PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE OF

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

REVIEW OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

NO.8 OF 2018-19

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT: YEARS 7-10

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Hon Ivan Dean MLC (Chair to 26 March 2021)

Hon Ruth Forrest MLC (Chair from 23 June 2021)

Hon Josh Willie MLC

Hon Meg Webb (from 22 June 2021)

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Dr Shane Broad (from 24 August 2021)

Mr David O'Byrne MP (to 26 March 2021)

Mr Nic Street MP

Mr John Tucker MP (to 26 March 2021)

Ms Madeleine Ogilvie MP (from 22 June 2021)

Ms Rebecca White MP (22 June 2021 to 7 July 2021)

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CHARTER OF THE COMMITTEE

The Public Accounts Committee (the Committee) is a Joint Standing Committee of the Tasmanian Parliament constituted under the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970*.

The Committee comprises six Members of Parliament, three Members drawn from the Legislative Council and three Members from the House of Assembly.

Under section 6 of the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970* the Committee:

- must inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any matter referred to the Committee by either House relating to the management, administration or use of public sector finances; or the accounts of any public authority or other organisation controlled by the State or in which the State has an interest; and

- may inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any matter arising in connection with public sector finances that the Committee considers appropriate; and any matter referred to the Committee by the Auditor-General.

1 INTRODUCTION

As many of the Government responses to the Auditor-General's recommendations cover a number of areas, this Report should be read in its entirety to understand the full context of the response from the Department.

This Report should also be read in conjunction with the Auditor-General's full report, Hansard transcripts and the attached questionnaire responses.

The Committee was provided with evidence of a significant number of programs and initiatives aimed at supporting student attendance and engagement. A number of initiatives have been recently implemented. The Committee was unable to assess the impact on student outcomes of the majority of these initiatives.

The Committee makes the following over-arching recommendations:

- Measurable performance targets inform and guide the evaluation of all Departmental programs, processes and initiatives aimed at student attendance and engagement.
- Reporting against performance targets be provided in the Department's Annual Report.
- Measurable performance targets be the basis for maintaining current and/or developing future initiatives.
- All analysis and assessment of Departmental programs and initiatives must focus and report on student outcomes as the key measure of success or failure and ongoing funding.
- 'Student engagement' be consistently defined in relevant Departmental documentation.

2 CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW

The Auditor-General had undertaken a performance audit in order to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department of Education's (DoE) management of student attendance and engagement in Years 7 to 10 and how effectively the Department collects information about student attendance and engagement and whether that information is used to improve students' educational outcomes.

The audit examined information relating to full-time and part-time students in Years 7 to 10 at Tasmanian Government high schools over the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2017. However, some of the data collected related to 2018, including the school visits. Work undertaken for this audit was limited to government schools.

The list of audit criteria in the Auditor-General's report are:

1. What does the attendance and engagement data show?

2. Is student attendance managed effectively?

    2.1 Is student attendance recorded, monitored, reported and analysed?

    2.2 Is student attendance data used to inform decisions and responses?

    2.3 Does DoE involve parents and others in improving student attendance?

    2.4 Does DoE support and measure improvement in student attendance?

    2.5 Does DoE have strategies for managing and improving student attendance?

3. Is student engagement managed effectively?

    3.1 Is student engagement recorded, monitored, reported and analysed?

    3.2 Is student engagement data used to inform decisions and responses?

    3.3 Does DoE involve parents and others in improving student engagement?

    3.4 Does DoE support and measure improvement in student engagement?

    3.5 Does DoE have strategies for managing and improving student engagement?

The Auditor-General's Report also stated:

Attendance and engagement at school is essential for students to emerge equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for the future. Consistent attendance at school is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes and keeping students engaged in their learning. While student attendance at school is a legal obligation of parents and carers under the Education Act 2016, Tasmanian government schools, in partnership with parents and carers, students and the wider community, must provide active support for full student attendance and engagement. Therefore, it is important that schools have effective, reliable policies, procedures and systems that record student attendance accurately and in a timely manner, to enable schools to identify whether any interventions or additional supports are required to promote consistent student attendance.

Attendance is, however, only part of the equation for good educational outcomes, as the level of participation and intrinsic interest a student shows in school is of equal importance. Some students indicate their level of engagement through observable signs in their behaviour (such as persistence, effort, attention) and attitudes (such as motivation, positive learning values, enthusiasm, interest, pride in success) or performance at school. However, research indicates that there is a significant proportion of students who are quietly and passively disengaged from learning. These students are behaviourally compliant and do enough work to sit above minimum standards, so their disengagement may not be indicated in data analysis. However, they may be disengaged to such an extent as to fall well short of reaching their full potential.

Schools, in partnership with families, have responsibility for the engagement of each student so that they continue to learn and reach their full potential. Tasmanian schools are expected to make use of data, from a range of sources, that gives an indication of students' level of behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement and to identify early signs of disengagement. School staff are expected to work proactively to ensure that the school culture, structures, programs and processes are inclusive of all students and conducive to effective, engaged learning.[1]

The Auditor-General's recommendations are contained in Section 2 of this Report, together with Departmental responses.

The audit concluded with:

"…key elements are in place within policies, processes and systems to support DoE's effective management of student attendance and engagement for Years 7 to 10. Whilst the framework for managing student attendance and engagement is effective, it could be enhanced by further investment in improving student attendance data quality, better defining and capturing student engagement data, enhancing monitoring and reporting systems and establishing and monitoring performance targets for acceptable attendance and engagement."[2]

On 24 March 2021, the Public Accounts Committee resolved of its own motion to examine the Auditor-General Report No. 8 of 2018-19 – Student Attendance and Engagement Years 7 to 10.

The Committee's term of reference was to follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Auditor-General's Report and report to both Houses of Parliament.

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[1] *[Report of the Auditor-General No. 8 of 2018-19: Student Attendance and Engagement, Years 7-10,](#)* p.1

[2] Ibid, p.10

On 24 March 2021, the Committee received a briefing from the Auditor-General and subsequently resolved to undertake a follow-up review of the Report.

The Department was asked to provide a response to the Committee detailing action(s) taken to implement recommendations including:

1) Progress of implementation of each recommendation;

2) Any explanation for delay in implementation;

3) Rationale for not implementing/adopting recommendation if appropriate; and

4) Any other relevant detail.

Parliament was prorogued on 26 March 2021. The Public Accounts Committee was re-established on 22 June 2021 and the Committee resolved to continue work on the review.

On 24 June 2021 a questionnaire was sent to the Minister for Education. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the action taken by the Department of Education to implement the Auditor-General's recommendations.

The Department's response to the Committee's questionnaire was received on 20 August 2021 (attached in Appendix 1). Responses to each of the Auditor-General's recommendations are contained in Section 2 of this Report.

The Committee resolved to invite the Minister for Education and the Secretary of the Department to provide additional verbal evidence at a public hearing. This was conducted on 24 September 2021.

At the public hearing, the Hon Minister Sarah Courtney MP made a general comment in relation to progress on implementing the audit's recommendations:

> *...this audit was tabled in 2019. All recommendations were accepted by the department and work has commenced. Obviously, COVID-19 impacted last year, so that meant that the implementation of some of the recommendations was delayed. However, we can update you on each recommendation as we go through. I can advise the committee today of the 23 recommendations, 18 are complete or substantially underway and the remaining 5 have commenced.*[3]

The Minister provided a table describing the status of each recommendation which is contained in Appendix 2.

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[3] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Minister for Education, p.2

3 DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSES

AUDIT CRITERIA 1

What does the attendance and engagement data show?

Auditor-General Recommendation 1

Consider analysing absence data for students in each Years 7 to 10 according to educational risk categories - particularly in schools with a low ICSEA rating — with a view to establishing initiatives that make a positive difference for disadvantaged students.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 1

There are no nationally agreed attendance categories (including 'risk categories') aside from the national reporting of students attending 90 per cent or more of the time. However, DoE monitors and reports attendance routinely, including by examining particular student groupings. ICSEA is a nationally used *school level* indicator of socio-economic status, whereas parental education is used as an indicator at the *student level.*

The Department's Executive is routinely provided with an attendance summary at the conclusion of each term. In addition, the Executive has been presented with specific 'research' findings using DoEs own data, to more deeply understand and identify attendance trends and challenges, including the link between attendance, educational outcomes and socio-economic status (across all year groups, not just years 7-10). This reporting is informing actions and initiatives aimed at improving student engagement (to which attendance is a key consideration).

The School Engagement Team supports schools in building capacity to maximise engagement. Utilising the Student Engagement Guide, leadership teams are supported to build on their current provision and identify next steps.

Student Engagement Guide

At the public hearing on 24 September 2021, the Minister provided an update on the Annual Student Wellbeing Survey.

> *The Annual Student Wellbeing Survey, a data set that was not available at the time of this audit was undertaken, now provides us with measures of student engagement and learning. The data shows that across our system, 82 per cent of our students are cognitively engaged in their learning, 73 per cent of our learners report a sense of belonging to their school and, pleasingly, 96 per cent of our learners are emotionally engaged with their teachers. While this data provides a positive picture of engagement, I recognise that there is still more work to do to*

ensure we continue to increase the number of young people who are achieving the goal of attending 90 per cent or more at the time.[4]

The Secretary of the Department provided information in relation to the link between student attendance and the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA):

If we start with the ICSEA, the data clearly shows that the lower the ICSEA of the school, the more likely students are not to be attending. This is saying, how are you going to sort those students into categories of risk? They proposed a 60 per cent threshold for being at risk. If you were below 60 per cent in terms of attending 90 per cent or more of the time, you were considered high risk. We actually think that is too low. We think that by the time you are at 60 per cent you are in significant trouble. We'd set that threshold at 70 per cent.

It is a model that will allow us to sort students into risk categories as another way of analysing your being at risk of disengaging. I think, though, we've got to be really cognisant of the fact that the attendance rate itself is a proxy that other things are going on in your life. On the back of the sheet that the minister has tabled is a model that I think very succinctly summarises the fact that students who are engaging have good wellbeing, are finding the teaching and learning appropriate and are engaging at school.

The Secretary also outlined the use of data analytics for the early identification of students at risk of disengagement:

What that requires is something more than what the Auditor-General suggested, which brings in data analytics. So being able to take a broad range of data and make informed decisions about where the support is needed to get you engaging in learning.

In terms of the future … we are building a new case management platform that is going to take a lot of that data which, at the moment, is long text. It is people typing in observations and putting it into a business analytics engine that is going to allow us to quickly flag on a range of measures. It might be your NAPLAN performance, it might be your attendance, it might be behaviour flags, to be quickly flagging students before they disengage; therefore being able to provide support that is needed, rather than having to try to re-engage them once they are not attending.

And further

…Excel spreadsheets and tracking every student and giving them a risk rating in terms of how they're tracking. We want every school to have access to that. Cosgrove has a staff that are highly data-literate and able to do that. We need an engine that is pushing that information out, not requiring staff to be spending time cutting that.

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[4] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Hon Sarah Courtney MP, p.1

CHAIR - … Does the department have the data analytics capacity to do this? These are expensive tools and you need the skills as well as the technology to do it.

Mr BULLARD - Gaining that capacity and the change in technology over the last couple of years is helping us. Using business analytics through a Microsoft platform, for example, is providing a much more accessible way to present data that is dynamic. We also have a specialist team that is working on the system improvement. So we have a team running the old systems and we have a specialist team that is building the new system, working with schools and stakeholders to do that.[5]

Committee finding

1. The Department has taken significant steps, including through the use of data analytics, to identify at-risk cohorts in all schools.

Committee recommendation

1. The Department utilise the recently introduced data analytics to monitor and report on the effectiveness of student engagement strategies.

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[5] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, pp.3-4

AUDIT CRITERIA 2

Is student attendance managed effectively?

Auditor-General Recommendation 2.

Reinforce the use of documentation and self-directed online training modules to increase the reliability of data entry.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 2

'Help desk' support is centrally provided to all schools with regard to the recording of attendance in DoE systems, and is further supported by documentation (for eg, explanatory manuals). Attendance data is monitored centrally on a routine basis at school level, and contact with schools is made if potential anomalies are detected to assist schools with data entry and validation. Training is available for school staff.

An example of the measuring system progress dashboard is provided in Appendix 2.

