

**INQUIRY INTO EDUCATION LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (PARENTAL RIGHTS) BILL 2020**

Organisation: Public Service Association of New South Wales

Date Received: 5 March 2021



SUBMISSION

**Parliament of New South Wales - Legislative Council
Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education**

Inquiry into the Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020



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About the PSA

The Public Service Association of New South Wales is the union covering administrative and support staff in NSW Public Schools. Our members work in NSW state government schools, in roles directly working with and supporting students such as School Learning Support Officers working with children with disabilities and behaviours requiring support, School Psychologists, Student Support Officers, Aboriginal Education Officers and Community Liaison Officers. They also work in administrative roles ranging from Administrative Managers, Business Managers and Administrative Officers in the school office as well as the library and food and science laboratories. We also cover outdoor staff including General Assistants and Farm Assistants.

In addition, we cover all classifications, except teacher roles, at the NSW Education Standards Authority (previously the Board of Studies).

At the Ministry of Health our members work in areas such as Health Systems and Strategic Planning, Population and Public Health and Patient Experience and System Performance. They work in mental health, aboriginal health and covid-19 contact tracing as well as numerous other areas.

The Public Service Association of New South Wales is a state-registered employee organisation. For the purposes of this submission, the PSA will be referred to as 'the Association'.

Foreword

Every child in NSW has a right to a non-discriminatory education, and every NSW school has a duty of care to every child.

It is the position of the Association and our members that the proposals in the *Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020* violate the rights of children and would prohibit all school staff from properly fulfilling their professional obligations, particularly for vulnerable students.

Members of the Association have called the *Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020* “harmful”, “discriminatory” and “divisive”. It is a regressive Bill that threatens to undermine decades of progress that both the NSW education system and society more broadly have made in removing discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people.

The Association is the union covering administrative and support staff in NSW Public Schools, which include Student Support Officers and School Psychologists. The impact this Bill would have on these two roles will be the primary focus of this submission, as well as the impact on our members at the National Education Standards Authority (NESA).

In order to complete this submission, the Association consulted our membership and collaborated extensively with our delegates. Every case put forward in this submission has been informed by our members.

Our members are of the strong position that the proposed Bill would be contrary to the professional and ethical guidelines of Student Support Officers and School Psychologists as well as detrimental to students’ mental health and wellbeing.

It is the overall recommendation of this submission that the *Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020* be rejected in its entirety. However, if the Bill was to pass through the parliament and become law, the submission also contains recommendations for what the Association believes to be necessary amendments.

The Association thanks the Committee for its work and looks forward to providing any other assistance that may be required.

Yours sincerely,

Troy Wright

Assistant General Secretary

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

It is the **overall recommendation** of the Association that the *Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020* be **rejected in its entirety**.

If, however, the Bill is made law, the Association recommends the following amendments prior to its passage through Parliament:

Recommendation 2

That the Bill be amended to recognise that there is a distinction between “teaching” and “acknowledging” and/or “supporting” and that therefore non-teaching staff, in particular Student Support Officers, School Psychologists and Counsellors, be removed from the Bill and allowed to continue providing lawful, non-discriminatory support to students who present with questions/issues of gender identity, or “gender fluidity”.

Recommendation 3

That appropriate funding and resources are provided to NESA to support the short-term increased workload in research and resource preparation, as well as the long-term increased workload of compliance monitoring and provision of advice and assistance to parents.

Child Welfare

The amendments are discriminatory

The Department of Education states that it is “committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments that respect and value diversity and are free from violence, discrimination, harassment and vilification”.¹ For example in NSW the Department of Education is prohibited from unlawfully discriminating against a student on transgender grounds by denying the student access, or limiting the student’s access, to any benefit provided by the educational authority.²

The Association and our members believe the amendments of this bill to be discriminatory, and therefore in breach of several Acts and the Department of Education’s own position.

