

## APPENDIX 4: 2025 BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN QUEENSLAND AND THE COMMONWEALTH ON SCHOOLS REFORM

### Preliminaries

1. Queensland and the Commonwealth acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which Australians live, learn and work, and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.
2. This Agreement satisfies the conditions in paragraph 22(2)(b) of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) requiring each state and territory to be party to an agreement with the Commonwealth relating to the implementation of school education reform.
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledges are fundamental to shaping and improving education systems and outcomes for Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Queensland and the Commonwealth commit to ensuring that the implementation of this Bilateral Agreement is undertaken in a way that will enliven the priority reforms of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (Closing the Gap Agreement).
4. Queensland and the Commonwealth reaffirm their commitment to the vision for Australian schooling outlined in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* (the Mparntwe Education Declaration) for a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face.
5. The *Interim School Funding Agreement 2025* (2025 Agreement) sets out the shared intention of the Parties to work in partnership to improve education outcomes for all Australian students and build on the capability and capacity of the education workforce. This Bilateral Agreement outlines the actions and activities that Queensland will undertake to achieve these shared objectives.
6. This Bilateral Agreement between Queensland and the Commonwealth will commence on 1 January 2025 and expire on 31 December 2025 unless otherwise agreed.
7. Under section 22 of the Act, a bilateral agreement must be in place. Following expiry of this Bilateral Agreement, a new bilateral agreement will commence from 1 January 2026.
8. The terms of this Bilateral Agreement do not limit Queensland's and the Commonwealth's ability to agree different terms as part of a future bilateral agreement. Any variations to this Bilateral Agreement will be in accordance with clause 28 of the 2025 Agreement.
9. Should the Commonwealth offer more favourable terms (including funding) to another state or territory as part of the 2025 Agreement or an associated Bilateral Agreement, then the Commonwealth will offer Queensland those terms as well and, if agreed by Queensland, this Bilateral Agreement will be updated accordingly.
10. Clause 9 above also includes but is not limited to:
  - a. an adjustment to the measurement of state funding contribution included in another jurisdiction's Bilateral Agreement as part of the 2025 Agreement

- b. any agreement the Commonwealth makes with any other state or territory as part of the 2025 Agreement which favourably impacts on that state's financial contributions or risk sharing arrangements under the agreement.

In either of these cases these terms will also be made available to Queensland, and this Bilateral Agreement will be updated to take into account the adjustment or material change to circumstance.

11. This Bilateral Agreement may also be updated through written agreement of the Commonwealth Education Minister and the Queensland Education Minister if there is a material change in the State's circumstances, beyond its reasonable control, which will affect Queensland's fiscal position or the recognition of the State's funding contribution, in accordance with the process in clause 28 in the 2025 Agreement.

## State Reform context

12. This Bilateral Agreement sets out the reform activities to be undertaken during its term to give effect to national priorities and reforms outlined in the 2025 Agreement.
13. Queensland is a large state with a geographically dispersed population across the government and non-government schooling sectors. Almost two-thirds of Queensland state schools operate outside major cities and more than a quarter have fewer than 100 students.
14. Queensland schools have the second largest Indigenous student cohort in the country. From 2019 to 2023, Indigenous student enrolments in Queensland state schools grew by 12.1 percent compared to 1.7 percent for all state school students in Queensland.
15. The Queensland Government is committed to the following overarching values for the Queensland education system:
  - a. empowering principals, teachers and school communities to deliver improved educational outcomes for Queensland children;
  - b. implementing strategies to deliver improved NAPLAN results for Queensland;
  - c. reducing administrative burden on teachers to allow them more time to focus on classroom teaching; and
  - d. ensuring schools are adequately resourced and empowered to maintain strong behavioural standards.
16. Consistent with clause 51 of the Interim School Funding Agreement 2025 and section 77(2A) of the Act, non-government representative bodies (NGRBs) – the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) – and non-government approved authorities are required to cooperate with the Queensland Government in the implementation of this Agreement.
17. The activities listed above are provided for context and are not considered part of this Bilateral Agreement for the purposes of paragraphs 22(2)(b) and (c) of the Act.

