

National School Reform Agreement

**Northern Territory Bilateral Agreement:
2019 Progress Report**

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Executive Summary

The Northern Territory (NT) Department of Education (the department) has successfully completed all reform directions as set out in its Bilateral Agreement under the National School Reform Agreement for 2019. Progress continues on all ongoing reform directions, and the NT is on track to meet all milestones for these reforms.

Highlights from 2019 include the successful development and implementation of the School Improvement Framework, which enables the department to understand where each school sits on their improvement journey, in order to facilitate tailored and differentiated system support in meeting the needs of each school and its students.

The department also developed its Local Decision Making continuum model to promote community engagement and strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal people to make decisions about their children's learning. In line with this model, Local Engagement and Decision (LEaD) Making Committees were established in 17 schools, to ensure a strong Aboriginal voice is present on school representative bodies, and 10 schools are on community-led pathway under the Community-led schools initiative, providing these schools with a significant level of community voice in educational delivery.

Progress against the NT's reform directions contributes to the department's vision of a strong public education system that ensures equity and gives every child the opportunity to engage, grow and achieve. Along with other departmental initiatives, these reform directions also support the NT's contribution to the national vision 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 challenges they may face.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Progress Against Each Reform Direction

Reform Direction A - Support students, student learning and achievement

Implementation of NAPLAN Online

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Cohort of government and non-government schools implement NAPLAN Online	All sectors	May 2019	<p>Completed</p> <p>The Northern Territory (NT) is committed to transitioning all schools to NAPLAN Online. In May 2019, 32 schools across the NT (both government and non-government) conducted NAPLAN testing online. This means that approximately 17 per cent of NT schools and 35 per cent of students in the NT participated in online testing in 2019. Overall the online testing was successful, with only a small number of NT students impacted by the national connectivity issues.</p> <p>During 2019, the NT Department of Education (the department) undertook preparatory work to support the planned transition of additional schools in 2020. The department will continue to work with schools in 2020, to ensure schools are able to effectively transition to online testing.</p>
Improved data processes in place to increase integrity of NAPLAN assessment data across both government and non-government sectors	All sectors	Sep 2019	<p>Completed</p> <p>The department has implemented improved data processes in managing NAPLAN data from both government and non-government schools, with respect to student registration, validation of data and the delivery of results data and reports. As a result, NAPLAN Online data from both government and non-government schools is integrated into the department's data environment, matching results for students across their testing history. The department</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			continues to make improvements to reporting and data dashboards available to schools, which now include NAPLAN Online data.
All eligible government and non-government schools implement NAPLAN Online, noting that, at the date of signing of this agreement, no tested no/low bandwidth solution has been delivered which may affect the Northern Territory's ability to implement in those affected schools.	All sectors	May 2020	<p>On track</p> <p>Some remote and very remote schools in the NT require a low and no bandwidth (LNB) solution to transition to NAPLAN Online. This solution was not available for use in 2019. During 2019 the department worked with the NAPLAN Online delivery partners Education Services Australia the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), and other jurisdictions to develop the LNB solution for use in 2020 testing. The department planned for a group of NT schools requiring the LNB solution to transition to online testing in 2020, noting that this will be the first time the LNB solution is used for a NAPLAN test.</p> <p>During 2019, all NT schools that did not require the LNB solution were supported to transition to online testing in 2020. A suite of readiness activities that included onsite staff training, ICT assessments, and school readiness tests was made available to schools as part of this work.</p>
Growth data available for first cohort of matched students who have NAPLAN Online in 2020 and 2022	All sectors	Sep 2022	<p>On track</p> <p>The department has maintained the capability to provide matched student gain data for the entirety of the NAPLAN dataset from 2008.</p> <p>With the first NT students participating in NAPLAN Online in 2019, matched two-year gain data for the first cohort of students will be available in 2021.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Invest in pathways for remote and very remote students to provide opportunities and deliver workplace-specific skills and knowledge that is tailored to employment opportunities within communities.

