



**ACT**  
Government

Education

# **Future of Education: An ACT Education Strategy for the Next Ten Years**

## **Phase 2 Implementation Plan**



# MINISTER'S FOREWORD

In August 2018, the ACT Government released the *Future of Education: An ACT education strategy for the next ten years* (Future of Education Strategy), the product of a deep and meaningful conversation with the ACT community to inform how education in the ACT will be delivered to meet the needs of the next generation.

The Future of Education Strategy sets out the ACT Government's long-term vision through a roadmap that outlines how all students in all schools – government and non-government – will benefit from the provision of excellent education over the next decade. Implementation of the Future of Education Strategy comprises three phases in total, with each phase of implementation governed by an implementation plan. The roadmap is supported by rolling implementation plans that show a continuing focus and investment from a government committed to the very best future for the ACT's children. This implementation plan represents a partnership between the education system at large, including the Board of Senior Secondary Studies, Teacher Quality Institute, and both government and non-government schooling sectors. The National School Reform Agreement ACT Bilateral Agreement further outlines our commitment to working together across schooling sectors to achieve excellent outcomes for children and young people.



The first phase implementation of the Future of Education Strategy spanned three years, 2018–2020 and is now complete. Insights gained from this phase of implementation indicate that while progress has been made there is a renewed need to focus efforts on inclusion, student wellbeing, strengthening partnerships with school communities and learning gain for all students. These insights have shaped this second phase of the implementation plan towards:

- inclusivity, agency and wellbeing for all students, with a particular focus on students with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and secondary students where we know more focus is needed
- enhancing use of data to tailor educational efforts to individuals and groups of students who require additional supports
- strengthening connections between students and their communities
- further integrating the early years learning framework and national curriculum to ensure the best start for every child.

