



Measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

Informed by the Data:
Evidence-based education in NSW

Report 40

February 2020

3



Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education

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Evidence-based education in
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Terms of reference

1. That Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education inquire into and report on measurement and the proposal for outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools, and in particular:
 - (a) New South Wales school results relative to other states and other countries and what these trends show about schools policy,
 - (b) the existing state of measurement in the New South Wales education system and the measurement systems and data requirements that would be required to implement outcome-based budgeting in the New South Wales education system,
 - (c) consequences of the introduction of outcome-based budgeting for New South Wales schools with particular regard to:
 - (i) the needs of and impact on disadvantaged schools and students from a disadvantaged background
 - (ii) the needs of and impact on students with a disability
 - (iii) parental/community involvement in school accountability
 - (iv) the development of the status and quality of the New South Wales teaching profession
 - (v) establishing international best practice for teaching methods, performance measurement and school management in New South Wales
 - (vi) the effectiveness of the Local Schools/Local Decisions policy,
 - (d) how schools should be funded into the future and whether New South Wales growth funding, including from Gonski and other sources, should be linked to outcomes and performance,
 - (e) reporting and accountability measures for all schools in regard to state government funding,
 - (f) the provision of wrap-around services to support educational outcomes, and
 - (g) any other related matters.
2. That the committee report by 28 February 2020.¹

The terms of reference were self-referred by the committee on 20 June 2019.²

¹ The original reporting date was 20 December 2019 (*Minutes*, Legislative Council, 6 August 2019, p 305). On the 29 November 2019 the committee resolved to extend the reporting date to 28 February 2020.

² *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 6 August 2019, p 305.

Committee details

Committee members

The Hon Mark Latham MLC	Pauline Hanson's One Nation	<i>Chair</i>
The Hon Matthew Mason-Cox MLC	Liberal Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
The Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC	Australian Labor Party	
The Hon Wes Fang MLC	The Nationals	
The Hon Scott Farlow MLC	Liberal Party	
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Chair's Executive Summary

Over the past 20 years, compared to other countries and States/Territories, school results in New South Wales have gone backwards, in some cases disastrously. Our future economic competitiveness and success as a society are now at risk.

The introduction of Outcome-Based Budgeting in education can play a role in reversing this failure, in tandem with other major reforms. Policy makers have no choice but to act. Inertia will most certainly see our State fall further behind.

The Committee Inquiry identified a striking lack of measurement, accountability and quality control in the government schools system. Classroom practice has been allowed to deviate from the evidence-base.

We know what works in schools and what doesn't work. It has all been researched and reported on in many thousands of studies here and around the world. Some NSW schools are using this evidence-base to good effect, but others are not.

The challenge for Government is to scale up best practice and ensure every NSW school is a place of high-quality learning and opportunity. The know-how exists to make this happen, but substandard policies, management and incentive systems are holding us back.

The Committee identified major failings in the administration of:

- The Department of Education and NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA);
- The breadth and transparency of proposed school performance targets under Outcome-Based Budgeting;
- The rigorous, independent measurement and reporting of government school results;
- The Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, which has given some schools the freedom to fail and keep on failing;
- The problem of under-performing teachers and principals, with only a tiny fraction of them being moved out of the system;
- The way in which highly-recommended, high-effect teaching methods, such as Direct Instruction, can be readily discarded by schools;
- The teaching of literacy programs in schools, where the evidence-base can too easily be ignored;
- Quality compliance in the development of school plans and annual school reports, the contents of which can deviate widely from departmental expectations;
- Teacher accreditation at each of the three levels of Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, with major system failures inside NESA;

- Performance and professional development improvements for teachers, the systems for which are plainly not working;
- The quality and purpose of university Schools of Education, which persist in thinking that school leavers who have failed their ATAR can come back into the system a few years later as school teachers; and
- The NSW school funding model, which, in part, has embedded perverse incentives for public schools in their NAPLAN performance, giving them more money for worse results.

Most of the things that could go wrong in the administration of the NSW government schools system have gone wrong. The declining results are not surprising. They are the inevitable result of poor policies and practices leading to system failure.

We must ensure every NSW school takes a data-informed, evidence-based approach to its work, using only teaching methods and strategies that are known to lift student results. The Committee's Report recommends the following major policy changes:

- Establishing an independent authority for measuring and reporting NSW school results. The Department can no longer be allowed to measure itself;
- Under Outcome-Based Budgeting, publishing performance targets and outcomes school-by-school, with a wider range of performance measures than currently proposed by the Government;
- Publishing comparative school performance data for the benefit of parents, based on value-added measures of educational success;
- Tasking the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) with researching and creating a mandatory best practice framework for teaching methods, learning materials, classroom content and practice, physical classroom design, external consultants and school management, within which NSW public schools are obliged to operate;
- Certifying university teaching courses on the basis of whether or not they are consistent with CESE's best practice menu;
- Amending the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy to reflect the principle of earned autonomy: as schools lift their performance they are given greater managerial freedom;
- Creating a new category of NSW school: the Best Practice School, with extra funding for the networking of their success with other schools;
- Introducing financial incentives for improved school performance, including placing principals on performance-based contracts;
- Running a trial program for the recruitment of school principals from outside the teaching profession;
- Establishing a School Inspectorate as an independent unit undertaking regular inspections of classroom practices, teacher quality and school management;

- Using school inspectors to substantially increase the number of accredited Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in NSW;
- Identifying outstanding classroom teachers achieving high level results and keeping them in these valuable classroom roles but at salary levels comparable to principals;
- Going outside the existing teaching profession to bring a range of successful people into our schools, such as through the Teach For Australia program;
- Introducing a formal Tailored Support Policy guiding interventions and improvements in under-performing schools;
- Introducing a NSW equivalent of the 2019 Victorian reform package for disadvantaged schools, so that the best principals and teachers take up positions in our most challenging schools; and
- Negotiating School Education Accords with the non-government sectors to improve data and research sharing and consistency in school reporting across the State.

Chair's foreword

Most parliamentary inquiries occur after the event: after governments have introduced policies that have gone wrong. The relevant committee picks over the wreckage and makes recommendations to repair the damage.

This Inquiry is different. It was conducted in 'real time', to examine the implementation of a policy not yet finalised: the introduction of outcome-based budgeting for the NSW Department of Education. Thus the focus of the Inquiry has been prospective and positive. The Committee has sought to make recommendations to assist the Government in improving education measurement and outcomes as the new policy is implemented in coming State budgets.

During the Inquiry, however, another important purpose became clear. The release of new NAPLAN and the OECD's PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) results confirmed that NSW schools are heading in the wrong direction. Our State is losing economic competitiveness and the social capability that comes from academic excellence. All aspects of life in NSW are dragged down by a failing education system. (A summary of NSW's declining results is set out in Appendix 1 to this report).

Since 2014, compared to other States and Territories, NSW's NAPLAN ranking has dropped. The Government's submission highlighted the NSW ranking for all domains and year levels for NAPLAN from 2014 to 2018, and in net terms, NSW fell two rankings. This is in the context of Australia's disappointing performance across the life of the test (since 2008), with small gains in primary school outcomes offset by flat-lining secondary school results. The national decline in writing skills has been particularly concerning.

PISA is a triennial international assessment of the functional skills of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. In 2018, 600,000 students participated across 79 countries, including more than 14,000 students in 779 Australian schools. Throughout the course of this century, NSW's results have consistently declined, now placing us behind competitor countries and Australian States/Territories.

In 2000, within the Commonwealth, NSW ranked second in PISA reading, behind only the ACT. In 2018, we ranked fifth, falling behind Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland. Our 45-point decline was the biggest in the country, the equivalent of one-and-a-third years of schooling. That is, the reading ability of NSW 15-year-olds in 2018 was more than five school terms behind their counterparts 18 years earlier – a systemic, cross-generational decline.

Compared to international best practice, the learning lag was even greater. In 2018, NSW reading skills were more than one-and-a-half years behind students sitting the PISA test in Singapore and China (Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang schools).

Similar declines have been experienced in NSW's maths and science results. In the 15 years following 2003 (when PISA maths was first tested), NSW students lost the equivalent of 1.4 years of schooling

proWess. Our 15-year-olds are now four years behind their Chinese counterparts in maths. In science, the comparable figures are 1.3 years (against their NSW predecessors) and 3.5 years (against China). In reading, maths and science, NSW is now in the bottom half of Australian State/Territory school performance.³

These comparisons make the Committee's work timelier: to not only analyse the introduction of outcome-based budgeting but also, to recommend ways in which our schools can improve. The broadening of the Inquiry is not surprising, as most aspects of education policy are closely inter-related. An examination of outcome budgeting and measurement has led the Committee to look at the factors dragging down the measured outcomes.

Schools policy is at a tipping point. Either new solutions are found or Australia's results will continue to decline. Our State should lead the fight back against mediocrity. As the largest schools system, Australian schools cannot recover unless NSW recovers.

Some people say they are worried about the rise of China. But who is worried about the fall of Australia and most importantly, doing something about it? Our position in the world is declining because of the failing nature of our education system. For a combination of reasons (set out in this report), the system has deviated from the evidence base of what works in the classroom. It's been a perfect storm leading to an absence of quality control and accountability in schools.

Sadly, the decline has been sharpest in NSW. There is a temptation to think that because we are Australia's largest State we must have the best schools system. The PISA results reveal the truth: we have dropped into the second tier of Australian States and Territories in education. The ACT, Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland are in the top tier, with NSW languishing alongside South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. I can remember when Queensland's schools were regarded as a joke. Now people are asking: whatever happened to NSW? This report aims to provide answers and policy solutions.

Traditional approaches will not suffice. Pouring money into school inputs and hoping that goodwill and good intentions by schools will achieve the best results has not been a successful approach. Something more is needed in the funding system to give schools a reason, a discipline, an incentive to reach best practice teaching and results.

NSW has a long list of schools classified as disadvantaged. The problem with the list is that it appears to be permanent. Excuses are found to explain away failure, but this is little comfort for students who have to live with the consequences of substandard schooling. NSW needs a new list, a long list of schools known as 'Formerly Disadvantaged Schools' – a new pathway to opportunity and upward social mobility.

Currently the system has elements of 'provider capture', run for the benefit of adults working in education, not the children studying in it. There is also a lingering fear of the 'Metherell Effect', the political disruption that comes from upsetting provider interests. Adults vote, children don't.

³ See Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), *PISA 2018, Reporting Australia's results, Volume One*, December 2019.

This is why so much of the political debate focuses on school funding and physical infrastructure concerns instead of the real problem: what's gone wrong in classrooms, in the instructional relationship between teachers and students. More money hasn't improved our schools; the big gains are to be made in the way in which the money is spent.

The great paradox in schools policy is we know what works. It has all been measured and reported on hundreds of times in educational research projects across the world. Yet the things that work are not automatically built in school curricula, teaching programs and practices.

The know-how exists to make every NSW school a high-quality school for each of its students. This should be a hallmark of our civilisation and the governments that guide it. Yet unfortunately, too many schools have ignored the evidence-base, instead pursuing fad, ideological teaching programs with minimal or negative impacts in the classroom.

Educationalists have developed a long list of programs and pedagogies without a positive evidence-base. This includes philosophy circles, play-based learning, group work, inquiry-based learning, the development of 'self-directed learners', teachers as facilitators, so-called '21st Century skills', general capabilities, creative thinking, growth mindset, 'emotional regulation strategies', 'student impulse control', teaching emotional intelligence, collaborative classrooms, flexible learning spaces, co-teaching and constructivist teaching.

In practice, there should be little contested debate about the direction of education policy. There should be no experiments or new-age ideological frolics. Everything about teaching methods and classroom programs has been measured extensively, over many years in every part of the world.

We know what works. Professor John Hattie, for instance, has conducted a global meta-analysis based on 95,000 school-based studies involving more than 300 million students. This research assigns an effect-size for a vast range of interventions impacting on students, with 0.4 the 'hinge point' at which something is worth using.

Working out of Australian universities, Hattie has condensed the effectiveness of teaching programs into just 4-5 pages of effect-measures. It's a comprehensive list of positive and negative classroom practices. Hattie's effect-size summary is reproduced as Appendix 2 to this report.

During the Inquiry, it became clear many of the best schools in NSW have been inspired by Hattie's research. They follow the evidence of high-effect teaching methods and consequently, achieve high-effect results for their students.⁴

Education policy shouldn't be a question of Left versus Right, progressive versus traditional. It's simply a matter of what works and doesn't work in classrooms.

This makes the role of government relatively straightforward: to scale up success, to develop the measurement, performance and regulatory systems needed to ensure all schools are implementing

⁴ There are many Hattie publications, the most important of which remains his first book synthesising over 800 meta-studies: John Hattie, *Visible Learning* (Routledge, 2009).

evidence-based education, delivering improved student results. This is the great promise of outcome-based budgeting, if done well.

Thankfully, Education Minister Sarah Mitchell has set out a reform agenda for 2020. After the release of the PISA results in December, she gave an honest assessment. “There is no sugar coating what [PISA] shows. For 20 years now, we have been on a steady downward trajectory in the international student rankings”, she wrote, “there are systemic problems that need addressing if we are to rise back to the top of the rankings.”⁵

She outlined six policy directions, as follows:

1. Focus on quality, not the quantum of money: “We know that the problem is not funding. Under Gonski 1.0 - and now under Gonski 2.0 - schools have more money than ever before.” The key issue is the effective use of increased funding.
2. Follow the data and evidence of what works in schools: “...it is clear we must focus on the basics of numeracy and literacy, and we must ensure that what is being taught in the classroom reflects evidence-based best practice.”
3. Avoid education experiments and uphold standards: “Perhaps more than any other portfolio area, education is prone to sudden infatuations with flavour-of-the-month fads. The current one seeks to downplay the importance of final assessment of academic ability, on the grounds that final assessments such as the HSC [and ATAR] put too much pressure on students. At the end of the day, academic capability matters. This is something that is recognised by high performing systems overseas.”
4. Concentrate on knowledge development in schools, not politics: “The gradual overcrowding of the curriculum in some ways is not surprising. Too often, the curriculum has become a depository for content aimed at fixing societal ills. The reality is that instilling value sets and encouraging positions on social and political issues is not the job of schools. It is the job of parents. A school’s job is to equip kids with the knowledge needed to successfully engage with the world as independent thinkers.”
5. Teacher quality is crucial, with universities having “forgotten their societal duty to put only the most qualified graduates in front of our kids ... A low ATAR and poor university marks are not good enough if you want to be a teacher.”

⁵ Sarah Mitchell, NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, 'For 20 years our students have been slipping - but money is not the answer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/education/for-20-years-our-students-have-been-slipping-but-money-is-not-the-answer-20191206-p53hn6.html>.

6. School leadership is even more important: “A good principal can be transformative but a bad principal can be devastating ... We must give incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools.”⁶

These policy principles are consistent with the findings and recommendations of this report. We are on the same page. Minister Mitchell has said 2020 “will be exciting for our schools as we roll out reforms that allow us to build the best education system in the world.”⁷ The Committee is keen to be part of this process.

A key issue in school education is the information base. The system is incredibly complex. The Education Department knows the details well, while the challenge for Ministers and MPs is to understand fully the many complicated ways in which schools are run. Only when armed with this information can policy makers introduce effective reform. Figure 1 provides a flow chart guide to how the NSW school system is organised.

The Committee has worked hard at drilling into the detail of school management, measurement and performance. I believe we have produced a report that can greatly assist the Government in the implementation of outcome-based budgeting. It’s a template for turning the system around, for putting data, evidence and excellence back at the centre of NSW education.

I have appreciated the opportunity to chair such an important Inquiry. I wish to convey a special thanks to the schools we visited and those who gave evidence to assist the Committee’s deliberations. I also wish to thank the Legislative Council Secretariat staff who so capably organised our visits, hearings and meetings, namely Madeleine Foley, Emma Rogerson, Shu-Fang Wei and Tina Mrozowska.

The Committee Members should also be praised for their diligence in getting across the complicated issues raised in such a broad Inquiry. There is no more important work for a State MP than improving the quality of education. Hopefully we have played a role in helping the Government and Parliament realise the mighty goal of a world-class NSW schools system.

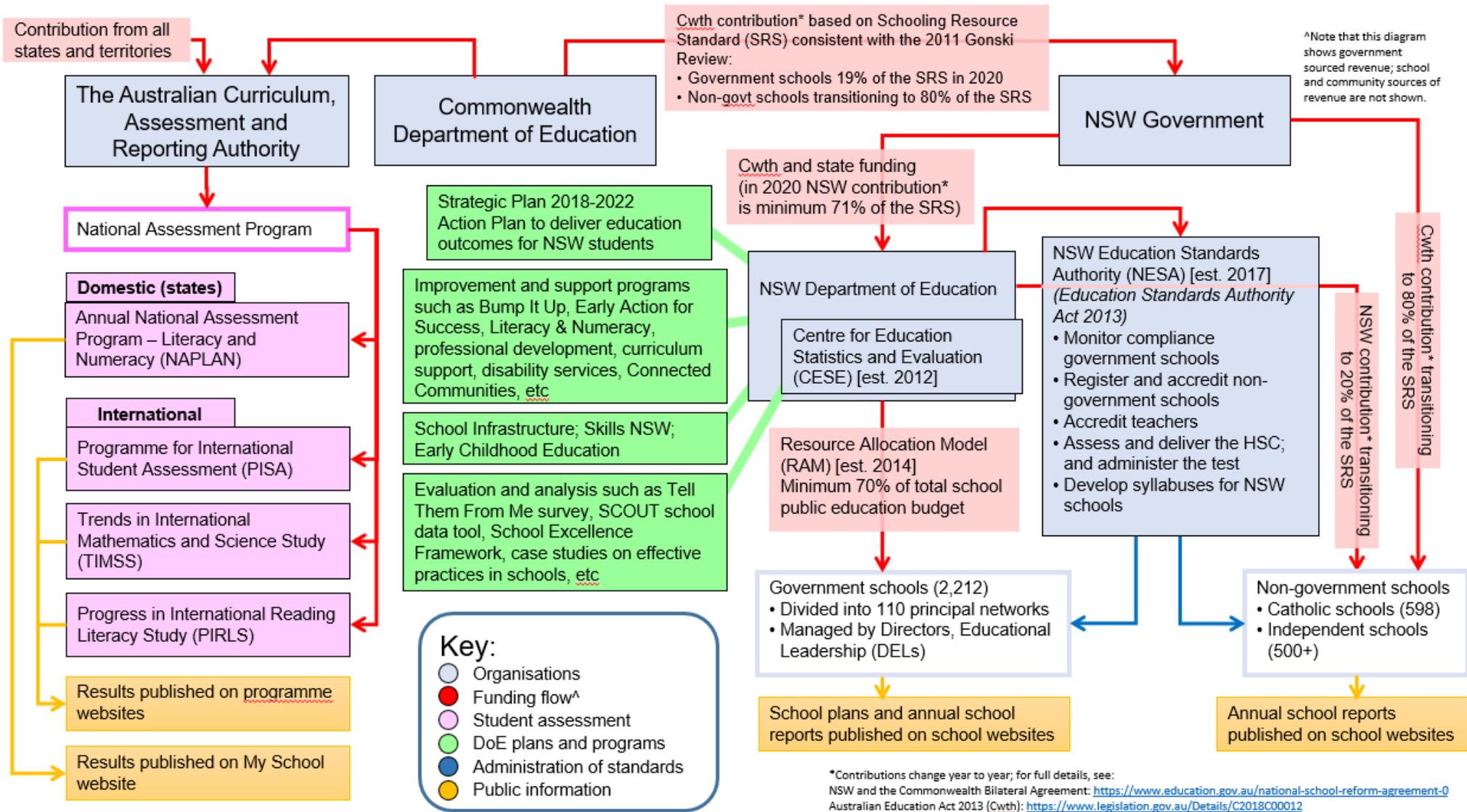


Hon Mark Latham MLC
Committee Chair

⁶ Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, 'For 20 years our students have been slipping - but money is not the answer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/education/for-20-years-our-students-have-been-slipping-but-money-is-not-the-answer-20191206-p53hn6.html>.

⁷ Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, 'For 20 years our students have been slipping - but money is not the answer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/education/for-20-years-our-students-have-been-slipping-but-money-is-not-the-answer-20191206-p53hn6.html>.

Figure 1: Flow chart depicting how the NSW schools system works, different administrative bodies, acronyms and responsibilities



Recommendations

Historically the education debate in Australia has been framed around two competing dichotomies: the school choice/diversity agenda versus an equity/needs focus. In practical terms, with the advent of generous Gonski funding, this struggle has ended. Across the various sectors, parents and students can find schools of their choice in which resourcing has become a lower-order concern. The Committee believes the new agenda, the new challenge for education policy makers, concerns quality: how to reverse the decline in national and NSW school results this century.

If done well, outcome-based budgeting in NSW can be a circuit breaker, whereby the disciplines of measurement, evidence, accountability, academic excellence and performance upgrading are spread throughout the school system. The know-how exists for NSW to reach international best practice, to have one of the best education systems in the world. The only thing holding us back is a failing of public policy.

The Committee believes this can be overcome by a change in direction, using the new budgeting and measurement systems as a catalyst. Throughout the remainder of this term of parliament, the Government should introduce a comprehensive, integrated package of school policy reform. Much has gone wrong in NSW education, so much needs to change – as reflected in the following Committee recommendations:

Recommendation 1

10

That the Government comply with its own Outcome Budgeting Policy and a true citizens' perspective of the education system by ensuring the 2021/22 Budget features the publication of school-by-school performance targets and appropriate accountability measures for how well these targets have been met (for schools of sufficient size where outcomes can be reliably measured). That the Government also publish the Department of Education's business plan developed in collaboration with Treasury.

Recommendation 2

11

That the Government, during the course of 2020, develop a single publication point where parents and citizens can access information about the new targets and performance data for their local school. Logically, this should be the My School website, which currently publishes National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results and background information about schools.

Recommendation 3

15

That in the development of the new school performance targets, the Government include data from international assessments such as PISA, with comparisons against other States and Territories, as well as other nations. New South Wales should settle for nothing less than international best practice.

Recommendation 4

16

That the Government include Year 12 indicators (retention rates and Higher School Certificate performance) in its targets for high schools. That these be based on averaged school results (the best indicator of HSC achievement) ahead of various band level targets. That NAPLAN measures/targets also give priority to averaged results, ahead of band level data.

- Recommendation 5** **16**
 That the Government's high school targets include post-secondary outcomes in work, further education, training and welfare; and the Minister for Education commission the Centre for Education Statistics Evaluation (CESE) to develop a post-Year 12 tracking tool as soon as possible.
- Recommendation 6** **16**
 That the Government work with the NSW Business Chamber and other industry groups, and vocational education and training experts, including the TAFE sector, to develop detailed performance measures for vocational education and training in schools, including a survey measure of business satisfaction with the NSW education system. That the Government then use this data as the basis of a concerted effort to improve service provision and outcomes in the State's school and vocational education systems.
- Recommendation 7** **16**
 That the Government ensure the school targets err on the side of ambition. Across the system, the goal must be to aggressively lift NSW's education performance and rankings. That an exception be made for schools and communities handicapped by unforeseen events, such as drought and bushfires. (One would expect, for instance, school attendance rates in these districts to be lower until such time as the natural disasters pass.)
- Recommendation 8** **23**
 That the Government amend subsection 18A(3) of the Education Act 1990 to allow the publication of comparative school results using CESE/Scout value-added data.
- Recommendation 9** **23**
 That the Government review the effectiveness of 18A(3) of the Education Act 1990.
- Recommendation 10** **23**
 That the Government develop a 'gold standard' measure of school performance based on value-added/student-growth principles as part of the implementation of outcome-based budgeting. That this measure be the primary focus for ambitious improvement targets and accountability in the schools system (including identification of where schools sit as a percentile of primary/secondary school cohorts).
- Recommendation 11** **24**
 That the Government require CESE to revise its value-added/student-growth methodology to develop a 'pure' measure, as outlined in the report. That the value-added methodology also be broadened into:
- learning domains beyond NAPLAN literacy and numeracy testing; and
 - regular school use of standardised Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) testing and publication of comparative data.
- Recommendation 12** **28**
 That the Government ensure no NSW school is worse off financially (its annual funding reduced) due to the introduction of outcome-based budgeting.

- Recommendation 13** 28
That the Government acknowledge that financial incentives have an important role to play in lifting school performance; and that under the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) funding principles, the best way of meeting school needs is through improved outcomes.
- Recommendation 14** 28
That the Government phase out the Low Level Adjustment for Disability funding stream (ensuring no school is worse off financially) as it does not require the diagnosis or confirmation of a disability. The committee recommends replacing it with an equivalent funding pool that rewards socio-economically disadvantaged schools for improved NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results.
- Recommendation 15** 28
That the Government immediately review the RAM funding model to ensure no other perverse financial incentives have been embedded in its methodology.
- Recommendation 16** 28
That in two years time (2022), the Government review the effectiveness of the two financial incentive reforms recommended in this report (see Recommendations 14 and 25) to determine whether other, broader funding incentives are needed to lift NSW school results.
- Recommendation 17** 31
That in the development of student ‘well-being’ performance targets/results, the Government seek to improve the methodology and reliability of the Tell Them From Me survey, addressing the concerns raised in the report.
- Recommendation 18** 31
That the Government make it mandatory for government school principals to consult with their school community about major spending decisions.
- Recommendation 19** 31
That the Government include in the job description/duties of government school principals a requirement to foster the size and success of their school Parents and Citizens' Association, with performance measures as to how well they do this.
- Recommendation 20** 31
That the Department of Education require its schools to seek to conduct exit interviews of parents when students leave a school.
- Recommendation 21** 32
That the Minister for Education commission the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) to develop a specific set of verifiable, ambitious targets for remote and isolated schooling.
- Recommendation 22** 33
That the Minister for Education give greater priority to developing performance measures, targets and accountability in disability education and commission CESE to identify best practice, working with experts.

- Recommendation 23** 47
That the Government amend its Local Schools Local Decisions policy to include the principles of earned school autonomy. If school outcomes are exemplary, the school would be given more managerial freedom. If outcomes are substandard, the school would be placed on a performance plan and subject to departmental intervention to correct the problem and lift its results.
- Recommendation 24** 47
That the Department of Education review the criteria for the appointment of principals to better reflect the qualities (personal and professional) of those leading Best Practice Schools.
- Recommendation 25** 47
That the Government place school principals on performance-based contracts with significantly increased salaries. Performance measures should be based on the effective use of evidence and data, and achievement of high-level school results (measured primarily by value adding). Successful principals would receive performance bonuses; failing principals the termination of their contracts. The new system should also be used to meet Minister Mitchell’s goal of giving “incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools”.
- Recommendation 26** 47
That the Government place Directors of Educational Leadership (DELs) on performance-based contracts, using the combined achievements of their local cluster of 20 schools (measured primarily by value adding) as the main assessment criteria for whether or not to extend their contracts.
- Recommendation 27** 48
That the Department of Education give principals full control over teacher recruitment decisions, with an expectation that they handle staffing problems within the school directly without automatic referral to the Employee Performance and Conduct (EPAC) Directorate.
- Recommendation 28** 48
That the Government create a new category of NSW school, the Best Practice School, to recognise and honour exemplary achievement in the education system (as per the best practice characteristics set out in the report), with these schools drawn from all three school sectors: government, Catholic and Independent. The creation of the new category would not only acknowledge the work of the best schools, but also place pressure on other schools to reach this status.
- Recommendation 29** 48
That the Government assist Best Practice Schools (government and non-government) with the networking of their methods, so that other, less successful schools can also benefit, with extra resources being provided from Gonski growth money as a new funding support program (given that the Gonski money can be used for any purpose past the school gate). We simply don’t have enough of these outstanding school leaders in NSW; so wide networking of the success of Best Practice Schools is a logical way of spreading their influence.
- Recommendation 30** 48
That the Government ensure the principle of direct/explicit instruction is the main teaching method in NSW Government schools.

- Recommendation 31** 48
That the Government require schools to publish the details of their teaching methods and classroom programs on their website, annual report and My School entry (with an explanation of their effect-size impacts) and specifically, the use they are making of direct/explicit instruction.
- Recommendation 32** 48
That the Government acknowledge the positive attitude of Best Practice Schools in their use of NAPLAN as a verification tool for their in-house data. That in its current review of NAPLAN, the Government avoid any substantial discontinuity in outcome measurement for Best Practice (and other) schools, given that outcome-based budgeting relies on rigorous, consistent measurement systems over time.
- Recommendation 33** 48
That the Government, as a matter of policy, narrow down the purpose of schooling to give greater priority to student achievement (academic and vocational), issuing a ministerial statement to this effect. As the Minister has said, encouraging positions on political and social issues is the work of parents, not schools. All schools must follow this approach.
- Recommendation 34** 49
That the Government commission CESE to undertake further work studying the success of Best Practice Schools, refining the model identified in this report and making further recommendations for scaling up high-level education success.
- Recommendation 35** 55
That the Government establish an independent authority for the measurement of NSW school outcomes and the public reporting of them, examining the alternative models presented in the report.
- Recommendation 36** 59
That the Government urgently implement the recommendations of the 2019 NSW Auditor General's report on teacher accreditation and quality.
- Recommendation 37** 59
That the Government establish a School Inspectorate as an independent unit undertaking regular inspections of classroom practices, teacher quality and school management. The inspectors would be responsible for auditing teacher accreditation, recommending action against substandard teachers, handling public complaints against schools and additional functions (as outlined later in the report - see Recommendations 39, 40, 44, 55 and 60).
- Recommendation 38** 59
That the Government task the proposed School Inspectorate (in cooperation with DELs) with proactively identifying different levels of teacher accreditation, overcoming the problem of very low numbers of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. Currently, teachers need to apply for these higher rankings and pay an application fee. Under the new system, inspectors would identify them in the first instance and, as long as they agree, confer the new accreditation (at no cost to teachers).

- Recommendation 39** **60**
 That the Government ensure the new school inspectors have access to all classrooms and the capacity to set improvement goals for teachers (in collaboration with principals, DELs and the teachers themselves), playing a vital monitoring, assessment and feedback role in improving teacher quality.
- Recommendation 40** **60**
 That the Government ensure that school inspectors (if established) are truly independent with a singular focus on improving classroom performance and accountability. They should also be a point of data collection on teacher quality across the government system.
- Recommendation 41** **60**
 That the Government use the introduction of outcome-based budgeting to produce a single, coherent definition of teacher quality (based on the value added to student results) as the key measure of teacher and school success.
- Recommendation 42** **64**
 That the Government develop a formal Tailored Support policy, specifying:
- the measured level of under-performance that automatically triggers intervention in a failing public school (a mandatory process that schools must agree to);
 - the range of changes likely to be made to school practice to improve school outcomes;
 - the type of binding performance plans and hard-data measures and targets entered into with the school's leadership, guiding the Tailored Support process;
 - under outcome-based budgeting, the additional resources provided to each school receiving Tailored Support (as a change to school funding – that is, an additional RAM category); and
 - the level of public accountability at the end of the process, with a comprehensive report to the school community on what has occurred, its successes and failures. The objective is to give schools a chance to improve, rather than stigmatising them at the outset with an announcement of Tailored Support intervention.
- Recommendation 43** **68**
 That the Government commission CESE to research and introduce a mandatory best practice framework for teaching methods, learning materials, classroom content and practice, physical classroom design, external consultants and school management, within which NSW government schools are obliged to operate (henceforth known in the report as 'the CESE menu').
- Recommendation 44** **68**
 That the Department of Education use school inspectors to guarantee compliance with the CESE menu of educational best practice.
- Recommendation 45** **68**
 That the Government ensure, once the "CESE menu" is established, classroom teachers have the appropriate support to implement this "menu" into their teaching plans, in a similar model to the support provided by the peak organisation for independent schools.

- Recommendation 46** **69**
That the Minister for Education use the proposed independent measurement authority to overcome the lack of central data collection about NSW schools, building a detailed information base to help guide better practices.
- Recommendation 47** **69**
That the Government urgently review the effectiveness of its open-plan classroom initiative.
- Recommendation 48** **71**
That the Government only allow immediate-past school leavers who have a 70 minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and 70 university Grade Point Average (GPA) to teach in a government school. This 70/70 rule would be in addition to the current HSC benchmark for new teachers (needing three Band 5s, including one in English).
- Recommendation 49** **73**
That the Government develop a policy to allow people from a wide range of backgrounds (not just university Education graduates) to teach, provided that:
- as a quality control measure, entry to the profession should still be by competitive means; and
 - non-graduate teachers also comply with Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards to be registered for employment in schools.
- Recommendation 50** **73**
That the Minister for Education introduce the Teach For Australia program into NSW government schools as a matter of priority.
- Recommendation 51** **73**
That the Government explore other means in its own recruitment and training processes (including an expansion of the School Leadership Institute) by which highly successful people from outside the teaching profession can be recruited into NSW schools (subject to the quality safeguards set out in Recommendation 49).
- Recommendation 52** **75**
That the Minister for Education ensure that the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) only certify university teaching courses consistent with CESE's best practice menu. As the biggest employer of teachers in the country, the NSW Government has significant leverage in this regard.
- Recommendation 53** **75**
That if the university system fails to cooperate with Recommendation 52, the Government pursue alternatives in teacher training/recruitment, utilising non-government teaching colleges (such as Alphacrucis), online training providers and organisations like Teach For Australia.
- Recommendation 54** **76**
That the Government adopt a policy of identifying outstanding classroom teachers achieving high-level results and keeping them in these valuable classroom and teacher mentoring roles, but at salary levels comparable to principals. This is what the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher classifications should mean. Priority should be given to ensuring these teachers are available in disadvantaged schools, where their standards of excellence can have the biggest impact.

- Recommendation 55** 76
That the Government measure teacher classroom success by the value-added (where available) to student results over several years, along with (more conventional) performance assessments by school leaders, inspectors and DELs.
- Recommendation 56** 76
That the Government establish a trial program for the recruitment of school principals from outside the teaching profession: leaders with a track record of workplace success and strategic insight. Under this program, employment would be through performance-based contracts, with financial bonuses for improved school results (and obvious sanctions for failure).
- Recommendation 57** 76
That the Department of Education improve training programs for school principals and deputy principals. This should be a key focus of the NSW School Leadership Institute, developing a strictly evidence-based, best practice approach to school management and expectations for classroom practice.
- Recommendation 58** 79
That the Government ensure, in drawing teachers from universities that follow the CESE menu, priority be given to Schools of Education that teach evidence-based early reading instruction (as outlined in the report).
- Recommendation 59** 80
That the Government require schools to publicly report in detail on their literacy teaching methods and effect-levels associated with them, and that this information be gathered and collated centrally by the Education Department (or independent measurement authority, if established).
- Recommendation 60** 80
That the Government, in guaranteeing school compliance with the CESE menu, give priority to evidence-based early reading instruction. That school inspectors and DELs be used to ensure classroom compliance with high-effect literacy programs.
- Recommendation 61** 85
That the Government use the Tailored Support and Best Practice School Network programs to end educational disadvantage in NSW, bringing struggling schools up to best practice performance.
- Recommendation 62** 85
That the Minister for Education introduce a NSW equivalent of the 2019 Victorian reform package for disadvantaged schools (as outlined in the report), consistent with Minister Mitchell's stated goal: "We must give incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools".
- Recommendation 63** 85
That the Government produce a full report on the success of the Minto public housing redevelopment project (as outlined in the report), learning its lessons and identifying similar communities and schools that would benefit from redevelopment schemes. An effective way of improving disadvantaged schools is to improve the local neighbourhood.

Recommendation 64

86

That the Government develop and publish a clear policy on the interface between Health and Education services (especially regarding the problem of cost-shifting), using the guidelines outlined in the report.

Recommendation 65

86

That the Minister for Education report to the NSW Parliament:

- every 12 months on the Government's performance in meeting the targets in Recommendation 21 (remote and isolated schooling)
- every 12 months on the state of NSW school literacy, addressing matters arising from Recommendations 58, 59 and 60, and literacy test outcomes (NAPLAN, PISA etc)
- every six months on the Government's progress in bringing disadvantaged schools up to best practice; addressing the challenges of the 12 to 15 per cent of public schools operating in an environment of social crisis; and the development of the Department's 'new tool' for identifying and measuring these problems.

Recommendation 66

90

That the Government, building on the success and contents of the January 2020 Memoranda of Understanding, take this process a step further and negotiate School Education Accords with the non-government sectors to:

- replicate the success of the Victorian system in sharing de-identified datasets across school sectors,
- develop CESE as a cross-sectoral resource for identifying best practice and sophisticated school/student measurement and data usage,
- adopt in the non-government sectors, as far as possible, the outcome-based budgeting reforms applying to government schools, especially with respect to teacher quality, value-added reporting, ambitious school improvement targets and the CESE best practice menu. To assist parents and ensure consistency across the State, the same set of school-by-school performance outcomes need to be published across the government and non-government sectors,
- ensure non-government school sectors have Board representation on the proposed independent measurement authority, and
- secure the support of non-government sectors for the Best Practice School Model and widespread school improvement networking (backed by eligibility for a new public funding program).

Conduct of inquiry

The terms of reference for the inquiry were self-referred by the committee on 20 June 2019.

The committee received 21 submissions.

The committee held three public hearings at Parliament House in Sydney.

The committee also conducted two site visits to six schools in North, East and Western Sydney.

Inquiry related documents are available on the committee's website, including submissions, hearing transcripts, tabled documents and answers to questions on notice.

Chapter 1 Background to the Inquiry

- 1.1 A core responsibility of government is to ensure the best possible use of taxpayer funds. At a time of record expenditure on NSW schools (\$18.1 billion in the 2019/20 Budget)⁸ student academic results have been going backwards compared to other States and other countries. Increased funding has not led to improved outcomes.

Table 1 NSW Department of Education⁹ Expenses Budget over the past 10 years¹⁰

Year (Financial)	Expenses Budget (total)	Year on Year increase	Cumulative increase
2010/11	\$12.7 billion	-	-
2011/12	\$13.8 billion	8.66%	8.66%
2012/13	\$14.2 billion	2.89%	11.81%
2013/14	\$14.2 billion	0%	11.81%
2014/15	\$14.2 billion	0%	11.81%
2015/16	\$12.8 billion	-9.85%	0.79%
2016/17	\$13.7 billion	7.03%	7.87%
2017/18	\$14.9 billion	8.75%	17.32%
2018/19	\$15.7 billion	5.36%	23.62%
2019/20	\$18.1 billion	15.2%	42.52%

- 1.2 In response, schools policy needs to change. New strategies are needed to ensure every school is a high-achieving school, fulfilling the potential and maximising the life opportunities of its students. For the long-term future of NSW, we have no greater public responsibility than giving our young people their best start in life.
- 1.3 With these challenges in mind, the Government has announced a shift towards outcome-based budgeting.¹¹ Traditionally schools have been funded to cover the costs of their inputs, with annual adjustments for increased demand and inflation. This has led to a frustration that public money is poured into the schools funding silo without clear measures and indicators for what is being achieved.
- 1.4 As a reform initiative across the NSW public sector, outcome budgeting was first announced in the 2017/18 Budget. Instead of focusing on inputs, the new system was designed to improve

⁸ Correspondence, NSW Department of Education to secretariat, 24 January 2020.

⁹ The functions of the NSW Department of Education (and its previous iterations) have been subject to Machinery of Government changes over this period. As a result, the above Expenses Budget figures are not directly comparable.

¹⁰ NSW State Budget Paper 3 (relevant year). Correspondence, NSW Department of Education to secretariat, 24 January 2020.

¹¹ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 3.

budget outputs. The example given in school education was as follows: a traditional service delivery approach is to “increase the number of teachers and build new schools”. Under outcome budgeting, the goal is to “improve educational outcomes for primary and secondary schools.”¹²

1.5 Initially, the new system manifested itself as 46 Premier’s Priorities, or outcome targets across the various functions of government.¹³ In his 2019 Budget speech, the Treasurer Dominic Perrottet announced that, "Education will be the first department shifting to a focus on outcomes" more comprehensively, in its entire budget, as part of the new "outcome budgeting" practice.¹⁴

1.6 On 28 May 2019, Education Minister Sarah Mitchell told Parliament:

... recurrent funding is not enough because we have to ensure that while we are putting taxpayer money into the system it is used to deliver improved outcomes. We cannot invest billions of dollars and not see good results. We do not want children to miss out on the basics and not succeed ... One of my priorities as Minister will be to ensure that we match education funding to outcomes. I know it is a priority that the Premier shares as well. We will work collaboratively with stakeholders across the sector and the community to create a framework to achieve this.¹⁵

1.7 This statement raised expectations for outcome-based funding: changing the way in which schools are funded, so “that we match education funding to outcomes”¹⁶ (This is a more complex question, however, which the Committee subsequently analysed in-depth and has reported on, below).

1.8 Significantly, NSW is not the only jurisdiction introducing outcome-based budgeting in education. In August 2019, the Federal Government released its Wellings Review of Performance-Based Funding for the Commonwealth Grant Scheme for universities.¹⁷

1.9 From 2020 onwards, to qualify for undergraduate growth funding (lifting the freeze on student places), universities will need to meet four key performance outcomes: in graduate employment, student continuity, student satisfaction and equity programs. Graduate outcomes will be measured by employment rates at the completion of degrees. Continuity will be measured by domestic first-year student dropout rates.¹⁸

1.10 Student surveys will measure satisfaction with teaching programs, while equity outcomes will be based on university participation rates for students from Indigenous, low income and rural

¹² NSW Treasury, *Policy and Guidelines Paper, Outcome Budgeting*, December 2018, p 1.

¹³ NSW Treasury, *Policy and Guidelines Paper, Outcome Budgeting*, December 2018, p ii.

¹⁴ Budget Speech 2019-20, the Honourable Dominic Perrottet MP, Treasurer, p 13.

¹⁵ *Hansard*, NSW Legislative Council, 28 May 2019, p 14 (Sarah Mitchell).

¹⁶ *Hansard*, NSW Legislative Council, 28 May 2019, p 14 (Sarah Mitchell).

¹⁷ Australian Government, Performance-Based Funding for the Commonwealth Grant Scheme, June 2019.

