



# SCHOOLS FOR ALL

## Executive Summary - December 2017

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From October to December 2017 the ACT education sector has remained committed to supporting the development of safe, supportive and inclusive school environments by continuing to implement and embed the recommendations made by the Schools for All Expert Panel. This executive summary outlines areas of focus for this period, an overview of key achievements and progress made, and the intended direction moving into 2018. The ACT Education Directorate (the Directorate), Association of Independent Schools of the ACT (AISACT), and the Canberra Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CE) have each provided individual reports outlining key achievements made during this period.

Through 2017 the *Schools for All* program has transitioned to a consolidation phase. A key focus for this quarter has been, therefore, to ensure the sustainability of positive developments and changes made through the *Schools for All* program. This has involved consolidating the wide variety of actions being taken to make schools safe and inclusive environments for all students, and embedding best practice principles across all education sectors.

One significant advancement this quarter has been the completion of the *Schools for All Evaluation Baseline Development*. This document defines the Directorate's 2014 baseline target group for students with complex needs and challenging behaviours, and will be used to evaluate the impact of the *Schools for All* program. The evaluation team from the Directorate has engaged with CE and AISACT to ensure that suitable methodological approaches are sensitive to sector needs, and align where possible. A meeting to identify comparable data sets and a preferred way forward was held in December. The evaluation team is currently analysing the data and a preliminary evaluation report is expected to be completed in March 2018. The final evaluation report will detail students with complex needs and challenging behaviour outcomes in ACT schools, and will look at both academic and wellbeing measures. This is expected to be completed in 2019. This evaluation will allow for continual improvement moving into the future.

As we have entered a consolidation phase this quarter, we have begun to see a systemic cultural change where all children and young people in ACT Schools are placed at the centre of all decision making relating to education policy and practice to enable their social, academic and wellbeing needs to be met. This continued focus on student needs and outstanding student centred practice is benefitting all students, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

The Directorate has seen a more systematised approach to school improvement through links with school review under the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT); and built capability to support change in schools through the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Framework and strengthening of the Network Student Engagement Team (NSET) through the addition of allied health staff.

During this quarter, CE has consolidated a structured approach to supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours in both business-as-usual activities, and cultural-change activities. Building on the Collaboration on Student Achievement (COSA) model, CE continues towards improving student outcomes through a systematic and organised change process. CE is confident that in moving forward it is utilising a robust decision making framework that will guide the utilisation of monetary and personnel

resources to support students with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

The response to the *Schools for All Report* by Independent schools in the ACT has been to refine and reflect on their approaches to benefit student learning, and this work never ceases. Independent schools pride themselves on their culture and the supportive and caring environments they provide for their students. The Association will continue to support schools to enhance and build on already strong school cultures serving a diverse range of communities.

As an education sector this quarter, we have focussed on professional learning to ensure that all teachers, school leaders and support staff, not just those in specialist positions, have relevant expertise in relation to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. Our multi-faceted approach to professional learning has included delivery of professional learning courses, coaching, mentoring, observations and working alongside experienced colleagues and specialists from other fields such as allied health therapists.

The Directorate has also designed a set of change elements and resources that bring together lessons learnt from the *Schools for All* program. These will be used by the Directorate through the *Future of Education* conversation to support future organisational cultural change efforts, particularly in respect to how it will respond to diversity and achieve inclusive schools for all children and young people.

As well as working to ensure that the underlying approach of the *Schools for All* program continues to reinforce a whole of system response, significant progress has been made this quarter on implementing the recommendations that have yet to be closed. These developments have been made across all four of the overarching themes from the Expert Panel Report; improving student outcomes, being informed, collaboration, and building capability.

### **Highlights of Cross Sectoral Progress**

A key component of ensuring that the implementation of the *Schools for All* program recommendations embeds best practice principles in a robust and sustainable way is to ensure that cross sectoral collaboration is at the core of the program. Therefore, during this quarter emphasis has been placed on strengthening collaboration across our sectors and with the broader human services sector. Examples of the outcomes of this collaborative approach are included below under the four *Schools for All* themes.

#### ***Improving student outcomes: Evaluation***

The development of a robust evaluation is fundamental to ensuring that work completed under the *Schools for All* program effectively supports the needs of children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours. To ensure the integrity of the evaluation, the Directorate established the Schools for All Evaluation Working Group, and engaged National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) as an external authority. This collaborative approach ensured that both cross sector and external representation was at the core of the evaluation's design.

