



# SCHOOLS FOR ALL

## Executive Summary - September 2017

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This Executive Summary outlines the progress of the *Schools for All* program across the ACT education sector between June and September 2017. Each sector, the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AISACT), the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn (CE) and the ACT Education Directorate (EDU) have provided individual reports for this period that outline key achievements which address the Schools for All Expert Panel recommendations.

In 2017, the ACT Education sector remains committed to system reform to ensure Canberra schools are safe, inclusive learning environments for every student. As a system, we have focussed on the implementation and closure of the recommendations of the Expert Panel, but most importantly we have continued our ambitious, evidence based, and single-minded, student-centred vision to give priority to each student's needs in education policy and practice in our schools. This continued focus on student needs and outstanding student centred practice is benefitting all students, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

We have improved accountability and open communication for schools and parents through the development of "one-stop-shop" web portals – staff intranet and external internet sites for parents and the wider public. These have provided accessible and clear information on universal supports including Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs and the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Framework to create a positive school environment and strong student engagement. The web portals have provided referral pathways for students, supports for schools in working effectively with students with complex needs and challenging behaviours, community supports for schools, information on how to design classroom spaces and new schools to meet student need, and professional learning and development opportunities for teachers, school leaders and support staff.

We have made it easier to be informed, by updating our frameworks, policies and procedures across the sector to ensure our staff are aware of their legislative responsibilities and best practice. We have focussed on challenging our culture and changing attitudes toward inclusive education through a strong focus on Positive Behaviour for Learning, and building capacity of school leaders, teachers and support staff through the Network Student Engagement Teams (EDU) and Student Support Engagement Team (CE) and a focus on professional learning.

We have strengthened collaborations across our sectors and with the broader human services sector including with the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate (CSD) and non-government community services organisations. By mapping opportunities to collaborate at a strategic, tactical and operational level across the educational sectors and government, we have identified over 50 established mechanisms which provide the opportunity to work together to support the wellbeing and learning outcomes of our children and young people. By collaborating we ensure service provision with respect to children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour, and their families, is offered in a strategic and client focused manner and demonstrates effective communication among all parties.

## Highlights of Cross Sectoral Progress

The progress is highlighted under the following themes which were synthesised from the Expert Panel Report at a 2016 workshop with stakeholders facilitated by Dr Helen Berry, Professor, Faculty of Health, University of Canberra and Adjunct Professor, Australian National University Climate Change Institute.

Children and young people's wellbeing needs for learning will be met, schools will teach to the needs of each student, physical environments meet student needs and schools will attend to the needs of students' carers and families by:

1. *Improving Students Outcomes*: using evidence to improve practice, promoting student-centred outcomes and ensuring the whole system works for students

- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) (cross sectoral): an evidence based, whole school approach for creating safe, and supportive school environments.
- Student Voice (cross sectoral): The Youth Coalition of the ACT (Youth Co) was contracted by the ACT Education Directorate to facilitate a project about Student Voice in the ACT. This project combined what students across schools in the ACT have to say with the research and evidence base around student voice and youth participation. This information from students and the literature review has informed the development of a kit of resources and strategies for school leadership teams and teachers on how they can better listen, take into account, and act on the opinions of children and young people within their school.
- Safe, Sensory Spaces and Universal Design for Learning: (cross sectoral): To action the *Principles of Pedagogy Principle 6: Positive educational environments empower learning*, Catholic Education has continued to work with schools to create classroom that are organised and characterised by mutual respect. The use of interactive approaches is proving to be especially successful in creating classrooms where students feel safe asking questions and contributing to discussions.

The 2017-18 EDU *Schools for All* grant application process for ACT public schools closed at the end of September 2017. These grants are targeted at upgrades to safe, sensory learning spaces. The grant process required schools to work with occupational therapists in Network Student Engagement Teams to develop their proposals.

- Evaluation (cross sectoral): The evaluation will initially establish a baseline and then determine progress towards: a student centred system that gives priority to each student's needs in education policy and practice; and better outcomes for students, in particular those with complex needs and challenging behaviour. The evaluation will help guide future policy and practice decisions for all students, and in particular students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

Catholic Education will use the evaluation plan as the foundation of their evaluation and where possible will replicate it across the ACT Catholic Education sector. This work will be supported by the Education Directorate. The Association of Independent Schools ACT is in discussion with the evaluation team from EDU Planning and Analytics branch about the appropriate methods to evaluate their relevant recommendations linking to this evaluation where possible.

2. *Being informed*: providing clear, consistent, accessible information, laws and policies

- Each education sector is reviewing policies and procedures and providing information on their staff intranets for school leaders, teachers and support staff and their external internet sites for parents/carers, students and the wider community.

