

## **Disability Education Reference Group Terms of Reference**

### **Purpose**

The Disability Education Reference Group (the Reference Group) is a community consultative forum convened by the Director-General of the Education Directorate. The purpose of the reference group is to provide a forum for information sharing and for key community stakeholders to contribute to the formulation of policy and advice in relation to the education of students with a disability in ACT public schools.

The work and scope of the group is guided by the following definition of disability derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability:

*“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”*

This definition is based on a social model of disability that acknowledges that disability is an evolving concept that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Note: this definition is not linked to resourcing for students with disability.

### **The Disability Education Reference Group will:**

- Contribute to the formulation of policy and advice in relation to the education of students with disability in ACT public schools;
- Work together in the best interests of students with disability to support an education system that empowers our young people to thrive in ways that foster a democratic, equitable, diverse and prosperous society;
- Provide strategic advice to the Education Directorate on issues affecting students with disability;
- Foster cooperative linkages with students with disabilities, their families and other unpaid carers, organisations, government and community;
- Share information on projects and initiatives with implications for the education and inclusion of students with disability.

### **Membership**

- Membership of the Reference Group is determined by the Director-General of the Education Directorate and reviewed biennially. Interim adjustments to the membership can be made if necessary by the Chair acting as the representative of the Director-General. Any such interim adjustments would be communicated to the Director-General as a part of the Reference Group’s quarterly reporting.

- Members are invited from organisations representing students, young people and people with disability, principals, Australian Education Union, parent associations and other government and community organisations involved in the support of people with a disability, their families and allies.
- The Reference Group is not a representative body but rather an advisory group of people who are able to draw upon valued and relevant perspectives and experience.
- Other individuals with expertise for particular projects or issues may be co-opted as required.
- Applications for changes to the membership, including resignations must be made in writing to the Chair and reported to the Director-General as a part of the Reference Group's quarterly reporting.
- Members are requested to send a proxy if they are unable to attend.

#### **Chair**

- The Reference Group is chaired by an Education Directorate Executive.
- The Minister of Education and/or Director-General of the Education Directorate will be invited to Chair/attend one meeting each year.

#### **Meetings**

- The Reference Group meets four times per year.
- The Reference Group may appoint a time-limited working group to address specific issues between sessions and working groups will report to the Reference Group.
- Following each quarterly meeting, the Reference Group will report the topics discussed to the Director-General, the Minister and the public through a Communiqué on the Education Directorate website.

#### **Secretariat**

The Education Directorate provides secretariat and advisory assistance to the Reference Group. Meeting agendas will be developed in consultation with members. A final agenda and papers will be circulated one week prior to the meeting. Minutes and actions arising will be distributed within two weeks of each meeting.

#### **Confidentiality**

In general, meeting papers and minutes are generally not for further distribution beyond members and their parent organisation.

There may be times, however, that specific discussions require a higher degree of confidentiality. Where this is the case, the Directorate will highlight the highly confidential nature of the topic and request that details of the discussion are not shared with any parties outside the room.