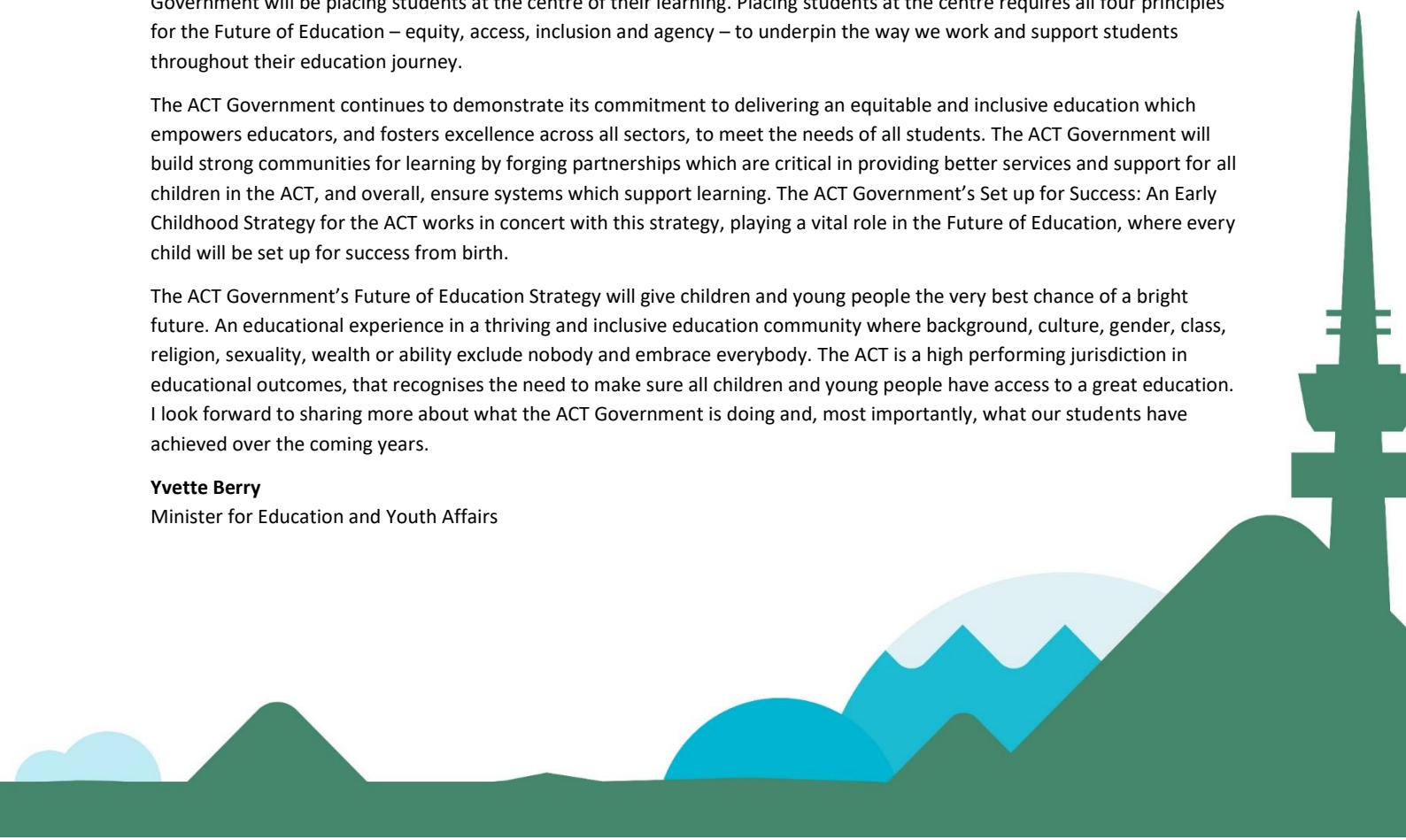
This second phase plan provides a strong platform with strengthened focus that will drive actions and deliver commitments in this next phase that speak to the core themes as heard loud and clear from the ACT community and deliver the desired vision for the Future of Education. It is structured within the Future of Education Strategy's four foundations, through which the ACT Government will be placing students at the centre of their learning. Placing students at the centre requires all four principles for the Future of Education – equity, access, inclusion and agency – to underpin the way we work and support students throughout their education journey.

The ACT Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to delivering an equitable and inclusive education which empowers educators, and fosters excellence across all sectors, to meet the needs of all students. The ACT Government will build strong communities for learning by forging partnerships which are critical in providing better services and support for all children in the ACT, and overall, ensure systems which support learning. The ACT Government's Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT works in concert with this strategy, playing a vital role in the Future of Education, where every child will be set up for success from birth.

The ACT Government's Future of Education Strategy will give children and young people the very best chance of a bright future. An educational experience in a thriving and inclusive education community where background, culture, gender, class, religion, sexuality, wealth or ability exclude nobody and embrace everybody. The ACT is a high performing jurisdiction in educational outcomes, that recognises the need to make sure all children and young people have access to a great education. I look forward to sharing more about what the ACT Government is doing and, most importantly, what our students have achieved over the coming years.

**Yvette Berry**

Minister for Education and Youth Affairs



## Students at the centre

Ensuring children and young people are engaged in their learning by taking a holistic view of their unique needs and interests, respecting that they are active participants in their learning who can make informed choices about what and how they learn. This includes a focus on connection, belonging, inclusion, cultural integrity and personalised learning.

### Our priorities

- Inclusion
- Student agency
- Wellbeing



## Empowered learning professionals

Supporting teachers, allied health and all education professionals to meet the needs of children and young people through access to high quality training, mentoring and professional development, and supporting school leaders to build expert teaching teams. This includes a focus on high quality teaching and learning that meets the needs of every child and young person in every school.

### Our priorities

- Teaching excellence
- Delivering a workforce for the future



## Strong communities for learning

Building collaborative partnerships between schools, government and community service providers to enhance wellbeing and connections throughout the community.

