Q44.

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

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Q53. **We have noted your preference around publishing your submission.**

Q54.

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)?

If the Governments and the Public Service continue to treat our Education System as a marketable commodity, that entrenches inequality through a tiered system of haves and have nots, a large proportion of all of Australia's public school students are at risk of falling behind - through no fault of their own. Our APS needs to address the root cause of our unfair system. Real courage and leadership must be taken to overhaul our system and invest in a quality Public Education System that provides equal opportunity to all students. It must take steps to reduce government funding (capital or otherwise) to private religious bodies. The funding priority must be for improving and investing in our public education system. The Panel must consider the effect our current system has on our society as a whole, not just student outcomes. What is the effect of having schools segregated by class? What is the effect of presenting education as a type of consumer choice, rather than a right to equal education for all children no matter their background? What does this message that education is a matter of choice (for the wealthy only) say and encourage in our society?

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?

Continuing with policies that further entrench inequality, segregation, encourage commodification of education for the wealthy at the expense of families that do not have the luxury of choice is not producing best practice. In fact, our education on the world stage suggests a very unbalanced and unfair system. A different approach is required ENTIRELY, not just for at risk students. As taken from research into the outcomes of the 2015 PISA "Australia's social segregation is also the 4th highest in the OECD. This is one of the most alarming results to come out of PISA 2015. It shows that social apartheid is an enduring feature of Australia's school system. Students are sharply divided by social class in schools. Other research shows staggering levels of ethnic and religious segregation in schools. Social segregation in schools has dire consequences for education outcomes and the nature of our society. It is a key factor behind the high inequity in education in Australia as evidenced by the large achievement gaps between high socio-economic status (SES) students and low SES, Indigenous and remote area students. It allows privileged groups to maintain and enhance their advantages"

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

From Sae our schools -"A student attending a low SES school is likely to have lower outcomes than a student from a similar background attending a high SES school. That is, the results for students of all socio-economic backgrounds tend to improve when they attend schools with a larger proportion of high SES students. There is a "double jeopardy" effect for students from low SES families in that they tend to be disadvantaged because of their circumstances at home, but when they are also segregated into low SES schools they are likely to fare even worse. So, increasing social segregation between schools tends to lead to worse results for low SES students and widen the achievement gap between high SES and low SES students." We already know that students from low SES areas, where there is high segregation and less social inclusion and diversity with medium to high SES students, are likely to fall behind. Therefore, take steps to reduce the segregation. Invest in public education so med-high SES families are not choosing a private religious school. Invest in our Public Schools to encourage vibrant diverse learning communities that lift the outcome of ALL students both academically and

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?

Any attempt to address marginalised students must to viewed through a clear process of national reform of our education system; reduce segregation, increase funding for public school and reduce/phase out funding to private religious school bodies. You cannot fiddle with the edges, we need a system that prioritises our disadvantaged students/areas and improves their learning opportunities - and yes, completely at the expense of government funding flowing to advantaged private schools. The system must reduce and phase out funding advantaged schools. The system cannot, nor should it, prioritise both.

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 previous response.

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?

As one of the OECD reports on PISA 2015 recommends, governments should strive to have excellent schools in all neighbourhoods and make them accessible and welcoming for all students in the area. This question seems like an attempt to appease religious private school bodies by appealing to consumer 'choice'. There is no need for an education system to be so segregated. There is no need for a government funded private religious school to have been given millions of dollars for capital infrastructure meanwhile the public school a few kilometres down the road has had no meaningful investment in 30 years. This isn't flexibility or responding to individual needs, this is entrenching inequality, it is entrenching the idea that good quality education is a commodity not a right for all children regardless of where they are from.

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

The APS has a commitment to the Australian people to provide a quality and fair education system. This includes ensuring Australians have trust in the information the agency reports and publishes. The department should proactively engage with media and other key stakeholders to ensure average Australians have access to information about our school system, targets and funding in a way that is easy to understand and transparent.

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?