3. *Collaborating*: building strong partnerships with all stakeholders

- Parental engagement: This work builds on ARACY's previous work, *Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT* project; a cross-sectoral project which provided a suite of resources including an evidence-based technical and plain language definition of parent engagement, and a series of parent engagement resources for parents and schools. EDU is leading the project to bring together the findings and recommendations of the ARACY Report and additional consultation with stakeholders to deliver practical resources to support effective parental engagement with families

of children and young people, with a specific focus on those with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

4. *Building capability*: looking after all staff and supporting educators to keep learning.

- Engaging Schools Summit 2017 (cross sectoral): The summit on 1 September 2017 was open to the ACT education sector. The focus was to provide access to experts in innovation, evidence based research and best practice that supports all learners to become engaged and integral members of the learning community.
- Professional Learning
  - Online Training (cross sectoral):
    - Understanding and Supporting Behaviour
    - Autism Spectrum Disorder
    - Dyslexia and Significant Reading Difficulties
    - Speech, Language and Communication Needs
    - Motor Coordination Difficulties
    - Understanding Hearing Loss
- Everyone Everyday: a Toolkit for Inclusion (cross sectoral): a comprehensive social and emotional learning program that targets mainstream primary schools, and focuses on the concept of 'inclusion'. The components of the program include a teaching resource (accessed online) and a professional learning program for teachers. This has been developed as a cross train-the-trainer model.

## **Key Achievements by Sector**

### ***Education Directorate***

1. *Improving Students Outcomes*: Using evidence to improve practice, promoting student-centred outcomes and ensuring the whole system works for students

- Continuum of Education Support (CES) project is an evidence-based model for high schools (Year 7-10) to support students at risk of disengagement or who have disengaged from education.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) - 29 schools are currently on the journey of implementing the PBL Framework, with representation from primary, high school and college. Four PBL coaches provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to schools to support implementation. The team are working to embed a neuroscience informed and trauma informed approach into the PBL Framework.
- Primary School Continuum: Preliminary scoping of action research projects to provide a range of appropriate behavioural support and therapeutic intervention for primary school students with very challenging behaviours has commenced. The outcomes from the projects will inform a possible Continuum of Education Support for primary schools in the future.
- Evaluation of the post school outcomes of graduates of the two senior specialist schools, and special units in mainstream high-schools and colleges.

2. *Being informed*: Providing clear, consistent, accessible information, laws and policies

- The EDU Inclusion and Wellbeing internet site is scheduled to go live by the end of October 2017.

3. *Collaborating*: building strong partnerships with all stakeholders

- Parental engagement: The practical resources to support effective parental engagement with families of children and young people as outlined on page 2.

#### 4. *Building capability*: Looking after all staff and supporting educators to keep learning.

- Professional Learning: EDU has held a number of TQI accredited professional learning programs to assist schools in their understanding of students with challenging behaviours and complex needs. The professional learning sessions have included:
  - Wellbeing: a Healthy Mind Platter: provides an overview of the neuroscience behind wellbeing and the use of various strategies to promote staff and student wellbeing including the use of mindfulness.
  - Everyone Everyday Facilitator Training
  - Everyone Everyday Program Training
  - Disability Standards for Education online modules (mandatory component of induction) and OLT Online Training noted on page 3.
  - Neuroscience in Education and Neuroscience Perspectives on Trauma Informed Education: focuses on guiding principles based on neuroscience that support teachers to create a rich learning environment to ensure children and young people are engaged to develop a learning brain and uses a neuroscience lens to examine the impact of trauma and adversity on brain development and the impact on student learning outcomes.
  - Allied Health: professional learning delivered by speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists on speech and language, using specialised equipment safely; accessibility and supporting participation for students with disabilities; positive classroom environments; sensory processing and safe sensory spaces; fine motor skills and handwriting development; self-care skills at school.
  - Understanding Learning Difficulties, Specific Learning Disorders and Dyslexia: focuses on causation, neuroscience and intervention/adjustments.
  - Team Teach provides a whole school holistic approach, using positive behaviour supports and interventions to safely respond to complex and challenging student behaviour. It aims to reduce risk, restraint and restriction.
- Certificate IV for Learning Support Assistants – Tuggeranong Cluster pilot: 14 LSAs commenced their Certificate IV in Education Support with CIT Tuggeranong. The course duration is 5 terms in total from October 2016 until December 2017. Already this trial is demonstrating significant success with 3 of the 14 participants indicating they will continue into the Bachelor of Education through Australian Catholic University.