## PART 1 — PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

18. Queensland and the Commonwealth acknowledge that a high-quality school education is critical to ensuring that Queensland's students will succeed in an increasingly complex world. Australia's future stability and economic prosperity is reliant on a high-quality, equitable and inclusive school system.
19. This Bilateral Agreement sets out the reform activities to be undertaken during its term to give effect to national Objectives, Outcomes and Reforms outlined in the 2025 Agreement.
20. As per clause 59 of the 2025 Agreement, the Parties seek to deliver upon the following Objectives:
  - a. Equity and excellence – schools and education systems are equipped to provide all students with highly effective evidence-based teaching and equitable learning opportunities and support them to maximise their learning.
  - b. Wellbeing for learning and engagement – schools take a structured approach to wellbeing for learning in a way which reflects their school and learning environment, and students have a sense of belonging, safety and engagement with their learning.
  - c. A strong and sustainable workforce – the workforce is respected and continues to grow, and teachers and non-teaching school staff are supported to innovate and be at their best to ensure young Australians thrive in their education. A sustainable workforce means that the Australian community recognises the value teachers and school leaders bring to students, communities and the economy.
21. This Bilateral Agreement also reiterates Queensland's and the Commonwealth's ambition and commitment to work together to contribute, along with other states and territories, to the national achievement of the national Objectives and Outcomes specified in the 2025 Agreement. While Queensland and the Commonwealth are committed to this, Commonwealth funding to states and territories under the Act, this Bilateral Agreement or the 2025 Agreement is not conditional on the achievement of the Objectives and Outcomes in the 2025 Agreement or this Bilateral Agreement.

## PART 2 — FUNDING

### Required funding contributions

22. Under section 22A of the Act, Queensland must meet its funding contributions for the government and non-government sectors as a condition of receiving Commonwealth funding.
23. Queensland’s funding contributions for the government and non-government sectors for 2025 onwards must be in accordance with section 22A of the Act and will determine the default requirement if this Bilateral Agreement is terminated by either party.
24. Queensland’s funding contributions for the government and non-government sectors agreed in this Bilateral Agreement are outlined in Table 1 below for 2025. The minimum funding contributions are expressed as a percentage of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) as defined in Part 3 of the Act.

Table 1. Queensland’s agreed funding shares for the government and non-government sectors, 2025

Sector	2025
Government	70.5%
Non-government	20%

25. The Commonwealth’s share of the SRS for Queensland government schools for 2025 is 20 per cent, as set out in the legislation.
26. Consistent with clause 39 of the 2025 Agreement and in the event of a change to the SRS that results in an impact on state contribution requirements, Ministers will agree to vary the contribution shares set out in clause 24 above to ensure that the state contribution amount is not impacted. The amended amount should represent the funding calculated as if the SRS settings are applied that were in operation at the time the agreement commenced. The Commonwealth will facilitate this process by providing the data required to enable Queensland to calculate the amount of its contribution on an unchanged basis.
27. In December 2023, National Cabinet agreed that funding for foundational supports for students with disability is to be agreed through new Federal Funding Agreements, with additional costs split between the Commonwealth, states and territories and final details to be settled through the Council of Federal Financial Relations.
28. Disability reforms, including those related to changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) including foundational supports, may impact Queensland’s school education services. Commonwealth funding under the 2025 Agreement and this Bilateral Agreement is not for those purposes. This Bilateral Agreement does not establish any Commonwealth requirements with respect to these reforms.
29. The clauses 27 and 28 above do not preclude Queensland and the State’s non-government schools from using Commonwealth funding under the 2025 Agreement to provide and improve education services and supports for students with disability more broadly.