¹⁸ Australian Parliament, Performance-Based Funding for the Commonwealth Grant Scheme, June 2019, p 64; Fergus Hunter, 'University funding increases to be tied to performance tests', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 August 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/university-funding-increases-to-be-tied-to-performance-tests-20190806-p52eeg.html>

backgrounds. The Federal Minister for Education, Hon Dan Tehan, has described the new funding system as an “incentive for performance and transparency” in higher education.¹⁹

- 1.11** It was timely, therefore, for a NSW parliamentary committee to examine this shift in budget policy. The 2019 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results made it even more topical. We should have zero tolerance of failure in the schools system. We all have an interest in turning the system and its results around.
- 1.12** The Legislative Council Education Portfolio Committee takes this task seriously. This is why we have started the new parliamentary term with a wide-ranging inquiry, founded in a belief that improved measurement, transparency, accountability and evidence-based education are essential to uplifting schools performance.
- 1.13** In its Inquiry, the Committee adopted a conventional approach, calling for submissions and hearing evidence from experts and interested parties. We also added a practical dimension: visiting best practice schools adding high value to student learning and results.
- 1.14** The Committee asked the major school sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent) to nominate their best schools, the ones making sophisticated use of data and evidence. The Committee Chair visited a total of 20 schools (mostly best practice, but also others). The full Committee undertook site visits to four primary schools and two high schools. Seven Best Practice Case Studies are presented in the text of this report.
- 1.15** This was an extremely useful process. It uncovered amazingly successful schools, teachers and students – a true inspiration. It showed what could be possible in NSW education. But it also raised a bigger question: If some schools are achieving exemplar results, often against the odds, why are the State’s overall results so disappointing? Why hasn’t the success of some (including in disadvantaged communities) been scaled up universally?

Best Practice School Case Study: Auburn North Public School²⁰

Auburn North is a very impressive school. With its 692 students entirely from a disadvantaged background and 97 percent NESB, it has given the local community its best chance of upward socio-economic mobility.

¹⁹ Fergus Hunter, 'University funding increases to be tied to performance tests', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 August 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/university-funding-increases-to-be-tied-to-performance-tests-20190806-p52eeg.html>

²⁰ See Tabled document, Report - Portfolio Committee No. 3's site visits to schools across Sydney, 25 and 29 October 2019, pp 3-5; Pamela Macklin and Vic Zbar, 'How to turn a struggling (or middling) school's performance around', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 February 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/education/how-to-turn-a-struggling-or-middling-school-s-performance-around-20190118-p50s7a.html>. In correspondence to the committee, dated 23 January 2020, the Department of Education advised that it was the Department's preference to keep confidential the relationship between the school and the external consultant. 'The Department ordinarily would not endorse publicly the advice of a private consultant.' As the consultant is publicly funded and has made his views publicly known, the Committee sees no problem in publishing this material. Mr Zbar has been a big part of the success of Auburn North and we congratulate him and the school on their successful collaboration.

In 2018 and 2019, 42 percent of students achieved the top two NAPLAN bands for both literacy and numeracy, compared to 25 percent in 2015. In terms of value added to student learning (measured by NAPLAN), Auburn North has been in the top five percent of NSW schools for K-3, 3-5 and 5-7 for three consecutive years. The Committee was shown graphs plotting school-by-school results across the State, with Auburn North always at the top end.

The school attributes its success to an “evidence-based, data-informed, action-planned culture”. John Hattie’s findings for high-effect collective teacher efficacy have been influential, with the development of the ‘Auburn North Buy-In’. The school describes this as, “the extent to which all teachers work as one cohesive, committed team to assist students”. It is matched by ‘Auburn North Expectations’ – an agreed commitment to annual classroom goals.

The school has also developed a calm, orderly learning environment, with a clear sense of behavioural norms. Parents are encouraged to buy-in through several community-based programs, the most important of which is Parents as Partners in Learning, which assists parents with the skills and confidence they need as home educators of their children.

In the classroom, Auburn North has developed an award winning instructional model based on the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy, building on the work of John Hattie’s *Visible Learning* (2008) and CESE’s *What Works Best* (2015) paper. The Principal, Mark Harris, says he read Hattie’s work 7-8 years ago and thought it rang true, but “I had not intellectualised it”. It was a breakthrough moment, with Mr Harris shifting his focus to instructional leadership in the school. He has now developed a common, explicit method of teaching in every classroom.

He is also very careful in staff recruitment, ensuring new teachers are highly skilled in student engagement. Well-intentioned people are coming out of the university system but of an uneven quality. If the school advertises a temporary position it will receive 100 applications. Mr Harris will invite 7-8 to teach a class for a day as he observes their manner and practice. Hiring high-engagement teachers is essential to behavioural stability and student attentiveness at the school.

Another breakthrough moment at Auburn North was enlisting a Melbourne-based education consultant, Vic Zbar, to conduct a school review in 2015. He had written a 2012 paper on “10 things disadvantaged schools are doing to punch above their weight”. Zbar updated his recommendations in February 2019, setting out the preconditions for school success as follows:

- An orderly learning environment. Teachers cannot do a good job in a disorderly classroom as they are too busy battling misbehavior to implement effective learning.
- Raising expectations for behaviour and results. This is vital in countering the view, too often heard in disadvantaged schools that, “You need to understand the sort of students who come to this school and you can’t really expect more from these sorts of kids.” Zbar writes: “There is no research to suggest working-class students are any less capable than others, and what we expect is commonly what we then get.”
- Simplify the priorities for school improvement: “The enemy of sustained improvement in many schools is trying to do too much”. Emphasis in primary school must be given to literacy, numeracy, student wellbeing and the development of common teaching methods (that is, collective efficacy).

- School leadership is critical in managing these changes: in accurately diagnosing problems, advocating the right solutions and managing personal/professional relationships to get the school moving in one, coherent direction. “It’s not, as the saying goes, rocket science”, Zbar writes, “In fact, it’s far more difficult than that”.

At Auburn North, Zbar is described as “an outstanding influence on our school”. He is “a critical friend” who, in 2019, conducted a second review of the school. He also runs an internal leadership program for six days each year. This is part of a strong professional development focus, constantly upgrading staff skills.

Regular meetings are held for all teachers to participate in PD workshops, as well as analyse student learning data to set future goals. Part of the PD program is in-class. Auburn North has two Department-funded Instructional Leaders (IL) and one school-funded IL, in addition to a Deputy Principal fulfilling this role. The ILs are expert teachers, guiding classroom excellence and acting as mentors across the school.

In summary, the Auburn North message is powerful: With the right leadership, using evidence of what works in disadvantaged schooling, building a common culture around explicit, direct teaching and classroom behavioural standards, setting high expectations, sticking to the basics of learning, recruiting the right teachers and getting parents and the community involved – it is possible to overcome educational disadvantage and make every school in NSW a good school.

Chapter 2 Measurement gone missing

- 2.1 Often when poor school results are released publicly, education ‘experts’ and media commentators express surprise. The Committee found there is no need for surprise. Given the things that have gone wrong in the NSW schools system, our declining results are quite predictable.
- 2.2 Yes, there are wonderful people in the system: teachers dedicated to their jobs; students striving hard; parents loving and helping their children; and public servants desperately hoping for better results. Nothing in this report is a reflection on individual effort or intent.
- 2.3 Rather, the people in the system are being let down by the way in which the system is structured: the rules, regulations, incentives, measurement, accountability systems and data usage around them. In public administration, bad systems invariably produce bad results, overwhelming the best efforts of good people. This is the current state of NSW schooling.
- 2.4 From a parent’s point of view, the measurement and reporting systems in NSW government schools are perfunctory. The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) provides a bi-annual assessment of basic skills development, but sustained media/political attacks have eroded public confidence in it. The Government has joined with the Victorian and Queensland Governments in a NAPLAN review (even though the Federal Government supports the current system).²¹
- 2.5 School student reports provide less useful information than ever before, with the Gonski Review recommending the replacement of A-E grading with so called ‘progression points’.²² Fears about student ‘anxiety’ have led to some schools minimising the testing and assessment workload on students. This is reflected in the government’s 2018 submission to David Gonski’s education review “urg[ing] other states to consider limiting the number of school-based tests to reduce excessive student stress”²³
- 2.6 School plans (supposedly setting targets) and annual reports on school websites tend to be shallow and vague, rarely meeting the accountability requirements of the 2017 School Excellence Framework. Even though the Education Department holds detailed data on school value-adding (improvements in student performance measured over time), these comparisons are never published or communicated directly to parents. Subsection 18A(3) of the *Education Act 1990* “prohibits the public publishing or revealing of school results in a way that ranks or otherwise compares the results of particular schools.”²⁴

²¹ Media release, Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education, 'Ministers progress NAPLAN review', 12 September 2019, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/ministers-progress-naplan-review#>

²² Australian Government, *Through Growth to Achievement - Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*, March 2018, pp 30-31.

²³ Michael Koziol, 'Reduce HSC pressure in favour of a 'growth mindset', NSW tells David Gonski', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 2018, <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/reduce-hsc-pressure-in-favour-of-a-growth-mindset-nsw-tells-david-gonski-20180215-p4z0fo.html>

²⁴ *Questions and Answers Paper*, NSW Legislative Council, 23 September 2019, p 479.

- 2.7** In summary, it is not hard for under-performing schools in NSW to hide from public view. The schools funding system, supposedly needs-based in its orientation, even contains a monetary boost for schools that under-perform in NAPLAN (via the Low Level Adjustment for Disability) – a perverse incentive to do even worse. The net effect of weak measurement, accountability and incentive systems in NSW government schools has been declining results.
- 2.8** It need not be this way. We live in an era of data, when the application of measurement and transparency principles to school education should be commonplace. It's a logical way of improving school outcomes. Data collection and publication highlights the shortcomings of under-performing schools, putting pressure on their leadership to upgrade performance.
- 2.9** Management experts have long noted how 'what gets measured gets done'. In schools, what gets tested gets taught. Nothing beats measuring results and making those responsible for them publicly accountable. Measurement is a struggling school's best ally.
- 2.10** For this reason alone, the Committee welcomes the Government's shift in emphasising outcomes in school education. It's long overdue. The Committee has concluded, however, that the Government lacks ambition and adequate transparency in the way in which the new budgeting system is being introduced.
- 2.11** In fairness, it is a new policy direction affecting a large public sector, so further improvements in implementation can be made over time. This report makes recommendations for ways in which more effective Department of Education outcome-based budgeting can be introduced in the life of the current parliament (2019-23).
- 2.12** Despite the earlier rhetoric of Ministers, the Committee found that the implementation of the new system in the 2020-21 NSW Budget would be minimalist. Early in the Inquiry, an important distinction was made: The Government was not intending to implement 'outcome-based funding' (whereby a quantum of school funding would be tied to school outcomes) but rather, outcome-based budgeting.
- 2.13** This was not disclosed openly in the Government submission to the Inquiry (dated 2 September 2019) but rather, in an answer to a supplementary question from NSW Budget Estimates (received on 30 September 2019).²⁵ At Question 378, Labor's Mark Buttigieg asked, "How will the NSW Government's adoption of outcome-based funding change the way the Department operates and funds schools?"
- 2.14** The Government responded, "There will be no change to the way schools are funded and operated due to outcome based budgeting. The needs based Resource Allocation Model [RAM] which has been in place since 2013 will continue to determine full school funding."²⁶
- 2.15** At this point a contradiction was clear: the RAM funds inputs to schools (on the basis of assessed need) while outcome-based budgeting focuses on outputs. The reconciliation of this input/output duality will be a key challenge for the Government in future State budgets.

²⁵ Answers to supplementary questions, the Hon Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Early Childhood Learning and Education, 30 September 2019, p 96.

²⁶ Answers to supplementary questions, the Hon Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Early Childhood Learning and Education, 30 September 2019, p 96.

- 2.16** What is the nature of the Government’s proposed change? The NSW Treasury’s Sector Outcomes and Performance officer, Dr Vinita Deodhar, told the Committee that outcome-based budgeting moves away from “incremental annual budgeting” (last year’s allocation, adjusted for cost inflation and changes in service demand) by creating three new elements: planning for outcomes (goal setting), budgeting for outcomes (“by way of looking at evidence on performance”) and a new “performance reporting culture”.²⁷
- 2.17** She said, “[This] ... constitutes the entire performance accountability system that we are implementing as part of outcome budgeting”. To clarify, Dr Deodhar summarised the reform as “looking at evidence based performance. It is looking at how performance accountability cascades all the way from Government, Treasury, the cluster, the ministry right down to point-of-service delivery.”²⁸
- 2.18** Dr Deodhar explained how, “All of those aspects will be covered in a business plan” now under preparation, with Education as the first department to do so. Performance assessment is no longer solely between the Minister and her Department. Treasury has a new role as a third party to this process.²⁹
- 2.19** As Dr Deodhar told the Committee:
- ... with the Government Sector Finance Act which came about late last year [2018], performance is a key part of that. It provides for agencies to hold and share performance information for purposes of resource allocations, so that has changed.
- A fundamental shift that is happening is greater transparency and visibility. Treasury will now be looking at eight cluster outcome business plans which say these are the results for citizens, but how are you going to get there in quite a granular way. So we would not be looking at just checking performance after four years, have educational outcomes been met? We would be looking at lead indicators – milestones. If teacher quality is the best driver, what is required to shift that; if instructional leadership is a driver, what needs to happen in a quarter, in six months, to shift that, and having those conversations with the Department of Education.³⁰
- 2.20** The Committee welcomes Treasury’s involvement as an oversight and accountability agency. But if the new system is to have a major positive impact on school results, it must be more than minimalist. Given “there will be no change to the way schools are funded and operated”, the Committee concluded the new system (at this stage) is a relatively minor change introducing new budgetary information (planning for outcomes) with improved lines of accountability. Under the Government’s proposal, outcome-based budgeting is actually a modification of the traditional incremental annual budgeting method.

²⁷ Evidence, Dr Vinita Deodhar, Executive Director, Sector Outcomes and Performance, NSW Treasury, 8 October 2019, p 3.

²⁸ Evidence, Dr Vinita Deodhar, Executive Director, Sector Outcomes and Performance, NSW Treasury, 8 October 2019, p 3.

²⁹ Evidence, Dr Vinita Deodhar, Executive Director, Sector Outcomes and Performance, NSW Treasury, 8 October 2019, p 4.

³⁰ Evidence, Dr Vinita Deodhar, Executive Director, Sector Outcomes and Performance, NSW Treasury, 8 October 2019, p 21.

- 2.21** But even here, it does not cascade “right down to point-of-service delivery”, that is, to individual schools. While the Government is introducing new targets for school performance (in time for the 2021/22 NSW Budget), these will not be published school-by-school, meaning that accountability for performance will not occur school-by-school. Rather, the performance of each government school will be aggregated into a total Department-wide performance that then forms the basis of the ‘outcome-based budgeting’ relationship with Treasury.³¹
- 2.22** The Committee regards this as unacceptable. It believes that if the targets are not published, the Department would be the only point of accountability for each school, and there would be no other scrutiny of whether schools are achieving what they aspire to achieve.
- 2.23** The absence of publicly transparent school targets continues a debilitating pattern in NSW schools policy. It maintains the Department’s role as the central gatekeeper of the most important information available about NSW school performance, thereby minimising accountability. It locks parents and taxpayers out from knowing in detail whether or not their local public school is meeting government performance targets.
- 2.24** It also contradicts the Government’s own Policy and Guidelines Paper (Outcome Budgeting), developed by NSW Treasury (December 2018). This document states that the current budgeting process has a “provider perspective”, whereby “the total budget spend is disaggregated into agencies and explained in terms of outputs and services they will deliver”.³²
- 2.25** The “future process” is supposed to deliver a “citizen perspective”. This policy reads as follows: “Total budget spend will be disaggregated into outcomes and explained in terms of the outcome targets to be achieved...”³³ Yet, at this stage, the Government is not proposing any disaggregation. The Department will be the aggregated unit of performance accountability, not each school.
- 2.26** This is not a citizen’s perspective at all. Clearly, parents would see their child’s school as the point of service delivery. It’s the place that makes or breaks their child’s education. In public opinion, when people think of schooling they don’t think of the Education Department in Parramatta; they think of the primary and secondary schools where they live.
- 2.27** To overcome this accountability weakness, the Committee recommends:
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Recommendation 1

That the Government comply with its own Outcome Budgeting Policy and a true citizens’ perspective of the education system by ensuring the 2021/22 Budget features the publication of school-by-school performance targets and appropriate accountability measures for how well these targets have been met (for schools of sufficient size where outcomes can be reliably measured). That the Government also publish the Department of Education's business plan developed in collaboration with Treasury.

³¹ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 31.

³² NSW Treasury, *Policy and Guidelines Paper, Outcome Budgeting*, December 2018, p 2.

³³ NSW Treasury, *Policy and Guidelines Paper, Outcome Budgeting*, December 2018, p 2.

Recommendation 2

That the Government, during the course of 2020, develop a single publication point where parents and citizens can access information about the new targets and performance data for their local school. Logically, this should be the My School website, which currently publishes National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results and background information about schools.

Measuring up

- 2.28** In principle, the Committee strongly supports the creation of a new, rigorous set of school performance targets. NESA's school registration requirements and the Department's 2017 School Excellence Framework were supposed to facilitate targets and performance accountability, school-by-school, but this appears not to have happened. Under the banner of 'outcome-based budgeting', a third attempt is being made, albeit with inadequate transparency.
- 2.29** The Department's Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, Murat Dizdar, told the Committee:
- ...this is not new work. Schools have always had targets and aspirations in their school improvement plans. What is new here is the system doing the heavy lifting, not leaving that to chance on the ground, [we are] doing all the data analysis and then sitting down with the school leadership showing [them] what that looks like and agreeing on what that might look like.³⁴
- 2.30** Mr Dizdar insisted there was no need for publication of the new targets as "[t]hey actually sit in current school plans [on school websites]; it is just that we intend to be more systematic around that by not allowing schools just to pick and choose what those targets might be..."³⁵
- 2.31** The Committee believes this to be incorrect. One can readily find published school plans in NSW with no numerical targets at all. Possible improvements are couched in the most general 'motherhood' terms, such as, "Implementing a whole school approach to support students to develop literacy and numeracy skills" or "Increased demonstration of students taking greater responsibility for their own learning, goal setting and growth mindset."
- 2.32** In the school plan just quoted, the only numerals used are for school year and calendar dates. There are no detailed performance targets. Once school plans avoid the publication of numerical targets, school annual reports (which are supposed to be the ultimate public accountability mechanism) have nothing to be accountable about. It's a case of 'no targets, nothing to report'.
- 2.33** Thus school annual reports also become 'motherhood' documents, giving parents no more information than the data they can already access on the My School site (NAPLAN results). There is considerable variability in the quality of government school annual reports. Some have no new information, which reduces accountability. At the other end of the scale, best practice

³⁴ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 6.

³⁵ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 31.

schools visited by the Committee are more likely to report on progress with their internal school targets and results (such as Progressive Achievement Test assessments). As an example, the Committee refers readers to the 2018 Annual Report of Marsden Road Public School.³⁶

- 2.34** In other cases, schools set goals for learning programs that cannot be measured. To give one example from a 2018-20 (Primary) School Plan: “With a focus on a growth mindset and by encouraging all learners to take risks, our students will become creative and critical thinkers, self-directed learners, collaborators and curious researchers. They will develop positive relationships and connections with others, nurture a positive self-concept and work towards developing high levels of emotional intelligence.”
- 2.35** At this school, there are no numerical targets because there is no way of measuring what the school is trying to achieve. Hence the school annual report has no statistics, other than for attendance rates and NAPLAN. Parents are left guessing as to how their children are progressing (emotionally and curiously) at school. Not only is the current system of school plans and reports based a on self-assessment of ‘results’ (with no independent form of scrutiny), it also allows schools to set their own goals, to self-regulate their entire purpose.
- 2.36** Local Directors of Educational Leadership (DELs) are supposed to monitor the quality and contents of school plans/reports. But invariably, the DELs are former principals themselves – and, in some cases, appear to be presiding over number-free/target-free school planning and reporting.
- 2.37** The net result is a striking lack of quality control over school plans and annual reports. Page 6 of the School Excellence Framework (July 2017) issued to schools by the Education Department requires schools to meet a minimum Whole School Reporting Standard whereby, “The school analyses internal and external assessment data to monitor and report on student and school performance”. Clearly, some schools have ignored this and no higher authority (either DELs or the Department) has ensured compliance. In schools' culture and practice, there appear to be two conflicting forces at work: the freedom schools have been given to be masters of their own destiny under the Local Schools, Local Decisions (LSLD) policy; and attempts to put boundaries around schools with centrally-developed policies such as the School Excellence Framework. This has led to confusion and wide variability in school standards and outcomes. It’s possible that LSLD is being used to ignore Departmental directives.
- 2.38** Mr Dizdar said the development of school-by-school targets should be complete by the end of Term One, 2020.³⁷ He described the early piloting of the new system as rigorous and encouraging: “We are quite excited by this in terms of having a great line of sight to how schools are going to be performing...”³⁸ The Committee believes parents, citizens and taxpayers should also have this line of sight for government schools.
- 2.39** What will the new performance targets look like and what data will be used to measure them? In its submission to the Inquiry, the Government explained:

³⁶ *Marsden Road Public School Annual Report 2018* https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/doe-nsw-schools/annual-report/2018/4278/2018_Marsden_Road_Public_School_Annual_Report.pdf

³⁷ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, pp 5-6.

³⁸ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 31.

The newly announced NSW Premier's Priorities 2019-2023 for education are to increase the proportion of public school students in the top two NAPLAN bands (or equivalent) for literacy and numeracy by 15 per cent by 2023, including through a state-wide roll-out of Bump It Up; and to increase the proportion of Aboriginal students attaining Year 12 by 50 per cent by 2023, while maintaining their cultural identity.

In addition, the Department will target improvement in areas including:

1. Students reporting a sense of belonging, expectations for success and advocacy at school
2. Students attending school at least 90 per cent of the time
3. Students achieving in reading and numeracy (in addition to the Premier's Priority target for increasing the number of students in the top two NAPLAN bands, targets for students achieving expected growth in reading and numeracy and students above the national minimum standard)
4. Students at or above the proficient standards in international assessments
5. Students continuing to Year 12, and with HSC results in the top two achievement bands
6. School leavers participating in education and work.³⁹

2.40 The Department described this as part of a "reform journey".⁴⁰ At Committee hearings, however, it became clear the journey is somewhat truncated. In the 2020/21 State Budget (to be delivered in June) the only performance targets adopted as part of the new outcome-based budgeting will be the two Premier's Priorities.

2.41 That is, for non-Indigenous students in struggling schools with no hope of reaching the top two NAPLAN bands, the Education Department's 2020/21 outcome-based budgeting is meaningless. There is nothing in it for them. They have been left out of the process.

2.42 The Committee objects strongly to this omission and lack of ambition. We believe the Government should live up to its rhetoric about 'inclusion' and 'equity' in education by ensuring its 2020/21 performance targets cover all schools and all students. In the next section of the report, a recommendation is made to overcome this problem through the use of value-added (or student growth) data across the system.

2.43 Given that the Premier's Priorities were happening anyway, outcome-based budgeting in NSW education is starting on the smallest possible scale. For 2020/21, it's no more than a different accounting relationship between Treasury and the Department of Education. It needs to broaden its remit to have any lasting impact on the quality of the State's government schools. In the out-years, it needs to be something more substantial than an extended list of Premier's Priorities.

2.44 Further into the Inquiry, the Department provided additional detail about its in-house school targets. At the Committee hearing on 8 October, Mr Dizdar said the targets would be developed in five areas:

- Literacy (measured primarily by NAPLAN)
- Numeracy (measured primarily by NAPLAN)
- School attendance rates

³⁹ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 4.

⁴⁰ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 4.

- Student wellbeing (measured primarily by the ‘Tell Them From Me’ survey of parents and students in Year 4 and above)
- Equity (focusing on Aboriginal student outcomes, rural and remote schooling and low SES schools).⁴¹

2.45 The Committee was disappointed that, compared to the Government submission five weeks earlier, three important performance targets had dropped off the list, namely:

- Students at or above the proficient standards in international assessments;
- Students continuing to Year 12, and with HSC results in the top two achievement bands; and
- School leavers participating in education and work.

2.46 Given the disappointing PISA results released at the end of 2019, it might be inconvenient for the Government to deal with proficiency standards in international assessments, but this is essential. In a competitive global economy where skills and innovation are crucial, the NSW schools system needs to be benchmarked against advanced systems overseas. We should aim for international best practice.

2.47 The NAPLAN National Minimum Standard (NMS) is set much lower than international benchmarks such as PISA. Therefore the NAPLAN NMS gives a false (overly positive) impression of literacy and numeracy standards. For example, 94 percent of NSW Year 9 students were above the NMS in NAPLAN reading in 2018, but only 56 percent achieved the National Proficient Standard in PISA reading in 2018. International benchmarking is a relevant, necessary process in which NSW schools should be constantly engaged.

2.48 So too, Year 12 HSC results and targets should be publicly available, school by school, always striving to lift the qualifications of the leaving student cohort. The Government has a habit, both in NAPLAN and HSC assessment, of focusing on the top two bands. This leaves out many students, only giving an impression of achievement among the best students.

2.49 Yet in terms of equity, the bottom bands are more significant: students with substandard skills, most likely consigned to a life of struggle. The averaging of results (NAPLAN and HSC) gives a more representative picture of a school’s performance. Targets should be framed around improvements over time: schools that add maximum value to the results of the entire student population.

2.50 Another vital performance measure is in the immediate post-Year 12 years. Schools need to maximise the number of leaving students going into work and further education and training and minimise the number on welfare.

2.51 The Committee discussed this objective at length with departmental representatives, exploring the merits of various measurement options: survey work, a student census, the proposed National Student Identifier and accessing Federal Government tax and welfare data. In theory,

⁴¹ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 5.

it shouldn't be hard to track outcomes 12 or 24 months after students finish Year 12, but the NSW Education Department is yet to do so.⁴²

2.52 The Committee also received an informative submission from the NSW Business Chamber. It presented data showing that more than 50 per cent of employers are dissatisfied with the way in which the education system is preparing young people for work. It lamented how:

NSW has seen a decline in the number of government funded vocational education and training (VET) student enrolments, from around 480,000 in 2003 to 390,000 in 2017. Further, there were only 2,500 school-based apprenticeships and trainees in NSW in 2017 compared to 11,300 in Queensland.⁴³

2.53 The NSW Business Chamber suggested that outcome-based funding “presented an opportunity to target alternative outcomes ... which may be of benefit to both student and the broader community”. For example:

- Partnerships between schools and employers
- Students (Year 9 and above) who have received industry-specific careers advice
- School-based apprenticeships and traineeships successfully completed
- VET units completed in each school, focused on units in skills shortage areas.⁴⁴

2.54 According to the Chamber:

this funding could be used to increase teacher numbers to support delivery of VET in schools or to provide wraparound services that support students to complete their schooling. Continued funding would be determined by the proportion of students achieving these outcomes.⁴⁵

2.55 The Chamber also advocated for a NSW post-school survey tool, similar to the Victorian Government's ‘On Track’ survey of school leavers or the Queensland Government's ‘Next Step’ survey.⁴⁶

2.56 In response to these measurement issues, the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 3

That in the development of the new school performance targets, the Government include data from international assessments such as PISA, with comparisons against other States and Territories, as well as other nations. New South Wales should settle for nothing less than international best practice.

⁴² Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, pp 6 and 9; Evidence, Ms Liana Downey, Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery, New South Wales Department of Education, 8 October 2019, pp 8-9.

⁴³ Submission 6, NSW Business Chamber, p 3.

⁴⁴ Submission 6, NSW Business Chamber, p 5.

⁴⁵ Submission 6, NSW Business Chamber, p 5.

⁴⁶ Submission 6, NSW Business Chamber, p 5.

Recommendation 4

That the Government include Year 12 indicators (retention rates and Higher School Certificate performance) in its targets for high schools. That these be based on averaged school results (the best indicator of HSC achievement) ahead of various band level targets. That NAPLAN measures/targets also give priority to averaged results, ahead of band level data.

Recommendation 5

That the Government's high school targets include post-secondary outcomes in work, further education, training and welfare; and the Minister for Education commission the Centre for Education Statistics Evaluation (CESE) to develop a post-Year 12 tracking tool as soon as possible.

Recommendation 6

That the Government work with the NSW Business Chamber and other industry groups, and vocational education and training experts, including the TAFE sector, to develop detailed performance measures for vocational education and training in schools, including a survey measure of business satisfaction with the NSW education system. That the Government then use this data as the basis of a concerted effort to improve service provision and outcomes in the State's school and vocational education systems.

Recommendation 7

That the Government ensure the school targets err on the side of ambition. Across the system, the goal must be to aggressively lift NSW's education performance and rankings. That an exception be made for schools and communities handicapped by unforeseen events, such as drought and bushfires. (One would expect, for instance, school attendance rates in these districts to be lower until such time as the natural disasters pass.)

Gold standard measurement

- 2.57** The Committee took a particular interest in the Bump It Up program, not just in assessing its outcomes, but for what it says about the reform process leading to student improvement. Bump It Up started as a pilot program in 137 public schools in 2016 to help the system reach its Premier's Priority targets in literacy and numeracy (at that time, an 8 per cent increase in the proportion of students in the top two NAPLAN bands). Targets were set for each school to be realised by 2019.⁴⁷
- 2.58** Based on 2019 results, 45 Bump It Up schools (33 percent) have met their targets. In total, 92 schools (67 percent) have improved by at least two percent in the proportion of students in the top two literacy and numeracy bands from base years 2014/2015.⁴⁸ In their internal school testing, schools were encouraged to pre- and post-test their students, using a standardised

⁴⁷ Answers to questions on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 4.

⁴⁸ Answers to questions on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 4.

Progressive Achievement Test (PAT).⁴⁹ Bump It Up is now being rolled out to all NSW government schools.⁵⁰

2.59 In evidence, Mr Dizdar explained:

At the time we did internal analysis that identified there were 137 schools in the system that had a lot of students in the middle bands—a large number of students in the middle bands in reading and numeracy. We went to those schools and said, “You have got significant uplift potential. Do you realise what your data looks like? You have got some students here who may not be hitting where they could hit. They might be cruising through school. They could be quiet and lost in the context. Can you put faces to the data for these students?”⁵¹

2.60 He described this as “a cultural shift in 2016”, whereby:

This shifted the dial to say, “Are you aware of students who could be cruising along here, who go through schooling and do not get to their maximum potential?” We really pushed our leaders to thinking about moving all kids and not missing those who have great potential to move into the upper band. So, from our perspective, it is a really great outcome that we have stayed the course with that Premier's priority...⁵²

2.61 There was no extra funding for Bump It Up, or transformation of classroom practices. It was simply a “target-setting process” whereby schools were told to have “a good concentrated look at data [and try to improve]”.⁵³ It seems the “cultural shift” was for schools to do what parents and taxpayers would ordinarily be expecting them to do.

2.62 For the Committee, these lessons were confirmation of the importance of scrutiny, pressure and accountability in the schools system. It is possible to improve results by saying to schools: ‘We are monitoring you, we are pushing you, we are measuring what you do and holding you accountable for it’. As ever, what gets measured gets done.

2.63 If Bump It Up can lift the results of two-thirds of its schools with the bare basics of data assessment and pressure, imagine what can be achieved with a detailed, sophisticated program of evidence-based pedagogy, measurement and continuous improvement. The Committee has seen what’s possible by visiting best practice schools (see below). We are convinced, with the right policies and systems in place, rapid gains in NSW school outcomes are achievable.

⁴⁹ Evidence, Ms Georgina Harrisson, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 34.

⁵⁰ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 33.

⁵¹ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 33.

⁵² Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 33.

⁵³ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 34.

Best Practice School Case Study: Balgowlah Boys High, Manly⁵⁴

The Committee was privileged to visit the Balgowlah Boys Campus of the Northern Beaches Secondary College and witness its teaching excellence. Through the adoption of evidence-based, proven teaching methods, the school has achieved a sharp rise in its NAPLAN results.

The Committee sat in on a senior English class led by a truly remarkable and effective teacher. He engaged and inspired his students in the writing of essays, analysing a well-known Australian poet. He was practising direct instruction—a teacher who was teaching—explaining to his students what needed to be done and drawing out of them a rich interchange of ideas, concepts, knowledge and inspiration.

He stood at the front of the class and had complete command of the students in front of him. Every eye was set on him, his instruction and his whiteboard. It was fast moving, gripping and incredibly impressive teaching. It was a classroom alive with the absorption of knowledge. Balgowlah Boys is an evidence-based high school determined to implement teaching methods that have been studied extensively and are proven to work.

Led by its English faculty, it engages in direct instruction and rejects constructivist approaches to teaching (in which knowledge and history are said to be socially constructed). It also rejects so-called inquiry-based learning, where teachers no longer explicitly teach, but act as so-called facilitators, guiding groups of students who are expected to be self-starters, who find their own information.

Balgowlah Boys has achieved an outstanding result in HSC Advanced English, a standout achievement in the entire NSW education system. It has ranked fourth, behind James Ruse Agricultural High School, Kincoppal and Redham House. This is a remarkable achievement for a regular (non-selective) NSW government high school (with 1066 students). It is ahead of every NSW selective school, barring James Ruse, and many non-government schools where parents are paying tens of thousands of dollars a year in tuition fees.

For the past three years, Balgowlah has been in the top 10 schools for overall HSC English results. There have also been an increased number of students in the top two bands for literacy and numeracy. Its NAPLAN results have spiked upwards, as sharply as any school could.

The turn-around has been dramatic. Twenty years ago, it had been foreshadowed the school would close at the end of 2002, when it was stuck near the bottom of HSC league tables. The English faculty started to make progress with its students through the adoption of direct instruction and, over time, the rest of the school has followed suit.

As Hattie and other serious researchers have found, direct instruction works. It has a high positive impact on student results. Why did schools ever moved away from it, replacing classroom evidence with junk social theories about learning?

Balgowlah has high expectations for its students, with a clear set of expected behaviours, under the school motto 'Listen, Follow Instructions, Work'. It also values professional development in practical settings. HSC marking by teachers, for instance, is seen as an excellent PD process, making teachers aware of the expectations on students.

Teachers are also required to undertake exam tasks themselves, such as writing a Band 6 HSC essay in 40 minutes. This helps them better understand what is required of students and how to teach, clearly

⁵⁴ See Tabled document, Report - Portfolio Committee No. 3's site visits to schools across Sydney, 25 and 29 October 2019, pp 6-7.

and methodically, essay writing skills. Balgowlah does well in exams because it actually prepares its students for what's involved. Incredibly, at some schools, this common sense approach to teaching has become a novelty.

The school also offers a range of vocational subjects, including hospitality, computing and carpentry. Balgowlah is keen to offer more options but often, parental expectations are for a university education for their children, rather than trades. Employers wanting to take on apprentices regularly contact the Principal but he is unable to find students to take up the opportunities.

- 2.64** The starting points are measurement and accountability. At the moment, the Department has adopted a policy of “targets without force” – a description used by the Hon. Scott Farlow at Committee hearings.⁵⁵ The new school-by-school targets lack the force of publication and school-by-school accountability. They also lack a clear public plan for intervening and fixing schools that consistently under-achieve on their targets.
- 2.65** This is why outcome-based budgeting in education needs to go further. Some schools have said they want a ‘gold standard’ measure of outcomes across the system: a single reliable indicator of how well students are performing that can be used for comparative purposes (across schools).⁵⁶
- 2.66** At the moment, there is no shortage of data available to schools internally. In fact, school leaders can feel overwhelmed by the array of material. This is why a ‘gold standard’ measure can assist: to provide clarity and purpose to schools in the core priority of their work.
- 2.67** In answer to a question taken on notice (No. 7) from the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, the Department explained the range of information available to schools in the ‘Scout’ IT system:
- CESE maintains the Scout data platform which enables both the department and schools to track and monitor their performance. The information available in Scout covers asset planning dashboards, Best Start Y7, corporate finance, community profiles, enrolments, school finance, school human resources, HSC, NAPLAN (DoE & non-DoE), primary transition, primary and secondary enrolment rates, demographic data, suspension data, Tell Them From Me reports and Validation of Assessment for Learning and Individual Development (VALID).⁵⁷
- 2.68** The Committee supports the idea of a ‘gold standard’ measure, a single, publicly available reference point for how schools are performing. Based on the Bump It Up experience, accountability of this kind would substantially lift school results across the system.
- 2.69** The measure, however, needs to be fair and reliable, and also immune from media sensationalism. No one wants a replay of the infamous Daily Telegraph front page years ago, stigmatising a particular school on the basis of its (dismal) raw results. Something more sophisticated is needed.
- 2.70** We know James Ruse will always easily beat a high school in a public housing estate. Raw results tell us nothing about a school’s starting point: the learning advantages and disadvantages of its

⁵⁵ Transcript, the Hon Scott Farlow MLC, 8 October 2019, p 20.

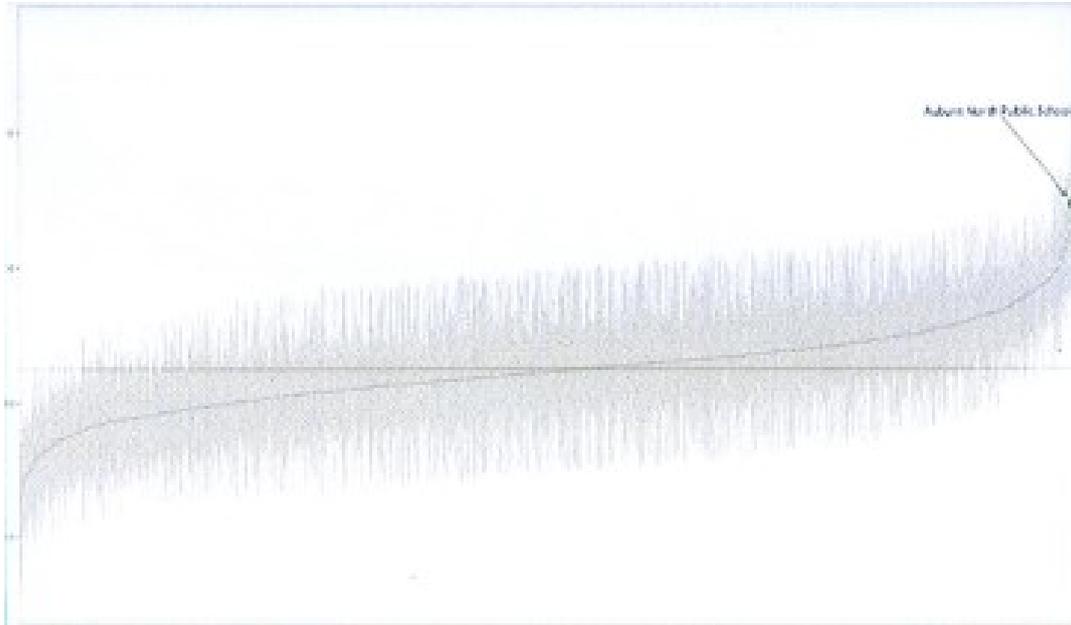
⁵⁶ ‘Gold standard’ reference, from the Chair’s visit to St Paul’s Catholic Primary School in Camden, see Correspondence from the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 4 October 2019.

⁵⁷ Answers to questions on notice, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 8.

student population before they even come to the school. This is why value-added or student-growth data is far more valuable. It discloses how school-time impacts on the learning progress of students.

- 2.71** Each year, as students get older and access more information, all schools and (usually) all classes advance their academic outcomes. The key question is: By how much? What value has been added to a student's results? And in aggregate, how do a school's results compare longitudinally and against others in the system?
- 2.72** In its school visits, the Committee was shown a data presentation that summarised comparative school performance in a single format. It was a graph plotting value-added results (based on NAPLAN) for every primary school in the State. This is the kind of calculation upon which the new 'gold standard' data can be based.

Figure 1 Comparison of school performance regarding 2018 value add results based on NAPLAN 3-5, Auburn North Public School⁵⁸



2.73 When asked about this, the Department explained that CESE calculates a range of school-by-school results as part of the Scout system, such that:

Valued-added measures are available to assess individual schools' relative contribution to student progress in literacy and numeracy for the following cohorts:

- Kindergarten Best Start assessment to Year 3 NAPLAN (VA K-3)
- Year 3 to Year 5 NAPLAN (VA 3-5)
- Year 5 to Year 7 NAPLAN (VA 5-7)
- Year 7 to Year 9 NAPLAN (VA 7-9)

⁵⁸ Tabled document, Auburn North Public School presentation to committee, 25 October 2019. In correspondence to the committee, dated 23 January 2020, the Department of Education advised that it was the Department's preference to not publish the graph as it was not easily understood without copious explanatory notes and caveats. The Department referred the following reference for the committee's consideration: 'On measures of student progress in NAPLAN testing, Auburn North Public School achieves significantly greater progress for students from Year 3 to Year 5 across reading and numeracy, than similar schools with similar students'.

In answers to supplementary questions, dated 5 November 2019, the Department of Education defended CESE's methodology for calculating value-added measures, stating 'Value-added measures are available to assess individual schools' relative contribution to student progress in literacy and numeracy for the following cohorts, including Kindergarten Best Start assessment to Year 3 NAPLAN (VA K-3)'. The CESE methodology for measuring value-added using NAPLAN results is well-established in NSW. It sits on the Scout dashboard of schools and has been seen by Committee members on several occasions. It is a common reference point for best practice schools in highlighting the quality of their work. The My School website also has value added NAPLAN data for individual schools. The Committee sees no problem in publishing the graph as a starting point in understanding the potential of this data as a single 'gold standard' reference point for achievement and accountability among NSW schools.

- Year 9 NAPLAN to Year 12 HSC (VA 9-12).⁵⁹

2.74 CESE has had value-added data for at least five years. It describes the measures as:

...the contribution that a school makes to student learning, over and above the contribution made by the average school. Value-added measures examine student progress over a specific time period, and adjust for factors that are outside the control of schools (such as students' socio-economic status). This provides a fair and accurate indication of the effectiveness of schools.⁶⁰

2.75 Other factors said to be “outside the control of schools” include student Aboriginal status, co-educational/single-sex student entry, selective/comprehensive entry, Opportunity Class (OC) student enrolment and gender disparities (stronger Year 9-12 female performance).⁶¹ As these factors have been identified as consistently altering school results, CESE has removed them from its value-added calculations. They have been factored out.