The *Schools for All Evaluation Baseline Development*, completed in December 2017, is a fundamental step in ensuring all Canberra schools are implementing best practice principles when supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. This work will continue with preparation of the preliminary report, which is expected to be completed early in 2018, and the final report, scheduled for completion in 2019.

#### ***Being informed: Parental engagement***

The Directorate collaborated with CE and AISACT to develop a suite of parent engagement resources as a part of a cross-sectoral project. These resources were finalised in December 2017. These resources build on previous work from the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), and through additional consultation with stakeholders. They provide evidence-based technical and plain English definitions of parent engagement, and practical resources that support effective parental engagement with

families of children and young people. A particular focus on engaging families of children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviours has been included. These resources will be utilised by all ACT education sectors.

### ***Collaborating: alignment of disability criteria***

The Directorate, CE, and AISACT have collaborated to ensure that each sector's disability criteria aligns with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5). This process has ensured clarity and consistency surrounding the assessment and evidence required to confirm eligibility. These adjustments in criteria will be available in the 2018 school year.

### ***Building capability: professional learning***

Cross sectoral online training has continued to be rolled out through this period. Examples of modules offered include:

- Understanding and Supporting Behaviour
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dyslexia and Significant Reading Difficulties
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Motor Coordination Difficulties
- Understanding Hearing Loss

Information on participation, uptake, and feedback of these programs from staff in public schools is recorded by the directorate. In addition, *Everyone Everyday: a Toolkit for Inclusion* has continued to be offered across all sectors. The toolkit is 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.

## **Key Achievements by Sector**

### ***Education Directorate***

*Improving student outcomes:* Using evidence to improve practice, promote student-centred outcomes and ensure the whole system works for students.

- The continuing implementation of Directorate improvement initiatives, including the Student Resource Allocation (SRA) program, the School Administration System (SAS), and the Continuum of Educational Support (CES) provides for:
  - learning environments that best meet student needs through innovative work practices, delegation, decision making, staff development and performance management, and special classroom assistance;
  - updated and improved policy settings to guide school and system decision making;
  - increased school level control over how resources are used based on what works best in their school and within system wide parameters;
  - a fairer allocation of funding to schools based on student need;
  - improved data on student and school performance;
  - improved administrative and school management systems; and
  - better assistance for schools in supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviours through a coherent strategy for the provision of alternative education programs and/or other flexible learning options.

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

- Thorough research was undertaken during this period, and an investigation report developed, on the 'schools as a hub' model. This research referenced current initiatives that exist within the ACT, existing hub models identified through a literature review, and the extensive research that has been undertaken on Family Safety Hubs. The analysis outlines examples of evidence based best practice approaches to engaging with families. These findings will be used to inform the structure of the Directorate's future service delivery through the *Future of Education* conversation.
- Extensive research regarding *Student Centred Appraisal of Need* (the Appraisal) process was undertaken in late 2016 and early 2017. This was a part of the SRA Program's extensive consultation process, and review of the Directorate's delivery of education for students with disability. The Directorate identified issues and concerns surrounding the Appraisal that aligned with the feedback from stakeholders reflected in the Expert Panel Report. The SRA Program team will use these findings to inform policy decisions moving forward, which will also be made in relation to *the Future of Education* community conversation. This integrated approach will provide the Directorate with the opportunity to develop a clear and consistent policy direction for the support of students with disability in Canberra public schools.

*Collaborating:* Building strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

- The *Prep for Pre* program is a collaborative project involving a multidisciplinary team made up of Child and Family workers, Network Student Engagement Team (NSET) staff, and Child Development Services. The team works together to equip families with knowledge, strategies and confidence to support children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development prior to starting preschool. In this quarter, *Prep for Pre* was successfully rolled out in three child and family centres and at Namadgi School.

*Building capacity:* Looking after all staff and supporting educators to keep learning.