Ensuring parents and carers can be active participants in school life and in the learning of their children. This includes a focus on equity and ensuring a fair start for all children.

### Our priorities

- Parent and community partnerships
- Early years learning

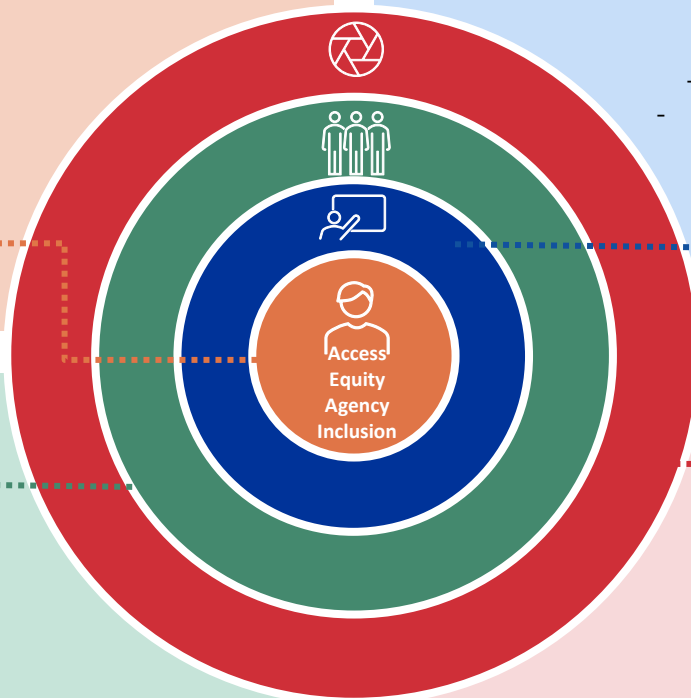


## Systems supporting learning

Ensuring the systems that support education enable the flexible delivery approaches that are required to meet diverse needs, including infrastructure, legislation, resourcing and teaching tools, organisational structures and culture, public accountability and reporting, and data and information technology.

### Our priorities

- Digital and data systems
- Strategic planning and legislative reforms
- Infrastructure



Our objective is to achieve student wellbeing and learning outcomes through a renewed and deep focus on the four principles of equity, access, agency, and inclusion.

## STUDENTS AT THE CENTRE

Ensuring children and young people are engaged in their learning by taking a holistic view of their unique needs and interests, respecting that they are active participants in their learning who can make informed choices about what and how they learn.

### Evidence: Insights from first phase implementation

#### **Inclusion**

Inclusivity has improved or sustained for the majority of children and young people in ACT public schools; however, this is not equally experienced by all, including students with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose sense of support, safety and belonging (school identification) were below that of their peers. There is a need to focus on ensuring our school communities are inclusive and welcoming for all children and young people, with a particular focus on these groups.

#### **Student agency**

Student agency has remained high for the majority of students in ACT public schools; however, this is not equally experienced by all students including secondary students, students with disability, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who feel less engaged with their schooling than their peers. There is a need to continue to progress and strengthen personalised learning pathways that promote student agency and engagement in learning.

#### **Wellbeing**

Research continues to demonstrate strong links between wellbeing and learning outcomes. The experience of COVID-19 built resilience and new ways of working for students, however it also may have contributed to increased anxiety and decreased life satisfaction for some students. In 2020, secondary students in ACT public schools experienced lower levels of life satisfaction than other public school students, however initiatives such as Positive Behaviours for Learning and Muliyan, have shown initial signs of improving wellbeing outcomes. There is a need to continue to focus on wellbeing outcomes for all students, with an emphasis on secondary students.

*"My achievements are something I take great pride in, as only a couple of years ago I thought I would never finish year 12" (Student 2020)*

### Outcomes: What we aim to achieve

#### **Inclusion**

- All children and young people feel safe, supported, and like they belong within their school community. They are encouraged and supported, with opportunities to reach their full potential.

