

**Submission
No 3**

**FOLLOW UP OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S
PERFORMANCE AUDITS APRIL 2012 – AUGUST
2012**

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Mr Jonathan O'Dea MP
Chair
Legislative Assembly
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament House of New South Wales
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

MT13/1318

Dear Mr O'Dea

I write in response to your letter of 27 September 2013 to the Minister for Education, the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, and myself requesting a submission to the Public Accounts Committee outlining the Department of Education and Communities' response to the Auditor-General's report, *Improving the Literacy of Aboriginal Students in NSW Public Schools*.

I am pleased to provide advice about the Department's response to each of the nine recommendations. This is detailed in the attached template.

The Department has implemented four of the recommendations made by the Audit Office and is "on track" in implementing the other five. A Departmental Senior Officers Group has been established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

The Department remains committed to ensuring that the Audit Office's recommendations are successfully implemented and welcomes future opportunities, should they arise, to work with the Audit Office in the interests of Aboriginal students in NSW schools.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michele Bruniges AM
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES
28 October 2013

PERFORMANCE AUDIT – Improving the Literacy of Aboriginal Students in NSW Public Schools

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	ACCEPTED OR REJECTED	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	DUE DATE	STATUS (completed, on track, delayed) and COMMENT	RESPONSIBILITY (Section of agency responsible for implementation)
<p>1</p> <p>By December 2013, the Department needs more realistic targets with which to assess its progress in improving the literacy of Aboriginal students.</p> <p>All schools should set targets for Aboriginal students based on a realistic assessment of each individual's capability.</p>	<p>Accepted in revised form: "All schools should set targets for Aboriginal students identified as "at risk" in terms of literacy attainment based on a realistic assessment of each individual's capability"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New school based assessment and accountability framework involving schools as part of the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform. • The establishment of personalised learning and support plans involving all schools as part of the implementation of the reform "Every Student, Every School". 	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>On track</p> <p>The development of the new school based assessment and accountability framework is underway.</p> <p>Personalised learning and support is made available through the NSW Government's education reform, Every Student, Every School. Work is being undertaken to develop a functional assessment tool to ascertain where a student needs an adjustment to their learning, to inform the development and provision of personalised learning and support for that student.</p> <p>Other relevant actions: The <i>Best Start Kindergarten Assessment</i> is being used across the state to recognise every Kindergarten student's literacy understanding at point of entry to school and to identify their individual learning needs.</p>	<p>Learning and Leadership – new school based assessment and accountability framework</p> <p>Learning and Engagement (Disability, Learning and Support) – Personalised learning and support</p>