- Supported by four external PBL Coaches, 32 ACT public schools have commenced their Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) journey. Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), is an internationally renowned, research and evidence based, whole school approach for creating safe, and supportive school environments. This is having a significant impact in increasing student engagement in learning with improved learning outcomes, improving school culture and decreasing both low level behaviours and high level challenging behaviours.
- To support high schools in planning for implementation of the CES model from 2018, four CES Support Partners were appointed to work with high schools during this quarter. The CES Support Partners work with 4-5 high schools in each network to assist the individual schools identify key CES priorities, and work towards meeting the needs of all students. A summary of each high school's key CES priorities has been developed. The Support Partners will continue to work with schools throughout 2018 to implement and embed these strategies.
- In week four of term four a CES Master Class was run for school leaders. This session provided the school leaders with the opportunity to gain clarity as to purpose and process, not only for students who are identified as disengaged, but for all learners.
- The Directorate is currently developing a workforce strategy which will clarify the vision and long-term framework for building the capability of the ACT public education system. The professionalisation of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) is being considered within this strategy. As an interim measure, the Directorate has developed a partnership with the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) to deliver the Certificate IV in Education Support to a pilot group of LSAs. The pilot has enabled the participants to build their capability to work with students, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviours. Based on the success of this pilot, the Directorate will

continue to encourage LSAs to upskill through supported access to the training at CIT and a range of internally run professional learning course to build their capacity, with a specific focus in the areas of trauma, learning difficulties and disability.

### ***Catholic Education***

CE has continued to utilise The Student Achievement Model (COSA) as a framework for improving student outcomes through a systematic and organised change process. From this approach, a range of projects and strategies have been implemented or continued during this quarter to help support and maintain positive cultural change. Examples include:

- The Berry Street Education Model. This model is designed to improve a school's capacity to address school engagement of vulnerable or disadvantaged children and young people so that they can achieve their personal and social potential through educational achievement.
- KidsMatter, a mental health and wellbeing program for primary school students and their families. The program utilises a prevention and early intervention framework. Schools are indicating that this program is resulting in students being more engaged, and are demonstrating an increase in positive attitudes and behaviours.
- MindMatters, a mental health and wellbeing framework for secondary schools. This program focusses on fostering a positive schools community, and the development of student resilience. The program encourages close collaboration with families, and connections with external support agencies. School successes are currently being seen through a wide uptake in a range of social and emotional programs throughout years 7-12.
- Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework. This framework is for both primary and secondary students, and helps schools to maximise the academic achievement and behavioural competence of students. Where schools are implementing SWPBS, they are typically finding a decrease in inappropriate behaviours (as measured by decreases in discipline referrals, and suspensions).

The Early Learning Initiative (ELI) process has continued to be implemented during this period. This initiative focusses 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.

CE uses case management as a mechanism to build inclusive cultures in schools and wider communities. This approach aims to create cultural change through collaboration between the Wellbeing and Diversity Team and school teams to increase each schools' capacity to embed evidence based practice and to build school communities where everyone belongs. In 2017, 64 ACT students, their families and the staff who work with them were supported through this model.

Leaders of Learning from CE, in collaboration with schools leadership teams and staff, continued to implement school based action research projects. These projects are designed to address the learning needs of all students, including those with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

Many staff members attended professional learning opportunities October – December 2017, examples include;

- Eight Classroom Support Teachers (LSTs) who were new to the role received specific training;
- 15 staff members participated in Everyone Everyday training;
- 72 staff members participated in the Wellbeing and Diversity Twilight staff meetings;
- 15 participants attended Classroom Support Teacher video conferences;
- 200 staff members attended talks by Tom Brunzell about the Berry Street Education Model; and
- 100 staff members attended Early Learning Initiative professional learning days on Numeracy and Literacy Support.

Coordination of services with external agencies and providers has remained a priority for CE during this period. Officers from CE, as well as school-based staff have worked with a number of external agencies and/or specialists to seek advice and support to ensure that the needs of all children are understood and met.

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

A Students with Disability Network meeting was held early in term four 2017. This meeting brought together over twenty staff members including Heads of Learning Support (HLSs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). This meeting provided a networking opportunity for staff members, and the chance for collaboration. It also identified four key themes of future support and resources that would support them in their roles. These themes include:

1. sharing of best practice;
2. role clarification of teacher, LSA and HLS and how best to assist teachers in the classroom;
3. supporting students with anxiety; and
4. opportunities to network with other schools.

The *Schools for All* subcommittee will take a role in devising a plan to address these themes across 2018 and in the future.

In early November AISACT held the AISACT 2017 Celebrating Teaching and Learning Event. This annual event provides member schools with the opportunity to showcase and discuss the extensive range of teaching and learning projects and programs that have occurred in AISACT member schools in 2017. This event also provides an opportunity for AISACT member schools to come together as a group and celebrate the successes enjoyed, share challenges met and lessons learned. Below is a sample of presentations that were showcased at the event.