## Measurement of contributions

30. For the purpose of this Schedule, Queensland and the Commonwealth have agreed the costs that are measured towards Queensland's funding contribution requirements for the government and non-government sectors. In assessing compliance with section 22A of the Act, the National School Resourcing Board's (the Board's) Terms of Reference will direct the Board to use this agreed methodology for measurement of the state's contribution, including as set out in clauses 31 and 54 of this Bilateral Agreement.
31. Consistent with the calculation of the SRS, Queensland's funding contributions will be measured consistent with the existing Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) financial data reporting methodology for state Net Recurrent Income Per Student (NRIPS) for school years Year 1 minus 1 to Year 12, excluding funding for full fee-paying overseas students, along with the following additional funding types:
  - a. Up to 4 per cent of the total SRS for the government sector each year for costs contributing to the provision of education in schools, which may only include, at the state's full discretion, depreciation of capital assets and direct school transport.
  - b. All regulatory funding provided by the government for the purpose of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority.
  - c. All funding for the purpose of the National Reforms and National Enabling Initiatives outlined in Part 3 of this Bilateral Agreement or Part 4 of the 2025 Agreement (with the exception of any capital funding).
  - d. Any accounting standard changes as agreed between the Commonwealth and state and territory Ministers for Education, that affect the measurement of recurrent funding where the NRIPS methodology has not been adjusted to negate this impact (e.g. AASB 16).
32. If the reported contribution for Queensland for 2025 falls short of meeting the required contribution for a sector by an immaterial amount, this will not be considered non-compliant with section 22A of the Act. An immaterial amount is less than or equal to 0.6 per cent of the total SRS for the sector, or another immaterial amount agreed by the Commonwealth Minister for Education for a year, which accounts for the timing constraint of state budget processes being finalised in advance of the year and the required contribution for the year being finalised at the end of the year following the annual School Census.
33. In assessing compliance with this Agreement, the Commonwealth Minister for Education will request the Board, through the Board's Terms of Reference for its review of section 22A of the Act, will take into account mitigating factors that have contributed to non-compliance. This may include, but is not limited to, fluctuations from year-to-year in funding which could be assessed through, for example, the application of a three year rolling average if funding has fallen below the required amount, unintended and unforeseeable budget pressures in the state budget process, financial accounting impacts (e.g. actuarial assessments and timing of expenditures due to reporting dates), and other unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. such as natural disasters).

## PART 3 — NATIONAL REFORMS

34. The National Reform Direction activities agreed in this Bilateral Agreement align with the National Reform Directions of the 2025 Agreement and Queensland commits to supporting and advancing initiatives aligned to each of the National Reform Directions.
35. Approved authorities of non-government schools in Queensland must adhere to their ongoing policy requirements under subsections 77(2) and (2A) of the Act). As per clauses 50 and 51 of the 2025 Agreement, approved authorities of non-government schools in Queensland are required to cooperate with the Queensland Government in the implementation of this Bilateral Agreement.

### National Reform Directions

36. Queensland commits to the actions outlined below to give effect to the National Reform Directions as outlined in the 2025 Agreement.

#### Equity and Excellence

37. Initiatives that identify student learning needs early and provide tiered and targeted, intensive supports, in line with evidence-based teaching and a 'multi-tiered systems of support' (MTSS) approach. This approach includes:
  - i. Continuing Queensland's Reading Commitment, delivering an evidence-informed approach to reading in the classroom supported by tailored resources and professional development, key checkpoints and advice for schools and families about reading difficulties and disorders (Government sector).
  - ii. Continuing to conduct internal moderation and training for the assessment and support of students with disability (Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability) in accordance with the principles of multi-tiered systems of support (Catholic/independent sectors).

#### Wellbeing for learning and engagement

38. Initiatives which support student engagement in learning, for example greater student participation, attendance, inclusion and/or enhanced school-family engagement. This will include:
  - i. Continuing to provide four integrated hubs, co-located in schools (in Kingston, Corymbia, Aurukun and Kowanyama) that bring together education, health and community services under one roof, to improve the health, wellbeing, education and life outcomes for students and their families (Government sector).
  - ii. Continuing to work with the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board on the development and implementation of accreditation standards for student wellbeing and boarding arrangements (Catholic/independent sectors).