#### **Student agency**

- All children and young people are positively engaged, interested in their learning, and actively involved in shaping their education pathways.

#### **Wellbeing**

- All children and young people are equipped with skills, strategies and dispositions to meet challenges in a positive way with lower levels of anxiety and depression.

## Our theory of action: How we will achieve impact

If we focus on ensuring all children and young people feel welcome and included at school, connected with their learning, and supported to respond to life's challenges, then children and young people will achieve improved learning outcomes.

We will achieve this by:

- Expanding existing opportunities for strengthening inclusivity, with our actions informed by a better understanding of the student and family experience and a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability.
- Expanding and strengthening existing opportunities to better understand and address the barriers to engagement for all students, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, and secondary students.
- Supporting existing great school practices, including interventions that improve wellbeing outcomes for all students, especially secondary students.
- Supporting all children and young people in ACT schools to engage in their learning through a modern, evidenced based, student-centred approach to learning.

## Actions: What we will do

### Inclusion

- Reviewing disability education together with people with disability and carers, and planning for the renewal of several ageing specialist schools, with focus on strengthening inclusive education across all schooling sectors.
- Embed cultural integrity in ACT public schools, including by providing opportunities for students to respectfully learn about the language and culture of our nation's First Peoples.

### Student agency

- Review the delivery of ACT public high schools with a focus on choice, flexibility and personalised pathways that meet the diverse needs and aspirations of young people.
- Pilot the innovative 'Headstart' program to enhance access to vocational education and training and apprenticeship opportunities in ACT public schools.
- Expand approaches for measuring and evaluating personalised and project-based learning in ACT public schools.

### Wellbeing

- Recruiting social and youth workers to increase access to supports, including case-coordination approaches, and enhance existing school wellbeing practices in ACT public schools.
- Implement evidence-based transition processes and evaluate and refine the Continuum of Education Support Framework in ACT public schools.
- Strengthen whole of school approaches to gender equality and reduce discrimination and harassment, including for LGBTIQ+ students in ACT public schools.

## Partnerships and collaborations: Who we will work with

- Students and families
- The Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- Government and non-government schooling sectors
- ACT Government human services agencies
- ACT Parents and Citizens Associations
- Community sector agencies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community
- Tertiary education and training providers, including CIT and Industry professionals
- Disability Education Reference Group
- Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs

## EMPOWERED LEARNING PROFESSIONALS

Supporting teachers, allied health and all education professionals to meet the needs of children and young people through access to high quality training, mentoring and professional development, and supporting school leaders to build expert teaching teams.

### Evidence: Insights from first phase implementation

#### Teaching excellence

International evidence continues to demonstrate that the quality of teaching is the single strongest predictor of student outcomes, outside of personal circumstances. There are initial signs of strengthened educational outcomes achieved through high quality teaching in ACT public schools with a reduction in the equity gap for NAPLAN outcomes, and a high proportion of teachers reporting strong support for their professional development.

Government and non-government schooling sectors have worked together to deliver professional learning in the General Capabilities, a cross-sectoral STEMEd Conference, and the First Nations Science project as part of the commitment to cross-sectoral collaboration.

There is more work to do to focus on learning gain for all students which will be a priority for phase two.

#### Delivering a workforce for the future

Educators need a framework of supports to strengthen focus on contemporary evidence-based practice to build capabilities that empower them to better meet the current and future needs of individual children and young people.

Pockets of excellent practice are evident, that with the right supporting framework in place, might be shared and scaled across all ACT schooling sectors to achieve great practice as common practice.

There is a need to continue to recruit, support, and develop school leaders, teachers, allied health, and all education professionals, to build system capability to achieve outcomes for all children and young people.

*"I can see strong 'teachers as researchers'. There is fertile ground now to springboard into another part of teacher practice" (Principal 2020)*

### Outcomes: What we aim to achieve

#### Teaching excellence

- The delivery of high-quality education practice that supports learning progress and success for every child and young person.
- Investment in educators and school leaders, policies, structures, and systems to support high quality teaching and scale great practice out across the education system.