- Leading culture for classroom observation
- Creating a culture of innovation – shifts in pedagogy across the school
- Design thinking processes – Entrepreneurs: It's Your Move
- Data tracking and gifted and talented students
- Hands-on demonstration in full-immersion virtual reality – Code Cadets
- ReSolve: Maths by Inquiry national project overview
- Youth Parliament for Sustainability project: selected for presentation at the ACT Legislative Assembly

This event was highly successful, and feedback received indicate that it was a valuable experience for the participants. All attendees and staff from AISACT member schools have access to the presentations via the AISACT website.

## Recommendation Closures

As of December 2017, 43 (Directorate) and 19 (CE) recommendations are closed and 6 (Directorate) and 7 (CE) remain active:

Rec.	Education Directorate		Catholic Education		Rec.	Education Directorate		Catholic Education	
	Closed	Open	Closed	Open		Closed	Open	Closed	Open
Rec 3.1	✓		N/A		Rec 11.4	✓		N/A	
Rec 3.2	✓		✓		Rec 11.5		✓		✓
Rec 4.1	✓		✓		Rec 11.6	✓		N/A	
Rec 6.1	✓		✓		Rec 11.7	✓		N/A	
Rec 6.2	✓		✓		Rec 12.1	✓		✓	
Rec 6.3	✓		✓		Rec 12.2	✓		N/A	
Rec 6.4	✓		✓		Rec 12.3	✓		✓	
Rec 7.1		✓	N/A		Rec 12.4	✓		N/A	
Rec 7.2	✓		N/A		Rec 12.5		✓	N/A	
Rec 7.3	✓		N/A		Rec 12.6	✓			✓
Rec 7.4	✓		N/A		Rec 12.7	✓		N/A	
Rec 7.5		✓	N/A		Rec 13.1	✓		✓	
Rec 8.1	✓		✓		Rec 13.2	✓		✓	
Rec 8.2	✓		✓		Rec 13.3	✓		N/A	
Rec 9.1	✓		✓		Rec 13.4	✓		✓	
Rec 10.1	✓		N/A		Rec 13.5	✓		✓	
Rec 10.2	N/A			✓	Rec 13.6	✓		✓	
Rec 10.3	✓		N/A		Rec 13.7	✓			✓
Rec 10.4	✓		N/A		Rec 14.1	✓		N/A	
Rec 10.5	✓		N/A		Rec 15.1	✓			✓
Rec 10.6	✓		N/A		Rec 15.2	✓			✓
Rec 10.7		✓	✓		Rec 15.3	✓		✓	
Rec 11.1	✓		✓		Rec 15.4	✓		N/A	
Rec 11.2	✓			✓	Rec 15.5		✓	N/A	
Rec 11.3	✓		N/A		Rec 15.6	✓		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 and projects closed this quarter
<b>Education Directorate</b>
<b>Recommendation 7.2:</b> That ETD consult stakeholders and develop and publish a policy and procedure regarding the placement of students in Learning Support Units and Centres, covering issues including: timing, eligibility criteria, and rights of review of placement decisions.
<b>Recommendation 14.1:</b> That ETD (a) undertake an urgent review of the Student Centred Appraisal of Need (SCAN) model, with particular attention to the: appropriateness of the current eligibility criteria for SCAN funding; adequacy of funding; the effectiveness of the appraisal process, and its impact on parents, carers and students; and (b) in undertaking this review, consult with school leaders, teachers, parents, carers and students, as well as the Disability Education Reference Group, CE and AIS.
<b>Project 11 – Change resources</b>
<b>Catholic Education and Education Directorate</b>
<b>Recommendation 6.3:</b> 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.
<b>Project 12 – Schools for All Evaluation plan</b>

## Future Focus

The Directorate, 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. Examples of upcoming actions include the consultation process for the *Suspensions, Transfer and Exclusion* policy and the development of the off-campus component of the CES model that will provide an alternative education option for a small number of students who at a particular point in time are not able to access education in a mainstream environment.

Many of the remaining recommendations are, in both their intent and practical application, closely tied to cross government initiatives. For example the SRA project and the *Future of Education* community consultation. Therefore, the focus for 2018 will be on ensuring effective collaboration across government as well as between education sectors.

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 – December 2017 is approved by:**

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