#### A strong and sustainable workforce

39. Implementing initiatives which support the attraction and retention of the teacher workforce, for example, actions under the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* and/or recommendations of the *Strong Beginnings: Report of the Teacher Education Expert Panel*. This will include:

- i. Continuing to deliver programs (including financial incentives) that attract and retain teachers in rural and remote areas of Queensland, such as the Recognition of Rural and Remote Service Scheme (Government sector).
  - ii. Continuing to promote engagement of teachers and schools in nominating for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation and training of HALT assessors (Catholic and independent sectors).
40. Implementation of the National Reform Directions stated above is outlined further in Table 2.
41. Reporting on the activities undertaken in respect of the above National Reform Directions will be undertaken through an Annual Implementation Report, as outlined in Part 4.

## National Enabling Initiatives

42. Queensland commits to the following actions to give effect to the National Enabling Initiatives as outlined in the 2025 Agreement, and fulfil commitments as per Schedules B and C of the 2025 Agreement:
  - a. Contribute to the implementation of the Unique Student Identifier (USI) to ensure all Queensland school students receive a USI.
  - b. Contribute data where available, and information and expertise to inform a Review of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia to ensure it remains a relevant tool. This may include student level outcome data, appropriate disaggregated data, and information to inform possible new and updated measures. The review's Terms of Reference are to be agreed by Education Ministers Meeting and will include consideration of the costs and benefits of:
    - i. a new measure of student engagement.
    - ii. a new equity in learning gain measure, to enable measurement of student learning growth.
    - iii. national measures of access, participation and outcomes for students with disability to establish a better understanding of the education experiences and outcomes of students with disability.
  - c. Supporting development of an early years numeracy check to support teachers to assess their students' numeracy skills and identify and respond to students who need tailored support.
43. As per clause 72 of the 2025 Agreement, Queensland will contribute to the development of a Project Plan for each of the National Enabling Initiatives in Schedule B of the 2025 Agreement and provide the Commonwealth with the data or information necessary for the Commonwealth to fulfil its annual reporting obligations on National Enabling Initiatives, as per clause 78 of the 2025 Agreement.

## Implementation

44. In committing to the above reforms, Queensland commits to the actions and milestones set out in Table 2.

45. The Queensland Government will continue to engage with the non-government sector in relation to school education in Queensland.
46. In accordance with subsection 77 (2A) of the Act, non-government approved authorities are required to cooperate with their local state or territory government in the implementation of this Agreement.
47. Where applicable, the non-government sector in Queensland, as per clause 51 in the 2025 Agreement, should cooperate with the Queensland Government to implement the National Reform Directions and National Enabling Initiatives. Activities against National Reform Directions undertaken by the Queensland non-government sector will be included in reports by the non-government representative bodies provided to the Australian Government as set out in Part 5 in the 2025 Agreement.
48. The Commonwealth will not impose financial or other sanctions on Queensland for a failure by Queensland's non-government school sector to cooperate with this Bilateral Agreement, as per clause 70 of the 2025 Agreement. Nor will the Commonwealth impose sanctions on the non-government school sector for a failure of Queensland to cooperate with them in the implementation of this Bilateral Agreement.



## National Reform Directions Implementation Milestones

Note: This table should capture all reform efforts outlined in Part 3.

Table 2 – Queensland bilateral school reform milestones

Reform and Milestones	Sector	Timing
<b>Reform A – Equity and Excellence</b>		
<b><u>Initiatives that identify student learning needs early and provide tiered and targeted, intensive supports, in line with a 'multi-tiered systems of support' (MTSS) approach.</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing Queensland's Reading Commitment, delivering an evidence-informed approach to reading in the classroom supported by tailored resources and professional development, key checkpoints and advice for schools and families about reading difficulties and disorders.</li> </ul>	Government sector	From January 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to conduct internal moderation and training for the assessment and support of students with disability (Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability) in accordance with the principles of multi-tiered systems of support.</li> </ul>	Catholic/independent sectors	From 2025, ongoing
<b>Reform B – Wellbeing for Learning and Engagement</b>		
<b><u>Initiatives which support student engagement in learning, for example greater student participation, attendance, inclusion and/or enhanced school-family engagement.</u></b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to provide four integrated hubs co-located in schools (in Kingston, Corymbia, Aurukun and Kowanyama) that bring together education, health and community services under one roof, to improve the health, wellbeing, education and life outcomes for students and their families</li> </ul>	Government sector	From January 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to work with the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board on the development and implementation of accreditation standards for student well-being and boarding arrangements.</li> </ul>	Catholic/independent sectors	From 2025, ongoing