2.76 The Committee has reservations about this approach. By its nature, value-added data should be a pure measure of school performance, reflecting student growth. The factors identified by CESE as “outside the control of schools” are just as evident in the base year of measurement as they are in the final (comparative) year of measurement. A selective school, for instance, will always start with a stronger base result than a comprehensive school, but in value-added terms, this is irrelevant. It is possible for James Ruse to be the weakest value-added school in the state.

2.77 The real comparison lies in the value the respective schools have added to student results over the measurement period. If the comprehensive school is adding 20 per cent per annum (off a lower base) and the selective school 10 per cent, then the comprehensive school is the stronger performer. The objective should be to take a stable student population (excluding those who have left and joined the school during the measurement period) and aggregate the value added to their education – that is, a longitudinal measure of school improvement.

2.78 In any case, CESE has excluded from its methodology a major factor outside the control of schools: the Resource Allocation Model of needs-based funding. These big extra amounts of money for disadvantaged education are designed specifically to ensure struggling schools can overcome the external factors dragging down their results. That's the whole point of the funding model.

2.79 In effect, CESE has engaged in the equivalent of double counting: factoring out the RAM resources for disadvantaged schools, while factoring in the reasons the extra resources were allocated in the first place. It has set up an excuse for poor value-added results among disadvantaged schools: that the school couldn't do much to progress its students because of their background; that, compared to other student populations, classroom learning is futile for these sorts of people.

⁵⁹ Answers to supplementary questions, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 9.

⁶⁰ NSW Department of Education and Communities, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, *Using value-added measures to identify school contributions to student learning*, December 2014, p 1, https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/images/stories/PDF/learning_curve_6_ValueAdded_20141128.pdf.

⁶¹ NSW Department of Education and Communities, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, *Using value-added measures to identify school contributions to student learning*, December 2014, p 4, https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/images/stories/PDF/learning_curve_6_ValueAdded_20141128.pdf.

- 2.80** The Committee believes no such excuse should exist. Disadvantaged schools must have high expectations, resisting the idea that the students themselves are the problem. There is no evidence to say that students from disadvantaged households are less intelligent or inherently learn at a slower rate than other students. As some Best Practice Schools have shown, their results can be as impressive as any other student cohort.
- 2.81** Stripped down, the CESE methodology tells us something disturbing about NSW public school results. Despite the much-fabled needs-based funding system, high-SES schools start ahead of the pack and then, in adding value to students' results, they move further ahead over time. The Education Department has said, "our research consistently shows that 70 percent of the variance in school performance is explainable by differences in school SES."⁶²
- 2.82** The system lives by this fatalism. In a best practice education system, upward mobility would be equally available for all students, no matter their starting point in life, no matter their SES background. The NSW response is to factor SES out of value-added calculations, to give the appearance of equal educational opportunity.
- 2.83** Schools policy should always avoid this form of fatalism. Needs-based school funding, best practice teaching, rigorous data measurement and accountability should be used to break the poverty cycle in struggling communities. Not only is upward mobility possible, it should be expected. Value-added measurement, properly understood and practiced, is the best way of assessing these schools, as it is for every other school.
- 2.84** In publishing this material, the Government also needs to address a related issue. Each year, after the release of NSW HSC results, newspapers and private websites produce NSW school league-table rankings (either partly or wholly), seemingly in breach of Section 18A(3) of the Education Act 1990. The Committee believes the Government should review this matter, either making 18A(3) enforceable or recognising that media outlets have found ways to circumvent it, so that the Section has no practical effect. A law that is easily avoided is not much of a law.
- 2.85** Therefore the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 8

That the Government amend subsection 18A(3) of the Education Act 1990 to allow the publication of comparative school results using CESE/Scout value-added data.

Recommendation 9

That the Government review the effectiveness of 18A(3) of the Education Act 1990.

Recommendation 10

That the Government develop a 'gold standard' measure of school performance based on value-added/student-growth principles as part of the implementation of outcome-based budgeting. That this measure be the primary focus for ambitious improvement targets and accountability in the schools system (including identification of where schools sit as a percentile of primary/secondary school cohorts).

⁶² Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 31.

Recommendation 11

That the Government require CESE to revise its value-added/student-growth methodology to develop a 'pure' measure, as outlined in the report. That the value-added methodology also be broadened into:

- learning domains beyond NAPLAN literacy and numeracy testing; and
 - regular school use of standardised Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) testing and publication of comparative data.
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Chapter 3 School funding incentives

- 3.1** A basic management principle is to offer financial incentives for improved outcomes. This can change behaviour and refocus organisational purpose in a positive way. While a proven private sector technique, financial incentives remain contentious in the public sector, especially in education. One point, however, should be beyond dispute: the schools system should not feature perverse financial incentives. That is, funding programs that give schools more recurrent resources as a direct reward for declining results.
- 3.2** On this issue, the Committee notes the submission of the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) citing academic research critical of input-based funding systems for schools. These are said to “misalign incentives, reward sub-par performance and diminish the imperative for significant and sustained educational outcomes.” The CIS referred to a study which concluded that:
- 'By concentrating on inputs and ignoring the incentives within schools, the resources have yielded little in the way of general improvement in student achievement'. In Australia – and NSW specifically – funding has perpetually increased over time, with little return observed in improved educational outcomes.⁶³
- 3.3** In a Commonwealth technical paper, schools receiving funding equivalent to an adequate resource standard were found to be still experiencing declining results. As the CIS points out, “having enough money resulted in lower achievement – how money is spent is what matters.” The Committee further notes the CIS critique of input-based funding as:
- Flawed as a means for maximising educational outcomes since it is based on who comes to a school rather than what happens at school. Funding 'should be based upon academic growth and not just whether a student enrolls and sits at a desk'. Too often, confronted with just about any educational policy challenge, 'the remedy of choice is to provide more money but to leave the existing system for spending it in place'.⁶⁴
- 3.4** The Committee believes no school should be worse off financially because of the introduction of outcome-based budgeting. We support the Government’s intention in this regard.
- 3.5** The Committee also sees a role for financial incentives, rewarding schools that achieve outcomes above expectations. The current model of growing, guaranteed input-based school funding has produced elements of complacency in the system. It is possible for school leaders to think: ‘no matter what we do here, no matter how we perform this year, we will still get the same funds (plus growth) next year’.
- 3.6** Financial incentives can break this lacklustre ethos and encourage schools to strive for excellence in everything they do. Incentives should be introduced in a targeted way as a by-product of outcome-based budgeting. However, an obvious objection might be raised: the

⁶³ Submission 10, The Centre for Independent Studies, p 2, quoting Hanushek, E. (2003). The Failure of Input-Based Schooling Policies, *Economic Journal*, 113(485), pp. F64-F98.

⁶⁴ Submission 10, The Centre for Independent Studies, p 2 quoting Snyder, R. (2011). A Special message to the Michigan Legislature from Governor Rick Snyder: Education Reform, State of Michigan Executive Office, https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/SpecialMessageonEducationReform_351586_7.pdf and Hanushek, E. (2009). Performance-based funding, *Defining Ideas*, June 9 2019, Hoover Institution.

Government has said there will be no change to the way in which schools are funded. In fact, during the Inquiry it became clear this is not the case.

- 3.7** In Chapter 6(3) section entitled ‘Hope Over Evidence’, the Committee reports on a change in school funding due to outcome-based budgeting. Schools that are subject to the Tailored Support program will receive additional resources to lift their performance. Thus it is available to the Education Minister to make other changes.
- 3.8** The Committee advocates two incentive-based initiatives. The first is performance-based contracts for school principals (as recommended in Chapter 5 section entitled ‘Best Practice Schools’). The second is reform of Low-Level Adjustment for Disability (LLAD) funding, a program worth \$288 million per annum. It provides all mainstream NSW public schools with access to a specialist teacher and flexible funding for student disability.⁶⁵
- 3.9** LLAD is part of the Resource Allocation Model (RAM), which provides ‘needs-based funding’ for NSW public schools. It is one of the special resource loadings, along with socio-economic background, Indigenous students, English language proficiency, refugee students (enrolled for less than three years) and moderate-to-high-level disability.⁶⁶
- 3.10** The Government submission to the Inquiry states: “The RAM, introduced in 2014, has been developed to ensure a fair, efficient and transparent allocation of the state public education budget.” The funding model is said to reflect the Gonski Review emphasis “on the need for an equitable school funding system: one that ensures that differences in educational outcomes are not the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions”.⁶⁷
- 3.11** Unlike the other disability loading (high-to-moderate), the LLAD does not actually involve an assessment of student disability. As the Education Department answered in response to Supplementary Question No. 10:
- The Low Level Adjustment for Disability equity loading allocation is based on the school’s enrolments and student need at the school level. It does not identify individual students. Through this loading schools are able to support students with a disability and additional learning needs without the requirement of a diagnosis or confirmation of disability.⁶⁸
- 3.12** The Committee believes it is disrespectful to students with actual assessed disabilities to have a disability funding category determined in this fashion.
- 3.13** In answer to Supplementary Question No. 12, the Department gave more information as to how LLAD funding for “additional learning needs” is calculated. This is “determined using literacy and numeracy data from NAPLAN to create a Student Learning Need Index (SLNI). A school’s SLNI is a needs based index drawn from three years of longitudinal NAPLAN data.”⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 33.

⁶⁶ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 14.

⁶⁷ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 14, quoting https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/School_Funding/School_Funding/Report/a03.

⁶⁸ Answers to supplementary questions, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 14.

⁶⁹ Answers to supplementary questions, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 17.

Schools receive a boost to their SLNI for every student placed in the bottom 10 percent of NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results.

- 3.14** That is, the worse a school performs in NAPLAN, the more LLAD funding it receives – a perverse incentive. Instead of labeling the program for what it is (financial support and encouragement for poor NAPLAN results), LLAD has been dressed up as disability support. It carries the clear inference that students doing poorly at NAPLAN are, in fact, intellectually disabled.
- 3.15** Yet poor NAPLAN performance may be due to poor school leadership, poor teaching or the wrong teaching programs in the classroom. It doesn't automatically mean the children are disabled. Instead of saying the money is for failing schools, the Department has misused the term 'disabled' and tried to push the blame onto the students – in effect, a slur against their intelligence.
- 3.16** Whether by accident or intent, the LLAD serves to protect the performance of the people running schools. They are allowed to hide behind the misnomer of 'student disability' when, in reality, they are running schools with failing NAPLAN results – and get more money the more they fail.
- 3.17** While the Committee acknowledges that school performance is made up of many inter-related factors, funding incentives/disincentives clearly play some role. Under the current LLAD it is possible for school leaders to think: 'It's not so bad that our NAPLAN results have gone down, as at least the school receives more funding for these low-achievement kids classified as intellectually disabled'. This is not a healthy way to run schools. It highlights the problem with input-based funding and its disconnection from outcomes. As the CIS evidence has highlighted, if the introduction of outcome-based funding in NSW is to have beneficial results, it must encourage positive behavioural change where schools are recognised and rewarded for excellence, not given ever-increasing funding allocations for failure.
- 3.18** The Committee supports the principle of needs-based funding but also believes it must be linked to outcomes. In particular, it should avoid perverse financial incentives. The LLAD actually takes an undesirable outcome (declining NAPLAN results) and gives schools more money for this result (dressed up as some kind of student disability). In any area of public administration, the best way of meeting community needs is through improved outcomes. Schools and the RAM are no exception. A core purpose of schools policy should be to ensure disadvantages schools and students do not stay disadvantaged forever, that public policy creates upward social mobility. Unfortunately, the LLAD in its current form is not doing this.
- 3.19** The Committee believes this perverse incentive should be removed from the system. Disadvantaged schools should still be eligible for resources from the \$288 million envelope, but on the basis of improved NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results. The Committee notes that the Department is "currently reviewing the methodology for the Low Level Adjustment for Disability loading for the 2021 school year..."⁷⁰
- 3.20** We believe the review should totally rework the program. It should become part of a 'bonus funding' policy. That is, a section of Gonski growth money would be used to reward struggling schools that adopt best practice methods and achieve better outcomes for students in the

⁷⁰ Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2020, p 34.

bottom NAPLAN bands. That's a genuine equity initiative. It would help these schools progress further, in lifting up their weakest students, as well as offering an incentive for other schools to do the same.

3.21 Accordingly, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 12

That the Government ensure no NSW school is worse off financially (its annual funding reduced) due to the introduction of outcome-based budgeting.

Recommendation 13

That the Government acknowledge that financial incentives have an important role to play in lifting school performance; and that under the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) funding principles, the best way of meeting school needs is through improved outcomes.

Recommendation 14

That the Government phase out the Low Level Adjustment for Disability funding stream (ensuring no school is worse off financially) as it does not require the diagnosis or confirmation of a disability. The committee recommends replacing it with an equivalent funding pool that rewards socio-economically disadvantaged schools for improved NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results.

Recommendation 15

That the Government immediately review the RAM funding model to ensure no other perverse financial incentives have been embedded in its methodology.

Recommendation 16

That in two years time (2022), the Government review the effectiveness of the two financial incentive reforms recommended in this report (see Recommendations 14 and 25) to determine whether other, broader funding incentives are needed to lift NSW school results.

Chapter 4 Other Important Accountability Issues

- 4.1 The Committee had broad terms of reference. We were fortunate to hear from experts covering a wide range of education issues. This section of the report deals with these additional matters: parental involvement, Indigenous education, rural/remote schooling and disability education.
- 4.2 The Committee was tasked with examining parental/community involvement in school accountability. It's a vital issue. Parents have got the right to know in detail not only how their children are progressing, but how their children's school is performing. Taxpayers need to know how their money is being spent and with what outcomes.
- 4.3 Historically, the Department of Education's default position has been one of secrecy. Information is power, and the Department has held the great bulk of information about government schools. This practice must end. Output-based budgeting should be synonymous with a new era of openness and accountability. There should be no place to hide for underperformers in the system.
- 4.4 The Department's main mechanism for parental involvement in schools is the 'Tell Them From Me' survey, operated by CESE. There are three different survey types: for parents, students and teachers, each anonymous and confidential for the survey participant. Students participate from Year 4 onwards (10 year olds). Summary documents are produced for each school, with their public release a local school decision.⁷¹
- 4.5 Until now, Tell Them From Me has been optional. In 2019, 1630 schools participated in at least one element of the survey.⁷² The Department indicated it was looking to make the Tell Them From Me survey mandatory in the second half of 2020 as the key performance measure for new targets in student well-being (incorporating a 'sense of belonging' and 'student engagement'). It will be compulsory for students to complete the survey. The Department is still sorting out how parental and teacher participation rates can be maximised.⁷³
- 4.6 The Committee notes concerns raised by its members about the reliability of Tell Them From Me, for the following reasons:
- Generally polls and surveys have become less reliable as more people engage in tactical answers or refuse to participate due to privacy concerns.
 - Asking children as young as 10 to answer questions about their feelings has obvious accuracy problems. Under the age of 10, parents will need to give the answers, so the subject group doesn't even get to speak for itself.
 - Parent survey answers are likely to either pump up their children's learning capacity (naturally) or excessively praise the school for fear of negative answers rebounding on their children (reprisals).

⁷¹ Evidence, Ms Sally Egan, Relieving Executive Director, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 7; Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 1.

⁷² Answers to questions on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 2.

⁷³ Evidence, Ms Georgina Harrisson, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Department of Education, 29 November 2019, p 29.

- Artificially positive Tell Them From Me feedback from parents encourages schools to focus on this type of accountability, rather than the ‘hard-data’ of academic results. This is already a feature of NSW government school annual reports.
- Parental participation is self-selecting, rather than a random, representative reflection of the group’s opinions.
- Well-being issues are not solely within the control of the school, with family life and the health system playing bigger roles. It’s near impossible to isolate and measure the school contribution accurately.

4.7 In gaining a more definitive and accurate view of parental opinion about school quality, the Committee believes the Department of Education should make better use of information-gathering when families leave a school. At the moment, there appear to be no exit interviews in the system. When asked about this oversight, the Education Department replied, “The decision to conduct exit interviews/surveys is a local school decision.”⁷⁴ The Department also said, “It may be possible to identify leading indicators relating to parents from Tell Them From Me. The department also considers social media sentiment and engagement rate as indicators of parent and community sentiment.”⁷⁵

4.8 The Committee notes the findings of a previous 2017 report by this Committee entitled ‘*Students with a disability or special needs in New South Wales*’ where parents of children with disabilities said exit interviews were desirable.⁷⁶ Dissatisfied families leaving a school should not disappear into the system, with no record of the reason for their departure relating to school performance. Conversely, parents satisfied with a school but leaving for other reasons should also be interviewed/surveyed, as this is a very positive (and reliable) indicator of school performance.

4.9 During the inquiry, the Committee also became aware of problems in the relationship between schools’ leadership and parent representative bodies. Some principals are happy to have either a compliant P and C or one that is inactive. The Committee believes a good school involves an effective partnership between principals, teachers, students, parents and the broader community. The Committee heard criticism of the existing system from the NSW Federation of P and C Associations, with its Secretary Mr Alan Gardiner stating that the Department of Education “is not very good at rolling out change of any kind across the board and it is something they should be working on. In fact — and, again this is my personal view — I do not believe the Education Department knows how bad it is at doing that. I think they have a much higher view of their ability than I would on that particular topic.”⁷⁷

4.10 While there is a lot of rhetoric about school/parent collaboration, the Department has not successfully rolled out measures to make this happen in practice. One of the problems is the freedom and authority given to principals under Local Schools, Local Decisions. Patrick Doumani from the P and C Federation said, “It seems largely up to the principal how much

⁷⁴ Answers to supplementary questions, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 47.

⁷⁵ Answers to supplementary questions, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 48.

⁷⁶ Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education, NSW Legislative Council, *Student with a disability or special needs in New South Wales* (2017).

⁷⁷ Evidence, Mr Alan Gardiner, Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales, 10 October 2019, p 5.

they consult with the parent community and wider school community.”⁷⁸ Mr Gardiner said, “The degree to which the principals consult with their parent community is very variable.”⁷⁹ Committee member David Shoebridge suggested making it mandatory for principals to consult with parents (preferably a functioning P and C) on major spending decisions.⁸⁰ The Committee supports this requirement.

4.11 Indeed, it should be part of the regular work of principals to support and foster parental involvement in schools. The more interest and involvement parents have in the education of their children, generally, the better the children will perform. Principals' job descriptions and performance measures should include a requirement to foster the size and success of their school P and C.

4.12 For these reasons, the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 17

That in the development of student ‘well-being’ performance targets/results, the Government seek to improve the methodology and reliability of the Tell Them From Me survey, addressing the concerns raised in the report.

Recommendation 18

That the Government make it mandatory for government school principals to consult with their school community about major spending decisions.

Recommendation 19

That the Government include in the job description/duties of government school principals a requirement to foster the size and success of their school Parents and Citizens' Association, with performance measures as to how well they do this.

Recommendation 20

That the Department of Education require its schools to seek to conduct exit interviews of parents when students leave a school.

4.13 On outcome-based budgeting and Indigenous education, the Committee found that, through specific targets developed for Aboriginal school achievement, the Government has a clear and sufficient focus on this key equity issue. The Aboriginal Education Council NSW was asked for case studies of best practice in this field, but none were submitted to the Inquiry.

4.14 The Committee notes the findings of the 2017 CESE paper, ‘Closing the Gap, Case Studies’, which looked at the successes (higher than average learning growth) of five NSW government schools with relatively high proportions of Indigenous students. The common themes in these

⁷⁸ Evidence, Mr Patrick Doumani, Member Support/Communications Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales, 10 October 2019, p 9.

⁷⁹ Evidence, Mr Alan Gardiner, Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales, 10 October 2019, p 9.

⁸⁰ Transcript, Mr David Shoebridge MLC, 10 October 2019, p 9.

schools were: regular use of data measurement; a learning culture based on explicit teaching and collaboration; high expectations of student success; professional learning and targeted teaching; parent and community participation; and recognising and celebrating Aboriginal culture.⁸¹ These were very similar to the practices of best practice schools studied by the Committee in other parts of the Inquiry.

- 4.15** In rural and remote education, the Isolated Children's Parent's Association of NSW gave compelling evidence about the paucity of service delivery. However, its main issues concerning access to preschool and TAFE are outside the Inquiry's remit.⁸² With the new school performance targets being developed, it is not clear if remote education will have specific targets in its own right or be consumed under the general banner of 'Equity'.
- 4.16** Later in this report, the Committee will recommend that the Minister for Education report to Parliament each year on the Government's performance in meeting the targets in Recommendation 21.
- 4.17** Given the importance of school education access in rural and remote parts of NSW, the Committee as follows:
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Recommendation 21

That the Minister for Education commission the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) to develop a specific set of verifiable, ambitious targets for remote and isolated schooling.

- 4.18** In disability education, the Committee was concerned by evidence of departmental neglect, especially regarding teacher quality. Dr David Roy, an expert in this field from Newcastle University, cited examples of repeated student abuse that has gone unchecked. He concluded:

We have some fantastic teachers in the classroom, we have some horrendous teachers in the classroom ... We do not have in place in this system ways to remove teachers who are underperforming consistently, let alone those teachers who are actively harming children ... We have got to have children who are safe, first. We must deal with that fundamental before we can try to educate them.⁸³

- 4.19** With regard to the challenge in measuring the progress of students with a disability, Dr Roy said:

You could measure anything you wish, depending on your measurement tool. You could measure outcomes for children with disability about their progression, about the add-on and the build-up. We have to decide what we want to measure ...

⁸¹ See, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, *Closing the gap case studies* (15 November 2017), <https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/publications-filter/case-studies-closing-the-gap>.

⁸² Evidence, Ms Claire Butler, President, Isolated Children's and Parent's Association of New South Wales Inc, 10 October 2019, pp 50-57; Evidence, Ms Annabel Strachan, Rural Schools Portfolio Leader, Isolated Children's Parent's Association of New South Wales Inc, 10 October 2019, pp 50-57.

⁸³ Evidence, Dr David Roy, Lecturer, School of Education, University of Newcastle 8 October 2019, p 39.

Can we measure? Yes we can. Can we set targets? Yes we can. But we have to provide full curricula. We have to provide meaningful curricula and not make assumptions that children with a disability are a homogenous group ...⁸⁴

4.20 In its submission, the Government conceded that its 2019 Disability Strategy hadn't developed adequate performance measures for disability education, noting how:

... one of the biggest challenges we face in reforming the education system is building an adequate evidence base. Currently, there is little consensus on how to measure learning outcomes for students with disability. To this end, one of the focus areas of the Disability Strategy is to 'track outcomes' through building an evidence base against which we will evaluate our progress. These measures will provide the Department, teachers and families with a good understanding of how students and schools are progressing, and allow us to make any changes as necessary.⁸⁵

4.21 The Committee regards this position as vague and inadequate. It agrees with Dr Roy that measurement is possible. This should be a leading priority in the introduction of outcome-based budgeting, especially given the importance of assisting students with disabilities.

Recommendation 22

That the Minister for Education give greater priority to developing performance measures, targets and accountability in disability education and commission CESE to identify best practice, working with experts.

⁸⁴ Evidence, Dr David Roy, Lecturer, School of Education, University of Newcastle 8 October 2019, p 33.

⁸⁵ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 11.

Chapter 5 Best Practice Schools

- 5.1** NSW school results have been disappointing, yet some schools are achieving excellent outcomes. Without exception, these schools have very good leaders and use the evidence base very well. They are ‘informed by the data’ schools.
- 5.2** To shine some light on what has gone wrong at struggling schools in NSW, the Committee decided to examine a series of best practice schools. If these schools can add high value to their students’ learning, why can’t others do the same? If the know-how exists in some schools to achieve outstanding results, why can’t this success be scaled up across the State?
- 5.3** In no part of the world has any government school system achieved full school equality – that is, equal results across advantaged and disadvantaged communities. Very often students from a poor (often transient, unsettled) background do not bring the same learning assets to school as wealthier families. Books, computers and a learning culture can be rare at home, as poor families struggle with more immediate ‘survival’ tasks. Bright children are held back by socio-economic circumstance.
- 5.4** It is, therefore, particularly significant that a small number of NSW schools servicing disadvantaged areas (low income, high NESB, refugee populations etc.) have excelled well beyond expectations. Policy makers would be foolish not to learn from them, to use them as templates for education policy reform.
- 5.5** This would give NSW its best chance of not only lifting up Statewide school results but also achieving a huge social justice goal: breaking the poverty cycle through quality school education and making ours a society of more equal opportunity.
- 5.6** In studying these schools, the Committee has adopted its own evidence-based approach. We felt privileged to visit such impressive schools and meet with inspirational principals and teachers. Yes, many things have gone wrong in NSW education, but we came across a small cadre of school leaders who have got it right – our champions, our inspiration, our best hope for the future. We must learn from them.
- 5.7** In October 2019 the Committee conducted site visits to Christ the King Catholic Primary School (Bass Hill), Auburn North Public School, Sefton High School, Mimosa Public School (Frenchs Forest), Northern Beaches Secondary College Balgowlah Boys Campus and Claremont Anglican College (Randwick). The principals of two exemplar schools, Marsden Road Public and Canley Vale High, appeared at a Committee hearing on 29 November.
- 5.8** The Committee Chair visited 14 other schools, including four from outside Sydney. He tabled a series of reports on these visits for the benefit of Committee members.
- 5.9** None of them can be thought of as privileged schools. Four service highly disadvantaged communities (Auburn North, Marsden Road, Canley Vale and Christ the King in Bass Hill). The other three are Wollondilly Anglican College, Balgowlah Boys and St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School in Dubbo.
- 5.10** Collectively, the seven schools represent a ‘Best Practice School Model’. Despite differences in geography and systems (two are Catholic primary schools, one an Independent Anglican high

school and the remaining four are government schools), they share 12 key characteristics, as follows:

- 5.11** First, they have **energetic, ‘big personality’ principals**, exuding the special qualities of their school. They provide quality, data-informed, inspirational leadership. Invariably the arrival of these principals was a catalyst for change, turning around disappointing results. They are skilled at placing themselves at the centre of change and then managing it successfully around them, encouraging others to buy-in to new processes of continuous improvement.
- 5.12** Second, often the schools have been subject to an **external catalyst for change**: such as a research study, a successful school elsewhere or an external consultant who shows the way forward. Once student results improve, the schools continue enthusiastically in the new direction. There is a ‘fluke element’ in NSW education (the random chance by which new ideas and classroom practices are introduced without centralised systems of quality control). But for Best Practice Schools, it’s been a fluke in the right direction.
- 5.13** Third, they have developed a **‘whole of school’ direction** and culture, with a big emphasis on everyone ‘buying in’ to the changes. This is what Hattie describes as ‘collective teacher efficacy’, producing the highest positive effect-level in his work, at 1.39.⁸⁶ Instead of teachers doing their own thing in the classroom, with their own teaching style and methods, the school adopts a common approach.
- 5.14** This has multiple advantages. The first is quality control. Evidence-driven principals can ensure that what is being taught and how it’s being taught have proven high-effect impacts on student learning. A second advantage is consistency for students as they move between classes over time. At St Laurence’s Primary in Dubbo they call it “One seven-year experience” at the school, rather than seven one-year experiences. Students don’t have to adjust to new teaching practices and language as their classes and teachers change. They have a seamless transition through their school years.⁸⁷

Best Practice School Case Study: St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School, Dubbo⁸⁸

Dubbo has four Catholic primary schools, including St Laurence’s with 210 students. Five years ago the school’s results were mediocre. The arrival in 2015 of a new Principal, Susan Byrnes, has resulted in an impressive turn-around. NAPLAN results have spiked upwards; value-added data is now strong across the school; and in 2019, each Kindergarten student reached the benchmarked literacy and numeracy level. In 2014, outcomes such as these were unthinkable.

How did the new Principal do it? She believes the teachers at St Laurence’s were working hard and wanted the best for the students but lacked the necessary tools and direction to get the job done. Around 85 percent of the 2015 teachers are still at the school, so the stronger results came not by changing personnel, but changing teaching practices. This included:

⁸⁶ Visible Learning Plus, *John Hattie's Visible Learning: 250 + Influences on Student Achievement*, <https://visible-learning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/VLPLUS-252-Influences-Hattie-ranking-DEC-2017.pdf>

⁸⁷ See Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 28 November 2019.

⁸⁸ See Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 28 November 2019.

1. The adoption of Direct Instruction teaching under the guidance of a Diocese consultant who has become a pedagogy mentor for the 15 teachers at St Laurence's. There is no confusion or inconsistency in the classroom, with the development of a "this is how we teach" culture.
2. Developing a whole-of-school approach so that "teachers were no longer doing their own thing in isolation". This is the Hattie 'collective efficacy' impact, moving as one in pedagogy and professional development. The Principal talks of the school offering "one seven year experience", so that as students progress from class to class, they experience the same language and teaching methods, without disruptive chopping-and-changing.
3. A heavy emphasis on data, with intense measurement and monitoring of every student's results. "Data takes the argument out of it", with all teachers buying into this approach. Regular, small-group teacher meetings identify successes and failures, and rapid implementation of corrective measures. There's a data wall but more importantly, a very detailed, very impressive computerised system of data-tracking: relative student results in all subject areas. There's no chance of anyone falling behind without intervention. NAPLAN is seen as an asset in this process, supplementing frequent classroom assessment. The school makes regular value-added reports to parents.
4. Relying on available evidence: Phonics in literacy and direct instruction in all classrooms. Foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) and deep knowledge attainment are seen as essential before students can undertake lessons featuring 'creative thinking' and 'inquiry-based learning'. Writing classes seek to replicate the skills of high-quality authors. The school is hungry for ongoing evidence, having introduced its own Year One Phonics Check three times a year. There is also zero-tolerance of fad ideas and programs, with Ms Byrnes saying, "My job is to keep that other stuff out of the school."
5. A high level of regimentation and behavioural norms for students, to the point of being somewhat apologetic about "sounding like the army". The classrooms have few distractions, maximising valuable learning time. Part of every week involves class time teaching the students about productive behaviour.
6. A concerted professional development focus, mostly in-house. Staff meetings no longer have any administrative content; it's all PD. The conversation has changed from looking at raw results and a shallow critique of teacher performance to assessing "did the students actually learn it", "how do we know they learnt it" and "what if they haven't learnt it". As the Principal points out, "we talk about teaching and how to improve it". The culture of continuous improvement at St Laurence's is striking.

The school is very proud of its recent results and confident the NAPLAN improvements will continue. The senior teachers like the idea of a funding top-up for the school as a reward for enhanced outcomes. Perhaps such funding could be used to develop St Laurence's role as an exemplar school in Central NSW – freeing up the Principal to act as a mentor for other schools (government and non-government) in the district.

In summary, St Laurence's confirms the key characteristics of a highly successful, inspiring school, as seen in other parts of the State. There's a definite pattern at play. The challenge for policy makers is to find smart ways of scaling up this kind of success universally.

- 5.15** Another benefit of ‘collective teacher efficacy’ is consistency in professional development. Practices are common across the teaching group, meaning it’s easier to collaborate and learn from each other. The school moves as one, with higher levels of dialogue and teacher support. The Committee found this to be a fascinating process: schools building a new culture of cooperation and consistency, first and foremost, followed by the refinement of pedagogy.
- 5.16** Fourth, most of the **teacher professional development (PD) is in-house**. Data-driven schools are sceptical of fad ideas, preferring to develop staff skills internally. They know what works and practice it among themselves.
- 5.17** At St Laurence’s, staff meetings no longer have any administrative content; it’s all PD. The conversation has changed from looking at raw results and a shallow critique of teacher performance to assessing “did the students actually learn it”, “how do we know they learnt it” and “what if they haven’t learnt it”. As their principal points out, “We talk about teaching and how to improve it”.
- 5.18** Fifth, the factors listed above create **high levels of staff stability**. Teachers want to stay at the school, appreciating the benefits of a collegiate, data-informed approach. They have discovered things about teaching they haven’t seen before.
- 5.19** This contrasts sharply with the experience of struggling schools, which usually have a high churn of teachers.⁸⁹ As staff come and go at these schools, invariably they introduce experimental programs – the latest ‘magic bullet’ to overcome failure. The zigzag in classroom practice ends up adding to the school’s problems and sense of despair.
- 5.20** Sixth, Best Practice Schools rely on an **orderly, structured learning environment**. Learning is impossible in classrooms dominated by chaos. So these schools emphasise discipline, behavioural norms, the minimisation of ‘teacher time’ (having to tell students to do the right thing) and the maximisation of learning time. Some of the principals are almost apologetic for the extent of regimentation.
- 5.21** Marsden Road Public believes that if students are unsettled outside of school (the impact of family and community disadvantage) they need firm structure and ordered learning inside it. The principal has no complaints about her administrative workload because, “I don’t have a long line of students outside my door in trouble; in fact, on most days, I don’t have anyone there.”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ See Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 29 August 2019.

⁹⁰ See Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 29 August 2019.

Best Practice School Case Study: Marsden Road Public School⁹¹

This is an amazing school with amazing leadership, based on what it calls ‘The Art and Science of Teaching the Marsden Way’. It is achieving strong and improving NAPLAN results, with the proportion of students in the top two bands for reading/numeracy increasing from 18 percent in 2015 to 25 percent in 2018. Based on the departmental SCOUT assessment system, Marsden Road is in the top rank of NSW schools adding value to students’ education. Year 5 growth in writing has been 67 percent above expectations.

The Marsden model has been so successful, 60 teachers from other schools have visited to learn about it. The school is now part of a network whereby it mentors five other government schools, particularly in improving classroom practice.

Marsden Road services a 90 percent NESB, 20 percent refugee population, which is also quite transient (with 60 to 100 students starting or leaving the school each year, from a student population of 730). Families settle here, earn a higher income and then move out to better areas, replaced by new disadvantaged people. The school gives considerable emphasis to structure and discipline, believing that if students are unsettled outside of school they need firm structure and ordered learning inside it.

Each school year starts with a two-week ‘boot camp’ during which students learn how to follow teacher instructions, walk in a straight line to class, do homework, sing the school song and national anthem, always be in uniform, never be late, cover their books, organise their pencils and other learning materials, how to greet and address teachers and behave in class and assembly. This idea is based on the Michaela Community School in London, which has developed the ‘Tiger Teacher’ model. In the words of the Principal, Manisha Gazula, it instils “love and respect for learning ... [and] the moral capital [we] are trying to build in our students”.

At the start of every day, Ms Gazula stands outside the front gates, checking and assisting families with punctuality and uniform as they arrive. It’s the ‘broken windows’ law-and-order philosophy applied to education: even the slightest drop in standards can infect the whole school and unravel its achievements.

The students are very responsive to this approach. New teachers coming to the school have noted how pleasing it is to teach in ordered, well-behaved classrooms. The Principal has no complaints about her administrative load because “I don’t have a long line of students outside my door in trouble; in fact, on most days, I don’t have anyone there.”

Teaching programs are based entirely on their measured effects (the Hattie model), the highest being ‘collective teacher efficacy’ – everyone pulling in the same direction. Marsden Road uses “clear, simple, explicit and direct teaching”. It takes the best of CESE’s research and other literature searches and applies it to the classroom.

When Ms Gazula appeared at our Committee hearing in November, she said:

At our school, explicit teaching is a core way of teaching students. Explicit teaching is where the teacher knows what needs to be taught, tells the students what they will learn, stands in front of the class and teache[s] it, and then checks that students have learnt. This model of teaching is beneficial to all and harmful to none.

⁹¹ See Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC, to committee, 29 August 2019; Evidence, Ms Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, pp 15, 17, 22, 24.

She described direct/explicit instruction as “I do, we do, you do”, further explaining:

...if you want to learn something, we can take any skill – if you want to learn to play hockey you are not going to give a child a hockey stick and a ball and say, ‘Go and play’. You are going to tell them how to hold the stick, how to dribble the ball, how to push – every step is explicitly taught, practised and then you send them to play. That is what explicit teaching is. [So too] if you want children to read, reading is an artificial thing – they are not born to read – so it has to be taught explicitly.

The teaching of literacy is via Phonics, with no Whole Language instruction – “We teach them how to read”. The school is heavily informed by data and evidence for each individual learning plan. It has devised its own Year One Phonics Check, ahead of the NSW Government announcement in 2019.

In classroom practice, there is no room for experimentation without a clear positive evidence-base. When Ms Gazula started at the school in 2016, she abolished a questionable program, saying, “This is not going to work because there is no evidence backing this. Let’s put good teaching in place ... I am very conscious of the fact one year of bad teaching pushes a child back two years and with two years of bad teaching, the damage is irreversible.”

Marsden Road has no minimum standards, as expectations are always set at the highest level. Student assessment is ‘triangulated’: using classroom data (quizzes, bookwork assessment/check and observation), the department’s Progressive Assessment Test (PAT) at the beginning and end of each year and NAPLAN. There’s no fear of NAPLAN, “It should validate what we already know about our students”.

Student prizes and rewards are limited to genuine achievement, “not for what we are expecting anyway”. In terms of ‘mindfulness’ and other social-type school objectives, the Principal believes: “We find that success is the greatest motivator for our students.” Overall, “Making our students literate and numerate before they go to high school is our core business”. At the Committee hearing, Ms Gazula said the school’s vision was for its students to “have a life of choice and not chance”.

When the Principal first arrived at Marsden Road, there was a PD course proposed for ‘orienteeing’. Now the PD is mostly in-class via two Instructional Leaders (for 30 classes across the school) and regular class/teacher monitoring by the school executive.

The teaching is standardised and systemised through a hefty set of rules and guidelines. Teachers have no chance to put their own spin on the syllabus. The objective is a Marsden Road classroom culture and instruction moving in the same direction.

A key goal is to ‘reduce teacher talk’ in the classroom, that is, time taken up by teachers having to tell students how to behave. There’s a three-second rule for students wiping mini-whiteboards clean. Teaching and learning time must be maximised: “No wasted thought or energy in the classroom”. Getting these little things right adds up to hours of extra learning time each week.

Marsden Road is an inspiring model of school success for children who desperately need it. The leadership here has created an engine for upward social mobility – a wonderful thing. But why isn’t this happening universally?

One reason given is the incredible churn of teachers in outer-suburban and rural disadvantaged schools – it’s impossible to get continuity in ‘collective teacher efficacy’ or in trusting relationships between teachers and students. As teachers come and go in these schools, sometimes they introduce experimental programs – the new ‘magic bullet’ to solve the school’s problems. The staffing and program zig-zag ends up adding to the problems and sense of despair.

Marsden Road overcame this through dynamic, clear-minded, evidence-based leadership. There were teething problems with some teachers and parents early on, but now the 'buy-in' is universal. The teacher retention rate is high. For policy-makers, there's much to learn from The Marsden Way.

- 5.22** Seventh, the schools set **high expectations for staff and students**. They are not afraid of exams and extending their students. Other than by showing their skills in tests and assignments, how else can children from a disadvantaged background get ahead in life, competing against the advantages of others? At Marsden Road, there are no minimum standards, as expectations are always set at the highest level.
- 5.23** The consultant working with Auburn North Public, Vic Zbar, argues that high expectations are doubly important in poor areas. They counter the view, too often heard in disadvantaged schools, that, "You need to understand the sort of students who come to this school and you can't really expect too much from them." He writes: "There is no research to suggest working class students are any less capable than others, and what we expect is commonly what we then get."⁹²
- 5.24** Eighth, these schools are very good at **simplifying the educational task**, focusing tightly on the basics of learning and student achievement. They don't see themselves as fixing societal ills across the board. Wellbeing supports such as breakfast programs, or speech therapy, are provided outside of classroom time, to maximise learning. Given the challenges they face, they simply don't have the time and resources to be all things to all parts of a broad schooling agenda.
- 5.25** At a Committee hearing, the Principal of Canley Vale High, Peter Rouse, highlighted the simplicity of his approach. He follows the available evidence and sees the role of school leadership as "clear[ing] all the malarky out of the way, all of the distractions out of the way, and having a laser-like focus on what success is..."⁹³

Best Practice School Case Study: Canley Vale High School, Fairfield⁹⁴

This is a rare example of a disadvantaged NSW high school achieving high-level NAPLAN results. The data at Canley Vale is off the radar, in a good way. It is said to be the only school in NSW to consistently add value to years 7-to-9 NAPLAN; and for four consecutive years, it has been the highest value-adding school Year 9-to-HSC in the State.

The school is 96 percent NESB, with 1500 enrolled students and 109 staff in a tough, challenging district. Yet 90 percent of students seeking a university place achieve it, with the remainder doing well in VET and job placements. There is a heavy emphasis on 'Year 13 of schooling'. Canley Vale is an outstanding success story, built on five key elements:

⁹² Pamela Macklin and Vic Zbar, 'How to turn a struggling (or middling) school's performance around', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 February 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/education/how-to-turn-a-struggling-or-middling-school-s-performance-around-20190118-p50s7a.html>.

⁹³ Evidence, Mr Peter Rouse, Principal, Canley Vale High School, 29 November 2019, p 19.

⁹⁴ See Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 29 August 2019; Evidence, Mr Peter Rouse, Principal, Canley Vale High School, 29 November 2019, p 19.

1. The Principal, Peter Rouse, arrived six years ago and identified a deficiency in literacy. Even though the feeder primary schools are part of a strong cluster, the NESB reality was limiting learning capacity. For Mr Rouse, “Being evidence-informed is the key”, so he introduced Literacy classes in Years 7-9 in addition to English. A new Literacy faculty was created, now replicated in other Fairfield high schools. This approach has been validated in the tracking of results.
2. When the new Principal arrived, Canley Vale had seven variations of its student uniform. He brought this down to one, to build a unifying school culture: “We needed to ensure every student and teacher felt like they belonged, had a voice, were supported and could trust the school environment around them.” Pride in the uniform has given students pride in the school (especially when competing against the best private schools in debating).
3. The school benefits from moving as one in a single direction, especially in classroom practice. New teachers go through a 12-month induction process to learn the ‘Canley Vale Way’, based on the explicit instruction of students. Taking this a step further, there has been an attempt to move from ‘compliance to engagement’ in teaching methods. Instead of simply requiring students to comply with classroom directions, the emphasis has shifted to high-level engagement and interaction between teachers and students.
4. In prioritising student well-being, case management systems were introduced around the needs of students (many of whom had troubles away from school). Relationships have deepened with teachers over time. The breakfast club and gym became focal points, as teachers now see themselves as not only imparting academic content, but also caring for student welfare. Local Schools, Local Decisions has given the school financial flexibility to hire health workers: speech pathologists, occupational therapists and a mental health nurse. Mr Rouse strongly supports LSLD as a ‘mature policy’, letting schools get on with the job.
5. These four changes helped to unleash the full potential of the Asian work ethic among students. A powerful mix of skills, engagement, unity and study culture was created. The school leadership talks of the amazing trust and respect parents place in them, driving the students harder for results. Expectations in the community are very high, so much can be achieved quickly if a school has its act together. This one has.