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Mobile and embedded trainers working with approximately 15 very remote schools in 2018	NTG	2018	<p>Completed</p> <p>The department has continued to invest in pathways for remote and very remote students to improve their employment opportunities in communities. The NT Government funds a number of Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs and offers career education support to schools, particularly senior secondary schools.</p> <p>VET for remote schools is delivered in a variety of modes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embedded trainers – in 2018 there were 11 schools with embedded trainers including 6 very remote schools • centralised delivery – in 2018, 13 schools accessed training offsite including 4 very remote schools • mobile trainers – in 2018, mobile trainers provided block delivery at 23 schools, including 15 very remote schools.
Up to 225 students are engaged in accredited training	NTG	2018	<p>Completed</p> <p>In the 2018 school year, 916 students from 33 remote and very remote schools were enrolled in nationally accredited VET. A total of 285 students from remote and very remote schools completed a full qualification in 2018.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			In addition to students undertaking VET in schools, 37 students in remote and very remote NT schools were undertaking school-based apprenticeships or traineeships.
Up to 250 students annually, and their communities, engaged in accredited training	NTG	2019-2022	<p>2019 activities completed, on track</p> <p>The department continues to work with industry, training providers and schools to ensure that VET programs delivered to secondary students result in appropriate and relevant employment pathways which are aimed at improving the number of qualification completions.</p> <p>In the 2019 school year, 917 students from 33 remote and very remote schools enrolled in nationally accredited VET. A total of 234 students from remote and very remote schools completed a full qualification in 2019.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Reform Direction B – Support teaching, school leadership and school improvement

Continued implementation of National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) with a focus on moderation and quality control measures

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Participation in two cross-sector moderation activities per annum	All sectors	2019-2023	<p>2019 activities completed, on track</p> <p>The department coordinates and leads cross-sector moderation activities across the NT.</p> <p>In 2019, four cross-sector National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) moderation workshops were conducted across the NT in Darwin/Palmerston, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alice Springs. A total of 74 educators from 61 schools participated, including non-government schools and educators.</p> <p>The moderation workshops assist with consistency of teacher judgement and reporting across government and non-government NT schools. The workshops include reviewing and making decisions about nationally consistent case studies from the NCCD portal and discussing the level of adjustment and category of disability the evidence indicates.</p>
Inclusion Support Coordinators in place and teachers trained to use the Learning with Diversity Integrated System	Catholic Education	2019-2023	<p>Information provided by Catholic Education NT or taken from the Catholic Education NT annual report 2018:</p> <p>2019 activities completed, on track</p> <p>Catholic Education NT has invested significantly in the development and implementation of the single software platform Inspire: Learning with Diversity (Inspire) over the past five years. Inspire provides data for the NCCD Project and is used by all relevant staff in Catholic Education NT schools. The program collects data on all levels of adjustment to programs for students with identified</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>needs. It assists teachers to identify, plan, support, adjust, refer, manage, assess and report on all disability and diversity categories.</p> <p>The Catholic Education NCCD Education Officer continues to work with the software providers to ensure the ongoing development of this software. In 2019, the NCCD Education Officer facilitated training for school based Inclusion Support Coordinators to ensure rigour and consistency in NCCD referral, funding and reporting processes for the Catholic Education sector in the NT, and the effective implementation of Inspire across all schools. The appointed school based Inclusion Support Coordinators trained classroom teachers in the use of Inspire, and ensured teacher compliance with NCCD requirements. Network meetings were also held once a semester in 2019, to provide systemic training and development for Inclusion Support Coordinators.</p> <p>Catholic Education NT’s Inclusion Support Services (ISS) team continued to identify and support students with inclusion needs across all Catholic Education NT schools. The ISS team consisted of Inclusion Advisors, a Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, two School Psychologists and Team Leader, as well as school-based Inclusion Support Coordinators, Inclusion Teachers and Inclusion Support Assistants.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Support teachers through a system of coaching and mentoring to build teacher and school leader capability to ensure students have quality teachers who are proficient in literacy, numeracy and ESL pedagogy