The NSW *Education Act 1990 No 8* states that education in government schools should be provided “without discrimination on the ground of sex, race or religion” and that educational disadvantages “arising from the child’s gender or from geographic, economic, social, cultural, lingual or other causes”, should be mitigated.³

The Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (the Commonwealth Act) defines gender identity as meaning the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person (whether by way of medical intervention or not) with or without regard to the person’s designated sex at birth. It provides that a person is unlawfully discriminated against on the ground of their gender identity if they are treated less favourably than, in circumstances that are the same or are not materially different, a person who has a different gender identity would be treated.⁴

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act addresses unlawful discrimination against a person specifically on transgender grounds and provides that a person is unlawfully discriminated against on transgender grounds if, on the grounds that they are transgender they are treated less favourably than in the same circumstances (or circumstances which are not materially different) than a person who is not transgender.⁵

The amendments are harmful

A recent summary by the Australian Lawyers for Human Rights notes that LGBTI school students represent a significant minority population:

- 10% of students are same sex attracted
- 4% of students are trans and gender diverse and
- 1.7% of students are intersex.⁶

¹ NSW Department of Education, *Bulletin 55 – Transgender students in schools*, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-55-transgender-students-in-schools>

² NSW Department of Education, *Bulletin 55 – Transgender students in schools*, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-55-transgender-students-in-schools>

³ Education Act 1990 No 8, <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1990-008#sec.16>

⁴ Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2014C00002>

⁵ NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1977-048>

⁶ Radcliffe, J. Ward, R. Scott, M. Richardson, S. 2013. *Safe Schools Do Better: Supporting sexual diversity, intersex and gender diversity in schools*. Safe Schools Coalition Australia

Regardless of whether or not this Bill became law, children and young people will continue to develop psychological complexities around gender identity. These children and young peoples' access to support services, however, will be directly impacted if the Bill was implemented.

Removing the ability for schools to support children dealing with issues of gender identity will have a detrimental flow on affect to other areas of the public system, particularly Health. Mental illness in children has been steadily increasing in the last five years. Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that between 2014-15 and 2018-19, the total number of emergency department presentations (for any reason) in kids aged 5 to 17 grew by 10.0%, but the growth in emergency department visits for mental health is nearly double that, increasing by 19.2%.⁷

As a PSA Member from the Ministry of Health has warned, *"Our health system simply can't support any measure that expert teachers, counsellors, nurses and doctors know will expose kids to more psychological distress."*

LGBTI children and young people are at a particularly high risk of mental illness. Compared to the general population, LGBTI Australians are more likely to attempt suicide in their lifetime, specifically:

- LGBTI young people aged 16 to 27 are five times more likely
- People with an intersex variation aged 16 and over are nearly six times more likely
- Transgender people aged 18 and over are nearly eleven times more likely⁸

What these statistics show is that children who present with questions about so-called "gender fluidity" are likely to be at higher risk of mental illness. In essence, these amendments would **take away** supports from children who arguably **need more support** than the majority of their peers, and our frontline members agree:

"The students most in need of support will be the ones most negatively affected by a bill such as this."

- School Support Officer and PSA Member

"Young people in the LGBTQIA+ community are among some of our most vulnerable. We need to offer these young people unbridled support. We do not need to silence and isolate them further, which I believe passing this Bill will do."

- Student Support Officer and PSA Member

Research shows the supportive environment schools provide can have a lasting impact on both the educational and lifelong outcomes for students.⁹ The NSW Department of Education *Student Welfare* policy states that, *"students develop best in schools where teaching and learning occur in a context of student welfare"*¹⁰ The Department also proclaims that, *"all students, including those who identify as transgender, have a right to be treated equitably and with dignity"* and that *"schools have a legal duty to*

⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Mental Health Services in Australia report, Table ED.20, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-contents/summary-of-mental-health-services-in-australia>

⁸ LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, <https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/statistics>

⁹ NSW Department of Education, *Bulletin 55 – Transgender students in schools*, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-55-transgender-students-in-schools>

¹⁰ NSW Department of Education, *Student Welfare Policy*, 1996, <https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/student-welfare-policy>

protect students from foreseeable risk of harm and to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure their safety.”¹¹

Restricting all mention around the topic of “gender fluidity” prevents LGBTIQ+ students from being equally recognised, accepted and able to study in a supportive and affirming environment and removes a school’s ability to properly support these students.

