

Schools for All Report

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT

Quarterly Report – September 2017

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.”

An indication of this desire to build on an existing reform, and to respond to the recommendations, 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, where Schools for All is a standing item, advice on strategies, opportunities and approaches in direct reference to the Schools for All Report, and with alignment to the responses to the recommendations from the Association. The establishment of this Subcommittee was noted and endorsed by the full Board of AISACT.

Recent consultation with Member Schools determined that the report and the recommendations have facilitated and expanded the refining of best practice to engage students with challenging behaviours and complex needs. The report’s findings have reaffirmed to staff that many of the practices are already embedded in schools. However, consultation determined that there is a further shift in culture still needs to occur within all schools, to ensure that all students in all schools feel supported in their education.

Consultation noted that the training on the Disability Standards of Education 2005 completed by staff in Independent Schools has been a vehicle for rapid changes within schools, and has given teachers a refresher on the rights of all student to access education on the same basis as their peers.

The Association continues to support schools in progressing the cultural shift to increase the awareness of support to all students in all school irrelevant of if they have challenging behaviours and complex needs.

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

Policy and School Governance

Recommendation 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.
Key Activities
<p>The Association continues to support schools to review relevant policies and procedures. The Association has recently worked closely with the ACT Ombudsman to support school in the implementation of the ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme. Key information on the Scheme is available to all Member Schools via the AISACT website.</p> <p>Member Schools have access to additional School Operation resources via the AISACT's website, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on Privacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Compliance Manuals o Briefing Papers o Updates - Compliance Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enterprise Risk Management Maturity Assessment o Policy Management Maturity Self-Assessment o Work Health and Safety Self-Assessment o WHS Checklist - Briefing Papers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Child Protection Requirements o Record Keeping o Complaints Handling <p>The Association partners with CompliSpace a provider of governance, risk, compliance and policy management who specialise in education and not-for-profit. The Association will continue to work with CompliSpace to develop resources for schools.</p>

Recommendation 4.1

That ETD, CE, and each Independent School, review their policies and procedures with respect to students with complex needs and challenging behaviour to ensure that all schools have a comprehensive suite of relevant policies and procedures.

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.

Key Activities

AISACT has developed two sets of guidelines for Member Schools; Managing NDIS externally funded service providers, and Assistance Animals in ACT Independent Schools. The 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 post-vention policies and procedures. This work stems from a professional learning conducted by Headspace School Support for Member Schools in June 2017.

AISACT will continue to work with schools to develop and evolve guidelines for use in schools, building this with support from the Association's external partners in areas of compliance, legal support and work health and safety.

Recommendation 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.

Key Activities

The Association is currently working on developing guidelines around restrictive practices. These guidelines will build on the work undertaken by the Victorian Department of Education, other jurisdictions and the ACT Education Directorate. Once completed these guidelines will be available to Member Schools via the AISACT's website.

A summary of examples of policies and guidelines already used within Member Schools is outlined below:

- The Executive of the school works in conjunction with pastoral care staff and a student's family to better support students emotional needs through the development of individual plans.

- The adaptation of a Relationship Management policy allows for educators and students to discuss, problem-solve and negotiate alternative solutions for challenging situations.

Community and Culture

Recommendation 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 with students is an ongoing priority for ETD, CE and independent schools. (Reference to the ARACY cross-sectoral project)
Key Activities
<p>AISACT continues to work with Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools to engage with the Parents and Friends committees in Independent Schools. The Association will continue to support APFACTS to support parents of students in Independent Schools.</p> <p>The Association was involved with the development and delivery of two cross sectoral information sessions for the National Disability Insurance Scheme School Leavers Employment Support (SLES). The information sessions targeted year 12 students, their families and key school personnel to provide key information and support in the application process for the SLES.</p>

Student Wellbeing

Recommendation 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.
AISACT Response
AIS acknowledge(s) that student satisfaction is an important indicator of student engagement.
Key Activities
<p>As noted in previous reports each Independent School has their own policy and programs in place to support student voice. A majority of the schools have a student representative council or similar which are made up of a range of Year groups.</p> <p>On the 24th August the Association held the AISACT 2017 Colloquium, the Colloquiums theme was Leading Improved Student Engagement. In order to set the scene of the day the first session provided four students the opportunity to speak to the following four questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does engagement in education mean to you? - What has enabled you to engage and participate in your learning? - What are the elements that could further engage you in your learning - What message would you like to leave the participants with today?