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Project governance structure established through the network leaders within Education NT Strategy (coaches work under network leaders to work intensively with focus schools)	NTG	2018	<p>Completed</p> <p>The department restructured in 2018 to focus on School Improvement and Leadership, including creation of Network Leader positions that directly support schools in their improvement journey, including providing differentiated support for schools, and coaching and mentoring school leadership staff.</p> <p>The work of the Network Leaders and the broader School Improvement and Leadership team is governed through regular executive meetings, sharing successes and risks, monitoring progress and adjusting plans.</p>
Identify focus schools based on school improvement data	NTG	2018	<p>Completed</p> <p>Over 2018 and 2019, the department put in place the School Improvement Framework, which identifies where each government school sits on their improvement journey, and informs how support should be tailored and differentiated to meet the needs of the school and its students.</p> <p>The department partnered with McKinsey and Company to develop a process in which each school can be identified in one of four improvement journeys (engage, accelerate, recharge and achieve) based on the school's performance and recent progress on student outcomes and engagement.</p> <p>As part of improvement planning, all NT Government schools have been introduced to the School Improvement Framework and considered their improvement journey in line with this methodology. The identification of a</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>school in their improvement journey helps identify differentiated and prioritised improvement interventions to meet the needs of each school and their students.</p> <p>Using this methodology and relying on other information sources, the School Improvement and Leadership teams were able to identify schools requiring additional support, including through a tiered support model.</p>
Deliver intensive support to focus schools in 5-week sprints	NTG	2018–2023	<p>2019 activities completed, on track</p> <p>Through 2019, the sprint model was piloted with some focus schools, focussing in particular on engagement and attendance. This approach is being evaluated to determine if it is the most impactful model to move forward.</p> <p>The School Improvement and Leadership team including the Network Leaders continue to provide focus schools a higher level of support through their improvement journey.</p>
Evaluate at end of each 5-week sprint – refine strategies where necessary	NTG	2018–2023	<p>2019 activities completed, on track</p> <p>Through 2019, the sprint model was piloted with some focus schools, focussing in particular on engagement and attendance. This approach is being evaluated to determine if it is the most impactful model to move forward.</p> <p>The School Improvement and Leadership team including the Network Leaders continue to provide focus schools a higher level of support through their improvement journey.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Strengthen local governance arrangements in remote and very remote school communities, ensuring decisions are community-led

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Develop Local Decision Making assessment continuum reflective of the Northern Territory Government Influence Model	NTG	By Dec 2018	<p>Completed</p> <p>The department’s Local Decision Making continuum model has been created in line with the NT Department of the Chief Minister Community Control Continuum. This model provides information and advice to schools and parents about where they sit in the local decision making spectrum and lets them suggest where they would like to be. As both parents and schools are asked to self-assess their position on the continuum, the tool provides a useful point of discussion between communities and schools.</p> <p>Six staff are currently trained in delivering the model, enabling these staff to lead conversations with communities and schools. The training was delivered internally with the assistance of the NT Department of the Chief Minister.</p>
Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations Incorporated (NT COGSO) to develop governance training protocols and schedule of visits and workshops in remote and very remote communities.	NTG	By Dec 2020	<p>Completed</p> <p>A Services Funding Agreement is in place between the department and NT COGSO to provide governance training to school representative bodies.</p> <p>The department is working with NT COGSO to develop governance training resources and materials that are contextualised for outer regional, remote and very remote school representative bodies (SRBs) and adaptable to individual school communities. NT COGSO has also been engaged to deliver governance training to a minimum of 20 SRBs per Semester, co-deliver financial training to SRBs with relevant departmental officers and ensure SRBs have an increased</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			awareness and understanding of their roles and responsibilities as representative bodies.
Ongoing engagement with local communities to enhance school engagement and local governance across 50 per cent of remote and very remote government schools.	NTG	By Dec 2020	<p>On track</p> <p>Following the development of the Local Decision Making continuum model, the department has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaged with 78 remote and very remote schools using the Local Decision Making continuum model, supporting school communities to understand where they are on the continuum and where they would like to move to; • established 17 Local Engagement and Decision Making (LEaD) committees to provide for a strong Aboriginal voice through school parent representative bodies at these schools; and • implemented the Community-led Schools initiative to promote community engagement and strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal people to make decisions about their children’s learning. There are currently 10 NT government schools on a community-led pathway, providing these schools with a significant level of community control. <p>The department is on track to meet this commitment in 2020.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Assist schools to improve governance and financial management practices