The Bill is contradictory to the Department’s current inclusive and progressive stance on child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing. As one School Psychologist has noted, it renders the topic of gender identity “taboo” and will risk worsening academic outcomes for these already vulnerable young persons as schools will no longer be a vaguely safe or affirming place for them, which will undoubtedly further heighten their psychosocial risk factors.

Duty of care

“I feel this bill places too much emphasis on “parents” as the only and sole decision maker of what a young persons’ values and morals are allowed to be. Child and adolescent development is a socialisation process, where morals and values are learned and model by social others in the young persons’ life. School environments; classrooms, and school counselling offices are just some of the places where young people should have the freedom to explore their ideas, and ask for information.”

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

The Association and our members of course acknowledge and respect the rights of parents and their overall responsibility for their own child. However, the school environment is also extremely formative for children’s development, and at certain times of their young lives, may be the preferred place for them to discuss their lives, particularly if they are naturally formulating views that differ from those of their parents.

It is a natural aspect of adolescent development for a child to pull away from their family as the central influence in favour of their peers. All teens shall, in some way, seek to assert their individuality within their family, and this often involves questioning established views and customs. Some parents will find even slight deviations from compliance challenging and frightening (especially where their views hold eternal outcomes) and the support services at school can play a vital role in helping families through these challenging periods. As one member has assessed:

“As psychologists... we often work to assist families to find resolutions in both large and small conflicts - but as the neutral party working within strict parameters governed by ethical and evidence based considerations.

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

Our members have noted that schools frequently provide support to students that the students themselves identify that the parents/ families can't, won't, don't provide to them. Departmental policies acknowledge the

¹¹ NSW Department of Education, *Bulletin 55 – Transgender students in schools*, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-55-transgender-students-in-schools>

importance of consulting with parents when planning for a student's support, but also make note that in some circumstances it may not be in the student's best interest to do this.¹² It comes down to duty of care.

Nobody wants to override parents, or remove their status as primary decision maker, but the simple truth is, they are not always in a position to have the information and understanding of the evidence base to make decisions that are best for their child, particularly where they conflict with their personal views and attitudes.

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

Existing Child Protection Laws can override parental control in extreme circumstances. Under these laws, parents can be held accountable by the medical neglect clause in NSW if they ignore certain identifiable risks in their child, for example, ignoring suicidal ideation is high risk for death by suicide, ignoring ADHD is high risk for negative life outcomes.

The school environment can and does provide children with an alternate avenue for support. If they are not able to receive the support they need at home, they can seek that support at school. Our psychologist members tell us that there is a great deal of research which shows that failure to provide appropriate treatment has high risks for student life outcomes.

Removing children's access to school support services may force them to rely solely on family support, regardless of whether it is there or not. Our members warn that the proposed amendments will potentially result in the need to use such extreme laws like the Child Protection Laws more likely.

"This legislation equates the parent attitudes and opinions as equivalent to scientific fact and gives precedent to the former, even where research would clearly demonstrate the student is at greater risk of harm - then necessitating the school's resorting to child protection (an already overwhelmed system) to resolve issues of imminent risk, whilst at the same time debilitating any chance of the school's providing harm minimization measures to alleviate that risk."

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

This proposal is specifically aimed at giving parents the power of veto in situations where the obvious ethical clinical/educational approach conflicts with parental personal belief - it is designed precisely to override situations where all the research, evidence and ethical considerations would rightfully prevent the parent from having their way because it would be dangerous for their child.

¹² NSW Department of Education, *Bulletin 55 – Transgender students in schools*, <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-55-transgender-students-in-schools>

"In my work I often encounter children who are mentally/emotionally struggling with their identity. Often, the clear issue is repugnant to their parents. The student might have ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Depression, Anxiety or they may be struggling with how to identify themselves in gender and sexuality terms...Am I trans? Non binary? Gay? In ALL these cases, the student's parents may struggle with the label but all the student wants is to understand their feelings and be comfortable with who they are. It is essential in my treatment to accept the student where they are at, if there is any chance of achieving that.

