Q44.

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

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Chapter 2: Improving student outcomes – including for students most at risk of falling behind

Q1. 1. What are the most important student outcomes for Australian school students that should be measured in the next NSRA? Should these go beyond academic performance (for example, attendance and engagement)?

We should measure student progress as well as student attainment. Many high performing students are allowed to loaf when they have met the level for their year, rather being pushed ahead. This reduces the number of high attaining student graduates. Low performing students who make more than one year's progress in a year are currently not being noted unless their progress takes them up to year level standard.

Q2. 2. What are the evidence-based practices that teachers, schools, systems and sectors can put in place to improve student outcomes, particularly for those most at risk of falling behind? Are different approaches required for different at-risk cohorts?

We need to teach all students in their zone of proximal development. This is close to impossible when teaching the same thing to a class of students who span six or seven year levels of understanding. Low achieving students tend to be withdrawn from the classroom for small group learning, but the time that they are out of the classroom creates more gaps in their knowledge. Other students can understand what is being presented in five to ten minutes and end up wasting the rest of the lesson as they re-hear things. Wouldn't it be better if every student could learn what he or she is ready to learn, with instruction in small groups? Maths Pathways (a private company) allows this to happen with middle school students up to year 10. Schools who use this system for only high school are finding that they have students who have completed all of year 10 and 10A/extension work before the end of year 9. Meanwhile, once low performing students are convinced that they can actually learn something, they build on their existing learning and learn the maths that they are ready to learn. We need to move away from all students learning the same things at the same time.

Q3. 3. How can all students at risk of falling behind be identified early on to enable swift learning interventions?

If student are moving through a continuum instead of attaining or not attaining a level, it would be easier to identify those who are not learning adequately. As it is teachers are often told about their incoming cohort in terms of "these ones are low…. These ones are high" but they are not told what it is that any of the students are ready to learn next, so they waste time until they know better what the student is capable of before they can even attempt to teach in the students zone of proximal development. We need a system that instead of saying for a year 7 student "working toward standard", lists exactly what they do know and what they are ready to learn next. We need there to be a system that does this for every student in every school, for every skill based subject where next learning depends on prior learning. Maths Pathways, it seems is too expensive for this.

Q4. 4. Should the next NSRA add additional priority equity cohorts? For example, should it add children and young people living in out-of-home care and students who speak English as an additional language or dialect? What are the risks and benefits of identifying additional cohorts?

If we want to improve something, we need to measure it or we can't say that it has been improved. So yes, it should.

Q5. 5. What should the specific targets in the next NSRA be? Should the targets be different for primary and secondary schools? If so, how? What changes are required to current measurement frameworks, and what new measures might be required?

As well as including targets foe growth of low performing students, there should also be targets for growth of high performing students. For skill based subjects, ask what percentage of student contact time is spent on direct instruction tasks, and what percentage is spent on enquiry / student lead, minimal teacher instruction type tasks.

Q6. 6. How can the targets in the next NSRA be structured to ensure evidence-based approaches underpin a nationally coherent reform agenda while allowing jurisdictions and schools the flexibility to respond to individual student circumstances and needs?

There seems to be a bit of a miss-mash about what constitutes evidence-based approaches. People seem to find some sort of evidence for whatever it is that they want to do. We need to make sure that evidence-based approaches apply to the largest numbers of situations and students and year levels and subjects as possible, and not use a study done with 3 or 4 year three students as evidence for what to do when teaching 27 year nine students of mixed ability in one classroom. (This is what we were shown in my ITE degree)

Q7. 7. How should progress towards any new targets in the next NSRA be reported on?

Q55.

Chapter 3: Improving student mental health and wellbeing

Q8. 8. What does it look like when a school is supporting student mental health and wellbeing effectively? What is needed from school, systems, government and the community to deliver this?