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Provide leadership and school board professional development with an emphasis on roles and responsibilities and how to work effectively together	Independent schools	2018-2023	<p>Information provided by Association of Independent Schools NT:</p> <p>2019 actions completed, on track</p> <p>The Association of Independent Schools NT provided two leadership forums during 2019 facilitated by Dr Stephen Brown, the Managing Director of the Brown Collective. A total of 17 schools were represented at these forums. The focus of the forums was on effective governance underpinned by a clear determination of the separation of the rights and responsibilities of the board as opposed to the school leadership. Leadership and governance forums are planned to continue through to 2023, in line with the agreement.</p>
Provide assistance and training for Independent schools to improve financial management	Independent schools	2018-2023	<p>Information provided by Association of Independent Schools NT:</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>The Association of Independent Schools NT provided schools with two forums in 2019 which focussed on non- government schools’ funding and the importance of understanding the financial impacts of school management decisions. All 20 Independent schools in the NT were provided with assistance, either directly or through their system office, in understanding both the Commonwealth and NT Government funding models for non-government schools to ensure schools provided the necessary data and information required to maximise their funding.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Assist schools to improve governance practices

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
School leader and teacher recruitment and appointment processes reviewed and updated	Catholic Education	2018	<p>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>A review of school leadership, teacher recruitment and appointment processes was led by Deputy Director School Services, Catholic Education NT. The review was conducted in consultation with key stakeholders and included updates to processes and all documentation.</p> <p>Catholic Education NT standardised and streamlined recruitment, selection and employment policies and procedures, and position descriptions for all classification of employees within the context of the approved Catholic School (Northern Territory) Collective Enterprise Agreement 2018–2021. New recruitment processes were implemented.</p>
Review of operations, personnel and structures to ensure support for schools is in line with best practice	Catholic Education	2018	<p>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Catholic Education NT conducted a survey of all stakeholders across a number of areas including teaching and learning and Catholic Identity. Consultation sessions were also facilitated at network meetings to review structures and practices and ensure they were meeting school needs.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Review and refocus the CENT School Improvement and Renewal Framework to ensure an ongoing, rigorous approach to school self-assessment and review	Catholic Education	2019	<p>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>In 2019, Catholic Education NT Principal Consultants worked with principals and school leaders to ensure the effective implementation of the Catholic Education NT School Improvement and Renewal Framework and the alignment with the National School Improvement Tool. One school elected to trial the tool and provided feedback to Catholic Education NT Executive in relation to the process.</p> <p>Network meetings for Curriculum Coordinators and School Leaders included a strong focus on the key School Improvement Areas and assessment of school performance in line with the National School Improvement Tool.</p> <p>Detailed information regarding expectations and requirements in relation to School Improvement self-assessments and review processes was provided to all Catholic Education NT schools in 2019.</p>
School Improvement Assessment, External Validation and Registration Renewal processes completed for all schools	Catholic Education	2019-2023	<p>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</p> <p>2019 actions completed, on track</p> <p>In 2019, five Catholic Education NT schools were involved in an External Validation Process conducted by an external panel as part of the five year cycle of school reviews. External Validation reports were compiled and used by schools to inform strategic planning and future priorities.</p> <p>Two Catholic Education NT schools also participated successfully in the non-government school registration process in 2019.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>School Improvement Assessment visits were conducted in 11 Catholic Education NT schools by members from the Catholic Education NT Executive and Leader of Teaching and Learning using the Catholic Education NT School Improvement and Renewal Framework. Reports from these visits were used by schools to inform improvement planning processes for 2020.</p>
<p>Professional development programs and appraisal processes implemented for middle and senior school and system leaders.</p>	<p>Catholic Education</p>	<p>2019-2023</p>	<p>Information provided by Catholic Education NT:</p> <p>2019 activities completed, on track</p> <p>The Brown Collective Executive Leadership Professional Development Program, tailored specifically for Catholic Education NT School and System Leaders was attended by 21 School and System Leaders from across the system in 2019.</p> <p>This program included the delivery of five face-to-face modules over six days and an online module. It included the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governance • ethics • thinking strategically • responsible stewardship • building a culture of safety and wellbeing • building a culture for performance. <p>The 21 program participants rated the program as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 per cent of participants rated the program extremely or very valuable professional learning.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 per cent of participants reported the program exceeded or far exceeded expectations. • 100 per cent rated the program very valuable or extremely valuable for them as a leader in NT Catholic Education. <p>The Middle Leadership Program, offered by Brown Collective was attended by 21 current and aspiring middle leaders. It was offered over three days and included the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature of the work of middle leaders • change management • leading self and others • strategic thinking and leadership • self/peer reflection • approaches to the review and enhancement of school performance. <p>Program evaluations from participants rated the Middle Leadership Program as highly successful. Two participants were subsequently appointed to senior leadership positions in Catholic Education NT schools including Head of Secondary Curriculum and Head of Primary Curriculum.</p> <p>In 2019, performance appraisals continued to be conducted on a cyclical basis by external consultants and linked to contract renewal. Information from the appraisal process and report is used for individual goal setting; promoting accountability and informing future steps in leadership growth and development.</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			100 per cent of Catholic Education NT middle, senior and system leaders in their final year of contract period participated in a performance appraisal; setting goals based on recommendations from the appraisal reports.

