

Q44.

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

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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)?

Student wellbeing and a focus on helping students to understand and know themselves as human beings striving to live in a connected and dynamic community. A focus on interconnected learning that is deep, engaging and artistic to foster creative thinkers and students with strong sense of self. Resilience and ability to engage with and overcome challenges. Focus on academic outcomes fail to support students growth and wellbeing and overly competitive environments ensure that children are focused on extrinsic outcomes rather than a love of learning.

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?

Children need time to play in the early years and to build upon the important work of creative and dynamic thinking and experiences that serve as a foundation for learning and life experiences later in their schooling and their lives. Children require time to be children with less focus on outcomes and tests and more focus on their overall development in movement, play, sensory processing, mental health and wellbeing. The current model of pushing early academia onto children from a very young age robs them of their childhood and the important growth that occurs through sensory experiences, play and introducing concepts and ideas to children when they are developmentally ready rather than a one size fits all model that seeks to fill a child's head with facts and concepts that bear little resemblance to their lived experience. Steiner Education seeks to educate the whole child in a developmentally appropriate way without the use of technology and devices until children are much older.

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

Engaged carers and communication between all the stakeholders and educators ensure ongoing conversations. This ensures the emotional development of the child through supported families who can provide a stable home life that supports the growth and development of young children. Families require support through strong community to ensure the best conditions at home for children to grow and learn. Supporting parents and families is key to identifying risk factors early on for children.

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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

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?

Q56.

Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

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

More respect for the profession in the community and by the government. This would look like fairer and sustainable working conditions, fairer remuneration, ensuring issues of workload are meaningfully addressed in the long term. Support with mentoring and paid intern opportunities for students and new teachers.

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

Meaningful adaptations to manage teacher workload, support with behaviour and tangible and accessible funding for students requiring extra support. Smaller class sizes and addressing classroom complexity. Quality differentiated teaching practices are not a solution for all these issues in the classroom as teachers cannot possibly manage it all. A focus on student achievement through meaningless benchmark testing ensures that the most important factors for student engagement and learning are not prioritised. As above, greater respect of teachers in the community and by employers. This would look like sustainable workload practices and better remuneration.

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

See points above.

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?

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

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?

HAT and HALT certification is a massive workload and highly stressful for those who engage in the process. Those who do often face an even greater workload as a result of certification and mostly the process is unappealing as it is such a huge task and requires ongoing impact on workload with little support or benefit. Teachers need a highly supported opportunity to engage with further learning that is tailored to their interests and skill sets. This would require release time, monetary support and a balance of workload to staff who still carry a teaching load.

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

I can give many examples of the opposite where more tasks/materials and administrative tasks are placed on teachers as a result of trickle down directives from the Department of Education and placing more administrative roles back onto the teacher that were never their core business in the first place and detract from their ability focus on their core business.

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?

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?

What funding? There is very little funding that actually gets to students in classrooms. At our school there is a committee that oversee funding applications from teachers that meets every term and teachers are constantly asking for support and putting together long forms of documentation seeking support for their students. From my understanding, I do not know of any teachers who have been successful in obtaining funding and the process seems purposely obfuscated to ensure that funding is impossible to get.

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?

What is actually required to secure support/funding for students that are struggling? How do we access intervention programs that work for these students when programs keep being cut and support taken away. Quality differentiated teaching cannot possibly plug the gaps left by a government that keep cutting public education back to the bone.

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

Equity in funding to public schools versus private schools. There is very clearly an issue with the quality of education that is accessed by students from different backgrounds. There needs to be more equity and private schools should not be receiving the funding that they do when public schools are struggling for the basics.

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

We need options for Steiner Education streams in public schools. Steiner Education offers an alternative approach to education to those who seek it. Steiner options in public schools provide rich and valuable educational opportunities to families. They require early learning options too with the development of publicly funded feeder kindergartens and options in the early years for those seeking to access Steiner Education. There needs to be a funding approach that values the developmental approach to the curriculum and ensures that the developmental curriculum can be delivered in the way it was intended by single year levels per class. These streams provide a rich culture and strong communities for schools that supports families and children in dynamic and unique ways. This connection to the cohort from the early years and into high school are a valuable way to ensure that children are supported from an early age to access a child centred curriculum that honours individuality in artistic and creative ways.

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