Students' mental health is negatively impacted by thinking that they cannot win at this game called school. If we spent more time celebrating growth instead of telling them that they are still "working toward standard" this would be better for their mental health. This won't fix all the problems; students still need access to counselling etc.

Q9. 9. What evidence-based wellbeing approaches currently being implemented by schools and communities should be considered as part of a national reform agenda?

Q10. 10. Should a wellbeing target be included in the next NSRA? Could this use existing data collections, or is additional data required?

Many schools already have well-being surveys that ask about belonging and bullying, but they are not standard across schools. As a first step a standard one could be developed and offered to schools.

Q11. 11. Would there be benefit in surveying students to help understand student perceptions of safety and belonging at school, subjective state of wellbeing, school climate and classroom disruption? Would there be value in incorporating this into existing National Assessment Program surveys such as NAPLAN?

Q12. 12. To what extent do school leaders and teachers have the skills and training to support students struggling with mental health?

This was not included in my ITE course. So I do not feel equipped. My support for students cones from supporting my own children through their own challenges. To have teachers trained in this area as well as teaching would take a double degree in teaching and social work or psychology. Trying to shoe horn it into

13. 13. What can be done to establish stronger partnerships between schools, Local Health Networks and Primary Health Networks?

> More availability in the local health networks. In my regional area appointments with mental health services are as rare as hen's teeth, so problems tend to escalate until they become major.

Q19. 14. What can be done to ensure schools can easily refer students to services outside the school gate that they need to support their wellbeing? How can this be done without adding to teacher and leader workload?

> Well being social workers or psychologists that are on staff and not teaching and can provide first level help and know how and when to refer to providers outside the school gate.

Q56.
Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

Q20. 15. What change(s) would attract more students into the teaching profession?

> Not asking teachers to do the impossible. At the moment teachers are given up to five new classes each year or semester, and asked to teach each one of these in their zone of proximal development without knowing the students well enough to know where that zone is. Where this involves a change of a 'for all' lesson, the teacher needs to document any adjustments so that the school can get funded appropriately for students that are far behind or ahead of the level of the planned lesson.

Q32. 16. What change(s) would support teachers to remain in the profession?

See above. Teachers want to see all their students learning in every lesson, but they cannot do that and tend to get burned out trying.

Q31. 17. What change(s) would support qualified teachers to return to the profession?

Changing teacher registration to make it easier. I know of a primary school teacher who successfully taught for over 20 years, but when she moved to a different state, she was not allowed to register because her ITE degree from 2-3 decades before did not include enough practicum days.

Q30. 18. What additional reforms are needed to ensure that the schools most in need can support and retain highly effective teachers?

Pay is a thing, but most teachers don't leave because of the pay. They leave when they know that they cannot do the impossible, and they are getting paid at a level that does not reflect the effort they are putting in.

Q29. 19. What can be done to attract a diverse group of people into the teaching profession to ensure it looks like the broader community?

Teacher training that looks more like an apprenticeship than 'do a degree and you are good'. Having larger rooms with two teachers, a highly effective one and an apprentice one with most of the students working independently and some learning in small groups. At the moment none knows what actually goes on inside the black box of a classroom except the teacher who is teaching and the students. But students' criticisms are not as likely to be believed.

Q28. 20. What can be done to attract more First Nations teachers? What can be done to improve the retention of First Nations teachers?

The apprenticeship model could help here too. At the moment many remote schools have Aboriginal workers who are called "teacher"s but are not registered although they are the senior employees of the school that stay while the white, accredited teachers cycle through every through every two or three years. Some form of recognition of prior learning for them could also help them to move through their qualifications.

Q26. 21. What reforms could enable the existing teacher workforce to be deployed more effectively?

Systems that track student knowledge at the skill level so that teachers can much more easily teach small groups at their level of proximal development. Whole class instruction will inevitably miss the zone of proximal development of some students, either at the bottom level or the top level.

Q25. 22. How can teacher career pathways, such as master teachers and instructional specialists, be improved to attract and retain teachers? How should this interact with the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher (HALT) certification and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers?