At the public hearing, the Secretary of the Department explained measures taken to ensure data integrity:

> *We have now introduced a number of steps to ensure there is greater data integrity. By way of example, a Help Desk: if you do not know what you are doing, ring someone. Makes perfect sense but it helps business managers who are entering data and might have particular questions. Online training modules: when you are new to a role and not sure what you're doing regarding attendance, you can have online training. A higher degree of back-end auditing of the data is coming to allow the running of analytics to see anomalies, if a child is there or not there, and then reinforcing the school's business rules that need to be applied. That has been fully implemented.*

And further

> *Mr WILLIE - … When I was a teacher, some teachers would fill out a paper-based attendance sheet that would go to the office for data entry, while others who might have been more capable with ICT would do the data entry. Is that still occurring across schools? Is double-handling still happening? Is it all electronic now? Are all teachers entering the data?*
>
> *Mr BULLARD -We certainly provide the technology for teachers to have an app in class, but some is still paper-based and sent to the office. It is a change management process.*
>
> *Dr BROAD - Do you think the change to that system has had an impact? Or is that not enough?*

Mr BULLARD - It is a really interesting question. There is a question in the data about truancy, which is where a child has not attended and the parents expected them to; that is a truant. That number is very low in terms of how that is coded.

I think texting is sometimes useful, as you would have seen through the report. At one of the schools, their modus operandi was to get the data in early, and text the parents of those who are not there. That would only work if the parents weren't aware that the student wasn't there. But where it has been parental choice not to send them, it has no impact whatsoever.[6]

Committee findings

2. Processes have been introduced to improve data integrity including self-directed online training modules and access to a help desk.

3. Ongoing challenges remain as part of the change management process.

Auditor-General Recommendation 3

Consider using attendance information to measure DoE and school performance

Department of Education response to Recommendation 3

DoE system measurement now includes attendance as a key performance indicator and is promoted throughout the Department. School level dashboards that include attendance measures have been in place for around 2-3 years. Schools are encouraged through their School Improvement Plans to identify performance measures and targets, including attendance (particularly for those schools that have attendance challenges).

The system measurement framework contains both measures and growth targets, and for attendance, is disaggregated by primary and secondary years.

The Secretary advised that Recommendation 3 had been completed and outlined other performance indicators established in response to this recommendation:

CHAIR - What other performance information indicators have been implemented as a result of this recommendation?

Mr BULLARD - In terms of a system, obviously we have always looked at attendance, but we have not had it as a performance measure that sits there and is monitored. Nor have we had a target attached to it. Following this report, both of those things have occurred, so it is one of the measures.

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[6] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, pp.6-8

CHAIR - Is the target 90 per cent?

Mr BULLARD - The measure is the number of students attending 90 per cent or more and the target is a growth target that all schools should be able to implement. What we have found is that it is easy for schools to disengage. They think, well, I am never going to get all my students there 90 per cent of the time, so this one's not for me. Going and saying that you need to plot a trajectory about how you are going to get more students there 90 per cent of the time and give yourself that target, it might be 2 per cent for next year -

CHAIR - So, it is individualised by school.

Mr BULLARD - Individualised in terms of their school improvement planning, but with an eye to it centrally. Next year, for the department, we have set a target, an average of 2 per cent improvement across the board, which we think should be achievable.

Mr STREET - I can understand looking at each school and its performance, year on year, but we wouldn't be comparing schools with one another, would we, if most of the factors that influence attendance are external factors to the school, which I think you have already acknowledged they are.

Mr BULLARD - So, would we want to compare them? No, that puts them in competition. Would we want to be pointing schools toward like schools that have similar attributes that are performing at a higher level - absolutely. Trying to set up those peer-to-peer relationships, which is, I understand you are really struggling with this issue but did you know that a school that is 50 kilometres away from you with very similar attributes is hitting it out of the park? The intent would be to join those schools up in a learning partnership to see whether we can't expand that learning across the system.

And further

Schools are required to set three priorities for growth in their school improvement plans. Over the past few years we've been building that culture of school improvement using data-informed decisions and leaving it to schools with support from school improvement leaders to set those targets. As we continue to discuss that target of 2 per cent we have put on ourselves for next year, there will be a higher level of expectation on schools that they are reflecting that where required. You don't want schools that say, well, we have hit the mark and now I am being told I've got to go above where I am.

Mr WILLIE - Some schools would already be way above the 90 per cent.

Mr BULLARD - Some schools are absolutely there but, likewise, some schools need to be assisted with their focus. [7]

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[7] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, pp.7-9

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Committee finding

4.   The Department is using attendance information to measure DoE and school performance and is included in school improvement plans.

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Auditor-General Recommendation 4

Report attendance data for each year group in annual reports.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 4

Attendance data for each school is published in the Department's Key Data Set each year. These are reported in year level groupings. In addition, both the Key Data Set and the Department's Annual Report publish attendance by each year level.

Annual report (page 25):
https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/DoE-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf

Key Data (page 36):
https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/Key-Data-2021.pdf

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Committee finding

5.   The attendance data is publicly reported for each year as recommended.

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Auditor-General Recommendation 5

Analyse and report absence information on a regular and systemic basis to identify any trends and measure the effect of initiatives to improve attendance and reduce absenteeism.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 5

The Department provided evidence regarding this recommendation in its response to Recommendation 1.

In addition, the Committee was advised that work on the recommendation had commenced. The Secretary of the Department added:

> *There is a lot of work going on in that space. This really comes down to differentiation. How am I ensuring that I am teaching for learning for ways that*

meet the specific needs of learners? That can then be triaged into 'what's our general approach to professional learning and differentiation?', and so on.

We know that in some particular schools and some particular classrooms there are particular challenges that need to be addressed in that space. We have 16 inclusive practice coaches.

.... They're focused on particular attributes of students who might be more difficult to engage, or have difficulty learning. They are highly experienced in different approaches to teaching that will accommodate those students.

And further

The other part of the puzzle is, what are you teaching? We have to accept that traditional approaches to the curriculum do not work for every student. Students do not necessarily want to sit in maths class and do maths. Some do.

Looking at different approaches, especially in years 9 and 10, where you can see that disengagement starting to occur, hands-on learning - or packages of learning - is showing dividends for re-engaging students.[8]

Committee findings

6. The Department has implemented initiatives to improve student engagement, including inclusive practice coaches.

7. The Department has yet to measure and report on the impact of inclusive practice coaches.

Committee recommendation

2. The Department measure and report on the impact of the initiatives targeted at improving student engagement.

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[8] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.10

Auditor-General Recommendation 6

Define performance measures and targets for student attendance.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 6

See response to Recommendation 3. The system measurement framework contains both measures and growth targets, and for attendance, is disaggregated by primary and secondary years.

> **Committee finding**
>
> 8. The Department advised that it has fully implemented Recommendation 6.

Auditor-General Recommendation 7

Monitor trends and establish improvement targets for students at highest educational risk.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 7

In response to several initiatives, DoE has designed and is implementing a Case Management Platform (CMP). The CMP will enable the Department to better understand the needs of our learners, and make data informed decisions supporting educational and wellbeing outcomes.

The Vulnerability Management module will allow front line staff to identify students who face a range of indicators that flag that the student may require additional supports to engage in learning. Once the CMP is established and being used in all schools, it will provide a tool for schools and the system to monitor and analyse attendance of highly vulnerable students.

School-based Support and Wellbeing Teams will be able to use the CMP data to plan and implement school strategies that support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring support to engage in learning.

By implementing standardised practices and entering high quality data across all our systems, the opportunity exists to have real time access to information and more timely identification of learners needing support through structured analysis of information. This includes students who may be disengaging from education and training and activate supports to ensure they remain engaged.

The CMP technology is established, and the Vulnerability Management module will soon be trialled with a small number of schools.

The Secretary of the Department provided the following supplementary information:

Think of a triangle. At the top are students who are severely disengaged and not attending. We move down four tiers so at the bottom is more than 90 per cent of the time. We need to understand the attendance trajectory for those students. Schools do that but we need to make sure we can see that transparently. We can see it at a system level but we need supports available to step in, especially when you are in those risk categories, under 70 per cent attendance. The work under way is taking the data and making sure we have systemic approaches that we use where we can see those students and young people disengaging.

And further

Regarding monitoring trends and improvement targets, one thing that changed, again another COVID-19 positive, was setting up the student wellbeing teams in every school and having a wellbeing lead in every school. While schools were monitoring data, they did not have one person in the school that was accountable for that. The person was not known by the system as the intersection point. Now every school has set up a lead and a team. That provides us with the connection between the system supports and the school-based supports.[9]

Committee findings

9.   The case management system has assisted in the monitoring of trends for students at risk.

10. Student wellbeing teams have been established in response to COVID-19 to improve outcomes for students at the highest education risk.

Committee recommendation

3.   The Department measure and report on the impact of student wellbeing teams targeted at improving student engagement.

Auditor-General Recommendation 8

Identify and manage risks to student attendance in Years 7 to 10.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 8

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[9] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, pp.11-12

The Department of Education has formed a new Inclusive Practice Team to support the educational needs of all learners, including students with autism.

The Inclusive Practice Team forms part of the Department's broader work to improve the impact of its student supports on wellbeing and engagement for learning.

Support and Wellbeing Teams were established in schools during 2020. One of the roles of Support and Wellbeing Teams (as communicated in the School Support and Wellbeing Team Guidelines and Resources document) *is to analyse the school's data (e.g. NCCD, attendance, Student Wellbeing Survey) and use the findings to inform planning.*

A copy of the 'Guidelines for School Support and Wellbeing Teams in Schools' is provided in Appendix 2.

At the public hearing, Mr Bullard added:

> *...That dataset has become front and centre of wellbeing planning for the schools and systems.*

And

> *...getting the voice of the students who haven't engaged is as, or more, important than those who are engaged. This year, we have tier 3 sites where there is alternative learning in schools, and tier 4, which is off-site learning. They are both included in the survey. It will be really interesting to see how those young people are tracking and what they see as the opportunities and challenges to their engagement. They are the ones who are obviously struggling to engage in mainstream schooling but are, fortunately, still with us. We need to be learning from them about what is going to help you to re-engage in a school experience.[10]*

The Minister provided the following additional remarks:

> *As Mr Bullard talked about in terms of the model of learning, there are things we can do to increase wellbeing and engagement with learning when kids are here, but when they're not, we have to work through a range of different strategies. The broader work we're doing in the Youth and Wellbeing Strategy is really helpful with that.*
>
> *One of the other things that we'll see benefits of in the long term, and it will take a while, is the work we are doing with our Child and Family Learning Centres. A big part of things like Working Together for 3 Year Olds and the work we are doing investing in those organisations is about the child but a lot of it is about the family as well.[11]*

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[10] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.14
[11] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Minister for Education, p.14

Committee findings

11.   The Department advised that work on the Auditor-General's Recommendation 8 to identify and manage risks to student attendance in Years 7 to 10 had substantially commenced.

12.   Inclusive practice teams have recently been implemented and it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness.

Committee recommendation

4.   The Department measure and report on the impact of inclusive practice teams targeted at improving student engagement.

Auditor-General Recommendation 9

Consider providing further clarity to schools regarding the inclusion of targets in school improvement plans for improved parent, community and stakeholder engagement.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 9

As part of school improvement planning processes, school leadership teams have been provided with data in relation to parent and community engagement through the annual parent satisfaction survey.

Schools are expected to self-assess against the National School Improvement Tool, including Domain 9 which is School-Community Partnerships. A target setting document has been developed to support school improvement planning.

In 2019-20, the Tasmanian Government committed to implementing the recommendations of the 2019 Family Engagement Review.

There were three recommendations made in the Review to improve family engagement across schools and the Department. The Department has worked collaboratively with stakeholders to develop the Together with Families approach, which includes clear expectations for staff to:

- build strong and trusting relationships with families
- be guided by our engagement principles; to be caring, purposeful, inclusive, genuine, responsive and effective
- be deliberate about how we engage families in decision making.

A family engagement project officer has been employed to facilitate improved family engagement practice. Resources, tools and information are available to staff to build their skills and knowledge in engaging with families.

The Families and Us: Together with Families Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) Pilot Project (pilot project) commenced in February 2021 and is providing targeted support to ten sites including schools, libraries, and child and family learning centres until June 2022.

These sites are supported to implement the evidence-based parent engagement guidelines developed by ARACY to improve family engagement in learning.