#### ***Catholic Education***

- Schools continue to be supported in improving student outcomes through a systematic and organised change process, the Collaboration on Student Achievement Model (COSA). Leaders of Learning from Catholic Education in collaboration with school leadership teams and staff develop a school based action research project, implemented in context. Catholic Education's focus on COSA continues to include:
  - continued implementation of action research projects;
  - supporting professional practice of school staff through coaching;
  - using data to inform practice.
- Work has continued with the roll out of the Archdiocesan Wellbeing and Diversity Framework during this reporting period with schools commencing work around identifying which key elements will be included in their School Improvement Plan for 2018. Many schools continue to focus resources from the wellbeing grants to respond to one or more of the key elements from the Framework.

- The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) process has focused on growing the capacity of classroom teachers to improve the literacy and numeracy of all students (K–2) including those with complex needs and challenging behaviours as well as educating parents/carers in effective ways to support their children with reading, writing and numeracy at home.
- 25 Wellbeing projects are underway. Schools have continued to deliver on the goals of their Wellbeing projects. While Catholic Education resourced these projects, autonomy around each project lies distinctly with each school. This has seen a richness in the scope of projects, each responding to the particular needs of the participating school and their community. Projects have addressed:
  - student behaviour practices (school wide);
  - building community;
  - sensory outdoor play spaces;
  - staff wellbeing.
- Professional Learning opportunities:
  - 35 Classroom Support Assistants have completed the Certificate IV in School Support.
  - A cohort of 16 Classroom Support Teachers who were new to the role in 2017 have continued to receive support from Catholic Education’s Leaders of Learning, Wellbeing and Diversity. These teachers have completed an additional training day since the last report and officers have visited their schools on several occasions to provide them with targeted individual advice.
  - Managing Aggression and Potential Aggression training was delivered to two school staffs and to first and second year teachers.
  - So Safe training provided for schools with specific need.
  - An additional 55 teachers commenced an Online Learning module. Modules offered include:
    - Inclusion for Learners with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
    - Understanding and Supporting Behaviour
    - Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders
- SchoolTV is operating in 95% of ACT Catholic Schools and exceeds 10,000 visits from parents/carers. Since Catholic Education commenced its partnership with SchoolTV, readership has been tracked across each edition. Notably, information on anxiety was accessed three times more often than any other topic by parents/carers. This has indicated a thirst for information on this topic. Information on childhood/young adult depression as well as suicide and self-harm have also been of significant interest to parents/carers.

### ***Association of Independent Schools of the ACT***

- The Association continues to support schools to review relevant policies and procedures. The Association has recently worked closely with the ACT Ombudsman to support schools in the implementation of the ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme. Key information on the scheme is available to all Member Schools via the AISACT website.
- AISACT has developed two sets of guidelines for Member Schools; *Managing NDIS Externally Funded Service Providers*, and *Assistance Animals in ACT Independent Schools*. These guidelines and any additional guidelines will be made available, along with other relevant resources via the AISACT’s website.
- Headspace School Support continues to support Member Schools in the development of or refinement of, suicide postvention policies and procedures. This work stems from a professional learning conducted by Headspace School Support for Member Schools in June 2017.
- On 24 August the Association held the AISACT 2017 Colloquium, the theme being Leading Improved Student Engagement. One of three keynotes of the event was Ms Jo Dane, who is a Principal Architect working within the Education, Science and Health section at Melbourne Architecture firm

Woods Bagot. Ms Dane’s keynote discussed six key elements of effective teaching and learning and how schools need to not only apply these to how they teach but also apply them to the teaching and learning spaces in the school. The Association hopes to continue to work with Ms Dane to assist Member Schools in the development of new teaching and learning areas and improving existing teaching and learning areas.

- The Association has held a number of TQI accredited professional learning programs to assist schools in their understanding of students with challenging behaviours and complex needs. The professional learning sessions have been for Member Schools and in collaboration with the ACT Education Directorate and Catholic Education, including:
  - Everyone Everyday Facilitator Training
  - Everyone Everyday Program Training
  - Personal Leadership Workshop
  - Programs for gifted learners: understanding and implementing grouping and acceleration programs
  - Twice exceptional and underachieving gifted students: identifying and catering for their needs
  - Cross Sectoral NCCD moderation for Primary and Secondary Schools
  - AISACT 2017 Colloquium: Learning Improved Student Engagement

### Recommendation Closures

In September 2017, 40 (EDU) and 18 (CE) recommendations are closed and 9 (EDU) and 8 (CE) remain active:

Rec.	Education Directorate		Catholic Education		Rec.	Education Directorate		Catholic Education	
	Closed	Open	Closed	Open		Closed	Open	Closed	Open
Rec 3.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 11.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 3.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 11.5		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rec 4.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 11.6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 6.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 11.7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 6.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 12.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 6.3		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rec 12.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 6.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 12.3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 7.1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A		Rec 12.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 7.2		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A		Rec 12.5		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Rec 7.3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 12.6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rec 7.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 12.7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 7.5		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A		Rec 13.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 8.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 13.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 8.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 13.3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 9.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 13.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 10.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 13.5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 10.2	N/A			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rec 13.6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 10.3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 13.7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rec 10.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 14.1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Rec 10.5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 15.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rec 10.6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 15.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rec 10.7		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 15.3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Rec 11.1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Rec 15.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	
Rec 11.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rec 15.5		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	
Rec 11.3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A		Rec 15.6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		N/A	

Closure of recommendations is accepted on the basis the intent of the recommendation has been met and any future implementation steps have been embedded in ongoing business as usual and accountability mechanisms are established.

The following table lists the recommendations closed in this reporting period.

Recommendations closed this quarter
<b>Education Directorate</b>
<b>Recommendation 6.2:</b> That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop and promote tools to assist all schools to meaningfully and regularly consult with all students about (a) their experiences at school; (b) decisions that affect them at school; and (c) the operation of the school.
<b>Recommendation 7.4:</b> That ETD publish information about support and education options for students at risk in the ACT Public School system, including the location of programs, Operational philosophy, curriculum offered, criteria for enrolment, and referral process.
<b>Recommendation 12.4:</b> That ETD publicly release the report on the evaluation of the Early Childhood Schools and Koori Preschools once completed.
<b>Recommendation 15.4:</b> That ETD undertake an evaluation of the post school outcomes of graduates of the two senior specialist schools, and special units in mainstream high schools and colleges, by following up recent graduates, their parents/carers and others where appropriate, and consider any implications for program development at these schools.
<b>Catholic Education</b>
<b>Recommendation 8.1:</b> That ETD, CE and each Independent School, ensure that all existing schools have safe, calming/sensory spaces that are appropriate to meet the needs of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.
<b>Catholic Education and Education Directorate</b>
<b>Recommendation 12.3:</b> That ETD, CE, AIS, the Community Services Directorate, and ACT Health, collaboratively develop mechanisms to ensure that service provision with respect to children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour, and their families, is offered in a strategic and client focused manner and demonstrates effective communication among all parties.
<b>Recommendation 15.3: (Agreed in principle).</b> That ETD, CE, and AIS co-fund a tertiary institution, or other relevant research institute, to undertake a longitudinal study on post-school outcomes for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

### **Future Focus**

EDU, AISACT, and CE, in partnership with the broader human services, will continue to implement the remaining recommendations and consolidate the systems response to ensure sustainability over the long term. The implementation will be supported by the following:

#### ***Evaluation of the Schools for All Program***

The Evaluation will analyse the impact of the program and assess progress in achieving the program objectives and vision. The evaluation plan, baseline design and program logic was drafted and reviewed by Professor Robert Tanton and Dr Phillip Roberts from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM). On 26 September the Program Board endorsed the Evaluation Plan.

#### ***Change Management***

As the responses to the recommendations are designed and embedded into usual business practice, the program is monitoring the change they effect through internal governance and accountability mechanisms. EDU has brought together lessons learned from the *Schools for All* program implementation to design a set of resources. These resources were shared with the Student Resource Allocation team and the Future of Education (EDU) community conversation to inform decision making, practice and process.

Catholic education schools continue to be supported in improving student outcomes through a systematic and organised change process, the Collaboration on Student Achievement Model (COSA).

#### ***Parental engagement***

All sectors will continue to develop and promote practical resources to assist all schools to effectively engage with parents/carers of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

#### ***Students at Risk***

Provision of alternative education programs and/or other flexible learning options, for students at risk of disengaging from secondary school and developing and implementing a range of options to ensure that

primary school students with very challenging behaviours are able to access an appropriate behavioural support and therapeutic intervention will continue to be a focus for EDU.

Over the next quarter, the three sectors will continue to focus on consolidating the work already underway and implementing the remaining recommendations. While progress continues, the program acknowledges a number of the remaining recommendations are dependent on the finalisation of cross government initiatives and other reform projects currently being undertaken by EDU. For example, the review of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need model is strongly linked to the Student Resource Allocation model for students with disability and the professionalisation of Learning Support Assistants to build their capacity to work with students with complex needs and challenging behaviour is aligned with the workforce strategy currently being developed by the People and Performance branch (EDU).

The *Schools for All* program acknowledges the work undertaken to date and continuing commitment and determination across all sectors to ensure inclusive education for all children and young people in all ACT schools.



**The Schools for All report – September 2017 is approved by:**

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