Environment

Recommendation 8.2
<p>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.</p>
AISACT Response
<p>ETD, CE and AIS accept the recommendation.</p> <p>ETD will share elements of universal design with CE and AIS.</p>
Key Activities
<p>On the 24th August the Association held the AISACT 2017 Colloquium, the Colloquium's theme was Leading Improved Student Engagement. One of three keynotes of the event was Jo Dane, who is a Principal Architect working within the Education, Science and Health section at Melbourne Architecture firm Woods Bagot.</p> <p>Jo's keynote discussed six key elements of effective teaching and learning and how schools need not only apply these to how they teach but also apply them to the teaching and learning spaces in the school. This keynote provided attendees information on what are some of the key elements that all teaching and learning spaces should have and how they can benefit the engagement of students.</p> <p>Attendees to the Colloquium have access to Jo's PowerPoint for future reference via the AISACT's Website. The Association hopes to continue to work with Jo to assist Member Schools in the development of new teaching and learning areas and improving existing teaching and learning areas.</p>

Professional Learning

Recommendation 13.5
<p>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.</p>
AISACT Response
<p>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.</p>
Key Activities
<p>The Association has a representative on the TQI led working group, which discuss matters in relation to this recommendation and recommendation 13.1.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2016 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing Challenging Behaviours in Schools - accredited 5 hours ○ Developing differentiated curriculum using conceptual frameworks - accredited 5 hours ○ People Leadership workshop- accredited 15 hours ○ AISACT 2016 Colloquium: Innovation and Collaboration – accredited 5 hours - 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone Everyday Facilitator Training – accredited 6 hours ○ Everyone Everyday Program Training – accredited 6 hours ○ Personal Leadership Workshop – accredited 15 hours ○ Programs for gifted learners: understanding and implementing grouping and acceleration programs – accredited 5 hours ○ Twice exceptional and underachieving gifted students: identifying and catering for their needs – accredited 5 hours ○ Cross Sectoral NCCD moderation for Primary and Secondary Schools – accredited 2 hours ○ AISACT 2017 Colloquium: Learning Improved Student Engagement - accredited 5 hours <p>The cross sectoral NCCD moderation for Primary and Secondary schools was built upon previous moderation sessions run by the Association for Member Schools. This year the session was opened up to all sectors. The day provided attendees the opportunity to discuss the students in their schools and assist with not only the decision making process, but to support</p>

each other through sharing ideas to further support students who are identified under the NCCD.

Feedback from the day included:

- *'Working together is always enriching- would like more opportunities to do so on a variety of school bases issues.'* – Primary School Teacher
- *'Great session today, we welcome these opportunities to share uninterrupted time to discuss issues with colleagues /school clusters.'* – Primary School Teacher
- *'A well organised session with ample opportunity for discussion, comparison and sharing.'* - Secondary School Teacher
- *'I found this a very positive learning experience.'* - Secondary School Teacher

The AISACT 2017 Colloquium: Leading Improved Student Engagement was for the first time opened to all ACT Education Sectors. The day included presentations on

- Engaging Gen Z as Learners
- Developing future competencies and assessments
- Learning Environments
- Differentiation
- Teacher wellbeing
- Equity and Inclusion
- Turning evidence and data into action in the classroom
- Facilitating individual development

The day enabled attendees to further understand how best to lead engagement in their school and how best to engage each student as individuals. Feedback from the day included:

- *'A most informative, thought provoking, disruptive (to mindset) day. Great keynotes. Thankyou.'*
- *'Thank you for designing a very relevant and useful learning experience.'*
- *'Thank you for an excellent day that has ignited the ongoing conversation on leading improved student engagement.'*
- *'Thank you for the day. I feel motivated, enlightened and refreshed.'*

The Association continues to monitor feedback and school participation in these programs.