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<p>2</p> <p>By December 2013, the Department needs more standardised, consistent and practical tools for assessing and diagnosing student performance. A wider use of the Literacy Continuum and further development of diagnostic tools like Best Start appear to offer the best prospect of this.</p>	<p>Accepted with a revised delivery date of: "December 2013 and ongoing"</p>	<p>Develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Continuum K-6 and Best Start - teacher professional development. • Literacy Continuum 7-10. 	<p>December 2013 and ongoing</p>	<p>On track</p> <p>Literacy Continuums K-6 and 7-10 developed.</p> <p>Professional learning and support for teachers in Literacy is available through a range of programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Start Kindergarten Assessment and Stage 1 Professional Learning • Language, Learning and Literacy (L3) • New Focus on Reading 3-6. <p>Teachers are also supported through access to the Interactive Literacy Continuum, <i>Literacy K-12 Policy</i>, DEC Literacy website and literacy publications – <i>An introduction to quality literacy teaching</i>, <i>Literacy teaching guide – Phonics and Literacy teaching guide – Phonemic Awareness</i>.</p> <p>Registered professional learning courses on using the Literacy and Numeracy K-10 continuums in both primary and secondary school contexts are being developed for publication in 2014.</p> <p>The Best Start software has been extended from Kindergarten, so that by the end of 2013 all government primary school teachers will have access to <i>Planning Literacy and Numeracy (PLAN)</i> software that supports tracking and monitoring student progress in literacy and numeracy across the primary school years K-6. By the end of 2014 all teachers</p>	<p>Learning and Leadership – Literacy Continuum and EAL/D</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAL/D Learning Progression professional learning, including how it can be used with the Literacy Continuum • Functional assessment tool to be developed by December 2013. 		<p>K-8 will be able to use the software to track individual student achievement in Literacy.</p> <p>EAL/D: The English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Learning progression has been developed by ACARA to support implementation of Australian Curriculum by assisting teachers to identify students' levels of English language proficiency and to plan teaching and learning activities. Professional learning in the use of the Learning Progression has been available during 2013 (completed by 1,298 participants) and will continue in 2014.</p> <p>Work is currently being carried out to finalise individual student profile reporting for schools.</p> <p>The Personalised Learning and Support Signposting Tool is expected to be available to be used by schools early in 2014.</p> <p>Other relevant actions: Under the Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership, all 402 schools (213 primary, 174 secondary and 15 central schools) were required to assess targeted students against either the NSW DEC Literacy or Numeracy K-10 Continuum-. The same targeted students will be reassessed against the Literacy Continuum in November 2013.</p>	<p>Learning and Engagement (Disability, Learning and Support) – Functional assessment tool</p>

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				<p>The Early Action for Success Strategy (EA4S) aims to improve students' performance through a targeted approach within the early years of schooling (K-2).</p> <p>There are currently 92 schools participating in EA4S. Of these schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83 schools (90%) have more than 5% Aboriginal students in K-2 26% of all K-2 enrolments in EA4S schools are Aboriginal students. <p>Under EA4S Instructional Leaders coordinate the identification of the literacy and numeracy achievement of all Kindergarten to Year 2 students, strategically plan tiered interventions and work with the school executive to determine the professional learning needs of staff to differentiate instruction.</p>	
<p>3 by December 2014, the Department needs to ensure that all Aboriginal students who perform at or below National standards in literacy are provided with the additional support they need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting criteria to identify those Aboriginal students eligible for additional 	<p>Accepted in a Revised form By December 2014, the Department needs to ensure that all Aboriginal students who perform below National Standards in literacy are supported through a personalised learning and support plan that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New school based assessment and accountability framework involving all schools as part of the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform. Implementation of the reform Every Student, Every School – embedded in the work of student learning support 	<p>December 2014</p>	<p>On track The development of the New School based assessment and accountability framework is underway.</p> <p>Through the strategy Every Student, Every School, a range of projects have been developed and implemented to build the capability of Departmental staff to understand and respond to the additional</p>	<p>Learning and Leadership – new school based assessment and accountability framework</p> <p>Learning and Engagement (Disability, Learning and Support) – Every Student,</p>

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<p>literacy support, and the nature of the support required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping data on the targeted use of literacy support programs in schools • Specifying the interventions needed for Aboriginal students who have scored in the bottom two bands of NAPLAN for their year • Systematically tracking students in need, the instances of intervention and the resulting performance outcomes • Conducting routine educational audits. 	<p>directly addresses each student's individual literacy development needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School learning and specialist support teams will provide advice about and monitor the success of the Personalised Literacy Intervention program developed for each student. • Interventions and outcomes for students in need will be systematically tracked via their personalised learning and support plan. • Routine educational audits will be undertaken. 	<p>teams, student learning and support teachers and the required use of learning and support plans for identified students (lead: Disability, Learning and Support Unit).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching English Language Learners (TELL) professional learning provided to increase teacher capacity to meet the needs of students learning English as an additional language or dialect. 		<p>learning and support needs of students. Every regular school is now allocated a specialist learning and support teacher and annual flexible funding to support students with additional learning needs and their classroom teachers. The allocation of these resources is based on index of student learning need in the school drawn from longitudinal NAPLAN data over three years.</p> <p>An extensive range of professional learning is also being progressively implemented for teachers and support staff.</p> <p>TELL: Information about community engagement and effective assessment practices, including assessment for learning, is included in teacher professional learning through online Classroom Teacher Program modules and the 6 module professional learning program, <i>Teaching English Language Learners (TELL)</i>. TELL also provides professional learning in ESL pedagogy to address the needs of students learning English as an additional language or dialect. In 2013, 1,298 teachers completed the program.</p> <p>Other relevant actions: Under the Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership (ILNNP), the final list of schools was formed by identifying schools with the greatest</p>	<p>Every School</p> <p>Learning and Leadership - TELL</p> <p>Learning and Leadership - Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership</p>