NAPLAN is seen as a useful but not primary assessment tool. In Year 8, for example, students do two internal tests per annum per subject. NAPLAN results are supplementary to these measures. What about ‘anxiety’? “Any kid anxious about NAPLAN would be anxious about any test”, the Principal says, “It’s something that comes from the external debate not from within the school itself.”

At the Committee hearing, Mr Rouse summarised Canley Vale’s success by pointing to the simplicity of its approach. He follows the available evidence and sees the role of school leadership as “clearing all the malarkey out of the way, all of the distractions out of the way and having a laser-like focus on what success is”. His achievements have been remarkable – an inspiration for school leaders across the State.

- 5.26 For Best Practice Schools, the basics lie in foundational skills (literacy and numeracy) and students having a deep knowledge of subjects. These are essential prerequisites before attempting more ambitious class work, such as ‘creative thinking’ and inquiry- or project-based learning. In the words of Marsden Road’s Principal, Manisha Gazula, “You have to be able to think within the box to be able to think outside of the box”.⁹⁵
- 5.27 Ninth, **data is a central part of the teaching culture.** Every student’s results/progress is highly visible. There is no hiding of failure. Evidence guides all aspects of class practice and school management, providing clarity for every staff member. At St Laurence’s, “Data takes the argument out of it”. At Christ the King Primary, “Making data today becomes instruction for tomorrow”.
- 5.28 The schools are happy to use NAPLAN for verification of their in-school, in-class assessments. Usually, it holds no surprises for them, as they have so much data about their students they know what to expect from the tests. They regularly talk of ‘triangulating’ results: using their own formal testing and in-class assessments, with NAPLAN as the third leg. These schools are hungry for data and NAPLAN consistently gives them more.
- 5.29 Any significant change to NAPLAN would lead to a discontinuity in measurement for these Best Practice (and other) schools – an impact the Government needs to avoid at a time when outcome-based budgeting is being introduced to highlight strengths and weaknesses in schools’ performance. To quote a useful adage: If you want to measure change, don’t change the measure.
- 5.30 External, diagnostic testing remains a key part of ensuring schools, especially the most disadvantaged schools and students, get the support they need. Outcome-based budgeting relies on rigorous and consistent data, so any changes to NAPLAN should consider the value of maintaining a consistent data set.
- 5.31 While NAPLAN has many critics, it appears our best schools are not among them. The Committee also notes the submission of Catholic Schools NSW in, “strongly support[ing] the continuation of NAPLAN as a tool to help identify students needing support with their basic skills ...” CSNSW also described NAPLAN as “an important tool for informing school and system improvement efforts, being the only assessment conducted by all schools nationally”.⁹⁶
- 5.32 Tenth, Best Practice Schools are **still willing to innovate**, but only if the new approach has been researched and tested, **with a clear evidence base.** They are hostile to the influence of fads. At Marsden Road, soon after the new principal started, she abolished a questionable program, explaining: “This is not going to work because there is no evidence backing this. Let’s put good teaching in place ... I am very conscious of the fact one year of bad teaching pushes a child back two years and with two years of bad teaching, the damage is irreversible.”⁹⁷
- 5.33 Eleventh, the core teaching method at these schools is **direct/explicit instruction.** The teachers teach, clearly and explicitly, rather than acting as classroom facilitators. The Hattie evidence is clear: Direct Instruction has an effect-size of 0.59, compared to 0.19 for Co-

⁹⁵ Evidence, Ms Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, p 23.

⁹⁶ Submission 12, Catholic Schools NSW, pp 3-4.

⁹⁷ Evidence, Ms Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, p 24.

Teaching, 0.21 Discovery Teaching, 0.34 Collaborative Learning, 0.35 Problem-Based Learning, 0.37 Teaching Creative Thinking and 0.40 Cooperative Learning.⁹⁸

5.34 The success of Best Practice Schools is hardly surprising. They use teaching methods with the most beneficial impact on students. When Ms Gazula appeared before the Committee, she said:

At our school, explicit teaching is a core way of teaching students. Explicit teaching is where the teacher knows what needs to be taught, tells the students what they will learn, stands in front of the class and ...[teaches] it, and then checks that students have learnt. This model of teaching is beneficial to all and harmful to none.⁹⁹

5.35 She described direct/explicit instruction as “I do, we do, you do”, further explaining:

...if you want to learn something, we can take any skill – if you want to learn to play hockey, you are not going to give a child a hockey stick and a ball and say, ‘Go and play’. You are going to tell them how to hold the stick, how to dribble the ball, how to push - every step is explicitly taught, practiced and then you send them to play. That is what explicit teaching is. [So too] if you want children to read – reading is an artificial thing – they are not born to read – it has to be taught explicitly.¹⁰⁰

5.36 Twelfth and finally, Best Practice Schools are likely to be involved in **collaborative networks** of educational excellence. They readily share their methods and experience when approached by other schools. As word circulates through the education community, many visitors come to their classrooms. This is an important process, as the success of one school becomes the success of many. At Christ the King, for instance, it is said that, “We use the group to move the group”.

Scaling up success

5.37 In the post-war era, Australian schools followed a highly structured approach to learning, with detailed syllabus outlines in traditional subject areas, direct teaching of students and regular testing and grading practices that acknowledged the inevitability of success and failure.

5.38 In the 1990s, so-called progressive approaches emerged, with post-modernism entering the curriculum. Teachers started to see themselves as ‘facilitators’ and students as ‘self-starting learners’. Testing and grading also fell out of favour. A major deviation from the educational evidence-base opened up.

5.39 In defining the purpose of schooling, the 2008 Melbourne Declaration placed the ‘social and emotional development’ of students on equal standing with traditional goals for academic attainment.¹⁰¹ This broadened the remit and workload of schools, as pastoral care, ‘mindfulness’ and social welfare and attitudinal programs were developed. Given that schools can only do so much, spending less time on academic subjects has inevitably meant weaker academic results.

⁹⁸ Corwin Visible Learning Plus, 250+ influences on student achievement, https://us.corwin.com/sites/default/files/250_influences_10.1.2018.pdf.

⁹⁹ Evidence, Ms Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, p 15.

¹⁰⁰ Evidence, Ms Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, p 22.

¹⁰¹ See Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008.

- 5.40** In many respects, Best Practice Schools are a return to a better-established evidence base in schooling. They combine elements of school autonomy with the rigour of data-informed classroom practice. This is something to be emulated system-wide. The remainder of this report examines ways in which multiple problems in NSW schools can be solved. In particular, how can the success of Best Practice Schools be scaled up universally?
- 5.41** Certainly the know-how exists to run a very good school. Other than on the question of value-added measurement, the Committee was very impressed with the work of CESE, the Department's research and statistical arm. CESE regularly produces summaries of the achievements of successful schools, such as Blue Haven Public on the NSW Central Coast.¹⁰² In 2015, CESE produced two documents with findings similar to the Committee's examination of Best Practice Schools:
- 'What Works Best' recommended seven strategies to improve student educational outcomes, namely: high expectations; explicit teaching; effective feedback (from teachers to students); the 'use of data to inform practice'; in classroom management, a 'stimulating learning environment'; improved student wellbeing and collaborative professional development among teachers.¹⁰³
 - 'Six Effective Practices in High Growth Schools' recommended 'Effective collaboration'; 'Engaging and sharing in professional learning'; 'Setting whole-school goals and strategies for change'; 'Using explicit and effective teaching strategies'; 'Creating an environment that promotes learning and higher levels of student engagement' and 'Setting higher expectations for achievement'.¹⁰⁴
- 5.42** The public is entitled to ask: What was done to ensure government schools followed this best practice direction? Next to nothing, it seems. The system has shown itself to be incapable of putting in place quality control measures to turn the theory of high value-added schooling into practice. A likely reason for this shortcoming is the open-ended nature of school autonomy in NSW.
- 5.43** The Committee examined the successes and failures of the Local School, Local Decisions (LSLD) policy introduced in 2012. School autonomy is important but it must be accompanied by central systems of quality-control, offering reasons and incentives for schools to achieve best practice. It can't be the autonomy to fail and keep on failing.
- 5.44** LSLD has given schools control over their finances and teaching programs but not staffing. Principals can only directly hire 50 percent of teachers, with the remainder centrally determined Departmental postings. Staff performance and disciplinary issues are routinely referred to the

¹⁰² See NSW Department of Education, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, *Blue Haven Public School Evidence-based practice case study*, https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au//images/stories/PDF/Blue_Haven_case_study.pdf.

¹⁰³ NSW Department of Education, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, *What works best: Evidence-based practices to help improve NSW student performance* (11 March 2015), <https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/publications-filter/what-works-best-evidence-based-practices-to-help-improve-nsw-student-performance>.

¹⁰⁴ NSW Department of Education, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, *Six Effective Practices in High Growth Schools* (13 October 2015), <https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/publications-filter/six-effective-practices-in-high-growth-schools>.

Department's Employee Performance and Conduct Directorate (EPAC), rather than dealt with directly by school leaders.

- 5.45** There are other significant quality-control deficiencies. NESAs have failed to create an adequate system of teacher accreditation. Principals' decisions to accredit proficiency are not being independently checked through classroom inspections. Many capable, deserving teachers are not being accredited to Lead Teacher and Highly Accomplished levels (see Chapter 6(2) below).
- 5.46** Schools are not obliged to teach from a proven, evidence-based suite of high-effect programs. Too often school leaders attend a conference or seminar and bring back changes without ensuring they are evidence-based. LSLD gives them this autonomy. It can be a license for fad experimentation at the expense of student results.
- 5.47** The public has been left wondering: How can something be introduced into my child's classroom unless its impact has been thoroughly researched and established by the school? How can the performance of my child's teacher be left unchecked and unmonitored by the relevant school authorities?
- 5.48** Ultimately, programs without an evidence-base can only flourish if Ministers and Department heads let them. If schools perceive LSLD as an invitation for open slather, where anything goes in the classroom, then the system loses quality-control and accountability.
- 5.49** The Committee supports the principle of school autonomy. In a large education system like NSW, schools must have the management flexibility to get on with the job, adjusting their programs to suit local circumstances and needs.
- 5.50** There also needs to be a greater recognition of the vital role of school leadership, as a new principal (in a relatively short space of time) can either make or break a school's performance. At Best Practice schools, for instance, new leadership has had an incredibly positive impact. There are also examples of high-quality principals leaving schools and the results falling away. LSLD has given principals increased power and authority but not necessarily increased accountability. The Committee believes this should change through the introduction of performance-based contracts for principals (in tandem with increased remuneration). Principals should be given responsibility and accountability for a school's effectiveness in achieving specific policy, operational and student outcomes as stipulated in their performance contracts.
- 5.51** The Education Department has informed the Committee that currently "There are no Public Service senior executives (PSSE's) on a performance-based contract in the Department of Education. PSSE's are employed under Division 4 of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013."¹⁰⁵ This raises an important question about Directors of Educational Leadership, who are responsible for school performance in clusters of 20 local schools. If principals should be on performance-based contracts then why shouldn't their line managers also have the same arrangement, measured primarily by the combined performance of the school cluster? The Committee believes they should. Outcome-based budgeting should not only involve measuring school performance but also the senior people in the system ultimately responsible for it.
- 5.52** The problem with LSLD is the way it was introduced as a blanket policy across all schools. It would have worked better as a policy of 'earned autonomy' – that is, as schools lifted their

¹⁰⁵ Correspondence, NSW Department of Education to secretariat, 24 January 2020.

standards and results, they would have been granted greater managerial freedom. Best Practice Schools would have been first in line.

5.53 Thus the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 23

That the Government amend its Local Schools Local Decisions policy to include the principles of earned school autonomy. If school outcomes are exemplary, the school would be given more managerial freedom. If outcomes are substandard, the school would be placed on a performance plan and subject to departmental intervention to correct the problem and lift its results.

5.54 The Committee notes that CESE is currently reviewing the LSLD policy, with a report due in mid-2020. Our view is that LSLD needs a different set of boundaries. Schools should have greater staffing powers (with principals able to hire 100 percent of teachers) but less freedom with regards to classroom practice.

5.55 Schools need evidence-based boundaries on the way in which students are taught. All classroom activity should be based on high-effect programs and pedagogy. (Recommendations to this effect are made elsewhere in the report). The Committee notes, for instance, that the Department of Education's 2017 School Excellence Framework endorses the use of direct/explicit instruction as the main classroom teaching practice for NSW government schools. Yet some schools have developed a range of other, low-effect methods as their preferred pedagogy. There appears to be no quality control in the system to bring them back to the evidence base.

5.56 As a way of scaling up the Best Practice School Model, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 24

That the Department of Education review the criteria for the appointment of principals to better reflect the qualities (personal and professional) of those leading Best Practice Schools.

Recommendation 25

That the Government place school principals on performance-based contracts with significantly increased salaries. Performance measures should be based on the effective use of evidence and data, and achievement of high-level school results (measured primarily by value adding). Successful principals would receive performance bonuses; failing principals the termination of their contracts. The new system should also be used to meet Minister Mitchell's goal of giving "incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools".

Recommendation 26

That the Government place Directors of Educational Leadership (DELs) on performance-based contracts, using the combined achievements of their local cluster of 20 schools (measured primarily by value adding) as the main assessment criteria for whether or not to extend their contracts.

Recommendation 27

That the Department of Education give principals full control over teacher recruitment decisions, with an expectation that they handle staffing problems within the school directly without automatic referral to the Employee Performance and Conduct (EPAC) Directorate.

Recommendation 28

That the Government create a new category of NSW school, the Best Practice School, to recognise and honour exemplary achievement in the education system (as per the best practice characteristics set out in the report), with these schools drawn from all three school sectors: government, Catholic and Independent. The creation of the new category would not only acknowledge the work of the best schools, but also place pressure on other schools to reach this status.

Recommendation 29

That the Government assist Best Practice Schools (government and non-government) with the networking of their methods, so that other, less successful schools can also benefit, with extra resources being provided from Gonski growth money as a new funding support program (given that the Gonski money can be used for any purpose past the school gate). We simply don't have enough of these outstanding school leaders in NSW; so wide networking of the success of Best Practice Schools is a logical way of spreading their influence.

Recommendation 30

That the Government ensure the principle of direct/explicit instruction is the main teaching method in NSW Government schools.

Recommendation 31

That the Government require schools to publish the details of their teaching methods and classroom programs on their website, annual report and My School entry (with an explanation of their effect-size impacts) and specifically, the use they are making of direct/explicit instruction.

Recommendation 32

That the Government acknowledge the positive attitude of Best Practice Schools in their use of NAPLAN as a verification tool for their in-house data. That in its current review of NAPLAN, the Government avoid any substantial discontinuity in outcome measurement for Best Practice (and other) schools, given that outcome-based budgeting relies on rigorous, consistent measurement systems over time.

Recommendation 33

That the Government, as a matter of policy, narrow down the purpose of schooling to give greater priority to student achievement (academic and vocational), issuing a ministerial statement to this effect. As the Minister has said, encouraging positions on political and social issues is the work of parents, not schools. All schools must follow this approach.

Recommendation 34

That the Government commission CESE to undertake further work studying the success of Best Practice Schools, refining the model identified in this report and making further recommendations for scaling up high-level education success.

Chapter 6 State of the Schools System

NSW school education can be thought of as an example of system failure. So many things have gone wrong that each problem feeds off every other problem, magnifying the extent of failure. To repair the system, all issues need to be addressed simultaneously. Incremental reform – slowly fine-tuning change and politically massaging the needs and feelings of interest groups – is not an option. Improvements from every stand-alone change will be overwhelmed by negative influences elsewhere. The only feasible pathway is a package of system-wide reforms.

The Committee found problems grouped into seven categories of failure, making recommendations for reform in each area.

(1) Departmental Defensiveness

- 6.1 In running 2,200 government schools (with 60,000 classrooms, 800,000 students and 130,000 staff) the NSW Education Department is one of the largest in the world. It's a huge system covering both support services for schools and responsibility for school outcomes and performance. The Committee found there is a tendency to blur the two: to pretend that performance is fine because the Department's servicing of schools is fine.
- 6.2 When confronted by clear evidence of under-performance in the State's schools, senior Departmental officials instinctively turn to excuses and blame shifting. If only NSW could turn its excuse-making culture in education into academic results – we would be a world leader.
- 6.3 When asked at a Committee hearing about the decline in the State's PISA results from 2006 to 2015, a senior official, Mr Dizdar, blamed the students for not trying hard enough. "We are looking at why our students may not be taking that testing instrument as seriously as we would like", he said, "and what we might do as a system across the board, knowing it is a sample, to lift performance in key domains."¹⁰⁶
- 6.4 Student effort levels must have dropped again in 2018, as the NSW results fell even further. If students are not taking tests seriously in the State's schools, it's not a good sign for HSC, NAPLAN and other test-based outcomes. Their marks will be low and their job prospects diminished.
- 6.5 The Committee remains unpersuaded that declining PISA results can be explained by declining student earnestness and effort over time. Unfortunately, it says a lot about the Education Department that this is not only their conclusion, but also an active source of research into what went wrong. Examining student effort is a higher priority than upgrading school quality.
- 6.6 Dr Roy gave a disturbing account of the Department's failure to deal promptly and thoroughly with allegations of teacher abuse of students with disabilities. EPAC usually refers such complaints for inquiry by local area management:
- 6.7 "In effect this usually means a principal of a school investigates her or his own school.", Dr Roy wrote in his submission, "It is therefore of little surprise to find that often a principal will find

¹⁰⁶ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, Committee Hearing, 8 October 2019, p 13.

little to no fault over how they run their own school”.¹⁰⁷ This contrasts with the way in which NESAs (the NSW Education Standards Authority) independently investigate abuse allegations in the Catholic and Independent school systems.¹⁰⁸

6.8 Dr Roy lamented how, “If you contact any outside authority such as Family and Community Services or even indeed the police, you are informed that the Department of Education investigates itself, usually through the internal section of EPAC.”¹⁰⁹ When Dr Roy complained to a staff member at EPAC about the lack of transparency in investigative procedures, he was told, “Well, they are transparent to us”.¹¹⁰

6.9 The Committee regards this as unacceptable. In any area of public sector management, problems arise whenever organisations are allowed to investigate themselves. Especially for serious issues, such as child safety and substandard educational opportunities, independent oversight is essential.

6.10 The culture of departmental defensiveness is particularly frustrating for parents. On a range of matters, often they will make complaints about schools, only to have them dismissed by principals, regional offices and up the line to the Department. The impression is of a system where nothing ever goes wrong. The NSW P&C Federation gave evidence confirming the extent of this problem.¹¹¹

6.11 The P&C also explained its disappointment with the absence of evidence-based programs in schools. As its Secretary, Mr Gardiner, explained:

I am profoundly frustrated every day of my life with the education system on that kind of point particularly ... [T]he degree of institutional inertia within education is overwhelming. Obviously my experience is mostly with the government sector, which has probably got that institutional inertia in spades ... There are so many stakeholders which have a very strong vested interest in the way things currently work and the way they might change in the future but it is very hard to push some of those changes through.¹¹²

6.12 A defensive system is naturally inert, rationalising failing and accommodating sectional interests that are content to live with failure. In the lengthy evidence tendered by the Department, the Committee was struck by the extent of excuse making and the lack of urgency in turning the system around.

6.13 How can the culture of defensiveness be replaced by a culture of high expectations and excellence? It is constantly said that students need to have high expectations, but how can this occur if the Education Department itself is lacklustre in measuring, publishing and upgrading the performance of the schools for which it is responsible?

¹⁰⁷ Submission 4, Dr David Roy, p 15.

¹⁰⁸ Submission 4, Dr David Roy, p 15.

¹⁰⁹ Submission 4, Dr David Roy, p 15.

¹¹⁰ Submission 4, Dr David Roy, p 16.

¹¹¹ Evidence, Mr Alan Gardiner, Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales, 10 October 2019, p 5.

¹¹² Evidence, Mr Alan Gardiner, Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales, 10 October 2019, pp 4-5.

- 6.14** The first step in dealing with the problems in NSW education is to accept reality, to have a clear-headed, frank assessment of what has gone wrong. Minister Mitchell has done this. Her Department needs to follow suit.
- 6.15** The Committee heard arguments for changing the Department's structure, for dividing it into two sections: one administering and servicing schools, the other with responsibility for school performance. This would lead to less defensiveness and greater transparency and accountability.
- 6.16** School performance can never improve if the people running schools are unwilling to upset their colleagues and other sectional interests by admitting to school errors and under-performance. The measurement and management of these issues can no longer be left to the Department: the agency responsible for school performance measuring itself.
- 6.17** As Dr Roy argued in his submission:
- Currently if you have an issue with the public school system, the highest authority to whom you can complain is the Minister and thus there will be no independent body until there is a separation between the Ministry for Education and the Department of Education ... Such separation of accountability and investigation is apparent in other systems across the world. The different education systems found through the UK are all subject to HM Inspectorate. This creates a confidence in the community that the system is robust and trustworthy.¹¹³
- 6.18** Priority must be given to ending the culture of defensiveness in NSW education. This is driving a range of other problems: the lack of transparency and accountability; a reluctance to rigorously measure school results and performance; the absence of data-informed and evidence-based teaching; and the softness, verging on neglect, in dealing with failing schools and correcting their shortcomings. The time for excuses has ended. Too many people in the system would rather hide failing school results than correct them.
- 6.19** If outcome-based budgeting is to succeed in NSW it cannot be based on the Department of Education measuring itself. The Department has had many opportunities over many years to put in place rigorous, reliable systems of performance measurement and reporting but has failed in this essential task. Its culture of defensiveness and secrecy does not allow for transparency and accountability. As a result, there is next to no pressure on government schools to improve their performance. Public awareness of just how bad things have become is limited to the publication of NAPLAN results (a system effectively imposed by the Federal Government) and international benchmarking such as the OECD's PISA tests. Where is the 'home-grown' rigour inside the NSW schools system for open and extensive school performance targets and reporting?
- 6.20** The Committee was repeatedly surprised at the laxness of administrative systems for monitoring the thoroughness of school reporting. We were told that schools already have comprehensive performance targets in place and these are published in School Plans and Annual Reports, complying with the self-assessment requirements of the School Excellence Framework (SEF). But a sampling of these publications reveals this is not the case (see above). NESAs also has a responsibility in this regard, as the registration of government schools (that is, their very existence) depends on compliance checking of school reporting (among other requirements).

¹¹³ Submission 4, Dr David Roy, p 15.

Across the board, government schools need to comply with requirements similar to those for the registration of non-government schools.

- 6.21** As the Education Minister has explained in answer to Question on Notice No. 0998 (5 February 2020): “NESA’s monitoring includes a sample of the Department’s internal assurance policies and procedures as applied in a sample of government schools. NESA monitored the Department’s internal assurance policies and procedures for government school reporting as part of its monitoring sample in 2018. All schools complete a School Excellence Framework self-assessment in accordance with the School Excellence Policy which is then published in the Annual Report. This is monitored through the School Policy and Reporting Online (SPaRO) tool.”¹¹⁴
- 6.22** That is, NESA’s monitoring system involves a sample of a sample. While school annual reporting was included in the 2018 sample, it was excluded in 2017 and 2019.¹¹⁵ This confirms the Committee’s concern about the laxness of school reporting. In effect, rigorous performance targets and public reporting (as set out in the SEF) has become optional. Notionally, the Department, DELs and NESA are supposed to be involved guaranteeing compliance but in practice, this does not happen for all schools, perhaps not even a majority of them. That three layers of quality assurance could fail so badly says a great deal about where the NSW government schools system has got to.
- 6.23** The Committee regards the establishment of an independent measurement authority as a bedrock reform for lifting NSW school outcomes. Schools should no longer self-assess under the SEF; the new authority should do it for them, reporting publicly (school by school) on strengths and weaknesses in performance. This should also include reporting on the new targets/results being introduced under outcome-based budgeting.
- 6.24** In its deliberations, the Committee identified three possible ways in which an independent measurement authority could be introduced:
1. As a new stand-alone body (although this would add to what is already a complex administrative system in school education);
 2. As an extension of CESE, combining its current research analysis and data collection role with school performance measurement and reporting; or
 3. Through a fundamental restructuring of NSW education, as follows:
 - Dividing the functions of the NSW Department of Education in two: with one section servicing the operational needs of schools (the traditional departmental function) and the other involving the establishment of a separate, independent Schools Performance Commission (SPC). The new body would be responsible for the measurement, public reporting and improvement of school performance. This would include managing the new system of output-based budgeting, school performance targets/accountability and interventions to fix failing schools. The new SPC would also administer the systems of principals’ performance-based contracts and Best Practice Schools model recommended above.

¹¹⁴ *Questions and Answers Paper*, NSW Legislative Council, 5 February 2020, p 1527.

¹¹⁵ *Questions and Answers Paper*, NSW Legislative Council, 5 February 2020, p 1527.

- Both agencies would report to the Minister for Education, with the SPC responsible for schools policy advice to government. The new Commission would assume the current roles of NESA (curriculum, assessment, school standards and teacher quality/certification), CESE (covering school best practice, measurement and accountability), the School Leadership Institute and DELs. It would also provide parents and citizens with an independent forum for investigating complaints against schools. SPC independence is vital. Its work would be overseen by a Board of Management, comprised of parent representatives (the NSW P&C), education trade unions, experts in school measurement/performance, businesspeople and other stakeholders (see Recommendation 66 below). The Board would report to the Education Minister (especially in certifying the SPC's independence) and make recommendations to Government for the appointment of senior staff.

6.25 Given the extent of the problems in NSW schools, the Committee believes, on balance, that establishing an SPC is the best option. It would provide a more comprehensive solution to declining school outcomes, although Option 2 is also appealing given its relative administrative simplicity.

Recommendation 35

That the Government establish an independent authority for the measurement of NSW school outcomes and the public reporting of them, examining the alternative models presented in the report.

(2) Not Just the Department

- 6.26** Every significant study into school results highlights the importance of the quality of teaching. One of the basic functions of the NSW Government in education is to accredit teachers as fit for classroom instruction – at the beginning of their teaching careers and over time, ensuring high initial standards are maintained.
- 6.27** When questioned by the Committee, the Education Department's Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery, conceded, "it may be" that the decline in NSW school results is a product of declining teacher standards. Ms Downey said, "We believe that quality teachers are the most important lever we have and (standards) need to be higher."¹¹⁶
- 6.28** The Committee found a shocking failure of duty with regard to NSW teacher accreditation. Just about everything that could go wrong at the accreditation body, NESA, has gone wrong. The Committee was disappointed with the explanations provided by NESA about these problems.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Evidence, Ms Liana Downey, Deputy Secretary Strategy and Delivery, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 14.

¹¹⁷ Evidence, Ms Lyn Kirkby, Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority, and Dr Sofia Kesidou, Executive Director, Assessment Standards, NSW Education Standards Authority, 10 October 2019, pp 35-49.

6.29 As with the Department, NESAs have a culture of defensiveness, whereby massive system failures are rationalised away, providing a fresh platform for further inaction. The establishment of a School Performance Commission (see above) has the advantage of overhauling NESAs and realigning its administration with a hard-headed, excuse-free focus on school outcomes. The quality-control functions of the NSW Government in education need to be under the one administrative body.

6.30 The Committee found that:

- Over the past three years, none of the State's approximately 24,000 new teachers ticked off for Proficient Teacher accreditation at school level have had their credentials reviewed by NESAs. There has been no inspection of their classroom proficiency – removing an entire quality control level from the system. Lyn Kirkby, NESAs's Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, said this was due to “a problem with our online system”.¹¹⁸
- Assuming the NESAs system will be moving back online shortly, they plan to resume checking on a random audit basis. This will be a “desktop research exercise” rather than actually going into schools. When the Committee asked what proportion of teachers will be audited this way, Ms Kirkby replied, “That is yet to be determined”.¹¹⁹ This confirmed one of the findings of the recent Auditor-General's report: that NESAs is not checking in classroom situations principals' decisions to accredit teachers as proficient. There's a clear risk that teachers may be accredited without meeting minimum standards.¹²⁰
- NESAs acknowledged “a fundamental fail” in the number of teachers being accredited as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. The projected number for 2019/20 is just 284.¹²¹ Many teachers would be worthy of this recognition but the process had been substandard. As Ms Kirkby conceded, “There has been a lot of complexity across the system with perceptions of duplication between employers and NESAs and we are working as well to simplify and streamline the system.”¹²²

6.31 In addition to these deficiencies, the September 2019 Auditor-General's report, ‘Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools’ identified five major problems:

- “The Department of Education does not effectively monitor teaching quality at a system level. This makes it difficult to ensure strategies to improve teaching quality are appropriately targeted. The Department is not collecting sufficient information to monitor teaching quality across the State. No information on teacher assessment against the Performance and Development Framework is collected centrally.”¹²³
- “The Department has no single consistently communicated definition of teaching quality, and includes varying descriptions of quality teaching in multiple tools and strategies. This

¹¹⁸ Evidence, Ms Lyn Kirkby, Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority, 10 October 2019, p 47.

¹¹⁹ Evidence, Ms Lyn Kirkby, Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority, 10 October 2019, p 47.

¹²⁰ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 2.

¹²¹ Answers to questions on notice, NSW Education Standards Authority, 4 November 2019, p 3.

¹²² Evidence, Ms Lyn Kirkby, Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority, 10 October 2019, p 42.

¹²³ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 2.

is problematic because clear expectations or quality teaching are needed to inform direct feedback to teachers on classroom practice, as well as to effectively deliver and evaluate strategies that aim to improve teacher performance.”¹²⁴

- Despite the problem of declining NSW school results, the public system is virtually incapable of identifying and dealing with under-performing teachers. Only 53 of the 66,000 teachers employed by the Department in 2018 were placed in improvement programs, less than 0.1 per cent. By comparison, a report on inspections conducted in the United Kingdom assessed the quality of teaching as ‘inadequate’ in three per cent of schools.¹²⁵ In 2018, only 29 NSW government school teachers were either dismissed or resigned due to concerns about the quality of their work.¹²⁶
- “The \$224 million Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) program has not been evaluated since it began in 2015. Evaluations are needed to compare the relative cost-effectiveness of strategies and target support to strategies providing the best value for money.”¹²⁷ Ostensibly funded to help primary schools improve teacher quality, there is little practical evidence of what QTSS is achieving. As Mr David Shoebridge from the Committee pointed out, it appears to be a program in search of a mission.¹²⁸
- While the Department wants to increase the number of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers, “it has no current strategies on how to use these teachers effectively to improve teaching quality across the system. There is also no guidance for schools on how to use these teachers at a local level.”¹²⁹

6.32 Minister Sarah Mitchell has accepted these criticisms and pledged to deal with them. On the day of the tabling of the Auditor-General’s report (26 September 2019), she told the Legislative Council that, “All report recommendations have been accepted by the department, which is in the process of implementing them in association with the NSW Education Standards Authority. I am advised that the Department will report to the Audit Office in July 2020 on the implementation of each recommendation.”¹³⁰ The Committee urges that this timetable be kept, reflecting the urgent task of lifting teacher quality and accreditation in NSW schools.

6.33 The Committee also supports comments made by the NSW Teachers Federation critical of the teacher accreditation system. In particular, many deserving, high-quality teachers are missing out on professional recognition and additional financial rewards due to the slow, cumbersome nature of the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher accreditation system. As the then Federation President Maurie Mulheron said in October, “Teachers in every school who would be deserving of the recognition [are missing out]” because the process is too time-consuming and “onerous”. In 2018, just 10 NSW teachers received these higher levels of accreditation. It

¹²⁴ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 11.

¹²⁵ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 18 and p 22.

¹²⁶ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 18.

¹²⁷ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 3.

¹²⁸ Transcript, Mr David Shoebridge MLC, Member, NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education, 10 October 2019, p 43.

¹²⁹ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 4.

¹³⁰ *Hansard*, NSW Legislative Council, 26 September 2019, p 27 (Sarah Mitchell).

urgently needs to be streamlined, through in-class inspections of teacher quality, promptly moving talented teachers into these higher bands.¹³¹

- 6.34** Clearly the current system of teacher accreditation is not working. It lacks the staff-power and remit to regularly scrutinise classroom practices. It is simply appalling that for the past three years, no NSW teacher applying for Proficient Teacher status has had the quality of his or her work reviewed. Even now, the suggested remedy does not involve inspections of classroom performance in situ.
- 6.35** There can be no excuse for system failure on this scale, or NESA's neglect in allowing the problem to be unresolved for so long. The culture of defensiveness and excuse making in NSW education extends well beyond the Department. In this instance, it warrants the restoration of a school inspector system – an independent, evidence-based source of classroom accountability.
- 6.36** Inspectors are needed to independently review the judgement of principals at teacher proficiency level, plus expedite higher levels of accreditation. The deficiencies identified by the Committee and the Auditor-General can only be overcome by a network of inspectors focused on lifting teacher quality for the benefit of students.
- 6.37** School inspectors can also play a role in assisting the professional development and performance of teachers. The Auditor-General's report found that "the Department has no central oversight of schools' implementation of the Performance and Development Framework (PDF)" – the key system of appraisal and feedback designed to constantly improve teacher and principal performance.¹³²
- 6.38** The Auditor-General also reported that, "The Department does not monitor whether teachers have a Performance and Development Plan (PDP), receive feedback from lesson observations or formal feedback on their performance."¹³³ Further, "The Department does not clearly communicate its expectations for teachers' professional goals or provide any guidance on what effective professional goals look like."¹³⁴ Again, it is left to the school.
- 6.39** At school level, the Auditor-General concluded that implementation of the PDF relies too heavily on "mutual agreement" with teachers, such that:

Under the Framework, teachers collaborate with their supervisors to establish goals, nominate a colleague to observe their teaching practice and agree on annual written feedback on progress towards their goals. The requirement for teachers to agree with all goals within their PDP limits the ability of the principal or supervisor to set goals to target areas of greatest individual need. Setting appropriate goals is critical as they form the basis of professional learning, observations, self-assessment and annual review. Teachers can select who conducts observations and negotiate what will be observed. This introduces risks that under-performing teachers will choose peers rather than supervisors to conduct the observations and do not receive effective feedback. Teachers

¹³¹ Pallavi Singhal, 'Accreditation for not checked NSW teachers in three years, inquiry hears', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 2019, <http://www.smh.com.au/education/accreditation-for-nsw-teachers-not-checked-for-three-years-inquiry-hears-20191010-p52zlp.html>

¹³² NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 16.

¹³³ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 16.

¹³⁴ NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 17.

must also agree to all written feedback. This limits opportunities for robust supervisor feedback to target areas for improvement.¹³⁵

- 6.40** Teachers are supposed to have two of their lessons observed per annum, as part of the PDF “but there is no guidance on effective methods of observation or how to provide effective feedback.”¹³⁶ The Auditor-General surveyed a random sample of 130 PDPs but found only 10 cases where the two classroom observations had been conducted.¹³⁷ This is another striking example of a lack of quality control in NSW government schools.
- 6.41** Ultimately, students suffer badly for these failings. As the Auditor-General has noted, “Australian research has suggested that effective systems of teacher appraisal and feedback can increase teacher effectiveness by up to 30 percent.”¹³⁸ The Committee believes significant gains can be achieved by introducing inspectors into the classroom, fulfilling roles currently missing from the system: mentors, advisors, assessors and quality control experts. The Committee advocates this reform as a logical consequence from the Auditor-General’s findings.
- 6.42** The Committee recommends major improvements to teacher accreditation and quality as follows:

Recommendation 36

That the Government urgently implement the recommendations of the 2019 NSW Auditor General’s report on teacher accreditation and quality.

Recommendation 37

That the Government establish a School Inspectorate as an independent unit undertaking regular inspections of classroom practices, teacher quality and school management. The inspectors would be responsible for auditing teacher accreditation, recommending action against substandard teachers, handling public complaints against schools and additional functions (as outlined later in the report - see Recommendations 39, 40, 44, 55 and 60).

Recommendation 38

That the Government task the proposed School Inspectorate (in cooperation with DELs) with proactively identifying different levels of teacher accreditation, overcoming the problem of very low numbers of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers. Currently, teachers need to apply for these higher rankings and pay an application fee. Under the new system, inspectors would identify them in the first instance and, as long as they agree, confer the new accreditation (at no cost to teachers).

¹³⁵ NSW Auditor-General, *'Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools'*, 26 September 2019, pp 16-17.

¹³⁶ NSW Auditor-General, *'Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools'*, 26 September 2019, p 17.

¹³⁷ NSW Auditor-General, *'Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools'*, 26 September 2019, p 17.

¹³⁸ NSW Auditor-General, *'Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools'*, 26 September 2019, p 17.

Recommendation 39

That the Government ensure the new school inspectors have access to all classrooms and the capacity to set improvement goals for teachers (in collaboration with principals, DELs and the teachers themselves), playing a vital monitoring, assessment and feedback role in improving teacher quality.

Recommendation 40

That the Government ensure that school inspectors (if established) are truly independent with a singular focus on improving classroom performance and accountability. They should also be a point of data collection on teacher quality across the government system.

Recommendation 41

That the Government use the introduction of outcome-based budgeting to produce a single, coherent definition of teacher quality (based on the value added to student results) as the key measure of teacher and school success.

(3) Hope Over Evidence

- 6.43** A recurring theme of the Inquiry was the random nature of educational excellence. An outstanding school leader or inspirational outside influence might lift up a school's performance, but this is mostly by chance. There are few systems in place in NSW government schools to mandate or provide incentives for quality.
- 6.44** Instead, the prevailing ethos is one of hope. Repeatedly, the Committee asked its witnesses (from government and non-government sectors) about the central paradox in education policy: how can best practice in schools be so well known and defined without being embedded in all schools? Universally the answer came back: 'We are sharing information about what works best in our schools'.
- 6.45** To use the words of Mr Dizdar:
- We case study those sites that are, in my words, punching above their weight in student performance. We certainly share the ingredients of what that success looks like ... The constant challenge that we have is to stay sharp on the evidence base, to bring that evidence base to the fore in a contextual way with sites that are doing really well, and then to look at how we might offer professional learning in that area. And to do that in an expedient way is very important.¹³⁹
- 6.46** Sharing is nice. We all want our children to be good sharers. But it's not a sufficient basis for ensuring schools implement best practice. The material shared can be readily discarded. Without clear performance measures and accountability in place, no one ever knows if genuine attempts were made to improve school performance.

¹³⁹ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 16.

- 6.47** Inside the government system, another ethos was apparent, that of goodwill. Sometimes this borders on the delusional: pretending that little has gone wrong in schools because everyone is trying so hard, that goodwill abounds – and this will soon translate into stronger school outcomes. It’s an example of hope over evidence.
- 6.48** Given the crisis in NSW school results, the Committee did not find in Departmental representatives a sense of realism or the urgency needed to repair the problem. When Mr Dizdar was asked about action to fix failing schools, he replied:
- We have the Director of Educational Leadership, who is the direct line manager of the principal ... have performance conversations with the leadership of the school. It may lead to a school review that is driven by the Department in line with our review procedures. The recommendations of a review are mandatory for implementation by a school ... It may lead, in some circumstances, that we need a change of leadership.¹⁴⁰
- 6.49** Mr Dizdar was then asked how often changes are made to the leadership of failing schools. He said:
- In my operational experience it happens a number of times in a range of contexts. I know of cases where we have had to have performance conversations with the leadership who have decided to retire or resign or take a demotion. Or we have had to follow improvement program processes.¹⁴¹
- 6.50** Most people hearing this would think there was a rigorous departmental policy of not tolerating failed school leadership. To be certain, the Committee asked (on notice) for “some data over the last five years that shows the number of occasions where a school leadership team was changed” due to poor performance.
- 6.51** The answer came back from the Department as follows:
- Strengthening school leadership is one of the five priority reforms for the Department of Education. The Department does not centrally hold the number of occasions on which a school leadership team was changed ... The process of removing an existing school leader or leadership team is a difficult one for the school and all those in it. On rare occasions this has happened.¹⁴²
- 6.52** The bottom line in the data finally provided? In the five years from 1 July 2014 to 31 October 2019, two principals were “separated from the Department after being found to be inefficient”. Presumably this is a synonym for being dismissed for under-performance. One other principal was “placed on alternative duties after being deemed inefficient”.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, pp 16-17.

¹⁴¹ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 17.

¹⁴² Answers to questions on notice, Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 5.

¹⁴³ Answers to questions on notice, Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 5.

- 6.53** In summary, over a five-year period, 0.14 per cent of NSW government school principals were removed from their positions for failing in the job.¹⁴⁴ That's all. One does not know whether to laugh or cry. At one level, it's comical to run a major under-performing system this way.
- 6.54** On the serious side, it sends a message to other school leaders that no matter how badly they perform or how far student results decline, they are unlikely to lose their jobs. NSW school principals, regardless of how they do their jobs, are virtually untouchable.
- 6.55** The big losers are the students themselves. They have their life prospects damaged by a system that tolerates failure at the highest levels of school leadership. The Department says it is "difficult" to dismiss a principal.¹⁴⁵ Maybe it is, but not as difficult as moving through life with a poor education. NSW needs serious people facing up to serious problems in its public schools, not apologists too weak to upset those they know personally.
- 6.56** This confirms the need for performance-based contracts for principals. The system also needs a strong, reliable system of intervention to deal with failing schools. Hope and goodwill are not enough.
- 6.57** The Committee was told that, "historically schools needed to reach out" to the Department for assistance. The new system of school performance targets is designed to change that. At the beginning of each year, the Department will have "conversations" with principals and DELs "about what they think that they need" to improve a particular school.¹⁴⁶
- 6.58** In an important question, the Hon. Wes Fang asked Department officials, "If we move to outcome-based budgeting, how will that change the levers (of improvement) that are available to you if you continue to have a school which does not meet targets?" Mr Dizdar responded by pointing to "tailored support" programs, whereby a school failing to meet targets could receive a range of extra assistance: in literacy and numeracy, professional development, "additional human resources" (staffing) and student wellbeing initiatives.¹⁴⁷
- 6.59** This would apply not just to disadvantaged schools, but also "more advantageous contexts where they should be punching way above where they are at". That is, all under-performing schools (as measured by the new targets) will be subject to tailored support interventions. Mr Dizdar said that under outcome-based budgeting, "it may require that we give additional resources" to these schools "for a period of time" – presumably until their performance meets expectations.¹⁴⁸
- 6.60** After being told earlier in the Inquiry that the introduction of outcome-based budgeting would not change school funding allocations, it became clear that, in fact, they would – in circumstances of failing schools and tailored support. The Committee supports this move. It should be formalised, however, by the development of a Government policy for the new

¹⁴⁴ Answers to questions on notice, Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 5.

