

Q44.

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

Privacy Statement

Your personal information is protected by law, including under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Privacy Act).

Personal information is information or an opinion about an identified individual or a reasonably identifiable individual. Personal information includes an individual's name and contact details and may include opinion-based data.

Your personal information is collected by the Australian Government Department of Education (the department) as part of a consultation process for the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System (the Review).

Your personal information may be used for the purposes of:

- administering the Review and related consultation process, including contacting you in relation to your submission
- informing or contributing to policy development related to the Review
- developing reports
- publishing your submission where you have agreed to that.

If you do not provide your contact information and there is an issue with your submission, your submission may not be published or used for policy development related to the subject of the consultation.

Your personal information may be disclosed to third parties, including but not limited to:

- Qualtrics and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for the purpose of IT support, and
- a contracted service provider engaged by the department in connection with the Review.

Your personal information may also be disclosed to other parties where you have agreed or it is otherwise permitted under the Privacy Act.

Where you have agreed, your submission (including any personal information you include in your submission and your name), may be published on the department's website, which may involve disclosure to overseas recipients in any country. As such, by agreeing to the publication, you are consenting to your personal information being accessible overseas and acknowledge that an overseas recipient is not likely to be subject to the Privacy Act and the department will not have an obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not breach the Australian Privacy Principles in relation to the published information.

The department's [Privacy Policy](#), including information about how to make a complaint and how to access or correct your personal information, can be found on our website. You can also request a copy from the department by emailing privacy@education.gov.au.

For more information on how the department handles your submission, visit the [terms and conditions for public submissions](#) page.

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)?

- Attendance and engagement must be measured, along with mental health issues and behavioural issues. - Many children (including our own three) are doing well academically but are not thriving. Anxiety and school refusal are rife amongst their classmates in both primary and high school. This places an enormous burden on teachers who are struggling to manage the associated behaviours. It also causes huge stress in families. - Support services must be improved (access to school counsellors, as well as support staff in classrooms). We are lucky to have been able to afford private services, but this is not an option for many children who remain either undiagnosed or untreated for a range of neurological and mental health conditions. This places enormous stress on both families and teachers.

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?

- Additional school counsellors and school nurses. Early intervention makes all the difference. The current waitlist in Brisbane to see a paediatrician or paediatric psychiatrist in 9 to 12 months. In the meantime these kids are falling through the cracks. - Run programs such as Macquarie Uni's "Cool Kids" program for anxiety for free in all schools. Run them regularly (every term) so that children can get help sooner. - Running these programs in school would save so much stress and time (children not needing to attend external appointment during the school day). It would also improve equity if it is offered through the school at no cost. - The curriculum MUST be revised. Every parent I speak to at our children's high school is struggling with the pace and expectation of the curriculum. These are bright children who have had every advantage from birth, parents who can afford early intervention of every type, and STILL these children are struggling to keep up with the curriculum. The curriculum require parents with tertiary-level education just to help with homework. There is no need for children in Years 9 and 10 to be doing maths that was previously Year 11/12 level.

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

- More school nurses, counsellors, OTs. Free universal screening for mental health and learning issues would remove access and affordability barriers. - We have been able to afford private health and education services (OT, psychologists, tutors etc) for our children, but the financial burden is enormous. Not only do we pay for these out of pocket, but i have to take a day off work to get my child to the appointment (I'm a nurse and would like to work more hours, but it is impossible with the amount of time it takes to get help for our children through private services. So we pay \$220 for the psychologist appointment, and on top of that I have lose \$400 pay for the day). I genuinely don't know how any family in middle to lower income brackets could ever afford 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?

I am not informed enough to comment on this.

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?

- Need to measure whether the curriculum is serving our children well. The current curriculum is complete madness and even bright children are struggling. It is contributing to the youth mental health crisis. - Measure student's ability to concentrate/focus. - Need to measure whether students are parents are happy with teachers, as well as school leadership. Our children have had some absolutely outstanding teachers (increasing their engagement, improving their confidence and self-esteem, nurturing their ability to make friends and navigate social groups and conflict). I have no idea how these teachers are assessed but would love to be able to provide feedback about the incredible job they have done in extremely difficult circumstances. I hope that a teacher's value is not measured by the academic performance of their students, as this fails to recognise the many other challenges they are navigating every day in the classroom.

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?

Can't comment specifically on this but need to urgently reform the curriculum, and measure student wellbeing.

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

Needs to be transparent. Needs to be more widely reported (eg in school newsletters so parents are aware)

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?

- Quick access to school counsellors and support staff (no excessive wait times for appointments). - Prioritising mental health ahead of the ridiculous demands of the curriculum. - Sufficient support staff (teacher aides, learning support staff) to help the classroom teacher during lesson time. - Transparent but simple paperwork (no need for excessive documentation that will take time away from actually supporting students). - Manageable assessment schedule for high school (current assessment timetable for most high school students is overloaded and anxiety-inducing). - Quality transition programs for preschool to prep, and Year 6 into Year 7 (including additional transition/orientation sessions for children who need it). - Get rid of the requirement for devices! So many students are struggling with interpersonal skills and social skills because they spend so much time on devices. Our own two high school students have both had huge increases in distractability (and corresponding inability to focus) since being forced to have laptops for high school. In primary school many of their classmates were engaging in bullying and inappropriate behaviour online.

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

Any programs for anxiety (eg. Macquarie Uni's "Cool Kids" program) and social skills (eg. Rock and Water program) should be run regularly in all schools.

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

Yes

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?