No-one would advocate I tell a mildly depressed child they should just "suck it up" other than a parent who finds the thought their child is struggling to feel efficacious overwhelming. By supporting the child, and educating the parent, I can assist BOTH to overcome the issue. Anyone outside the emotional entanglement (removed from the subjective influences) would see the sense in that - especially if informed by the evidence and ethical obligations a School Psychologist works under both as a registered practitioner and an employee of the department of education.

Similarly, some parents of particular persuasions view suicide as a sin. When their children present to the school counselling service reporting suicidal ideation they are terrified of their parents due to these beliefs; complicating the treatment of this serious situation. But would anyone advocate that if the parent responds to my contact with the statement, "Tell my son suicide is sinful", I should? Of course not - but this is precisely what this legislation is actually about; removing the obligation of the school to follow evidence based, rigorously researched guidelines and replacing them with parental beliefs - keeping in mind that these beliefs shall be as diverse as the student population...There is no obligation for the parent to back their opinion with evidence based or ethical constraints - which is precisely why those constraints exist for education and psychological practice. We are constrained by guidelines and knowledge obligations to reduce the risk that personal opinions overly influence our choices of what to do and how to do it PRECISELY because we know that people just doing what they believe to be right might be detrimental to the student."

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

School Staff

The Association is extremely concerned over the potential impact this Bill would have on our members, both legally (the consequences if they breached the proposed laws) and professionally (the ability for them to perform their jobs as per their role descriptions and professional registration obligations).

There is a significant distinction in the role these workers provide and that of a teacher, particularly in relation to the proposed amendments to this bill. To put it simply, teachers teach, our members support. The Association is therefore highly concerned about the language used in this amendment bill, particularly part (e) of the overview which states:

To ensure that all school staff – including non-teaching staff, counsellors, advisors and consultants – do not **teach** gender fluidity and that such staff undertake their duties and engage with students in schools in a way that recognizes parental primacy in relation to core values.

These amendments imply that children would only ever know about, experience, or have an interest in "gender fluidity" if they were "taught" this by someone. One PSA member and School Psychologist has called this premise "incorrect and bigoted". A Student Support Officer member has explained, *"there is a difference between acknowledging something and providing support and "teaching" it."* It is one thing to take a subject area out of a curriculum. It is quite another to remove support structures that protect vulnerable children.

"One the primary functions of a counsellor, being an advocate of positive change and good mental health practices, is to provide "psychoeducation", meaning informing the client about their distress reactions, to help them understand psychobiological, and psychosocial processing occurring within them. This not an "advising" process as such, but a guiding and coaching of the young person towards making decisions they wish to make, which align with their own values, as these values develop. Essentially, in our work through counselling sessions, we explore values, rather than teach them, and this does require discussing and informing young people the what these unexplored values are called."

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

The Association is concerned that while the Bill outlines in its amendments to the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 that the consequence of breach of the law for teaching staff would be having their accreditation revoked, it does not specify what the consequences would be for non-teaching staff.

The Association firstly seeks clarification on what the consequences for non-teaching staff would be, however, the Association holds the position that non-teaching staff should not be party to this Bill.

Recommendation 2

That the Bill be amended to recognise that there is a distinction between "teaching" and "acknowledging" and/or "supporting" and that therefore non-teaching staff, in particular Student Support Officers, School Psychologists and Counsellors, be removed from the Bill and allowed to continue providing lawful, non-discriminatory support to students who present with questions/issues of gender identity, or "gender fluidity".

Student Support Officers

"If such a Bill was to be passed, it would greatly impact on the way I work and am able to support students."

- Student Support Officer and PSA Member

"Schools should be safe places for young people. This includes being safe places to question and develop their identity, made up by their beliefs, values, gender, sexuality, and social and political views. In my role as a Student Support Officer, supporting students in these areas is not about telling them what is right or wrong, but rather, it is about giving them the freedom and opportunities to explore these ideas themselves, in a space that is free from judgement."