Throughout the 18-month pilot project, the Family Engagement Project Officer will continually review the progress of sites involved in the pilot project to inform future practices and decision making.

Mr Bullard provided an update on the progress of the project:

> *...we have had a project underway with families. We know in school improvement - if you look at the National School Improvement Tool, which is a nationally endorsed document, that family engagement is a big driver of education outcomes. It makes perfect sense. We hadn't been explicit around what we expected the schools to do. We have now got it together with a families approach which has expectations of schools in relation to engaging with families. It is not a 'nice to do', it is a 'must do'. Then we have the support in place to assist them to do it again. Some do it incredibly well; others are still on a growth curve.*[12]

Committee findings

13.   The Department has implemented a number of processes and projects aimed at improving family engagement. A family engagement review was conducted in 2019.

14.   A target-setting document has been developed to support student planning.

15.   The Committee did not receive any evidence of the effectiveness of family engagement programs to date, noting that some had only recently been implemented.

Committee recommendation

5.   The Department measure and report on the impact of family engagement programs and processes targeted at improving student engagement.

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[12] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.16

Auditor-General Recommendation 10

Complete the implementation of the initiative to review and revise the school improvement framework.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 10

Development of Our Approach to School Improvement is underway. It will include three elements:

1. Model of school improvement to provide a picture of the interconnected core components of Our Approach to School Improvement.

2. Supporting policy guidance to help schools implement Our Approach to School Improvement. The policy guidance includes reference to how school improvement is measured, including through the use of the Measuring System Progress and Measuring School Progress Dashboards, which include outcomes, indicators and growth targets that relate to school improvement, including indicators related to attendance.

3. Explicit statements of expectations and supports for schools in relation to each of the key drivers of Our Approach to School Improvement – Learning, Teaching and Leading, noting that at this stage there are no explicit expectations in relation to attendance, but this will be considered through the 'test, try and learn' phase in 2022.

It is intended that these documents are all released as 'provisional' to guide schools' practice in 2022, while at the same time providing the opportunity to test, try and learn from their implementation and build system expectations in relation to school improvement.

Mr Bullard added the following:

> *… every school has to undertake a data-informed school improvement process. This approach means being more explicit in some of those things, such as a focus on attendance and engagement that we will need to see in those plans.*[13]

Committee finding

16. The initiative to review and revise the school improvement framework has been commenced.

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[13] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.17

Auditor-General Recommendation 11

Include development of performance targets and measures as part of the revision of the school improvement framework.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 11

See response to Recommendation 10.

Auditor-General Recommendation 12

Include targets and measures for attendance rates and levels for Years 7 to 10 for Tasmania in school improvement plans.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 12

See response to Recommendation 10.

AUDIT CRITERIA 3

Is student engagement managed effectively?

Auditor-General Recommendation 13

Continue to develop ASPIRE focusing on further detail and setting targets for improved attendance in Years 7 to 10.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 13

See response to Recommendation 3.

Mr Bullard provided an update on the current status and plans for the dashboard:

> *… Every school has access to that dashboard. We're now looking to move to an updated version of that which will allow greater interrogation of the data to show growth trends, et cetera.*[14]

The Committee was provided with an example of the ASPIRE dashboard display.

Committee finding
17.   The ASPIRE dashboard has been updated to allow for greater interrogation of the data.

Auditor-General Recommendation 14

Develop a system to identify signs of disengagement and tools to be used by schools for structured analysis of information

Department of Education response to Recommendation 14

In response to several initiatives, DoE has designed and is implementing a Case Management Platform (CMP). The CMP will enable the Department to better understand the needs of our learners, and make data informed decisions supporting educational and wellbeing outcomes.

The Vulnerability Management module will allow front line staff to identify students who face a range of indicators that flag that the student may require additional supports to engage in learning. Once the CMP is established and being used in all schools, it will provide a tool for schools and the system to monitor and analyse attendance of highly vulnerable students.

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[14] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.17

School-based Support and Wellbeing Teams will be able to use the CMP data to plan and implement school strategies that support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring support to engage in learning.

Research indicates that vulnerability indicators such as 'out of home care' and 'experiencing housing instability' can contribute to levels of disengagement.

By implementing standardised practices and entering high quality data across all our systems, the opportunity exists to have real time access to information and more timely identification of learners needing support through structured analysis of information. This includes students who may be disengaging from education and training and activate supports to ensure they remain engaged.

The CMP technology is established, and will soon be trialled with schools.

Link to the authenticated Case Management Platform for appropriately authorised users.

Annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey

The annual student satisfaction survey has been replaced with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey (SWES). This survey is administered annually across all Government schools for students in years 4-12. Schools use this data (along with other available data) to inform their School Improvement Plans.

Four indicators from the SWES are included in the System Progress Measures with associated growth targets.

Student Engagement Team

The Student Engagement Team supports schools to build capacity to maximise student engagement. School leadership teams are supported to use the Student Engagement Guide to map their current provision and identify next steps. Over 90 per cent of schools engaged with the Student Engagement Team during 2020/21.

Mr Bullard provided additional clarification:

> *Really, this is asking us: can you see pockets of good practice which sit outside the norms? So, which schools have got higher levels of attendance and engagement than like schools and what are they doing? We have referenced there one aspect of that, which is the support for trauma, which has gone out to schools to fund the initiatives that they have come up with around supporting students that are at that pointy end. Because that is being run systemically and systematically, we are now able to go back and look at the success of those interventions, or otherwise. So, it has been an action research project across those schools.*[15]

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[15] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.19

Committee findings

18. The Department has developed and implemented the CMP to be piloted with schools.

19. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey provides for a structured analysis of data.

20. Over 90% of schools engaged with Student Engagement teams in 2020/21.

Committee recommendations

6. Initiatives designed to identify disengagement and the tools to monitor these should be annually assessed for effectiveness and their impact on student outcomes.

7. Impacts on student outcomes of initiatives to identify disengagement be reported in the DoE Annual Report.

Auditor-General Recommendation 15

Consider undertaking further work to clarify and agree on the information to be recorded, reported and monitored regarding student engagement and establishing improvement targets.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 15

The Student Engagement Team will undertake further work in 2022 that aims to understand and improve how schools identify and respond to students at risk of disengagement.

Committee findings

21. The response provided by the Department in relation to the Auditor-General's recommendation 15 was not consistent with previous responses indicating that work was underway in the areas of student engagement and established improvement targets.

22. The Committee did not receive evidence that demonstrated the effectiveness of Student Engagement teams on student outcomes.

> 23. The Department did not provide documentation evidencing the information to be recorded, reported and monitored regarding student engagement and established improvement targets.

Committee recommendation

> 8. Evaluation of the effectiveness of current programs and processes be undertaken to guide further work undertaken in 2022 with regard to student engagement.

Auditor-General Recommendation 16

Undertake a benefits analysis to determine the level of success of interventions and determine where best to invest funds using measurable performance targets.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 16

The [Model for Supporting Students Impacted by Trauma](#) provides 33 schools with targeted funding over two years (2020 – 2021) to build capacity in their school to support students impacted by trauma.

The impact of this work is measured using a range of student data sets including the annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey, behaviour data, attendance data and suspension data.

This information is used to strengthen the system response to supporting the most vulnerable students to engage in learning.

The Department of Education is currently undertaking a review and evaluation of this component of the Model, to determine the level of success of the targeted interventions implemented by this group of schools.

The review will inform decision making about future allocation of resources to support students impacted by trauma to engage in learning.

The review will provide recommendations for use of program resources to support quality outcomes for students and build capacity of staff, and to improve program alignment with inclusive practice in schools in support of complex and individual learning needs.

* Attached document: Supporting Students Impacted by Trauma (see Appendix 2)

Committee findings

24. The Department is currently undertaking a review of the pilot program on Supporting Students Impacted by trauma.

25. The Committee did not receive evidence of a benefits analysis of the level of success and other interventions.

Committee recommendation

9. The Department address the Auditor-General's Recommendation 16 across all interventions using measurable performance targets.

Auditor-General Recommendation 17

Consider how information regarding student engagement can be monitored and analysed to better support DoE and school decisions and processes.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 17

The annual student satisfaction survey has been replaced with the annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey (SWES). This survey is administered across all Government schools for students in years 4-12. Schools use this data (along with other available data) to inform their School Improvement Plans.

Four indicators from the SWES are included in the System Progress Measures with associated growth targets.

Data collection of student wellbeing and engagement: https://www.education.tas.gov.au/about-us/projects/child-student-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-survey-3/

Committee finding

26. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey is a single example that addresses the Auditor-General's Recommendation 17.

Committee recommendation

10. System progress measures with associated growth targets be implemented across all student attendance and engagement initiatives.

Auditor-General Recommendation 18

Ensure schools use information that identifies issues that most affect student engagement when preparing school improvement plans.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 18

The Student Engagement Team support school leadership teams to utilise the Student Engagement Guide to map their current provision and identify next steps.

The Student Engagement Team and School Improvement Team are collaborating to determine how best to support schools to identify issues affecting student engagement when preparing school improvement plans.

The annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey provides schools with data (by Year and School Level) to use in school improvement planning on key elements of engagement, including:

- School Climate
- Cognitive Engagement
- School Belonging
- Emotional engagement with teachers

The quality and extent of implementation of the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey across Tasmania is comparable to other national and international surveys in terms of participation rate and school involvement. Many other studies collect information from representative samples but census-type collections which seek to include the views of all young people are rare.

Despite the impacts of COVID-19, all eligible schools (except for Ashley School) undertook the SWS in either Term 1 or Term 3 2020.

Approximately 30 000 individual students completed the survey at least once in 2020 (76 per cent of Year 4 – 12 students).

Three data sets are required to determine trends. As such, the 2021 survey data will provide more of an indication of key wellbeing issues across the state.

Schools are supported to analyse their wellbeing data for school use in school improvement, including examples of triangulating it with other key data sets such as attendance, in post-survey workshops.

Mr Bullard provided some additional information:

> *It is providing more datasets to schools. It is providing accountability for schools to be using those, which we have through the Child and Student Wellbeing leads, and then it is actually providing the support to interpret it. At the moment, it is interpretation. A lot of that is done one-to-one, so a school improvement leader or a student support leader is in there discussing it with you.*

We need to be better using technology, so you don't have to go looking for it. Wouldn't it be great if a classroom teacher could open up their iPad and see that there are two kids in their class at risk of not doing well in NAPLAN in year 5?

...then you go to the next stage, and here are some possible supports you can put in place that would assist.[16]

Committee findings

27. The data collected via SWES can be used to identify cohorts of students at risk of disengagement.

28. Ongoing work is being undertaken by the Department to enable classroom teachers to identify at-risk students and direct them to possible supports.

29. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey partly addresses the Auditor-General's Recommendation 18.

Auditor-General Recommendation 19

Align satisfaction survey questions to issues that most affect student engagement to provide meaningful information to determine actions.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 19

As per the response to recommendation 17 the annual satisfaction survey has been replaced with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey (SWES). This survey is administered across all Government schools for students in years 4-12. Schools use this data (along with other available data) to inform their School Improvement Plans.

A draft Approach to Student Engagement has been developed with clearly defined alignment between the SWES questions and key elements of student engagement. This resource is expected to be completed in Term 4 2021.

Committee finding

30. Work is in progress to implement the Auditor-General's Recommendation 19.

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[16] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.21

Auditor-General Recommendation 20

Complete the implementation of the initiative to revise and review the school improvement framework.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 20

See response to Recommendation 10.

Auditor-General Recommendation 21

Ensure teachers are provided with professional learning and development that focuses on maintaining student engagement.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 21

The Student Engagement Team has developed a number of online modules with regard to developing effective student engagement practice.

From 2022, the content expertise will continue to sit with the Student Engagement Team, while a lens of design and delivery, as required will be provided by the Professional Learning Institute (PLI) as a consultancy.

Modules will be listed on the PLI website as a program without enrolments.

Each year modules will be reviewed by the Student Engagement Team and as a system to determine who is doing the modules and send them feedback as part of planned development. Modules have been delivered by Student Engagement Project Officers to 41 schools across the state.