Proper reform of our Education System is critical. Reframing the negative mental health outcomes that result from intrenched inequality in disingenuous spin. "Just as increased government funding for private schools has increased social segregation, so too can it be reduced by phasing out funding for already well-resourced private schools. Thousands of private schools are over-funded because their government funding enables them to have more total income than public schools. The over-funding amounts to $4-6 billion a year. This is indefensible, especially when thousands of disadvantaged public schools are starved of resources. It is a complete waste of taxpayer funds. It means that less funding is available for schools serving the education needs of low income, Indigenous students and students with disabilities. Re-directing this over-funding to less advantaged schools would be instrumental in reducing social segregation by ensuring that all schools are excellent schools. As one of the OECD reports on PISA 2015 recommends, governments should strive to have excellent schools in all neighbourhoods and make them accessible and welcoming for all students in the area [p.231]."

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

None - wellbeing is a broad and subjective state that differ for each individual. Address the root causes of educational inequality and you'll improve the state of wellbeing for all students across our society. "There are extensive research studies showing a positive relationship between attending schools with diverse peers and greater acceptance of cultural differences, declines in racial fears and prejudice, and the development of a socially cohesive, multi-ethnic, democratic society. Diversity in school composition makes possible the interplay of ideas and exchange of views between students from different backgrounds and better equips young people with an understanding of others from different backgrounds. It reduces prejudice and social intolerance and promotes social understanding, co-operation and cohesion. It helps create citizens better prepared to know, to understand, and to work with people of all races and backgrounds. Unless children learn together, there can be little hope that they will ever learn to live and work together as adults."

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

Our education system does not need to be corporatised and further commodify by measuring a subjective state that frequently differs for each individual. It's feel good language to make it seem like the government cares about students. There is plenty of evidence about what actions and policy reforms will enhance the school environment for all students, teachers and the community at large. The APS should focus on driving that agenda rather than adding corporate style feel good markers. What will the department and stakeholders do if it clearly shows that students at disadvantaged schools have lower rates of wellbeing? What is the measure of wellbeing? Will the measure take into account other factors that contribute to lower rates of wellbeing? Will there be evidence base to support an inclusion of a wellbeing measure?

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?

No - none of this is about education system reform and building a fairer system. This is taking on identitarianism and fixating on subjective markers to refocus the reform agenda and national conversation from one of radical collective change that will benefit everyone, to hyper individualism that benefits no one but the already advantaged.

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

Not much especially for teachers and leaders working in under funded, under supported, under appreciated and under resourced schools.

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

All good ideas to strengthen partnerships but a fairer and more equal system will be brought about by radical reform, investing heavily in public education, reducing or phasing out private school funding. Children from disadvantaged areas need good quality schooling and education to drive mentally healthy outcomes from childhood to adulthood. They don't need 'aftercare' to deal with the effects of living in an unequal society and attending underfunded and under resourced schools.

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?

Students should be able to attend their local GP or health centre for mental health care. Outsourcing, or even 'insourcing' external parties into the school system in a way that is not related to education outcomes and learning (eg: reading) doesn't seem like a great idea. Too many conflicting ideas, interference, agendas and ideologies. Children and parents should be supported by a good quality public health system to access mental health care.

Q56.
Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

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

Proper resources, adequate resourcing levels and fair and equal national education system.

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

Proper resources, adequate resourcing levels and fair and equal national education system.

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

Proper resources, adequate resourcing levels and fair and equal national education system.

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

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?

Australia's school system shows it is divided by social class, at high levels of ethnic and religious segregation. This segregation and inequality contributes to the gaps in achievement at higher education levels and professions. Our current education system is directly responsible for the lack of diversity in higher education and the teaching profession. We need more diverse school communities, less concentration of disadvantge. Breaking up this disadvantage benefits all and creates diverse and strong social inclusion improved educational (and career) outcomes.

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

As above.

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

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?

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?

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

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?

Funding to the private sector and funding to the religious sector and each individual religious school. It's not accessible and reporting of it is convoluted and not at all transparent.

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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

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.

If you have any questions about your submission or the submissions process more broadly, please contact NSRA.submissions@education.gov.au