**Reform C – A Strong and Sustainable Workforce**

**Implementing initiatives which support the attraction and retention of the teacher workforce, for example, actions under the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* and/or recommendations of the Teacher Education Expert Panel report.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continuing to deliver programs (including financial incentives) that attract and retain teachers in rural and remote areas of Queensland, such as the Recognition of Rural and Remote Service Scheme.</li></ul>	Government sector	From January 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continuing to promote engagement of teachers and schools in nominating for Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation and training of HALT assessors.</li></ul>	Catholic/independent sectors	From 2025, ongoing

## PART 4 — REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

### Requirements for annual reporting to the Commonwealth

49. The following clauses set out the annual reporting arrangements for Queensland for 2025.
50. As set out in Part 5, clause 83 of the 2025 Agreement, Queensland will also be required to ensure full and accessible information on their needs-based funding arrangement is publicly available, in line with subsection 78(5) of the Act.

### Annual Funding Report

51. The Commonwealth will provide Queensland with a Funding Estimation Tool in January 2026 prior to Queensland's annual report with the final Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) data for 2025 for the purpose of the Board's review of Queensland's compliance with section 22(A) of the Act.
52. As outlined in Part 5, clause 84e of the 2025 Agreement, the Queensland minister responsible for school education, or their delegate (i.e. the Director General (or equivalent) of the Department responsible for school education) must provide an Annual Funding Report to the Commonwealth Education Minister, or their delegate such as the Departmental Secretary.
53. Queensland must provide its Annual Funding Report for 2025 to the Commonwealth no later than 30 November 2026.
54. The Annual Funding Report must set out the following:
  - a. The total amount of funding provided by Queensland for government schools in Queensland for 2025 as measured in line with clause 31 of this Bilateral Agreement.
  - b. The total amount of funding provided by Queensland for non-government schools in Queensland for 2025 as measured in line with clause 31 of this Bilateral Agreement.
  - c. Total full time equivalent enrolments for 2025, relating to the amounts in (a) and (b) above.
  - d. The amount for each funding type set out in clause 31 of this Bilateral Agreement.
  - e. The amount of funding consistent with the specified NRIPS methodology.
55. For the avoidance of doubt, each amount included in the Annual Funding Report must have been:
  - a. spent by the Queensland Government for schools for 2025 (including centralised funds expended by the department for schools and funds allocated for schools that are not spent within 2025 but are spent within remainder of the financial year or subsequent years by schools), or approved authorities,
  - b. or spent by schools or approved authorities for schools for 2025, and
  - c. not counted towards another reporting year for the purposes of this Agreement, and
  - d. not counted towards another Commonwealth-State agreement, without the explicit consent of the Commonwealth.