At the public hearing, Mr Bullard provided some additional comments in respect of professional learning:

> *We found, during COVID-19, that 'just in time' professional learning works a lot better than coming out for two days and having a dose of something that you might think is of interest and trying to modularise that. Sometimes it might be pre-recorded, but more and more we will move into having, say, professional learning on trauma-informed practice 10 times during this year, and then the coaches are out there saying, 'I think it might be something that will benefit you for where you are at the moment with the student cohort that you are supporting, and the student engagement team'.*

> **CHAIR** - *Do you monitor the number of teachers who take up that opportunity?*

> *Mr BULLARD* - Yes, absolutely. If it is a 'push' - i.e. I need to enroll - all of that data is collected; some of these would be on the website. There is a small vignette - or '15 minutes of your day'; I don't know that we monitor who has done those.[17]

Committee finding

31.   The approach taken to professional learning changed during the COVID-19 pandemic and been more targeted and accessed on an as-needs basis.

Committee recommendation

11.   The Department monitor feedback from school staff on the effectiveness and uptake of professional learning under the current model.

Auditor-General Recommendation 22

Provide opportunities for less effective teachers to observe more effective teachers in the classroom and provide mentoring opportunities with a view to improving teacher performance.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 22

Lead Quality Teaching Coaches provide at the shoulder support for teachers and in school coaches. This coaching model is currently being piloted in 19 schools and includes:

1.   Modelling in classrooms (with teachers observing)
2.   Co-planning and co-teaching
3.   Supporting in collaborative teams with planning learning sequences, task selection, looking/listening for evidences of learning in work samples and data.

In addition, the Inclusive Practice Team (formed in Term 2, 2021) is focused on building the capacity of schools to develop and maintain inclusive learning cultures that support the educational outcomes of learners with diverse needs. The Inclusive Practice Team uses a coaching model of practice to influence improved teacher and school inclusive practice.

Mr Bullard spoke of the process of providing support and professional development to teachers:

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[17] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, pp.21-22

...We have had to learn quickly regarding approaches that will ensure that teachers continue to feel supported in their practice, rather than being scrutinised or criticised for the work they are doing.

...It is confronting for teachers to have someone else in their classroom. We quickly discovered that coming in with your little vignettes of advice, from when I was a teacher, didn't work. The lead coaches are trained in adult coaching methodology, but it is the 'show me', I will show you, I will do it with you and now I will watch you do it' that we are putting in place. That seems to work culturally and we're seeing some positive improvements in practice.

Getting teachers to work with the teacher in the next-door room has benefits. In schools now you'll see professional learning communities where you're sitting with the other grade 5 teachers, planning and talking about your approach and what you're going to do and working with them on delivery. Mr Willie has spoken about high-performing teachers. They are fantastic. We need to lift the whole profession to that standard. It is an ongoing process.

CHAIR - How are you monitoring and reporting on the outcomes of this?

Mr BULLARD - With the lead coaches, it is around feedback and working together. We're not at the point where we would be monitoring particular teacher performance in their class.

CHAIR - No, I'm not talking about monitoring teacher performance - I suppose it is in a way - are you monitoring, or observing for improvement, as a result of this?

Mr BULLARD - Yes.

CHAIR - How are you measuring that then?

Mr BULLARD - It is through the coaches who are looking at what work is going on. It is through the school improvement leaders going into schools and seeing what is going on. It is also through external school review. We have a team that goes around schools on a revolving cycle. I have been on one of those and it is a very comprehensive process, looking at data, looking at teacher performance and talking to students about what their experience is. Over time we will build that.

CHAIR - The outcomes of students?

Mr BULLARD - Outcomes of students front and centre. A lot of quantitative analysis is done back at base, but it is the qualitative stuff that you hear when you are out on the ground, which is of benefit.

And further

...We are also a lot more explicit about the fact that everyone is growing and learning. We use exit surveys and teachers will be quite explicit, like, 'I want to know how did you find today's lesson?' You can have an exit ticket on an app or physically

where you say, 'You talk too much, you didn't ask enough questions, I didn't know what you were going on about'. We never would have done that. This idea of growing and learning together is a core value of the department. We want teachers to say, 'I am learning the same time as you are learning'.[18]

Committee finding

32.　The Department has responded effectively to the Auditor-General's Recommendation 22.

Auditor-General Recommendation 23

Ensure the development of a risk register that identifies risks to student engagement and which also develops mitigation strategies for any identified risks.

Department of Education response to Recommendation 23

See response to Recommendation 14.

Mr Bullard further advised:

CHAIR - *… 'Ensure the development of a risk register, identifies risk to student engagement which also develops mitigation strategies for any identified risks'. Have you developed the risk register?*

Mr BULLARD - *We are doing a whole-of-agency reset of the strategic risk register. This is part of it.*[19]

Committee finding

33.　The Department has responded effectively to the Auditor-General's Recommendation 23.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

As a general conclusion, Mr Bullard provided the following statement:

> **Mr WILLIE** - *If there was a follow-up audit by the Auditor-General, you are very confident he would agree with the 18* [recommendations] *that you stated had been completed?*

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[18] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, pp.22-24
[19] Ibid

Mr BULLARD - Am I confident? Yes. I am conservative in the way that we mark this. Hopefully you've heard from me that there are a couple you might want to close off, such as continuing to use the student wellbeing data. I am not going to close it off because is that ever finished? Where there was a tangible tidy up of systems, I'm very confident in saying completed. Where it says have a system to measure engagement, we do have one now but we also need to keep revisiting, updating and upgrading it.[20]
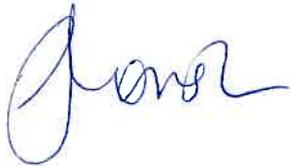
Hon Ruth Forrest MLC

Chair

19 November 2021

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[20] Transcript of evidence, 24 September 2021, Tim Bullard, p.25

Minister for Education
Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Children and Youth
Minister for Hospitality and Events

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Our Ref: MIN21/19146

20-Aug-2021

Hon Ruth Forrest MLC
Chair
Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts
ruth.forrest@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Forrest

Thank you for your letter dated 24 June 2021 requesting an update on progress toward implementation of the recommendations of the Auditor General Report *No 8 of 028-19: Student Attendance and Engagement Years 7 to 10 (the Report).*

Please find attached my response to the Report's recommendations.

I appreciate the extra time provided by the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts to prepare a response. I am advised that I have been invited to appear before the Committee and I look forward to attending with relevant Departmental officials to provide further information and context.

Yours sincerely

Hon Sarah Courtney MP
Minister for Education

Encl

AUDIT CRITERIA 1- What does the attendance and engagement data show?

Recommendation 1 - Consider analysing absence data for students in each Years 7 to 10 according to educational risk categories - particularly in schools with a low ICSEA rating — with a view to establishing initiatives that make a positive difference for disadvantaged students.
Department of Education response:

There are no nationally agreed attendance categories (including 'risk categories') aside from the national reporting of students attending 90 per cent or more of the time. However, DoE monitors and reports attendance routinely, including by examining particular student groupings. ICSEA is a nationally used *school level* indicator of socio-economic status, whereas parental education is used as an indicator at the *student level*.

The Department's Executive is routinely provided with an attendance summary at the conclusion of each term. In addition, the Executive has been presented with specific 'research' findings using DoEs own data, to more deeply understand and identify attendance trends and challenges, including the link between attendance, educational outcomes and socio-economic status (across all year groups, not just years 7-10). This reporting is informing actions and initiatives aimed at improving student engagement (to which attendance is a key consideration).

The School Engagement Team supports schools in building capacity to maximise engagement. Utilising the Student Engagement Guide, leadership teams are supported to build on their current provision and identify next steps.

Student Engagement Guide:

AUDIT CRITERIA 2 - Is student attendance managed effectively?

Recommendation 2 - Reinforce the use of documentation and self-directed online training modules to increase the reliability of data entry
Department of Education response:

'Help desk' support is centrally provided to all schools with regard to the recording of attendance in DoE systems, and is further supported by documentation (for eg, explanatory manuals). Attendance data is monitored centrally on a routine basis at school level, and contact with schools is made if potential anomalies are detected to assist schools with data entry and validation. Training is available for school staff.

Measuring system progress dashboard
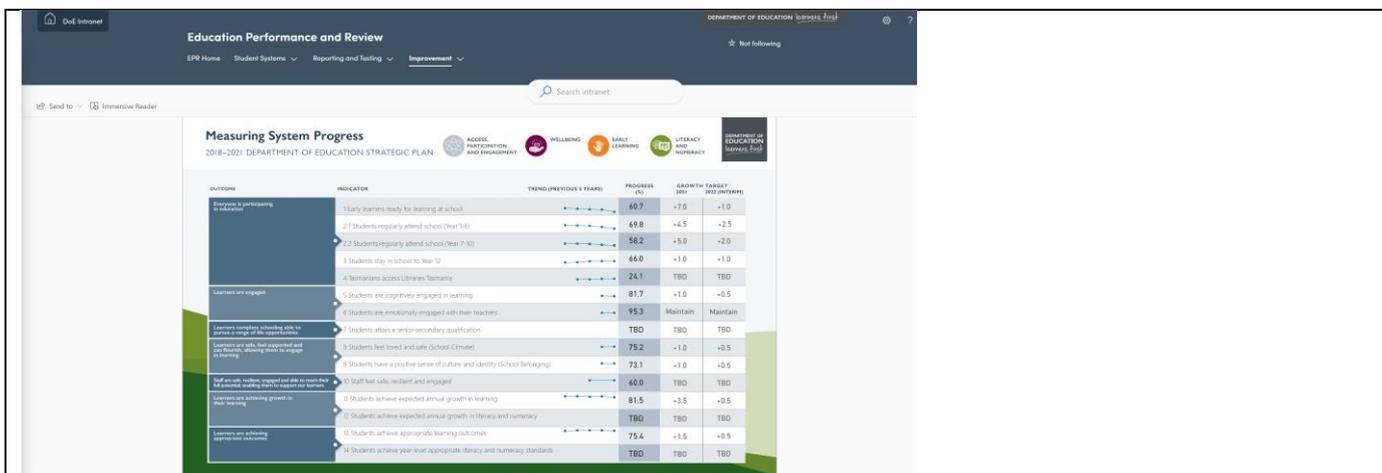
Recommendation 3 - Consider using attendance information to measure DoE and school performance.

Department of Education response:

DoE system measurement now includes attendance as a key performance indicator and is promoted throughout the Department. School level dashboards that include attendance measures have been in place for around 2-3 years. Schools are encouraged through their School Improvement Plans to identify performance measures and targets, including attendance (particularly for those schools that have attendance challenges).

The system measurement framework contains both measures and growth targets, and for attendance, is disaggregated by primary and secondary years.

Recommendation 4 - Report attendance data for each year group in annual reports.

Department of Education response:

Attendance data for each school is published in the Department's Key Data Set each year. These are reported in year level groupings. In addition, both the Key Data Set and the Department's Annual Report publish attendance by each year level.

Annual report (page 25): https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/DoE-Annual-Report-2019-2020.pdf
Key Data (page 36): https://publicdocumentcentre.education.tas.gov.au/library/Shared%20Documents/Key-Data-2021.pdf

Recommendation 5 - Analyse and report absence information on a regular and systemic basis to identify any trends and measure the effect of initiatives to improve attendance and reduce absenteeism.

Department of Education response:

See response to Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 6 - Define performance measures and targets for student attendance.

Department of Education response:

See response to Recommendation 3. The system measurement framework contains both measures and growth targets, and for attendance, is disaggregated by primary and secondary years.

Recommendation 7 - Monitor trends and establish improvement targets for students at highest educational risk.

Department of Education response:

In response to several initiatives, DoE has designed and is implementing a Case Management Platform (CMP). The CMP will enable the Department to better understand the needs of our learners, and make data informed decisions supporting educational and wellbeing outcomes.

The Vulnerability Management module will allow front line staff to identify students who face a range of indicators that flag that the student may require additional supports to engage in learning. Once the CMP is established and being used in all schools, it will provide a tool for schools and the system to monitor and analyse attendance of highly vulnerable students.

School-based Support and Wellbeing Teams will be able to use the CMP data to plan and implement school strategies that support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring support to engage in learning.

By implementing standardised practices and entering high quality data across all our systems, the opportunity exists to have real time access to information and more timely identification of learners needing support through structured analysis of information. This includes students who may be disengaging from education and training and activate supports to ensure they remain engaged.

