# Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

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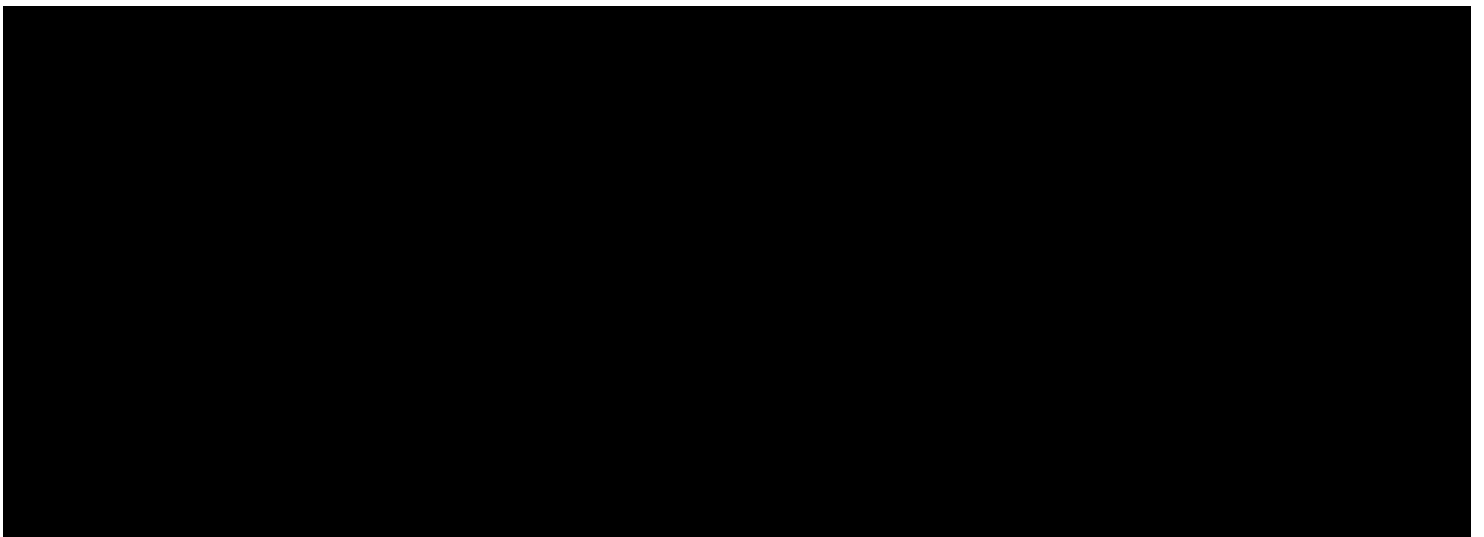
# Chapter 2: Improving student outcomes – including for students most at risk of falling behind

*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)?

Important measures should be progress of children who have fallen behind or are at risk of falling behind to measure their progress against support and assistance received and adjustments made accordingly to improve their outcomes. Service learning measures to demonstrate how school communities have programs to engage students with local and wider communities to promote civics and demonstration of values. This includes volunteering and other service learning programs promoting responsible citizenship Wellbeing needs to be measured to ensure outcomes are being met to promote programs that lead to wellbeing outcomes. Examples include but are not limited to anti bullying, cyber safety, resilience, self esteem, identity, suicide/self harm awareness, substance and alcohol abuse, child safety, racism etc. Whilst schools deliver these programs there is no measure on it's depth, frequency and effectiveness. Attendance measures to ensure students aren't falling through the cracks particularly in vulnerable communities.

*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?

Better measurement of progress of students requiring support/assistance to gauge the effectiveness of adjustments made beyond report cards. A targeted approach will ensure this is resourced where it's most needed and will remove the burden of teachers to rely on Individual Learning Plans and differentiated lessons. This also needs to include feedback from allied health and medical practitioners assisting the child. More release time for teachers so they can plan to assist all students in their care, at present the expectation is for teachers to make differentiated strategies/individual learning plans for classes with diverse students needs, it's tenable to expect this to be done effectively without resources and time given to teachers to do that effectively Learning and wellbeing support need much greater access to resources/funding for numeracy/literacy, wellbeing programs, counselling psychological support services and internal assessment for students who are at risk.

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

Internal, regular learning/psychological assessments of students against measures to identify challenges requiring intervention of allied health or medical practitioners. When these assessments are done externally significant time, often many months pass before an assessment can be done and little meaningful time is left in a school year to make adjustments to improve learning and wellbeing. Schools need access to resources/funding to ensure this is done quickly and regularly to avoid students falling through the cracks. It's not enough to leave this to time poor and often disengaged parents. This is particularly important for vulnerable communities including indigenous, refugee, low SES communities and those with high proportions of students who fall into disability categories as defined by the NCCD

*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?

