



Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations Inc.
Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System
Submission

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations pays respect to First Nations and Traditional Custodians of the lands of Australia, in particular to palawa/pakana people of lutruwita (Tasmania).

We acknowledge parents, families, Elders and communities, past, present and future, as they hold the memories, traditions, and culture of First Nations people.

Acknowledging Members Association

TASSO acknowledge the volunteer parents, carers and broader school community that make up the School Associations in Tasmanian State Schools. We thank you for your commitment to education, your school, and your contribution to our organisation.

Who are we?

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations Inc (TASSO) is the peak body representing all Tasmanian State School Associations since 1947.

TASSO is a not-for-profit organisation that provides guidance to strengthen and support all School Associations Committees in Tasmanian State Schools, empowering the committee to support their School Associations, and advocates for the issues that our members value.

TASSO is primarily a volunteer organisation with a President and Board Members spanning the state. We use this reach with School Associations and stakeholders to form policy and inform our advocacy efforts.

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Introduction

Education should be equitable, accessible, and free for all young people in Australia. The current system is not equitable, we congratulate the federal government for undertaking this review and look forward to actualisation of a system that is fair for all students.

We look forward to a future where National School Reform Agreement and bilateral agreements that recognise the current inequities and correct them. A future where government schools are not underfunded. Where there is transparency in all education agreement in all sectors.

Responses to the Consultation Paper: Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

Improving student outcomes including for students most at risk of falling behind

Q1: 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)?

Measurement of literacy, and numeracy academic performance is narrow, while they provide a guide to academic excellence, they do not encompass all aspects of a students engagement with learning, educational growth, creativity or wellbeing.

TASSO believe that linking funding to student outcomes should be avoided. However, using the tools already implemented in schools like NAPLAN could provide insight into practices that are providing exceptional outcomes for students. Practices and tools that see major academic growth in schools and regions should be celebrated, shared, and resourced to be adopted more widely.

Measuring student educational growth should be considered. If the students' academic results are not at the minimum requirement, school should be adequately funded to be able to provide intervention programs and individualised learning plans that engage with families to support the student's progress. While government schools are underfunded and under resourced managing intervention is more challenging.

TASSO believe that measuring academic performance when schools are not equally funded is a recipe for a comparison that is grossly unbalanced and unfair. Government schools need to be funded to 100% SRS to truly be able achieve excellency in academia.

Ensuring that all school have funding equity should be measured and public recorded.

Attendance is multifaceted and should not be linked to the NSRA.

Q2: 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?

Family engagement is proven to be a fundamental key in developing a students love of learning. Embedding a culture of genuine engagement between the classroom and home is crucial in growing learner outcomes.

Using scientifically results proven phonics practice should be resources and professionally supported in all government schools.

The adoption of trauma informed practice in all schools should be mandatory professional learning for all educators. The model currently in place in Tasmania could be expanded upon and rolled out nationwide.

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

Early assessment of a student's grasp on phonics may provide insight into any learning difficulties that a student may be experiencing. Adequately funding schools is essential to provide specialist assessment of students to ensure early intervention, the development of a learning plan and engaging and supporting learning at home.

Adaptive assessments that are held in consultation with families, open communication that hears the concerns of families. True family engagement as an embedded practice with the school.

Access to school psychologists.

Q5: 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 measurements frameworks, and what new measures might be required?

Targets need to be beyond academics.

Wellbeing of the school, including its inclusiveness, culture and feeling.

A consistent global way of measuring the goals of the Mparntwe Education Declaration.

A measurement of financial equity and how far that is from the equitable figure.

Improving student mental health and wellbeing

Q8: What does it look like when a school is supporting student mental health and wellbeing effectively? What is needed from schools, systems, government and the community to deliver this?

What is needed: Funding, resources, and training.

A school that supports student mental health and wellbeing fosters a positive and inclusive environment where students feel safe and valued. This could be achieved through availability of social workers or school psychologists, as well as an emotional education program embedded into the curriculum.

Teachers should be equipped with training to recognise signs of distress and provide appropriate trauma informed support. Teacher training should begin at university and be fostered and supported through professional development through the teacher's career.

Access to early intervention and prevention programs for students and collaborating with parents (where possible) would be beneficial.

Schools need to be resourced with allied health services to achieve these practices.

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

The ratio of students to school psychologists could be measured. However, it should be noted that there is a national shortage of psychologists so while on paper it would be a good measure in practice not.

The NSRA should address the supply chain of allied health services.

Embedding wellbeing and intervention programs within the curriculum and school.

Our current and future teachers

Q15: What changes(s) would attract more students into the teaching profession?

Lifting the profile of teaching as a career.

Providing pathways from Year 12 that support the young people while at university. Offering scholarships, mentorship, paid employment while studying as a Teachers Aide.

Q16: What change(s) would support teachers to remain in the profession?

Developing a whole school understanding of what the role of a school, principal and teacher is. Creating clear pathways for raising concerns and handling of grievances. Bring families on the journey. Creating a strategic plan or map for the school as a whole school exercise.

Career mentorship programs. That are resourced.

Improving on the initial teacher training to ensure it adequately prepares new teachers to manage behavioural concerns in students and pathways and tools to handle parents.

Resourcing schools well enough to allow time for ongoing professional development.

Addressing the wellbeing data of principals and teachers should be addressed in the NSRA.

Q17: What change(s) would support qualifies teachers to return to the profession?

Listening to the reasons for teachers leaving the profession and actively addressing the concerns. Teachers that have left will not return to the classroom if the reasons they left are not addressed. Exit surveys should be mandatory.

Collecting data to inform decision-making and boost student outcomes

Q26: What types of data are of most value to you and how accessible are these for you?

Data that is consistent in collection and leaves little way to be misinterpreted. Data that is measurable and comparable.

Collection of attendance through a USI for each student would potentially provide interesting insight to the difference between high attendance and lower attendance. Data that could be used to promote the benefit of education.

Q34: How could the national USI support improved outcomes for students?

The creation of a USI can only benefit students moving between sectors and states. A system that puts student learning at the centre with the easy ability to share learning progression and only improve educational outcomes for these students.

The flow on benefits for data analysis on a national scale could be beneficial also.

Funding transparency and accountability

Underfunding government schools and fully funding non-government schools is not equitable or fair. If the Tasmanian State Government insists on underfunding government schools' non-government schools should be equally underfunded.

Adding to the inequity is the ability for families to contribute to levies. TASSO seeks for the new National School Reform Agreement to remove all expectation of levies, that if a school wishes to ask for levies, they void to option of government contribution, creating a schooling system that truly offer choice to families not only choice if you can pay.

For equitable funding of education to be possible the conditions applied to the Bilateral Agreement between the State and Federal Government need to be the same. TASSO insist that the condition in the current agreement 40a) allowing for 4% transport and depreciation costs to factor into the state contribution of the SRS be removed. By allowing this condition to remain deprives schools of more than \$800 per student in funding.

All conditions or factors affecting the amount of SRS reaching the school should be removed or at minimum be applied equally to all schools no matter the sector.

There should be no 'special deals' or support payments to the non-government sector unless they are equal or greater to the government sector.

By purposefully underfunding our government schools our School Associations and their committees are required to fundraise to provide the basics for our student's education. School Association are fundraising to install seating, purchase furniture, undertake school repairs, purchase laptops, maintain car parks, create master plans of the school, all things that are arguably the responsibility of the state government.

The inequality of schools is again evident in the School Associations ability to fundraise or not. Adding again to the disparity of education in Tasmania.

Funding should be fair and equal for all students.