- Student Support Officer and PSA Member

The amendments would prevent Student Support Officers from properly fulfilling their job description (Attachment A):

- One of the **key accountabilities** for Student Support Officers is to "improve the wellbeing, resilience and pro-social behaviours of students."

If and when an SSO was presented with a student who was struggling with gender identity, the proposed amendments would prevent the SSO from working to improve that child's wellbeing, which could then have a detrimental effect on that child's resilience and social behaviours.

- One of the **key challenges** for Student Support Officers is to "understand the impact of child and adolescent development, mental health, cultural identity, and gender diversity on student wellbeing, while maintaining empathy, reserving judgement and respecting student privacy."

The proposed amendments directly contradict this key challenge.

School Psychologists

"The ethical code of conduct of a practicing counsellor and registered psychologist... is to "support" the young person, presenting with distress, in which ever form they need, that is consider safe, and "non-judgmental". Restricting counsellors in this manner implies, the counsellor with their young client, may appear to be callus, and disregarding, un-empathic, should we have to intentionally "ignore" a subject of discussion."

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

The Bill would prevent School Psychologists from properly fulfilling their job description (Attachment B):

- The **primary purpose of the role** section states that School Psychologists are to, "apply their psychological expertise to support students to achieve cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing."
- One of the **key accountabilities** for School Psychologists is to "contribute to the social, emotional, and academic development of students."

- The **primary purpose of the role** section also states that School Psychologists, “are not required to teach or undertake teaching duties as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004.”

This reinforces our argument that support staff such as School Psychologists serve a very different function, that there is a significant distinction between “teaching” and “acknowledging” and/or “supporting.”

- The **key challenges** for School Psychologists include to “deliver timely, evidence-based and tailored psychological and counselling support” and to “provide psychological services for a diverse range of students experiencing complexity.”

Children with complex questions about gender identity will continue to exist regardless of whether this Bill becomes law. This law would prevent School Psychologists from delivering their services to these students.

Not only would this Bill prevent School Psychologists from properly performing their roles, it would actually put them in an impossible situation of being non-compliant with the Australian Psychology Society Code of Ethics in terms of confidentiality, privacy and providing services in a non-discriminatory way.¹³ As one member has observed:

“All things considered, a School Psychologist would have to breach the law in order to meet their clinical obligations to their client were this legislation to be ratified.”

- School Psychologist and PSA Member

National Education Standards Authority (NESA)

In its proposed amendments to the *Education Act 1990 No 8*, the Bill adds a significant increase to the responsibilities and functions of NESA:

- Schedule 1[9] adds provisions which requires the NSW Education Standards Authority to **indicate** those parts of any syllabus which includes content relating to matters of parental primacy and which prohibit the development or endorsement of any syllabus for a school which teaches gender fluidity.
- Schedule 1[11] provides that the function of the NSW Education Standards Authority to **provide advice and assistance** to students and employers on the nature of courses of study **is extended to include** an obligation to provide advice and assistance **to parents**.
- Schedule 1[12] adds a new provision that gives the NSW Education Standards Authority an **additional function of preparing and making available to schools such resources** as will be necessary to give parents key information about matters of parental primacy that are part of the syllabus.
- Schedule 1[13] adds a new provision to give the NSW Education Standards Authority the power to monitor and provide advice to the Minister and the Secretary on the compliance of government schools with the prohibition on the teaching of gender fluidity and with the obligation to recognise

¹³ Australian Psychology Society, <https://www.psychology.org.au/About-Us/What-we-do/ethics-and-practice-standards/APS-Code-of-Ethics>

that parents are primarily responsible for their children's education in relation to matters of parental primacy. Where there is non-compliance, the Authority may recommend taking specific action by the Department and the Secretary must advise the Authority of any action that it takes to deal with the non-compliance.

These new functions and responsibilities would include further research, providing additional advice and assistance to additional parties, preparing new resources and a new monitoring function. Some of these additions would be short-term, however, others would be ongoing. This is a significant workload increase and NESA would require additional resources and staff to perform these new functions.