I see HALT as expensive hoops to jump through that give no return to most teachers that undertakes it. We need to review HALT accreditation so that it recognises teachers who teach their own students well, whereas now it seems aimed at teachers who teach their peer teachers well.

Q24. 23. Are there examples of resources, such as curriculum materials, being used to improve teacher workload or streamline their administrative tasks?

Q23. 24. How should digital technology be used to support education delivery, reduce teacher workload and improve teacher effectiveness? What examples are you aware of?

Maths Pathways. Does maths learning only and only from year 5 to year 10. Sees maths knowledge as a web with dependencies. Does an 'entrance ticket' for each module so students can show learning that they have picked up outside the system. Accelerated Christian Education covers all subjects but sees learning in each subject as a simple line so some students can end up re-learning things that they have picked up outside the system. Both have some form of diagnostic/ placement test to place students at their -lace of learning. Calculadder Learning Vitamines is a paper based system to have students get arithmetic fluent.

Q22. 25. Are there benefits for the teaching profession in moving to a national registration system? If so, what are they?

Yes. And once registered it should be easy to re-register. For example after having children or after retirement.

Q57.
Chapter 5: Collecting data to inform decision-making and boost student outcomes

Q27. 26. What data are of most value to you and how accessible are these for you?

What this child s ready to learn next. The way this is available (for maths only) is if the school has decided to pay for Maths Pathways for that student and the student has engaged enough to have enough data in the system.

Q35. 27. Is there any data that are not currently collected and reported on that is vital to understanding education in Australia? Why is this data important?

What this student is ready to learn next. How much has this student's learning grown this year, and in past years.

Q34. 28. Should data measurement and reporting on outcomes of students with disability be a priority under the next NSRA? If so, how can this data be most efficiently collected?

This one is a Curley one, you would need about as many categories of data as there are categories of disabilities.

Q33. 29. Is there a need to establish a report which tracks progress on the targets and reforms in the next NSRA? Should it report at a jurisdictional and a national level? What should be included in the report?

Everything measured should be reported at the national level. Everything that we want to improve should be measured.

Q32. 30. Is there data collected by schools, systems, sectors or jurisdictions that could be made more available to inform policy design and implementation? What systems would be necessary to enable these data are made available safely and efficiently?

Q31. 31. The Productivity Commission and Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) have identified the need for longitudinal data to identify the actual students at risk of falling behind based on their performance (and not on equity groups alone) and to monitor these students' progress over time. Should this be the key data reform for the next NSRA?

Q30. 32. Should an independent body be responsible for collecting and holding data? What rules should be in place to govern the sharing of data through this body?

Doesn't ACARA do this?

Q29. 33. Is there data being collected that is no longer required?

Q28. 34. How could the national Unique Student Identifier (USI) support improved outcomes for students?

When we have a system that tells us what a student is ready to learn next, it would be useful if that data could follow students so they don't need to do diagnostics every time they move school. Also it would help track NAPLAN across schools.

Q58.
Chapter 6: Funding transparency and accountability

Q36. 35. Are there other objectives for funding accountability and transparency we have missed?

Q39. 36. How can governments make better use of the information already collected and/or published to achieve the objectives?

Recognise that having students working at six to seven different year levels in the one classroom meant hat it is impossible to teach them all the same thing at the same time.

Q38. 37. What other funding accountability and transparency information regarding schools (both your school and the education system more generally) would be useful?

Q37. 38. What are the priority gaps in the current funding transparency and accountability arrangements from your perspective?

All schools need to be funded to an appropriate level.

Q59. Do you have any additional comments? (2,000 characters)

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Q52. If you have more information you would like to share with the Expert Panel, please send a written response as a .docx or RTF format to NSRA.submissions@education.gov.au. An additional PDF version may also be submitted. Please make sure to note that your email is to be considered alongside your current submission.

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