#### Delivering a workforce for the future

- An expanded workforce with the capability to deliver equity of learning outcomes and future focused skills for all children and young people.
- Multidisciplinary teaching and support teams that meet the needs of children and young people in a holistic and integrated way.

## Our theory of action: How we will achieve impact

If we identify and scale great teaching practice and build a multidisciplinary workforce of highly skilled and supported education professionals, then children and young people will have access to holistic learning and supports to meet their needs.

We will achieve this by:

- Working together across all education sectors to build and share excellence of practice with school leaders, educators, and education teams.
- Delivering high quality training, mentoring and professional development for strengthened impact on educational outcomes for children and young people, including further embedding professional learning communities in ACT public schools.
- Investing in our workforce through a comprehensive workforce strategy to meet current and future challenges and supporting educators across the span of their career.
- Focusing on supports for early intervention, contemporary data and research, strategic recruitment and retention, capability building and leadership to enable educators to focus on quality teaching for impact.

## Actions: What we will do

### Teaching excellence

- Curate and share local research and resources on excellent teaching practice and deliver professional learning on the Australian Curriculum general capabilities across government and non-government schooling sectors.
- Continue to implement and expand research and professional learning partnerships with the tertiary sector.
- Develop future focused curriculum and professional learning with a focus on future skills, vocational opportunities, and interdisciplinary courses.
- Build the instructional leadership capabilities of School Leader Cs (SLCs) in ACT public schools so that principals and deputy principals can engage in strategic leadership.
- Enhance access to data to enable public schools to tailor teaching and learning to the individual needs of children and young people.
- Continue to support teaching excellence in ACT public schools, including literacy, numeracy and STEM with a focus on early years literacy, numeracy strategies, and the Academy of Future Skills.

### Delivering a workforce for the future

- Implement workforce strategies including service partnerships, strategic recruitment and retention, workforce planning, capability development, leadership excellence, workforce safety and wellbeing, and a diverse and inclusive workforce, and contribute to the Australian Teacher Workforce Data Strategy.
- Work with universities to enhance job readiness of teachers and leaders, including through initial teacher education and pre-service placements.
- Invest in teacher librarians, local educators and Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) in ACT public schools to improve student outcomes with a focus on skills for the future.
- Support early years learning with a focus on early intervention and high impact teaching.

## Partnerships and collaborations- Who we will work with

- Students and families
- The Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- Government and non-government schooling sectors
- ACT Government human services agencies
- ACT Council of Parent and Citizens Associations
- Community sector agencies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community
- Tertiary education and training providers including Canberra Institute of Technology
- Industry professionals
- Senior Practitioner

## STRONG COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING

Building collaborative partnerships between schools, government and community service providers to enhance wellbeing and connections throughout the community. Ensuring parents and carers are active participants in school life and in the learning of their children.

### Evidence: Insights from first phase implementation

#### Parent and community partnerships

Family and community support for learning is critical to educational success and provides a context for learning that considers the whole child and their connections to the world around them. Forging meaningful partnerships that are focused on a child or young person's preferred pathway can enhance learning outcomes.

Partnerships can also play an important role in achieving wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. While collaborative relationships and partnerships have strengthened through key initiatives, the majority of children and young people in ACT public schools do not feel able to access supports from their community. There is a need to continue to strengthen our partnerships with parents and community to support learning outcomes for all children and young people.

During COVID-19, the government and non-government schooling sectors worked together to meet the needs of school communities, through sharing of resources and professional learning, and collaborative development of guidelines and supports for students, families, and school communities. By working together when critical issues are faced by the community the learning can follow.