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				<p>numbers of students in the bottom two bands on NAPLAN.</p> <p>The schools involved in the ILNIP have been provided with additional resources to assess targeted students against the continuum, develop actions to improve outcomes and reassess the students.</p> <p>In the <i>Early Action for Success</i> strategy, Instructional Leaders coordinate the identification of the literacy and numeracy achievement of all Kindergarten to Year 2 students, strategically plan tiered interventions and work with the school executive to determine the professional learning needs of staff to differentiate instruction. They lead the professional learning of teachers in effective literacy and numeracy teaching practices.</p> <p>The Department is using a consistent and coordinated approach across all participating schools in evaluating <i>Early Action for Success</i>. Key components of the evaluation framework include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collection of baseline data against which improvements in student achievement, teacher learning and school leadership practices can be measured • ongoing monitoring and reporting against key milestones highlighted within the <i>Early Action for Success</i> 2013 Implementation Plan 	<p>Learning and Leadership - Early Action for Success</p>

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<p>4 by December 2014, the Department needs to ensure its new management systems are fully developed and quickly put to use to enable the effective tracking analysis of students performance and students needs over time.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>a) First component of the new Student Administration and Learning Management (SALM) solution - Wellbeing - implemented for initial 229 schools participating in the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership.</p> <p>b) Second component of the new SALM solution – Student Management – implemented for initial 229 schools participating in the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership.</p> <p>c) Both components of SALM implemented for the remaining 2000 plus NSW public schools.</p>	<p>September 2013</p> <p>November 2013</p> <p>End of 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of common performance measures against which student progress is judged tracking the progress of individual students from Kindergarten to Year 3 NAPLAN using some of the above measures. <p>Completed SALM provides schools with an online student-centric view of student information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personalised learning and support additional learning and support needs counselling and referrals custody and access suspensions and expulsions <p>On track – SALM will provide schools with a tool to manage and organise the many activities of individuals and groups of students including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> class attendance timetabling curriculum attendance health and behaviour sick bay/first aid administration of medication behaviour incidents; and student finance <p>On track</p>	<p>Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR)</p> <p>Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR)</p> <p>Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR)</p>

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5 By December 2013, the Department needs a means of routinely evaluating the effectiveness of schools' efforts to promote the involvement and support of Aboriginal parents and the Aboriginal community.	Accepted in revised form By December 2013, the Department needs a means of routinely evaluating the involvement and support of Aboriginal parents and the Aboriginal community.	Develop a monitoring process, in consultation with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG).	December 2013	Completed In collaboration with the NSW AECG, a monitoring process has been developed. This involves the NSW AECG regularly collecting information about what schools the AECG supports, the level of support given by the AECG to those schools and the number of schools that have staff who regularly attend AECG meetings. The NSW AECG will collect this information from regional AECGs using a mutually agreed template as part of the AECG's routine internal data collection and dissemination processes. The NSW AECG will then forward this information to the Department's Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement Unit annually.	Learning and Engagement (Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement)
6 By December 2012, the Department needs to periodically review the resourcing and allocation of Aboriginal field staff.	Supported in principle This recommendation is supported in principle, however, there are planned timelines for these actions currently in place that preclude actioning this by December 2012.	Review resourcing and allocation of field staff within the context of the Department's Aboriginal Human Resources Development Plan 2012-2017 and broader departmental reforms.	December 2013	Completed In 2010, the Department established a new paraprofessional classification of staff that now includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers • Write it Right Support Officers The Department has developed the Resource Allocation Methodology (RAM) in the context of <i>Local Schools, Local Decisions</i> . Under this reform, principals and school communities will be able to make decisions about the employment of Aboriginal field staff based on local needs. Through the Public Schools NSW realignment, Aboriginal field positions	Human Resource Directorate

