Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

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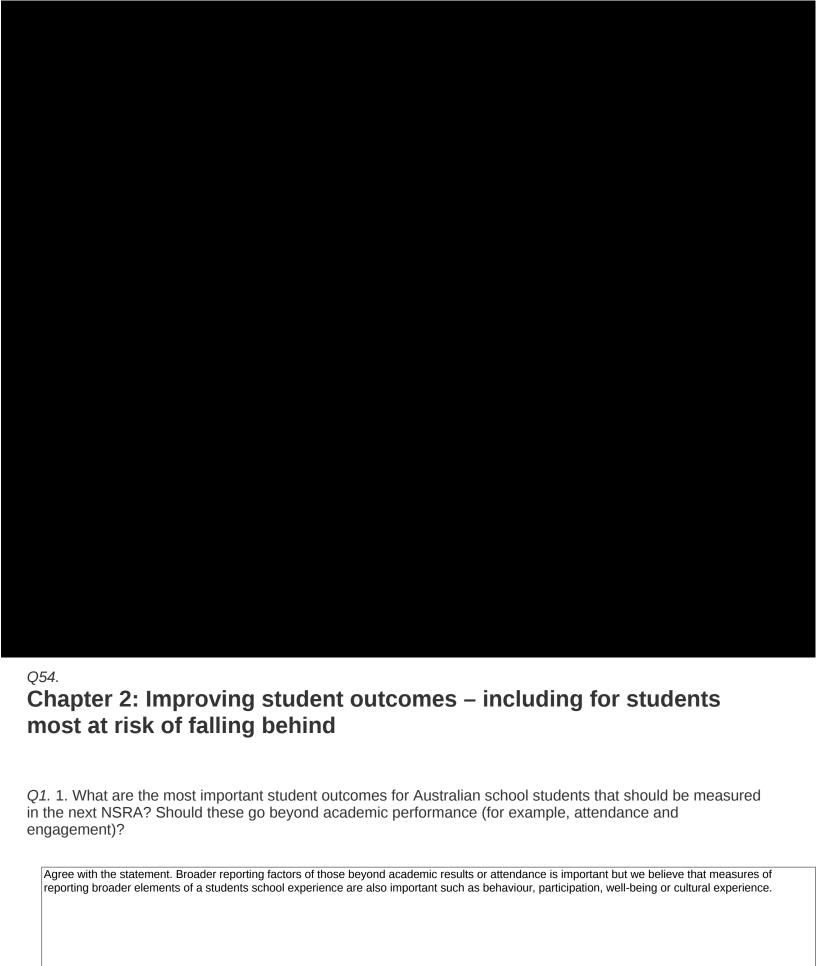Your personal information may be disclosed to third parties, including but not limited to:

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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)?

Agree with the statement. Broader reporting factors of those beyond academic results or attendance is important but we believe that measures of reporting broader elements of a students school experience are also important such as behaviour, participation, well-being or cultural experience.

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?

Small group tuition and supports should be encouraged. Whilst this sort of goes against the current trending of inclusion it is possibly required to minimise the behavioural disruption impacts to all other students and to increase individualise engagement for students at risk of disengagement, isolation or who cannot cope with full size classrooms.

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

Preventative monitoring should include a wide range of techniques and a suite of tools that are not just academic performance results. This techniques and tools need to review /monitor aspects of behaviour , attendance, participation, achievement and engagement. There needs to be a multi-pronged approach of measures, monitoring points / identifiers to highlight and triage students at highest risk.

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?

Ideally yes , which ties into the earlier comment on the benefits of small cohort tuition. The risks of identifying additional cohorts could be that attention is spread too thin and that nothing of meaning is then delivered to key cohorts. This would need to be managed effectively.

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?

Should the targets be different for primary and secondary schools? If so, how? Yes, definitely different measures and targets for primary and high schools - these measures need to be tailored to students educational stage. Differentiated measures can also be utilised to apply specific focus and attention to key stages of development. What changes are required to current measurement frameworks, and what new measures might be required? With limited understanding of the current measures it is posed that if current measures are not differentiated between primary and high school with the same measures such as Naplan, how then do leaders identify different needs and progress of students at different stages of their educational life. In relation to setting or determining the targets there needs to be a consensus as to what a successful school experience delivers for students that is broader than just academic results.

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?