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Reform Direction C – Enhancing the national evidence base

Implement a system wide, data driven, coherent school and system improvement framework. The reforms will drive evidence-based strategies that will deliver differentiated support for Territory schools and ensure a focus on continuous school improvement

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
Establish a School and System Improvement delivery unit to develop and implement a school and system improvement framework	NTG	Oct 2018	<p>Completed</p> <p>The department’s School and System Improvement unit was established in 2018.</p> <p>In 2019, the School and System Improvement unit continued working on developing and implementing a School and System Improvement Framework that will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • align schools and system around a single, cohesive process and language for driving school improvement – assess, set goals, plan, act, review and adjust • ensure that all school and system leaders build an understanding of, and act on their role in school improvement as a core purpose • provide the basic tools and infrastructure to support school improvement.
Develop standardised metrics for schools and system performance and improvement	NTG	2019	<p>Completed</p> <p>Standardised metrics for school and system improvement were identified in the development of an analytical placement model by the School and System</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>Improvement unit. These measures are available within school and system focussed data dashboards for all schools to view and explore.</p> <p>The NT School Review Framework was developed and implemented across all networks in 2019 with a total of 40 schools reviewed in the first 12 months of the life of the framework. Commendations, affirmations and recommendations will be used to inform the school's strategic and annual improvement plans, and identify areas of differentiated support from the system.</p>
Develop resources identifying evidence-based school improvement strategies	NTG	By Dec 2020	<p>On track</p> <p>The department has partnered with Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and Evidence for Learning (E4L) as national evidence partners to identify strategies that will make the biggest difference while responding to the specific needs of each school.</p> <p>The department has developed 24 'Signature Strategies' in partnership with ACER and E4L. Signature strategies are a small number of differentiated evidence-based improvement strategies recommended to support school progress and growth. These strategies are based on a national and international evidence base and draw on the experience of other jurisdictions who have commenced similar journeys towards differentiated support. The signature strategies have been designed to align directly with the National School Improvement Tool developed by ACER.</p> <p>School Strategic Improvement Plans (SSIP) and Annual School Improvement Plans (ASIP) were redesigned. Greater focus has been placed on these plans to</p>

National School Reform Agreement – Bilateral Agreement Report – Northern Territory – 2019

Actions	Sector(s)	Timing	Progress towards implementation of actions (including progress of non-government sector actions)
			<p>identify the priority focus areas and needs of schools and to align system support to these areas.</p> <p>The department has developed a School Improvement Hub that links supporting research and the resources to support school and system leaders in planning the successful implementation of the selected strategies identified in SSIPs and ASIPs. The department has also developed an e-Learn website which aligns all system resources to signature strategies and provides support and exemplars as well as case studies for school leaders.</p>
Evaluate the school improvement framework	NTG	2021	Work on this action will commence in Semester 1, 2021.