¹⁴⁵ Answers to questions on notice, Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 5.

¹⁴⁶ Evidence, Ms Liana Downey, Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 23.

¹⁴⁷ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 24.

¹⁴⁸ Evidence, Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education, 8 October 2019, p 24.

Tailored Support Program. School targets, intervention and outcomes should not be held in secret, known only to the Department. The public has a right to know.

- 6.61** Tailored support for schools started in 2018, with 300 schools involved. In 2019 this increased to 500 schools¹⁴⁹ (nearly one-quarter of all NSW government schools). The support ranges from single-issue interventions (such as behavioural problems or failing literacy and numeracy results) to wider school problems. It usually emphasises the importance of professional development, explicit teaching and evidence-based practices. Extra resources and staff are allocated, paid for by the Department.¹⁵⁰
- 6.62** Tailored support is run by the Department’s Educational Services, in collaboration with DELs (previously known as regional directors, who are now responsible for assisting with the performance of clusters of 20 schools). The process relies heavily on goodwill. Schools need to agree to the support plan and “buy-in” to the changes. As Georgina Harrisson, Deputy Secretary of Educational Services, told the Committee, “We need to be welcome in the school”.¹⁵¹
- 6.63** The Department shared with the Committee case studies of the early success of Tailored Support at six government schools. In the listed outcomes, only one of the schools was measured by a hard-data result: improved Year 5 writing, plotted on a comparative graph. The other performance outcomes were along the lines of: “Development of whole school scopes and sequences with literacy outcomes embedded; whole school approach to differentiated programming; whole school expectation for explicit teaching; and whole school system for assessment for learning.”¹⁵²
- 6.64** These are not actually outcomes but rather, nice intentions. Verbiage of this kind has little meaning for parents and the general public. The Committee believes this program should be firmed up into a rigorous set of hard-data targets and reportable outcomes, as per the recommendation below.

¹⁴⁹ Ms Georgina Harrisson, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Education Department, 29 November 2019, p 38.

¹⁵⁰ Ms Georgina Harrisson, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Education Department, 29 November 2019, p 39.

¹⁵¹ Ms Georgina Harrisson, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Education Department, 29 November 2019, p 38.

¹⁵² Answer to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 39.

Recommendation 42

That the Government develop a formal Tailored Support policy, specifying:

- the measured level of under-performance that automatically triggers intervention in a failing public school (a mandatory process that schools must agree to);
 - the range of changes likely to be made to school practice to improve school outcomes;
 - the type of binding performance plans and hard-data measures and targets entered into with the school's leadership, guiding the Tailored Support process;
 - under outcome-based budgeting, the additional resources provided to each school receiving Tailored Support (as a change to school funding – that is, an additional RAM category); and
 - the level of public accountability at the end of the process, with a comprehensive report to the school community on what has occurred, its successes and failures. The objective is to give schools a chance to improve, rather than stigmatising them at the outset with an announcement of Tailored Support intervention.
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(4) Laissez Faire Teaching

- 6.65** A striking feature of the Chair's program of school visits was the wide variation in institutional purpose. Yes, it can be said that every school is different, as are the communities they serve. But the fluctuations across the system are now huge. Some schools are more like community health clinics or social work laboratories. Others resemble pastoral care centres, with a greater emphasis on 'well-being' than academic achievement.
- 6.66** As schools have been expected to do more in non-scholarly areas of responsibility, their institutional focus has scattered. High performing schools still tightly concentrate on exam results but this is no longer a given across the system. As the Committee Chair visited more schools, he would walk out of some, wondering, 'Compared to other places I've visited, can we still call this a school?'
- 6.67** With relatively little public comment or debate, the core purpose of large parts of the schools system has been transformed. Not surprisingly, over the past 20 years, this trend has coincided with the deterioration in NSW education results. If students spend less time developing basic skills and deep subject knowledge, how can they be expected to compete with Asian nations that emphasise nothing else?
- 6.68** Clearly something has gone wrong in education policy. The know-how exists to make every school a good school. Best Practice Schools have shown what can be achieved, even against the odds of community disadvantage. Yet across the system, academic results have been disappointing with NSW going backwards compared to other jurisdictions. One can only conclude a vast number of schools are being run through low-effect-level programs.

Best Practice School Case Study: Wollondilly Anglican College, Tahmoor, south of Picton¹⁵³

This school boasts a strong success record: well-above-average 2019 NAPLAN results in all years and all disciplines (compared to similar schools); enrolments growing at four times the expected level; and a thriving reputation in the local community (a hinterland area outside Sydney, typically middle and working class). It's a K-12 school with enrolments of 920. What are the sources of its success?

WAC has only had one Headmaster, Stuart Quarmby, since its establishment in 2004. He has built a culture based on discipline, high expectations, intense professional development, constant pastoral care and evidence-based teaching (direct instruction and phonics). He proudly talks about the importance of traditional values. The school pulls in one direction, the Quarmby model built up over 15 years.

WAC has kept it simple, the basics of what works in practice. Foundational skills and deep knowledge in subjects are a huge priority. The school has a 98 percent staff retention rate and no job-share classrooms (all single teacher). There is no group work in classrooms.

“We also try to teach what we call ‘A Second Education’ here: morals, ethics, values, character, strength and resilience”, Mr Quarmby says, noting how this reinforces the success of first education/academic results. He believes in schools today, there is “not enough of going back to where it starts, with discipline”.

On his blog on the day of the Chair’s visit, there was an article on ‘anti-wussification’, a wonderful term. It concluded:

God does not promise that life will be easy. In fact, the only promise is that this life will be tough. The road that leads to life is narrow and bumpy. You will trip and fall from time to time. Does a society seeking to bubble wrap the narrow road and hand out slippers really make it better in the long run?

The biggest club at the school is the Homework Club on a Wednesday afternoon. The students and staff here also do a lot of outreach: cooking meals for needy families, a program helping poor communities in Vietnam and helping with the recovery from Picton’s floods.

The major innovation in school design is the presence of seven libraries. These are at the centre of every classroom block, like a reception area, meaning that students don’t make special visits to the library. They walk through them on the way to class and use them as common areas every day, reading and researching as they see fit. Smart thinking.

WAC is a fine school in every respect, a credit to its leadership, staff and school community. It has a strong sense of order, discipline, evidence and excellence. Why has it been so hard to scale up this type of success across the State?

- 6.69** There is a strong case for maintaining school autonomy in NSW, for allowing school leaders to get on with the pedagogy and management decisions that best suit their school. It would be foolish to think that a large, diverse system such as this could be run effectively through centralised control.
- 6.70** But equally, there must be quality-control systems in place ensuring all school investments and pedagogical decisions are evidence-based. This is a basic responsibility in the sound use of taxpayers’ funds and outcome-based budgeting. The worst thing that can happen to a school is

¹⁵³ Correspondence, the Hon Mark Latham MLC to committee, 4 October 2019.

to misuse its autonomy: to instruct its students with failed programs, to ignore the evidence base and recklessly pursue other agendas.

- 6.71** In his school visits, the Chair spoke to teachers who acknowledged the problem of educational fads. Too often school leaders attend conferences or listen to TED Talks or read media speculation about ‘the next big thing in education’ and bring this back to their school, untested by a rigorous evidence base.
- 6.72** Such actions are well intentioned, often in desperate situations where disadvantaged schools are keen to try new things – anything to break their cycle of despair. The fad programs can also appeal to broader school goals, such as the ‘social development’ of students; or match the political/ideological viewpoint of principals and teachers. But clearly, in the best interests of students, nothing new should be introduced into classrooms unless it is proven to work, to boost learning outcomes.
- 6.73** The Local Schools, Local Decisions policy seems to have been implemented the wrong way round. Instead of having evidence-based boundaries around what schools can do in the classroom, they have full freedom. Instead of allowing principals to hire their own staff and making them accountable for these decisions, the Education Department runs half of the recruitment process.
- 6.74** With the introduction of LSLD, Departmental knowledge of what is actually happening in classrooms is minimal. Through series of questions, the Committee has established that in the following areas or responsibility there is no central monitoring, database or awareness of what schools are doing: classroom teaching methods; classroom content; learning materials (including library books); external consultants in schools; staff attendance at various conferences/training courses; student award/recognition practices; and testing and grading policies.
- 6.75** In summary, NSW schools policy features the worst of all worlds. Partial LSLD autonomy (sans principals’ responsibilities for hiring staff) has no centralised systems of classroom quality-control strapped around it. Vague notions of ‘information sharing’ and ‘we all want to improve’ are not enough to lift school outcomes.
- 6.76** The onus must be on those wanting to introduce new programs into schools to demonstrate their evidence-based value. This involves more than anecdotes and new theories. The program must have been tested (preferably through large-sample control trials measured over time) and repeatedly demonstrated positive aggregated results. CESE has already compiled an extensive evidence hierarchy, so the know-how exists in NSW for getting this right.¹⁵⁴
- 6.77** The Government should reject the views of the education establishment in wanting unlimited classroom flexibility. Things can actually get worse, with the Interim Masters Curriculum Review (October 2019) writing of how: “Within a clear framework of expectations, teachers should have flexibility to decide what to teach, when and how to teach it and how much time to spend teaching it.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Evidence, Mr Glenn Fahey, Research Fellow, Education, Centre for Independent Studies, 8 October 2019, p 42.

¹⁵⁵ NSW Education Standards Authority, *Nurturing wonder and igniting passion: NSW Curriculum Review-Interim Report*, October 2019, p 71.

- 6.78** The era of laissez faire teaching must end. Evidence-based boundaries need to be placed around classroom practice. Governments need to govern and teachers need to teach solely by the things that are known to work for and benefit their students. This discipline also needs to apply to the Education Department. Too often, it has introduced fad/experimental programs contrary to the existing evidence base. Some critics have placed the introduction of student ‘growth mindset’ in this category.¹⁵⁶ Others have expressed concern about the decision in 2014-15, at a huge capital cost, to design hundreds of new government school buildings and classrooms on open-plan principles.
- 6.79** Research has shown that open-plan ‘learning spaces’ (with multiple classes and teachers occupying the same, enlarged room) are counter-productive. Teachers and students struggle to hear what is being said. They tend to be distracted by activity from the adjoining classes.¹⁵⁷ In Hattie’s research, open space classroom architecture has a miniscule effect-level of 0.01, while co- or team teaching has a low-effect impact of 0.19.¹⁵⁸ Several of the schools promoting their open-plan experiments on the Department’s website have experienced a sharp decline in NAPLAN results.
- 6.80** The age of experimental education in NSW must end. CESE should be commissioned to research and certify a high-effect menu of classroom content, teaching methods, learning materials, classroom design and external consultants, from which government schools are obliged to teach and operate. Schools would be free to choose from the menu but with clear, evidence-based boundaries in place. If new fad ideas gain currency among educationalists, CESE should test them prior to any authorisation for schools to use them.
- 6.81** In effect, CESE’s menu would be the NSW equivalent of the Victorian HITS (High Impact Teaching Strategies) document, which has attracted the Committee’s interest. The Victorian Education Department has described HITS as:
- Ten instructional practices that reliably increase student learning whenever they are applied. They emerge from the findings of tens of thousands of studies of what has worked in classrooms across Australia and the world. International experts such as John Hattie and Robert Marzano have synthesised these studies and ranked hundreds of teaching strategies by the contribution they make to student learning (effect-sizes). The HITS sit at the top of these rankings.¹⁵⁹
- 6.82** The Committee was impressed by evidence from the Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW, Michael Carr, who pointed out the support the independent sector gives to its schools and teachers in developing evidence-based programs:

¹⁵⁶ Centre for Independent Studies, ‘Growth Mindset: Just Another Platitude’, 23 February 2018, <https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/articles/growth-mindset-just-another-platitude/>.

¹⁵⁷ The Conversation, *Students struggle to hear teacher in new fad open-plan classrooms* (17 January 2020), <http://theconversation.com/students-struggle-to-hear-teacher-in-new-fad-open-plan-classrooms-37102>

¹⁵⁸ Dr John Hattie, Professor and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute, University of Melbourne, ‘What doesn’t work in education: The politics of distraction’, June 2015, p 34.

¹⁵⁹ Victorian State Government, *High Impact Teaching Strategies: Excellence in Teaching and Learning* (17 January 2020), <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/support/high-impact-teaching-strategies.pdf>, p 5.

...when it comes to improving outcomes for kids the evidence is very clear: the most important factor is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. You do not have to be Einstein to realise that. That is straightforward. The second is the quality of the leadership. The third area is one which I think we overlook, that is, the role that parents play as the prime educators of their children in supporting the education of their children.¹⁶⁰

6.83 Specifically, Mr Carr said:

We have a team of approximately 70 educational consultants as part of our staff. Their job is to go into those schools. Often times they will model the sorts of teaching and learning experiences that are required. They will mentor staff. They will coach staff so it is a lot of one-on-one. That does not happen straight away. Of course, there is a lot of negotiation with the leaders of the school to make sure they are comfortable with that approach. But it is very much a hands on approach. On most occasions this school improvement process will go for up to three years in a school, so there is no magic wand, it is a lot of hard work getting in there trying to change practices to ensure that the modelling is such that the teachers can then adapt or adopt those techniques.¹⁶¹

6.84 The Committee believes support systems such as these are needed in government schools to help teachers teach the CESE evidence-based menu.

Recommendation 43

That the Government commission CESE to research and introduce a mandatory best practice framework for teaching methods, learning materials, classroom content and practice, physical classroom design, external consultants and school management, within which NSW government schools are obliged to operate (henceforth known in the report as 'the CESE menu').

Recommendation 44

That the Department of Education use school inspectors to guarantee compliance with the CESE menu of educational best practice.

Recommendation 45

That the Government ensure, once the "CESE menu" is established, classroom teachers have the appropriate support to implement this "menu" into their teaching plans, in a similar model to the support provided by the peak organisation for independent schools.

¹⁶⁰ Evidence, Mr Michael Carr, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW, 10 October 2019, p 26.

¹⁶¹ Evidence, Mr Michael Carr, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW, 10 October 2019, pp 26-27.

Recommendation 46

That the Minister for Education use the proposed independent measurement authority to overcome the lack of central data collection about NSW schools, building a detailed information base to help guide better practices.

Recommendation 47

That the Government urgently review the effectiveness of its open-plan classroom initiative.

(5) Failing Education Faculties

- 6.85** From the evidence before it, the Committee believes Minister Mitchell is correct in saying that universities have “forgotten their societal duty to put only the most qualified graduates in front of our kids”.¹⁶² The Inquiry heard from senior representatives of the Schools of Education at Sydney and NSW Universities, those responsible for the teaching of school teachers.
- 6.86** Professor Hayes (Head of the University of Sydney’s School of Education and Social Work) did not think that there is anything wrong with the current university system. She suggested the Committee to make a distinction between 'the noise about schools and the noise about issues around quality of teaching from the actual evidence'. Professor Hayes told the Committee that "...based on a very broad range of indicators ... [t]he evidence suggests that young people in Australia are doing very well and that schools are doing very well". To support her claim with a specific example, she said, “if you consider what schools do in terms of taking young people from age five to age 18 and navigating that experience - Just look at the Schools Spectacular that was on recently. Look at some of the really positive things about schools.”¹⁶³
- 6.87** Professor Tognolini (Director of the Centre of Educational Measurement and Assessment at Sydney University) also suggested that different indicators might provide different interpretations about students' performance. For example, he suggested that the state's performance, as assessed by the State-based examinations, had improved, whereas the performance under the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) had gone backwards. Professor Tognolini attributed the failing in PISA results to factors such as motivation. He said that:

...everybody says you cannot teach to PISA. So why are we judging our system on something we cannot teach to? There is a whole motivation factor associated with PISA. I do a lot of work in China ... Hong Kong, and Singapore etcetera...

¹⁶² Minister Sarah Mitchell MLC, NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, 'For 20 years our students have been slipping – but money is not the answer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 2019.

¹⁶³ Evidence, Professor Debra Hayes, Head of School, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, 29 November 2019, p 12.

When they [the students] walk in, they walk in singing the national anthem. They are going to do it — represent their country. Our kids ... [are saying]: "Why are you picking on me to do this test? ..." That accounts for a huge number of marks.¹⁶⁴

- 6.88** When the Committee Chair suggested that perhaps NSW could improve its PISA outcomes by its students singing the Australian National Anthem, Professor Tognolini cautioned the Committee about “unintended consequences”.¹⁶⁵ Again, the Committee is not inclined to interpret PISA results and international rankings as a function of student convenience and national pride.
- 6.89** In her evidence, Professor Beswick (Head of the School of Education, University of NSW) said that, “Teachers have never been better qualified at any point in history”.¹⁶⁶ When asked about the Sydney University whistle-blower who released a report in September 2018 showing that, in NSW and the ACT, students with 0-19 ATARs have been admitted to university courses for teaching, Professor Beswick was unaware of such information.¹⁶⁷
- 6.90** Professor Hayes told the Committee it is possible to enter university with a very low ATAR and, upon graduation, become a very good teacher. “Otherwise our teaching profession will be an incredibly narrow profession of people who have done well at school”, she said, “We know that there are many groups in society who, through no fault of their own, simply do not do well at school.”¹⁶⁸
- 6.91** The Committee strongly disagrees with this perspective. It is ridiculous to say the teaching profession is strengthened by the inclusion of people who did poorly at school. NSW parents would be horrified at the thought of those who failed at school being actively encouraged to come back as the teachers of their children.
- 6.92** Inevitably, excellence in any profession requires a narrowing of professional selection. We expect doctors and scientists to be part of “an incredibly narrow profession of people who have done well at school”, and teachers should be no different. It devalues the status of teaching to think and act otherwise.
- 6.93** Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) data shows a direct correlation between higher ATAR entry to university teacher education and stronger undergraduate pass and retention rates. The better the school leaving result, the better the undergraduate teaching results (and presumably the better the trained teacher).¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Evidence, Professor Jim Tognolini, Director, Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment, University of Sydney, 20 November 2019, p 13.

¹⁶⁵ Evidence, Professor Jim Tognolini, Director, Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment, University of Sydney, 20 November 2019, p 13.

¹⁶⁶ Evidence, Professor Kim Beswick, Head of School of Education, University of New South Wales, 29 November 2019, p 8.

¹⁶⁷ Evidence, Professor Kim Beswick, Head of School of Education, University of New South Wales, 29 November 2019, p 8.

¹⁶⁸ Evidence, Professor Deb Hayes, Head of School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, 29 November 2019, p 8.

¹⁶⁹ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Ltd., ‘Insights: Initial Teacher Education: Data Report 2019’, 2019, pp 34 and 50.

- 6.94** In the university admissions announced in late 2019, students with ATARs of less than 50 were admitted as education undergraduates in NSW and the ACT. The Committee supports the reported comments of the NSW Teachers Federation President, Maurie Mulheron, who said of the university admissions, “If you don’t have the intellectual capacity, you won’t be able to do teaching. It’s an extraordinarily demanding job and we should be expecting the best and brightest going into it.”¹⁷⁰ Almost one-half of NSW HSC students achieved an ATAR above 70. This is the cut-off point recently set in Victoria for entry into teaching courses. Mr Mulheron said he would prefer an 80 ATAR cut-off “to meet demand but not lower the standard”, taking “no more than the top 30 percent of students”.¹⁷¹ The Committee supports moving to the Victorian benchmark at this stage.
- 6.95** The Committee also supports efforts by the NSW Government to lift the quality of teaching, most notably in requiring a university 70 Grade Point Average (GPA) from teaching graduates before they can work in government schools. We endorse Minister Mitchell’s statement that, “A low ATAR and poor university marks are not good enough if you want to be a teacher.”¹⁷² It follows, therefore, that the Government should extend its 70 GPA requirement into a minimum ATAR benchmark for school leavers moving into teaching.

Recommendation 48

That the Government only allow immediate-past school leavers who have a 70 minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and 70 university Grade Point Average (GPA) to teach in a government school. This 70/70 rule would be in addition to the current HSC benchmark for new teachers (needing three Band 5s, including one in English).

- 6.96** The Committee also urges a rethink of the overall teacher education framework. Over many decades, there has been a strong industrial relations assumption that only university-qualified teachers can work in NSW schools. There has even been hostility to non-teachers taking up senior management roles in the Education Department.
- 6.97** For all the talk about developing ‘21st Century learning’, the system still functions more like an 18th Century guild. It’s time to open the doors of teaching to a wider range of high-calibre professional people.
- 6.98** In some schools, there is growing unease about the quality of university graduates. In 2019, for instance, four leading NSW non-government schools (The Scots College, Blue Mountains Grammar, William Clarke College and St Andrews Cathedral School) formed the “Teaching

¹⁷⁰ Natassia Chrysanthos, ‘Low ATAR students “won’t be able to do teaching”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 2019, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/loaw-atar-students-won-t-be-able-to-do-teaching-20191224-p53mpe.html>

¹⁷¹ Natassia Chrysanthos, ‘Low ATAR students “won’t be able to do teaching”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 2019, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/loaw-atar-students-won-t-be-able-to-do-teaching-20191224-p53mpe.html>

¹⁷² Sarah Mitchell, NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, ‘For 20 years our students have been slipping - but money is not the answer’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/education/for-20-years-our-students-have-been-slipping-but-money-is-not-the-answer-20191206-p53hn6.html>.

Schools Alliance' as an alternative to the current teacher training system. They believe teaching graduates are "not classroom ready". They have developed their own program of in-house placements and Alphacrucis College training (at Parramatta) to overcome this weakness.¹⁷³

- 6.99** The Committee Chair has spoken to the leaders of Best Practice Schools who have made a telling observation: It's better if the universities teach their graduate teachers less. Instead of filling their heads with wasteful content, it's better if they are empty vessels. That way a successful school can pour into its new teachers the carefully crafted standardised methods of the school through intensive, in-house professional development.
- 6.100** It logically follows that a bright, successful person from most vocational backgrounds could enter such a school and quickly become a successful teacher. Their capacity to absorb and teach the 'school model' is more important than learning a wide range of (often superfluous) pedagogies at university.
- 6.101** This is the approach underpinning the Teach For Australia (TFA) program, which has been particularly successful in Victoria and Western Australia. TFA recruits high-calibre people from outside the teaching profession, puts them through an intensive training course and places them in disadvantaged schools. At the end of three years, more than 85 per cent are still working as teachers. The program is funded through a combination of philanthropic and government resources.¹⁷⁴
- 6.102** Teach For Australia works by the motto "A postcode shouldn't define a child's future but a great teacher can" - a sentiment supported by the Committee. By age 15, children from low SES backgrounds are, on average, three years behind the schooling level of those from high SES backgrounds. For this reason, 75 percent of Teach For Australia recruits are allocated to disadvantaged schools, many in remote and rural areas. The 2019 cohort had an average ATAR of over 90. Over the 10 years of the program, 830 new teachers have been placed in the schools system of five different States/Territories. All have had Bachelor's degrees, with nearly half holding advanced university qualifications. The teacher vetting is highly selective, with the top eight percent of applicants placed into schools.¹⁷⁵
- 6.103** The evidence suggests Teach For Australia provides new energy, inspiration and high-level skills in struggling schools. It's further proof of how success breeds success in life. There are many positive testimonials to the program interstate, but one captures the spirit and successes of Teach For Australia. The Northern Bay Secondary College is a government school in Geelong, Victoria, with a high proportion of Indigenous students. Principal Fred Clarke has said, "What we like most about the program is the unique opportunity it provides us to recruit high calibre, quality teachers who each have a strong social conscience and who we generally retain on the completion of the program to take on significant curriculum leadership roles within our college."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Jordan Baker, 'Private schools to train their own teachers with new classroom cadetship', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 November 2019.

¹⁷⁴ See Teach For Australia, <https://www.teachforaustralia.org/>.

¹⁷⁵ Teach for Australia, <http://www.teachforaustralia.org>

¹⁷⁶ Teach for Australia, *Personal Perspectives: No student is a bad student – unless you believe they are*, 1 March 2015, <http://www.teachforaustralia.org/stories/no-student-is-a-bad-student/>

- 6.104** Unfortunately, due to objections from the Teachers Federation, TFA hasn't been used in NSW schools. This is denying students in disadvantaged communities (such as public housing estates and Indigenous areas) access to role models and new forms of instructional excellence. To overcome this lost opportunity, the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 49

That the Government develop a policy to allow people from a wide range of backgrounds (not just university Education graduates) to teach, provided that:

- as a quality control measure, entry to the profession should still be by competitive means; and
- non-graduate teachers also comply with Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards to be registered for employment in schools.

Recommendation 50

That the Minister for Education introduce the Teach For Australia program into NSW government schools as a matter of priority.

Recommendation 51

That the Government explore other means in its own recruitment and training processes (including an expansion of the School Leadership Institute) by which highly successful people from outside the teaching profession can be recruited into NSW schools (subject to the quality safeguards set out in Recommendation 49).

- 6.105** The three Education professors enthusiastically defended the current system, while acknowledging limits to how much a teaching degree can achieve. Professor Hayes pointed out, "We are really constrained in the time available to work with students".¹⁷⁷ The Committee was left with the impression that, in content and scope, teaching degrees have become increasingly shallow. In trying to cover more issues, they have moved away from the basics of learning.
- 6.106** Professor Tognolini said that the broadening of the school curriculum (through policy statements such as the 2008 Melbourne Declaration) has created new challenges in assessing graduate quality. It is harder to measure learning domains and provided an example of current research underway at the University of Sydney trying to measure, at a student level, graduate quality with the intention of reporting on students "like cultural competence, creativity, critical thinking, communications and digital literacy".¹⁷⁸ Graduate teachers need to master a wider range of more nebulous skills and subjects. The focus is not necessarily on teaching methods that achieve high-effect classroom results.
- 6.107** The Committee concluded that university Schools of Education have become disconnected from the practical needs of best-practice schools in NSW. Instead of instructing undergraduates in pedagogies that maximise student outcomes, they are teaching a wide menu of methods, regardless of proven evidence. This is leaving new teachers confused as to what actually works

¹⁷⁷ Evidence, Professor Debra Hayes, Head of School, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, 29 November 2019, p 4.

¹⁷⁸ Evidence, Professor Jim Tognolini, Director, Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment, University of Sydney, 20 November 2019, p 7.

in the classroom. They are ill-equipped to start their teaching careers in data-informed, evidence-based schools.

6.108 As the Principal of a Best Practice School, Manisha Gazula of Marsden Road Public, told the Committee:

There is a risk that if you tell teachers to start having a buffet of strategies, how do you know what the teacher is choosing is right for the classroom? Whereas [with] explicit teaching, [the] science and evidence tell us that that works. I take it on that basis. It is not my opinion; it is what I read and therefore I am giving that in my school.¹⁷⁹

6.109 At the hearing, a Committee Member (Hon Scott Farlow) told Mrs Gazula and another exemplar Principal, Peter Rouse from Canley Vale High School, that a school leader had recently told him teaching graduates “do not know much about explicit instruction. They know it as a theory but they are not necessarily trained in doing it.” Mr Farlow then asked, “Is that what you are finding as well”, to which both Principals answered “Yes”.¹⁸⁰

6.110 The Committee heard from NESAs that notionally, there is a certification system to approve the quality of undergraduate teaching degrees offered by universities. But from what the Committee was told, it lacks rigour. NESAs have approved each and every university teaching program in NSW, with mutual recognition of interstate courses. This is regardless of the quality or effect-level of the pedagogies taught. When the NESAs representative was asked, “[Even] if you teach everything under the sun you will get accredited”, she replied, “If you meet our requirements, then yes.”¹⁸¹

6.111 The Committee proposes a different approach. Once CESE certifies its list of proven classroom practices (see recommendation above), large parts of the universities’ teaching curriculum will become redundant. They won’t be able to be taught in NSW government schools as they won’t meet the CESE criteria for high-effect outcomes. It makes sense, therefore, for the NSW Government to draw its graduate teachers from universities that have adopted the ‘CESE menu’ and teach to it in their courses. There is no point in Education courses training would-be teachers in failed, low-impact programs that have been abandoned by NSW government schools.

6.112 This approach creates a double bonus: trainee teachers instructed in greater depth in high-effect pedagogies; thereby giving these teachers a stronger grounding in the classroom methods NSW schools expect them to use. They will have a better chance of fitting into schools with evidence-based learning models and expectations. Schools, students and parents will have less reason to be disappointed with the quality of university teaching graduates.

¹⁷⁹ Evidence, Mrs Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, p 22.

¹⁸⁰ Evidence, Mrs Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, and Mr Peter Rouse, Principal, Canley Vale High School, 29 November 2019, p 22.

¹⁸¹ Evidence, Ms Lyn Kirkby, Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority, 10 October 2019, p 35.

6.113 The Committee recommends:**Recommendation 52**

That the Minister for Education ensure that the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) only certify university teaching courses consistent with CESE's best practice menu. As the biggest employer of teachers in the country, the NSW Government has significant leverage in this regard.

Recommendation 53

That if the university system fails to cooperate with Recommendation 52, the Government pursue alternatives in teacher training/recruitment, utilising non-government teaching colleges (such as Alphacrucis), online training providers and organisations like Teach For Australia.

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- 6.114** The Committee also considered another pressing staffing matter: the way in which our best teachers are promoted out of the classroom, into higher, (sometimes administrative) duties as deputy principals and principals. As the NSW P&C Federation explained it, "... [Principals] are the most able teachers and ambitious who have been promoted up through the ranks with very little training in how to run a school. They are just super-teachers historically in terms of their background as opposed to people who have been trained to run a school."¹⁸²
- 6.115** Great classroom teachers do not always become great school leaders, especially when they lack training assistance in making the transition. But certainly, when they leave the classroom, their skills are lost where they are needed most, in directly instructing students.
- 6.116** Similarly, to be an effective principal, one does not always need to have been a school teacher. The leadership skills of inspiration, collaboration and strategic thinking can come from a wide range of work histories. There is no reason to believe they originate solely from university Schools of Education.
- 6.117** It should be possible to recruit principals from outside the teaching profession, provide transition training (especially in understanding pedagogy) and have them achieve high-level results. This approach has two clear advantages: deepening the talent pool for NSW school leadership; and ensuring outstanding teachers are not lost to the vital role of classroom instruction. The Committee believes it is worthy of trialling in a limited number of government schools. Successful trials could then be scaled up throughout the system.

¹⁸² Evidence, Mr Alan Gardiner, Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales, 10 October 2019, p 13.

6.118 The Committee recommends four changes to NSW school employment practices as follows:**Recommendation 54**

That the Government adopt a policy of identifying outstanding classroom teachers achieving high-level results and keeping them in these valuable classroom and teacher mentoring roles, but at salary levels comparable to principals. This is what the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher classifications should mean. Priority should be given to ensuring these teachers are available in disadvantaged schools, where their standards of excellence can have the biggest impact.

Recommendation 55

That the Government measure teacher classroom success by the value-added (where available) to student results over several years, along with (more conventional) performance assessments by school leaders, inspectors and DELs.

Recommendation 56

That the Government establish a trial program for the recruitment of school principals from outside the teaching profession: leaders with a track record of workplace success and strategic insight. Under this program, employment would be through performance-based contracts, with financial bonuses for improved school results (and obvious sanctions for failure).

Recommendation 57

That the Department of Education improve training programs for school principals and deputy principals. This should be a key focus of the NSW School Leadership Institute, developing a strictly evidence-based, best practice approach to school management and expectations for classroom practice.

(6) Literacy Lost**6.119** The failure of university Schools of Education to develop rigorous evidence-based programs is most telling in the teaching of reading. At Committee hearings, Professor Hayes rejected the notion of teachers relying solely on methods that are known to work in the classroom. She compared learning to read to the playing of music, arguing that:

Just like a musician would have a repertoire of pieces that they would play to achieve certain moods and for various audiences in a different context, we need our student (teachers) to have that repertoire and to not think it is about applying something to fix something but how to fine-tune, adjust and apply a range of strategies in a timely way to address young people's learning. So it is a much more complex issue than just applying what we know works.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Evidence, Professor Debra Hayes, Head of School, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, 29 November 2019, p 4.

6.120 She also said it was important:

To distinguish between a technical approach to, say, the teaching of reading and understanding reading as a social practice. So there is no doubt that we need our students to understand some of the technical things that need to happen in order for young people to learn. But really, reading is much broader than that and what we can find is that once some of those technical things are taken care of, if we keep making students do those things when they have moved on then we can actually undermine their interest and their capacity to read.¹⁸⁴

6.121 There was no mention of the relative value of Phonics versus Whole Language literacy. Vague notions of reading as a ‘social practice’ are given priority in her School of Education. At a time of declining NSW school results and the Premier’s stated desire to ‘get back to basics’, evidence-based teaching practices in literacy have never been more important.**6.122** As the MultiLit Research Unit at Macquarie University submitted to the Committee:

According to the 2018 NAPLAN report, 5.5 percent of students in Year 7 in NSW schools did not achieve the very low national minimum standard. A further 12.7 percent only just achieved the standard. Together, these percentages represent more than 16,000 students beginning their secondary education as struggling readers.¹⁸⁵

6.123 These students have been consigned to a life of struggle, lacking something the rest of society takes for granted: basic literacy. The tragedy of this outcome is difficult to describe, in large part because it is so unnecessary. No aspect of early learning techniques has been studied more comprehensively than literacy. The know-how exists to ensure every student (without disability) leaving primary school has the skills of comprehension and vocabulary. They can read and write without struggle or embarrassment.**6.124** In particular, in the evidence base, the long wasteful struggle between Phonics and Whole Language literacy has ended. Minister Mitchell has declared:

This Government is very much in the position of wanting to make sure that literacy and reading teaching practices are evidence-based. As a government, we support the explicit instruction of phonics in the early years as the best way to teach reading.¹⁸⁶

6.125 This policy position is supported by CESE’s conclusion that:

The shift back towards explicit instruction in phonics has been informed by a growing body of evidence pointing to the effectiveness of phonics instruction. John Hattie’s meta-analysis finds whole language approaches have an effect size of 0.06, and phonics an effect size of 0.52. Similarly, the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy found ‘strong evidence that a whole-language approach to the teaching of reading on its own is not in the best interests of children, particularly those experiencing reading difficulties’.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Evidence, Professor Debra Hayes, Head of School, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, 29 November 2019, p 4.

¹⁸⁵ Submission 17, MultiLit Pty Ltd, p 1.

¹⁸⁶ *Hansard*, NSW Legislative Council, 26 September 2019, p 19 (Sarah Mitchell).

¹⁸⁷ Centre for Education, Statistics and Evaluation, ‘Effective Reading Instruction in the Early Years of School’, April 2017, p 3.

Best Practice School Case Study: Christ the King Catholic Primary School, Bass Hill, South-West Sydney¹⁸⁸

There were two key moments in the transformation of Christ the King. The first was the arrival of a new principal, Lee Scola, in 2015. This relatively small school of 200 (seven classes, 92 percent NESB – mainly Vietnamese, Arabic and Italian) has bottomed out in its NAPLAN performance. Ms Scola sought to build a ‘collective efficacy’ in the school culture, beefing up its data analysis and understanding of each student. She brought tremendous energy and inspiration to the school.

The second moment was the hiring of a consultant, Lyn Sharratt, specialising in data-driven evidence. Sharratt showed the school how to develop its expertise in 14 key areas of data assessment, as “making data today become instruction for tomorrow”. Data also became more visible, with the creation of a Data Wall, tracking every student’s progress.

The Data Wall became a focus of the ‘buy in’ among teachers at Christ the King, especially those new to the school. As one teacher said four years ago, “My goodness, the support I’m getting here from the data is the best of my career”. Soon all staff owned part of the system, with regular Data Wall conversations about students. This also lifted expectations for what the school could achieve.

Sharratt helped to embed these practices into professional development. An evidence-based culture has emerged at Christ the King. Early intervention in literacy is a key priority. Through a Catholic system directive for Reading Recovery, a combination of Phonics and Whole Language is taught, via two-hour blocks at the beginning of every day.

Christ the King is also part of a cluster of 12 Catholic schools learning from each other. In the words of the Principal, “we use the group to move the group”. Given the sharp spike in its NAPLAN results since 2015, especially in Year 3 subjects, Christ the King has much to offer the other schools learning from it.

- 6.126** Unfortunately, the shift back has not been universal. For instance, the State’s Language, Learning and Literacy (L3) program (taught to more than 16,000 K-2 students) only teaches Phonics incidentally. It is based on a New Zealand project called ‘Picking Up The Pace’, which is described as a “socio-cultural, co-constructivist view” whereby “language and meaning are a way of thinking, feeling and acting in a social practice”.¹⁸⁹
- 6.127** L3 is part of the Government’s Early Action for Success (EAFS) literacy and numeracy strategy. Evaluation reports highlight how 77 per cent of the schools that joined EAFS in 2013 had either negligible or negative changes in Year 3 NAPLAN reading scores.¹⁹⁰ This is not surprising, as L3 uses a methodology similar to the discredited Reading Recovery program.
- 6.128** Even though CESE identified Reading Recovery as ineffective and the NSW Government stopped supporting it,¹⁹¹ schools themselves have (seemingly) defied this decision by piecing it

¹⁸⁸ See Tabled document, Report - Portfolio Committee No. 3 site visits to schools across Sydney, 25 and 29 October 2019, pp 1-2.

¹⁸⁹ The Centre for Independent Studies, *Language, Learning and Literacy (L3)* (March 2018), <https://fivefromfive.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/research-brief-l3.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ The Centre for Independent Studies, *Language, Learning and Literacy (L3)* (March 2018), <https://fivefromfive.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/research-brief-l3.pdf>

¹⁹¹ Centre for Education, Statistic and Evaluation, *Reading Recovery: A Sector-Wide Analysis*, 2015.

back into literacy programs. The Committee Chair has visited schools where L3 and Reading Recovery are still being used. School leaders were unaware of the CESE findings and any departmental directive to abandon Reading Recovery.

- 6.129** It's a strange system where the research and the State Government can say one thing and schools are free to do the opposite, to the proven detriment of students. This is the downside of laissez faire teaching under Local School, Local Decisions: harming the reading ability of early learners when alternative, higher-effect literacy programs are available.
- 6.130** How can this be? Again, it's due to the lack of quality-control systems in NSW education. The Department does not monitor or collect data on the type of reading programs being taught in its schools. In answer to a Committee question as to why "principals and teachers are allowed to piece (Reading Recovery) back into classroom literacy programs", the Department replied:
- All schools with a K-6 enrolment receive an annual literacy and numeracy resource allocation. Principals have the flexibility to use their school funding and resources to meet the needs of their students, personalising support and identifying teacher professional learning needs.¹⁹²
- 6.131** Even though the Government notionally ended funding and training for Reading Recovery in 2018, it is free to live on in schools – the Lazarus of NSW literacy.
- 6.132** Another problem is in undergraduate teaching courses. These have failed to deliver evidence-based information on how children learn to read and the most effective ways of teaching them. A 2019 MultiLit study, for instance, found that only five of the 116 literacy units reviewed (in 66 degrees at 38 universities) had "a specific focus on early reading instruction or early literacy". Only six percent of the units referred to all five essential elements of evidence-based reading instruction.¹⁹³
- 6.133** There is a direct correlation between these failings and the large number of students in NSW schools who struggle to read. It cannot be allowed to continue.
- 6.134** Later in this chapter, the Committee will recommend that the Minister for Education report annually to Parliament on the state of NSW school literacy, addressing matters arising from Recommendations 58, 59 and 60, and literacy test outcomes (NAPLAN, PISA etc).
- 6.135** The Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 58

That the Government ensure, in drawing teachers from universities that follow the CESE menu, priority be given to Schools of Education that teach evidence-based early reading instruction (as outlined in the report).

¹⁹² Answers to supplementary questions, Ms Sally Egan, Acting Executive Director, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 5 November 2019, p 53.

¹⁹³ Jennifer Buckingham and Linda Meeks, 'Short-Changed: Preparation to Teach Reading in Initial Teacher Education', MultiLit, Macquarie University, July 2019, https://fivefromfive.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ITE-REPORT-FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3M25d4xShnvITLwXRQ3S4n2cyQAjI8_Op-9HcaTpriztN_XFvL9QbN6R4

Recommendation 59

That the Government require schools to publicly report in detail on their literacy teaching methods and effect-levels associated with them, and that this information be gathered and collated centrally by the Education Department (or independent measurement authority, if established).

Recommendation 60

That the Government, in guaranteeing school compliance with the CESE menu, give priority to evidence-based early reading instruction. That school inspectors and DELs be used to ensure classroom compliance with high-effect literacy programs.

(7) Entrenched Disadvantage

6.136 When a schools system is going backwards, many people pay a price. But students from a disadvantaged background pay the heaviest price. Living in households and suburbs in crisis, by far their best chance of breaking the poverty cycle is a good school. Without basic skills and deep knowledge drawn from quality teaching, they have little chance in life.

6.137 In some parts of the State, the problem is particularly acute. The NSW Government submission identifies a significant cohort of schools not only experiencing educational disadvantage but also a social crisis in servicing their local population. It writes of how:

Approximately 12-15 percent of NSW public schools are coping with highly complex school environments, where multiple types of need combine in high concentrations to produce unpredictable and often unsustainable demands on school leaders and staff. These are schools operating on the frontlines of entrenched disadvantage, in communities where they are often acting as the service providers of last resort.