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7 By December 2012, the Department needs to ensure all AECG representatives are provided with information on the performance of Aboriginal students and their progress at school level, where the biggest problems are and where intervention is needed.	Accepted in revised form By December 2012, the Department needs to ensure that the NSW AECG is provided with regular information concerning the performance of Aboriginal students at a school level including identifying areas of greatest concern. NOTE: further revision of this recommendation was required in order to protect students' entitlement to privacy.	A monitoring process will be developed in consultation with the AECG.	December 2012	have been reviewed and allocated according to local community and departmental needs. Completed, with data provided by AECG region, rather than by school. The publication of data by Aboriginality and by school would enable some Aboriginal students to be identified, and thereby breach their entitlement to privacy. In view of the potential breach of some Aboriginal students' entitlement to privacy, the NSW AECG did not support the release of data by school. The Department liaised with the NSW AECG to determine the level of disaggregation that would be most appropriate and helpful for AECG use. It was agreed that providing data by AECG regions would enable areas of concern to be identified, support the NSW AECG in its strategic planning and provision of support to schools, and therefore would be consistent with the intent of Recommendation 7.	Learning and Engagement (Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement) coordinates the data provision. The data is supplied by the Statistics Unit and the High Performance Unit.
8 By June 2013, the Department needs to evaluate the design and effectiveness of PLPs, now that it has several years of experience in their use by schools. It needs to specify minimum	Accepted in revised form Change date to December 2013 and ongoing to align with the development of personalised learning and support plans.	Establish a working party with representatives from the NSW AECG, Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement, Disability, Learning and Support, Student Engagement and Interagency Partnerships	December 2013	On track A working party with representatives from the nominated sections has been established. Data about PLP implementation has been collected from each of the Department's 10 former school regions. This includes regional PLP guidelines, summaries of regional	Learning and Engagement (Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement)

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<p>content and frequency, with the inclusion of a literacy component for all students at risk of falling behind.</p>		<p>and High Performance to analyse data.</p>		<p>evaluations, PLP templates used in a sample of schools and interviews with a sample of teachers involved with PLPs.</p> <p>This data is being analysed. PLP guidelines are also being drafted.</p>	
<p>9 By June 2013, the Department needs to routinely evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs and measures to improve the literacy of Aboriginal students.</p>	<p>Accepted with revised timeline Change date to December 2013 to align with broader reform agenda.</p>	<p>Develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New school based assessment and accountability framework involving all schools as part of the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform. Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation to systematically evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programs across DEC 	<p>December 2013</p>	<p>On track The development of the New School based assessment and accountability framework is underway.</p> <p>The Department has established the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of education in NSW. CESE is working with DEC business centres to implement the new NSW Government Evaluation Framework introduced in August 2013. The Department will prioritise more rigorous, systematic and transparent evaluation of programs that are aligned to government priorities in the NSW 2021 Plan.</p> <p>The Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy provides advice to the NSW Government on the <i>Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan</i>. In response to the Advisory Group's recommendations a 2013 priority action for Early Action for Success is trialling additional strategies to strengthen the partnership between home and school, using place based</p>	<p>Learning and Leadership – new school based assessment and accountability framework</p> <p>Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation</p> <p>Learning and Leadership – Ministerial Advisory Group on Literacy and Numeracy</p>

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				approaches that work best to identify areas of literacy and numeracy need.	