The CMP technology is established, and the Vulnerability Management module will soon be trialled with a small number of schools.

Link to the authenticated Case Management Platform for appropriately authorised users.

Recommendation 8 - Identify and manage risks to student attendance for years 7 to 10.

Department of Education response:

The Department of Education has formed a new Inclusive Practice Team to support the educational needs of all learners, including students with autism.

The Inclusive Practice Team forms part of the Department's broader work to improve the impact of its student supports on wellbeing and engagement for learning.

Support and Wellbeing Teams were established in schools during 2020. One of the roles of Support and Wellbeing Teams (as communicated in the School Support and Wellbeing Team Guidelines and Resources document) *is to analyse the school's data (e.g. NCCD, attendance, Student Wellbeing Survey) and use the findings to inform planning.*

The next step in this work will be to embed Support and Wellbeing Teams in all Tasmanian Government Schools to serve as the primary mechanism for identifying and responding to diverse student needs.

School-based Support and Wellbeing Teams will have a key role in monitoring the attendance of and communication with vulnerable students. This will include planning and implementing school strategies that support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on interventions that support student engagement in learning.

Recommendation 9 - Consider providing further clarity to schools regarding the inclusion of targets in school improvement plans for improved parent, community and stakeholder engagement.

Department of Education response:

As part of school improvement planning processes, school leadership teams have been provided with data in relation to parent and community engagement through the annual parent satisfaction survey.

Schools are expected to self-assess against the National School Improvement Tool, including Domain 9 which is School-Community Partnerships. A target setting document has been developed to support school improvement planning.

In 2019-20, the Tasmanian Government committed to implementing the recommendations of the 2019 Family Engagement Review.

There were three recommendations made in the Review to improve family engagement across schools and the Department. The Department has worked collaboratively with stakeholders to develop the Together with Families approach, which includes clear expectations for staff to:

- build strong and trusting relationships with families
- be guided by our engagement principles; to be caring, purposeful, inclusive, genuine, responsive and effective
- be deliberate about how we engage families in decision making.

A family engagement project officer has been employed to facilitate improved family engagement practice. Resources, tools and information are available to staff to build their skills and knowledge in engaging with families.

The Families and Us: Together with Families Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)Pilot Project (pilot project) commenced in February 2021 and is providing targeted support to ten sites including schools, libraries, and child and family learning centres until June 2022.

These sites are supported to implement the evidence-based parent engagement guidelines developed by ARACY to improve family engagement in learning.

Throughout the 18-month pilot project, the Family Engagement Project Officer will continually review the progress of sites involved in the pilot project to inform future practices and decision making.

Recommendation 10 - Complete the implementation of the initiative to revise and review the school improvement framework.

Department of Education response:

Development of Our Approach to School Improvement is underway. It will include three elements:

1. Model of school improvement to provide a picture of the interconnected core components of Our Approach to School Improvement
2. Supporting policy guidance to help schools implement Our Approach to School Improvement. The policy guidance includes reference to how school improvement is measured, including through the use of the Measuring System Progress and Measuring School Progress Dashboards, which include outcomes, indicators and growth targets that relate to school improvement, including indicators related to Attendance.
3. Explicit statements of expectations and supports for schools in relation to each of the key drivers of Our Approach to School Improvement – Learning, Teaching and Leading, noting that at this stage there are no explicit expectations in relation to Attendance, but this will be considered through the 'test, try and learn' phase in 2022.

It is intended that these documents are all released as 'provisional' to guide schools' practice in 2022, while at the same time providing the opportunity to test, try and learn from their implementation and build system expectations in relation to school improvement.

Recommendation 11 - Include development of performance targets and measures as part of the revision of the school improvement framework
Department of Education response:
See response to Recommendation 10

Recommendation 12 - Include targets and measures for attendance rates and levels for Years 7 to 10 for Tasmania in school improvement plans.
Department of Education response:
See response to Recommendation 10

AUDIT CRITERIA 3 - Is student engagement managed effectively?

Recommendation 13 - Continue to develop ASPIRE focusing on further detail and setting targets for improved attendance in years 7 to 10.
Department of Education response:
See response to Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 14 - Develop a system to identify signs of disengagement and tools to be used by schools for structured analysis of information.
Department of Education response
In response to several initiatives, DoE has designed and is implementing a Case Management Platform (CMP). The CMP will enable the Department to better understand the needs of our learners, and make data informed decisions supporting educational and wellbeing outcomes.
The Vulnerability Management module will allow front line staff to identify students who face a range of indicators that flag that the student may require additional supports to engage in learning. Once the CMP is established and being used in all schools, it will provide a tool for schools and the system to monitor and analyse attendance of highly vulnerable students.
School-based Support and Wellbeing Teams will be able to use the CMP data to plan and implement school strategies that support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring support to engage in learning.
Research indicates that vulnerability indicators such as 'out of home care' and 'experiencing housing instability' can contribute to levels of disengagement.
By implementing standardised practices and entering high quality data across all our systems, the opportunity exists to have real time access to information and more timely identification of learners needing support through structured analysis of information. This includes students who may be disengaging from education and training and activate supports to ensure they remain engaged.
The CMP technology is established, and will soon be trialled with schools. Link to the authenticated Case Management Platform for appropriately authorised users.
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The Student Engagement Team supports schools to build capacity to maximise student engagement. School leadership teams are supported to use the Student Engagement Guide to map their current provision and identify next steps. Over 90 per cent of schools engaged with the Student Engagement Team during 2021/22.

Recommendation 15 - Consider undertaking further work to clarify and agree on the information to be recorded, reported and monitored regarding student engagement and establishing improvement targets.
Department of Education response:
The Student Engagement Team will undertake further work in 2022 that aims to understand and improve how schools identify and respond to students at risk of disengagement.

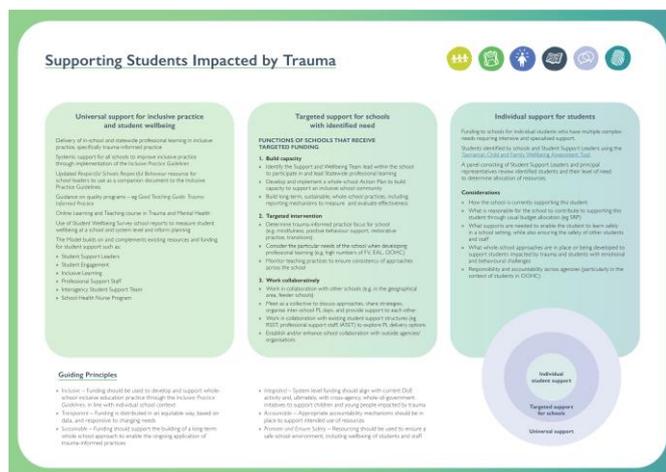| Recommendation 16 - Undertake a benefits analysis to determine the level of success of interventions and determine where best to invest funds using measurable performance targets |
| --- |
| Department of Education response: |
| The Model for Supporting Students Impacted by Trauma provides 33 schools with targeted funding over two years (2020 – 2021) to build capacity in their school to support students impacted by trauma.

 The impact of this work is measured using a range of student data sets including the annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey, behaviour data, attendance data and suspension data.

 This information is used to strengthen the system response to supporting the most vulnerable students to engage in learning.

 The Department of Education is currently undertaking a review and evaluation of this component of the Model, to determine the level of success of the targeted interventions implemented by this group of schools.

 The review will inform decision making about future allocation of resources to support students impacted by trauma to engage in learning.

 The review will provide recommendations for use of program resources to support quality outcomes for students and build capacity of staff, and to improve program alignment with inclusive practice in schools in support of complex and individual learning needs.

  |

Recommendation 17 - Consider how information regarding student engagement can be monitored and analysed to better support DoE and school decisions and processes.
Department of Education response:
The annual student satisfaction survey has been replaced with the annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey (SWES). This survey is administered across all Government schools for students in years 4-12. Schools use this data (along with other available data) to inform their School Improvement Plans.   Four indicators from the SWES are included in the System Progress Measures with associated growth targets.

Data collection of student wellbeing and engagement: https://www.education.tas.gov.au/about-us/projects/child-student-wellbeing/student-wellbeing-survey-3/

Monitoring system measures of engagement:

Recommendation 18 - Ensure schools use information that identifies issues that most affect student engagement when preparing school improvement plans.

Department of Education response:

The Student Engagement Team support school leadership teams to utilise the Student Engagement Guide to map their current provision and identify next steps.

The Student Engagement Team and School Improvement Team are collaborating to determine how best to support schools to identify issues affecting student engagement when preparing school improvement plans.

The annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey provides schools with data (by Year and School Level) to use in school improvement planning on key elements of engagement, including:
- School Climate
- Cognitive Engagement
- School Belonging
- Emotional engagement with teachers

The quality and extent of implementation of the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey across Tasmania is comparable to other national and international surveys in terms of participation rate and school involvement. Many other studies collect information from representative samples but census-type collections which seek to include the views of all young people are rare.

Despite the impacts of COVID-19, all eligible schools (except for Ashley School) undertook the SWS in either Term 1 or Term 3 2020.

Approximately 30 000 individual students completed the survey at least once in 2020 (76 per cent of Yr 4 – 12 students).

Three data sets are required to determine trends. As such, the 2021 survey data will provide more of an indication of key wellbeing issues across the state.

Schools are supported to analyse their wellbeing data for school use in school improvement, including examples of triangulating it with other key data sets such as attendance, in post-survey workshops.

Recommendation 19 - Align satisfaction survey questions to issues that most affect student engagement to provide meaningful information to determine actions.

Department of Education response:
As per the response to recommendation 17 the annual satisfaction survey has been replaced with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey (SWES). This survey is administered across all Government schools for students in years 4-12. Schools use this data (along with other available data) to inform their School Improvement Plans.

A draft Approach to Student Engagement has been developed with clearly defined alignment between the SWES questions and key elements of student engagement. This resource is expected to be completed in Term 4 2021.

Recommendation 20 - Complete the implementation of the initiative to revise and review the school improvement framework.

Department of Education response:
See response to Recommendation 10

Recommendation 21 - Ensure teachers are provided with professional learning and development that focuses on maintaining student engagement.

Department of Education response:
The Student Engagement Team has developed a number of online modules with regard to developing effective student engagement practice.

From 2022, the content expertise will continue to sit with the Student Engagement Team, while a lens of design and delivery, as required will be provided by the Professional Learning Institute (PLI) as a consultancy.

Modules will be listed on the PLI website as a program without enrolments.

Each year modules will be reviewed by the Student Engagement Team and as a system to determine who is doing the modules and send them feedback as part of planned development.

Modules have been delivered by Student Engagement Project Officers to 41 schools across the state.

Recommendation 22 - Provide opportunities for less effective teachers to observe more effective teachers in the classroom and provide mentoring opportunities with a view to improving teacher performance.

Department of Education response:
Lead Quality Teaching Coaches provide at the shoulder support for teachers and in school coaches. This coaching model is currently being piloted in 19 schools and includes:
1. Modelling in classrooms (with teachers observing)
2. Co-planning and co-teaching
3. Supporting in collaborative teams with planning learning sequences, task selection, looking/listening for evidences of learning in work samples and data.

In addition, the Inclusive Practice Team (formed in Term 2, 2021) is focused on building the capacity of schools to develop and maintain inclusive learning cultures that support the educational outcomes of learners with diverse needs. The Inclusive Practice Team uses a coaching model of practice to influence improved teacher and school inclusive practice.

Recommendation 23 - Ensure the development of a risk register that identifies risks to student engagement and which also develops mitigation strategies for any identified risks.

Department of Education response:
See response to recommendation 14.

Minister for Education
Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Children and Youth
Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events

Tasmanian Government

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Hon Ruth Forrest MLC
Chair
Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts
pac@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Forrest *Ruth*

I refer to your letter of 24 September 2021 regarding the provision of the following information following the Auditor-General performance audit Report No 8 of 2018-19: Student Attendance and Engagement: Years 7 to 10.

