independent)
- Design and develop e-learning resources to support implementation of Literacy and Numeracy Indicators. (State, Catholic, Independent); and
- Deliver vacation professional development for teachers (State).

Differentiated intervention – improved learning

Existing strategies:

- Support teacher attention to diversity of learning styles/needs of targeted groups including Indigenous (State, Independent).

New strategies:

- Implement P – 9 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators in Partnership schools. (State)
- Implement ESL Band scales for students with non-English speaking backgrounds in Partnership schools. (State, Catholic)
- Summer Schools for students with a focus on literacy and numeracy. (State)
- Engage and train teachers to provide intensive teaching support for students who are below literacy and numeracy national minimum standards in Years 3 and 5. (State); and
- Build teacher assessment literacy and use of student achievement data to drive improvement (State).

SCHOOL-LEVEL PLANS

Schools will address the key reform areas as part of their school planning documentation. Reforms will be actioned to meet the accountability requirements for the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

Schools will publish their individual or cluster school plans on their school or sector websites.

The Annual School Action Plan will demonstrate scope and depth of reform as it aligns to the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. The School Action Plan will state the National Partnership investment and detail the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership reforms being implemented.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Queensland Implementation Plan for Literacy and Numeracy has direct and complementary links to the plans proposed under the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities, Improving Teacher Quality, and Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnerships. The plan builds teacher, school and broader community capacity to contribute towards improved student engagement and enhanced literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Performance indicators applicable to the Literacy and Numeracy Partnership schools cover two broad areas:

- NAPLAN (Yrs 3, 5 and 7) indicators of achievement; and
- Local indicators of achievement.

Each of these areas includes elements of whole of state and Indigenous focus. The spread of focus emphasises Queensland's continuing commitment to improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students as well as maintaining continued vigorous emphasis on the outcomes for Indigenous students.

NAPLAN indicators:

- Percent of students at or above national minimum standard in reading – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Percent of students at or above national minimum standard in numeracy – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Percent of students above national minimum standard in reading – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Percent of students above national minimum standard in numeracy – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Mean score in reading – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students

- Mean score in numeracy – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Percent of students at or above national minimum standard in reading – Indigenous students; and
- Percent of students at or above national minimum standard in numeracy – Indigenous students.

Local indicators:

- Percentage of improvement using a recognised local diagnostic measure of reading tracked over 12 months – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Percentage of improvement using a recognised local achievement measure of reading tracked over 12 months – Indigenous and non-Indigenous students; and
- Percent improvement using a recognised local diagnostic measure of reading (or equivalent) tracked over 12 months – Indigenous students.

TARGETS

The Partnership sets stringent targets for improved student performance in literacy and numeracy. Those targets have been framed in terms of two sets of measures. DEEWR proposed four sets of targets for reporting performance against National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) measures. DET identified a set of local measures that complement those mandates. Both sets include targets specific to the performance of Indigenous students.

Achievement of these targets will trigger reward funding. In the first year of the Partnership the NAPLAN targets will account for 40% of the total reward funding, with the local measures weighted at 60%. For the payment in 2012, the NAPLAN targets will carry a 70% weighting with the influence of local measures reduced to 30%.

In Queensland, a very large sample of schools has been identified for inclusion in the Literacy and Numeracy plan.

Table 1: Number of schools in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership, by sector

EQ sample	QCEC sample	ISQ sample	Total number of QLD schools in sample
175	36	28	239

The nomination of 239 schools is an ambitious and significant commitment. Each school has been asked to nominate an area of special focus (literacy or numeracy). Schools selected for reporting will be allocated on the basis of that specialisation.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) targets

NAPLAN data is available for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across a range of domains. To limit the total number of measures used to a manageable number, only the Reading and Numeracy domains will be used to comprise these targets.

In Queensland, reporting will be based on the performance of students in Years 3 and 5. This should not be interpreted as suggesting that work is not being conducted in later years but rather that early intervention is a key aspect of the Queensland focus. This early years focus is consistent with other strategies being initiated such as those relating to the Closing the Gap goals.

Within the selected domains and Year levels, targets have been agreed with respect to:

- percentage of students at or above national minimum standard
- percentage of students above national minimum standard
- Mean scale score targets; and
- Indigenous students at or above minimum standard.

In each category (for example, Year 3 Students above National Minimum Standards Reading) the target demands a 50% greater improvement than trends observed from testing data based upon the years 2006 – 09.

After the NAPLAN 2010 results become available, the results obtained by the target students will be compared to the targets category by category to determine the reward payments. No payment is made for any category in which less than half of the nominated improvement is achieved. Beyond that threshold, proportional payments are made reflecting the extent of the improvement.

Equally demanding targets have been nominated for 2011, subject to review when the data on performance in 2010 is available.

Local targets

Local measures provide more sensitive or relevant indicators of student improvement in literacy or numeracy in areas emphasised by different schools. These targets enable the use of instruments matched to the preferred philosophy or approach of schools operating in different contexts.

Two different measures of reading performance have been nominated. These are the Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading Comprehension (PAT-R) and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2). In each case, norms and scale score tables provided by the test developer have been used to identify an expected rate of progress and then to set a challenging (but achievable) target for students in partnership schools. Schools using each instrument will be kept in separate pools and appropriately sized samples drawn for reporting to avoid the difficulty of equating performance on different instruments.

The target for each category involving all students has been expressed as a specified improvement in the mean scale score achieved by students in those schools. In view of the historical under-performance of Indigenous students in the focus areas, the Indigenous local measures target requires

that the mean scale score of sampled Indigenous students is not less than that demonstrated by non-Indigenous students in the same schools.

All teachers using these instruments will have been given information on how to administer them prior to their initial use i.e. PAT R in Term 1, 2010 and DRA 2 pre test in term 4 2009.