Addressing complexity is likely to be important for achieving equity targets, driving system-wide school improvement, and delivering an education system that reduces the impact of disadvantage.¹⁹⁴

6.138 Some 300 government schools find themselves in this very difficult situation. When the Committee Chair asked about the duration of their educational disadvantage and what was being done to overcome it, the Department replied that it did not have data about the durational question. It also maintained “there is no apparent correlation between complexity and educational outcomes”.¹⁹⁵

6.139 The Committee finds this hard to believe. The original statement in the Government submission was in relation to disadvantaged schooling.¹⁹⁶

6.140 In further information provided to Committee, the Department has stated that “our research consistently shows that 70% of the variance in school performance is explainable by differences

¹⁹⁴ Submission 18, NSW Government, 10.

¹⁹⁵ Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, pp 6-7.

¹⁹⁶ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 10.

in school SES".¹⁹⁷ If 'complexity' is synonymous with disadvantaged schooling there must be a correlation between complexity and educational outcomes. The Committee urges the Department to clear up this apparent inconsistency.

6.141 Every education study of note points to a correlation between socio-economic disadvantage (including complexity/chaos in the local community) and school outcomes. This is why we have needs-based funding, with hefty additional allocations for disadvantaged schools.

6.142 This discrepancy may be another example of departmental defensiveness. Or it may arise from new research the Department has been working on. The full answer from the Department is worth noting:

Schools that are facing complex environments perform at a range of levels and are not necessarily poorly performing schools. But some may require targeted support to address the needs of their students. They have been identified using a new tool that the Department of Education is using to understand where targeted support may be required, and to learn from schools that are in complex environments but achieving good results for their students. The new tool is yet to be validated and is in development. The tool considers health, child protection, out-of-home care and socio-economic data to identify communities that are likely to have students with multiple support needs. Early investigation of results of identified schools indicates that there is no correlation between complexity and value add (school results).¹⁹⁸

6.143 The Committee plans to monitor progress with this interesting 'new tool'. Normally, to identify 'complexity' and 'students with multiple support needs' one would look to public housing estates, low-income areas and remote Indigenous communities. Nonetheless, the Committee welcomes any Government attempt to better integrate support services around disadvantaged schools with broader attempts to break the poverty cycle.

6.144 In many cases, these tend to be welfare schools, overwhelmed by problems in the local community, so that the pastoral care of students becomes a leading priority. Sometimes in desperation, experimental teaching programs are introduced with a focus on social rather than academic goals. Project-based learning, which is designed to foster social cooperation between students, is a popular example of this process. Direct instruction teaching methods appear to be less common in disadvantaged schools.¹⁹⁹

6.145 No one can deny welfare schools are well intentioned but at the bottom line, the best way of snapping the poverty cycle is for a student from a disadvantaged background to achieve breakout educational excellence. A good school is a poor child's passport to a better life. Without this opportunity, they are left stranded in troubled, welfare dependent neighbourhoods and towns.

6.146 Despite the political boast of 'record investments in education', these additional resources are not yielding results where it matters most. A 2017 study in the Australian Journal of Education found that nearly a third of government high schools in Sydney were "neither efficient nor effective" in lifting student performance between years 10 and 12. The problem was

¹⁹⁷ Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 20 December 2019, p 31.

¹⁹⁸ Answers to question on notice, NSW Department of Education, 5 November 2019, p 6.

¹⁹⁹ Blaise Joseph, The Centre for Independent Studies, 'Overcoming the Odds 2: where are the top-performing disadvantaged secondary schools?', July 2019, p 1.

concentrated in Western and South-Western Sydney, where over 40 percent of high schools were found to be ineffective, delivering sub-standard ATAR scores for their students.²⁰⁰

- 6.147** The tragedy of failing schools is they hit poor students hardest. In a recent study, Blaise Joseph from the CIS found NSW has just one disadvantaged high school and two disadvantaged primary schools that are achieving high-level NAPLAN results.²⁰¹ The Committee heard from the principals of two of these Best Practice Schools: Canley Vale High and Marsden Road Public School. Ms Gazula from Marsden Road said the school's vision was for its students to "have a life of choice and not chance".²⁰²
- 6.148** As a measure of social mobility, the CIS findings are sobering. Among hundreds of disadvantaged schools in NSW, only three are truly lifting up their students – and they are doing it with no additional funding compared to other disadvantaged schools. (Joseph's report identified 15 other primary schools and two high schools in other States with the same type of success).²⁰³
- 6.149** Australia-wide, approximately 25 percent of all government funding for schools is allocated on the basis of school and student disadvantage, up from 11 percent in 2009.²⁰⁴ Yet major improvements have not been realised, especially in high school education. Joseph attributes this to four factors:
- Once disadvantage entrenches itself in the primary school years, it is harder to overcome in secondary schools, meaning that educational inequities widen over time. Effective literacy and numeracy programs in the early school years are absolutely vital.
 - Many students attending a local high-achieving disadvantaged primary school do not attend the secondary school in their area, hence the paucity of successful high schools.
 - School discipline problems worsen in the secondary years, rendering some classrooms as a jungle where structured learning is impossible. Bright students from a disadvantaged background have little chance in this environment.
 - As schools become more desperate in their disadvantaged circumstances, high value-added direct instruction teaching is replaced by low-value experimental/fad programs, very often driven by social well-being concerns for students. The schools are overwhelmed by the extent of social crisis, losing their academic focus.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Pallavi Singhal, One-third of Sydney high schools 'neither efficient nor effective': study, *Sydney Morning Herald* (9 August 2017), <https://www.smh.com.au/education/onethird-of-sydney-high-schools-neither-efficient-nor-effective-study-20170809-gxsdlc.html>

²⁰¹ Blaise Joseph, The Centre for Independent Studies, 'Overcoming the Odds 2: where are the top-performing disadvantaged secondary schools?', July 2019, p 6.

²⁰² Evidence, Mrs Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School, 29 November 2019, p 15.

²⁰³ Blaise Joseph, The Centre for Independent Studies, 'Overcoming the Odds 2: where are the top-performing disadvantaged secondary schools?', July 2019, p 6.

²⁰⁴ Blaise Joseph, The Centre for Independent Studies, 'Overcoming the Odds 2: where are the top-performing disadvantaged secondary schools?', July 2019, p 3.

²⁰⁵ Blaise Joseph, The Centre for Independent Studies, 'Overcoming the Odds 2: where are the top-performing disadvantaged secondary schools?', July 2019, p 1.

- 6.150** Joseph's study points to six common factors in creating successful disadvantaged schools – indeed, turning them into 'Formerly Disadvantaged Schools'.²⁰⁶ These are very similar to the Committee's findings with regard to Best Practice Schools: school discipline, direct instruction, data-informed practices, early reading intervention, teacher collaboration and autonomous school leadership (see Appendix 3).
- 6.151** In the name of equity and maximising the economic and social participation of all our citizens, there is no more important task for the NSW Government than breaking the cycle of entrenched educational disadvantage. The Committee sees this as a leading priority for outcome-based budgeting. It should be the subject of regular Ministerial progress reports to parliament.
- 6.152** During its Inquiry, the Committee identified four viable policy solutions. The first is to build on the Canley Vale and Marsden Road models of success, to turn the 12-15 percent of struggling government schools into Best Practice Schools as quickly as possible. The Department's Tailored Support Program should be tasked with this goal. So too, maximum support should be given to the development of Best Practice School networks, ensuring their mentoring role is spread as widely and effectively as possible.
- 6.153** Second, the Committee noted the Victorian Government's \$245 million initiative in 2019 to assist disadvantaged schools with improved leadership and teacher quality and 'turnaround team' interventions. The reform package included:
- Incentive payments of up to \$50,000 for accomplished teachers to work in the State's most challenging schools (urban and country);
 - A follow-up payment of up to \$9,000 a year (for three years) for accomplished teachers who remain in these hard-to-fill positions;
 - Forty of Victoria's best principals being recruited to run Victoria's toughest urban schools and improve student outcomes, with the help of nine expert Turnaround Teams;
 - Financial incentives for high-performing university graduates and people with experience in other careers to switch to teaching, whereby they are paid for learning on the job in schools, while simultaneously studying for postgraduate teaching qualifications at university;
 - In every government school, recruiting learning specialists (instructional leaders) who want to stay in the classroom and help other teachers to improve; and
 - Financial support (\$68.4 million) to extend programs for teacher collaboration networks across schools.²⁰⁷
- 6.154** Given that these measures are similar to Committee recommendations elsewhere in the report, we see them as a logical, targeted response to disadvantaged schooling and worthy of implementation in NSW.

²⁰⁶ Blaise Joseph, The Centre for Independent Studies, 'Overcoming the Odds 2: where are the top-performing disadvantaged secondary schools?', July 2019, p 2.

²⁰⁷ Media release, Minister James Merilino MP, Victorian Minister for Education, 'Biggest-ever investment in teaching quality in Victoria', 9 October 2019, <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/biggest-ever-investment-in-teaching-quality-in-victoria/>

- 6.155** Third, the Committee Chair visited a ‘disadvantage success story’ in South-West Sydney with important lessons for policy makers. Twenty years ago the NSW Government started the redevelopment of the Minto public housing estate, knocking down decrepit housing stock and introducing a public/private mix of new housing (public tenants in lease-back accommodation). The suburb went from being ‘The Bronx’ (as local teachers described it) to a regular working/middle class district. The influx of new families has been particularly beneficial in terms of work ethic and attitudes to education.
- 6.156** Changing the suburb has changed its schools. Minto Public is now knocking back out-of-area enrolments – unthinkable 20 years ago. Its NAPLAN results have spiked upwards, especially in Year 5. At the four government schools in Minto, the student behavioural crisis has dissipated. The schools feel normal in their outlook and optimism. Sarah Redfern High School, once notoriously bad, is starting to achieve exceptional post-school results, whereby all leaving students are going into work, training or university.
- 6.157** Research and experience tells us that putting disadvantaged people in a disadvantaged place magnifies the extent of disadvantage. Schools get caught up in this cycle, degenerating into the welfare/pastoral/experimental model. The Committee recommends further study into the Minto success story. An effective way of improving struggling schools is to improve the suburb and community they serve.
- 6.158** Fourth, the Committee also looked at the provision of wrap-around services for schools – essentially, efforts to address what the Department has defined as measures of ‘student well-being’. The Committee found that the argument for these services is irrefutable.
- 6.159** Students will not concentrate well in class on an empty stomach, hence the need for breakfast clubs at some schools. Physical activity helps with mental alertness, hence the usefulness of gym exercise programs at lunchtime. Speech and hearing problems setback the capacity for classroom learning, hence the need for hearing services and speech pathology in some schools.
- 6.160** The Committee believes these additional services can support better educational outcomes. The Committee notes that in its 2019-20 Budget, the NSW Government committed \$8 million to expanding the Foodbank breakfast program to an additional 500 schools.²⁰⁸ However, no evaluation of this program is being undertaken to see if there is additional demand for breakfast clubs, or for additional, similar programs (for example, supplying lunches).
- 6.161** The Committee notes that Canley Vale High has established a well-being centre which provides a range of wrap-around services. The centre is a key part of the school’s student well-being framework. It includes a breakfast program for 250 students daily, occupational and speech therapists and recently employed a full-time mental health nurse.²⁰⁹
- 6.162** The key questions for policy makers are: how far should these services go; who should pay for them; and what role, if any, should they have during class-time? Some schools are using their Gonski growth money to become quasi-community health centres. This is a sign of cost-shifting by the NSW Department of Health. Given sharply rising demand and tight budgetary limits, it is doing next-to-no new provision for community and allied health services. In South-West

²⁰⁸ Media Release, The NSW Budget 2019-2020, 'Helping create a better future for NSW children one meal at a time', 18 June 2019.

²⁰⁹ Evidence, Mr Peter Rouse, Principal, Canley Vale High School, 29 November 2019, p 16.

Sydney, a fast growing region, for instance, the NSW Government has not built a new community health centre this century.

- 6.163** The Committee believes the NSW Government (Health and Education Ministers) should develop a clear policy on this issue. Cost-shifting and confused responsibilities hamper efficient service delivery. In particular, they encourage NSW Health to consistently renege on its core public responsibility, using fast-growing Federal Gonski school funding as a substitute for its own health services resource base.
- 6.164** From a schools viewpoint, the Committee believes the policy should adopt the following guidelines:
- Schools should fund and provide health services on-campus only when it can be demonstrated they are essential to improving the basic learning capacity and fulfilling the potential of their student population.
 - The Government should prohibit Health Department cost-shifting and ensure community health centres are built in the 12-15 percent locations where disadvantaged schools are struggling. Service provision should be closely linked to school management and the needs of student populations.
 - Wrap-around or ‘well-being’ services on-campus should be ancillary to the primary learning purposes of schools. They should not feature in curriculum content or in the use of class-time. Classroom programs must focus tightly on academic and vocational attainment.
- 6.165** The Committee recommends:

Recommendation 61

That the Government use the Tailored Support and Best Practice School Network programs to end educational disadvantage in NSW, bringing struggling schools up to best practice performance.

Recommendation 62

That the Minister for Education introduce a NSW equivalent of the 2019 Victorian reform package for disadvantaged schools (as outlined in the report), consistent with Minister Mitchell’s stated goal: “We must give incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools”.

Recommendation 63

That the Government produce a full report on the success of the Minto public housing redevelopment project (as outlined in the report), learning its lessons and identifying similar communities and schools that would benefit from redevelopment schemes. An effective way of improving disadvantaged schools is to improve the local neighbourhood.

Recommendation 64

That the Government develop and publish a clear policy on the interface between Health and Education services (especially regarding the problem of cost-shifting), using the guidelines outlined in the report.

Recommendation 65

That the Minister for Education report to the NSW Parliament:

- every 12 months on the Government's performance in meeting the targets in Recommendation 21 (remote and isolated schooling)
 - every 12 months on the state of NSW school literacy, addressing matters arising from Recommendations 58, 59 and 60, and literacy test outcomes (NAPLAN, PISA etc)
 - every six months on the Government's progress in bringing disadvantaged schools up to best practice; addressing the challenges of the 12 to 15 per cent of public schools operating in an environment of social crisis; and the development of the Department's 'new tool' for identifying and measuring these problems.
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Chapter 7 Non-Government Schools

- 7.1 This report has focused primarily on policy solutions for government schools. But many of its recommendations also apply to the two main non-government sectors: Catholic and Independent schools. NSW education is strong when all three sectors are strong. As teachers, administrators and expertise moves between sectors, schools can benefit from the achievement of others. This is also true of Best Practice School mentoring, which, ideally, should cross sectoral boundaries.
- 7.2 In their submissions and evidence, both the Catholic and Independent sectors expressed their willingness to be transparent and accountable. To some extent, this is already a given, due to parents paying fees and exercising school choice. As with any market system, pricing decisions have an in-built accountability.²¹⁰
- 7.3 The Committee notes the Government’s commitment “to strengthen accountability measures for non-government schools that receive State funding”.²¹¹ The Government submission says, “Initially this will be through the development of memoranda of understanding with the Catholic and Independent sectors. Lifting educational outcomes at all schools is a common aim for all educators, and this joint ambition will be a core part of the new arrangements with the sectors.”²¹²
- 7.4 In January 2020, the NSW Government signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Catholic and Independent sectors. The agreement aims “to strengthen accountability measures for non-government schools”, use State funding in a needs-based way and “support improved educational outcomes for students”. Nothing in the MOU is conditional on the provision of State funding.
- 7.5 With regard to outcome-based budgeting, “the parties committed to align financial and performance reports to support the NSW Government’s outcome –budgeting policy, commencing in 2020, through “aggregate non-government school sector outcomes”. That is, not in the form of school-by-school reporting. For verification purposes, the two sectors committed “to provide access to student level data for the purposes of reporting to the State Government”.
- 7.6 Numerical targets have not been set, rather there’s a general commitment to improve Catholic and Independent school outcomes in:
- NAPLAN literacy and numeracy;
 - NAPLAN equity groups;
 - PISA results ,both absolute and in international comparisons;
 - School attendance levels;

²¹⁰ Submission 12, Catholic Schools NSW, p 3 and Submission 14, Association of Independent Schools of NSW, p 2.

²¹¹ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 16.

²¹² Submission 18, NSW Government, p 16.

- Year 12 retention rates; and
- For VET in schools, measurement of post-school destinations.

7.7 The Committee notes that this list of student outcomes is broader than the measures proposed for government schools, reinforcing the case for the public system to do more. In both cases, government and non-government schools, the Committee believes performance targets and outcome data should be disaggregated and published school-by-school.

7.8 The Committee regards MOU as a good start in building stronger cross-sector cooperation in NSW school education. The process should be extended in four significant ways.

7.9 The first is through data sharing. The Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW) expressed frustration that due to the decentralised structure of its sector (where the schools are very independent), it doesn't receive the aggregated NAPLAN data the other two sectors receive. Its officers have to go to the My School site and take down the information school-by-school.²¹³

7.10 Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) suggested a data sharing agreement across all sectors. In evidence, its Director of Education Policy, Danielle Cronin, said:

We have made good gains in recent times in terms of getting appropriate data sharing and information sharing agreements in place with NESA and the Department of Education. Is there more work to be done? Yes. An ideal scenario would be a MOU not unlike what happens in Victoria whereby all three sector authorities can share de-identified datasets across a whole range of areas in order to inform their system in school and their system improvement work.²¹⁴

7.11 The second area of cross-sectoral cooperation is in access to research and innovation. The CSNSW submission described CESE as “the 'gold standard' in evidence-based research and effective use of data in the Australian schools sector”.²¹⁵ The Catholic system has benefited from CESE's research and the development of the data analytics hub SCOUT. It wants this relationship to grow for the benefit of each sector.²¹⁶

7.12 There are huge advantages from this kind of collaboration, not just in avoiding the duplication of research resources (reinventing the wheel). A single best practice institute servicing all sectors is the best way of spreading the benefits of successful school innovation.

²¹³ Evidence, Mr Michael Carr, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW, 10 October 2019, p 28.

²¹⁴ Evidence, Ms Danielle Cronin, Director of Education Policy, Catholic Schools NSW, 8 October 2019, p 54.

²¹⁵ Submission 12, Catholic Schools NSW, p 6.

²¹⁶ Submission 12, Catholic Schools NSW, p 6.

- 7.13** AISNSW, for instance, proudly told the Committee of the introduction of a new app called ESTA-L to improve K-2 phonics literacy. It's achieving very strong results in the second year of its trial in 73 Independent schools, 2 Catholic and one government.²¹⁷ CESE should be a clearing house for the evaluation of technologies such as this and then, if appropriate, scaling up their use across sectors.
- 7.14** The third possibility is in aiding school quality improvements. As CSNSW does not own or run any schools directly (Dioceses have this responsibility) and AISNSW has no line-management control over Independent schools, both sectors need as much assistance as possible to cajole change school-by-school. State Government funding provision can be an important lever in this regard.
- 7.15** When asked about a NSW School Performance Commission (defining best practice, administering uniform measurement systems and monitoring school activities across all sectors) the CEO of CSNSW, Dallas McInerney, told the Committee: "If there is a suggestion that there should be a statewide uniform level of benchmarks or expectations against which we are measured and reported back to, we are open to those discussions...".²¹⁸ This process commenced with the January MOU. The Committee welcomes the cooperation of the Catholic and Independent sectors, and if an independent measurement authority is established they should be represented on it.
- 7.16** Fourthly, there's now an opportunity for the Government to build on the gains of the January MOU by aligning the outcome-based budgeting requirements for the three NSW school sectors. In comparing schools and choosing where to send their children, it would greatly assist parents to have common, standardised performance data (other than NAPLAN) available for all NSW schools, especially the 'gold standard' value-added measure identified earlier the report.
- 7.17** The Committee supports the maintenance of diversity and choice in the non-government school sector. This is a tremendously valuable asset for the people of NSW and nothing should be done to jeopardise its strength. But the Committee also sees an opportunity to benefit all our schools with higher levels of cross sector collaboration.

²¹⁷ Evidence, Mr Michael Carr, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW, 10 October 2019, pp 28-29.

²¹⁸ Evidence, Mr Dallas McInerney, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Schools NSW, 8 October 2019, p 57.

7.18 Thus the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 66

That the Government, building on the success and contents of the January 2020 Memoranda of Understanding, take this process a step further and negotiate School Education Accords with the non-government sectors to:

- replicate the success of the Victorian system in sharing de-identified datasets across school sectors,
 - develop CESE as a cross-sectoral resource for identifying best practice and sophisticated school/student measurement and data usage,
 - adopt in the non-government sectors, as far as possible, the outcome-based budgeting reforms applying to government schools, especially with respect to teacher quality, value-added reporting, ambitious school improvement targets and the CESE best practice menu. To assist parents and ensure consistency across the State, the same set of school-by-school performance outcomes need to be published across the government and non-government sectors,
 - ensure non-government school sectors have Board representation on the proposed independent measurement authority, and
 - secure the support of non-government sectors for the Best Practice School Model and widespread school improvement networking (backed by eligibility for a new public funding program).
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Appendix 1 NSW Schools Results

NAPLAN tests skills in literacy and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 that are developed over time through the school curriculum. The test reflects content identical to what is undertaken in regular classroom learning and assessment. According to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority "excessive test preparation using previous tests is not necessary or useful".²¹⁹ Students are assessed using common national tests in reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.²²⁰

In its submission to the inquiry, the NSW Government reported on the State's school results. Between 2014 and 2018, in the 20 aggregated NAPLAN results, NSW improved its ranking against other States/Territories in two areas (Year 7 spelling and writing) while going backwards in four (Years 7 and 9 numeracy, Year 3 grammar and Year 9 spelling) – a net drop of two, or a 10 percent decline.²²¹

In the 20 State/Territory NAPLAN comparisons in 2018, NSW outperformed Victoria in just six, the ACT in seven and Western Australia in 16. This is in the context of Australia's disappointing NAPLAN performance across the life of the test (since 2008), with small gains in primary school outcomes offset by flat-lining secondary school results. The national decline in writing skills has been particularly concerning.²²²

In October 2018, the Grattan Institute reported that, in terms of student progress from Year 3 to Year 5 in NAPLAN results, NSW was below the national average in each of numeracy, reading and writing. We ranked behind Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.²²³

The Department of Education advised that NAPLAN 2019 data has not yet been published by ACARA.²²⁴

²¹⁹ National Assessment Program, *NAPLAN, The tests*, <https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/the-tests>.

²²⁰ National Assessment Program, *NAPLAN, The tests*, <https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/the-tests>.

²²¹ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 6.

²²² See ACARA, *National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy, National Report for 2018*, <https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/2018-naplan-national-report.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

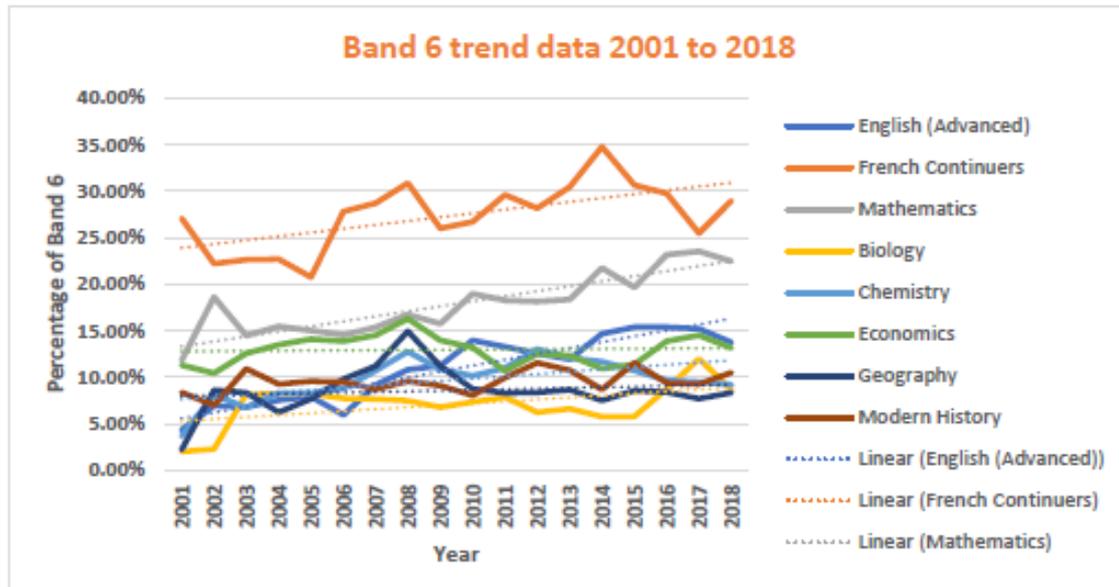
²²³ Grattan Institute, *Measuring student progress: A state-by-state report card*, October 2018, p 19, <https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/910-Mapping-Student-Progress.pdf>.

²²⁴ Correspondence, NSW Department of Education to secretariat, 24 January 2020.

Table 2: NSW rank for all domains and year levels for NAPLAN from 2014-2018²²⁵

Domain	Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Reading	Year 3	3	3	3	3	3
	Year 5	3	3	3	3	3
	Year 7	3	3	3	3	3
	Year 9	4	4	4	2	4
Numeracy	Year 3	3	3	3	3	3
	Year 5	3	3	2	2	3
	Year 7	2	3	3	3	3
	Year 9	2	3	4	1	3
Spelling	Year 3	1	2	1	1	1
	Year 5	1	1	1	1	1
	Year 7	2	1	1	1	1
	Year 9	1	1	2	1	2
Grammar and Punctuation	Year 3	2	3	3	3	3
	Year 5	2	3	2	2	2
	Year 7	2	3	2	3	2
	Year 9	3	4	4	2	3
Writing	Year 3	2	2	2	2	2
	Year 5	2	3	2	3	2
	Year 7	4	3	4	3	2
	Year 9	4	4	5	3	4

²²⁵ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 6.

Graph 1: HSC Band 6 trend data from 2001 to 2018²²⁶

In terms of the HSC, Professor Tognolini referred to Band 6 HSC results over the past 17 years as an indicator of how NSW results and performance is actually improving despite declining results in PISA, see graph above. The Committee notes the focus on English (Advanced) and the absence of results for the four other English course options available to HSC students (English Standard, English as a Second Language, English Extension 1, and English Extension 2). In addition, the graph only refers to results for 2 unit Mathematics, leaving out other course options available to HSC students in 3 Unit and 4 Unit Mathematics). The committee recognises the possibility of compositional change in the student body over time, as students seek higher ATAR marks by dropping to 2 Unit Mathematics.

This is despite the fact that in the hearing, Professor Tognolini said he considered "high-stakes exams to be unreliable performance measures".

As this Committee report states elsewhere, average HSC results are a much better guide than Band levels of student performance. In addition, some subjects (economics and modern history) are flat lining for band 6. In comparison to PISA results, we know that NSW has fallen behind other states and countries, which is a far stronger indicator of our status/success.

PISA results

In international testing, the NSW results have also been disappointing. The proportion of students reaching the National Proficiency Standard (NPS) in the Programme for International Students

²²⁶ Answers to questions on notice, Professor Jim Tognolini, Director, Centre for Educational measurement and Assessment, University of Sydney, 14 January 2020, p 3.

Assessment (PISA, which tests the skills of 15-year-olds in OECD countries) fell from 68 percent in 2006 to 58 percent in 2015.

PISA monitors trends in the knowledge and skills that students around the world, and in demographic subgroups within each country, have acquired. The test, now in its seventh cycle, is conducted every three years and focuses on the core school subjects of reading, mathematics and science:

- Reading: capacity to understand, use, evaluate, reflect on and engage with texts in order to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society.
- Mathematics - capacity to formulate, employ and interpret mathematics in a variety of contexts. It includes reasoning mathematically and using mathematical concepts, procedures, facts and tools to describe, explain and predict phenomena.
- Science - ability to engage with science-related issues, and with the ideas of science, as a reflective citizen. A scientifically literate person is willing to engage in reasoned discourse about science and technology, which requires the competencies to explain phenomena scientifically, evaluate and design scientific enquiry, and interpret data and evidence scientifically.²²⁷

PISA consists of both multiple-choice questions and questions requiring students to construct their own responses.²²⁸

In PISA reading literacy, 44 per cent of NSW students failed to reach the 2018 National Proficiency Standard, ranking the State behind Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, and the ACT. Since 2000, our results have fallen by 45 points (the biggest drop in Australia).²²⁹ Overall, Australia was above the 2018 OECD average (503 points to 487) but behind comparable countries such as Canada, Finland, Ireland and New Zealand, plus Asian competitor nations China, Singapore and Japan.²³⁰

In PISA mathematical literacy, 48 percent of NSW students failed to reach the NPS, ranking us behind the ACT, Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland.²³¹ Since 2003, declines in performance were recorded in all jurisdictions with the largest decline in South Australia by 53 points (equal to almost two years of schooling). NSW has experienced a 38-point decline in results.²³² Overall, Australia was below

²²⁷ OECDiLibrary, PISA 2018 Assessment and Analytical Framework, *What is PISA?*, pp 11, 13-15, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-assessment-and-analytical-framework_b25efab8-en.

²²⁸ OECDiLibrary, PISA 2018 Assessment and Analytical Framework, *What is PISA?*, p 12, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/pisa-2018-assessment-and-analytical-framework_b25efab8-en.

²²⁹ PISA 2018, *Reporting Australia's results: Vol 1 student performance*, p 50 (28 January 2020), <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=ozpisa>

²³⁰ Andreas Schleicher, *PISA 2018: Insights and Interpretations*, p 6. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf>

²³¹ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's results, Vol 1 student performance*, p 130.

²³² Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's results, Vol 1 student performance*, p 130.

the OECD average (491 points to 494) and but significantly behind some of its neighbouring countries in North Asian including Singapore (569), Macao (China)(558), Japan (527), and Korea (526).²³³

In PISA scientific literacy, 45 percent of NSW students fell short of the NPS, placing us behind all States/Territories except Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Since 2006 NSW has suffered the biggest decline in scientific literacy scores in Australia, with a 39-point drop.²³⁴ Overall, Australia was above the OECD average (503 to 489) but significantly behind some of its neighbouring countries in North Asian including Singapore (551), Macao (China)(544), Japan (529), and Korea (519).²³⁵

Elsewhere, in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the raw NSW results have been steady. From 2007 to 2015/16, the proportion of students reaching the NPS remained at 71 percent. The worrying aspect of these results is in the comparative data. Across the same period, the proportion of international students reaching the NPS benchmark rose from 59 to 72 percent.²³⁶

In summary, Australia is being out-performed by many of its competitor nations, while within the Commonwealth, NSW's school performance has fallen down the State/Territory rankings at a worrying rate.

Some people might think because we are the largest State we have the best schools. This is not the case, with NSW ranking behind the ACT and Victoria in national performance, while Western Australia and Queensland have either overtaken us or edged closer in many subject areas.

Table 3: Percentage of students who achieved the equivalent of the national proficient standard for Australia: OECD average – PISA²³⁷

PISA 3 domain average					
Year	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
NSW students	68%	66%	63%	58%	54%
Students from all countries (OECD average)	57%	57%	56%	55%	53%

²³³ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's results, Vol 1 student performance*, p 120.

²³⁴ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's results, Vol 1 student performance*, p 193.

²³⁵ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's results, Vol 1 student performance*, p 180.

²³⁶ Submission 18, NSW Government, p 7.

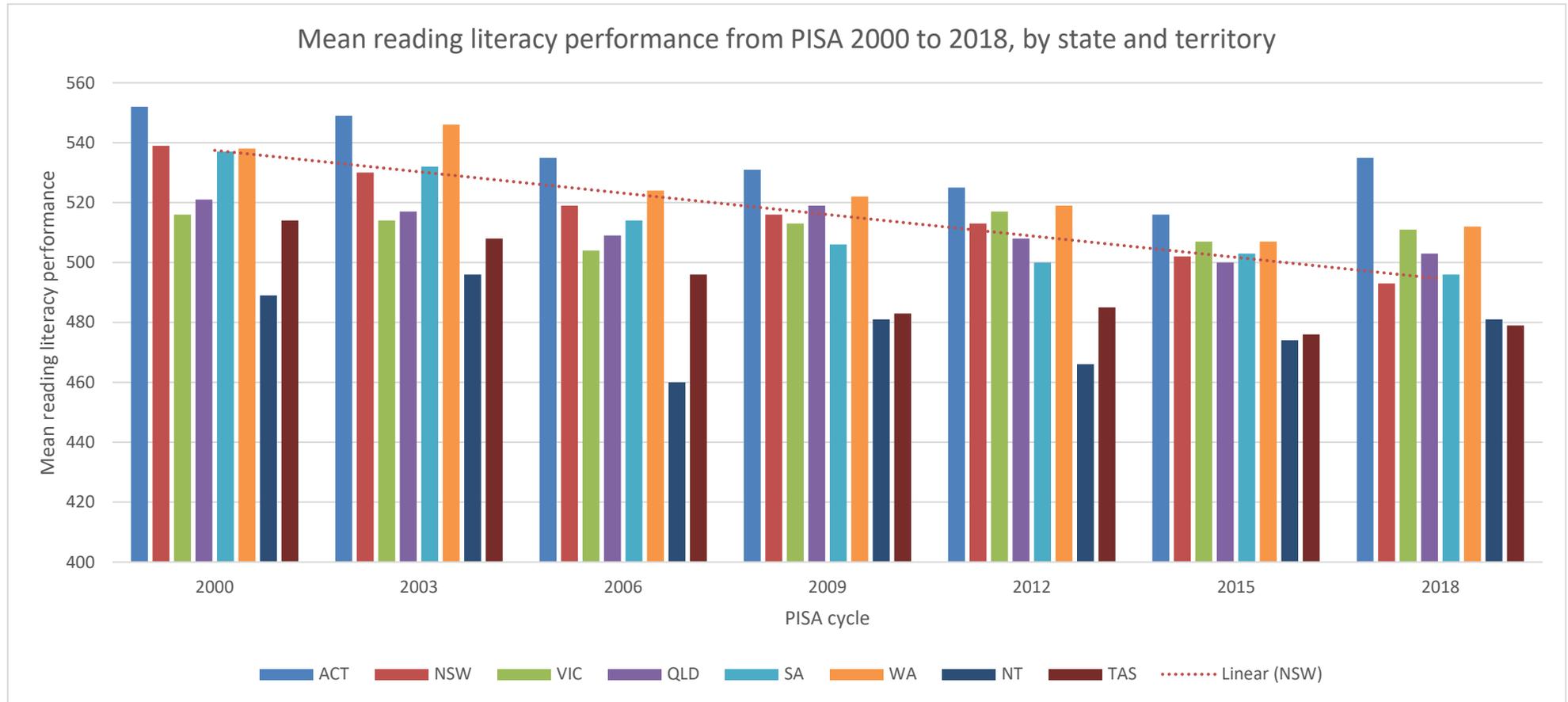
²³⁷ Correspondence, NSW Department of Education to secretariat, 24 January 2020.

Table 4: Percentage of students who achieved the equivalent of the national proficient standard for Australia: International Median - TIMSS/PIRLS²³⁸

TIMSS/PIRLS 5 domain average			
Year	2007	2011	2015/16
NSW students	71%	73%	71%
Students from all countries (international median)	59%	64%	72%

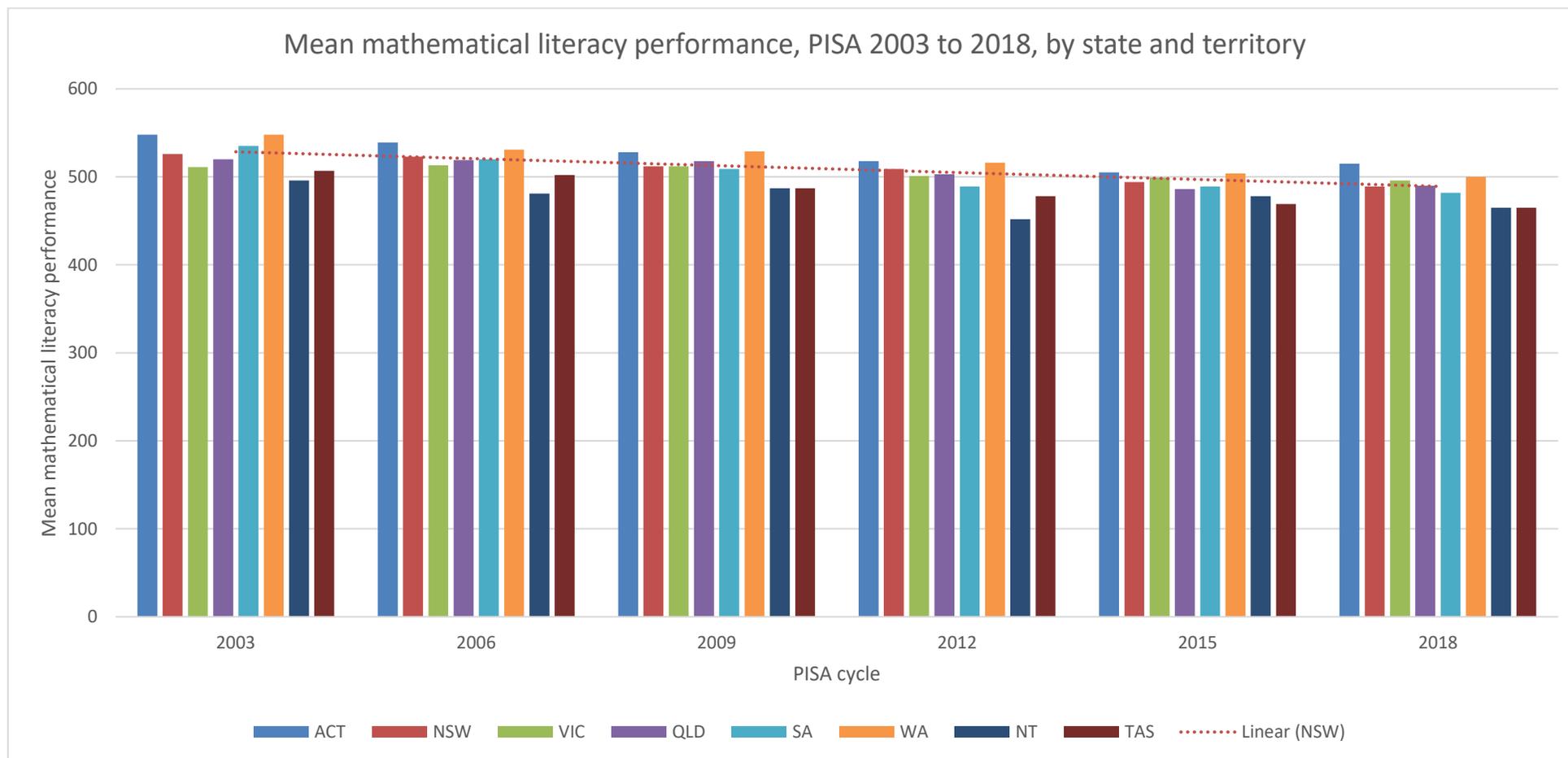
²³⁸ Correspondence, NSW Department of Education to secretariat, 24 January 2020.