#### Early years learning

We need to ensure we get the best start for every child from the earliest years. The transition from early learning to formal schooling is a big step for children and it is important that we work together to make this as seamless as possible. There is a need to leverage the confidence P-2 teachers feel in supporting the needs of children in their early years of formal schooling and continue to support parents to be effective first teachers and engage with children's learning.

*"We have a school Community Coordinator who facilitates partnerships between the school and community services... These partnerships and connections allow for timely referrals to any early intervention service when necessary" - Principal 2020*

### Outcomes: What we aim to achieve

#### Parent and community partnerships

- Strengthened connections, collaboration and partnerships between children and young people, parents, educators, and community services with a focus on better meeting individual learning and wellbeing needs.
- Improved transitions across the educational journey of a child from 0-18 years.

#### Early years learning

- An integrated approach to early learning that ensures smooth transitions and the best start on the education journey for all children.
- Parents are confident in supporting their children's learning and have expanded access to early learning opportunities and resources.



## Our theory of action: How we will achieve impact

If we coordinate supports across a child's life journey through meaningful partnerships from early childhood and throughout formal schooling, then children and young people will have the best access possible to lifelong learning. We will achieve this by:

- Strengthening school and community partnerships that focus on ways to better meet the needs of every child and young person throughout their educational journey, including through school transitions. Addressing disadvantage through equity funding and better access to services to ensure every child and young person has the same opportunity for success as their peers.
- Including early intervention and inclusion support from the very earliest years of education to give every child the very best start.
- Further integrating the Early Years Learning Framework and national curriculum as children transition through school.

## Actions: What we will do

### Parent and community partnerships

- Clarify and scope the community schools approach to strengthen connections between children and young people, and their communities by building partnerships with parents, services and local communities.
- Work with parents associations and with support groups, recognising the important role they play in improving school transitions and informing both school level and system wide decision making.
- Provide grants to support non-government school infrastructure upgrades and parent engagement.
- Explore best practice engagement processes between schools and ACT school communities and explore options for developing guiding principles.
- Deliver public school equity grants to help disadvantaged families cover the costs of education expenses and deliver a free-meals in schools trial to ensure children are ready and able to learn.
- Explore options to provide literacy and numeracy supports for parents who choose to home educate their children.

### Early years learning

- Implement Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT in partnership with the early childhood education and care sector, with a focus on expanding access to early learning for all 3-year-olds, supporting parents as first teachers and integrating the Early Years Learning Framework and national curriculum as children transition through school.
- Work with Community Services, Health and Justice directorates to ensure an integrated and evidence-based approach to service provision including by piloting early intervention projects.
- Embed support for early years educators within the Education Directorate Workforce Strategy.

## Partnerships and collaborations: Who we will work with

- ACT Government human services agencies
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
- Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools Inc
- Community sector agencies, out of school care and early childhood education and care service providers
- Government and non-government schooling sectors
- Home educating families
- The early childhood education and care sector

## SYSTEMS SUPPORTING LEARNING

Ensuring the systems that support education enable the flexible delivery approaches that are required to meet diverse needs, including infrastructure, legislation, resourcing and teaching tools, organisational structures and culture, public accountability and reporting, and data and information technology.

### Evidence: Insights from first phase implementation

#### Digital and data systems that support learning

System wide learning gain is an important measure of individual students' learning growth and is central to the vision of the Future of Education. There is a continued need to focus on learning gain for all children and young people by tailoring teaching and learning to individuals and groups of students that require additional supports.

Cross-sectoral collaboration has contributed to the national evidence base through initiatives such as the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) cross-sectoral moderation activities and providing national leadership by maximizing the implementation of NAPLAN online across ACT schools.

#### Strategic planning and legislative reform

Future implementation plans should focus on embedding excellence across the system. There is a need to ensure our planning and legislative frameworks support all schools to deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people.

#### Infrastructure

Significant progress has been made with upgrades to public school infrastructure and building 21st century learning environments. We need to continue our program of infrastructure upgrades, expansions and building of new schools to ensure we meet the needs and expectations of a growing community.