Additional priority cohorts are essential to identify to avoid children falling through the cracks particularly in vulnerable communities including rural, indigenous, low SES and refugee communities. There are rising numbers in out of home care, juvenile detention and home schooling which also need to be included. All will be citizen's in the future.

*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?

Specific targets should be on progress of students, wellbeing and community engagement. Delivery may differ in primary/high school, however the need is the same. There is also not enough support for teachers to help students with their wellbeing or to share information about wellbeing supports outside of school. This makes it harder for teachers to support students. The next NSRA should focus on ways to help mental health and wellbeing get better for all students including more teacher training and PD in this area This will support students to do better at school. The current system focuses on gathering data but not enough on effectiveness of these programs.

*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?

Effective teachers use quality evidence to establish the points individual learners have reached in their learning. This enables teachers to identify starting points for further teaching and learning and to ensure that each student is given learning opportunities at an appropriate level of challenge. 'The process of establishing and understanding where students are in their learning often requires detailed diagnostic evidence of individual misunderstandings and obstacles to learning progress. Highly effective teachers also have a repertoire of evidence-informed teaching strategies and select from these to engage individual students, set ambitious but realistic learning goals, and target teaching to address individual learning needs. A nationally consistent set of standards on effective teaching practice to meet improvement targets with resourcing and access to the diagnostic needs of students will be able to measure improvement targets

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

Progress should be measured against targets The success of reforms will be contingent on improving parental and community engagement, especiallywhere the needs being addressed require a culturally responsive or multidisciplinary approach.

*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?

Schools need support structures in place to assist already busy teachers to ensure those not meeting learning outcomes or with wellbeing needs get the assistance they require in collaboration with parents/caregivers, allied health and medical practitioners. Whilst it's not the sole responsibility of schools, school is the key environment beyond the home for nearly all Australian children. Experiences of school can be either a risk factor or a protective factor for a child's mental health and wellbeing, and the impacts – in either direction – can be significant. Schools that support good mental health and wellbeing are not only meeting their duty of care requirements but also delivering the environment required for students to learn.

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

Clearly defined implementation procedures, including roles and responsibilities of staff, details about appropriate monitoring of student outcomes, and ongoing staff consultation following program implementation are essential features of any implementation program. These should identify target audience, outcomes, delivery mode, frequency and reporting to all stakeholders including student surveys on their experience.

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

Wellbeing targets should be included and use existing and additional data. The lack of shared understanding of definitions, indicators and measures means there is no comprehensive national set of data and information on student health and wellbeing. This makes it difficult to evaluate whether current interventions and investments are effective

*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?

Feedback assists all students in understanding the subject matter and provides clear guidance on how to improve their learning procedure. Feedback can help students gain confidence, self-awareness, and enthusiasm for what they are learning, perceptions of wellbeing, school climate and effective teaching/learning in the classroom and should be incorporated into national assessment programs

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

Teachers and school leaders have only minimal skills and training to assist students struggling with mental health. School chaplains, counsellors, psychologists can assist with this. Teachers and school leaders often feel overloaded by the expectation that they solve students' social and emotional issues. Often there are overlapping policies such as discipline/behaviour welfare vs wellbeing and educators need greater access to support services, training and PD on these issues especially new graduates and those undergoing teacher training. There are Incoherent pathways for support within schools, and blurred responsibilities among school staff. Other issues include lack of skills, training and planning for wellbeing initiatives, no clear guidance or capacity to implement them, continuing stigma (and self-stigma), and little transparency on student outcomes. Costs, lack of access and cultural barriers can also be significant

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

Greater sharing of data whilst ensuring privacy protocols are met is essential in the networking between schools and local as well as primary health networks. The lack of shared understanding of definitions, indicators and measures means there is no comprehensive national set of data and information on student health and wellbeing. This makes it difficult to evaluate whether current interventions and investments are effective. A measure is needed against set targets

*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?

Schools need access to counsellors or psychologists and support staff to assist with and follow up on external referrals. This needs to be practical to be effective and not a small loading which cannot keep up with demand, funding for this needs to be according to the level of need in each school. Teachers and school leaders are already overburdened and engaged in the daily management of students. This extra burden is not sustainable and takes them away from their core duty

*Q56.*
## Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

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

Effective teachers are important for supporting students who are the most at risk of falling behind. The job that teachers do has become harder over the years and teachers need more support to keep them in their job. It's also been harder for some schools to find teachers with the skills they need. For example, schools in rural areas or low SES areas, . Attracting people into teaching includes better conditions, more release time for planning, wellbeing programming and extra curricular activities. More support with teacher aids and support services, not expecting teachers to do extra work over weekends and holidays, a move away from temporary contracts and opportunities for career progression. Teachers identify work/life balance, unsustainable and increasingly complex workloads, high levels of stress, impact on wellbeing or health, the demands of professional regulation, and changes imposed on schools from outside as key factors in leaving the workforce leading to significant stress impacting on health, well being and relationships. Merely giving small pay rises is not the solution, workload and support needs to be addressed as well as limiting class size to realistic numbers

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

Smaller class sizes, 20 -24 makes teaching more effective and allows time to focus on students, release time for planning, programming, following through on behaviour management and well being are essential in keeping teachers in the profession. Access to support staff, PD and industrial instruments giving better job security and conditions must also be considered as must avoiding extra work after hours, over weekends and particularly holidays.

