Schools for All Report

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT

Quarterly Report – June 2016

Introduction

As noted in the Preamble of the ACT Government Response to the Expert Panel recommendations, "…AIS (has) considered each recommendation and acknowledge a strong desire to build on existing reforms, improvements and initiatives in so far as it is practical and possible. As an independent governing body representing 18 independent schools that are separate and autonomous entities, AIS notes all the recommendations and the ACT Government response."

A precise indication of this commitment is evidenced in the agenda of both AISACT Board and Executive Committee meetings. Further, the Executive Committee has established a Schools for All Subcommittee to provide it with advice on strategies, opportunities and approaches in direct reference to the Schools for All Report, and the responses to the recommendations from the Association. The establishment of this Subcommittee was noted and endorsed by the full Board of AISACT.

Progress on the Recommendations specific to Independent Schools and/or to AISACT

Recommendation	Activity	Status
3.2 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop practical and readily accessible guidelines to enable school leaders and staff to understand and comply with their core legal obligations with respect to human rights, discrimination, work health and safety, and privacy; including how to reconcile potentially competing obligations. **AISACT Response** The AIS will support member schools to review relevant policies and procedures and will access the ETD resources to provide to ACT Independent Schools.	- All AISACT Member Schools have access to the University of Canberra Disability Standards for Education online course. - 213 Staff in AISACT Member Schools have engaged with the online course. - A number of schools are placing this into their end of term/year professional learning for staff	Ongoing
4.1 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, review their policies and procedures with	- A number of Independent Schools have begun the process of reviewing their procedures and policies around managing and respecting students with complex	Ongoing

respect to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour to ensure that all schools have a comprehensive suite of relevant policies and procedures.	needs and challenging behaviours through a whole school approach. - AISACT has begun supporting schools through providing a professional learning event on Managing Challenging Behaviours in Schools presented by Education Psychologist Tim Dansie.	
AISACT Response		
The AIS will support member schools to review relevant policies and procedures and will access the ETD resources to provide to ACT Independent Schools.		
6.1 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, encourage all school leaders to implement KidsMatter (for primary schools) and MindMatters (for high schools) as part of their overall strategy to support positive school culture, student wellbeing, and behaviour.	- AISACT continues its work with KidsMatter and MindMatters to promote their work and programs to Member Schools, this promotion is done through the Association's fortnightly newsletter. - A representative from the Association sits on the Reference Group for KidsMatter and MindMatters. - Members from Beyondblue, who are partners with both KidsMatter and MindMatters, will be present at the AISACT annual conference.	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
KidsMatter and MindMatters are also actively promoted across all AIS member schools. AIS will continue to support these programs and identify other recognised programs appropriate for each independent school's context.		
6.2 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.	- 2 representative from the AISACT office sit on the cross sectoral Youth Forum on Student Voice committee who are establishing a Student Voice Forum in term 3 2016. - A majority of Member Schools have processes in place to encourage student voice with one Member School having just reviewed their process (Radford) and another Member School currently reviewing their processes (CGS)	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
AIS acknowledge(s) that student satisfaction is an important indicator of student engagement.		

In addition to the Student Congress, the Minster for Education and Training will facilitate a cross-sectoral student forum in Youth Week 2016 with a focus on student voice in school decision making.		
6.3 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop and promote practical resources to assist all schools to effectively engage with parents/carers of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. AISACT Response Improving parent engagement in students is an ongoing priority for ETD, CE and independent schools. (Reference to the ARACY cross-sectoral project)	- AISACT continues to work with APFACTS to engage with the P&F committees in Independent Schools. - AISACT will be hosting a NDIS information night for Independent School parents in term 3 to inform then about the NDIS and how to connect their child's NDIS plans with their educational program.	Ongoing
6.4 That ETD, CE, and AIS, negotiate a partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the Community Services Directorate to better meet the needs of students who live in out of home care, drawing on models such as the Victorian 'Out of Home Care Education Commitment'. AISACT Response CSD will lead the development of the partnership agreement with ETD, CE and AIS. CE and AIS acknowledge that the partnership could be strengthened in this area and welcome the recommendation.	- A member of staff from the AISACT office sits on the Improving Educational Outcomes committee (for young people on care and protection and youth justice) - The IEO committee has asked that AISACT request from Schools examples of ILP's for the committee to discuss. Four schools have currently shared their ILPs with AISACT with a number of other schools waiting for approval to share this information with AISACT and the committee.	Ongoing
8.1 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. AISACT Response	- AISACT continues its work with schools to review current provision for calming/sensory spaces. - Schools have been provided information on the sorts of spaces that work for students through the Managing Challenging Behaviours in Schools presented by Education Psychologist Tim	Ongoing