*"More teachers are analysing student data ... and making necessary changes to their pedagogy or their support of student wellbeing. There is more collaboration and deeper team conversations using data as evidence to scaffold the discussions" (Principal 2020)*

### Outcomes: What we aim to achieve

#### Digital and data systems

- Student learning is enhanced through digital and data systems that support learning anywhere, with data available to enable tailoring of education offerings to match learning needs.
- ICT systems are contemporary and suitable to a modern education system.

#### Strategic planning and legislative reform

- Planning and legislative frameworks support schools to meet the expectations of the ACT community for high quality, safe and inclusive learning environments.

#### Infrastructure

- Schools will be built, modernised, and maintained to meet the needs of our growing city and to provide sustainable, safe, and adaptable physical learning environments to meet the future needs of ACT children and young people and the communities that support them.

## Our theory of action: How we will achieve impact

If we deploy intelligent systems, align our planning and legislative frameworks, and invest in quality learning environments, we will enable our leaders and learners to realise real gain in our classrooms. We will achieve this by:

- Establishing a process to enhance the use of disaggregated data to tailor educational efforts to individuals and groups of students that require additional supports.
- Embedding school excellence by measuring the success of interventions to support evidence informed practice.
- Continuing to contribute and lead national reform priorities to drive positive outcomes for ACT schools and the children and young people we support.

## Actions: What we will do

### Digital and data systems that support learning

- Support learning anywhere and at any time through digital platforms, provision of chromebooks for public high and college students, internet for families who need it, and enhanced E-Safety programs in schools.
- Enhance access to and use of public education data to inform decision making, including focusing with precision on what works for whom under what circumstances.

### Strategic planning and legislative reform

- Strengthen enabling supports for schools through a system improvement cycle that aligns strategic planning across the public education system.
- Review and update the *Education Act 2004* to ensure it meets the needs of all education sectors in the ACT, and the expectations of the ACT community.

### Infrastructure

- *Undertake planning and demand studies for the Inner North and Inner South.*
- *Plan for and build new and expanded schools in areas of growing demand.*
- *Upgrade and modernise existing public schools to meet the needs of children and young people, including students with disability.*
- *Implement contemporary strategic asset management practices across the directorate.*
- *Review the model for specialist schools and undertake feasibility and planning work for new specialist settings.*
- Work across government to further align registration and land allocation processes for new non-government schools.

## Partnerships and collaborations- Who we will work with

- Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- Teacher Quality Institute
- Government and non-government schooling sectors
- Environment, Planning, and Sustainable Development Directorate
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations
- Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools Inc
- Disability Education Reference Group

## MEASURING THE IMPACT OF PHASE TWO

The Future of Education Strategy seeks to support children and young people to overcome and achieve regardless of background or circumstance by responding to the needs of each individual student in order to develop capable adults who have learnt to learn, live productively in society, think, create and work in an increasingly digital future.

The theory of change is: putting students at the centre by focusing on inclusion, student agency and wellbeing will lead to long term improvements in educational outcomes and ensure students have the skills they need to succeed in the future.

The Future of Education Evaluation Framework seeks to review the success of the Future of Education Strategy in three key areas:

- 1. Processes:** Completion of the outputs for each phase of the strategy
- 2. Impact:**
  - Stakeholder reflections on impact and opportunities for realignment
  - Learning being centred around the needs of individual students (inclusive)
  - Students having agency in their learning (agency)
  - Student wellbeing being prioritised and enhanced (wellbeing)
- 3. Outcomes:**
  - Students having the skills they need for the future
  - Education outcomes being enhanced

The evaluation of Phase Two Implementation will establish systematic and broader collection of voices to inform progress and impact. Phase Three implementation will be informed by the Phase Two evaluation to ensure a continuous focus on improvement and evidence-based strategies to achieve the best learning and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.

