

Schools for All Report

Association of Independent Schools of the ACT

December 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.

The Association Subcommittee has taken the timely opportunity to once again look at all the recommendations and note all activities undertaken over the past two years. This has provided the Board with a comprehensive report acknowledging and celebrating the excellent work of Member Schools and the office in progressing and increasing the awareness of support to all students in all schools irrelevant of if they have challenging behaviours and complex needs.

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

Professional Learning

Recommendation 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.
Progress of Recommendation
<p>In early term four a Students with Disability Network meeting was held. This meeting was attended by both Heads of Learning Support (HLSs) and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), with over 20 staff members attending.</p> <p>This meeting provided both HLSs and LSA to network with each other while providing feedback on questions posed to them about future support and resources they require to extend their knowledge and skills.</p> <p>It arose that there were common themes which will drive the support that AISACT provides in 2018. These themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of best practices • Role clarification of teacher, LSA and HLS e.g. how best to assist teachers in the classroom • Supporting students with anxiety • Opportunities to network with other schools <p>The Schools for All Subcommittee will take a role in devising a plan to address these themes across 2018 and in the future.</p>

Recommendation 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 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

Progress of Recommendation

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, 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 & 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
- The Development and Implementation of the CGGS Music Academy
- Whole school analysis of engagement in Mathematics Learning – Initiatives and Resulting Trends
- Year 10 Geography Wellbeing Seminar Task using movie stimulus and story maps
- Whole school literacy skills program: vertical levels
- *Diary of a Stick Insect*: teaching with intent within a pedagogy of listening.
- Whole school art program (examples to be displayed in all rooms)

This event was highly successful, feedback from the event included:

“The level of service to the profession demonstrated by the presenters was fabulous, it truly demonstrated the number of passionate and deep thinking teachers in the ACT Independent Sector.”

“This event reinforced the need to move away from ‘silos’ to best prepare students for the world they will have to navigate.”

“We are doing a great job at our school but we can do more.”

“Thank you for hosting this event! It is a great opportunity to bring all schools together and showcase what is happening in each school that people outside of a schools community don’t get to see.”

All attendees and staff from Member Schools have access to the presentations via the AISACT website.