Please find below the information taken on notice:

1. Provide a visual example of the ASPIRE dashboard.

Screenshot of ASPIRE report (participation and attainment) for a randomly selected High school (name hidden).
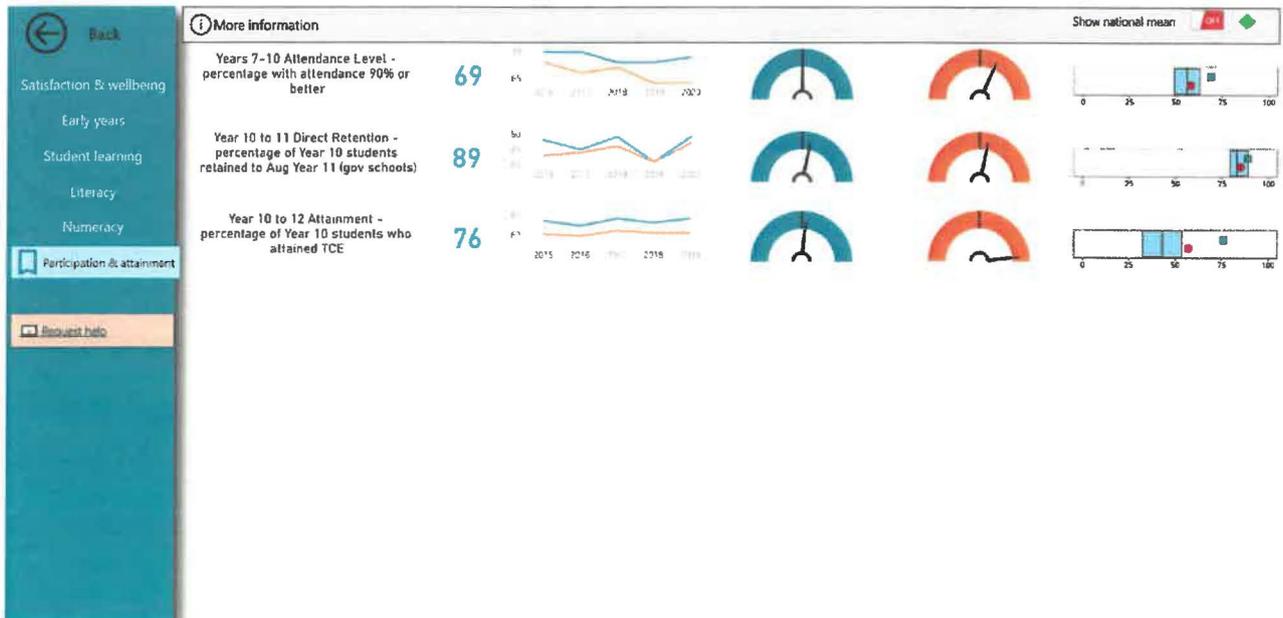
Presented in both screenshots above is the display of ASPIRE that is visibile to school leaders, showing metrics in the "Participation & Attainment" grouping, for both a primary and high school. ASPIRE is designed to only display the measures relevant to a school, and there are more measures for high schools in this grouping than for primary schools.

2. Provide a list of the schools that the Case Management Platform (CMP) will be rolled out in.

The Case Management Platform (CMP) is being developed for use by all areas of the Department of Education, including all educational sites and corporate business units.

Following an expression of interest process, the school leadership teams from 34 schools from across the State nominated themselves to participate in this project. These schools will form part of a network of change leaders playing an essential role leading the transition to the new CMP.

Complete list of Reference Schools:

- Sheffield School
- North West Support School
- West Ulverstone Primary School
- Hellyer College
- St Marys District School
- Kings Meadows High School
- Launceston College
- Prospect High School
- Ashley School
- Wilmot Primary School
- Windermere Primary School
- Glen Dhu Primary School
- Bracknell Primary School

- Illawarra Primary
- Elizabeth College
- Hobart College
- Claremont College
- Cosgrove High School
- Taroona High School
- Albuera Street Primary School
- Springfield Gardens Primary School
- Waimea Heights Primary
- Lansdowne Crescent Primary School
- Lindisfarne North Primary School
- Lenah Valley Primary School
- Dover District School
- Tasman District School
- Huonville Primary School
- Tasmanian eSchool
- EZOL - Edzone Online Tier 4 program
- Early Childhood Intervention Services in Burnie, Devonport, Launceston and Hobart.

The project will also engage subject matter expert schools as required to pilot specific modules. This allows the project team, working with relevant stakeholders across the Department of Education, to identify schools to provide advice and expertise on particular features and functionality.

3. Provide the number of staff currently employed in the Professional Learning Institute. (PLI).

The actual FTE employed in the Professional Learning Institute (PLI), which in a re-alignment is being changed to 'People and Capability Development', is currently 9.84 FTE with two of those FTE being fixed-term positions. There is also currently two vacant positions, one of which is a fixed-term position.

4. If possible, provide updated data for the past two years as per contained in Figures 1 and 2 on page 14 of the Auditor-General's Full Report.
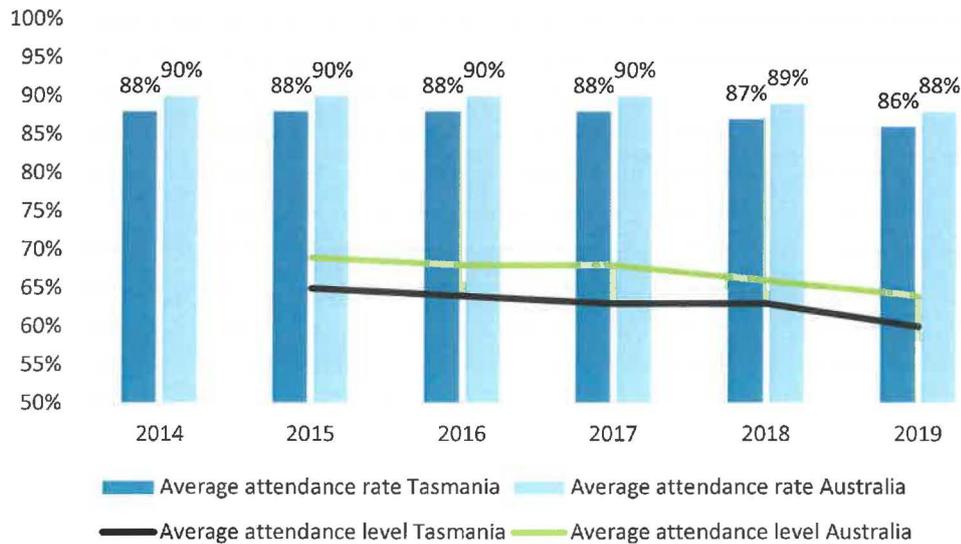
Figure 1: Average attendance rates and levels – Years 7 to 10 – Government schools 2018

Figure 2: Average attendance rates and levels – Years 7 to 10 – Government schools 2019

Figure 3: Average attendance rates and levels – Years 7 to 10 – Government schools 2014 – 2019

Legend:
- Average attendance rate Tasmania
- Average attendance rate Australia
- Average attendance level Tasmania
- Average attendance level Australia

Data labels shown on chart:
- 2014: 88% / 90%
- 2015: 88% / 90%
- 2016: 88% / 90%
- 2017: 88% / 90%
- 2018: 87% / 89%
- 2019: 86% / 88%

5. Provide a list of the current status of each of the Auditor-General's recommendations.

	Recommendation tracking sheet - *Auditor General Report No. 8 of 2018-2019: Student attendance and engagement Years 7 to 10*	
	Audit recommendation	
1	Consider analysing absence data for students in each Years 7 to 10 according to educational risk categories – particularly in schools with a low ICSEA rating – with a view to establishing initiatives that make a positive difference for disadvantaged students.	🟠
2	Reinforce the use of documentation and self-directed online training modules to increase the reliability of data entry	🟢
3	Consider using attendance information to measure DoE and school performance	🟢
4	Report attendance data for each year group in annual reports	🟢
5	Analyse and report absence information on a regular and systematic basis to identify any trends and measure the effectiveness of initiatives to improve attendance and reduce absenteeism.	🟠
6	Define performance measures and targets for student attendance	🟢
7	Monitor trends and establish improvement targets for students at highest educational risk	🟠
8	Identify and manage risks to student attendance in Years 7 to 10	🟠
9	Consider providing further clarity to schools regarding the inclusion of targets in school improvement plans for improved parent, community and stakeholder engagement	🟢
10	Complete the implementation of the initiative to revise and review the school improvement framework	🟡
11	Include development of performance targets and measures as part of the revision of the school improvement framework	🟡
12	Include targets and measures for attendance rates and levels for Years 7 to 10 for Tasmania in school improvement plans	🟡
13	Continue to develop ASPIRE focusing on further detail and setting targets for improved attendance in years 7 to 10.	🟢
14	Develop a system to identify signs of disengagement and tools to be used by schools for structured analysis of information	🟡
15	Consider undertaking further work to clarify and agree on the information to be recorded, reported and monitored regarding student engagement and establishing improvement targets.	🟡
16	Undertake a benefits analysis to determine the level of success of interventions and determine where best to invest funds using measurable performance targets	🟠
17	Consider how information regarding student engagement can be monitored and analysed to better support DoE and school decisions and processes.	🟢
18	Ensure schools use information that identifies issues that most affect student engagement when preparing school improvement plans	🟡
19	Align satisfaction survey questions to issues that most affect student engagement to provide meaningful information to determine actions	🟡
20	Complete the implementation of the initiative to revise and review the school improvement framework	🟡
21	Ensure teachers are provided with professional learning and development that focuses on maintaining student engagement	🟢
22	Provide opportunities for less effective teachers to observe more effective teachers in the classroom and provide mentoring opportunities with a view to improving teacher performance.	🟢
23	Ensure the development of a risk register that identifies risks to student engagement and which also develops mitigation strategies for any identified risks.	🟡

🟠 Recommendation commenced

🟡 Substantially underway

🟢 Complete

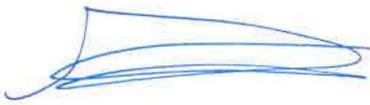6. Provide higher quality pdf copies of, or links to:

- Student Engagement Guide (see Attachment 1)
- Measuring System Progress dashboard (see Attachment 2); and
- School Support and Wellbeing Team Guidelines and Resources document (see Attachment 3).

Please find attached copies to this letter.

Once again, thank you for your letter.

Yours sincerely

Hon Sarah Courtney MP
Minister for Education

Encl.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION learners first

Student Engagement Guide

Student Engagement Guide – *This Guide is a tool to both audit and guide the work you are doing in student engagement within your school and are designed to be used in conjunction with the Guide for Inclusive Practice. They outline essential elements to enable students 'at risk' of disengaging to remain engaged or re-engage in learning at school.*

ENGAGING our students - Ensuring we have effective flexible Tier 3 and Tier 4 provision for students who are disengaged.

Connecting with LEARNING – Students actively learning through inclusive practices.