After the re-administration of the instrument in Term 4, 2010, the results of the sample schools will be cumulated. The proportion of the available funding allocated will be based on the proportion of sample schools that have met their target. If students in 16 of 20 sample schools have met their targeted improvement then 80% of the nominated reward payment will flow. As is the case for NAPLAN targets, the 50% threshold applies.

Comparable local measures targets have been proposed for 2011, to be reviewed in the light of results actually achieved in 2010.

SCHOOL SELECTION

Queensland state schools

A total of 175 state schools across Queensland have been selected to participate in the 2008 – 10 Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership. The intent of this plan is to maximise student achievement through the allocation of dedicated resources and targeted strategies, grounded in research that will improve student learning.

A list of participating schools is available at:

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

The selection of schools was based on:

- Analysis of NAPLAN 2008 data where significant proportions of students were identified at/or below the national minimum standards.

One or more factors were considered in school selection:

- Percentage of Indigenous students
- Percentage of students eligible for ESL support
- A representation of schools from across the state that included rural, remote and urban; and
- Schools with small and large student enrolment.

Regional Executive Directors and Executive Directors (Schools) consulted directly with principals for inclusion in the Partnership Agreement.

There are 87,697 students enrolled in the state Literacy and Numeracy Partnership schools, of which 10,742 are Indigenous students (August 2009 Census).

Queensland Catholic schools

Thirty-six Catholic schools in Queensland will participate in the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy. These schools have been selected after extensive consultation with Dioceses and schools. The criteria for selecting the schools are:

- A significant number of students in Years 3, 5 and 7 were 'at or below' the national minimum standard in the 2008 NAPLAN results
- A representation of Indigenous students
- Mostly schools that were not identified in the list of participation in the National Partnership for Low SES communities

Queensland Independent schools

Twenty-eight Independent schools in Queensland will participate in the National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy. Schools were selected from the Independent sector based on a number of factors including a proportion of students below the minimum standard, total number of Indigenous or ESL students and a low SES score. The schools represent the diversity of the Independent sector representing different religious affiliations, geographical locations and pedagogical philosophies.

SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC STUDENT COHORTS

Contribution towards closing the gap for Indigenous students

This Partnership is committed to building the skills of teachers and school leadership teams to enhance Indigenous achievement in literacy and numeracy. It will build on current programs and services to schools and students to improve student achievement and ensure meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities and improve workforce capacity. Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and community representatives throughout the development process of this plan, has ensured its appropriateness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standards of education, as required by the Partners for Success strategy.

Partners for Success is the Department's key strategy targeting the education and employment needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland. Its priority areas of attendance, retention, attainment and workforce capacity drive planning and are the basis for measuring performance.

Launched in 2000 in 38 trial schools and communities, mainly in rural and remote locations, Partners for Success was developed as a direct response to the Review of Education and Employment Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The Closing the Gap Education Strategy builds on and extends the Department's Partners for Success Indigenous education strategy, and is based on that strategy's priority areas of attendance, retention, attainment and workforce capacity.

The Department of Education and Training's Closing the Gap Education Strategy has three key targets: to halve the gap in Year 3 reading and numeracy by 2012 and to close the gap in student attendance by 2013 and in Year 12 retention by 2013.

The strategy delivers a targeted and decentralised approach to Indigenous education in Queensland and contains proactive interventions that will improve teaching and learning outcomes.

The Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership implementation plan will support the following initiatives contained in Closing the Gap strategy for state schooling:

- Indigenous students that have English as a second language – professional development for teachers
- Deadly Maths
- Let's Stay Put for literacy and numeracy
- School clusters/colleges
- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools
- Programs for parents; and

- Linking Families and schools.¹

The focus of Queensland reforms in this area will include:

Strong leadership

- Develop leadership capacity to pursue improved educational outcomes for Indigenous students; and
- Embedding Indigenous perspectives in professional development and initiatives.

Focused teaching – evidence-based teaching

- Quality professional development including follow-up coaching of teachers in cross-cultural pedagogical practices based on evidence of improved achievement for Indigenous students
- Professional development for teachers to use ESL Band scales to develop teaching strategies in the classroom. Specific literacy and numeracy strategies will be implemented appropriate to English language learners. Consideration will be given to differentiated strategies to accommodate points of differences in cohorts across the state; and
- Coaches working with teachers to inform and build teaching skills.

Improved learning – Using student achievement data to inform teaching and learning

- Provide additional resources to focus specifically on Indigenous students. Develop teachers' skills in interpreting student data to assist in clarifying gaps in student learning and teaching programs; and
- Create a culture of high expectations for all students to learn and succeed by building upon and setting goals for achievement based on data.

Students with disabilities and students with ESL backgrounds

Students with disabilities and students with ESL backgrounds will be supported in the NP through the following strategies:

- Principal curriculum leadership training in literacy and numeracy
- Literacy and numeracy professional development for teachers
- E-learning resources
- P – 9 Literacy and Numeracy Indicators; and
- Community engagement in literacy and numeracy.

¹ Linking Families and School has been developed to promote and support positive relationships between Indigenous communities, students and school staff. An initiative of the Partners for Success Unit, the project aims to provide information to help Indigenous families and schools form partnerships to improve attendance, retention and learning outcomes for Indigenous students. A key focus of the project is to build productive and worthwhile relationships between parents, students and teachers.

MORE INFORMATION

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations website:

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

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Queensland Department of Education and Training website:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/nationalpartnerships/>

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Independent Schools Queensland website:

<http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/files/files/whatsnew/NP.pdf>

Information about the Smarter Schools National Partnerships on the Queensland Catholic Education Commission website:

<http://www.qcec.qld.catholic.edu.au/>