AIS notes the recommendation and will support schools to review current provision for calming/sensory spaces.	Dansie. - AISACT is hoping to make connections with appropriate organisations – for example, Learning Environments Australasia – to provide advice about the requirements of such spaces so that schools might audit current facilities to determine whether they comply with best practice, and to provide advice on processes and specific requirements to be considered should schools be in a position to further develop these spaces.	
8.2 That ETD, CE and each Independent School, ensure that the design briefs for all new schools follow principles of universal design, and include an appropriate range of learning areas and facilities to meet the needs of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. These may include flexible classroom areas with adjacent small group learning spaces, and inclusive playgrounds, as well as safe, calming/sensory spaces. **AISACT Response** ETD, CE and AIS accept the recommendation. ETD will share elements of universal design with CE and AIS.	- AISACT is looking to expand on a connection with A4L in assisting schools with the design of learning spaces.	Ongoing
9.1 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, (a) endorse School-Wide Positive Behavioural Support; (b) resource and support schools to implement the program for a minimum of three years; and (c) evaluate the success of the program. **AISACT Response** AIS notes that member schools may have very similar approaches to that of Positive Behavioural Support as the theoretical foundation of this program is to create learning environments that	- AISACT has been working closely with the Galilee school in support the construction of a PBS model. - AISACT will continue this work and look at providing PL on the model in the near future.	Ongoing

are perceived by the student to be safe, welcoming and engaging. AIS will work with member schools to inform them of Positive Behavioural Support. Should individual schools wish to adopt the Positive Behaviour Support model, they could use the available resource support to implement the program for a minimum of three years.		
10.7 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, commit to the professionalisation of LSAs and ensure that by 2018 (a) all LSAs hold, or are in the process of obtaining, at least a Certificate IV in School Age Education & Care or equivalent; and (b) all LSAs working in a Learning Support Unit or specialist school hold, or are in the process of obtaining, at least a Certificate IV in Education Support or equivalent. AISACT Response AIS notes the recommendation and will work with the other sectors to explore strategic options for workforce planning.	- AISACT recognises that to commit to professionalization of LSAs will require close work with schools to adjust their employment agreements. - AISACT previously has provided opportunities for LSAs to gain higher qualifications through the More Support for Students program \ - Further discussion to occur through the AISACT Schools for All Executive Subcommittee	Ongoing
11.1 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, develop practical guidelines on the appropriate use of voluntary withdrawal spaces, seclusion, and physical restraint. AISACT Response ETD will share these resources with CE and AIS and will collaborate to develop future resources to support all students.	- AISACT will collaborate with ED and CE in developing possible future resources.	
11.2 That ETD and CE establish procedures that (a) enable ETD and CE to approve and monitor any behaviour support plans that propose the use of restrictive practices for an individual	- A number of Member schools are currently reviews their procedures. The Association will continue to support schools in the development and review of the procedures. (TCS, CGS, CGGS, Canberra Christian School, Dara, Orana)	Ongoing

student; (b) require member schools to report each occasion of the use of restrictive practices to a nominated officer within ETD or CE; and (c) monitor the use of restrictive practices and identify trends in order to inform service improvement. That each Independent School establish procedures that enable any behaviour support plans that propose the use of restrictive practices to be approved by the school leadership or management.		
AISACT Response		
AIS notes that where such procedures are not in place already, the AIS will support member schools to establish such procedures.		
11.5 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, provide alternative options to out-of-school suspension where appropriate and possible, including in-school suspensions with temporary additional staffing or support.	- Further discussion and information gathering from Member Schools will occur through the AISACT Schools for All Executive Committee Subcommittee	
AISACT Response		
AIS notes that ACT Independent School Boards and school leadership teams make decisions about how best to utilise their resources to meet the needs of their student community.		
11.7 That the ACT Government seek an amendment to the Education Act 2004 (ACT) to require Catholic and Independent Schools to report data of suspensions and exclusions of students, including the proportion of students with a disability and students in out of home care, to the Registrar of Non-Government Schools.	- AISACT has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the ACT Government to report to the Minister the nature and number of critical incidents every six months	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
ETD is committed to transparency of reporting and will consult with		