Figure 2: Graph depicting mean reading literacy performance from PISA 2000 to 2018, by state and territory²³⁹



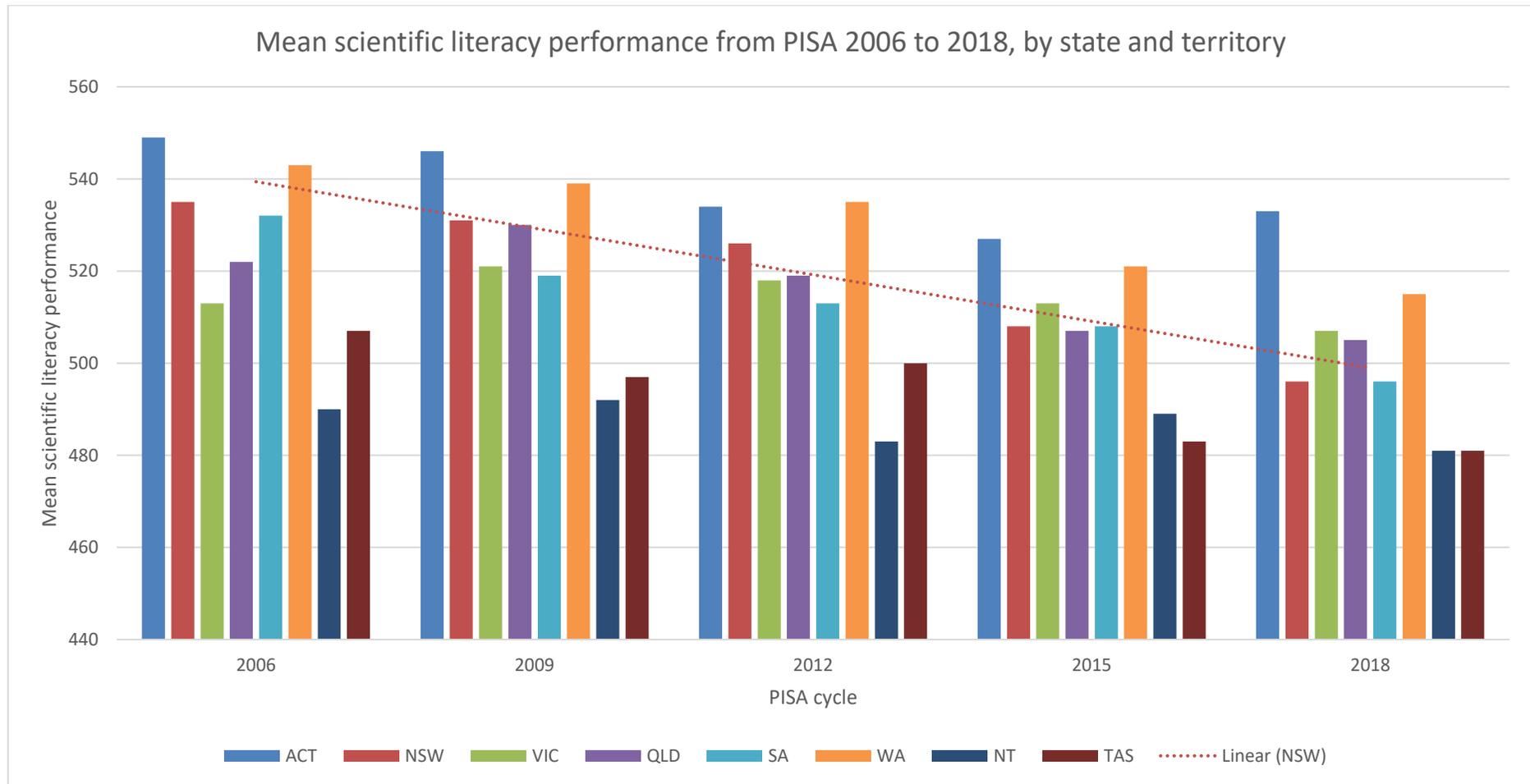
²³⁹ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's Results Volume I Student Performance*, p 51, <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=ozpisa>

Figure 3: Graph depicting mean mathematical literacy performance, PISA 2003 to 2018, by state and territory²⁴⁰



²⁴⁰ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's Results Volume I Student Performance*, p 131, <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=ozpisa>

Figure 4: Graph depicting mean scientific literacy performance from PISA 2006 to 2018, by state and territory²⁴¹



²⁴¹ Australian Council for Educational Research, *PISA 2018: Reporting Australia's Results Volume I Student Performance*, p 194, <https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=ozpisa>

Appendix 2 John Hattie's Visible Learning: 250 + Influences on Student Achievement²⁴²

STUDENT	ES	CURRICULA	ES
Prior knowledge and background		Reading, writing and the arts	
Field independence	0.68	Comprehensive instructional programs for teachers	0.72
Non-standard dialect use	-0.29	Comprehension programs	0.47
Piagetian programs	1.28	Drama/arts programs	0.38
Prior ability	0.94	Exposure to reading	0.43
Prior achievement	0.55	Music programs	0.37
Relating creativity to achievement	0.40	Phonics instruction	0.70
Relations of high school to university achievement	0.60	Repeated reading programs	0.75
Relations of high school achievement to career performance	0.38	Second/third chance programs	0.53
Self-reported grades	1.33	Sentence combining programs	0.15
Working memory strength	0.57	Spelling programs	0.58
Beliefs, attitudes and dispositions		Visual-perception programs	0.55
Attitude to content domains	0.35	Vocabulary programs	0.62
Concentration/persistence/ engagement	0.56	Whole language approach	0.06
Grit/incremental vs. entity thinking	0.25	Writing programs	0.45
Mindfulness	0.29	Math and sciences	
Morning vs. evening	0.12	Manipulative materials on math	0.30
Perceived task value	0.46	Mathematics programs	0.59
Positive ethnic self-identity	0.12	Science programs	0.48
Positive self-concept	0.41	Use of calculators	0.27
Self-efficacy	0.92	Other curricula programs	
Stereotype threat	0.33	Bilingual programs	0.36
Student personality attributes	0.26	Career interventions	0.38
Motivational approach, orientation		Chess instruction	0.34
Achieving motivation and approach	0.44	Conceptual change programs	0.99
Boredom	-0.49	Creativity programs	0.62
Deep motivation and approach	0.69	Diversity courses	0.09
Depression	-0.36	Extra-curricula programs	0.20
Lack of stress	0.17	Integrated curricula programs	0.47
Mastery goals	0.06	Juvenile delinquent programs	0.12
Motivation	0.42	Motivation/character programs	0.34
Performance goals	-0.01	Outdoor/adventure programs	0.43
Reducing anxiety	0.42	Perceptual-motor programs	0.08
Surface motivation and approach	-0.11	Play programs	0.50
Physical influences		Social skills programs	0.39
ADHD	-0.90	Tactile stimulation programs	0.58
ADHD – treatment with drugs	0.32		
Breastfeeding	0.04		
Deafness	-0.61		
Exercise/relaxation	0.26		
Gender on achievement	0.08		
Lack of illness	0.26		
Lack of sleep	-0.05		
Full compared to pre-term/low birth weight	0.57		
Relative age within a class	0.45		

²⁴² Visible Learning Plus, *John Hattie's Visible Learning: 250 + Influences on Student Achievement*, <https://visible-learning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/VLPLUS-252-Influences-Hattie-ranking-DEC-2017.pdf>.

HOME		ES
Family structure		
Adopted vs non-adopted care	●	0.25
Engaged vs disengaged fathers	●	0.20
Intact (two-parent) families	●	0.23
Other family structure	●	0.16
Home environment		
Corporal punishment in the home	●	-0.33
Early years' interventions	●	0.44
Home visiting	●	0.29
Moving between schools	●	-0.34
Parental autonomy support	●	0.15
Parental involvement	●	0.50
Parental military deployment	●	-0.16
Positive family/home dynamics	●	0.52
Television	●	-0.18
Family resources		
Family on welfare/state aid	●	-0.12
Non-immigrant background	●	0.01
Parental employment	●	0.03
Socio-economic status	●	0.52

SCHOOL		ES
Leadership		
Collective teacher efficacy	●	1.57
Principals/school leaders	●	0.32
School climate	●	0.32
School resourcing		
External accountability systems	●	0.31
Finances	●	0.21
Types of school		
Charter schools	●	0.09
Religious schools	●	0.24
Single-sex schools	●	0.08
Summer school	●	0.23
Summer vacation effect	●	-0.02
School compositional effects		
College halls of residence	●	0.05
Desegregation	●	0.28
Diverse student body	●	0.10
Middle schools' interventions	●	0.08
Out-of-school curricula experiences	●	0.26
School choice programs	●	0.12
School size (600-900 students at secondary)	●	0.43
Other school factors		
Counseling effects	●	0.35
Generalized school effects	●	0.48
Modifying school calendars/timetables	●	0.09
Pre-school programs	●	0.28
Suspension/expelling students	●	-0.20

Key for rating

- Potential to considerably accelerate student achievement
- Potential to accelerate student achievement
- Likely to have positive impact on student achievement
- Likely to have small positive impact on student achievement
- Likely to have a negative impact on student achievement

ES Effect size calculated using Cohen's *d*

CLASSROOM	ES
Classroom composition effects	
Detracking	0.09
Mainstreaming/inclusion	0.27
Multi-grade/age classes	0.04
Open vs. traditional classrooms	0.01
Reducing class size	0.21
Retention (holding students back)	-0.32
Small group learning	0.47
Tracking/streaming	0.12
Within class grouping	0.18
School curricula for gifted students	
Ability grouping for gifted students	0.30
Acceleration programs	0.68
Enrichment programs	0.53
Classroom influences	
Background music	0.10
Behavioral intervention programs	0.62
Classroom management	0.35
Cognitive behavioral programs	0.29
Decreasing disruptive behavior	0.34
Mentoring	0.12
Positive peer influences	0.53
Strong classroom cohesion	0.44
Students feeling disliked	-0.19

TEACHER	ES
Teacher attributes	
Average teacher effects	0.32
Teacher clarity	0.75
Teacher credibility	0.90
Teacher estimates of achievement	1.29
Teacher expectations	0.43
Teacher personality attributes	0.23
Teacher performance pay	0.05
Teacher verbal ability	0.22
Teacher-student interactions	
Student rating of quality of teaching	0.50
Teachers not labeling students	0.61
Teacher-student relationships	0.52
Teacher education	
Initial teacher training programs	0.12
Micro-teaching/video review of lessons	0.88
Professional development programs	0.41
Teacher subject matter knowledge	0.11

TEACHING: Focus on student learning strategies	ES
Strategies emphasizing student meta-cognitive/self-regulated learning	
Elaboration and organization	0.75
Elaborative interrogation	0.42
Evaluation and reflection	0.75
Meta-cognitive strategies	0.60
Help seeking	0.72
Self-regulation strategies	0.52
Self-verbalization and self-questioning	0.55
Strategy monitoring	0.58
Transfer strategies	0.86
Student-focused interventions	
Aptitude/treatment interactions	0.19
Individualized instruction	0.23
Matching style of learning	0.31
Student-centered teaching	0.36
Student control over learning	0.02
Strategies emphasizing student perspectives in learning	
Peer tutoring	0.53
Volunteer tutors	0.26
Learning strategies	
Deliberate practice	0.79
Effort	0.77
Imagery	0.45
Interleaved practice	0.21
Mnemonics	0.76
Note taking	0.50
Outlining and transforming	0.66
Practice testing	0.54
Record keeping	0.52
Rehearsal and memorization	0.73
Spaced vs. mass practice	0.60
Strategy to integrate with prior knowledge	0.93
Study skills	0.46
Summarization	0.79
Teaching test taking and coaching	0.30
Time on task	0.49
Underlining and highlighting	0.50

Key for rating

- Potential to considerably accelerate student achievement
- Potential to accelerate student achievement
- Likely to have positive impact on student achievement
- Likely to have small positive impact on student achievement
- Likely to have a negative impact on student achievement

ES Effect size calculated using Cohen's *d*

The Visible Learning research synthesises findings from **1,400** meta-analyses of **80,000** studies involving **300** million students, into what works best in education.

TEACHING: Focus on teaching/instructional strategies	ES
Strategies emphasizing learning intentions	
Appropriately challenging goals	● 0.59
Behavioral organizers	● 0.42
Clear goal intentions	● 0.48
Cognitive task analysis	● 1.29
Concept mapping	● 0.64
Goal commitment	● 0.40
Learning goals vs. no goals	● 0.68
Learning hierarchies-based approach	● 0.19
Planning and prediction	● 0.76
Setting standards for self-judgement	● 0.62
Strategies emphasizing success criteria	
Mastery learning	● 0.57
Worked examples	● 0.37
Strategies emphasizing feedback	
Classroom discussion	● 0.82
Different types of testing	● 0.12
Feedback	● 0.70
Providing formative evaluation	● 0.48
Questioning	● 0.48
Response to intervention	● 1.29
Teaching/instructional strategies	
Adjunct aids	● 0.32
Collaborative learning	● 0.34
Competitive vs. individualistic learning	● 0.24
Cooperative learning	● 0.40
Cooperative vs. competitive learning	● 0.53
Cooperative vs. individualistic learning	● 0.55
Direct instruction	● 0.60
Discovery-based teaching	● 0.21
Explicit teaching strategies	● 0.57
Humor	● 0.04
Inductive teaching	● 0.44
Inquiry-based teaching	● 0.40
Jigsaw method	● 1.20
Philosophy in schools	● 0.43
Problem-based learning	● 0.26
Problem-solving teaching	● 0.68
Reciprocal teaching	● 0.74
Scaffolding	● 0.82
Teaching communication skills and strategies	● 0.43

TEACHING: Focus on implementation method	ES
Implementations using technologies	
Clickers	● 0.22
Gaming/simulations	● 0.35
Information communications technology (ICT)	● 0.47
Intelligent tutoring systems	● 0.48
Interactive video methods	● 0.54
Mobile phones	● 0.37
One-on-one laptops	● 0.16
Online and digital tools	● 0.29
Programmed instruction	● 0.23
Technology in distance education	● 0.01
Technology in mathematics	● 0.33
Technology in other subjects	● 0.55
Technology in reading/literacy	● 0.29
Technology in science	● 0.23
Technology in small groups	● 0.21
Technology in writing	● 0.42
Technology with college students	● 0.42
Technology with elementary students	● 0.44
Technology with high school students	● 0.30
Technology with learning needs students	● 0.57
Use of PowerPoint	● 0.26
Visual/audio-visual methods	● 0.22
Web-based learning	● 0.18
Implementations using out-of-school learning	
After-school programs	● 0.40
Distance education	● 0.13
Home-school programs	● 0.16
Homework	● 0.29
Service learning	● 0.58
Implementations that emphasize school-wide teaching strategies	
Co- or team teaching	● 0.19
Interventions for students with learning needs	● 0.77
Student support programs – college	● 0.21
Teaching creative thinking	● 0.34
Whole-school improvement programs	● 0.28

Appendix 3 Six Common Factors in Creating Successful Disadvantaged Schools²⁴³

First, a strong focus on school discipline, with clear, consistently applied classroom rules. As one principal commented, “Unless you’ve got an orderly environment you can’t focus on learning. So we worked really hard on that for years. And it works really well now. It gets easier over time.”

Second, direct instruction in the classroom, so that new content is explicitly taught in sequenced and structured lessons. This includes clear lesson objectives, immediate feedback, reviewing previous lessons, unambiguous language, constantly checking on student understanding and all students practicing their skills under teacher guidance. As a principal said, “We haven’t got time to muck around for the kids to discover things by themselves, we have to actually teach them.”

Most of the successful primary schools are in Victoria, where the Department of Education has identified direct instruction as a high-impact teaching strategy that reliably improves student outcomes. This is part of the High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) document issued for the benefit of schools. What works is what matters.

Joseph also notes:

Several principals mentioned that for disadvantaged students in particular, inquiry-based learning activities are problematic because often these activities require background knowledge that students from low socio-economic backgrounds will not possess unless they are explicitly taught at school. Unlike direct instruction, inquiry-based learning in Australia is associated with significantly lower science scores ... according to a recent OECD report.

Third, data-informed practices: Using assessment data to inform teaching, track student progress and intervene to help under-performing students was common to the high-achieving disadvantaged schools. Data was collected and analysed at the student, class, year and school level. As one principal commented, “The more data, the better”.

In addition to teacher-developed assessments, the schools used data from two standardised tests: NAPLAN and Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT, from the Australian Council for Educational Research). The South Australian school also had information from its Year 1 Phonics Check. Among those interviewed for the study, student and teacher stress with NAPLAN was not raised as an issue.

Fourth, comprehensive early reading instruction: This is crucial for breaking the cycle of disadvantage. As a principal noted, “The students have to be really strong in early reading because if they’re not, it holds them back in everything.” Another said, “As a school goal, we want 100 percent of our students reading. We don’t care what their backgrounds are when they come, we’ll do everything we can to get them to read.”

The schools in the study teach the five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness (identifying individual sounds), phonics (sounding out and decoding words), fluency (reading pace and

²⁴³ See Blaise Joseph, *Overcoming the Odds: A study of Australia’s top-performing disadvantaged schools*, The Centre for Independent Studies Research Report 39, March 2019.

accuracy), vocabulary (the meaning of words and structure of language) and comprehension (understanding and interpreting texts).

Fifth, teacher collaboration: There was a heavy focus on professional development in-house, involving peer observations, mentoring, reviewing individual student progress, defining and implementing best practice and regular meetings to discuss the unique requirements of disadvantaged schooling.

Sixth, stable, experienced and autonomous school leadership was also a common feature, with principals having the capacity to select staff and run school budgets in line with evidence-based school priorities.

Appendix 4 Submissions

No.	Author
1	Name suppressed (<i>partially confidential</i>)
2	Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales
3	RMIT University Melbourne
4	Dr David Roy
5	Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW Inc (ICPA)
6	NSW Business Chamber
7	Name suppressed (<i>partially confidential</i>)
8	Name suppressed (<i>partially confidential</i>)
9	Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT
10	The Centre for Independent Studies
11	Professor James Ladwig
12	Catholic Schools NSW
13	Public Service Association of NSW
14	Association of Independent Schools of NSW
15	Name suppressed
16	Country Women's Association of NSW
17	MultiLit Pty Ltd
18	NSW Government
19	Name suppressed
20	Ms Anna Noon (<i>partially confidential</i>)
21	New South Wales Teachers Federation

Appendix 5 Witnesses at hearings

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
8 October 2019 Macquarie Room Parliament House	Ms Liana Downey	Deputy Secretary Strategy and Delivery, NSW Department of Education
	Mr Murat Dizdar	Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education
	Ms Sally Egan	Acting Executive Director, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation
	Dr Vinita Deodhar	Executive Director, Sector Outcomes & Performance NSW Treasury
	Dr David Roy	Lecturer, School of Education, University of Newcastle
	Mr Glenn Fahey	Research Fellow, Education Program, Centre for Independent Studies
	Mr Dallas McInerney	Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Schools NSW
	Ms Danielle Cronin	Director of Education Policy, Catholic Schools NSW
10 October 2019 Macquarie Room Parliament House	Mr Alan Gardiner	Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales
	Mr Patrick Doumani	Member Support/Communications Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales
	Associate Professor James Ladwig	School of Education, University of Newcastle
	Mr Michael Carr	Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW
	Ms Lyn Kirkby	Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority
	Dr Sofia Kesidou	Executive Director, Assessment Standards, NSW Education Standards Authority
	Ms Beverly Baker	Executive Officer, Aboriginal Education Council NSW

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Ms Dianne Butland	Honourary Treasurer, Aboriginal Education Council NSW
	Ms Claire Butler <i>Via teleconference</i>	President, Isolated Children's and Parent's Association of New South Wales Inc
	Ms Annabel Strachan <i>Via teleconference</i>	Rural Schools Portfolio Leader, Isolated Children's Parent's Association of New South Wales Inc
29 November 2019 Macquarie Room Parliament House	Professor Kim Beswick	Head of School of Education, University of New South Wales
	Professor Deb Hayes	Head of School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney
	Professor Jim Tognolini	Director - Research Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment, University of Sydney
	Mrs Manisha Gazula	Principal, Marsden Road Public School
	Mr Peter Rouse	Principal, Canley Vale High School
	Mr Murat Dizdar	Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Education Department
	Ms Georgina Harrisson	Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Education Department

Appendix 6 Minutes

Minutes no. 3

Wednesday 3 July 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

Room 1136, Parliament House, Sydney, 10.02 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

Mr D'Adam

Mr Farlow

Mr Fang

Mrs Houssos

Mr Shoebridge

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That draft minutes no. 2 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 2 July 2019 – Email from Mr David Shoebridge MLC raising concerns about the proposed inquiry and suggesting alternative terms of reference
- 21 June 2019 – Email from Mr David Shoebridge MLC suggesting an amendment to the proposed self-reference into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools
- 20 June 2019 – Letter from Hon Scott Farlow MLC, Hon Matthew Mason-Cox MLC and Hon Mark Latham MLC requesting a meeting of Portfolio Committee 3 – Education to consider a proposed self-reference into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

Sent

- 25 June 2019 – Letter from Hon Mark Latham MLC, Committee Chair, to Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance Mr Peter Riordan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services NSW Department of Education, thanking them for the briefing on workplace bullying of teachers and requesting copies of documents referred to during the briefing
- 25 June 2019 – Letter from Hon Mark Latham MLC, Committee Chair, to Mr Mark Scott AO, Secretary NSW Department of Education, inviting him or his departmental officials to brief the committee on the findings of the review by Mr Mark Tedeschi AM QC into the functions and operations of the Employee Performance and Conduct (EPAC) Directorate.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That to follow up the briefing on workplace bullying of teachers, the committee request that the Department of Education provide:

- a response to the article in the Daily Telegraph today, 3 July 2019, titled 'Schools chalk up a compo increase', relating to increasing compensation claims by school staff
- its figures on trends in workers' compensation claims in the last five years.

4. Consideration of terms of reference

The chair proposed the following terms of reference reflecting additions from Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos and Mr Shoebridge:

Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

1. That Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education inquire into and report on measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools, and in particular:
 - (a) New South Wales school results relative to other states and other countries and what these trends show about schools policy,
 - (b) the existing state of measurement in the New South Wales education system and the measurement systems and data requirements that would be required to implement outcome-based budgeting in the New South Wales education system,
 - (c) consequences of the introduction of outcome-based budgeting for New South Wales schools with particular regard to:
 - (i) the needs of and impact on disadvantaged schools and students from a disadvantaged background
 - (ii) the needs of and impact on students with a disability
 - (iii) parental/community involvement in school accountability
 - (iv) the development of the status and quality of the New South Wales teaching profession
 - (v) establishing international best practice for teaching methods, performance measurement and school management in New South Wales
 - (vi) the effectiveness of the Local Schools/Local Decisions policy,
 - (d) how schools should be funded into the future and whether New South Wales growth funding, including from Gonski and other sources, should be linked to outcomes and performance,
 - (e) reporting and accountability measures for all schools in regard to state government funding,
 - (f) the provision of wrap-around services to support educational outcomes, and
 - (g) any other related matters.
2. That the committee report by 20 December 2019.

Mr Farlow moved: That the committee adopt the terms of reference as proposed by the Chair.

Mr D'Adam moved: That the motion of Mr Farlow be amended by inserting in 1(c):

- (vii) the potential risks of introducing perverse incentives into the New South Wales education system
- (viii) the level of departmental support that would be required to enable the effective introduction of outcome-based funding

Amendment put.

Amendment resolved in the negative.

Original question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

5. Conduct of the inquiry

Proposed timeline

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee adopt the following for the administration of the inquiry:

- submission closing date – Sunday 18 August 2019
- hearings/site visit – late September/October 2019 (after Budget Estimates)
- reporting date – 20 December 2019, with a view to reporting in mid-December.

Stakeholder list

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee circulate to members the chair's proposed list of stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to amend the list or nominate additional stakeholders, and that the committee agree to the stakeholder list by email, unless a meeting of the committee is required to resolve any disagreement.

Advertising

The committee noted that all inquiries are advertised via Twitter, Facebook, stakeholder letters and a media release distributed to all media outlets in New South Wales.

It is no longer standard practice to advertise in the print media. The committee can pass a resolution if it wishes to do so.

6. Discussion of committee's agenda in 57th Parliament

The committee discussed potential inquiries in the 57th Parliament.

7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10.39 am, *sine die*.

Madeleine Foley
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 4

Wednesday 7 July 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

Parkes Room, Parliament House, Sydney, 6.01 pm

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*
Mr D'Adam
Mr Farlow
Mr Fang
Mrs Houssos

2. Apologies

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*
Mr Shoebridge

3. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That draft minutes no. 3 be confirmed.

4. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 28 June 2019 – Letter from the Hon John Ajaka MLC, President of the Legislative Council and Chair of the Procedure Committee, to the Chair advising that the Procedure Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the broadcast of proceedings resolution of continuing effect.
- 25 July 2019 – Email from Mr Cameron Dungan, Advisor, Office of the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, to the secretariat, providing a witness list for the Budget Estimates initial hearings.
- 26 July 2019 – Email from Mr Ben Turner, Senior Advisor, Office of the Hon Dr Geoff Lee MP, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, to the secretariat, providing a witness list for the Budget Estimates initial hearings.

Sent

- 28 June 2019 – Letter from the secretariat to the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, inviting the Minister to Budget Estimates initial hearings
- 28 June 2019 – Letter from the secretariat to the Hon Geoff Lee MP, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, inviting the Minister to Budget Estimates initial hearings.

5. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2019-2020 – procedural resolutions**5.1 Government questions**

The committee deferred consideration of government questions until a future meeting.

Order for examination of portfolios and witnesses

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That witnesses proposed to answer questions relating to the portfolios allocated to the following ministers be invited to appear for the duration of each session:

- Minister Mitchell on Wednesday 4 September 2019
- Minister Lee on Friday 6 September 2019.

5.2 Additional witness requests

The committee noted each minister's list of proposed witnesses, as per the table below, and that members have until 6.30 pm Thursday 8 August 2019 to provide any additional witness requests.

Resolved on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That Tracey Mackey, Executive Director, Early Childhood Education and Care, Department of Education be invited to appear at the Education and Early Childhood Education Learning hearing.

5.3 Parliamentary secretaries

Resolved, on motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee invite Mr Kevin Connolly MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Education to appear at the Education and Early Childhood Education Learning hearing.

6. Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

6.1 School site visits.

The committee noted that the Chair had previously circulated a memorandum regarding school site visits.

Resolved, on motion of Mr Fang: That the committee create subcommittees for the purposes of conducting school site visits, with details of the site visits to be determined at a later date in consultation with the school sector and the secretariat.

6.2 Submissions

Resolved, on motion of Mrs Houssos: That the submission deadline be extended to Saturday 31 August 2019.

Minister	Portfolio	Witness	Position and Department
Mitchell	Education and Early Childhood Education Learning	Mr Mark Scott	Secretary, Department of Education
		Mr Murat Dizdar	Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, Department of Education
		Ms Georgina Harrisson	Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, Department of Education
		Ms Leslie Loble	Deputy Secretary, External Affairs and Regulation, Department of Education
		Mr Peter Riordan	Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, Department of Education
		Mr Anthony Manning	Chief Executive, School Infrastructure NSW, Department of Education
		Mr Paul Martin	A/Chief Executive Officer, NSW Education Standards Authority
		Mr David Murphy	Executive Director, Corporate Governance and School Standards, NSW Education Standards Authority
Lee	Skills and Tertiary Education	Mr Mark Scott	Secretary, Department of Education
		Ms Mary Ann O'Loughlin	Deputy Secretary, Skills and Higher Education, Department of Education
		Ms Kerry Penton	A/Managing Director, TAFE NSW

7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 6.06 pm, *sine die*.

Jenelle Moore
Clerk to the Committee

Minutes no. 5

Wednesday 21 August 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

Parkes Room, Parliament House, Sydney, 6.30 pm

1. Members presentMr Latham, *Chair*Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

Mr D'Adam

Mr Farlow

Mrs Houssos

Mr Martin (*substituting for Mr Fang*)

Mr Shoebridge

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That draft minutes no. 4 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received:

- 28 June 2019 – Letter from Mr Peter Riordan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, Education NSW, responding to the committee's request for documents dated 25 June 2019
- 22 July 2019 – Email from Ms Deidre Mulkerin, Deputy Secretary, People and Culture, NSW Department of Education, responding to the committee's request for a response relating to a Daily Telegraph article published on 3 July 2019
- 23 July 2019 – Email from Mr Kevin Hughes, Performance Audit Leader, Audit Office of New South Wales, informing the committee of the Audit Office's audit into the effectiveness of agencies' arrangements in ensuring teaching quality in public schools
- 7 August 2019 – Email from the Bullied Teachers Support Network, enquiring about the outcome of the committee's briefing with NSW Department of Education on 21 June 2019

Sent:

- 10 July 2019 – Email to Mr Mark Scott AO, Secretary, NSW Department of Education, requesting a response relating to an article published by the Daily Telegraph on 3 July 2019
- 13 August 2019 – Email to the Bullied Teachers Support Network from the secretariat, responding to its enquiry relating to a committee briefing dated 21 June 2019

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee keep the correspondence from Mr Peter Riordan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, NSW Department of Education, dated 28 June 2019, confidential.

4. Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools**4.1 Public submissions**

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submissions nos 2, 3 and 4.

4.2 Partially confidential submission (name suppressed/identifying information)

The committee noted that submission no. 1 was partially published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 1 with the exception of certain identifying information and the author's name, which is to remain confidential, as per the request of the author.

4.3 School site visits

The committee noted that the House had not agreed to the motion to appoint subcommittees for the purpose of the inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools, and therefore that the proposed school visits would be conducted as a committee.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee conduct at least two days of site visits, to schools identified as being best practice schools, with the aim of seeing different practice in each school. Further, that the first site visit be on Friday 25 October 2019, and the chair in consultation with the committee identify at least one other site visit date.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 6.47 pm until Wednesday 4 September 2019 (Budget Estimates).

Madeleine Foley

Clerk to the Committee

Minutes no. 6

Wednesday 4 September 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education

Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney, at 9.20 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

Ms Boyd (substituting for Mr Shoebridge for parts of the meeting)

Mr Banasiak (*participating*)

Mr D'Adam

Mr Fang

Mr Farlow

Mrs Houssos

Mr Shoebridge

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Mason-Cox: That draft minutes no. 5 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 13 August 2019 - Email from Mr Rick Cortese, Senior Electorate Officer, Office of the Mr Kevin Conolly MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, advising that Mr Conolly will attend the Budget Estimates hearing for Education and Early Childhood Learning on 4 September 2019
- 14 August 2019 – Email from Ms Shannon Hall, Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Office of the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, to the secretariat, confirming Ms Tracey Mackey, Executive Director, Early Childhood Education and Care, Department of Education will attend the Education and Early Childhood Learning Budget Estimates hearing on 4 September 2019
- 29 August 2019 – From Mr Mark Latham, Chair, Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education to the committee, providing a report relating to his visits to Marsden Road Public School and Canley Vale High School.

Sent

- 12 August 2019 – Email from the secretariat to Mr Ben Turner, Senior Advisor, Office of the Hon Dr Geoff Lee MP, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, confirming that the committee has not requested additional witnesses for Budget Estimates
- 12 August 2019 – Email from the secretariat to Mr Cameron Dunger, Advisor, Office of the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, providing an additional witness request for Budget Estimates
- 13 August 2019 – Letter from the secretariat to Mr Kevin Conolly MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, inviting the Parliamentary Secretary to the Budget Estimates Education and Early Childhood Learning hearing on 4 September 2019.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee publish the correspondence from Mr Latham relating to his visits to Marsden Road Public School and Canley Vale High School on 27 August 2019, in addition to his school reports relating to his visits to Blairmount Public School, Campbelltown Public School and Liverpool Boys High School.

4. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2019-2020

Mr D'Adam declared an interest relevant to the education portfolio, for which he had received advice from the Clerk that this interest would not preclude him from participating in proceedings.

4.1 Government questions

Resolved on the motion of Mr Farlow: That with no questions asked by government members, the portfolio of Education and Early Childhood Learning be examined from 9.30 am to 11.30 am, 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm, and 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm (if required).

4.2 Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That for the each session:

- the opposition and crossbench be allocated 20 minutes of questioning each round, and any time remaining be divided between the two groups equally
- Mr Banasiak be allocated 5 mins from the cross bench time (except in the last round of questioning).

4.3 Public hearing: Budget Estimates 2019-2020 – Education and Early Childhood Learning

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings and other matters. The Chair noted that members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning was admitted.

Mr Kevin Conolly MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Education was admitted.

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Mr Mark Scott, Secretary, Department of Education
- Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, Department of Education
- Ms Georgina Harrison, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, Department of Education
- Ms Leslie Loble, Deputy Secretary, Education Futures and Governance, Department of Education
- Mr Peter Riordan, Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services, Department of Education
- Mr Erik Maranik, Chief Operating Officer, Schools Infrastructure NSW, Department of Education
- Mr Paul Martin, A/Chief Executive Officer, NSW Education Standards Authority

- Mr David Murphy, Executive Director, Corporate Governance and School Standards, NSW Education Standards Authority
- Ms Tracy Mackey, Executive Director, Early Childhood Education and Care, Department of Education
- Ms Deidre Mulkerin, Deputy Secretary, People and Culture, Department of Education.

The Chair declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Education and Early Childhood Learning open for examination.

The Minister and departmental witnesses were examined by the committee.

Mr Banasiak tabled a collection of documents related to complaints and investigations of workplace issues in the NSW Department of Education.

The Minister and Parliamentary Secretary withdrew at 11.30 am.

The hearing continued

4.4 Tendered documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the following documents tendered during the Education and Early Childhood Learning hearing held on Wednesday 4 September 2019, remain confidential

- Collection of documents related to complaints and investigations of workplace issues in the NSW Department of Education, tendered by Mr Banasiak.

4.5 Supplementary hearings

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee hold a further meeting to deliberate on whether to hold supplementary hearings for the portfolio of Education and Early Childhood Learning on a date to be determined following receipt of answers to questions on notice.

4.6 Allocation of questioning for the evening session

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the evening session be held from 6.00-7.15pm and that the allocation of questions be as follows:

- the opposition and crossbench be allocated 15 minutes of questioning each round, and Mr Banasiak be allocated 5 minutes.

4.7 Public hearing: Budget Estimates 2019-2020 – Education and Early Childhood Learning (evening session)

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The hearing continued

The witnesses withdrew

The public and media withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 7.13 pm.

4.8 Hearing on 6 September 2019

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That with no government questions, the hearing on the morning of Friday 6 September 2019 for the portfolio of Skills and Tertiary Education be held from 9.30 am – 11.30 am.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 7.18pm, until 9.15 am, Friday 6 September 2019, Macquarie Room (*Skills and Tertiary Education*).

Tina Higgins/Beverly Duffy
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 8

Wednesday 18 September 2019
Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education
Room 1136, Parliament House, 1.33 pm

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*
Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair (until 2.09 pm)*
Mr D'Adam (*from 1.35 pm*)
Mr Fang
Mr Farlow (*until 2.15 pm*)
Mrs Houssos (*from 1.37 pm*)
Mr Shoebridge (*from 1.45 pm*)
Mr Banasiak (*participating until 2.25 pm*)

2. Correspondence

The committee noted the following item of correspondence:

Received

- 13 September 2019 – Email from Ms Elspeth Prince for Margot Alston, Executive Assistant to David Gonski AC to secretariat, advising that Mr Gonski is unavailable to attend public hearings scheduled for Tuesday 8 and Thursday 10 October 2019, due to prior commitments.

3. Briefing by NSW Department of Education

The committee was briefed by Ms Deidre Mulkerin, Deputy Secretary, People and Culture, NSW Department of Education on the findings of the review by Mr Mark Tedeschi AM QC into the functions and operations of the Employee Performance and Conduct (EPAC) Directorate.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the issues discussed at the briefing with Ms Deidre Mulkerin, Deputy Secretary, People and Culture, NSW Department of Education remain confidential, but that the delivery of the briefing be a matter of public record.

4. Future briefings by NSW Department of Education

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee seek a briefing from the NSW Department of Education on the following by February 2020:

- Review of senior secondary pathways to the future
- Bump It Up strategy
- Tell Them From Me survey system.

5. Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

5.1 Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 5, 6, 9-14, 16, and 18.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 17 as per the request of the author.

5.2 Partially confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Fang: That the committee keep the following information confidential, as per the request of the author: names and/or identifying and sensitive information in submission nos. 7, 8, 15, and 19.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 20, with the exception of identifying and/or sensitive information which are to remain confidential, as per the request of the author.

5.3 Witnesses

The committee noted the unavailability of Mr David Gonski to attend either of the public hearings scheduled for Tuesday 8 and Thursday 10 October 2019.

5.4 Consideration of engagement of education expert from NSW Treasury

The committee discussed the idea of seeking funding from the NSW Treasury to engage an education expert, such as a secondee from a government agency or an academic, to assist with the inquiry.

Issues raised included the separation of NSW Legislative Council Committees and the Executive, and the precedent this may set for future inquiries.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee seek advice from the Clerk about the implications, if any, of seeking funding from the NSW Treasury to engage an education expert, such as a secondee from a government agency or an academic, to assist with the inquiry, and that the advice be circulated to members for consideration as to whether to proceed.

6. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 2.34 pm, until Tuesday 8 October 2019 (public hearing).

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 9

Tuesday 8 October 2019
Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education
Macquarie Room at 10.45 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*
Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*
Mr D'Adam
Mr Fang
Mr Farlow
Mrs Houssos
Mr Shoebridge (*from 11.20 am*)

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That the draft minutes no. 8 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 19 September 2019 – Email from Ms Sandra Lockey, Executive Assistant to Mr Stewart Little, General Secretary, Public Service Association of NSW, advising that the Public Service Association NSW declines the invitation to give evidence at this time
- 26 September 2019 – Email from NSW Teachers Federation to secretariat, advising that the NSW Teachers Federation will not be participating in the inquiry
- 26 September 2019 – Email from Mr Kevin Hughes, Performance Audit Leader, Audit Office of New South Wales, providing a performance audit report entitled 'ensuring teaching quality in NSW public schools', dated September 2019
- 26 September 2019 – Clerk of the Parliaments to Chair, providing advice on the matter of engaging an expert to assist with the committee
- 2 October 2019 – Email from Ms Sarah Egan, Consultant Policy and Compliance, Association of Independent Schools to secretariat, advising that Ms Egan will no longer be appearing alongside Mr Michael Carr as a witness at the hearing on 10 October 2019
- 3 October 2019 – Email from Mr Kevin Hughes, Performance Audit Leader, Audit Office of New South Wales, advising of the terms of reference for the audit of the Local Schools, Local Decisions reform
- 4 October 2019 – Email from Mr Mark Latham, Chair, Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education to the committee, providing a report relating to his visits to Wollondilly Anglican College and St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Camden
- 8 October 2019 - Email from William Coates to secretariat advising Mr Fang will be an apology for the Portfolio Committee 3 inquiry hearing on Thursday 10 October 2019.

Sent:

- 23 September 2019 – Letter from Chair to Mr David Blunt, Clerk of the Parliaments, seeking advice on engaging an expert to assist with the committee.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee publish the correspondence from Mr Latham relating to his visits to Wollondilly Anglican College and St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Camden on 12 and 20 September 2019.

4. Inquiry into measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools**4.1 Clerks advice**

The committee considered the Clerks advice regarding the engagement of an external expert to assist with the inquiry.

The Chair undertook to raise the matter of co-opting government department and/or agency officials to assist with Upper House inquiries in the House.

4.2 Site visits — 25 and 29 October 2019

The committee noted that the site visit on Tuesday 29 October is during the week of supplementary hearings for Budget Estimates 2019-2020.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the Chair's proposed itinerary for the two site visits around Sydney on 25 and 29 October 2019 be approved.

4.3 Public hearing***Allocation of questioning***

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That the timing of questioning for today's hearing be left in the hands of the Chair.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Liana Downey, Deputy Secretary Strategy and Delivery, NSW Department of Education
- Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education
- Ms Sally Egan, Acting Executive Director, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation
- Dr Vinita Deodhar, Executive Director, Sector Outcomes & Performance, NSW Treasury.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Dr David Roy, Lecturer, School of Education, University of Newcastle.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Glenn Fahey, Research Fellow, Education Program, Centre for Independent Studies.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Dallas McInerney, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Schools NSW
- Ms Danielle Cronin, Director of Education Policy, Catholic Schools NSW

Mr Shoebridge tabled the following documents:

- Documents obtained under the GIPA Act 2009 relating to Non-Government Schools Per Capita Rates for funding 2015 to 2017, payment advices and invoices between the NSW Government and the Catholic Education Commission NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5.00 pm.

The public and media withdrew.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee publish the documents obtained under GIPA Act 2009 relating to Non-Government Schools Per Capita Rates for funding 2015 to 2017, payment advices and invoices between the NSW Government and the Catholic Education Commission NSW.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.05 pm, until 10.45 am, Thursday 10 October 2019 (outcome-based funding public hearing).

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 10

Thursday 10 October 2019
Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education
Macquarie Room, Parliament House, 11.03 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

Mr D'Adam

Mr Farlow

Mrs Houssos

Mr Shoebridge

2. Apologies

Mr Fang

3. Inquiry into measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools

3.1 Public Hearing

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Alan Gardiner, Secretary, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales
- Mr Patrick Doumani, Member Support/Communications Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Association of New South Wales.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Associate Professor James Ladwig, School of Education, University of Newcastle.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Michael Carr, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Independent Schools NSW.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Lyn Kirkby, Acting Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority
- Dr Sofia Kesidou, Executive Director, Assessment Standards, NSW Education Standards Authority.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Beverly Baker, Executive Officer, Aboriginal Education Council NSW
 - Ms Dianne Butland, Honorary Treasurer, Aboriginal Education Council NSW
- Via teleconference:*
- Ms Claire Butler, President, Isolated Children's and Parent's Association of New South Wales Inc
 - Ms Annabel Strachan, Rural Schools Portfolio Leader, Isolated Children's Parent's Association of New South Wales Inc.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 4.43 pm.

The public and media withdrew.

4. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 4.44 pm, until 7.45 am, Friday 25 October 2019 (outcome-based funding site visit).

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 12

Friday 25 October 2019
Portfolio Committee No 3 - Education
Macquarie Street, Sydney, 9.00 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*
Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*
Mr D'Adam
Mr Farlow (*until 12.45 pm*)

2. Apologies

Mr Fang
Mrs Houssos
Mr Shoebridge

3. Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools**3.1 Site visit – schools in Western Sydney**

The committee attended Christ the King Catholic Primary School, Yagoona and was met by Mrs Lee Scola, Principal, Mrs Mary L'Estrange, School Consultant and Mr Gary Molloy, Manager, Research, Data and Analysis, Catholic Schools NSW.

Mrs Scola gave a presentation on successful learning at Christ the King Catholic Primary School. The committee then inspected the facilities of the school and observed a classroom lesson.

The committee attended Auburn North Public School and was met by Mr Mark Harris, Principal, Ms Cathy Clift, Assistant Principal, and Mr John Kennedy, Director, Educational Leadership – Auburn Principals Network.

Mr Harris and Ms Clift gave a presentation on the programs, teaching practices, and use of assessment data at Auburn North Public School that have led to successful NAPLAN results. The committee then inspected the facilities of the school and observed a classroom lesson.

The committee attended Sefton High School and was met by Mr Kevin Humphries, Principal and Mr Andrew Fielding, Director, Educational Leadership – Chullora Principals Network.

Mr Humphries provided a briefing on the programs, teaching practices, and models employed at Sefton High School to promote unity, consistency and results.

The committee then inspected the facilities of the school and observed a classroom lesson.

4. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 2.50 pm, until 8.20 am, Tuesday 29 October 2019, Macquarie St, Parliament House (outcome-based funding site visit).

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 13

Tuesday 29 October 2019

Portfolio Committee No 3 - Education

Macquarie Street, Sydney, 8.35 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*

Mr D'Adam

Mr Farlow (*from 9.10 am until 12.40 pm*)

Mr Shoebridge (*until 1.05 pm*)

2. Apologies

Mr Fang

Mrs Houssos

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

3. Inquiry into measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools

3.1 Site visit – school in North and East Sydney

The committee attended Mimosa Public School and was met by Mr Matthew Fuller, Principal, Ms Fiona Smith, Deputy Principal, and Ms Jann Pattinson, Director, Educational Leadership – The Forest Network.

Mr Fuller provided a briefing on school improvement and quality teaching practices for growth in learning of all students. The committee then inspected the facilities of the school and observed classroom lessons.

The committee attended Northern Beaches Secondary College Balgowlah Boys Campus and was met by Mr Paul Sheather, Principal, and Mr Ben Seldon, Deputy Principal.

Mr Sheather and Mr Seldon gave a presentation on explicit teaching used across faculties at the school and the successful results being achieved in the Higher School Certificate in English. The committee then inspected the facilities of the school and observed classroom lessons.

Mr Shoebridge left the meeting at 1.05 pm.

The Chair and Mr D'Adam proceeded to attend Claremont College, Randwick in their private capacity as members of Parliament.

4. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 1.05 pm, *sine die*.

Emma Rogerson

Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 14

Friday 29 November 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney, 10.47 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

Mr D'Adam

Mr Fang

Mr Farlow

Ms Jackson (*substituting for Mrs Houssos*) (*until 2.57 pm*)

2. Apologies

Mr Shoebridge

3. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the draft minutes nos. 9, 10, 12 and 13 be confirmed.