Yes!! This is absolutely critical! So many students are struggling with crippling anxiety, poor self-esteem or low confidence in their abilities, but this is not measured. We need to ask students and listen to them. It is absolutely essential that this is done confidentially. In primary school our children completed surveys such as "Tell them from me", however my son reported that the teacher went around the room reading over the students' shoulders. He did not feel able to voice his concerns with the teacher looking over his shoulder.

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

Extremely varied. We have experienced truly outstanding school leadership when two of our children were having major mental health struggles (during covid, on return to school following long stretches of homeschooling). We have also had very average school leadership, with critical information not being acted on, and the child regressing (after making excellent progress) due to inaction and zero follow-up. We have found enormous variation in the knowledge, skills, awareness, and willingness of teachers and school leadership to provide support. This has been due to a mix of factors, including experience, empathy, and capacity (teachers wanting to help but already being incredibly over-burdened in their workload).

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

School nurses and counsellors could liaise directly with LHN/PHN. Reduced bureaucracy, plus create a structured pathway for referral/liaison.

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?

I'm not sure this can be done without adding to teacher workload. Possibly "tick and flick" type forms that do not require excessive/unnecessary detail. Would be much better to provide support services within the school to ensure access for all students.

Q56.

Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

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

- Addressing behavioural issues (increased access/reduced wait times for specialist medical services, which would help with diagnoses and subsequent treatment/intervention). Support services in place at school. - Revising the national curriculum. Every single parent I speak to believes it is failing our children. The content is excessive, and the way it is taught is madness (for example - covering 30-40 maths topics in Year 9, 1 to 2 days per topic, then going back to the topic again in subsequent years). All our high school children are screaming that they can't learn that way. They need time and repetition to learn new concepts, but the curriculum does not allow time to focus more than a couple of days on any one topic. It takes a very strong and committed teacher to persist in such challenging circumstances. This has been our daughter's experience at both a public high school, and at a private school with minimal behaviour issues. - Get rid of devices!! Enormous distraction, very difficult for teachers to manage. Our own two high schoolers estimate that at least half their class are gaming/watching youtube/on social media at any given time during class.

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

- Revising the curriculum. Even well-behaved, clever students are struggling to keep up. More play-based learning in primary school. More time for outdoor/physical activity in high school. - Addressing massive behavioural issues in classrooms. Teachers are having to teach an extremely fast-paced curriculum with endless disruptions. - Get rid of or dramatically reduce use of laptops/devices in school. These are a massive distraction for students and make it much harder for teachers to keep their students attention. - Reduced bureaucracy

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

- Revising the curriculum - Addressing the mountain of behavioural issues. - Additional support at school from counsellors, learning support staff, teaching assistants. - Reducing bureaucracy so there is more time to teach and to support students - Get rid of devices (or greatly reduce their use) as they are a huge distraction. Few teachers can compete with youtube, games, social media. (two immediate family members are teachers who have left the profession for a range of reasons including the above).

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

- Addressing major behavioural issues (family members who are teachers refused to teach at certain schools due to safety concerns and unmanageable behaviour). This is a very complex problem that will require expertise, funding, and a multi-pronged approach. - Sufficient training for teachers in managing behaviour. - Support staff (teaching, administrative, healthcare)

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?

A new and diverse group of people will never be inspired to join the profession until the many existing challenges and problems are addressed. If highly capable and qualified teachers who once loved their job are leaving, why on earth would anyone leave a better paid or less stressful job in another industry to become a teacher? I personally would love to be a teacher but would never become one because of the behaviour challenges, lack of respect, lack of support, and stresses of the overcrowded curriculum (and I say that as a nurse!)

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

I will leave this to First Nations leaders and educators to answer.

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

I will leave this to teachers to answer but I would say that many excellent teachers are driven out of the profession, or away from their current school due to issues with leadership. We have now experienced two different primary schools in two different states (QLD and NSW) where excellent teachers left the school in droves because of challenges with new leadership. In a dire teacher shortage, it beggars belief that there are principals who are not working in partnership with highly regarded and experienced teachers.

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?

- Student well-being (mental health, engagement with school and learning) - Progress over time - Literacy and numeracy skills - General knowledge (I am much less interested in their essay writing skills in Year 7 than I am in their understanding of the content. Essay writing requires quite advanced writing skills that are not yet developed in Year 7, and yet the school assessment task is measuring essay writing skills as much as it is measuring knowledge of the topic). While NAPLAN provides an interesting snapshot for parents, and shows progress over time, it does not necessarily reflect a student's abilities in relation to the curriculum. For example our Yr 9 student achieved "very strong" for numeracy in NAPLAN, but is struggling to pass Year 9 Maths (D first term, C- second term).

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?

- Distractability/Focus - Behaviour - Engagement - Mental health

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?

Yes

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)

Many of the questions were beyond my scope to comment. I have written as the parent of three school-age children who are paying the price for the crisis in our schools. I see three major issues - the curriculum (madness, any parent will agree), teachers (overworked, under-supported with massive behavioural challenges to manage), and the use of devices (laptops and ipads). Most parents agree that negatives of devices (enormous distractability) vastly outweigh the benefits, but this is not being measured. Our high school students spend the bulk of their school day on a laptop, and we are expecting them to resist the endless distraction in front of them. We are also expecting them to write essays when they have never been taught to touch-type (if they are to spend their high school years on laptops, then touch-typing should be an essential skill taught prior). Please talk to parents and talk to teachers. The entire education system is in desperate need of reform, but no one is asking the students (or their parents, who are witness their students' struggles every day).

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