Targets definitely need to be established for evidenced based learning techniques implemented and utilised to ensure effectiveness., Schools structures and teaching platforms need to be brought into a more standardized approach with teachers teaching the same materials and curriculum across the country. A central pool of high standard best practice teaching resources needs to be developed. Importantly this pool must include best practice techniques and supports to allow tailoring / adapting to suit student types and cohorts. this would provide support to teachers in implementing best practice techniques.

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

Periodic reporting that ties into current reporting timeframes and instances. These reports need to be shared across stakeholders to increase transparency and understanding.

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?

There needs to be a set of elements that make up a Well-being package that is then implemented in each school. This should be either determined at a national or state level so that all schools deliver the same standard of program. This approach captures and shares the best experts available which would give the best results in the school environment.

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

Our understanding is that schools have been adopting a wide range of programs (some evidence based, some not) with little direction or conformity across the system. What is required is for experts to determine the best possible programs available nationally with them to be rolled out across schools.

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

Agree it needs to be a nationally consistent target with a well being package/program that is delivered in all schools that provides consistency of outcomes and effectiveness.

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?

Agree that there would definitely be benefit in surveying students. These could be part of the wellbeing measure that is reflected in the established well-being target.

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

The consultation paper refers to very limited skills being a significant barrier to successful management of mental health matters. This places teachers and leaders is very risky positions and often unable to adequately triage / support their students at critical times. Support needs to be provided, not to develop teachers skills in dealing withy mental health but understanding how to identify early issues and to triage students in a crisis. It is not part of the teacher remit to provide detailed mental health supports.

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

Developing a linked program of deliverables to force schools, local health networks and primary health networks to work together, this should then lead to a measurable outcome that becomes part of the performance measures that is linked to funding.

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?

If the consensus is that the issue is important enough (which is appears to be) then systems /practices need to be developed to force the linkages – in Queensland many schools now have inhouse health practitioners. These need to have direct linkages to outside health networks and systems so that both sides ie schools and the health networks have visibility and responsibility for the student. Performance measurables which include reporting activities need to be developed.

Q56.
Chapter 4: Our current and future teachers

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

Based on the information provided in the paper there appears to be some systemic problems with treatment of teachers (internally and externally) and workforce culture in the classrooms and the broader school. There needs to be rationalisation of "teachers' duties" to address the workload matters before any effective teacher attraction efforts can be achieved. The issues around perception of low pay, poor conditions and high workloads need to be addressed and countered in promotion to the general public and school leavers. In relation to attracting mature future teachers consideration needs to be given to streamlining the education load (ie the degree plus 2 years post) to decrease the timeframe before participants can start teaching and earning money.

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

As noted in the consultation paper there are a number of factors leading to early departure from the profession which need to be addressed through improved workforce management and leadership. Learnings need to be drawn from large commercial organisations to implement best practice HR, workload and workforce management and development. Internal systems of mentoring, coaching and support need to be enhanced.

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

As noted in the consultation paper there are a number of factors leading to early departure from the profession which need to be addressed through improved workforce management and leadership. Only by addressing the causation of the leaving of the profession can you expect to achieve successful re-engagement of qualified teachers. Learnings need to be drawn from large commercial organisations to implement best practice HR, workload and workforce management and development.

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

Consideration needs to be given to working with Unions and within the Industrial relation systems to allow flexibility to a differentiated pay structures to offer additional salary/wage packages toward "difficult/ hard to fill positions/schools'

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?

Attracting a diverse group of people into the teaching profession is essential to ensure that the education system reflects the broader community and provides students with a well-rounded and inclusive learning experience. Learning should be taken from commercial world or other educational jurisdictions to ensure the best techniques are being utilised.

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

The consultation paper identifies a range of issues that need to be addressed before any sustainable progress can be made in recruiting First Nations teachers. These include work place safety, racism, lacking of cultural sensitivity, lacking of leadership and poor culture within the system. Once these issues can be addressed then targeted recruitment strategies and campaigns could be considered for deployment.

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

A review of teacher duties and responsibilities needs to be undertaken to remove duties that could be performed by staff other than teachers. Playground duties would be an example of where a highly paid/skilled teacher isn't necessarily required for the duty and the duty could be performed by a TA or support staff. Aspects of administration also need to be reviewed with the mindset of teachers being supported by support/administration staff to do the data entry, mark rolls, set up /preparation for meetings and reporting Looking to commercial world practices with support EA's and administrators could be utilised across a group of teachers (not necessarily one on one)

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?