NSIT	Emerging – Low	Evolving – Middle	Embedding – High	Excelling – Outstanding
Explicit Improvement Agenda (NSIT 1)	There is a developing understanding of the role of flexible learning provision in supporting student engagement in learning. It has been identified that student engagement is an area for improvement but this is not yet reflected in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). School wide explicit targets are yet to be established, data is still be identified.	The school is developing a shared understanding and vision of the way flexible learning provision will be used to support student engagement and re-engagement. Student engagement data, targets and actions for flexible learning provision is documented in the SIP. The School has an operational plan for student engagement underpinned by the Guide for Inclusive Practice (G4IP).	The school's shared engagement vision is regularly articulated by the leader, embedded in school policies and procedures and reflects student engagement principles. School actions reflect a strong commitment to the vision and staff have role clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities in student engagement and flexible provision. SIP engagement priorities and inclusive practices are reflected in everyday actions, grounded in data, and have explicit school wide targets.	The school community is committed to the student engagement vision and all planning and actions reflect this. Engagement provisions and procedures are regularly reviewed and refined by the SWT. These actions underpin the SIP priorities and reflect the Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour (RSRB) principles. A range of data indicates that the school is inclusive and diverse cultural contexts are recognised, valued and celebrated. The school improvement agenda includes effective collaboration with tier 4 sites and cluster schools.
Analysis & discussion of data (NSIT 2)	The school leadership team monitors suspension and attendance data. Limited information on vulnerable students is entered into SSS. Individualised data and support strategies are still to be identified.	The Support and Wellbeing Team (SWT) monitors and responds to suspension and attendance data and students who face complex barriers. (Data could include Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool (CFWAT), Australian Curriculum Framework (ACF), Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT etc.) Student information is stored in SSS. For complex cases the school accesses advice through Learning Services (LS) including Respectful Schools Support Team (RSST), Professional Support Staff and Student Support Leaders.	Clear and effective attendance recording and tracking processes are in place. The SWT team lead all staff in using all relevant data to identify and implement interventions for attendance and engagement. SSS reflects schools up to date proactive re-engagement actions. A range of measurements are used to personalise data for students in flexible provision eg SA Student Engagement Matrix. (SEM)	The SWT give high priority to implementing evidence based interventions and regularly reviewing their effectiveness for all vulnerable students. Staff analyse attendance and engagement data through inquiry cycles. Personalised data drives improvement and SSS and EDI data shows cognitive engagement and academic achievement has increased.
	Students who experience difficulty in regular classes have some provision made to participate in a small number of existing tier 2 provision. *(behavioural)*	Provision based on data is made for students to participate in alternative programs. These provisions are designed to support their successful engagement in mainstream learning. *(behavioural)*	Individualised Learning Plans (LP) and school-wide data are used to inform the targeted use of resources to maximise learning opportunities. Evidenced based flexible provision enables students to build self-regulation skills to assist with re connection to mainstream classes. *(social-emotional, behavioural)*	Effective flexible provision is evidence based. Cluster data is used to inform Professional Learning (PL) on inclusive practice and student engagement and inform the wider systemic approach to student engagement. Re engagement is a priority and tracking data is regularly reviewed and updated. *(social-emotional, behavioural)*

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Department of Education

NSIT	Emerging – Low	Evolving – Middle	Embedding – High	Excelling – Outstanding
A culture that promotes learning (NSIT 3)		The school has an identified SWT that meets occasionally. They are aware of key policies and procedures including: G4IP, Student Engagement Policy, Student Engagement Procedures, Safe Homes, Safe Families, Attendance Policy and Procedure and the role of LS Student Support Team.	Key SWT stakeholders include the principal and professional support staff. The SWT meets regularly, is informed by clear policies and procedures and has identified student engagement as a core component. Effective use of the Student Wellbeing Survey (SWS) data is evident and reflects high levels of student wellbeing and engagement.	The well-resourced SWT meets weekly and is evidence and strength based and has a restorative focus. The team ensures effective communication with all key stakeholders including families, specialised support staff, and relevant external organisations or agencies.
	Students with flexible provision have little access to educational programs outside of their flexible learning provision. The school has limited avenues for students to have a say on issues that affect them (e.g. a student representative council). School communicates with families only as required. *(social-emotional, behavioural and cognitive)*.	Students with flexible provision have opportunities to access tier 3 provisions and celebrate successes within tier 3. Flexible learning is beginning to be recognised as a re-engagement provision not an end point. The school provides occasional opportunities for students to have a say on issues that affect them (eg student think tank). Families are given the opportunity to be involved in planning student support. *(social-emotional, behavioural and cognitive)*.	Students engaging in flexible learning provision have multiple pathways to access educational opportunities and are consulted on how they wish to celebrate their participation and achievement. Students in flexible provision regularly access mainstream classes and programs as part of a clear re engagement pathway. The school provides regular opportunities for students to have a say on issues that affect them, including feedback on teaching and learning. Families feel engaged and valued by the school and empowered to assist their child in their learning. *(social-emotional, behavioural and cognitive)*.	Students engaging in flexible learning provision are involved in the school's mainstream celebrations and graduations. Multiple re engagement pathways are highly visible and actively used. The school has clear structures and processes that reflect student agency. Feedback is actively sought from families regarding flexible provision and families are authentic partners in acknowledging young people's progress and participation. *(social-emotional, behavioural and cognitive)*.
	Flexible learning provision only occurs in a 'spare classroom / space' for limited time periods during the week The school is beginning to develop inclusive practice as outlined in the G4IP. The school is yet to identify a school wide approach to positive behaviour. *(social, emotional, cognitive)*	The school has a dedicated flexible provision space with established structures, routines and staffing to cater for student need. Within classrooms there is a flexible approach to meet individual's needs. Staff have a knowledge of inclusive practices, are aware of students' needs and utilise (RSST) to build positive relationships. Consistent school-wide positive behaviour processes and structures are in place to enable students to access flexible provision and maximise school attendance. Students can identify a staff member who cares about them. *(social-emotional, cognitive)*	Flexible learning spaces are welcoming, aspirational and well resourced. Student voice is reflected in the setup and provides a sense of agency ownership. Classrooms also provide multiple flexible learning opportunities for vulnerable students. Students feel respected through all school staff demonstrating consistent unconditional positive regard. Inclusive practices are embedded in classrooms and documented. Students have an identified significant adult in their Learning Plan, Safety Plan and Risk management plan, De-escalation plan. *(social-emotional, cognitive)*	Flexible provision is prioritised, and embedded in the network's culture. Flexible spaces support student diversity, have aspirational and clear expectations and are informed by student and family voice. Expert teachers share student behaviour practices within their cluster networks. Students' behaviours reflect an understanding of and commitment to their learning. SWS data reflects an inclusive culture. Re engagement data (including SEM, CFWAT) shows significant returns to mainstream. All students are aware of a range of key people and know how to access them to support their needs. *(social-emotional, cognitive)*

A SWT is yet to be implemented.

NSIT	Emerging – Low	Evolving – Middle	Embedding – High	Excelling – Outstanding
Targeted use of school resources (NSIT 4)	Alternative provisions are based on individual staff interests and availability. The school has an awareness of the need for staff to be trauma aware and model inclusive practice. All staff have undertaken the disability modules. School resources are still to be specifically targeted toward engagement. *(social-emotional)*	Some alternative provisions are being developed in response to student engagement needs. The school provides access to "student engagement" PL to build staff capability (e.g. trauma-informed practice (TIP), emotional intelligence). Flexible provision staff are developing their expertise. School funds are allocated to support engagement strategies for identified vulnerable students. *(social-emotional)*	Targeted resources appropriately meet student support needs through an evidence based flexible provision. All staff have undertaken trauma PL (e.g. Be You, ACF, Berry Street, ReBoot etc). Whole school inclusive practice PL includes support staff. Flexible provision staff are highly skilled. There are structures and processes in place to support all staff to continue to build their capability and understand their roles and responsibilities in engaging students in learning. *(social-emotional)*	School and cluster targeted resources and case management ensure effective inclusive flexible learning provision. Flexible provision ensures that Professional Support staff are prioritized and resourced. Staff providing flexible provision have high levels of expertise. There is a documented induction process and package for new staff to outline the school's "ways of working" and staff roles and responsibilities and supports available. *(social-emotional)*
Expert Teaching Team (NSIT 5)	Strategies to build staff capability in providing effective, evidence-based flexible learning is yet to be identified. Staff are aware of the need to provide support for student wellbeing and engagement in learning. *(social-emotional, cognitive)* An established or documented approach to supporting staff wellbeing is still to be implemented *(social-emotional)* Staff work independently and plan from the ACF framework, Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) Learning Progressions, General Capabilities and other curriculum documents that track student learning growth are still to be implemented. The school is yet to develop a clear focus on independent living and work readiness skills. *(cognitive, social- emotional, behavioural)*	School leaders understand that staff need high level pedagogical and curriculum design skills to academically engage vulnerable students PL is aligned to the school's engagement priorities (e.g. Universal Design for Learning, (UDL) TIP, wellbeing strategies, tiered interventions, barriers to engagement etc). Staff work in teams and provide informed support for student wellbeing and engagement in learning. *(social-emotional, cognitive)* Staff are aware of the importance of their own emotional self-regulation. The school has implemented staff wellbeing strategies. *(social-emotional)* Staff occasionally plan and reflect for disengaged students with colleagues. ACARA Learning Progressions and General Capabilities are used to track student learning. Staff use a variety of approaches to build students' independent living and work readiness skills. *(cognitive, social- emotional, behavioural)*	Staff demonstrate expertise in student engagement strategies, pedagogy and curriculum implementation for vulnerable students. Staff providing flexible provision are highly skilled. New staff are supported in building their skills in student engagement in line with documented school procedures and processes. School staff regularly participate in targeted student engagement and wellbeing Professional Learning as a part of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). *(social-emotional, cognitive)* School wide emotional intelligence PL is conducted annually. Staff play a role in co-regulating emotions with their students by self-regulating. *(social-emotional)* Flexible learning staff work as a coherent team. ACARA Learning Progressions, General Capabilities and the ACF curriculum documents are regularly used by staff and students to track growth and set goals. The school is developing a clear approach to delivering students' independent living and work readiness skills. *(cognitive, social- emotional, behavioural)*	Flexible provision staff are experts in student engagement, committed to continuous improvement and share practice with networks. All staff have a range of strategies to effectively plan and teach using the UDL principles. The whole school PLC reflect this practice. Support staff regularly lead whole school and network PL in inclusive practice. Cluster Leaders prioritise student engagement through sharing and showcasing effective practice and collaborative data analysis. *(social-emotional, cognitive)* Staff model effective self-regulation and use a range of strategies to support students who are dysregulated. *(social-emotional)* Staff demonstrate a collective responsibility for all student learning. Students engaged in flexible provision have a comprehensively mapped pathway. This pathway should build educational capital and is directly linked to an accredited assessment framework. The school has systematic procedures in place to build students' independent living and work readiness skills. *(cognitive, social-emotional, behavioural)*

NSIT	Emerging – Low	Evolving – Middle	Embedding – High	Excelling – Outstanding
Differentiated teaching and Learning (NSIT 7) and Effective pedagogical Practice (NSIT 8)	Learning provision is based on traditional timetables. All students undertake the grade level ACF curriculum. LPs are at grade level, with any adjustments and accommodations applied 'ad hoc'. Reporting is still to be aligned to LP goals. There are limited opportunities for students to be challenged in their learning. Transitions for students who are vulnerable are generically planned for. Tier 3 provision is seen as a solution. *(cognitive, behavioural)*	The school has established some alternative learning opportunities. Staff are exploring the use of the *Good Teaching* guides to inform their practice. Personalised LPs act in response to and extend students' knowledge and skills. They use SMART goals and are directly linked to curriculum frameworks. Reporting is aligned to LP goals. Parents are provided with an opportunity to have input. Transitions are targeted for students who are vulnerable and provide limited contact with their new provision. Some re engagement strategies are identified. Student re-engagement strategies are meaningful and personalised. *(behavioural, social-emotional, cognitive)*	Staff consistently use high-impact teaching strategies based on UDL to engage students. Staff actions visibly reflect key principles of the Good Teaching Guides. Flexible provision provides for social and emotional education, vocational learning and diverse pathways enabling students to return to mainstream learning. Comprehensive LPs and student reports are aligned to goals and relevant curriculum frameworks. Student and family voice are visible in the learning plan. *Transitions* are differentiated and occur over an extended period to maximise success. Effective re engagement strategies are identified and implemented. *(behavioural, social- emotional, cognitive)*	Flexible provision timetables directly reflect student interests, identified goals and have a clear potential pathway (including social and emotional learning). Flex timetables include innovative engagement strategies, multiple entrance points, vocational learning, micro credentialing and modulation. Students' reports explicitly recognise effort and engagement and celebrate learning growth. Students identify they are both challenged and supported in their learning. Transitions are well planned and cluster resources are maximised. Student voice is used in planning transitions. There are clear and comprehensive interagency transition processes. Young people successfully transition into further learning or employment. Many re-entry/re-engagement options are available. *(behavioural, social-emotional, cognitive)*
School - Community Partnerships (NSIT 9)	Staff engage with families, however, are yet to see the strengths in all families. Families are provided with information about student progress at annual parent-teacher interviews and at reporting times. Communication is primarily in regards to adverse student behaviour. The school is yet to create established relationships with the broader community to support engagement in learning.	All staff are aware of the importance of seeking out and recognising the strengths in all families. Key staff have completed *Family Partnerships Model* (FPM) training. Families are regularly provided with updates about student progress, both in mainstream and flexible provision. They are commonly contacted with positive feedback about student learning and behaviour. The school is working with the broader community (e.g. businesses/community organisations/service providers, network schools) to develop partnerships that support and enhance student engagement in learning.	Key staff actively seek out and explicitly recognise the strengths of all families. Staff that have completed FPM training are involved in building school capability. High levels of trust are clearly demonstrated across the school community. Flexible provision staff frequently communicate with families, tier 4 providers and interagencies. Regular celebrations of student learning with families and other stakeholders occur. The school has developed strategic community partnerships including school networks, to support and build student engagement in learning. Students have access to school based apprenticeships, mentoring programs and industry based work experience. Students are connected to, and engaged with the broader community.	There is a school-wide awareness of the FPM and a culture of recognising the strengths of all families. School satisfaction surveys indicate that families are connected and engaged. Families are authentically recognised as valuable partners and sources of information on students' needs, interest and abilities. Flexible learning staff engage frequently with students and families on assessments. Many opportunities are created to celebrate, formally and informally, young people's participation and achievement. Significant community, interagency and family partnerships exist. Staff use the *Industry engagement with young people and schools framework* to maximise career pathway opportunities. Students have strong connections to the broader community and are learning/participating/volunteering in a range of community spaces.