Recommendation 3

That appropriate funding and resources are provided to NESA to support the short-term increased workload in research and resource preparation, as well as the long-term increased workload of compliance monitoring and provision of advice and assistance to parents.

Conclusion

The Association has used this submission to put our position, which is our members position, that the Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 is a discriminatory, regressive Bill that would cause harm and division.

This Bill would prevent all school staff from meeting their professional obligations and duty of care to students. Furthermore, it contradicts the code of ethics that all Australian psychologists practice under.

Making this Bill law would be a step backwards for the State of NSW. The Association strongly urges the Committee to reject the passage of this Bill.

Role Description

Student Support Officer (Youth Worker)



Education

Cluster	Education
Agency	NSW Department of Education
Division/Branch/Unit	School Operations
Role number	Various
Classification/Grade/Band	Youth Outreach Worker
ANZSCO Code	411716
PCAT Code	1119192
Date of Approval	April 2020
Agency Website	www.education.nsw.gov.au

Agency overview

The NSW Department of Education provides, funds and regulates education services for NSW students from early childhood to secondary school, delivering world-class education through its public schools and providing funding support to non-government schools. We employ, develop and support teachers, leaders and other staff to deliver the best outcomes for students and to advance the wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

Primary purpose of the role

Student Support Officers work within the school community to enhance student wellbeing and learning outcomes in partnership with the wellbeing team and the school counselling service. Student Support Officers provide individual and targeted wellbeing support and whole of school wellbeing initiatives and programs that are evidence-based. They have a pivotal role in working collaboratively with external agencies and creating referral pathways for students and families to child and family support agencies.

Key accountabilities

- Improve the wellbeing, resilience and pro-social behaviours of students by working in partnership with the wellbeing team and the school counselling service to prioritise and deliver individual, small group and whole-school evidence-based programs and strategies.
- Enhance student learning and wellbeing outcomes by identifying and establishing support networks for students with staff, the school community, and locally-based government services and community agencies.
- Support transition, between schools and post-school enrolments by working with transition coordinators and external providers.
- Facilitate student referrals to external providers by establishing and maintaining referral pathways with appropriate local services.
- Support data collection processes to evaluate and feedback on school-based wellbeing programs and strategies.
- Support the implementation of departmental student wellbeing priorities, whole-school wellbeing programs and build positive community relationships.

ATTACHMENT A

Key challenges

- Understand the impact of child and adolescent development, mental health, cultural identity, and gender diversity on student wellbeing, while maintaining empathy, reserving judgement and respecting student privacy.
- Supporting students and their families to identify and access external services that meets their needs.
- Work flexibly and adapt to the changing needs of the school community to provide timely and appropriate wellbeing support.

Key relationships

Who	Why
Internal	
Principal or delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report issues of suspected risk of significant harm to a student.• Provide advice on interventions, prioritise risk and communicate issues relating to student and school wellbeing.
School Services teams, Head Teacher Wellbeing and Wellbeing team, Learning and Support Team and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work collaboratively on solutions for students and whole school wellbeing initiatives.• Provide feedback and information, when required to escalate issues for learning support interventions.• Offer recommendations to support students and enhance the learning experience.• Gather data and feedback to support the evaluation of programs, process and outcomes.
School Counsellor or School Psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work collaboratively with the school counselling services to support student wellbeing and mental health.• Assist with referrals to external services for students and their families, if required.
Students, parents, families and community agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide interventions and link students to wellbeing programs and services.• Provide a safe and supportive environment for students seeking information.• Develop and maintain positive working relationships to support referral pathways.

Role dimensions

Decision making

The role requires Student Support Officers to work in accordance with relevant legislative requirements, policies, procedures and guidelines of the NSW Department of Education.