Industry level promotion and marketing campaigns need to run that cover career paths, wages/salaries and benefits, supports and opportunities. Teaching and education roles are competing together with every other industry for skills and resources at all times.

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

In the consultation paper mention was made at to a central repository of lesson plans and curriculum resources. Anecdotal evidence indicates a lacking in confidence in the quality of these centrally developed resources. There is a clear opportunity to improve these resources which would have a direct result in lowering teacher workloads. The utilisation is dependent on the maintaining of quality and currency of these resources.

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?

Education like all industries need to progress and evolve with technology and current practices. Technology needs to be treated as an investment to improve productivity and support to the delivery of education. Learnings in terms of alternative ways of doing things were a key result out of COVID , the education system needs to embrace and utilise these learnings like the commercial world has. If we are to have a state of the art/modern education system, technology needs to be a central part to that. Underpinning the technology needs to be the systems (both teaching delivery and background systems that also must adapt/evolve in line with the technology. Examples of such adaptation could be One School additions/reporting, student teaching notes, report cards, data entry , being done via voice to text, or systems that integrate to avoid multiple entry of data.

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

A single national registration system could provide the following ; - immediate savings in overall system administration - assist in teacher transitioning across state boarders - improve transparency within the system as to teacher quality and qualifications - improve information sharing - allow for uniformity in professional development across the national system

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?

Parents and students, as the end customers of the state education system, seek information that provides visibility and validity on their students and schools performance and operations. This information should provide confidence that their students are receiving a quality education that meets their expectations. Taxpayers need information that confirms the transparency of expenditure and use of Government funds. In relation to accessibility, the information is not readily available at present with a need for the publication of information to be supported with explanation of outcomes and results.

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?

The current system of Naplan, despite its critics and misuse by some who turn it into a leader board, provides the best currently available comparative insight into a students and schools performance at a national level on a somewhat narrow set of measures. Other variables that need to form part of a nationalised comparison system could be aspects of SDA, wellbeing, student experiences to provide a well-rounded insight rather than purely academic results. The future focus on data collection and reporting needs to capture these other elements so that a broader insight of a students and a schools performance can be reviewed.

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?

Measurement of special needs students is an absolute must as they represent circa 22% of the student populations. In relation to the how it can be collected, the learning of measurement of First Nations student's performance and experiences so be used as a template. The significant segment of the special needs student population requires the same proportional focus as the segment of students that are first nations.

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?

There is a definite need to track progress on targets and reforms. These targets need to be SMART targets and reforms that are accurately measurable. Jurisdictional reporting is required at both state and national levels but the data collection is required to be done via a national collection system to ensure the integrity of data.

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?

There already exists a wide range of data that is collected by not effectively utilised or shared across jurisdictions. Establishing clear protocols for sharing of information is required to more readily facilitate the sharing of information into national reporting mechanisms. A tool to motivate this sharing to occur maybe to link this reporting to funding releases.

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?

Agree, if a system is to be incorporated into the future NSRA, it must be utilized to build a reliable long term picture of student performance with appropriate triggers that highlight factors/ indicators to a student struggling or falling behind. The key thing is to have the treatments/supports to students that are lacking in performance or falling behind, ready to be implemented to prevent further falling or struggling.

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?

Federal Government is already responsible for collecting and holding a wide range of sensitive data so should be capable of applying the same protocols to education related data.

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

Not that we can identify

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

The USI is a critical part to the functioning of a nationally integrated system. The benefits of the USI are numerous in reporting and collation of data but also will facilitate student movements between states. This approach ties into existing and successful systems utilised within private RTO and TAFE systems

Q58.
Chapter 6: Funding transparency and accountability

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

Not that we can identify.

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

Regular periodic reporting of high level performance related information and updates to stakeholder organisation with information that can be distributed through stakeholder networks. This would increase the breadth and range of information dissemination and transparency.

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

Further explanation is required in relation to retained school bank balances. Funding allocated to each year should be invested into and spent on the current cohort of students for the year. Reporting on current and future requirements of each schools funding is critically important for local state and national transparency and accountability.

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

A key lacking at the present (from our perspective) is within special needs funding within schools. Parents of students with special needs frequently report concerns with transparency as to how additional funds are allocated to support their students. Teacher workload that is restricted by funding priorities needs to be addressed.

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