Measuring System Progress

2018–2021 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT · WELLBEING · EARLY LEARNING · LITERACY AND NUMERACY

OUTCOME	INDICATOR	TREND (PREVIOUS 5 YEARS)	PROGRESS (%)	GROWTH TARGET 2021	2022 (INTERIM)
Everyone is participating in education	1 Early learners ready for learning at school		60.7	+7.0	+1.0
	2.1 Students regularly attend school (Year 1-6)		69.8	+4.5	+2.5
	2.2 Students regularly attend school (Year 7-10)		58.2	+5.0	+2.0
	3 Students stay in school to Year 12		66.0	+1.0	+1.0
	4 Tasmanians access Libraries Tasmania		24.1	TBD	TBD
Learners are engaged	5 Students are cognitively engaged in learning		81.7	+1.0	+0.5
	6 Students are emotionally engaged with their teachers		95.3	Maintain	Maintain
Learners complete schooling able to pursue a range of life opportunities	7 Students attain a senior-secondary qualification		TBD	TBD	TBD
Learners are safe, feel supported and can flourish, allowing them to engage in learning	8 Students feel loved and safe (School Climate)		75.2	+1.0	+0.5
	9 Students have a positive sense of culture and identity (School Belonging)		73.2	+1.0	+0.5
Staff are safe, resilient, engaged and able to reach their full potential, enabling them to support our learners	10 Staff feel safe, resilient and engaged		60.0	TBD	TBD
Learners are achieving growth in their learning	11 Students achieve expected annual growth in learning		81.5	+3.5	+0.5
	12 Students achieve expected annual growth in literacy and numeracy		TBD	TBD	TBD
Learners are achieving appropriate outcomes	13 Students achieve appropriate learning outcomes		75.4	+1.5	+0.5
	14 Students achieve year-level appropriate literacy and numeracy standards		TBD	TBD	TBD

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School Support and Wellbeing Team

Guidelines and Resources

Department of Education

Tasmanian
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Version 2.0 – 30/04/2021

1. Purpose

These guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to schools on establishing and maintaining School Support and Wellbeing Teams.

Support and Wellbeing Teams (the Team) play an important role in planning and implementing school strategies and processes that support the wellbeing of all students, with a particular focus on those students with diverse and complex needs requiring coordinated support.

The functions of the Team correspond to the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). The functions undertaken by the Team align with creating and maintaining a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.

Learning Services Student Support staff will continue to work closely with schools to ensure that appropriate resources are available.

2. The Support and Wellbeing Team

Each school must establish and maintain a Support and Wellbeing Team. The Team requires an identified Support and Wellbeing Lead.

Teams should include staff with a broad range of expertise including school leadership, professional support staff, support teachers, school health nurses, teachers, school chaplain etc

ROLES:

- ensure members understand and reflect the diverse needs of students

- meet regularly (e.g. minimum twice a term) with a clear agenda that ensures relevant staff are invited

- have the knowledge and understanding to access non-school based teams and outside agencies for advice and support (e.g. Learning Services, Inclusion and Diversity Services; GETI; Aboriginal Education Services; Child Safety Services; NDIS, Advice and Referral Line, Working It Out)

- Student support processes including positive behaviour support, care team management, learning plans and NCCD/Tasmanian Disability Educational Funding, individual trauma funding process are collaboratively managed by the Support and Wellbeing Team

- use appropriate information and data (e.g. professional support staff reports and recommendations, learning plans, Wellbeing Assessment Tool) to assist in identifying the most appropriate support and/or service for a student's needs

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ensure the school places a high priority on student support (e.g. positive behaviour, educational adjustments) and wellbeing (e.g. mental health)

- work collaboratively to achieve learning support and wellbeing outcomes for all students

- develop strategies to establish wrap around support for vulnerable students, including updating Learning Services Student Support as required

- share information, supports and capacity building with teaching staff

- case management co-ordination

- ensure the responsibilities of support staff are understood and enabled (e.g. the role of support teachers to build teachers' capacity to provide appropriate educational adjustments for students with a disability)

- ensure appropriate systems records management (e.g. SSS)

- analyse the school's data (e.g. NCCD, attendance, Student Wellbeing Survey) and use the findings to inform planning

3. The Support and Wellbeing Lead

The Support and Wellbeing Lead may be the **Principal**, **Assistant Principal** or **Advanced Skills Teacher**. It is the Principal's responsibility to determine which member of the leadership team is the Support and Wellbeing Lead. For exceptional circumstances where the Lead cannot be assigned to one of these roles, please contact your Student Support Leader to discuss.

ROLES:

- have oversight of, and accountability for, the above functions of the Support and Wellbeing Team

- be the point of contact for the Inclusive Practice Coach who has been allocated to work alongside the School Support and Wellbeing Team to assist continual improvement of inclusive practice.

- be the school's point of contact for Learning Services Student Support for students requiring support as determined by School Support and Wellbeing Team.

- be responsible for the coordination and/or delivery of in-school professional learning in relation to student support and wellbeing

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- arrange regular meetings (e.g. minimum twice a term) with an agenda

- coordinate the administration of the Student Wellbeing Survey

- be the school's representative within a network of Support and Wellbeing Leads

4. Supporting Information and Resources

The Support and Wellbeing Team must have a shared understanding of the following resources:

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Mandatory Reporting Procedure

Student Engagement Guide

Learning Plan Procedure

Guide for Inclusive Practice

Support Teacher FAQs

Inclusive Language Guidelines

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Tasmanian Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool

Tasmanian Educational Adjustment Descriptor Tool

RESOURCES

Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour

Good Teaching: Differentiated Classroom Practice Learning for All

Good Teaching: Trauma Informed Practice

Student Wellbeing Survey Canvas page
(link to self-enrol)

Good Teaching: Inclusive Schools – Disability Focus

Good Teaching: Inclusive Teaching for Students with Disability

Wellbeing Check-in

Respectful Relationships Education package

5. Definitions

Wellbeing Assessment Tool

The Tasmanian Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool was jointly developed by the Department of Education, the Department of Communities Tasmania and the Department of Health to support a consistent approach to assessing the wellbeing needs of children, young people and families, and to then determine the level of support required.

Elements of the Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool

Levels of Need

The Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool identifies four levels of need to assist practitioners to identify the most appropriate service response for children, young people and their families.

Level of Need	Response Type	Support Required
Level 1	Universal Response	Children, young people and families at this level are achieving expected outcomes. There are no unmet needs or there are only low level needs that can be met by universal services. Children, young people and families at this level can access the services they require directly.
Level 2	Primary Response	Children, young people and families at this level identify as having varied areas of need that would benefit from coordinated early intervention and support from services. The need cannot be met by universal services alone but can be met by timely intervention and short-term engagement with relevant service providers. Initial referral to support services may be required, after which they may have capacity to access services directly.
Level 3	Secondary Response	Children, young people and families at this level identify as having diverse and complex needs. Targeted, multi-agency support services are required to work with them as a priority to provide support over a medium to long-term timeframe. Ongoing support to access and continue to engage with support services may be required.
Level 4	Intensive/ Specialised Response	Children, young people and families at this level identify as having multiple complex needs requiring intensive help. Immediate, intensive intervention is required over a longer period to address the significant and complex needs identified. Ongoing case management may be required to keep them engaged with support services.

It is important to note that children, young people and their families can move across the four levels of need as their circumstances change and supports are put in place to address their needs.

6. Support and Wellbeing Team – Checklist for schools

[School Name] Support and Wellbeing Team	
Name of Support and Wellbeing Lead	
Support and Wellbeing Team (SWT) members including roles and responsibilities	
Planned frequency/dates of meetings	
Provisions in place to include SWT members offsite	
SWT plans (incl person responsible) for: • Preparing agenda • Recording and monitoring progress of actions • Storing decisions/actions • Communication with stakeholders (e.g. parents/carers, staff, students professional support staff, school health nurses, internal and external agencies) • Documenting information in SSS (required)	
Relevant contacts in Learning Services Student Support	
Referral process for: • Teachers referring to SWT • SWT referring to professional support staff, school health nurse • SWT referring to internal or external agencies	
Data sets to inform decision making	

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This Document Replaced: Support and Wellbeing Teams Guidelines

Supporting Students Impacted by Trauma

Universal support for inclusive practice and student wellbeing

Delivery of in-school and statewide professional learning in inclusive practice, specifically trauma-informed practice

Systemic support for all schools to improve inclusive practice through implementation of the *Inclusive Practice Guidelines*

Updated *Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour* resource for school leaders to use as a companion document to the Inclusive Practice Guidelines

Guidance on quality programs – eg *Good Teaching Guide: Trauma Informed Practice*

Online Learning and Teaching course in Trauma and Mental Health

Use of Student Wellbeing Survey school reports to measure student wellbeing at a school and system level and inform planning

The Model builds on and complements existing resources and funding for student support such as:

» Student Support Leaders
» Student Engagement
» Inclusive Learning
» Professional Support Staff
» Interagency Student Support Team
» School Health Nurse Program

Targeted support for schools with identified need

FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOLS THAT RECEIVE TARGETED FUNDING

1. Build capacity

» Identify the Support and Wellbeing Team lead within the school to participate in and lead Statewide professional learning
» Develop and implement a whole-school Action Plan to build capacity to support an inclusive school community
» Build long-term, sustainable, whole-school practices, including reporting mechanisms to measure and evaluate effectiveness

2. Targeted intervention

» Determine trauma-informed practice focus for school (e.g. mindfulness, positive behaviour support, restorative practice, transitions)
» Consider the particular needs of the school when developing professional learning (e.g. high numbers of FV, EAL, OOHC)
» Monitor teaching practices to ensure consistency of approaches across the school

3. Work collaboratively

» Work in collaboration with other schools (e.g. in the geographical area, feeder schools)
» Meet as a collective to discuss approaches, share strategies, organise inter-school PL days, and provide support to each other
» Work in collaboration with existing student support structures (eg RSST; professional support staff; IASST) to explore PL delivery options
» Establish and/or enhance school collaboration with outside agencies/ organisations

Individual support for students

Funding to schools for individual students who have multiple complex needs requiring intensive and specialised support.

Students identified by schools and Student Support Leaders using the Tasmanian Child and Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool.

A panel consisting of Student Support Leaders and principal representatives review identified students and their level of need to determine allocation of resources.

Considerations

» How the school is currently supporting this student
» What is reasonable for the school to contribute to supporting this student through usual budget allocation (eg SRP)
» What supports are needed to enable the student to learn safely in a school setting, while also ensuring the safety of other students and staff
» What whole-school approaches are in place or being developed to support students impacted by trauma and students with emotional and behavioural challenges
» Responsibility and accountability across agencies (particularly in the context of students in OOHC)

Individual
student support

Targeted support
for schools

Universal support

Guiding Principles

» *Inclusive* – Funding should be used to develop and support whole-school inclusive education practice through the *Inclusive Practice Guidelines*, in line with individual school context
» *Transparent* – Funding is distributed in an equitable way, based on data, and responsive to changing needs
» *Sustainable* – Funding should support the building of a long-term whole school approach to enable the ongoing application of trauma-informed practices
» *Integrated* – System level funding should align with current DoE activity and, ultimately, with cross-agency, whole-of-government initiatives to support children and young people impacted by trauma
» *Accountable* – Appropriate accountability mechanisms should be in place to support intended use of resources
» *Promote and Ensure Safety* – Resourcing should be used to ensure a safe school environment, including wellbeing of students and staff