CE and AIS to determine if this level of reporting can be achieved. CE and AIS have an agreement to report to the Minister for Education the number and nature of critical incidents that occur in …schools		
12.1 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School (a) develop and implement a case management framework for students with complex needs and challenging behaviour; and (b) support all schools to identify or recruit suitably qualified staff to act as case managers, including, for example, social workers, welfare officers, and/or community development workers.	- Further discussion and information gathering from Member Schools will occur through the AISACT Schools for All Executive Committee Subcommittee	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
AIS notes that if schools are interested in exploring this recommendation it would be necessary to verify the resource support available for implementation.		
12.3 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.	- If work in this space has commenced, AISACT is yet to be provided an opportunity to engage collaboratively on client services.	
AISACT Response		
CE and AIS welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively on client services in this area.		
12.6 That ETD, CE, and each	- 2 staff members from the office attend the NDIS education and employment working	Ongoing

Independent School, develop guidelines which regulate access to schools by NDIS service providers.	- group on a monthly basis. - AISACT is in the process of creating and distributing suggested guidelines to schools. - These guidelines will be taken to the AISACT Schools for All Executive Committee Subcommittee for consideration before being provided to schools. - The working group will collaboratively work together to provide a guidelines 'manual' for service providers.	
AISACT Response		
AIS will where appropriate work with member schools to support the development of guidelines related to NDIS providers in schools.		
13.1 That ETD, CE, and AIS, liaise with the Australian Catholic University (Canberra Campus) and the University of Canberra to review and improve the theoretical and practical relevance of teacher education units with respect to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.	- A staff member from AISACT sits on a cross sectoral committee in relation to this recommendation.	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
13.2 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, ensure that the program of induction for all permanent and temporary teachers includes components on the teaching of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.	- Further discussion and information gathering from Member Schools will occur through the AISACT Schools for All Executive Committee Subcommittee	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
AIS will work with and support member schools in this area where appropriate.		
13.4 That ETD, CE, and AIS, cooperate to (a) make available to all member schools existing online learning modules in: autism spectrum disorder; dyslexia and significant reading difficulties; motor coordination difficulties; speech, language and communication needs;	- AISACT is aware that both ED and CE schools have access to these modules. AISACT has yet to be provided with information on how Independent Schools can access them, as per the ED response to this recommendation.	Ongoing

understanding and managing behaviour; understanding hearing loss; and/or other courses as identified by member schools; and (b) ensure that these learning modules are complemented by follow-up support including face to face assistance, workshops and coaching components.		
ETD will make the resources available to all government and non-government schools.		
13.5 That ETD, CE and AIS, (a) develop, and liaise with the Teacher Quality Institute to accredit, a suite of professional learning options relevant to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. This would include, but not be limited to, modules on: de-escalation and safe use of restraint; trauma; autism spectrum disorder; mental health; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and/or learning difficulties; and (b) establish mechanisms to monitor staff and school participation in these programs.	- AISACT has provided a TQI accredited (5 hours) PL on Managing Challenging Behaviours in Schools presented by Education Psychologist Tim Dansie. - All Independent Schools in the ACT had representatives attend this PL. - AISACT will continue to explore PL in addressing this recommendation within the constraints of available resourcing.	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
ETD, CE and AIS will develop a suite of professional learning programs for staff in schools, which will explicitly address teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.		
13.7 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, (a) prioritise scholarships and sabbaticals for school leaders and teachers to undertake formal study in relation to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour; (b) create opportunities for school leaders and teachers to visit and see in action practices in schools with a reputation for creative and	- AISACT has an established Students with Disability network who meet once a term at a different independent school each term. At the beginning of each meeting the host school provides an overview of the types of programs they have in place for students with disability and students with complex needs and challenging behaviours.	Ongoing

