

**Submission  
No 3**

**EXAMINATION OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE AUDIT  
REPORTS AUGUST 2019 - JUNE 2020**

**Organisation:** NSW Education Standards Authority NESA

**Date Received:** 15 February 2021



Mr Greg Piper MP  
Chair, Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of NSW  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Our reference: CEO/21/6

Dear Mr Piper

Thank you for your letter of 1 February 2021 regarding the Auditor-General's performance audit report, *Ensuring teaching quality in NSW Public Schools* (September 2019).

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) is responsible for addressing three of the Auditor-General's seven recommendations. The attached table includes details of NESA's response to recommendations one to three.

I would like to acknowledge the professionalism of the NSW Audit Office staff and their commitment to understanding the functions and processes of NESA within the regulatory framework.

Overall, NESA found the performance audit to be a valuable reflective process. In addition to meetings and interviews held between Audit Office staff and the NESA executive and policy officers, it is estimated that NESA staff spent approximately 20 days on tasks relating to the audit process. This included collating documents and data, reviewing and providing feedback on draft iterations of the report and reporting on actions related to NESA's response to the recommendations.

Some of the findings from the audit have served as additional evidence to substantiate directions for NESA's work, particularly in relation to increasing the number of teachers accredited at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact the Executive Director, Quality Teaching on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
Paul Martin  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
15 / 02 / 2021

# Ensuring teaching quality in NSW Public Schools

## Implementation of Recommendations 1 to 3

### Context

The NSW Auditor-General's report on findings from the performance audit included three recommendations for the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The due date for all recommendations was July 2020 and all recommendations were accepted.

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS TAKEN	STATUS and COMMENT	RESPONSIBILITY
<p><b>By July 2020, the NSW Education Standards Authority should:</b></p> <p>1 work with relevant stakeholders to ensure Teacher Accreditation Authorities receive adequate training before making accreditation decisions</p>	<p>In March 2020, NESA completed research to identify a minimum benchmark for practice at Proficient Teacher to support consistent accreditation decisions across NSW.</p> <p><u>Findings from the research</u> were used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ identify and communicate agreed characteristics of effective Proficient Teacher practice</li> <li>▪ publish additional resources, including an online training course, to support TAAs and principals making accreditation decisions; and</li> <li>▪ inform criteria for auditing Proficient Teacher accreditation decisions (see also recommendation 3).</li> </ul>	<p>Completed May 2020.</p> <p>Recommendation 1 aligned with work that was underway to establish a benchmark to support consistent Proficient Teacher accreditation decisions.</p> <p><i>Nb.</i> Teacher Accreditation Authorities (Accomplished /Lead) are supported to make accreditation decisions at the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher levels through mandatory completion of the Assessor Training Program.</p>	<p>Quality Teaching Division, NESA</p>

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS TAKEN	STATUS and COMMENT	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>2</p> <p>review and improve the application and assessment processes for attaining higher-level accreditation, in consultation with NSW and national stakeholders, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) clarifying the quantity and quality of evidence for higher-level accreditation</li> <li>b) reducing duplication throughout the assessment process</li> </ul>	<p>The <i>Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Accreditation Policy</i> was revised in 2020 and endorsed by the NESA Board in August 2020.</p> <p>This endorsement followed substantial consultation during 2018-2019 with key stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposed revisions aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ clarify requirements for applicants,</li> <li>▪ increase and improve the level and quality of feedback applicants receive throughout the process; and</li> <li>▪ streamline and strengthen assessment processes to improve consistency of judgements.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed August 2020.</p> <p>The new policy is currently pending announcement by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning.</p> <p>Recommendation 2 aligned with findings from a 2017 NESA-commissioned review of higher-level accreditation processes. Revisions to the policy based on those findings were proposed and consulted on during 2018-2019. The release of the Auditor-General's provided a renewed imperative for making the proposed revisions.</p>	<p>Quality Teaching Division, NESA</p>
<p>3</p> <p>implement a program of risk-based reviews to provide confidence that proficient level accreditation determinations align with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.</p>	<p>NESA's program of internal audits began with a <a href="#">pilot audit of Proficient Teacher accreditation decisions</a> in March 2020.</p> <p>Findings from the pilot and from the Proficient Teacher benchmark research (see also Recommendation 1) were used to inform processes and criteria for NESA's ongoing <a href="#">audit program</a>.</p>	<p>Completed March 2020.</p> <p>Recommendation 3 aligned with work that was in NESA's forward workplan.</p>	<p>Quality Teaching Division, NESA</p>



Mr G Piper MP  
Chair, Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

CEO/21/94

Dear Mr Piper

Thank you for your email of 12 October 2021 regarding recommendation 2 from the Auditor-General's performance audit report, *Ensuring teaching quality in NSW public schools* (September 2019).

The Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Accreditation Policy (the HALT Policy) was revised in 2020 and endorsed by the NESA Board in August 2020.

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the disruption to teaching and learning during 2020 and 2021, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has not implemented new policies or initiatives during this time. This has allowed the education community to focus on student wellbeing and supporting the continuity of education while teaching and learning has occurred remotely. This has delayed the approval of the HALT Policy.

NESA is continuing to support the submission and assessment of HALT applications under the current policy until the new HALT Policy is approved. This includes enabling virtual Site Visits to allow teachers to complete this application requirement while public health orders are in place.

NESA's work to support implementation of the new HALT Policy has continued in anticipation of the Minister's approval early 2022.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact [REDACTED], Director, Teaching Standards and Accreditation by telephone on [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Paul Martin  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
28/10/2021