

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)?

Character Development There are certain character elements that are closely associated with success and wellbeing in life, AS WELL AS high performance in school, employment and entrepreneurship. We must train and report on these character traits. At the moment, educators tend to see themselves as a Formula 1 DRIVERS, pushing children to the discover limits of their abilities, relative to specific curriculum goals. Eg: How accurately can we get this child to add? How descriptively can they write a coherent report? How well do they understand the properties of different elements? The problem with this is that we cannot necessarily foresee the future. We do not know which skills will be most useful in helping the child successfully navigate their lives. Adding accurately and well, does not necessarily mean the child will be successful in their lives or happy. We should instead see ourselves as Formula 1 ENGINEERS. We should collaborate more closely with communities to train children to be high powered, expert learners. Thus children should be measuring and reporting traits like: Resilience, Self-Discipline, Courage, Etc.. [See research of Angela Duckworth, or Paul Tough]

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?

In relation to my comment above: Training a child to be an agile, high-powered learner, there are a number of elements that come into play: Leveraging the Community Become the 'Village that Raises the Child' Most of a child's performance at school is influenced by factors outside of school. We can leverage this to incorporate communities more meaningfully into education. Parents should not just be present at school to spectate, but to learn and participate. They can join with community fun-runs, help their children construct STEAM projects, participate in team challenges, etc... Anything that builds a sense of community and inspires children. Schools can also become centres for parent learning and access to seminars and research. With great parents, great learning will follow. Refer to works by Bronhofbrenner or recent researchers who followed up on his work, such as Jeynes' meta analysis. Also: Retrain the teachers to be able to train the sorts of character points outlined above. This can be done via the curriculum. So for example, recognise and praise courage, ahead of correctness. (The correctness does follow, when we teach children to be courageous and self-disciplined).

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

A couple of key elements here: At the Primary level, each class should have an ASSISTANT TEACHER. Or at least schools should have more Assistant Teachers available, who are capable of leading classes. This gives classes much more flexibility for the teacher to have individual conversations with children, tailor learning to their needs (flexible support, etc...). This is in contrast to the approach where teachers need to 'manage' their class. The aim is to also build better, more meaningful and productive individual relationships, which provides fertile ground for children to grow. At-Risk children need these reliable relationships and availability of their teachers for support, all the more and will thus benefit immensely. Schools should also provide more SPECIALIST TEACHERS, for subjects like Music, PE, etc... This not only will provide higher quality in these areas, but will give teachers more non-contact time to plan more intricate and tailored learning experiences. Plus they will have an Assistant Teacher to discuss different strategies with. I'm more of a Primary expert than Secondary, but the same principles apply to all. See the works of DIANE TAVENNER for example.

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?

- Children have clear systems where they can request the attention of any school leader or teacher they feel comfortable with. - Children's perspectives on their education are respected and incorporated whenever possible. We have had many great school experiences that were decided by the children. Some of them may have seemed frivolous, but the subtext is that school is a place for them, where their opinions matter. They learn to speak confidently and consider themselves to have value. Their school experience takes shape around them in a manner that they influence. Families participate actively in schools: - as a place to link as a community - as a place to learn together with teachers, to share ideas and stay on top of research regarding raising children. - to meaningfully collaborate on their children's learning. Children should see, feel and sense that their work is important. Not in a patronising way, but in a very real way that brings the community together. - Children should understand all the ways in which they can take action to address their feelings, emotions and challenges, as well as to celebrate their achievements and happiness together.

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

Here are some examples of approaches: - Bubble Time - where a child can request the attention of any teacher, staff member or leader. It may be to share a concern, happy news or an idea for the school. - Emoji Charts - where children can share their emotions and change it through the day, so at any time, teachers have a live map of how the class is feeling. They can speak to children if they need, or just listen to them, or ask about concerning patterns. NOTE: We do not judge emotions, overreact or try to 'fix' them. It is perfectly normal for anyone to feel sad, and a child must not be led to believe that this is undesirable or the 'wrong' answer. - Child Safeguarding Training. This must be robust and regular. All staff must know how to recognise concerning behaviour or patterns and what action can be taken. They must also know how to conduct themselves in a safe manner.

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

No. At least not in terms of outcomes. Firstly, we should never have a target that might suggest we will ever reach a point where this will cease to be something to actively learn about and pursue. Additionally, you absolutely do NOT want to incentivise school leaders in any way, to encourage children to give 'correct' answers on any survey. Better if the school leaders are incentivised to uncover, explore and resolve difficult issues head-on. Children must be encouraged to be open and honest. If we have a target, it must involve implementation of some agreed actions. However, schools must have some flexibility in terms of the specific shape they should take. One EXCEPTION to this, would be the implementation of very regular and robust child safeguarding training. NOTE: I would be more than happy to connect and follow up more with a review panel if people would like to explore any of my proposals in more detail. I have executed them myself with surprisingly strong results that have proven resilient under extreme challenges. I really do have a lot to say about them and would be glad to share.

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?

I will answer both questions on this page together in two parts: Please see earlier comments on the uses of specialists and ASSISTANT TEACHERS. Having meaningful time to strategise and create relationships with the community and students, would enhance the teacher experience. Having a colleague on hand as a partner to work with, would also be very meaningful. Instead of 'managing' the class and scrambling for planning in little free time. The teacher can create meaningful, individual relationships that impact the child in more ways than just helping them to add. Planning can be much more of a strategic, thought-out process, that is closely tailored to student needs and checked with a collaborator. This will really enhance the teaching process. So Specialists enhance the quality and depth of the curriculum, with the knock-on impact of providing more flexibility, relationship-building and strategising time in a school. The Assistant becomes a teaching partner, increasing the diversity of teaching approaches in a room, the flexibility of support strategies and groupings that can be used, and provide additional research, experience and ideas to the class. Everyone will benefit.

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

Please refer to the idea above. I will continue. Adding this flexibility to schools will have the following impact. a) Assistant Teachers and Specialists will provide a consistent stream of people who are experienced in education and know for sure that this is an area that they would like to be trained in. b) They will make the teaching experience more as it should be. Personal, collaborative, tailored to the pupils. Less a 'heads-above-water' or 'treading-water' exercise, and more a speedy 'freestyle' exercise. Please forgive the tenuous analogy, but you get the point. c) training for assistant teachers to become full-time teachers could take place fully within schools, in collaboration with universities. We often discuss how to spend money in education. Spending it on personnel, flexibility and creating space for better relationship-building and leveraging is a very productive space.

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

Please see above. Again, this is something I have experienced and would be happy to talk about at more length, if requested.

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?

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?

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?

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)

Please feel welcome to reach out to me if you would like me to expand on, or speak about any of the proposals contained within.

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