resourceful approaches to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour; and (c) create opportunities for these school leaders and teachers to become mentors and facilitators within networks, sectors, and schools.		
AISACT Response		
15.1 That ETD and CE, and each Independent School, make clear in their strategic plans a) how their student-centred vision and principles are operationalised with respect to priorities, targets and indicators; and b) how the various components, services and programs that they provide contribute to the implementation of their student-centred vision.	- School for All is an item at each AISACT board meeting in order to update board members on the progress and strategic implication of the work being done on Member Schools. - Additionally a Schools for All Executive subcommittee is in the nomination stages of being developed to provide additional support and guidance to schools and the Association.	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
AIS notes the strategic plans are developed by the governing body of a school to best set the directions and priorities, and reinforce the culture of schools. The office of AIS will, where appropriate, work with and support schools in their consideration of this recommendation.		
15.2 That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, complement the reporting of students' academic performance with reports on student progress towards the personal and social-emotional goals listed in school's vision statements and strategic plans.	- A number of Member schools have or are in the process of redeveloping Individual learning plans for students. - Schools are also closely working with families to ensure that goals for the students align with the NDIS goals where applicable.	Ongoing
AISACT Response		
Each ACT independent school develops reporting formats which best reflect the ethos of the individual school. An individual		

student's progress in personal development and goals would be considered to be an integral part of the responsibility in reporting to parents in schools. AIS will, where appropriate, work with member schools as they consider this recommendation.		
15.3 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. **AISACT Response** ETD, CE and AIS are open to an approach to support or facilitate research from tertiary institutions. Independent schools will consider possible partnerships for analysis of this data.	AIS are open to an approach to support or facilitate research from tertiary institutions. Independent schools will consider possible partnerships for analysis of this data.	Ongoing

Communities@Work Galilee School
Case Study – Positive Behaviour Support

The PBS framework adopted by the Communities@Work Galilee School has been designed around the needs of students presenting with complex and challenging behaviours. When scaled across an entire school or system, the framework has the potential to drive significant improvements in how students presenting with complex needs are supported. Providing consistent, comprehensive, and equitable support to students requiring an individualised approach aligns directly with the findings outlined in the Australian Capital Territory's 2015 expert panel review, 'Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour', and subsequent recommendations in the 'Schools for all' report.

Concepts associated with the objective recording, interpretation, and analysis of complex and challenging behaviours have been based on the research of Willis, LaVigna and Donnellan (1985). This research provides insight into comprehensive data gathering and records abstraction to facilitate the assessment and functional analysis of a behaviour. The concepts extend to the creation of non-aversive behavioural intervention plans.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2008) provides a series of recommendations on how to modify an educational environment to best support the needs of children suffering from exposure to trauma. These recommendations have been used to inform content associated with the understanding and analysis of complex and challenging behaviours.

Concepts relating to the importance of positive relationships and the significance of a student centred support network have been based on the research of Ludy-Dobson and Perry (2010). This research explores the imperatives of healthy and predictable relationships when supporting students who have experienced some form of developmental trauma.

Developing the capacity of teachers to deal will complex and challenging behaviours at a classroom level or, more comprehensively, an integrated whole school approach, has the potential to improve the educational outcomes for marginalised youth. On the completion of the Communities@Work PBS training modules:

   • Teachers will feel better equipped to understand the behaviours being presented by the students in their classes and provide the necessary support to assist with healthy social and emotional development, and;
   • School leaders will be more capable of driving a culture of effective student-centred support in their school networks. The PBS framework will provide a comprehensive and actionable tool that can shape how a school will support the growing cohort of students presenting complex and challenging behaviours.

The PBS training modules developed by the Communities@Work Galilee School has been accredited through TQI to provide staff with 5 hours of enriching professional development. The training has been accredited against the AITSL 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead' teacher professional standards.

AISACT are actively working with local high schools to identify their needs in the development and implementation of a consistent, comprehensive, and equitable behaviour support framework. Staff at the Communities@Work Galilee School are committed to supporting school leaders and classroom teachers across the sector in meeting the unique needs of their young people.

Willis, T., LaVigna, G., & Donnellan, A. (1985). The Behavior Assessment Guide. Los Angela, CA: IABA

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2008). Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. Los Angeles, CA: NCTSN.

Ludy-Dobson, C., & Perry, B. (2010). The role of healthy relational interactions in buffering the impact of childhood trauma. In E. Gil (Ed.), Working with children to heal interpersonal truama (pp. 26-43). Guilford Press.