Reporting line

The Student Support Officer reports to:
The principal or their delegate

Role Description Student Support Officer (Youth Worker)

2

Role Description School Psychologist



Education

Cluster	Education
Agency	Department of Education
Division/Branch/Unit	School Operation and Performance
Location	Various
Classification/Grade/Band	School Psychologist
Role Number	Various
ANZSCO Code	272399
PCAT Code	1119192
Date of Approval	20 January 2021
Agency Website	http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/

Agency Overview

The NSW Department of Education serves the community by providing world-class education for students of all ages. We ensure young children get the best start in life by supporting and regulating the early childhood education sector. We are the largest provider of public education in Australia with responsibility for delivering high-quality public education to two-thirds of the NSW student population. We are committed to fostering vibrant, sustainable and high-performing vocational and higher education sectors. We are responsible for enacting NSW Government policy, driving improvement in education, and overseeing policy, funding and compliance issues relating to non-government schools. We respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as First Peoples of Australia.

Primary purpose of the role

School psychologists contribute to student wellbeing in New South Wales public schools by providing specialised psychological assessment, counselling and intervention services.

School Psychologists apply their psychological expertise to support students to achieve cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing. They complement and enhance the work of teachers to strengthen student learning and wellbeing outcomes. School Psychologists provide psychological counselling services to allocated schools from Preschool to Year 12 across a range of metropolitan, rural and remote locations.

School Psychologists are not required to teach or undertake teaching duties as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 as amended.

ATTACHMENT B

Key accountabilities

- Provides counselling and psychological services to students, individually and in groups, including appropriate short term therapeutic interventions undertaken within the constraints of their training, experience and supervision
- Engages with and implements the procedures of the Professional Practice Framework for the NSW School Counselling Service
- Works in consultation with the principal, school executive, staff and student support services to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes and implement current departmental priorities
- Contributes to the social, emotional, and academic development of students, and supports schools and students with complex behavioural needs
- Administers cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural assessment of students, reports on the results of assessments and interventions and collaborates to improve learning, wellbeing and mental health outcomes
- Works collaboratively with learning and support teams, parents and carers, and other agencies, to develop appropriate school based support for students
- Responds as part of a team to assist schools experiencing serious incidents
- Refers students and/or their families and carers to other agencies that will support the development of student health and wellbeing outcome

ATTACHMENT B

Key challenges

- Work with a wide range of key stakeholders, including government and non-government agencies, to deliver timely, evidence-based and tailored psychological and counselling support to students who have additional learning and support needs
- Provide psychological services for a diverse range of students experiencing complexity across Preschool to Year 12, often from more than one school

Key relationships

Who	Why
Internal	
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works in consultation with the Principal to support school learning and wellbeing outcomes
District Guidance Officer/Senior Psychologist, Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engages in professional practice supervision with the Senior Psychologist Education/ District Guidance Officer
Educational Services Teams (Provide support to schools to enhance learning and engagement opportunities for students with additional learning and support needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works in collaboration with Educational Services teams to develop appropriate school based support for students
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides counselling and psychological services to students to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes
Parents/Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works collaboratively with parents and carers to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes
External	
External Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaises with relevant stakeholders to provide coordinated and collaborative support for students• Refers students and/or their families and carers to other agencies that will support the development of student mental health and wellbeing outcomes

ATTACHMENT B

Role dimensions

Decision making

The role requires school psychologists to work in accordance with relevant legislative requirements, policies, procedures and guidelines of the NSW Department of Education and the Psychology Board of Australia.

Sound decision making is achieved by assessing priorities, workload and in consultation with the School Principal and the District Guidance Officer/Senior Psychologist, Education as required.

Reporting line

- School Psychologists work as part of a team and are professionally supervised by the District Guidance Officer/Senior Psychologist Education.
- School Psychologists are assigned to a base school and are administratively responsible to the principal. School Psychologists may also provide psychological counselling services to other NSW public schools. Where they provide a service to schools other than their base, they are responsible to those schools' respective principals for service planning and delivery.

Direct Reports

Nil

Budget/Expenditure

Nil

Essential requirements

- Knowledge of and commitment to the Department's Aboriginal Education Policy, Partnership Agreement with the NSW AECG Inc. and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
- Registered or provisionally registered psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia.
- Valid and current Working with Children Check clearance.
- Ability and willingness to travel between work sites. This will require a current and valid driver's licence with permission to drive by one-self.