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

Better conditions including smaller class sizes, especially in schools with vulnerable communities, access to well being, behaviour management and learning support, release time and job security and pay that is competitive against other professions will support teachers returning to the profession.

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

Schools most in need should prioritise teacher support, class size, financial incentives and career progression to retain and/or attract 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?

Schools across all sectors should reach out to the broader community to ensure their is cultural diversity and gender equity amongst teaching staff. This should include indigenous and CALD communities. This may very depending on location and setting, schools however must reflect the diversity of their local community or risk being a cultural bubble

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

Greater outreach into First Nations communities and partnerships with those communities and universities for members of that community under going teacher training.

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

Giving teachers more choice and removing entry barriers between the government and non government sector as well as between state and territory jurisdictions. Overseas recruitment should also be fast tracked and supported in difficult to resource schools with effective 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?

Pathways to attract potential teachers from other professions with better support, more pedagogy training and more structured practicums which counts toward certification and accreditation will remove much of the bureaucracy of attracting teachers.

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

Digital platforms and sites to share information can assist, more needs to be done with sample programs which schools can access particularly when there is syllabus change. A significant amount of burden is placed on teachers when these changes occur and much of it is expected to be done in their non work time. This is not sustainable.

*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?

Platforms sharing information, programs, policies can all significantly reduce teacher workload and school leader workload. State governments have limited access on their websites and are often only accessible to public school teachers requiring a log in. The nations children are all our students and sharing of resources, particularly between sectors benefits all our children.

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

A national registration system will make it easier for teachers to move between jurisdictions and recruit across jurisdictions.

*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?

Data on student assessment on national assessments, wellbeing programs and level of support. This data is very difficult to access particularly for those in non government schools which compromise close to half the nations students and in some areas even more. Sharing and reporting can be improved to ensure that we focus data collection and reporting on the things that matter and the impacts of policy changes on student outcomes can be identified, shared and incorporated into future reform.

*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?

Data on students requiring support and those with special needs and how they're progressing is very difficult to access. This data is essential to gauge the effectiveness of intervention programs

*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?

Establishing a tailored reporting mechanism for students with a disability will not only enable policymakers to more easily identify successful reforms and interventions but also result in greater transparency to the public. This will provide communities with a better understanding of how the education system is performing, inclusivity and better enable them to become partners in the schooling system

*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?

A report tracking progress is essential for transparency and must include wellbeing, support, disability adjustments, indigenous students and teacher wellbeing. This needs to be at a national and jurisdictional level to measure against similar schools as well as those nationally.

*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?

Data improvement involves increasing the quality, scope, coverage and/or integration of existing datasets. This would include such things as adding additional equity groups to existing reporting, publishing the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability on MySchool, and sharing data to enable national insights across all students. Data should be shared between sectors and jurisdictions in a national database

*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?

Yes for transparency and to ensure the progress of students is not lost, it keeps stakeholders accountable.

*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?

Data should be managed by the Federal Department of Education with a multi agency scope and in accordance with privacy legislation. The prospect of data sharing may also raise concerns around privacy-related issues, the creation of league tables, and increased resource and administrative burdens on teachers and schools. Relevant parties must take these concerns into consideration and set out appropriate rules and protocols to ensure data sharing is done in a safe and secure manner.

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

Relevance of data should be reviewed periodically.

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

It will create a single government identifier for a students education journey ensuring records are easily accessible and portable to cater for student needs particularly when they move schools, move jurisdictions or transition to different levels or education spaces such as vocational education.

*Q58.*
# Chapter 6: Funding transparency and accountability

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

Sharing information about funding is important in building the community's trust. Funding is money from the government that pays for services and supports in schools. This includes information about how funding affects how well students do at school. Funding of support to students in need of support, those with a disability and funding of wellbeing needs to be reported with clarity and transparency. This extends to the way schools spend that money or utilise resources.

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

Governments can use this information to ensure that it's targeted to those who need it most and hold schools accountable for this. This would provide the community with the assurance they need that funding is used appropriately to help those it is intended for.

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

Funding and accountability and how it's spent on vulnerable groups including First Nations, refugees, those with a disability, CALD communities, those in juvenile detention. This includes funding for teaching/learning as well as wellbeing and careers

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

Students in need of support, allied and medical health assistance, careers and wellbeing areas including access to counsellors and psychologists.

*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](mailto: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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