56. It should be noted that clause 55 does not prevent Queensland from reporting budgeted amounts in its report.
57. Each amount included in the report for a sector must have been allocated or expended for that sector. Note: this means Queensland cannot count funding allocated or expended for one sector against the allocation or expenditure of another sector.
58. Each amount included in the report must be net of any Australian Government funding.
59. The Annual Funding Report provides the option for a statement explaining:
  - a. any material variances (positive or negative) in the total amount of Queensland's funding contribution that is between 2025 and 2024 for:
    - i. government schools in Queensland and
    - ii. non-government schools in Queensland
  - b. any adjustments to Queensland's funding contribution (i.e. timing adjustments) outside of the specified NRIPS methodology.
60. For each amount, the report must include evidence that the amount has been certified and is consistent with the agreed methodology in clause 31 of this Bilateral Agreement by one of the following:
  - a. the Auditor-General of Queensland or
  - b. an independent qualified accountant or
  - c. an independent qualified accountant engaged by ACARA for NRIPS funding or
  - d. the Director General or equivalent of the education portfolio for the state or territory, but only up to 0.1 per cent of the SRS for Queensland for all reported funding.
61. The Annual Funding Report may also provide an explanation and supporting evidence for the Board's consideration of any shortfall between the total amount reported for 2025 and the agreed funding contributions for 2025 in clause 24 of this Bilateral Agreement.
62. The Commonwealth will provide Queensland's Annual Funding Report to the Board for assessment of Queensland's compliance for 2025 with section 22A of the Act, including any funding requirements specified in this Bilateral Agreement.
63. The Commonwealth may request additional information from Queensland on behalf of the Board, to be provided within 21 days. If Queensland does not provide information or advice in this timeframe, the Board will make an assessment based on the information and evidence available. Such requests will be consistent with clause 81 of the 2025 Agreement which stipulates that as far as practical, reporting requirements will leverage existing reporting processes and data sources and unless explicitly stated otherwise, will not impose any additional burden on schools.
64. Queensland will have an opportunity to provide further information for the Board's consideration following their receipt of the Board's draft findings.

## **Annual Implementation Report**

65. As outlined in Part 5, subclause 84a of the 2025 Agreement, the Director General or equivalent of the education portfolio for the state or territory must provide an Annual Implementation Report to the Secretary of the Australian Government's Department of Education for 2025, for the purpose of assessing compliance with paragraph 22(2)(c) of the Act.
66. The template for the Annual Implementation Report is found at Attachment A of this Bilateral Agreement.
67. The Annual Implementation Report for 2025 is required by 30 November 2026, or a date as agreed by the Commonwealth and Queensland.
68. The Annual Implementation Report must include:
  - a. progress on agreed reform activity as outlined in Table [2] of this Bilateral Agreement for the National Reform Directions.
  - b. information on how the implementation of National Reform Directions is relevant to priority equity cohorts (as defined in the 2025 Agreement) and, where relevant, to schools which need additional support.
69. For the avoidance of doubt, Queensland's Annual Implementation Report should focus on government school implementation, noting that as per clause 87 in the 2025 Agreement, non-government representative bodies will be required to provide an Annual Implementation Report for 2025 to the Commonwealth by 30 November 2026.

## SIGNATURES

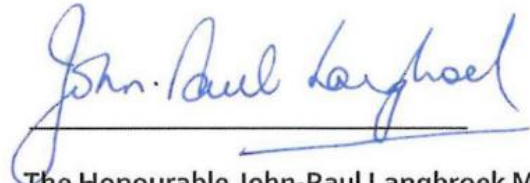
Signed for and on behalf of the  
Commonwealth of Australia by



The Honourable Jason Clare MP  
Minister for Education  
Date

27/11/24

Signed for and on behalf of  
Queensland by



The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP  
Minister for Education and the Arts  
Date

27.11.2024.

## ATTACHMENT A: ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT TEMPLATE

### Purpose of this reporting template

This Annual Implementation Report reporting template contributes to achieving the transparency and accountability commitments under the *Interim School Funding Agreement 2025*. Queensland will fill in the Annual Implementation Report and report it to the Australian Government Department of Education; non-government representative bodies will also be required to fill in their own template (see Schedule E of the 2025 Agreement).

### National Reform Directions

Queensland is required to fill in the below table outlining their implementation of National Reform Directions. If work is already underway in Queensland in relation to a National Reform Direction, then Queensland can choose to report qualitative information on the progress of the National Reform Direction.

National Reform Directions	Description of local implementation	Outline the focus on priority equity cohorts and schools needing additional support (where applicable)	Details of qualitative or quantitative impact (where applicable)
[For example] Structured initiatives that support wellbeing for learning and engagement, for example in-school wellbeing coordinators or access to School Counsellors, psychologists, mental health workers and/or youth health nurses.			Where applicable, for example, ratio of wellbeing functions to students, where applicable.
[National Reform Direction]			