Mr Farlow joined the meeting.

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received:

- 5 November 2019 – Email from Professor Michele Simons, Dean of Education, Western Sydney University to secretariat, advising she is unable to attend hearing on 29 November 2019
- 12 November 2019 – Email from Mr Patrick Doumani, Communications Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW to secretariat, advising that the response to the question on notice from the transcript of 10 October 2019 was provided during the hearing
- 15 November 2019 - Email from Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education to secretariat providing requested documentation about the Bump it up strategy, Tell them from me survey, and the recent reform process that established the Director Educational Leadership positions (including the role description for the position of DEL
- 18 November 2019 - Email from Ms Rhonda Hay, Secretary, Wollondilly Anglican College to secretariat, advising that Dr Quarmbly is unable to attend the hearing on 29 November 2019 due to illness
- 19 November 2019 – Email from Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education to secretariat, advising that the two Tell Them From Me surveys cannot be made public in any form, and cannot be published on the Legislative Council website
- 19 November 2019 – Email from Ms Gene Reardon, Professional Practice and Leadership Division, Department of Education and Training Victoria, to secretariat advising that representatives are unable to attend the hearing on 29 November 2019 but are happy to provide a response to any specific or formal questions the Committee members may have
- 21 November 2019 – Email from Ms Jessica Brosnan, Senior Project and Policy Officer, Professional Learning and Quality Teaching Practice Branch, Department of Education and Training Victoria to secretariat, clarifying that no representatives from the Department of Education and Training Victoria will be attending the hearing on 29 November 2019
- 22 November 2019 – Email from Opposition Whip to secretariat, advising that Ms Jackson will be substituting for Mrs Houssos at the hearing on 29 November 2019
- 28 November 2019 – Email from Mr Mark Latham, Chair, Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education to the committee, providing a report relating to his visit to St Laurence's Catholic Primary School, Dubbo on 26 November 2019.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That the committee keep confidential the two Tell Them From Me documents from Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education, dated 15 November 2019, as per the request of the author, as they are the intellectual property of the survey provider and the NSW Department of Education is contractually obliged not to reveal them publicly.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That the committee publish the correspondence from Mr Latham relating to his visit to St Laurence's Catholic Primary School, Dubbo on 26 November 2019.

5. Inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools

5.1 Chair's draft report

The committee noted that the Chair will be drafting the report for the inquiry into measurement and outcome-based funding in New South Wales schools.

5.2 Reporting timeline

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That

- the committee extend the reporting date for the inquiry to Friday 28 February 2020
- the secretariat canvass members' availability for a report deliberative on a date in the first week of February 2020, and
- the committee note that as per the new sessional order, the Chair will circulate the Chair's draft report at least seven calendar days prior to the date scheduled for the report deliberative.

5.3 Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- answers to questions on notice from Dr David Roy received on 9 October 2019
- answers to questions on notice from Mr Glenn Fahey, Centre for Independent Studies, received on 4 November 2019
- answers to questions on notice from Catholic Schools NSW, received on 6 November 2019
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from NSW Department of Education received on 5 November 2019
- answers to questions on notice from Professor James Ladwig, received on 7 November 2019
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from NESAs received on 4 November 2019
- answers to questions on notice from the Association of Independent Schools, received on 8 November 2019.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Mason-Cox: That the committee publish answers to questions on notice from the Isolated Children's and Parent's Association, received on 15 November 2019.

5.4 Attachment to submission no. 19

The committee noted the request from the author of submission no. 19 seeking to publish the attachment to the submission.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Fang: That, in accordance to the resolution establishing the committee and established practice, the committee do not publish the attachment to submission no. 19.

5.5 Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Fang: That, notwithstanding the resolution establishing the committee, the committee extend the due date for the return of the answers to questions on notice taken during the hearing held on 29 November 2019 and associated supplementary questions to Monday 13 January 2020.

5.6 Public hearing

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Professor Jim Tognolini, Director, Research Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment, University of Sydney
- Professor Kim Beswick, Head of School of Education, University of New South Wales

- Professor Deb Hayes, Head of School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.

Professor Hayes circulated a book entitled "Jean Blackburn, Education, feminism and social justice", by Craig Campbell and Debra Hayes.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mrs Manisha Gazula, Principal, Marsden Road Public School
- Mr Peter Rouse, Principal, Canley Vale High School.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was examined on his former oath:

- Mr Murat Dizdar, Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance, NSW Department of Education.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Ms Georgina Harrison, Deputy Secretary, Educational Services, NSW Education Department.

Ms Jackson left the meeting at 2.57 pm.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 3.21 pm.

The public and media withdrew.

5.7 Tendered document

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee accept and publish page 195 of the book, entitled "Jean Blackburn, Education, feminism and social justice", tendered by Professor Debra Hayes, Head of School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.

6. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 3.22 pm, *sine die*.

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 15

Thursday 6 February 2020
Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education
McKell Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 10.04 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*
Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*
Mr D'Adam
Mr Fang
Mr Farlow (from 10.06 am)
Mrs Houssos (until 1.57 pm)

Mr Shoebridge (until 1.00 pm, then from 1.54 pm)

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That draft minutes nos. 11 and 14 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 15 November 2019 – Letter from the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning to the secretariat, attaching answers to the request for further information regarding certain answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from the initial Budget Estimates hearing
- 23 January 2020 – Email from Mr Jerry Bishop, Leader Executive Support, Office of the Deputy Secretary – School Operations and Performance, Department of Education, advising that the Deputy Secretary, Mr Murat Dizdar, has requested material about Auburn North Public School not be published or referred to in the draft report
- 24 January 2020 – Email from Mr Tom Sherlock, Principal Project Officer, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education, providing requested information for inclusion in the draft report.
- 3 February 2020 – Email from Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education to secretariat asking the Committee to consider a request from the Department to review the draft report before publication
- 4 February 2020 – Email from Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education to secretariat providing reasons for the Department's request to review the draft report prior to publication
- 4 February 2020 – Email from Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education to secretariat rescinding the Department's request to view a draft copy of the report.

Sent

- 21 October 2019 – Email from the secretariat to Mr Mitchell Potts, Office of the Hon Geoff Lee MP, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, advising that Portfolio Committee No. 3 resolved not to hold supplementary hearings for the portfolio of Skills and Tertiary Education
- 21 October 2019 – Email from the secretariat to Ms Shannon Hall, Office of the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, advising that Portfolio Committee No. 3 resolved not to hold supplementary hearings for the portfolio of Education and Early Childhood Learning in the week set aside for supplementary hearings, and that the committee will write to the Minister seeking further information on certain answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions before considering a supplementary hearing in late November/early December
- 4 November 2019 – Letter from the secretariat, to the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, requesting further information regarding certain answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from the initial Budget Estimates hearing
- 17 January 2020 - Email from the secretariat to Mr Tom Sherlock, Principal Project Officer, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education, requesting update on PISA 2018, NAPLAN 2019 and remuneration of DELs
- 22 January 2020 - Email from the secretariat to Mr Jerry Bishop, Leader Executive Support, Office of the Deputy Secretary – School Operations and Performance, Department of Education, seeking permission to publish Auburn North Public School site visit material in draft report
- 4 February 2020 – Secretariat to Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education, requesting reasons be provided for wanting to review the committee's draft report.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee authorise the publication of correspondence received by Mr Tom Sherlock, Principal Project Officer, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education, dated 24 January 2020.

4. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2019-2020 – procedural resolutions – further hearings

The 2019-2020 Budget Estimates timetable for further hearings was agreed to by the House. Below is a table of Portfolio Committee No. 3 hearings:

Date	Portfolio
Tuesday 3 March 2020	Education and Early Childhood Education (Mitchell)
Wednesday 11 March 2020	Tertiary Education and Skills (Lee)

4.1 Total hearing time

Mr Fang moved: That

- the portfolios of Education and Early Childhood Education be examined concurrently,
- depending on whether questions will be asked by government members, the total hearing time for the portfolios of Education and Early Childhood Education be as follows:

With Government questions <i>(Equal question time allocated to opposition, crossbench and government members)</i>		Without Government questions <i>(Equal question time allocated to opposition and crossbench)</i>	
9.30am–12.30 pm	Minister appearing	9.30am–11.30 am	Minister appearing
		11.30am-11.40am	Break
		11.40am-12.40pm	Departmental staff
12.30pm-2.00pm	Lunch	12.40 pm-1.40 pm	Lunch
2.00pm-5.00pm	Departmental staff	1.40pm-2.40pm	Departmental staff
		2.40pm-2.50pm	Break
		2.50pm-4.20pm	Departmental staff
		4.20pm	Departmental staff
5.00pm-6.00pm	Dinner		
6.00pm-8.00pm	Departmental staff		

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the hearing allocation be amended so that where questions by government members are not asked, an evening session between 6-8pm be held with questions allocated equally between opposition and cross bench members.

Motion of Mr Shoebridge negatived.

Original motion put and passed.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Fang: That depending on whether questions will be asked by government members, the total hearing time for the portfolios of Tertiary Education and Skills be as follows:

With Government questions <i>(Equal question time allocated to opposition, crossbench and government members)</i>		Without Government questions <i>(Equal question time allocated to opposition and crossbench)</i>	
9.30am–12.30 pm	Minister	9.30am–11.30 am	Minister
		11.30am-11.40am	Break
		11.40am-12.40pm	Departmental staff
12.30pm-2.00pm	Lunch	12.40 pm-1.40 pm	Lunch

2.00pm-5.00pm	Departmental staff	1.40pm-2.40pm	Departmental staff
		2.40pm-2.50pm	Break
		2.50pm-4.20pm	Departmental staff
5.00pm-6.00pm	Dinner		
6.00pm-8.00pm	Departmental staff		

4.2 Allocation of question time

The committee noted that under the resolution establishing the Portfolio Committees, the sequence of questions at hearings is to alternate between opposition, crossbench and government members, with equal time allocated to each, unless the committee decides otherwise.

4.3 Witness requests

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Fang: That committee members email the Secretariat the list of witnesses requested by 5.00 pm, Thursday 6 February 2020.

5. Consideration of terms of reference

The Chair tabled a letter from three committee members, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham and Mr Mason-Cox; proposing the following self-reference:

That NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 3 (Education) inquire into and report on the contents of and proposed changes to the NSW school curriculum, and in particular:

1. The extent to which the Masters Curriculum Review addresses its terms of reference, including:
 - (a) Curriculum content, flexibility and pedagogy
 - (b) Quality and relevance of the evidence-base underpinning the recommendations (compared to CESE findings)
 - (c) Recommendations for student-centred 'progression points' and 'differentiated learning' in schools and whether such initiatives are research-based and proven to be effective
 - (d) Relationship with the national schools curriculum
2. The extent to which the Masters Review meets key Government policy objectives, including:
 - (a) Addressing concerns about the overcrowding of the curriculum
 - (b) Ensuring students' acquisition of excellence in literacy and numeracy, as well as deep knowledge of key subjects
 - (c) Professor Masters' explanation for NSW declining school results and the role a revised curriculum can play in reversing this decline
3. Other matters of public concern and interest in the development of the NSW curriculum:
 - (a) To what extent, if any, 'cross-curriculum priorities' are needed to guide classroom content and teaching,
 - (b) To what extent, if any, knowledge and the curriculum are 'socially constructed', requiring the teaching of source verification and fluidity principles,
 - (c) Whether and to what extent schools should be involved in the 'social and emotional development' of students, as per the Melbourne/Alice Springs Declarations, and growing popularity of 'wellbeing programs' in NSW schools
 - (d) Adequacy of the content and depth of teaching of Australian history, pre- and post-1788
 - (e) Given the importance of English literacy across the curriculum, adopting the most effective evidence-based approaches to language acquisition, especially for reading and writing
 - (f) Role and effectiveness of vocational education syllabuses in NSW schools
 - (g) Effectiveness of NESA in curriculum development and supervision
4. Any other related matters.

Mr Fang moved: That the committee adopt the terms of reference.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the motion of Mr Fang be amended by omitting Item 3 from the terms of reference.

Amendment of Mr Shoebridge put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Amendment resolved in the negative.

Original question of Mr Fang put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

6. Conduct of the inquiry into the review of the NSW School Curriculum

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Mason-Cox: That the committee:

- Defer opening submissions until publication of the Masters Curriculum Review, and that the closing date for submissions be six weeks after opening
- Circulate a discussion paper following the close of submissions and before holding hearings, drawing out the main issues for further comment by stakeholders
- Report in late 2020.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That the committee write to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Education, and the NSW Education Standards Authority, if applicable, to advise them of the new inquiry and to:

- Request that the committee be advised of the likely publication date of the Masters Review
- Request a copy of the NSW curriculum and syllabus
- Request private briefing with Professor Masters on the outcomes of his review
- Advise that when submissions open, the committee will again write to them to request that they contact stakeholders who made submissions to the Masters Review, to inform them that the committee is inviting submissions.

7. Inquiry into measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools

7.1 Public submission

The committee noted that the following submission was published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution establishing the committee: submission 21.

7.2 Answers to questions on notice

The committee noted the following answers to questions on notice were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- answers to questions on notice from the Department of Education, received 20 December 2019
- answers to questions on notice from Professor Kim Beswick, University of New South Wales, received 12 January 2020
- answers to questions on notice from Professor Jim Tognolini, University of Sydney, received 14 January 2020.

Resolved on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee keep confidential Tab A provided by Mr John Healey, Director, Enterprise Program Management Office, Department of Education, dated 20 December 2019, as per the request of the author, as they are the intellectual property of the survey provider and the NSW Department of Education is contractually obliged not to reveal them publicly.

7.3 Site visit report – 25 and 29 October 2019, prepared by secretariat

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee authorise publication of the report prepared by the secretariat regarding visits to schools on 25 and 29 October 2019.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee insert as a footnote in the report, the Department of Education's position regarding the publication of graphs and quotes in the committee's report from the presentation given by Auburn North Public School.

7.4 Consideration of Chair's draft report

The Chair submitted his draft report entitled *Measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools*, which, having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the secretariat draft a summary of the evidence from inquiry submissions and transcripts be included as one of the introductory chapters to the report.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the committee only consider the list of recommendations during today's meeting and defer consideration of the contents of the report until a further meeting to be held at 10am, Thursday 13 February 2020.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 1 be amended by omitting: 'That the Government comply with its own Outcome Budgeting Policy and a true citizens' perspective of the education system by ensuring the 2021/22 Budget features the publication of school-by-school performance targets and appropriate accountability measures for how well these targets have been met (for schools of sufficient size where outcomes can be reliably measured)' before 'That the Government also publish the Department of Education's business plan developed in collaboration with Treasury.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendations 2 and 3 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 4 be amended by omitting: 'That these be based on averaged school results (the best indicator of HSC achievement) ahead of various band level targets. That NAPLAN

measures/targets also give priority to averaged results, ahead of band level data' after 'That the Government include Year 12 indicators (retention rates and Higher School Certificate performance) in its targets for high schools'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That Recommendation 6 be amended by inserting: 'and vocational education and training experts, including the TAFE sector' after 'NSW Business Chamber and other industry groups'.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 6 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That Recommendation 7 be amended by omitting 'Department of Education and Treasury (in its oversight role)' and inserting instead 'Government'.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the Recommendation 7, as amended, be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the Recommendation 8 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That:

- a) Recommendation 9 be amended by omitting 'in light of the way in which, at the end of each year, media outlets and private websites publish (either partly or wholly) league-table school rankings for NSW Higher School Certificate results, seemingly without consequences' after 'Education Act 1990'.
- b) reflecting the deleted sentence in the committee comment.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 10 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 11 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 16 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 20 be omitted: 'That the Department of Education require its schools to conduct parents' exit interviews to find out why they left. Currently, dissatisfied families who leave disappear into the system, with no record of the reason for their departure from a certain school. The arrival of a substandard principal at a school usually leads to an exodus of families. Exit interviews would help the Department identify this problem. Conversely, satisfied families (leaving for other reasons) would be a very positive performance indicator for principals', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the Department of Education require its schools to conduct exit interviews of parents when students leave a school. Currently, dissatisfied families who leave disappear into the system, with no record of the reason for their departure from a certain school'.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the motion of Mr D'Adam be amended by:

- a) inserting 'seek to' before 'conduct exit interviews of parents'
- b) omitting 'Currently, dissatisfied families who leave disappear into the system, with no record of the reason for their departure from a certain school' after 'when student leave a school'.
- c) reflecting the deleted sentence in the committee comment. [FOOTNOTE: See Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education, NSW Legislative Council, *Students with a disability or special needs in New South Wales schools* (2017)].

Amendment of Mr Shoebridge put and passed.

Original question of Mr D'Adam, as amended, put and passed.

Resolved on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That Recommendation 23 be amended by omitting: 'like Dr Roy' after 'working with experts'.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the Recommendation 23 be amended by:

- a) omitting 'like Dr Roy. The Government needs to place a premium on student safety and teacher accountability, protecting one of the most vulnerable groups in our society' after 'working with experts'.

b) reflecting the deleted sentence in the committee comment.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That Recommendation 25 be amended by:

- a) omitting 'change' and inserting instead 'review'
- b) inserting 'better' before 'reflect the qualities'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 26 be omitted: "That the Government place school principals on performance-based contracts with significantly increased salaries. Performance measures should be based on the effective use of evidence and data, and achievement of high-level school results (measured primarily by value adding). Successful principals would receive performance bonuses; failing principals the termination of their contracts. The new system should also be used to meet Minister Mitchell's goal of giving "incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools", and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

"That the Government ensure that school principal's performance agreements include performance measures that are based on the effective use of evidence and data, and achievement of high-level school results (measured primarily by value adding). The Government should urgently establish a scheme to meet Minister Mitchell's goals of giving 'incentives to our best principals to take up jobs in our most challenging schools'."

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox, Mr Shoebridge.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 26 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 27 be omitted: "That the Government place Directors of Educational Leadership (DELs) on performance-based contracts, using the combined achievements of their local cluster of 20 schools (measured primarily by value adding) as the main assessment criteria for whether or not to extend their contracts', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

"That the Government ensure that the performance agreements for Directors Educational Leadership include performance measures that are based on ensuring the effective use of evidence and data, and achievement of high-level school results (measured primarily by value adding) for the schools in their local cluster'."

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 28 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 29 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved:

- a) That Recommendation 30 be amended by omitting: 'with extra resources being provided from Gonski growth money as a new funding support program (given that the Gonski money can be used for any purpose past the school gate). We simply don't have enough of these outstanding school leaders in NSW; so wide networking of the success of Best Practice Schools is a logical way of spreading their influence' after 'less successful schools can also benefit'.
- b) reflecting the deleted sentence in the committee comment.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 30 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That

- a) Recommendation 31 be omitted: 'That the Department of Education require government schools to use direct/explicit instruction as their main classroom teaching practice, without exception. This was supposed to have happened under the Department's 2017 School Excellence Framework but clearly it hasn't' and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the Government ensure the principle of direct/explicit instruction is the main teaching method in NSW government schools.'
- b) The following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 5.49: 'The committee found that in accordance with the Department of Education's 2017 School Excellence Framework, endorses the use of the principle of direct/explicit instruction as the main classroom teaching practices for NSW Government schools'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 34 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 34 be amended by inserting ', including deletion of special religious education' after 'to this effect'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge left the meeting.

Mrs Houssos moved: That Recommendation 43 be amended by omitting 'develop a formal Tailored Support Policy' and inserting instead 'investigate developing a formal Tailored Support Policy'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That a new recommendation be inserted after Recommendation 45: "That once the "CESE menu" is established, the Schools Performance Commission provide classroom teachers with the appropriate support to implement this "menu" into their teaching plans, in a similar model to the support provided by the peak organisation for independent schools.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That recommendation 52 be amended by: omitting "There is no point in Education courses training would-be teachers in failed, low impact programs that have been abandoned by NSW government schools." reflecting the deleted sentence in the committee comment.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That Recommendation 57 be amended by omitting ', whether coming from a traditional teaching background or other professions.'

Mrs Houssos moved: That Recommendation 67 be amended by omitting 'backed by eligibility for a new public funding program)'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mrs Houssos left the meeting.

Mr Shoebridge joined the meeting.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That Recommendation 41 be amended by:

omitting 'not part of the 'education establishment', finding excuses for school failure. They need to be' omitting 'the main point' and inserting instead 'a point'.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendations 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That Recommendation 47 be amended by:

omitting 'and other experimental programs developed centrally in school education over the past decade.' reflecting in the committee comment that there is no compelling evidence to support open-plan classrooms and co-teaching, including Hattie's finding that it has a low-effect result, and anecdotal evidence of declining NAPLAN results.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendations 49, 50 and 51 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That Recommendation 49 be amended by omitting ', such as the Teach for Australia and Alphacrucis models'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 53 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 54 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That Recommendation 55 be amended to insert '(where available)' following 'value-added'.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 55, as amended, be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 57, as amended, be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 59 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That Recommendation 61 be amended by omitting 'In particular, the report should outline progress with the implementation of government policy to "support the explicit instruction of phonics in the early years as the best way to teach reading."'.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 63 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 67 be amended by omitting:

- 'adopt in the non-government sectors, as far as possible, the outcome-based budgeting reforms applying to government schools, especially with respect to teacher quality, value-added reporting, ambitious school improvement targets and the CESE best practice menu,
- ensure non-government school sectors have Board representation on the proposed Schools Performance Commission, if they are willing to participate in the reforms recommended above, and
- secure the support of non-government sectors for the Best Practice School Model and widespread school improvement networking (backed by eligibility for a new public funding program).'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That Recommendation 67 be amended by:

- omitting 'That the Government negotiate School Education Accords with the non-government sectors to:' and inserting instead 'That the Government, building on the success and contents of the January 2020 Memoranda of Understanding, take this process a step further and negotiate School Education Accords with the non-government sectors to:'
- Inserting a second sentence to the third dot point: 'To assist parents and ensure consistency across the State, the same set of school-by-school performance outcomes need to be published across the government and non-government sectors.'
- Omitting in the fourth dot point ', if they are willing to participate in the reforms recommended above.'

8. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 2.54 pm until 10am, Thursday 13 February 2020, McKell Room (*Outcome based funding report deliberative*)

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Draft minutes no. 16

Thursday 13 February 2020

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

McKell Room, Parliament House, 10.03 am

1. Members present

Mr Latham, *Chair*

Mr Mason-Cox, *Deputy Chair*

Mr D'Adam

Mr Fang

Mr Farlow

Mrs Houssos

Mr Shoebridge (from 10.16 am)

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That draft minutes no. 15 be amended by:

- a) omitting 'Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos' after 'Noes', and instead inserting 'Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos' after 'Ayes' during the deliberation of Mr Shoebridge's motion that Recommendation 26 be omitted.
- b) Omitting 'Mr D'Adam' after 'Noes', and instead inserting 'Mr D'Adam' after 'Ayes' during the deliberation of Mr Shoebridge's motion that Recommendation 34 be amended.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That draft minutes no. 15, as amended, be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Sent

- 12 February 2020 – Letter from the chair to the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, advising of the new inquiry into the review of the NSW school curriculum,

requesting to be informed of the publication of the NSW Curriculum Review, requesting a copy of the NSW curriculum and syllabus, and requesting assistance in contacting submission authors to the review.

- 12 February 2020 – Letter from the chair to Professor Geoff Masters AO, Independent Review Lead, NSW Curriculum Review, advising of the new inquiry into the review of the NSW school curriculum, requesting a private briefing with the committee on the outcomes of the review soon after it is published.

4. Inquiry into measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools

4.1 Consideration of Chair's draft report – continued

The Chair submitted his revised Chair's draft report, entitled '*Measurement and outcome based funding in New South Wales schools*' which, having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendations 13 and 15 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That Recommendation 14 be amended by omitting the words 'and replace' after '(ensuring no school is worse off financially)', and inserting instead 'as it does not require the diagnosis or confirmation of a disability. The committee recommends replacing'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 14, as amended, be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mrs Houssos moved: That Recommendation 32 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That Recommendation 39 be omitted: 'That the Government make classroom inspections mandatory, rather than by what the Auditor-General's report described as "mutual agreement"; and seek to amend the industrial arrangements for government school teachers to reflect this new arrangement. Teacher should not be able to opt out of inspections of their work', and the following new recommendation be inserted instead:

'That the Government ensure the new school inspectors have access to all classrooms and the capacity to set improvement goals for teachers (in collaboration with principals, DELs and the teachers themselves), playing a vital monitoring, assessment and feedback role in improving teacher quality'.

Mr Shoebridge joined the meeting.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 47 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 55 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Recommendation 59 be amended by omitting 'and effects-levels associated with them' after 'on their literacy teaching methods'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 2.20 be amended by omitting 'The Committee welcomes Treasury's involvement as an oversight and accountability agency. But' before 'if the new system is to have a major positive impact on school results, it must be more than minimalist.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 2.48 be amended by omitting 'So too, Year 12 HSC results and targets should be publicly available, school by school, always striving to lift the qualifications of the leaving school cohort.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Chapter 3 be amended by:

- a) omitting the heading 'School funding incentives' and inserting instead 'School funding'
- b) omitting paragraphs 3.1 to 3.20

c) omitting Recommendations 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That paragraph 4.9 be amended by omitting 'During its deliberations' and inserting instead 'During the inquiry'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 5.19 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Houssos: That paragraph 5.24 be amended by inserting 'Wellbeing supports such as breakfast programs, or speech therapy, are provided outside of classroom time, to maximise learning,' after 'They don't see themselves as fixing societal ills across the board.'

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That the case study 'Best Practice School Case Study: Canley Vale High School, Fairfield' be amended by omitting '(mostly Asian background)' after 'The school is 96 percent NESB'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 5.29 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mrs Houssos moved: That the following new paragraph be inserted after paragraph 5.29:

'External, diagnostic testing remains a key part of ensuring schools, especially the most disadvantaged schools and students, get the support they need. Outcome-based budgeting relies on rigorous and consistent data, so any changes to NAPLAN should consider the value of maintaining a consistent data set.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Noes: Mr Shoebridge.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 5.30 be amended by omitting 'While Naplan has many critics, it appears our best schools are not among them.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That paragraph 5.44 be amended by omitting 'Under industrial arrangements, teachers can opt out of direct classroom monitoring of their work. At some schools, it is official policy not to have any monitoring of teacher performance' and inserting instead 'Principals' decisions to accredit proficiency are not being independently checked through classroom inspections. Many capable, deserving teachers are not being accredited to Lead Teacher and Highly Accomplished levels (see Chapter 6(2) below).'

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 5.48 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 5.49 be amended by omitting 'The Committee believes this should change through the introduction of performance-based contracts for principals (in tandem with increased remuneration). Principals should be given responsibility and accountability for a school's effectiveness in achieving specific policy, operational and student outcomes as stipulated in their performance contracts.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraphs 5.50 to 5.52 and Recommendation 23 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 5.54 be amended by omitting 'Yet some schools have developed a range of other, low effect methods as their preferred pedagogy. There appears to be no quality control in the system to bring them back to the evidence base.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 6.24 be amended by omitting 'the school leadership institute and DELs', and inserting instead 'and the School Leadership Institute'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 35 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That footnote 129 be amended by omitting 'Evidence' and instead inserting 'Transcript'.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr D'Adam: That paragraph 6.36 be amended by omitting: 'Clearly, the most reliable and efficient system of teacher accreditation is to have direct inspections of classroom practice' before 'Inspectors are needed to independently review'.

Mr Farlow moved: That the following new paragraphs be inserted after paragraph 6.36:

'School inspectors can also play a role in assisting the professional development and performance of teachers. The Auditor-General's report found that "the Department has no central oversight of schools' implementation of the Performance and Development Framework (PDF)" – the key system of appraisal and feedback designed to constantly improve teacher and principal performance. [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 16].

The Auditor-General also reported that, "The Department does not monitor whether teachers have a Performance and Development Plan (PDP), receive feedback from lesson observations or formal feedback on their performance." [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 16]. Further, "The Department does not clearly communicate its expectations for teacher's professional goals or provide any guidance on what effective professional goals look like." [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 17] Again, it is left to the school.

At school level, the Auditor-General concluded that implementation of the PDF relies too heavily on "mutual agreement" with teachers, such that:

Under the Framework, teachers collaborate with their supervisors to establish goals, nominate a colleague to observe their teaching practice and agree on annual written feedback on progress towards their goals. The requirement for teachers to agree with all goals within their PDP limits the ability of the principal or supervisor to set goals to target areas of greatest individual need. Setting appropriate goals is critical as they form the basis of professional learning, observations, self-assessment and annual review. Teachers can select who conducts observations and negotiate what will be observed. This introduces risks that under-performing teachers will choose peers rather than supervisors to conduct the observations and do not receive effective feedback. Teachers must also agree to all written feedback. This limits opportunities for robust supervisor feedback to target areas for improvement. [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, pp 16-17]

Teachers are supposed to have two of their lessons observed per annum, as part of the PDF “but there is no guidance on effective methods of observation or how to provide effective feedback.” [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 17] The Auditor-General surveyed a random sample of 130 PDPs but found only 10 cases where the two classroom observations had been conducted. [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 17] This is another striking example of a lack of quality control in NSW government schools.

Ultimately, students suffer badly for these failings. As the Auditor-General has noted, “Australian research has suggested that effective systems of teacher appraisal and feedback can increase teacher effectiveness by up to 30 percent.” [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, p 17] The Committee believes significant gains can be achieved by introducing inspectors into the classroom, fulfilling roles currently missing from the system: mentors, advisors, assessors and quality control experts. The Committee advocates this reform as a logical consequence from the Auditor-General’s findings.’

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the motion of Mr Farlow be amended by omitting:

‘At school level, the Auditor-General concluded that implementation of the PDF relies too heavily on “mutual agreement” with teachers, such that:

Under the Framework, teachers collaborate with their supervisors to establish goals, nominate a colleague to observe their teaching practice and agree on annual written feedback on progress towards their goals. The requirement for teachers to agree with all goals within their PDP limits the ability of the principal or supervisor to set goals to target areas of greatest individual need. Setting appropriate goals is critical as they form the basis of professional learning, observations, self-assessment and annual review. Teachers can select who conducts observations and negotiate what will be observed. This introduces risks that under-performing teachers will choose peers rather than supervisors to conduct the observations and do not receive effective feedback. Teachers must also agree to all written feedback. This limits opportunities for robust supervisor feedback to target areas for improvement. [FOOTNOTE: NSW Auditor-General, *Ensuring Teaching Quality in NSW Public Schools*, 26 September 2019, pp 16-17]’

Amendment of Mr Shoebridge put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D’Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Amendment of Mr Shoebridge resolved in the negative.

Original question of Mr Farlow put and passed.

Mr D’Adam moved: That paragraph 6.51 be amended by omitting ‘This confirms the need for performance based contracts for principals.’ before ‘The system also needs...’

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D’Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D’Adam moved: That paragraphs 6.60 – 6.79 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That:

- a) Recommendation 43 be amended by omitting 'mandatory' before 'best practice framework
- b) Recommendation 44 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraphs 6.91 – 6.99 and Recommendations 49 - 51 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 6.102 be amended by omitting 'Instead of instructing undergraduates in pedagogies that maximise student outcomes, they are teaching a wide menu of methods, regardless of proven evidence' after 'practical needs of best-practice schools'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraphs 6.106-6.108 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraphs 6.111 - 6.112 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That:

- a) paragraph 6.113 be amended by omitting 'four' and inserting instead 'two'
- b) Recommendations 55 and 56 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraphs 6.114 - 6.129 be omitted and the following new paragraph be inserted instead:

'We support the development by CESE of evidence based teaching methods to be applied in NSW schools. This should be evaluated over time so as not to limit innovation and ensure that it remains consistent with current best practice.

The NSW Government should ensure that this suite of evidence based teaching methods are included in the course content of university teaching degrees.'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendation 48 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative

Mr D'Adam moved: That:

- a) paragraph 6.139 be omitted
- b) paragraph 6.140 be amended by omitting 'No one can deny welfare schools are well intentioned but at the bottom line,' before 'the best way of snapping the poverty cycle...'

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr D'Adam moved: That paragraph 6.150 be amended by omitting 'The influx of Bangladeshi families has been particularly beneficial in terms of work ethic and attitudes to education' after 'a regular working/middle class district'.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow: That paragraph 6.150 be amended by omitting 'Bangladeshi families' and inserting instead 'new families'.

Mr D'Adam moved: That Appendix 2 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mrs Houssos, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That Recommendations 37 and 38 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr Mason-Cox moved: That the draft report as amended be the report of the committee and that the committee present the report to the House.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr D'Adam, Mr Fang, Mr Farlow, Mrs Houssos, Mr Latham, Mr Mason-Cox.

Noes: Mr Shoebridge.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Farlow:

- a) That the transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, material provided during site visits and correspondence relating to the inquiry be tabled in the House with the report;
- b) Upon tabling, all unpublished attachments to submissions be kept confidential by the committee;
- c) Upon tabling, all unpublished transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, material provided during site visits and correspondence relating to the inquiry, be published by the committee, except for those documents kept confidential by resolution of the committee;
- d) The committee secretariat correct any typographical, grammatical and formatting errors prior to tabling;
- e) The committee secretariat be authorised to update any committee comments where necessary to reflect changes to recommendations or new recommendations resolved by the committee;

- f) Dissenting statements be provided to the secretariat within 24 hours after receipt of the draft minutes of the meeting;
- g) That the report be tabled on Tuesday 18 February 2020.
- h) That the Chair hold a press conference at 11am on Wednesday 19 February 2020.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 11.24 am, until Tuesday 3 March 2020, Macquarie Room, Parliament House (Budget Estimates – Education and Early Childhood Learning hearing).

Emma Rogerson
Committee Clerk

Appendix 7 Dissenting statements

From Mr David Shoebridge MLC, The Greens

This report does not reflect either the submissions received or the evidence the committee heard during this inquiry. What it does reflect is a managerialist market-based approach that seeks to commodify education as a service, and which “emphasises choice and competition rather than equity and need”²⁴⁴. The disconnect between the recommendations and the evidence is a feature of this report.

The attempt to change the system to being one based on outcomes rather than needs will do little but paper over the real different needs that exist in diverse communities around NSW, and somehow pretend that a teacher in Woollahra or Mosman faces the same educational challenges as one in Broken Hill or Dubbo. It also absolutely fails to recognise the lesson of Gonski that needs-based funding is the most important priority for the education system. **We continue to underfund many schools and poorer educational outcomes for students are an inevitable result**, not because teachers aren’t motivated to improve performance but because teaching and learning are harder in classrooms with no air conditioning or heating, with no text books and without adequate access to technology.

Suggesting teachers do their jobs for only financial reward is offensive. Teaching is a vocation and teachers should be valued for the work they do, not just where they are able to influence test scores. Basing teacher pay on student outcome provides a perverse disincentive to teachers to teach to the test, or to avoid schools with significant levels of disadvantage where test results are likely to be poorer.

Children aren’t economic units to be measured and time taking ever more tests is time away from meaningful learning in the classroom and community. Constantly measuring children will basically see these children used as guinea pigs for this new regulatory model. Education is too important for these kinds of experiments.

We stand with public school teachers who are doing their best for kids with ever diminishing resources and on wages that don’t reflect how important and tough the job is. We stand with school students who are learning much more than just how to take tests, who are learning maths and English and languages but also cooperation, initiative, critical thinking and so much more.

²⁴⁴ Submission 13, Public Service Association of NSW, p 2.

From the Hon Courtney Houssos MLC, Australian Labor Party Opposition Dissenting Statement Part One

A new index for schools

There is no doubt that we live in the era of data. Schools, like so many organisations collate a broad range of information, much of it accessible by the Department of Education. Yet parents are still forced to make decisions about their children's education with limited access to it. During the inquiry, we were surprised by the rich data sources that are only available for the Department to view, and not for parents and the community.

Whilst many are fearful of schools being stigmatised if this is available at an individual school level, we believe this fear is impeding the necessary oversight to ensure schools that aren't performing are brought up to an appropriate standard.

It was Labor who introduced NAPLAN to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools receive the support they need. But now it's being used, at times, as a singular marker of a school's success. That's why we are supporting a new, broader measure for schools to give parents and the community a clearer picture of all of the value-adds that the school is contributing. However, if schools are to be compared then it must be on the basis of a measure that controls for relative disadvantage in a school population. For this reason, we oppose the extension of this approach to the publication of HSC results.

NAPLAN continues to have value as a diagnostic tool. But we are unwilling, given the current review that is underway, to place a higher emphasis on data continuity for the sake of outcome based budgeting, than ensuring NAPLAN is updated to provide a more accurate educational assessment of students.

Financial incentives

We agree there is a serious problem in NSW schools, which has been reflected in the most recent NAPLAN and PISA results. We are particularly concerned that NSW schools, comparative to the rest of the country, are going backwards, when we used to lead the nation. And we didn't receive a clear answer or explanation as to why this is the case from the NSW Department of Education.

We support the recommendations to ensure that the best evidence based teaching models are used in NSW schools. But we believe this should be set by CESE, with room for innovation if new best-practice models evolve, and not set by this inquiry report.

Furthermore, we oppose mandatory terms requiring schools to comply with a centrally determined framework. We are concerned that a heavy-handed centralised approach could damage the capacity to develop and localise evidence-based learning for each school. We are also concerned that the underlying assumption of the recommendation is that the professional judgment of teachers cannot be trusted. This is a notion that we strongly disagree with.

There are a number of contradictory themes in the report in that it both advocates for the retention of the Local Schools Local Decisions policy, but it is also advocating for increased mandated central direction in relation to teaching practices. We found these competing narratives hard to reconcile. Although we are attracted to the idea of earned autonomy for schools, we do not believe that the committee had sufficient evidence before it to justify recommending its implementation.

Similar themes are addressed in the section on literacy. The committee took very little direct evidence on the question of phonics versus the whole word approach. We cannot conclude that non-evidence based

literacy teaching is occurring. The committee did not hear evidence from any teachers on this question. Again, we believe that CESE should be setting the best practice framework, that schools then localise.

We sought to omit from the report the section on laissez-faire teaching in its entirety. We believe the section is grounded in the erroneous and unfounded supposition that our schools are dominated by teachers who ignore evidence-based practices and are continuously embracing new fads. Again, this assertion was not supported by the evidence before the committee.

There are a number of recommendations that relate to employment issues for teachers and principals which we oppose. The report refers to 'big personality principals' as a driver of school improvement. We are not convinced that a model of school transformative leadership that is based on a particular type of personality is replicable, sustainable or even desirable.

For this reason, we are hesitant to support the devolution of authority and accountability to principals in the way prescribed by the report. We are not convinced of the merits of the introduction of performance-based contracts for principals. Nor do we believe that teacher recruitment should be wholly devolved to principals. This proposal would involve the abandonment of the current system of transfer points which assists rural schools that are hard to staff.

We do agree that the role of the principal and the senior leadership is crucial to a school's success. But under Local Schools, Local Decisions, too much of this has been left to chance. To ensure that improvement occurs sector-wide, we support the rollout of additional support and training to principals, rather than performance-based contracts, or the power to hire and fire teachers.

We also oppose the introduction of financial incentives for schools achieving better results. Labor has, and will always support needs-based funding for schools. Indeed, the Bump It Up pilot program in NSW schools shows that there is room for improvement simply by more actively engaging with the data available to NSW schools.

Outcome based funding

Despite assurances that outcomes based budgeting will not change the needs-based funding model for NSW schools, we have concerns about the over reach of Treasury into NSW schools. Within the report Treasury is described as an "oversight body" which appears to be an encroachment of the separate and discrete functions of the department and Treasury under the Westminster system of government.

From the Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC, Australian Labor Party Opposition Dissenting Statement Part Two

Teacher training

A considerable section of the report is dedicated to attacking the quality of teacher education in universities. Underlying this is a theme that professional expertise cannot be trusted. The report asserts that the universities are training students in low impact teaching methods a view that was based on limited evidence.

Similarly, the report casts doubt on the value of university qualifications by suggesting that teacher numbers could be supplemented by recruiting outside the profession through programs like Teach for Australia. The committee received little evidence on this program. On that basis we are unwilling to support the recommendation that Teach for Australia is adopted in NSW. A similarly ill-considered recommendation has been made to recruit educational leadership from outside the teaching profession.

A well rounded education

Best Practice schools focus on more than academic and vocational achievement. A well-rounded education develops citizens and equips students with the skills they need to live a full life as active members of their communities. This means that schools must provide support for student health and wellbeing. On that basis, the opposition members oppose Recommendation 33 which assumes without evidence that teachers are encouraging students to take political action.

Outcome based budgeting in the non-government sector

While broadly supportive of the concept of negotiating School Education Accords the specific recommendation involves creating a new funding program that will be available to the private sector. In light of the current inequitable funding arrangements, opposition members oppose that element of recommendation 67.

Committee evidence and reporting

We dissent from a significant number of the recommendations of this report. The chair conducted the inquiry and the drafting of the report in an open and consultative way. However, a number of the recommendations have no evidentiary basis and in some instances are contrary to the evidence that was received by the committee.

Recommendation 47 in relation to open-plan learning is illustrative of a proposal that flies in the face of the evidence that was before the committee. Where evidence was taken on the question of open-plan learning, at the Claremont school, the advice of the staff was that it was very beneficial and conducive to effective learning. Despite this, the majority of the committee sought to rely on 'alternative facts'.

Similarly, we do not support recommendation 14 of the report. The committee did not hear any evidence to suggest that the Low-Level Adjustment for Disability scheme incentivises underperformance or that it constitutes a 'perverse incentive which pushes 'blame onto students'.

Many of the assumptions about effective teaching practices contained in the report have been drawn from the work of John Hattie. A summary of his effects size of teaching methods is contained as an appendix to the report. Hattie's conclusions have been accepted unconditionally by the committee. This approach is problematic as the committee gave no consideration to whether Hattie's conclusions are valid.

The Legislative Council's committee system has historically operated using an open and evidence-driven approach. Committee members should apply themselves with an open mind and a willingness to be guided by the facts. The public hearing process allows the committee to test evidence and to weight it appropriately. The recommendations should reflect the evidence. To depart from this approach is to jeopardise the integrity of the committee system as a whole.

